



Joseph W. Ozbourn
Pvt. USMCR



KIA 30 July 1944
Tinian, Marianas Islands

Reunion Re-cap Issue — San Antonio 2003

The 6th biennial reunion of the USS Ozbourn Association kicked off right on schedule on Wednesday, 8 October as shipmates from all over the country started gathering in the hospitality suite of the Holiday Inn Select in San Antonio. Many friendships that were forged in the past while serving on board the ship and at previous reunions were renewed while many new ones commenced as the scheduled activities got underway.

Day 1 was mostly filled with registration and getting checked in but Day 2 found the two tour buses packed up and outbound for the fully narrated tour of the city. Stops were made at the San Jose Mission, the Alamo and the San Fernando Cathedral, the original church of the Canary Island settlers. All of these sites proved to be most interesting as they contained many splendid artifacts, some dating all the way back to the 18th century. After lunching on Tex-Mex cuisine in the colorful and lively El



Tripsas, Whitten and Logan meet again

Mercado marketplace, the tour resumed through the more modern areas of the city and then returned to the hotel.. Shortly after 1700 all hands saddled up again for a night of entertainment at the famed Diamond W Ranch supper club and cowboy show. This turned out to be a real "hoedown" way out in the boonies with genuine longhorn cattle, horses and good old Texas grub. The cowboy band was superb



Deep in the heart of Texas!!

but the star of the show turned out to be a one ton longhorn steer who could count and do numerous other tricks. The antics that the old wrangler put this critter through were simply amazing. Another featured act was a cowpoke who amazed the audience with his skill with a bullwhip while at the same time terrifying the participants from the audience who innocently agreed to be a part of the show. It was all good fun and no one was the worse for wear when the show ended. It was a tired bunch of old salts that ended the day back at the hotel after a long day touring the south Texas countryside.

same, weather that is. Warm and muggy with numerous rain squalls seemed to be the order of the day, every day. It was surprising to walk out the door of the hotel and have the old eye-glasses fog up. Those of us from the northern climes generally experience the reverse phenomenon during the winter time. In any case, the weather did not seem to dampen


the spirits of the group that boarded the buses for a drive through the Texas hill country on our way to Fredericksburg while the tour guide related many facts concerning the origin of the early settlers to the area that included many immigrants from central Europe, mostly from Germany. Indeed, several road signs seen along the way sported such names as Boerne, Bergheim and Luckenbach that attested to their Germanic origins. Around mid-morning the convoy rolled into Fredericksburg to begin a day long tour of the renowned National Museum of the Pacific War which includes the Admiral Nimitz Museum. Being located far from the sea it seems an unlikely site for what is mainly a nautical museum but the impetus for establishing the facility here is the fact that this was the boyhood home of Chester Nimitz, one of the primary architects of victory in the Pacific during WWII. The future admiral's grandfather founded a hotel here in the

(See Re-cap on page 4)

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Saipan and Tinian	

Day 3 dawned with more of the



Taps for Shipmates

Donald L. Froman	(55-57)	February 1997
Donald G. Hobbs	RD2 (54)	09 January 2003
William D. Minter,	RD2 (52-55)	12 October 2003
Vernon H. McCord	QM2 (48-49)	04 August 2003
David R. Thornhill	Lt.(jg) (48-51)	26 May 1954

May they rest in peace

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Association Roster

The roster of association members will be provided to all new members upon submission of dues. Non-dues paying former crewmembers may obtain a copy by contacting the **Recording Secretary, William L. Jones**. Include a check or money order in the amount \$5.00 made out to USS Ozbourn Association to cover costs.

WELCOME ABOARD

Mike Allred	SM2	(63-64)
Ronald Arand		
Jack Bartet	MMFN	(70 72)
William Cutler	SN	(67-68)
Larry Greenfelder	MM3	(70-74)
Bruce Higgins	MM2	(51-53)
Randy Humphries	GMTSN	(72-73)
Valentine Kish	RM1 (CDD112 staff)	(50-52)
Jordan Lindsay	RD3	(55-56)
Clarence Moree		(54)
Tim Muscio	GMG3	(71-73)
Guy Posey	MMFN	(69-70)
Robert Richards	SM2	(46-47)
Fred Smart	FTG2	(64-68)
Terrence Sullivan	FTG2	(63-65)
Douglas Thompson	GMGSN	(73-74)
Robert Vargo	SN	(66)
Ryan Zakopyko	ETN2	(66-70)

This is by far the largest list of new members reported in quite sometime. You will note that we even picked up a long lost plank-owner. Whoever is out there beating the bushes to get the guys signed up and attend the reunion is to be commended.

BULLETIN BOARD OF GENERAL INTEREST

1. **ANNUAL DUES** are **DUE** -- Forward your dues to the Treasurer, Warren Zschach (see Membership Information on page **12**)
2. The Ozbourn web page and ship store operations will be undergoing reconstruction in the weeks to come. Your indulgence will be appreciated.
3. Anyone having knowledge of the identity of all shipmates appearing in the San Antonio reunion photo please forward a copy of your list to the editor.
4. Shipmate George Robbins, BT2 (57-59) of Austin, TX was not able to participate in all reunion activities, however, he journeyed to Fredericksburg to meet with the tour group. Thanks for coming, George, it was a pleasure to meet you.

MAIL CALL

Robert Henry GM1 (58-60) wrote in to thank us for the newsletter and to catch up on his dues which also included a donation to the Special Fund. He stayed in the Navy for 27 years and retired as Chief Gunners Mate.

Note from Lester Peich QMC (52) who thanked the association and reported he is now 83 but hoped to attend the San Antonio reunion. We missed seeing you Les.

William Hodge FT2 (57-59) also sent us KUDOS and informed us that he would be unable to attend the reunion.

In addition to William, John Prior, Charlie Akers, Jack Blonsick, Barr Palmer and Paul Hecht all wrote to let us know that they would be unable to attend the reunion. Sorry you couldn't make it guys. You missed a good one.

In an email Jack Bartet MMFN (70-72) wrote: "It was great meeting you guys who served before us. Meeting the Marines and the Ozbourn Family still brings tears. I was very broken up over the loss of WD. Can't wait for the next reunion. May God be with you and yours."

Charlie Akers, Skipper (50-52) wrote in response to the news about the passing of WD Minter as follows:

Dear Shipmates,

Into everyone's life some rain must fall. We, who served our Nation on board the USS Ozbourn, have just experienced a downpour. The loss of a treasured and talented leader of our Association is accepted with anguish but the spirit and memory of W.D. Minter will light the way for us to steam boldly through the seas which lie ahead. Indeed, W.D. Minter has enriched our lives.

It is our sacred wish that Pat Minter understands that we suffer along with her and that we will forever remember the spirit of her husband and will honor that spirit as we proceed with our lives.

So remember shipmates, we.....you and I and W.D. Minter are the USS Ozbourn.

Received by email from Mrs. Barbara A. Hobbs, widow of Donald Hobbs RD2 (54) of Dayton, OH.

Donald died on January 9, 2003. He enjoyed reading the "Fireball." At Don's memorial service, Taps were played and two naval officers presented the flag ceremony. This ceremony brought tears to everyone assembled (about 60) and was so well done and so meaningful. I am proud to have been the wife of a Navy Petty Officer and veteran.

From Susan Dodd of West Linn, OR via email:

Hi—I am the daughter of Donald W. Dodd. He was on the very first tour with the Ozbourn that left San Diego on January 6, 1947. He passed away on January 11, 2003 at the age of 78.

Today, I ran across a journal that he kept while on board the Ozbourn so I thought that I would send this on after finding your web site. He operated the radar and was a radioman, I believe. He had a couple of pictures of some of his buddies; last names Lopez, Cheves, Athanas, Talsma, Sheldon and Del Ross. He is buried in the National Cemetery in Riverside, CA.

Note from Ronald Sandusky BM1 ((61-64) of Coos Bay, OR: I was deeply sorry to of hear Mr. Minter's sudden death. I wish to extend by deepest sympathy to the Minter family. I couldn't attend the reunion for health reasons.



The editor - behind schedule, as usual

From Corrine McCord of Tacoma, WA by email:

Vernon passed away on August 4, 2003 at the age of 78. Funeral services were held in Tacoma, WA on August 7th with committal services following at the Tahoma National Cemetery in Kent, WA with full Military Honors. He was laid to rest in his Chief's Uniform. He served from July 1942 until his retirement in February 1964. Thank you for caring and for all the good newsletters. I hope to

keep receiving them and to help support the Association.

Editors note: Vernon was the helmsman when Ozbourn collided with T.E. Chandler off Tsingao, China in 1948 and he retired as Chief Quartermaster.

Jerome "Abe" Simon (50-52) of Sierra Vista, AZ sent in a note to express his sorrow over the passing of WD Minter.

A letter from the Korean War Veterans Educational Grant Corporation dated 14 October 2003 reads, in part:

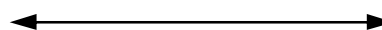
Dear Mr. Boff,

This letter acknowledges the USS Ozbourn (DD-846) Association's recent contribution of \$500.00 to the KWVEGC college educational grant program, which is used to fund scholarships for college-bound descendants of Korean War veterans. We salute the USS Ozbourn Association as one of our sponsors for the 2004-2005 academic year, and recognize it as a patriotic group that takes seriously the values of duty, honor, and country.

Sincerely,

John F. Disinger
Treasurer

Dwight Witte SN (56-57) wrote to cancel his membership in the USS Ozbourn Association.



Photos published in this issue came from many sources to include: Delbert Flielar, Harold McKeehan, Warren Zschach, Bill Jones, Trifon Tripsas. If I missed anyone, my apologies. The Editor

(Re-cap cont.. from page 1)

middle of the 19th century, part of which has been restored to form a segment of the complex that we see today. The exhibits are extensive and part of a day is really not enough time to see all that is on display.

Early in the afternoon, with the superstructure of the WWII submarine USS Pintado as a backdrop in the Veterans' Walk of Honor the customary Oz-bourn Memorial Service got underway under the direction of Paul Logan who



The setting for the Memorial Service.

was ably assisted by W.D Minter. This ceremony has become a tradition at our reunions during which time we pause to reflect on the sacrifices made by our shipmates in peace and war and to remember our brothers in arms who have faithfully served throughout the history of our country. Following the service, volunteer Museum staff personnel were on hand to record the personal reminiscences of any WWII veterans who wished to make their service memories a matter of record in the archives that form a part of the National Museum of the Pacific War. After a long bus ride back to the hotel the activity in the hospitality suite resumed as the sea stories continued into the night.

Day 4. Following the business meeting in the morning the tour bus loaded up for the final time for a visit to the Lyndon B. Johnson State and National Historic Park. Located on the mighty Pedernales River near Johnson City, the park features displays and artifacts relating to the life and times of the 36th President of the United States. The tour ended back at the hotel and there was only time for a quick refresher before it was time to proceed to the banquet hall where the reception was in full swing.

After a suitable period for attitude adjustment, all hands were assembled for the group photograph and that was followed by an Honor Guard from Fort Sam Houston who trooped the colors in a most professional manner. Next came the swearing in ceremony during which the incoming officers of the association were sworn in for their next tour of duty followed by presentation of awards to the outgoing members. The guest speaker Dr. Hans Mark, Professor of Aerospace Engineering and Engineering Mechanics at the University of Texas in Austin gave a most interesting and informative talk on the latest developments in sea launched ballistic missile systems. The Honor Guard retired the colors and the band took their places for the entertainment period to follow.

Day 5 commenced on a somber note, when, as the crew assembled for the farewell breakfast it was learned that our shipmate and colleague WD Minter had been stricken and died from a massive heart attack overnight. It was a sorrowful ending to an otherwise enjoyable and highly successful reunion.

Editors note:

WD Minter and I served in the ship together in the early 1950's but as so often is the case we were in different divisions and therefore we never became acquainted at that time. Those of you who attended the 1999 reunion at Las Vegas will recall his eloquent acceptance speech during which he pledged to uphold and further the goals and ideals of the USS Oz-bourn Association and this is where my close association with him began. Over the following four years I was in frequent contact with him and observed first hand his dedication, sincerity and good judgment in conducting the affairs of the association.

It was my great pleasure to have had the opportunity to work with him.

Thomas M. Perkins, Editor

Western novel written by Oz-bourn shipmate available

An Oz-bourn shipmate writing under the nom de plume Tom Everettson has pro-

duced a western novel entitled "Where the Wind Blows Free." It can be purchased on the internet at www.1stbooks.com. Price: \$11.25. The author has offered to give one-half of his profit on each book bought by a member to the Oz-bourn Association.

For the association to receive this premium, just mail or email the code number found on the bottom of the last page of the book to the Editor of the USS Oz-bourn Association at the address found on page 2 of the Fireball.

If cowboys and rustlers are your fancy, this is a book for you.

ABOUT THE BOOK:

Where the wind blows free, starts with Jim, a young man just out of high school. He goes to New Mexico to help on his grandfather's ranch which was having problems with rustlers. Jim meets Bill on the train ride west, they become friends and Bill is a main character through out the book, and a big help to young Jim.

Many exciting adventures throughout the book, some dangerous, some funny, some depict life in the early 1900's before cars became a common sight, before Arizona became a state, and soon after New Mexico entered the union.

A family reunited after many years, romance, gunfights, accurate descriptions of the beauty of nature in the areas of the story, descriptions to delight the mind's eye.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Tom was born in North Carolina, gave four years to the US Navy in the latter part of the Korean conflict. He married Caye in 1955 just before he got out of the service.

They have five children, thirteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

They lived in North Carolina until 1990 when they moved to New Mexico to better care for Caye's mother. When she died in 1996 they settled in East Tennessee, about 40 miles from where their son and his family live.

Tom's story basically takes place in the regions where he has lived, and has a knowledge of the area's history and geography. We hope you enjoy the story.

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* This book is also available at your local retailer.

To Tom Everettson:
We in the Association thank you for your generous offer and wish you well in your endeavor. Ed.

New Association Officers sworn in October 2003

President



Rudy Boff

Reported on board May 1952. Assigned to after engine room as a machinist mate. Achieved rating of MM2 and was discharged in 1955. Married and settled in Bethel Park, PA, a suburb of Pittsburgh. Joined National Cash Register Company in 1957 as a field engineer and retired in 1994 as a service manager. "I am proud of my family of five children, thirteen grandchildren and two great grandchildren."

Vice President



Ken Keene

Enlisted 1 May 1970. Recruit training at Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, IL followed by a course of instruction in the Enginemen Class A School. Reported to USS Ozborn in the Philippine Islands, February 1971. Duties included maintenance of diesel generators, compressed air systems and air conditioning and refrigeration systems. Achieved rating of EN2 prior to discharge in 1974. A tool and die maker he resides in Meadville, PA.

FROM THE BRIDGE

When I received a call from the nominating committee asking if I would consider accepting the nomination to become president of the USS Ozborn Association I felt honored as the association has become an important part of my life. Then reality set in. To be president meant that I had to follow in the footsteps of Bob Whitten and WD Minter and those are a huge pair of shoes to fill. I have always believed that a member of an organization should not only pay dues but should also be willing to shoulder some of the work that it takes to keep the organization alive and healthy. After a month of arguing with myself I agreed to accept the position and was elected and installed at the reunion in San Antonio. We are very fortunate to have dedicated and knowledgeable officers that have given freely of their time and talents. They have kept this association growing and with their help and support I will do my very best to perform the duties of president.

The 2003 reunion was a huge success. Due to the determination of some of our members, many more shipmates have been located and there were quite a few first time attendees in the assemblage. Several of these were from the 1964-1974 time frame which is very good news indeed.

Every detail had been handled to perfection and the planned activities provided a chance to enjoy some of the area's attractions. However, the best part was seeing old shipmates again and renewing old friendships.

A committee has been formed to select the site and plan for the 2005 reunion. I look forward to seeing all of you there.

As you know our shipmate WD Minter passed away on the last day of the reunion. He and I served on board the ship together and I am grateful to have had the chance to spend time with him at this and previous reunions. He will be greatly missed.

Rudy Boff, President

Report of the Recording Secretary, Bill

BUSINESS MEETING REPORT OCTOBER 11, 2003

Jones.

The meeting was called to order by President W. D. Minter.

- ◇ 621 Shipmates in our records
- ◇ 251 current with their dues
- ◇ 158 sent materials but no response
- ◇ 50 invalid postal addresses

No date has been established for printing an update of the crew roster.

Old Business

Paul Logan reminded all hands to keep their addresses, email etc. up to date.

New Business

Discussion about placing a USS Ozborn plaque on the wall at the Fredericksburg Pacific War Museum. Paul Logan suggested a committee be formed to investigate the feasibility and cost.

Committee members appointed;

Paul Logan (chairman)

Richard Satchell

Guy Posey

Don Sacco

- ◇ Discussion about reducing the number of reunion days from five to four. By majority vote of the members present the decision was to retain the present schedule format.
- ◇ WD Minter reported that there has been no progress in the new ship Ozborn effort. Situation is not encouraging - stalemate at this point.
- ◇ Bob Whitten moved to elect Lynn Rone, the granddaughter of Pvt. Ozborn and his four Marine squadmates, namely, Delbert Flielar, Herman Schwab, Eddie Newman and Tex Freeman as Honorary Members of the Association. Motion passed
- ◇ Bob Whitten suggested a committee be formed to explore how to disseminate the Association funds once it is disbanded. Motion tabled
- ◇ Jim Clay introduced the idea of establishing a "Survivors Bottle" to be consumed by the last two or three surviving members of the Association. No action taken.
- ◇ Bob Whitten requested the Association authorize the sum of \$60 for the purchase of a book entitled "Sumner and Gearing class Destroyers" for presentation to the banquet speaker, Dr. Hans Mark. Motion passed
- ◇ Historian Fred Conwell discussed the large number of items accumulated in the historical library and what might be done with them. Some ideas were to make donations to the Navy Memorial or the Naval Warehouse in Washington, DC. Decision- More study required
- ◇ Nominations and election of Association Officers for the 2003-2005 term

(See business on page 6)

(business cont. from page 5)

Rudy Boff - President
 Ken Keene - Vice President
 Warren Zschach - Treasurer (incumbent)
 Bill Jones - Recording Secretary (incumbent)
 Tom Perkins - Corresponding Sec. and Editor of Fireball (incumbent)
 Fred Conwell - Historian (incumbent)
 Slate was elected by acclamation.

- ◊ WD Minter turned the meeting over to President-Elect, Rudy Boff who made a few remarks.
- ◊ A Reunion Committee for the 2005 reunion was selected - Members are:
 Bob Whitten (chairman)
 Dick Clark
 Pete Cole
 Art Rainville

The new committee chairman introduced the idea of our next reunion possibly being held on board a cruise ship. Discussion followed with decision to let the Committee decide.

- ◊ Pete Cole asked the Association to consider continuation of the donation to the "Korean War Veterans Education Grant Corporation (KWVEGC). Discussion followed with a motion to donate the sum of \$500. Motion passed

The KWVEGC was founded in 1997 to award educational assistance to individuals who served in the armed forces of the United States during the Korean War; to individuals who have subsequently served in South Korea and their lineal descendants. Ten of 212 young people who applied for college scholarships in the 2003 competition were selected to receive \$1000 awards toward tuition and fees during the 2003-2004 school year. All hands should take satisfaction in knowing that our contribution is being used to further the education of some of our Nation's youngsters.

Shipmate Pete Cole is the President of the Corporation.

Report of the Treasurer, Warren Zschach:

Period 11 November 2001 to 29 September 2003.

Starting balance	\$10,643.59
Funds received:	
Dues	\$ 5585.00
Ships Store	\$ 1627.70
Special fund	\$ 2300.00
Current balance	\$11,208.17

Reunion expense breakdown reported by Armed Forces Reunions Inc.
 105 registration fees @ \$25 = \$2625.00
 Total paid to AFR, Inc. \$1758.77
 Returned to treasury \$ 866.23

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 0930.

To the many shipmates who made generous contributions to the "Special Donation" fund the officers of the association extend our heartfelt thanks. The extra funds available enabled the reunion committee to lay on additional activities that would not otherwise have been possible.



The first and the last.



During the ship's 30 years of commissioned life untold numbers of sailors joined the crew and then were transferred elsewhere. At the San Antonio reunion this was highlighted when Larry Greenfelder, shown on the left, met George Fink. George was in the commissioning crew in 1946 as MM2 and served until 1948. Larry, a MM3, was on board at the time of decommissioning in 1975.

Some Goat Locker levity... An Admiral retired after 40 years service and realized a life-long dream of owning a bird-hunting estate in South Dakota.

He invited an old friend for a shoot and the man so admired the Admiral's bird dog "Sailor" that he tried in vain to buy him.

The following year the friend returned for the shoot and "Sailor" was no place to be found. What happened to "Sailor?" he asked. "Had to shoot him," grumbled the Admiral. "A friend of mine came to hunt with me and couldn't remember the dogs name. He kept calling him chief and after that all the dog would do was sit on his ass and bark."

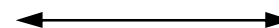
(Squadmates, continued from page 9)

neighboring Namur and we didn't lose anybody from our squad. Later on the navy boats kept dumping tons of supplies and we spent three days in a working party carrying it all off the beach."

Once the islands were declared secure the troops loaded back on the transport ships and returned to their new home base at Camp Maui, Hawaii, arriving during the latter part of February.

Camp Maui, located on the flanks of the extinct volcano called Haleakala had been, at one time, an Army installation. Some wags said that the Army would have no part of it and it was then passed to the Marines. In any case, when the Fourth returned from the Marshall Island assault they found a tent city all set up for them and they moved in and tried to make the best of it. In fact, it became the home base for the division until the end of the war. In spite of the mud, rain and wind the Marines set about making the base more livable and as the replacements reported in the training commenced for their next objective. This time it would be Saipan in the Marianas Group 3,700 miles to the west and only 1,500 miles from Tokyo.

To be continued



The editorial office now has custody of a book entitled "The Fourth Marine Division in World War Two." The book was published in 1945 and is the historical record off the division. It contains many pages of photographs, factual data and vivid descriptions of the four major engagements in which the division was engaged during the war.

The book was provided through the generosity of Herman Schwab and Eddie Newman. Thank you on behalf of the Association .

The Editor

USS OZBOURN ASSOCIATION FOUNDERS INSTALLED AS CHARTER MEMBERS

One day in May 1991 in Huntington Beach, California the concept of a reunion of Ozbourn shipmates was kicked around by three old seafarers long removed from the sea who still harbored a strong attachment to the ship that had first brought them together many years before. From that modest beginning the USS Ozbourn Association was founded and has developed into a thriving, dynamic organization of 251 dues paying members who meet at regular intervals and engage in certain philanthropic activities when called upon to do so. The three founding members were Charles Akers, former Commanding Officer (50-52), Barr Palmer, former Executive Officer (51-52) and

Robert Whitten, Jr., a former Main Propulsion Assistant (50-52). Following the reunion just past, a motion was forwarded to the President of the Association recommending that all three be installed as "Charter Members" in order to show the appreciation of all of the members and to recognize them for the great contribution they made in the establishment of the Association.

By unanimous vote of the Officers of the Association the motion was carried and all three founders have been installed as Charter Members of the USS Ozbourn Association.



Charles O. Akers

Raised in Nashville, TN. Attended Vanderbilt University. Entered the U.S. Naval Academy 1934, graduating with the class of 1938. After initial battleship duty ordered to ex-four piper destroyer converted to minelayer, USS Ramsay (DM 16) at Pearl Harbor, June 1940. Due to shortage of personnel was assigned as both Engineering Officer and Gunnery Officer at the same time. On board during Japanese attack on December 7, 1941, directed fire against Japanese aircraft although his battle station was in engineering spaces. Became XO and Navigator June 1942. Ramsay performed patrol duties in Hawaiian waters and then shifted to South Pacific and then Aleutian Island areas for mine laying operations into summer of 1943. Ordered to duty as commissioning XO of Fletcher class destroyer USS Laws (DD 558) July 1943. Commencing in March 1944 the ship participated in carrier operations against Kwajalein, Palau,

(See Akers page 8)

H. Barr Palmer

Born and raised mostly in Portland, OR. Entered U. S. Navy through the V-7 Reserve Officers program, commissioned Ensign in June 1941 and called to active duty shortly thereafter. Assigned to small patrol craft (YP) screening tankers from San Francisco to off shore loading facilities north of Morro Bay. Lots of on the job training that proved to be invaluable. Assigned as prospective commanding officer of a brand new little ship designated an APc, placed it in commission and sailed to the South Pacific along with five others of the same type. Dull duty except for Japanese air attacks. Ship credited with 3 aircraft shot down. Returned to U.S. and reported for training at the SCTC in Miami, FL for Destroyer Escort training. Assigned to USS Parks (DE165) in the South and Central Pacific to the end of WWII. Released to inactive duty and then recalled to active duty for Korean War and duty on USS Ozbourn as XO. Next duty with Armed Forces Special Weapons Project, Albuquerque, NM. in weapons effects testing. Witnessed 32 nuclear detonations. Served in COMSERVPAC as PACFLT Nuclear Weapons officer responsible for all movement of PACFLT nuclear weapons. With Defense Atomic Support Agency in the Inspector Generals directorate in Albuquerque, NM. Retired in 1966 in the rank of Captain USNR. Returned to the Pacific Northwest with wife Marge and three children. Now resides in Escondido, CA.

Barr says, " I am really pleased to see the Oz Association grow to where it is today as a result of a meeting between Charlie Akers, Bob Whitten and myself."



Robert C. Whitten, Jr.

A native of Bristol, VA. Grew up in Baltimore, MD. Graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY, 1947. Served in USS Elokomin (AO-55), 1949-1950; USS Ozbourn (DD-846), 1950-1952; USS Thomas F. Nickel (DE-587), 1952-1953, the last as Chief Engineer. Retired from USNR 1971 in the rank of Commander. Received Ph.D. in Nuclear Physics from Duke University, 1959. Employed by SRI International as physicist and senior physicist, 1959-1967. Research Scientist, NASA-Ames Research Center, 1967-1989. Worked mainly in atmospheric and planetary science. Author, co-author or editor of five books and 125 papers in the archival scientific literature. Associate Fellow, American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics. National Director of the Navy League, 1988-2000. Currently employed by Raytheon Co. under NASA contract. Married to Sally Marie Kriz, 1953; two children and four grandchildren. Charter Member of USS Ozbourn Association, 2003.

(Akers continued from page 7)

Yap, Ulithi and scored 2 aircraft kills and a probable during operations against Saipan. The Laws operated with carrier groups during the invasions of Palau and the Philippine Islands and screened Task Force 38 carriers during the battle off Cape Engano. Ordered to command of USS Hobby (DD 610) in November 1944, continued in strikes against enemy forces in the Philippines, Formosa and the Japanese home islands into February 1945. Later operated off Iwo Jima and Okinawa in support of invasion forces. Remained in command of Hobby until decommissioned at the end of WWII. Instructor at U.S. Naval Academy July 1946 to May 1950. Took command of Ozbourn in September 1950 until May 1952. Ordered to Bureau of Naval Personnel as detailing officer May 1952 to May 1954. XO USS Los Angeles (CA 135) May 1954 to September 1956 and then served as Commander Destroyer Division 72 where he received promotion to Captain. October 1957 reported to staff of Chief of Naval Operations as Head of OP 100, Personnel Plans and Policies Section. Capt. Akers' final sea command was Commander Destroyer Squadron 13, August 1961 to September 1962. Following this command served as Destroyer Force Pacific Fleet Representative, Long Beach and as CO of the Enlisted Personnel Distribution Center for Continental U. S. Relieved of all duties and retired from active service on June 30, 1968. Settled in Southern California and was Assistant Vice President property management of a Savings and Loan Association until final retirement in 1984. Since then he has enjoyed sail boat racing and cruising along the Pacific Coast.

In some personal reminisces of his Naval career, Charlie says, "the attack on Pearl Harbor scared the hell out of me, especially due to the absence of any guns on the old four piper capable of effective fire against enemy aircraft."

"...the Korean conflict was the only war he enjoyed because during it he commanded the best destroyer in any navy anywhere with shipmates too numerous to mention here who made the ship perform like a well oiled, precision organization."

His most demanding duty was working for CNO Arleigh Burke. As the saying

goes, it was "28 hours per day, 8 days per week" and the Admiral worked similar hours.

Now at age 88, Charlie says that he regrets that he has not been able to adequately express his appreciation and affection for his shipmates who served with him on board the Ozbourn. Further, his wife Becky, whose father was a pioneer Naval Aviator who lost his life in an aircraft crash, was the inspiration which enabled him to accomplish all that he did in the Navy.

Tin Can Trivia Pop-Quiz



All tin can sailors of the mid-20th. century era should recognize this scene. What is it??? Answer next time.

(photo courtesy of Jim Clay)

Association hosts Ozbourn descendant and Marine squadmates during San Antonio reunion.

Over the twelve year period of our Association's existence a good deal of effort was expended in trying to locate any of Joseph W. Ozbourn's family and indeed anyone who had been acquainted with him, either in his hometown of Herrin, IL, or during his service in the Marine Corps. Past President Bob Whitten visited Herrin, IL in 1995 and met with the mayor but found nothing really substantive as to the whereabouts of any family members. Other inquiries to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society and the Navy Historical Center did not produce any tangible results either.

Then, in the summer of 2001, out of the blue, an email arrived in the editorial office from 15 year old Zach Ozbourn who had found our website on the internet and was seeking information about his great grandfather Joseph W. Ozbourn. Over the next two years contact with other family members was established that culminated in the attendance at the reunion of Lynn Ozbourn Rone, granddaughter of Joseph Ozbourn. Mrs. Rone was accompanied by her husband John and her mother Carolyn. They brought with them and displayed several items of great interest to include Ozbourn's Medal of Honor, the bottle that was used during the ship christening ceremonies in 1945 and several family photographs depicting Ozbourn's early life in southern Illinois.

Sometime in 2001, Bob Whitten sent an inquiry to the newsletter of the Fourth Marine Division Association newsletter

requesting information about Joseph Ozbourn. This notice caught the eye of Herman Schwab of Denver, CO who had served in the same squad with Ozbourn during the Pacific war. Herman then went to work rounding up three additional members of the same squad. In addition to Herman three of the group namely, Eddie Newman of Evansville, IN, Delbert Fliear of Mesa, AZ and O.B. "Tex" Freeman of Sweetwater, TX responded and found their way to the reunion in San Antonio. These were the men of the Second Squad, Third Platoon, B Company, First Battalion, Twenty third Marines, Fourth Marine Division.

One morning at the reunion all four gathered in the hospitality suite, submitted to questions and related some of their experiences from their days in the Corps during the war in the Pacific.

To set the scene for their stories a bit of background data concerning the Fourth Marine Division is helpful. During the early part of WWII the strategy that developed for U.S. participation in the war was based on the defeat of Germany having first priority for troops and materiel. This policy resulted in the U.S. Naval establishment becoming the dominant force to eliminate Japanese forces from their far flung empire in the Pacific ocean areas. For the most part, the combat areas of Europe and North Africa involved continental land masses whereas in the Pacific much of the Japanese controlled territory was comprised of a string of heavily fortified

(Continued on page 9)

islands, extending over thousands of miles, that was intended to provide cover for the shipping lanes that carried the raw materials that Japan desperately needed back to the home islands. In order to breach this network of strong-points on the road to Japan a highly mobile, hard hitting force, schooled in the principles of amphibious operations was desperately needed. Fortunately during the lean times of the 1920's and 1930's, some farsighted men in the Navy and Marine Corps had recognized that the expansionist policies of Japan in Asia and the Pacific would



Honored guests at the San Antonio Reunion

(l to r) Eddie Newman; Herman Schwab; Lynn Ozbourn Rone; O.B. "Tex" Freeman; Delbert Fliar.

ultimately lead to a confrontation with American interests and they set about developing the doctrine, equipment and organization of what became the amphibious force. This concept consisted of specialized naval ships and craft capable of landing large numbers of troops over the beaches while at the same time providing the necessary logistic and fire support, both ship and airborne, to sustain them once ashore. Thus the foundation of the Fleet Marine Force was formed that in due time became a dominant factor in the defeat of Japan in the Pacific.

In 1940 the Marine Corps mustered about 28,000 men and had nearly doubled in size by the time WWII commenced. At wars end in 1945, six Marine Corps divisions had been raised, all seeing action in the Pacific theatre of operations and the number of personnel in the Corps stood at approximately 670,000.

The Fourth Marine Division was formed primarily from a cadre of units from the Third Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, NC in early 1943. After transport to the west coast and supplemented with additional men it was activated at Camp Pendleton, CA in late August 1943 and immediately commenced rigorous training on an intensive scale.

The Fourth was overseas for 21 months and was employed solely in the Central Pacific and thus avoided the hazards of the jungle conditions and tropical diseases that were so common in the combat areas further to the south. It was in combat for a total of 63 days and be-

tween operations it was based on the island of Maui. It was also the first Marine division to return to the continental U.S. for deactivation after the war. But in contrast to this, no division participated in more violent combat than the Fourth. In 63 days it saw more action than did many units engaged in months of jungle fighting or in long campaigns in other theatres of war. The Fourth set something of a record in making four beachheads, all of them bitterly opposed, in less than 13 months; at Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. During these operations, a total of 81,718 men of the division saw action in one or more campaigns (some served in all four operations and are included four times). Out of this total, there were 17,722 casualties in killed, wounded or missing in action for a total of 21.6 per cent. The percentage of the original 17,086 men who left the States with the Fourth and later became casualties would certainly be higher than this figure. These figures testify to the contribution which the Fourth made to victory in the Pacific.

At Camp Pendleton, in late August or early September, our group of Delbert, Eddie, Tex and Herman came together for the first time, having been assigned to the Second Squad of the Third Platoon. All were just in their late teens and had only been in the service for a few months. During the training that ensued, they practiced landing over the beaches at Oceanside and San Clemente island getting their sea legs and getting acquainted with the equipment that they would carry into battle upon deploy-

ment. During this phase of the training the men were put aboard ships and taken to sea and then practiced debarkation into small boats via a big cargo net slung over the side. "Tex" Freeman, not a very large man, interjected, "It was hell just getting to the boats climbing down those damned nets carrying all of our gear. Later on during the combat landings we always went ashore in tractors (AMTRACS) which was better for us." Delbert then broke in and described his indoctrination like this, "I volunteered for demolition work and found myself carrying some extra equipment. In addition to the usual outfit of pack, cartridge belt, grenades, ammo and rifle I strapped on a 75 pound flame-thrower as well. This was quite a load, considering that I only weighed 125 pounds to begin with."

On 8 January, 1944 only a week before departure from Camp Pendleton a rugged ex-coalminer from Illinois named Joe Ozbourn joined the squad. At 24 years of age he was somewhat older than his mates, and had only recently left boot camp having enlisted at the end of October of 1943. Herman Schwab described him as a steady performer and someone you would want on your side when the chips were down.

On 15 January 1944, the Division boarded ships at San Diego, combat loaded for their first assault of an enemy beachhead. This was "Operation Flintlock", the invasion of the Marshall Islands set for 1 February 1944 with the specific objective being the tiny coral islands of Roi-Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll some 2500 miles west of Hawaii. Neither island was greater than 1 square mile in size and an estimated 3,000 enemy troops were there to defend them. A very daunting prospect indeed. Roi island which contained the airfield was the objective of the First Battalion and the landing was unopposed as most of the defenders had fled to nearby Namur island which afforded them better protection against the shelling. The few stragglers that remained were soon cleared out and as Eddie Newman recalled, "we then just sat around listening to the heavy fighting going on over on

(Turn to Squadmates on page 6)



Across the alley from the Alamo!



Banquet night (l to r) Caye and Tom Hoots, Richard Satchell, Trifon Tripsas, Harold McKeehan and Rusti Satchell

Selected photographs from the 2003 San Antonio Reunion



Pat and Bert Waldroup make their first reunion appearance.



Past President Minter addresses the assembly



Cemetery at the LBJ ranch



Gold altar, Mission San Fernando



Waiting for chow call at the Diamond W Ranch (l to r) Ray Johnson, Burge, Tripsas and Rueth



"Deadeye" Rueth gives a real cowboy some tips on hitting the target!



The hospitality suite discussions begin Bernardino and Shelton discuss serious matters



AMTRAC and Howitzer, Marine tools of the trade at the Museum of the Pacific War, Fredericksburg



Honored guests await the memorial service (l to r) Lynn Ozbourn Rone, Eddie Newman, "Tex" Freeman and Herman Schwab



Plaque presented to WD Minter on behalf of the members of the Association in recognition of his outstanding service.



O.B. "Tex" Freeman, a Marine rifleman and holder of the Silver Star and Purple Heart Medals won during action on the island of Tinian, July 1944.



WWII Jap tank on display at the Museum



A-Bomb on display- a replica I trust!



Parlor at LBJ ranch house



The star of the show at the Diamond W Ranch



Mission San Jose



The old wrangler



Reunion "first timers" Back row (l to r): Pogue, Lindsay, Higgins, Langan, James, Bernardino. Front row: McKeehan, Posey, Waldroup, Bartet, Rick Johnson.



The Sea Stories begin, San Antonio- 2003

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USS Ozbourn Association
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Port Orchard, WA 98366-3454

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



“FIREBALL”

The newsletter of the USS Ozbourn Association

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the USS Ozbourn Association is open to all former crewmembers, embarked staffs and others subject to the approval of management. Active membership in the Association requires the payment of annual dues in the amount of \$10.00. The membership year runs from 1 January through 31 December and dues are payable not later than 1 January of each year. All dues paying members automatically receive the Association newsletter “Fireball!” and are eligible to attend the reunions that are held biennially.

The Association is totally funded by subscription so it is important to keep dues current. Dues status is indicated by a code found on the address label. For example: 04 indicates dues paid through 2004; “n” means a new contact-awaiting feedback; “nm” means non-member, never joined; “c” complimentary. Check your label and get up to date, please.

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

All inquiries concerning Change of Address and Mailing labels should be directed to the Recording Secretary, William L. Jones.