



Pvt. Joseph W. Ozbourn  
KIA 30 July 1944  
Tinian, Marianas Islands

**EDITORS MESSAGE:**

Trifon P. Tripsas served on board the USS Ozbourn from March 1956 until September 1957 and achieved the rating of IC3. By itself, there is nothing particularly unusual about this but when you hear the “rest of the story”, to borrow a phrase from the famous radio broadcaster Paul Harvey, I think you will be as intrigued as I was. My first meeting with Trifon Tripsas took place in the hospitality suite of the Ramada Inn at Seekonk, MA during a bull session at the 2001 reunion. Sitting across the table was a man of average size with a well trimmed, close cropped white beard and piercing blue eyes and as we chatted I detected the faint trace of an accent that was not readily identifiable to me. In the course of our conversation, I

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***REUNION 2003, San Antonio, Texas***

As reported in the last issue, the site of the 2003 Ozbourn reunion will be San Antonio, Texas. The home base for this operation will be the Holiday Inn Select and the dates to lock in on your schedule are 8 through 12 October, 2003. There are many attractions in the city to include famous military bases, the Alamo, River Walk and numerous others. All the details are being worked out and it is anticipated that a preliminary schedule will be ready for inclusion in the next issue. Lets all get behind this in order to make it our best reunion yet.

**FROM THE BRIDGE**

As we near the end of the tenth year of the OZBOURN Association’s existence let us look back on it’s accomplishments. We have held five memorable reunions, reunited countless friends and shipmates and encouraged many new friendships. Through our web page we have spread the story of Private Joseph William Ozbourn, USMCR and the great ship named in his honor world wide and helped to preserve the memory of this American hero and the USS Ozbourn. Many current members were able to locate us through this page.

The Association came into existence primarily because of three men; former Commanding Officer Charles Akers, former Executive Officer Barr Palmer and former Officer Robert C. Whitten. Being the junior of the three, Bob Whitten was appointed to do most of the leg work. He served as president, secretary, and newsletter editor until the first reunion in 1993 when a slate of officers was elected.

From the efforts of those first three, the association membership grew to about 500 shipmates and almost as many associate members (spouses and friends). The last two years however has seen a dramatic drop in the addition of new members. In fact, the death rate of existing members now exceeds the addition of new members. While organizations of this type must eventually succumb to time and mortality, there are still many former Ozbourn crew members who are not members. I challenge each of you to locate a shipmate and encourage them to become a member.

Also, to keep the association sound and functioning as long as possible we are going to need the help of the younger members, those who served in the 1960’s and 1970’s. I urge each of you to consider accepting a position of leadership in the association soon. Without you, the association is doomed to an early demise.

Finally, our nation today is faced with an enemy unlike any that we have met before, an enemy who hides among us and preys on the lives of innocent civilians in an attempt to undermine our way of life and our resolve as a nation. Although we are all well past the days when we held the helm and manned the guns there is still much that we can do as individuals. Let each of us find a spot where our talent is needed and volunteer our services to the war on terrorism.

Your President and shipmate, - W D Minter

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*(Editors message: continued from page 1)*

realized that here was a man who had an extraordinary tale to tell that contained all the elements of a first rate hardship, adventure, success story.

He was born in Greece to poor parents who worked the land and had much difficulty in providing for the family. At the age of 11 his country was invaded by foreign troops, his father was mobilized into the army and subsequently killed in the futile effort to prevent the invasion. Young Trifon then struggled to help his mother keep the family together during the three and one half years of enemy occupation and the terrible civil war that followed. In 1948 at the age of 18, he was inducted into the Greek army in which he served for over 5 years.

Times were still very hard in Greece when he was discharged from the army in 1953 and over the next several months he concluded that the best course of action for him would be to immigrate to the United States where he had tenuous contact with a Greek family who had immigrated to the Illinois area. After many months of waiting all the necessary processing was completed and he arrived in Chicago, IL in April 1955.

Being an industrious sort of man and of course needing means of support he found employment and was settling into his new surroundings when in November of 1955 he was summoned before the local Draft Board and ordered to report for induction into the Armed Services of the U.S. Thus began his service in the U.S. Navy and on board the Ozbourn until September 1957.

Following naval service he found employment with the General Telephone Co. of California, married, started a family and finally realized the American dream.

Trifon has assembled a voluminous account of his life that he began as a series of stories intended for the entertainment of his grandchildren entitled "Navy Stories". These were so well received that he went on to add two more sections, the first being "My memories from Greece 1929-1955" and finally an "Epilogue" that provides a description of his activities following naval service and more or less ties it all together. He has graciously consented to share this very personal account of his life with us. I believe you will find it most inspiring.

Due to space constraints it is not possible to publish the story in its entirety so certain parts have been extracted in order to convey the sum and substance of the journal of Trifon Tripsas, in his own words. The first installment entitled "My Memories of Greece" commences on page 7.

Several inquiries have been received regarding the availability of a roster of crewmembers of the USS Ozbourn Association. This effort is underway and it is planned to make distribution to all dues paying members in the next issue of Fireball. It will also be made available to non-members for the nominal fee of \$5.

As of 1 October 2002 the Ozbourn Association has 242 dues paying members on the muster list. It is imperative that all of us in the association get behind the spirit and intent of President Minter's appeal for your assistance in furtherance of the objectives of the association. Get involved, try to find and sign up an old buddy, attend a reunion and seek a position in the organization.

The Corresponding Secretary and Editor of Fireball position on the staff of the USS Ozbourn Association will become vacant effective October 2003. Interested parties should contact the chairman of the nominating committee:

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Thomas M. Perkins, Editor

### WELCOME ABOARD

**Gaylon Jacobs (56-58)**  
**Australia**  
**James Greenlee, Radarman (62-63)**  
**West Monroe, LA**

### SEA GOING TRIVIA

An entry in the Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships for USS Pavo (AK139) states, in part, "laid down as James S. Hogg; launched 29 Nov. 1943, sponsored by Miss Ima Hogg." True or Typo??

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### BINNACLE LIST

**John Kougl, Moses Lake, WA (51-54)**

### TAPS FOR SHIPMATES

**Joseph Ventura, CS1/c (60-61)**

### MAY HE REST IN PEACE

## MAIL CALL



The July Fireball! prompted several replies as follows:

Jim Stephens who was one to the aircrew in the featured "Heckler" story wrote: "It appears that you have everything accurate, to the best of my remembrance. I want to thank you for your efforts here because it also gave me a chance to remember that cruise and all the great people I became acquainted with. Fair winds and follow-

ing seas to all you salts. Maybe one of these get-togethers soon, I will be able to meet with some of you. Until then, thanks for the memories".

From John A. Montoya (64-67):

In the July 2002 Fireball there is a picture sent to you by "Goodie" Goodman (64-67). I was on board the "OZ" that day and I'm sending you the picture I took. As you can see the pictures are identical with Capt. Denham visible in both but the stories are totally different. A few years back I wrote a story which was printed in the Fireball called "Rattlesnake 26". This is not a Marine helicopter, but rather an Army "Huey" gun ship from the 1st Air Cav. as you can see by the insignia painted on the nose. Capt. Denham thought we were going to be asked to fire a gun fire support mission for the 1st Air Cav. but it turned out all they wanted was a hot shower, a hot meal and to buy 20 cartons of cigarettes from the ships store. The cigarettes were probably headed for the black market on the beach.



I remember the call sign because I was the radarman on watch on the bridge. I remember the Special Ops mission that RM3 Goodman referred to as well but this picture has nothing to do with that. I thought you might be interested in the real story.

From John Nyquist (55-58):

In the July Fireball, there's a short article on a pair of patches, including one with the numeral 11.

When I reported to the Ozbourn in August 1955, the ship was in DESDIV 112, which along with DESDIV 111 comprised DESRON 11. The ships in DESDIV 112 were OZBOURN, HOLLISTER, ARNOLD J. ISBELL and FRANK KNOX. I don't recall the ships in DESDIV 111.

At the time I joined the ship, I don't believe the patch had been developed yet, but it came into being later in my three year tour. It was indeed the DESRON 11 patch and was painted on the port (?) bulwark, just below the bridge. I do recall on one of our deployments, some wag snuck aboard in the middle of the night and substituted an "I" for the "O" in 'ON THE WAY'.

From Richard Satchell (55-58):

While reading the July issue of Fireball, the letter from Richard Mosca caught my eye. I think I may have a little bit of information on at least part of his question about the two patches that were pictured.

I was the cartoonist for the 56-57 cruise book and the 57-58 cruise book. When we did the 56-57 book the ship had no mascot or ships patch at the time so I made up the characters as I went along. Still we had no ships patch.

About three months prior to deployment we set up the cruise book team. Using the Oz from Ozourn and mixing it with the Wizard of Oz, I came up with the Fleet Wizard idea. As my father worked for Walt Disney Studio in Burbank, CA, it was easy for me to twist his arm into putting me in touch with the animation department. After presenting my very rough sketches to Ens. Burdsal, the cruise book advisor, he persuaded my Division Officer, Ltjg. Horne into giving me two days Special Liberty to visit the studio.

After conferring with the pros at Disney, I was able to smooth up my drawings and the "FLEET WIZARD" (see page 12) concept came into being. I was able to use the character to represent what each Division Officer and some of the senior officers did. For instance, Captain Kuhl collected stamps, so I had Mystic States Postage; XO Garrett loved his cigars, so this led to a wizard hidden in smoke. COMDESDIV 112, CAPT. Bowdey, raced a sports car in his off duty time (I acted as his pit crew a couple of times). Anyhow, you get the idea.

Upon arrival in Yokosuka, Japan in December 1957, we had a patch made and it was sold in the ships store until after I left the ship in June of '58. It looks like we had a good run of years as Richard Mosca stated it was still in use until 1963.



If anyone out there has an extra one of those patches and wishes to barter or sell, I would sure like to have one. Mine disappeared after I left the ship. As to the DESRON 11 patch, I have one of the originals. It was five inches in diameter with a blue eagle on a white background and red lettering and border. I believe this insignia was painted on the forward stack at the time I reported aboard in 1955. It was painted out after the yard period at

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(Mail Call, Continued from page 3)

Mare Island. The patch shown in Richard's letter had an addition of USS Ozbourn DD 846 at the bottom. This may be one from the Korean War era. Does anyone know the names of the ships assigned to DESRON 11 other than KNOX, ISBELL AND HOLLISTER? I never did know all of them.

I'm enclosing a couple of photos that some of the old timers may get a kick out of. Photo 1 is a bright shiny 18 year old EMFN (me) at the Koahsiung "EM Club" in October 1956. I wonder if it was Coke in that glass?

Photo 2 is my shipping over party, March 1958, at age 20, in the



L to R: William Potts Jr., EM1, Leading PO "R" Div., Rex Rumler, YN1, Com-DesDiv 112 Staff, George Coleman, MM1, Leading PO "M" Div., George Arnold, MM1, Norman Andoe, GM1, Leading PO "2nd" Div., and Richard Satchell, EM2.

"EM Club" Sasebo, Japan.

Hope to see you all in San Antonio for the 2003 reunion. Can I wear my Cowboy Boots??

You may indeed, Richard, but only if you get a ten gallon hat to go with them. See back page for Richard's "Fleet Wizard". Ed.

In an e-mail to Recording Sec. Bill Jones, Gaylon Jacobs (56-58) from Australia writes:

I'm looking forward to getting the newsletter and membership information. First, I just thought I'd query a couple things with you in regard to the "Names of Association Members List". The list shows Richard E. Satchell with no rating and years aboard as (58-61). "Satch", as most of his shipmates called him, was a friend of mine, and to the best of my memory was aboard when I arrived in 1956 (he had just shipped over for his second hitch) and before I left the ship in early November he had made EM1. I have the "Fleet Wizard" Cruisebooks for 56-57 and 57-58 which he was instrumental in publishing and he is pictured throughout both of them.

There is also the entry: Toulon, Alfred (55-58). Is this the Toulon who was Commanding Officer during those years? It just seems too coincidental not to be and I thought it was strange he wasn't listed as such.

I also ask about Brian Delano Day, EM3 who was aboard the Oz 56-57. He was a good friend from Fort Worth, TX and the last contact I had with him he was in San Diego.

Also, Kendel Jensen, USN Retired, (57-59). He was EM3 when I left in '58 and I would like to contact him. Any information would be appreciated.

Let me know if I can be of further assistance. There is what appears to be a complete ships roster in the 57-58 cruisebook and I can send you a copy of the relevant pages.

From Bill Norwil (52-56):

Hi there....my name is Bill Norwill, 383 93 25 from Aberdeen, WA. I'm 66 years old and just got a computer. I was a TM3 on the USS Ozbourn from 52 to 56. I was so happy to see the ship on the computer. It would be nice to get together and talk old times again. I looked at the roster and saw Jack Tyree's name. we served together as Torpedomen. Believe it or not, my e-mail address is fireball846@earthlink.net.

In an e-mail to WD Minter, J. Earl Freeman (45-46) writes:

I served on the USS Ozbourn DD 846 from the time of picking it up new in Bath, ME in 1945 until June 1946 when I was relieved of duty having accumulated enough points for discharge. I lost all contact with the ship and crew and it has remained this way until recently when I stumbled across the web page and it has revived a great deal of interest in what happened to the ship, where it served and what happened to the crew members that remained with her. I had the pleasure of helping with getting her ready for sea duty through shake down, setting up records and working for the Chief Petty Officers. We were assigned at this time to patrol duty for the new aircraft carrier FDR and conducted some patrol exercises with her. The Ozbourn was assigned to Boston however in June 1946 when we were informed that the home port was shifting to San Diego. Hope to hear from you.

In a follow on e-mail he writes:

WD, Thank you for such a nice response to my inquiry. Yes, I would be honored to become a member of the Association. I have found three other crew members that served with me during the Bath, ME and Boston days and the extended shakedown cruise.

I found Cdr. Bernard Smith's name while searching for the Ozbourn material and recalled the rumor that had come aboard with him. The story was that Cdr. Smith had the responsibility of another destroyer and had sunk it trying to moor it to a dock. He had rammed the dock and scuttled her. We never found out the name of the ship but we were told that he was on probation with this one and if anything happened he was through. We thought this might be true for any time he brought the Ozbourn in to berth her, we were always so far out that we couldn't throw a monkey fist to the shore personnel in order to get the lines over. Keep in mind this is all hear-say but otherwise he was a fine skipper.

With my age now, I feel certain that a great number of old crew members have gone to the briny deep. I'll be in touch again.

From Bob Whitten (50-52):

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(Mail call, Continued from page 4)

I sent the following to the local newspaper. Don't know if they will publish it. I can't stand this "sports hero" stuff unless they really deserve it.

The death, on July 5th, of baseball star Ted Williams brought to mind his wartime duty in the U.S. Marine Corps with considerable loss to his baseball career and nearly the loss of his life. While his World War II service was stateside as a flight school instructor, his recall for the Korean conflict was in action flying Marine Corps F9F's. He did not want to be recalled but made no serious attempt to evade it and, as in baseball, put great effort into his combat flying.

When I was being processed out of active duty in the Navy in July '53 I had lunch one day at what was the Nimitz Officers Club at Treasure Island. Since the room was crowded, a Marine Warrant Officer looking for a table asked if he could join me. During the course of conversation, he remarked that he had served in the same squadron as Williams and was struck by his apparent utter fearlessness. In returning from a mission that had encountered severe "flak", Williams' F9F was holed so badly that it could barely fly. Williams coaxed it back to the air base, landed, jumped out and nonchalantly walked away as it exploded behind him. The same nerve that he showed when at the plate.

To me, Ted Williams was a hero. A hero not because he was a great baseball player, but because when duty called, he went. He went at great cost to his civilian career and risk to and nearly loss of his life.

In a series of e-mails between several members of the CIC gang from the 1951-1954 time frame we learn of the severe illness of shipmate John Kougl, RD1 (51-54).

John has requested that all of his shipmates be notified that he has been diagnosed with cancer of the liver and pancreas and that the prognosis is not encouraging. He is in good spirits and "refuses to go down without a battle" and goes on to say, "we do solicit your continued prayers for both of us". John has indicated that he has little energy for e-mail traffic but would appreciate a note or a phone call.

John and Lu Kougl

P.O. Box 210

Moses Lake, WA 98837

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Warren Zschach (52-55) sent in a report on a mini-reunion of old Ozbourn Radarmen that was held in Sandy, Utah this past summer. He writes, in part:

WD (Minter) and I along with our wives planned to visit Ralph and Marie Phelps in West Jordan, UT in July and as a surprise to the Phelps we invited six other couples to join us there. Everything turned out as planned and all invited showed up and we really surprised Ralph and Marie. We stayed in the Comfort Inn in Sandy and used their breakfast room as a meeting place the first night, enjoying pizza and getting reacquainted. It was a

truly joyous time. Attendees were from WA, OR, CA, TX, IN, and FL. The next night Marie invited all of us to their home for an unforgettable meal and let me tell you that lady can cook.

All of us guys first met 50 years ago and the great part was that not only did the wives come along, they were all involved in having fun. We were relaxed and conversations flowed just as if we see each other often. This proves a point—never pass up a time to see old friends. More that once all heard the remark, "I wouldn't take a million dollars for this experience". Good friends, there is absolutely no



Radarmen mini-reunion, Sandy, Utah July 2002

L to R: Gurganus, Phelps, Riley, Zschach, Minter, Wissler, Kougl, Fauteck



Three of those attending the Sandy, UT mini-reunion can be found in the photo seen at left taken on board Ozbourn circa 1952.

Back row L to R: Purcell, Anderson, James, Jones

Front row L to R: Minter, Zschach, Kougl

substitute.

Enclosed are a couple of letters that I thought might be of interest for the newsletter. One is a copy of the recently discovered second Meritorious Service Award received by OZBOURN in 1972. The first was received during John Denham's command in 1967-1968.

The second letter is from Admiral Tom Fargo thanking the association for a painting that we presented to him. The painting was of the battle between the USS Washington (BB-56) and the Japanese battleship Kirishima during the third battle of Savo Island in November 1942. Admiral Fargo's father, our own skipper William B. Fargo, was serving aboard the Washington at that time. Bob Whitten happened upon the painting and requested that the association purchase it for presentation to Admiral Fargo.

W.D. Minter

(Continued on page 6)

Since this is the last newsletter of the year 2002, we, the duly elected officers of the USS Ozbourn Association wish to extend to you all our Best Wishes for the Holiday Season just ahead. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year.

Speaking of the New Year, it was once the custom throughout the Navy that the Officer of the Deck would, if he were so disposed, write the first log entry of the New Year in verse. Apparently, this same custom was also observed on Christmas Eve, on some ships, as can be seen in the following rhyme entitled:

“The Night Before Christmas”

‘Twas the night before Christmas, on the Twining, our can,  
We were off North Korea, eighty miles from Wonsan.

The ship, steaming darkened, showed nary a light,  
For who knows what may prowl on the ocean at night?

But the radars were “blip-less”, the horizon was clear,  
And the OD was certain, no bogies were near.

When Combat reported that something was wrong,  
From the business-like AN/ARC there came a faint song.

Men looked at each other—this really was queer,  
They’d have sworn they heard “Jingle Bells”, faint but quite clear.

The CO answered, “Nonsense, go call an “ET”,  
I know it sounds pretty, but it just couldn’t be.

But it wasn’t just nonsense, and the music poured forth,  
Then Combat reported, “Air contact—due North”.

It’s closing us fast, it must be a jet,  
So the ship was alerted, General Quarters was set.

Men leaped from their bunks, and the guns quickly manned,  
And a Gunners Mate growled, “Now ain’t this just grand!”

“Christmas Eve at GQ, and we’re miles out to sea,  
Last year at this time, I was trimming a tree”.

The contact came closer as the seconds ticked by,  
And the stars shown down brightly, against the black sky.

Nearer and nearer, the guns were all laid,  
The next moment the contact was lost in a fade.

“He’s on us”, cried Combat, then a lookout yelled “Hey”,  
“You may think I’m nuts, but it looks like a sleigh.”

And believe it or not, by CruDesPac direction,  
It was Admiral Claus on his annual inspection.

He climbed out of his sleigh, and hitched up his belly,  
And made a short call on Commodore Kelly.

He delivered his presents and inspected the crew,  
Then we all gathered ‘round to see what he would do.

The plane guard was stationed, he saluted the Skipper,  
Then his sleigh zoomed aloft, headed straight for the dipper.

And we heard him exclaim as he shot from his landing,  
“MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL— YOUR SHIP IS OUT-  
STANDING!”

Attributed to: LT. E.H. Friel, USNR  
USS Twining (DD540)  
from the Mid-December 1952 issue of  
“All Hands” magazine

Thanks to Shipmate Al Holmes (52-54)

(Mail call, Continued from page 5)

In response to the questions in the previous letters regarding the composition of units in DESRON 11, let me add my two cents worth and further cloud the issue. I found this scribbled notation in an old green “wheel book” from that period (ca 1950) that reads as follows:

DesDiv 111

Wiltsie (DD 716) F

T E Chandler (DD 717)

Hamner (DD718)

Not Legible

DesDiv 112

Ozbourn (DD 846) F

McKean (DD 784)

Hollister (DD 788)

Frank Knox (DDR 742)

“Not legible” might have been Southerland (DDR 743) or Higbee (DDR 806) as those names seem vaguely familiar to me in this context. I seem to remember that each division was comprised of 3 DD’s and 1 DDR in those days. Hope this jogs a memory out there somewhere so that we can get this resolved.

Tom Perkins, Ed.

### TIN CAN TRIVIA

Old four piper USS Buchanan (DD131) was one of the “fifty destroyers for bases”

deal that was struck between the U.S. and Great Britain and was commissioned into the Royal Navy as HMS Campbeltown in September 1940. After service in the North Atlantic convoy system she was selected to be the blockship in the lock entrance to the great dry dock in the French port of St. Nazaire in order to deny its use to the German Navy. Carrying five tons of explosives and a detachment of commandos she was driven into the lock gate and scuttled while the commandoes set about their demolition work. Eleven hours later the high explosives exploded wreaking great havoc in the port. Campbeltown’s commanding officer was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry.

### “My Memories from Greece”

I never thought to write all that you read in “Memories of Greece” and in my “Navy Stories”, it just came out as I described in the prologues. I would be lying if I said that the past and writing about it didn’t bother me. Sometimes I was feeling resentful and I wanted to abandon the writing, however I kept at it until I filled the page. When I finished I had a feeling of relief. It was just as if I was liberated from something that was frightening me and I was avoiding it. As you will see, my life in Greece was anything but normal.

At the age of 25 I immigrated to the U.S. and for the first three years I had to confront other adversities. Almost immediately inducted into the Navy, I was the only draftee on board the Ozbourn and in addition to everything else that was “foreign” to me I had to learn English. Now after all these years I have come to accept that lots of good things derived out of those difficult times which consequently influenced my life.

My name is Trifon P. Tripsas. All of us have been born in some place and from there we get our ethnicity. I believe that the largest contributing factor that molds our character and gives us our national identity is the environment in which we grow. I am Greek because I was born in the Macedonian town of Veroia, Greece on December 15, 1929 and I was raised there.

During the reign of the Ottoman Turks in Macedonia, the Greek ethnicity of my ancestors who lived in the village of Ermakia was depicted in many things. Among them were the tax records the Turkish administrators maintained. In these records, called “Tapi Teftir” since 1545, are listed the names of the taxed heads of families, their ethnicity and their religion. The taxes they had to pay were detrimental to the Greeks. No Turks were listed as they were exempt from taxation. The villagers were Orthodox Christians and in the village church the liturgy was done in Byzantine Greek. The villagers spoke both the Greek and Serbian languages together with Turkish.

I grew up speaking Greek and I had an exposure to Serbian until 1936 because my grandparents were still using both languages. This gave me some hard times from the kids in the town that apparently considered themselves “thoroughbreds” and unmixed. Anyway this practice was very common among the Greeks, not only in Veroia but all over Greece. The Southern Greeks always considered the northern Greeks inferior.

My hometown of Veroia has been in existence for more than 3000 years. Lots of history has been written about Veroia and archeological findings suggest that the Macedonians were there for more than 1000 years before Christ. Over the centuries the Goths, Bulgars, Serbs, and the Crusaders, to name a few, and most recently the Ottoman Turks conquered the area. This occupation lasted from the beginning of the 14th century until 1912 and gave Veroia its medieval character that remained practically untouched until the time I left Greece in 1955. The social and functional character of the urban space of the town took on a specific form with separate neighborhoods with clear boundaries for the Turks, Greek Christians, Vlachs, Spanish Jews and even one for the Gypsies. This partition of the town left Veroia a mosaic like character of racial and cultural areas that reflected on the social position of the occupants. This was

the environment in which I and all of my ancestors grew up.

My parents were married in 1928 and made their first home with my fathers parents in Veroia. This arrangement did not last very long as unbearable tension soon developed and my father finally rented a small room elsewhere and they moved out. He found work as a laborer and later teamed up with others building and repairing houses, barns and other kinds of structures. Later, my parents moved into one of five consecutive dwellings that belonged to the church of Agois Ioanis. Built more than two centuries before, the buildings were arranged in a circle around a courtyard. None of the



City of Veroia, Greece

dwellings had plumbing or water.

The town kept its medieval character into the 1950’s and seemed to exude a gloomy melancholy. The centuries old houses, the narrow treacherous stone paved streets, the overgrown and uncovered sewers in the streets of the poorer neighborhoods and the poor lighting made the town spooky after sundown.

I lived the first 18 years of my life there until the time I went into the Army in March of 1948. Up to the age of 10, in my kid years, my life was carefree. The daily distraction was the six hours we spent at school six days a week. The neighborhood playground was in the courtyard of the church of Saint Ioanis. There was no danger of cars and only seldom would a horse or ox-driven farm wagon disturb our play. There was no radio or television and the one 25 watt electric lamp was turned off early at night so all of us got some rest. All the kids in the neighborhood were friends.

My father worked very long hours, from dawn to dusk, Monday to Saturday and sometimes on Sunday, all year long. When he worked in the villages of the plains he was paid with wheat and corn (bartering). The most important task for my father every summer was to assure that we had wheat, corn, beans, lentils, pork fat, olive or sesame oil and other non-perishable provisions to last through the winter. My father managed to acquire a small vineyard next to my grandfather’s farm and this produced wine and another very potent distillate known as “Tsipuro” that was bartered for other necessities but he always set aside some of each for our own

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use. By October 1940, the family was comprised of myself, the oldest, and my brother and two sisters, each about two and one half years apart in age and my mother was about 5 months pregnant. At this time I was 10 years old and in the 5th grade of grammar school. (see photo right)



On the 28th day of October 1940 at 3 A.M. the Italian Ambassador Count Emmanuelle Grazzi drove to the residence of the President of Greece Mr. Ioanis Metaxas and delivered Mussolini's ultimatum to capitulate to the Italian demands or be invaded. The Presidents reply, on the spot, was the famous "OXI" which means "NO" and thus WWII began for Greece and Trifon Tripsas.

### The War Years and Aftermath

A general mobilization began immediately and every eligible man subject to military service had to report to the nearest Army unit. My father did not have very far to go because Veroia was an Army headquarters and within a few days he was in uniform. The last time I saw my father was in the courtyard of the Grammar school, next to the pedestal of Saint Paul. He was opening ammunition boxes and he had saved the screws. He gave them to me and told me to take them home so he could use them when he came back. I did that, but he never came back.

In the first week of the war the Italian Armies commenced offensive operations against Greece, advancing out of Albania through the mountain passes of Pindos. After initial small gains the attack was halted short of the Italian objectives and within two weeks the Greek Army had forced them back across the border into Albania.

At home, at the start of the war, the situation was chaotic. Every night the air raid sirens sounded, there was a blackout and all of us had to run in the dark to the newly dug trenches near our home. Several times we got separated and got lost in the waves of people rushing into the shelters. The Italians tried once to bomb Veroia's railroad station and they missed by miles. They never did bomb Veroia proper but later with the help of the Germans they managed to bomb other cities.

My grandfather now became concerned about us and a few days later he came to our home and took us all to his home where he had built an air raid shelter. This lasted little more than a month when my grandmother could not tolerate the commotion that we kids caused. As a result we gathered all our belongings and returned to our own home. We had provisions to last to the next summer but all the pressures were too much for my mother to bear and I often saw her crying loudly.

I remembered the instructions that my father had given me at the schoolyard, before he marched out with his unit, "Naki (that was my nickname) you will be head of the family until I return". I remember trying to comfort my mother saying, "Don't worry Mama, I will help you". It was to be like this until she died.

By this time my father was at the front with his artillery unit and in his last letter home in which he discussed an effort to have

himself declared exempt from the mobilization draft in addition to personal details concerning the family. This letter was written on 29 December 1940.

Three days later he was dead. Eyewitnesses said that my father was loading a mule when an artillery shell exploded on the opposite side of the animal. The body of the animal absorbed the bulk of the explosion but my fathers legs were severely injured and due to the lack of proper medical attention he died of hemorrhaging on 1 January 1941.

The following months were full of agony. The letters from my father stopped coming and rumors of an eminent German intervention were circulating.

By the end of March my mother gave birth to her 5th child, we named her Eirini, which in Greek means Peace.

Indescribable events now started to unfold. On April 6th, the Germans decided to intervene and attacked the defense line between the Greek-Bulgarian border but were unable to break through. After terror bombing leveled the capital city Belgrade, Yugoslavia capitulated leaving the borders undefended and the road to Thessaloniki open. Penetrating quickly, the German forces reached the sea at Thessaloniki on April 9th, 1941.

Now family members came to our aid and it was decided that our family should be moved to the village of Ermakia. We were on our way on April 8th through rain and snow. My mother and my newborn sister, just 10 days old, were on one mule, my other sisters and my brother rode on the other two mules and I walked all the way. It was after midnight, more than twenty hours later that we reached our destination. A day later the German armored groups struck through the Monastir Gap held by Greek and British troops. The battle centered only 10 kilometers east of Ermakia and lasted two days. The artillery barrages were furious and when the shells started to fall into the village we ran out into the mountains. I remember airplanes in dogfights and there was one that left a trail of smoke until it hit the ground in a big fireball. I watched what was happening all around me and even after so many years I can close my eyes and play the events just like a film in the movies.

A few days later it was quiet and we returned to the village. The next day we observed vehicles approaching and I soon saw German troops for the first time. It was to become a familiar sight for the next four years.

By the end of May, the German troops completed the conquest of Greece by taking the island of Crete.

Now the occupation began. In June we left Ermakia and returned to Veroia the same way we came. The return was easier because the snow had melted and the weather was good. We found our house untouched and that was a big relief for all of us. Both the Germans and Italians occupied Veroia. They commandeered all the installations and the buildings left from the Greek Army, they built embrasures, pillboxes and all kinds of other fortifications around the encampments and the railroad station.

The first thing we had to do was go to the Police station with a photograph to get new identity cards. Here our identity card stamped with the German stamp with the eagle

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holding the swastika placed halfway over the picture.

All the grocery stores were empty because the Germans, with their worthless occupation Marks, bought all the non-perishable items and shipped them to Germany to their homes. They confiscated all the wheat that was stored in the government silos and in general sent everything they could get their hands on to Germany. By the end of 1942, the signs of famine had started to appear all over the country.

By the end of the year 1941 the Government installed in the country managed to bring about some order and in November we got official notification of my father's death but no details. They gave my mother instructions to go to the prefecture in Thessaloniki to apply for a pension. My mother, my little sister and I got the required permit from the German Commandant's office and took the train. We spent all day in the prefecture and finally rushed to the station, with very little time, to catch the last train home. The station was almost a mob scene with lots of people pushing and shoving and as the train arrived the mob almost trampled us. But miracles never cease to happen.

All of a sudden, a tall German wearing the SS Officer's insignia had approached my mother and asked for her papers. She handed over our ID's with shaking hands and after looking at them he pulled out a whistle and blew it twice. Almost instantly, three helmeted German soldiers surrounded us. The officer shouted instructions to them in German, gave our papers back to my mother with a salute, of sorts, and then turned away. The soldiers then opened a path in the crowd for us and took us to the train. They popped a smile at my sister, messed my hair and smiled at me, closed the door and left. That was the first time a German did something good for us and I would not be fair if I didn't mention it.

There is another time when an Austrian soldier, one of five quartered in my grandparent's home, befriended me. He was fascinated when I was reading ancient Greek to him from my schoolbook and he always gave me something to eat.

On another occasion, an Italian officer dentist befriended us. When he learned that my father had been killed he appeared visibly shaken and later after he had left for duty in Libya, our local dentist delivered a package that he had left for us. It contained small bags of rice, coffee, cocoa and other goodies. He was a humane person and I hope he survived the war.

As the war wore on desperation began to set in. Provisions began to dwindle and the harvests were inadequate. To add to the worries of my mother I got very sick with malaria. It struck me very hard and lasted for about two months. There were no medications available to help me overcome it so I had to get over it all by myself.

The daily struggle to feed and clothe the family now became critical. My brother and I tried very hard to help in any way we could but kids are no substitute for an adult man in keeping a family together. Certain people from the neighborhood, seeing our plight, came forward with assistance and by 1943 the International Red Cross stepped in with a system that included a program to provide youngsters with minimum calorie requirements. Many kind and compassionate people assisted in the program and all of the big kids had to help. I was assigned to siphon the cod-liver oil from a 50 gallon drum to a smaller container. I did this job so well that they made the job permanent

and that is how I had to develop a taste for the stuff. In the morning each child received a cup of evaporated or dry milk, a piece of bread and a teaspoon of peanut butter mixed with jelly. The price we had to pay was to gobble a spoonful of cod-liver oil. At noon we got a piece of bread and a bowl of soup, sometimes made with beans and at other times made with dehydrated potatoes with traces of corned beef. Other times there would be a soup of pasta made with a yellow or brown powder that tasted like chicken or beef. This meager feeding saved lots of kids from malnutrition and starvation.

I used to go to the grain fields to collect the wheat that the reapers left behind and I also learned to catch crabs from the river and snails from the hedgerows.

The year the war started the school building was used as a hospital and all classes were suspended. In 1942 and the following years, the curriculum was strictly controlled by the German propaganda machine and the education of all the children suffered greatly. In my case I passed to the 3rd grade of high school with ease but later my grades began to suffer due to a number of reasons and I was not advanced to the sixth grade of high school. I was malnourished, traumatized by the loss of my father and I had secured a job and worked full time at the local cinema. In this way I was able to make my family financially independent at the age of 14. I was earning much more than my mother's pension but I paid a heavy price. Besides the problems at school, I was working full time and I missed out on my childhood because I worked seven days a week. When the German Armies left Greece in October 1944, the cinema closed and did not reopen until the summer of 1945. I then took over the responsibility of projectionist at the age of 16.

From the first year occupation the andartes, and almost daily on the occupiers. severe and a lot of were executed. their collaborators andartes and in the indescribable ter-inflicted enormous Greek Communist short time, man-plete administra-



resistance movement in Northern Greece. In the south of the country the andartes were not under Communist control and were fighting the occupiers but most of the time they had to defend themselves from the communists from the north. In the middle of all this, the British airdropped guns and ammunition to anyone that would shoot a German. During this time I sometimes delivered mimeographed copies of the BBC news and carried pamphlets for the resistance. This was an offense punishable with "being shot on the spot". I also put a lot of graffiti that was passed to me on the walls of the buildings in the neighborhood. The Germans didn't like the contents and ordered the mayor to whitewash the walls every day.

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One of the most notorious Greek collaborators in the area was Colonel George Poulos. He was able to recruit about 300 men who dressed in German uniforms and were armed with German weaponry. Early in 1944 they were joined by an equally violent unit led by a Greek speaking German Sergeant named Fritz Schubert. They were joined by a Priest who rode along with them. Overseen by German Officers they raided the countryside, terrorizing and killing innocent people and burning their villages. One night in March 1944, suspecting underground activity in our "Mahala" (church compound) they surrounded the area after midnight and broke into all the houses simultaneously. The Priest, in his robes, together with three men dressed in German uniforms kicked open the door of our room. The Priest dragged me up with his hand around my neck and a Luger pistol in the other hand and ordered me to open all the closets. His companions ransacked the rest of the house and when they had finished we were all pushed into the courtyard. The Priest then ordered me to open the church and he and his men conducted a search of the area. He did not ask to see the attic where a wireless, a typewriter and mimeograph machine were stored. This was a really close call.

As part of their anti-guerrilla operations in the summer of 1944 this same group entered the village of Ermakia, where some of our relatives lived. They corralled all the male inhabitants, about 120, and shot them in the courtyard of the school in front of their relatives. My cousin Aristotelis, then 15 years old, seeing what was happening started to run and was shot in the abdomen. He continued to run until out of range and eventually crossed the mountains to Veroia and found our house. He was in critical condition but his wound was treated and after only one day he moved on. I never saw him again but we later learned that my Uncle Vangelis was killed in the massacre but fortunately the rest of the family, together with cousin Aristotelis survived. Since they had no place to go they wandered with the andartes in the mountains for a long time and when the Civil War started they were on the other side of the border in Serbia. Later they were labeled as political fugitives so they were denied permission to return to Greece.

Later in April 1944, the collaborator Poulos and his men commandeered the grammar school in Veroia and were attacked by a squad of the andartes. Caught off guard, over 100 of Poulos' men were killed and his second in command was killed as well. The surviving Poulos men got behind their barricades and shot at everything that moved and by morning they had killed 45 innocent civilians. They wanted to burn down the village but were stopped by the German Commandant. After the war both Colonel Poulos and the German sergeant Schubert were extradited to Greece, placed on trial for war crimes and executed.

In Greece the events of the last months of 1944 signaled the end of the occupation and the beginning of the Civil War that followed. In early October the last German train stopped in Veroia to pick up what was left of the remaining garrisons and take them north into Serbia. It never got there. I was in our vineyard when suddenly a low flying fighter plane passed over heading directly for the train station. He then doubled back for a firing run and destroyed the steam engine of the train. Empty shell casings from the machine guns fell all around me in the vineyard but fortunately none of them hit me. The next day the

"Andartes" entered Veroia. The church bells rang, Greek flags were displayed everywhere and a festive atmosphere hung over the city. In a few days the celebrations were over, we had been liberated and the occupation was ended.

This did not mean that peace and tranquility had returned and a sense of normalcy re-established. Immediately with the departure of the Germans a power struggle began among the various factions of the guerrilla units that had been operating throughout the region. One of these was known as the Greek National Liberation Front or the EAM, the political wing and another was the ELAS or the Greek People's Liberation Army the enforcers. There was little disorder or looting, but considerable fear of the organization was everywhere.

Then the British returned. When the Germans retreated and abandoned the cities, the ELAS units moved in and took control before the British landed. Almost immediately friction began as the newly arrived British diplomats were snobs and the military commanders as well as the regular soldiers showed little sympathy or understanding of the situation that existed throughout Greece. In early December 1944 the EAM ministers resigned from the Government of National Unity after negotiations broke down over the terms of a new provisional army. Demonstrations broke out in Athens and many people were killed or wounded when police attempted to quell the disturbances. The British Prime Minister Churchill ordered the British troops to destroy or neutralize all EAM/ELAS groups and to issue all regulations necessary for complete control of the streets. When British troops were pinned down by ELAS snipers their general ordered in the Royal Air Force and more innocent civilians became casualties.

It is my belief that this was the true beginning of the Greek Civil War that was to follow.

Life in Veroia was at a standstill throughout this period. There was no currency and the exchange of goods was done by gold or bartering. In the spring of 1945 the cinema reopened and I became the projectionist. I had managed to pass the exams and to move into the 5th grade of high school. Because of all of the disruptions a number of my class mates who had the means attended private preparatory seminars but I had no time or money for that. I was the main provider as my mother's pension was not sufficient for the family needs. In April of 1946, in a raid on Veroia, the andartes blew up the power generating plant and plunged the town into darkness for two months. The Civil War had come to Veroia.

Next issue: I enter the Army and then come to America

S. and A. Form 87 Approved by Comptroller General U. S. March 1, 1948		<b>PAY RECEIPT</b> (NOT TRANSFERABLE)		
CARRIER AIRCRAFT SERVICE UNIT - 21 (Name of Ship or Station)				(File or Service Number)
I acknowledge to have received, from the Disbursing Officer of the above-named Ship or Station, in person and IN CASH, on account of pay, the sum of:		\$		(Date)
				(Amount in figures)
				Dollars
				(Amount in words)
				(Payer's signature)
				U. S. N.
				(Bank or rating)
				(This receipt must be filled out without interlineations or erasures)
				U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-32450-1

How long has it been since you've seen one of these??



Seated: Bouchillon, Lindquist, Lauer GMC, Ens. Lewis, Ens. Hightower, DeWitt TMC, Taylor, May, Bellman  
 Middle Row: Newell, Hines, McDaniel, Maddox, Rosato, Peavy  
 Back Row: Blank, Farst, Anderson, Krog, Herron, Potosky, Smith, Mann, Motley

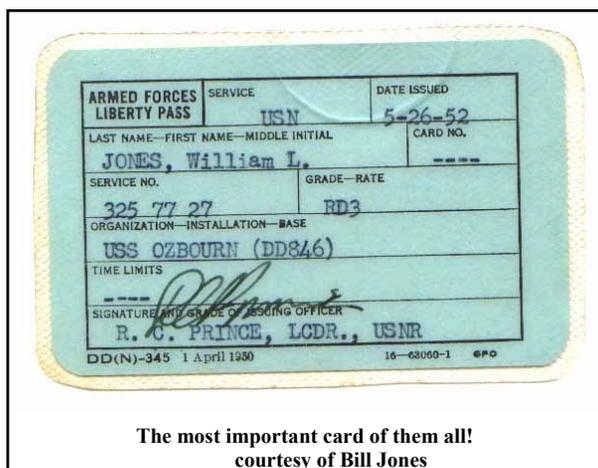
USS Ozbourn (DD 846) 2nd. Division 1952



Bill Jones (51-52) sent this in with this caption: Hey Joe, you like nice number one girl! — have swell time. Please drop by in once and pass your time.

Thanks Bill, we get the picture! Ed.

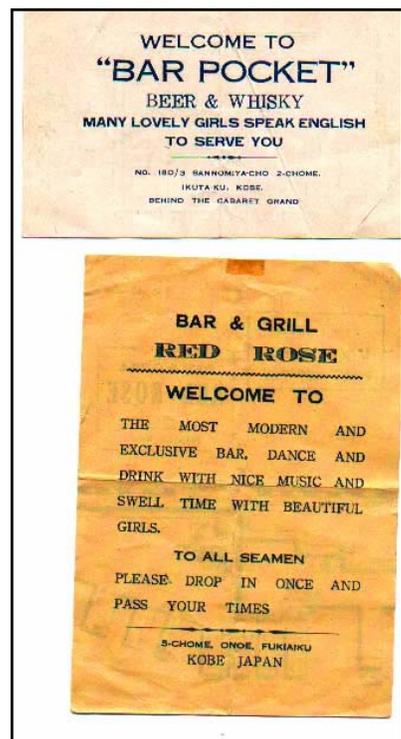
And here is the proof he was there. See ticket stubs below. Ahh, those were the days— and nights too.....



The most important card of them all! courtesy of Bill Jones



He couldn't spend it all!! Warren Zschach reports



**WHY VETERANS DAY?**

As November nears, it is time for us to stop and reflect on the origin of this holiday. It really isn't a holiday in the usual sense of the term but really falls into the category of a day of remembrance. Its origins go back to a day in 1918, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month when the whole world rejoiced in the news that World War I was finally over. After four years of bitter fighting the "war to end all wars" was finally over. November 11 was set aside as Armistice Day

in the United States, to remember the sacrifices that were made by all that had stepped forward to do their duty in the service of their country. Congress voted Armistice Day a legal holiday in 1938, twenty years after the cessation of hostilities. It soon became apparent that the previous war would not be the last one as another bloody struggle ensued. After WWII, Armistice Day continued to be observed on November 11 each year. In 1953 the people of Emporia, Kansas

called the day Veterans Day in honor of all the veterans in their town and soon thereafter a bill was passed in Congress officially renaming the national holiday to Veterans Day. Lets remember them all on this 11/11.

Thomas M. Perkins  
 USS Ozbourn Association  
 2240 Pine Tree Dr., S.E.  
 Port Orchard, WA 98366-3454



The original "Fleet Wizard" drawing.  
 courtesy Richard Satchell

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**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

The USS Ozbourn Association is totally funded by subscription and cannot operate without the support of the membership. U.S. Postal rates have increased and that will make further demands on our operating capital. The dues of each and every member is very important to the well being of the association.

Dues for membership in this very exclusive organization is \$10 (US) per year, payable annually NLT 1 January.

The Fireball! mailing label indicates your dues status by the addition of a two digit number. The latest year for which dues have been paid is indicated by this number. For example: 02 indicates dues paid through 2002; 05 is paid through 2005 and so on. Check your label and keep those dues coming in.

All inquiries concerning payment of dues should be directed to the Treasurer Warren Zschach. He will gladly accept additional years dues as well.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

This is another very key item, often disregarded or overlooked. Keep us informed as to your whereabouts and we will get all the association information out to you. All inquiries regarding Change of Address or label corrections should be directed to Recording Secretary Bill Jones.

DUES ARE DUE 1 JANUARY 2003. GET 'EM IN ASAP.