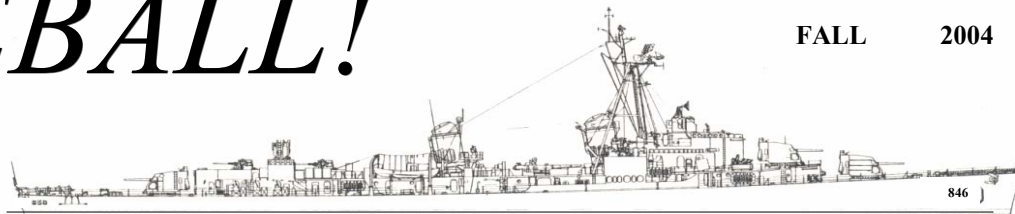


FIREBALL!

VOLUME 13, NO. 4

FALL 2004



The Newsletter of the USS Ozbourn (DD 846) Association
Dedicated to perpetuating the memory of a gallant Marine and the history of a fine ship

FROM THE BRIDGE

The USS Ozbourn reunion is only one year away so it is not too early to start making your plans to attend. The dates are September 28 through October 2, 2005 and the location is Charleston, South Carolina. Since the last issue of Fireball, when it was announced that the membership had chosen Charleston, I have received several emails telling me what a great place this city is for holding a naval reunion. Thanks again to Bob Whitten and the reunion committee for all their work in researching and finding cities that make our reunions so memorable. I have never been to Charleston and I am looking forward to seeing my shipmates and this beautiful city.

At the last reunion during the tour of the Admiral Nimitz Pacific War Museum in Fredericksburg, TX we viewed the Memorial Wall where many commemorative plaques are on display on a 100 year old limestone wall. Individuals, ships, or units from any of the United States or Allied military branches of service that served in the Pacific during WWII may be honored in this manner. Plaques are solid metal, photo-chemically etched and anodized with a dark bronze



Memorial Wall at the Nimitz museum, Fredericksburg, TX

background and silver text and detail. Photos and line drawings reproduce well and are featured on many plaques. All hands in our group were impressed with the exhibit and a committee was appointed during the business meeting to investigate the feasibility of having a plaque commemorating the USS Ozbourn placed on the Memorial Wall at the museum. Paul Logan and committee members Richard Satchell, Guy Posey and Don Sacco have done the preliminary ground work and their recommendations follow:

1. Proceed with the project

2. Commission a 20 inch X 20 inch plaque
3. Arrangement and content of plaque to be determined
4. Plaque to be produced in about 3 months following receipt of proposal at the museum



Close-up of commemorative plaque grouping

The committee will have the final draft ready for presentation to the membership at the business meeting to be held during the reunion next year in Charleston.

The plaque will be on display before thousands of visitors who visit the museum and will serve as a fitting testimonial to our old ship and all the men who served in her through war and peace.

Thanks to Paul Logan and his committee this project will become a reality.

Rudy Boff, President

BACK TO SEA DUTY

LCDR H. Barr Palmer served as Executive Officer of Ozbourn during 1951-1952. He passed away in May 2004 at the age of 86 and notification appeared in the last issue of the newsletter. Prior to his death, Barr wrote a memoir which included the period of his service on board Ozbourn and the remainder of his Naval career. This part of the narrative was provided to the Association by his brother-in-law Mr. John Harrington with the concurrence of Barr's son Mr. Harold Barr Palmer II and they have graciously granted permission

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Welcome Aboard

Richard Laney

(61-64)

Bulletin Board of General Interest.

1. **Annual dues.** Dues in the USS Ozborn Association are \$10 per year, a figure that has remained constant since the founding of the Association way back in '92. Where else could you find such a value? This \$10 gets you into a super exclusive organization based on camaraderie and good will, opens the doors to fun and frolic at the biennial reunions and not the least of all, a subscription to a cutting edge newsletter and web-page. All hands are urged to keep track of their own dues situation and if you know of a former Ozborn sailor who is not a member, urge him to sign up for a hitch. The membership IS the Association and without your support, the organization will fade into obscurity. Keep the dues coming in and promote YOUR Association. If for any reason you have let your dues lapse, there is no penalty for re-enlisting. Back dues are never collected, and whatever amount you send to the Treasurer will be credited to your new account. **DUES REMINDER - payment due 1 January 2005.**
2. **Web page.** The web page is still undergoing reconstruction. A web page editor/ constructor has been engaged to up-date and rearrange the Ozborn web site. Stay tuned.
3. **HELP WANTED.** The association database of members contains 61 entries with erroneous addresses. In addition, there are 163 entries of shipmates who have made contact with the Association, in one way or another, but have never taken any follow up action. Recording Secretary Bill Jones is seeking help to locate these AWOL members and convince them to sign up. Bill's addresses can be found in the adjacent column entitled "Officers of the Association." He will provide help and guidance to any volunteers for this worthwhile task. Give us a hand and keep the Association going.
4. **Military Records.** Earlier this year a story made the rounds to the effect that the National Personnel Records Center had undertaken a plan to transfer all military records in the archives to an automated electronic system and that all hard copies of the records would be destroyed unless they were notified to the contrary. This rumor is FALSE. Following is the official notification that was published by the Records Center.

Attention: There is a rumor circulating among veteran organizations that Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) at the National Personnel Records Center will be digitized and then destroyed. This rumor is NOT TRUE.

Neither the Department of Defense (DOD) nor the National Personnel Records Center intend to destroy any OMPFs stored at the Center. The purpose of any electronic scanning would be to reduce the handling of fragile records during the reference process or to reduce the time necessary to locate and answer an OMPF inquiry.

The National Archives and Records Administration preserves and protects OMPFs because they are permanently valuable records that document the essential evidence of military service for the veterans of our nation.

Should you wish to contact the Records Center you may write to: National Personnel Records Center, 9700 Page Ave., St. Louis, MO 63132-5100 or by email: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>

Some Goat Locker levity

Navy vs Marines

An old Navy Chief Petty Officer and a Marine Gunnery Sergeant, long since retired, were sitting in the local VFW sipping up the brew and arguing about who'd had the toughest career.

"I did thirty years in the Corps," the gunny declared proudly, "and fought in three wars. Fresh out of boot camp I hit the beach at Iwo, clawed my way up the blood-soaked sand and took out a pill box with one grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea where we pushed the

(Goat continued on page 4)

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MAIL CALL



From **Jim Helland** SN (1946) who lives in Mobile, AL.

09/15/2004 Hurricane IVAN struck at 1730. No electricity until 1300 on 09/21/2004 CST. Lost only the roof and it is patched and under contract. Could have been a lot worse. HSSIARFLAGS is back on line. Massive cleanup underway.

From **Arthur Estes** YN1 (51-52) from Venice, FL.

I reported to the Ozbourn as a YN2 in November 1951 while Captain Akers was the CO and LCDR Palmer was XO. I was the senior yeoman and remained on board until December 1952 when I was reassigned as a YN1 to the Staff, Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Force, Pacific as the Admiral's Writer. I greatly admired Harold Barr Palmer and found him to be a fine officer and a good XO.

Following are a couple of incidents that may be of interest. First, I really enjoyed reliving the USS Boxer incident in the last Fireball. I don't remember any of the names of the Yeomen who worked in the Ship's Office during my time on the Ozbourn but one was a YN3. One of the men we rescued from the Boxer turned out to be a high school classmate of this particular YN3 and they had a short "reunion" as a result of the fire, a strange coincidence indeed. The rescued seaman had his wallet with him and everything in it was soaked with seawater so we spread all his pictures, papers and money out on one of the desks in the ship's office so that it would dry out.

During our West Pac cruise in 1952, Captain William B. Fargo always had the crew go to General Quarters (GQ) for the dawn and dusk alert when we were in Korean or Japanese waters. As the senior Yeoman I did not stand Condition Three watches but all the other yeomen did. I was, however, the Captain's phone talker on the bridge during GQ. Because the other Yeoman stood Condition Watches I did most of the Ship's Office work including putting out the Plan of the Day (POD). Generally, the XO (LCDR Palmer) would give me the POD to type up after the dusk alert and then go to the Wardroom to watch the evening movie. I would type up the POD and he would sign it after the movie. I then had to run it off on the duplicating machine and then distribute it before I could hit the sack, usually well after midnight. Then it was up again at 0430 or 0500 for the dawn alert, after which I was in the office all day. To make a long story short, one morning one of the Sonar Operators (I slept in the bottom bunk just outside the Sonar Shack) woke me up and said, "The Captain wants you on the bridge, we're at GQ." I had slept through the GQ alarm! When I later explained to my boss, the Operations Officer, what had happened, he apparently talked to the XO because from then on LCDR Palmer made sure that he had the POD reviewed and signed before the evening movie. Thus, I could produce the POD, distribute it and still hit the sack before 2100 or 2200.

From my job on the staff at COMCDUDESAPAC I went to Officers Candidate School in Newport, RI and was commis-

sioned as Ensign in the Supply Corps. I retired in 1979 as a Commander having served just slightly over 32 years. I enjoyed my Naval career and have fond memories of the Ozbourn. I also served as Supply Officer on board the USS Halsey Powell (DD 686) and the USS Proteus (AS 19).

Following are two letters received from Charter Members **Charles O. Akers** and **Robert C. Whitten**. Both letters were addressed to President Rudy Boff.

I have received the testimonial signed by you as President of the U.S.S. Ozbourn Association recognizing me as a Charter Member of the Association and I sincerely appreciate it. It is impressive. I assure you that it will find a place of honor in my trophy room and will remind me through my remaining years of the shipmates who made the Ozbourn the finest destroyer to display the colors of this great nation.

It has been my great good fortune to be one of the Skippers of this superb ship and I will always treasure the association which I have enjoyed with the shipmates who have fought this ship through the conflicts which the country has endured and who gave the Ozbourn the reputation which it has earned.

Sincerely,

/s/ Charlie Akers

I want to express my appreciation to you and the Ozbourn Association for the appointment as Charter Member and the award of the very attractive certificate which now hangs in an honored place in my den. Service in the USS Ozbourn was the high point of my life. Aside from serving with two outstanding Commanding Officers and other shipmates from September 1950 to July 1952, I met the love of my life, Sally, during that service.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Bob Whitten

Note: A facsimile of the certificate appeared in the Summer issue of Fireball! Ed.

From **Jack Blonsick** ENS. (50-51)

While furloughed from Pan-American Grace Airways, (Panagra), I worked for the Martin Orlando company where I participated in the design of the ASM-N-7 Bullpup missile launched from attack aircraft. A year later, we made it nuclear and the damned thing worked. Vietnam pilots have told me that they could take out targets at a range of 34 miles from the launch site.

In early 1953, I went to work for North American Aviation and met the renowned Dutch Kindelberger. I worked on the design of the F-86H, the F100F, and the Vigilante (A-5), of which one is now retired to Sanford, a former NAS in Florida. Those were exciting days and we often worked 70 hour weeks to meet the schedules. The P-51 was designed in 90 days dur-

(Mail Call continued on page 4)

(Mail Call continued from page 3)

ing WWII to replace the British Spitfire. The engineers and workers sometimes slept at their work stations. My efforts to become a Production Test Pilot did not come to fruition and flying in the USNR wasn't fulfilling so I became a pilot in Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Peru and Ecuador. In 1949 we got our butts beaten when we went through the Shellback initiation as midshipmen in the USS Springfield (CL-66) in addition to getting dipped in oily waters when the evaporators broke down and we couldn't shower for over a week until we got to Panama. As a Panagra DC-3 F/O, we crossed the equator 3 to 5 times a day on flights from Quito to Barranquilla and a few other high altitude airports such as LaPaz, Bolivia with a field elevation of 13,404 feet. We definitely sucked oxygen while taxiing for takeoff. It was the F/O's job to check the fuel and I almost passed out climbing up to the wing tanks. At that altitude it took 1"45 for the takeoff roll to V-1 and V-2. We occasionally were shot at by the constant revolutions taking place in Santa Cruz, Boliva.

We definitely paid our dues for entrance into the ALPA _____.

(Goat Locker2 continued from page 2)

Commiss back up against the Chinese border, always under artillery fire and hand to hand combat. Finally as a Gunny I did three consecutive tours in Vietnam, humping through mud and razor grass, plagued all the way by snipers and mortar fire. In a fire fight, we'd fire until our ammo gave out and then charge the enemy with our bayonets."

The old Chief rolled his eyes skyward and said with a dismissive wave of his hand, "lucky bastard, all shore duty, huh?" _____

The New Navy

After an abortive attempt to disestablish the Warrant Officer ranks in the late 1950's, the subject has come full circle with the announcement that a new grade has been authorized. Henceforth, the senior grade in the community will be Chief Warrant Officer W-5 and the old grade of W-1 (pinstripe) has been eliminated. The stated purpose of the change is to "retain the very best technical leadership for the Navy." Can an O-12 or E-11 be far behind???

OZBOURN SHIP'S STORE

OPEN 24 HOURS

Rudy Boff, Proprietor



CAP, Cotton Twill
Dark Navy color with Brilliant Gold letters and destroyer silhouette; Plain black leather closure
One size fits all
Item # C01
\$14. ea

With "Korea" embroidered on back: Item # C01K - \$15. ea
With "Vietnam" embroidered on back: Item # C01V- \$15. ea



MUG, coffee 11 oz.
Embossed with Ozboourn patch design and destroyer silhouette

Item # M01
\$8 ea., 2 for \$12/ 6 for \$30



PATCH, fabric

Item # P01
Original design

\$6. ea



Item # P02
Revised



FRAME, license plate

Item # F01

\$5. ea

- Microfiber Jacket, fleece lined and water repellent \$90.
- Twill Jacket, full zip front and fully lined \$80.
- Windbreaker, full zip front with mesh lined body \$60.
- Jerzees Super Sweatshirt, many colors \$40.
- T-shirts, both long and short sleeve \$35 and \$20.

All items have ships name and hull number embroidered in Gold letters.
These items are special order— Contact the store manager



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for the publication of his story in the Fireball!

The story begins with recall to naval service in 1950, assignment to the Ozbourn and takes us through the varied and interesting assignments of great responsibility he served in prior to retirement in 1966. This is Barr's own story, told in his own words, condensed because of space limitations.

The family had a rather grim time of it after I was recalled to active duty. I was already in San Diego enrolled in a Prospective CO/XO refresher course and Marge had to handle all the details of the move from Oregon with the children. I located a house in Kensington and we camped out there until the furniture arrived. What a relief it was to be together for Christmas and Marge did a great job decorating and making the place livable. My schooling ended and I had orders to head for Japan and the Ozbourn, riding in the destroyer tender Prairie. I drew advanced pay and gave it to Marge who was standing on the pier with the children shortly before the ship sailed.

Upon arrival in Sasebo I moved to the BOQ and had my first experience ashore in postwar Japan. The XO of the Prairie invited me back aboard for lunch and dinner a couple of times which was very thoughtful of him. "Messing" in the BOQ was not too good.



Underway replenishing operations

In a short time I received orders to board the tanker Passumpsic for transfer to the Ozbourn, my permanent duty station. The tanker was a beautifully big and comfortably riding ship. I met the skipper, Frank Winant, to whom I would also report to for duty later the following year in a new duty station. After an overnight sailing we joined Task Force 77 to provide fuel and provisions to the ships of the fleet. The seas were too heavy for personnel transfer and all I could do was watch the Ozbourn plow through the heavy seas and wave to the crew. My new ship looked wonderful and the crew appeared to know what they were doing. I knew the XO I was to relieve was anxious for me to report aboard as I had received a letter from him before I left San Diego. I returned to Sasebo with the tanker and returned to the BOQ. Four days later I boarded the Passumpsic for another try at boarding the Ozbourn and this time I finally arrived. The date was 13 February 1951.

The seas were not quite as heavy but high enough that I

nearly took on "green water" transferring as Ozbourn pitched and yawed badly when I was halfway across on the highline. After meeting the XO and my gear was on board I went to the bridge where I met the Commanding Officer, Cdr. Charles "Charlie" O. Akers. He was wearing foul weather gear and all I could see of him was a couple of eyes peering out of his parka hood. The temperature was just above freezing and the wind chill factor had to be around zero. My new skipper welcomed me and very simply said I would be responsible for the internal administration of the ship and he would handle the operational aspects. I said that was fine with me and that was all that was said to me about my duties for the duration of my tour on the ship. From this first meeting the two of us seemed to be on the same wavelength and we are still close friends to this day.

The XO I was to relieve could not get off the ship fast enough. Later, several ships officers would infer that they also could not wait until he left. To give just an idea of this officer, when I visited COMCRUDESPEC staff in San Diego prior to heading for the ship, one of the staff officers told me that Ozbourn was not making required reports, or if they did they were always late. He asked me if I would look into the matter when I took over as XO. After assuming the duties as XO I checked with the senior yeoman, YN1 Garcia, who told me that the previous XO hated paperwork, especially with a war going on, so he would pick up the incoming administrative mail from the ship's office and en-route to his cabin he would just toss it over the side. That answered the question and the problem was easy to solve.

The ship had a full complement of officers on board and until the XO departed I slept in a temporary bunk in the Junior Officers bunkroom where I got to know Ensigns Pete Cole and Charles Jarrett. Both were fine young men. Later Pete would write a book, "Korea Remembered", which I have in my library and will refer to often. Ozbourn was the flagship of COMDESDIV 112, Capt. Bernard "Brute" Roeder, so once again, I am XO of a ship with the flag aboard and the CO and XO are bumped down, as far as our cabins are concerned.

After replenishing, Ozbourn (whose radio call sign was Fireball), was detached from TF 77 and ordered to join TF 95 which would enter Wonsan Harbor to commence the bombardment of the port. It was called the "siege of Wonsan Harbor." During the previous year, U.S. and ROK forces had been forced to leave the area when the Chinese Communist army took over on their drive south. Since I was not yet XO and had no real duties assigned, as a supernumerary, I spent most of my time in the Combat Information Center (CIC) to observe. The XO's duty was to send evaluated data to the CO on the bridge. Sometimes there is a conflict when an XO's battle station is in CIC and he is also the Navigator. At that point in time and with the state of the art then in existence, one person could not do both jobs from the CIC. My one recollection of CIC was that of utter noise. Overhead speakers were spouting various announcements and crewmembers were talking back and forth. The CIC Officer was Jerome Soloman, a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. He appeared to be in total charge and aware of each transmission. It took me a couple of days before I could understand the "lingo" of CIC.

(Palmer continued on page 6)

(Palmer continued from page 5)

Pete Cole, in his book, mentions my arrival on the ship and our move to Wonsan on 16 February so I will not retell it here except to say that no two people ever see the same incident in exactly the same way. During the action in which we were taken under fire by shore batteries I was still in the process of relieving as XO and did not have any active part in the proceedings. I soon found out that CIC was an uncomfortable location for me to be in, a cubicle with no way to see out. I was used to seeing the action from the bridge of my previous ships and getting a real feel for what is going on around me and being able to do something about it if required. WWII had taught me that aboard ship there is no one place safer than another. Maybe one could hide from view but one cannot get away from danger. On this particular day the ship suffered two direct hits, several near misses and the Mk 56 Gun Director was hit and rendered useless. Nevertheless, we stayed in the harbor until 26 February when we departed for Sasebo and a long overdue repair period alongside the tender Prairie.

While coming alongside the tender in Sasebo an incident occurred that showed the mettle of my new skipper. Charlie Akers was a superb ship handler and always maneuvered his ship with aplomb and precision. While approaching the mooring the Commodore got nervous and thought maybe Charlie should slow down. Charlie told him he could leave the bridge if he wished. I do not recall if the Commodore cleared the bridge or not but the point is that a commanding officer of a ship is responsible for his own actions and it is not for the Commodore to tell a CO how to handle his ship. I would learn ship handling from a consummate professional. I always regarded myself as a good ship handler; however, I was a little more cautious than Charlie.

There was another interesting thing that happened alongside the Prairie. All ships maintain files of work orders for repairs at the next overhaul or period alongside the tender. The XO of the tender and XO of the ship requiring repair act as heads of their respective officers at an arrival conference. Ozbourn had been in the forward area for almost 7 months so I told our officers to bring all their work orders regardless of priority and we would see what happened. My good friend Cdr. Daunis from the Prairie was at the meeting with his repair officers and after exchanging pleasantries we got down to work. We had two things going for us. One was that the tender was fresh from the states and was ready to service destroyers. The other thing was that we were her first ship alongside on this tour that had sustained battle damage. Things went smoothly and we got almost everything accomplished that was requested. Cdr. Daunis really prodded his repair department people if they showed any reluctance to do the work. The new XO of "Fireball" gained respect from the department heads early on as a result.

It was around this time that the "stay 'till the cows come home" incident took place. Pete Cole describes it very vividly in his book and I have a bit different recollection regarding the matter but the essence of the story is the same. One night

after closing up the Sasebo Officers club several ships officers and the Commodore returned to the ship a little out of sorts. The Commodore retired to his cabin to check the incoming radio traffic, some not directed to him, and read a message from ComSeventhFleet begging his immediate superior for more destroyers. Our fearless leader sent off a message to the Fleet Commander to the effect that he had four "small boys" who would stay 'till the cows come home." This in spite of the fact that the division was already being held longer than the normal rotation. Naturally the fleet commander accepted the offer post haste and the "cows come home" phrase was born. Sailors, being an ingenious lot, quickly picked up on the phrase and soon generated a flag with a blue field that displayed a cows udder with four teats, each emblazoned with the hull numbers of the four ships in the Division and COM-DESDIV 112 in large lettering across the top. When the division was finally relieved, enroute to CONUS we stopped in Pearl Harbor for fuel. Ozbourn entered the harbor first and Hollister (a ship in our division) was berthed directly behind us. When the in port flags were raised Hollister broke out the "cows" flag and hoisted it to the truck. I was on the bridge at this time and the Commodore was really fuming when he noticed it. I later found out that the Hollister skipper got a dressing down from the Commodore but everyone else in the division got much glee from the incident.

On arrival in San Diego in April the ship commenced a stand down period so that the officers and crew could get some well deserved leave and liberty. Those on board had a period to relax a bit but we maintained the in port watch and did little ship's work except for housekeeping duties. Charlie went on leave and I held down the fort, so to speak, but was able to get home every night.

Our division made a month long deployment to the Hawaiian Islands to act as Ready Duty division and we managed to get plenty of liberty. On return to San Diego there was another leave period and then we were scheduled for urgent repair work at Mare Island Navy Yard. Out of the blue, we received orders to proceed immediately which proved to be troublesome as a good part of the crew was on leave. We were short of officers to stand deck watches and barely enough engineering types to get the ship underway. I calculated that there was no way for us to make the ordered port time at Mare Island if we proceeded at the customary fleet speed of 16 knots so Charlie told me to set the speed of advance to get us there on time. It was a somewhat hairy trip up through the Channel Islands at 25 knots with fog and fishing boats dogging us the entire way. I had my hands full keeping on the shortest courses and we made it right on time, the yard workers were waiting for us and we went directly into dry dock.

With the repairs completed and after a stop-over at the ammunition depot at Port Chicago we were at sea again for return to San Diego. While there, the ship went through some additional training and DESDIV 112 was again ordered to

(Palmer continued on page 7)



Haze Gray and Underway!

(Palmer continued from page 6)

Pearl Harbor to assume duties as the Ready Duty division. It was a rather uneventful period and again all hands took advantage of the liberal liberty that was given. Armed Forces Day found us in Hilo where the locals provided us with a splendid time. The officers were invited to the Hilo Country Club for a brunch. The Commodore and Charlie were having a grand time swapping sea stories and martinis and I left to be sure the ship was ready for a 1600 departure. When departure time came, all hands were on board except for the two senior officers. With barely five minutes to go, a sedan pulled up to the gangway and our two seniors literally poured themselves out onto the dock. As I ordered all lines singled up Charlie called the bridge and told me to take the ship to sea and to Pearl Harbor, which I did. I saw neither of them until we reached Pearl Harbor the following morning. In November, after returning to San Diego we received orders to proceed to Hunters Point Naval Shipyard in San Francisco for a major overhaul. The ship was overdue for a lot of updating and retrofitting.

Marge didn't want to stay in San Diego with the children so when I got to the shipyard I found quarters for us in a Quonset hut. We camped out again doing the best we could with what we had. A ship in dry dock and in overhaul is a mess and living conditions are not good. Charlie left on leave to San Diego and I kept things moving along in the shipyard. Most of the officers were on leave which was well deserved because Ozbourn had a long difficult deployment ahead. New officers and men arrived almost daily and we were able to work them into the ship's company.

On the Sunday after Christmas 1951, I was at home with the family at the Quonset. In the afternoon a messenger came from the ship, handed me a slip of paper and saying the officer of the deck thought I would be interested in the accompanying message. It was a dispatch set of orders, transferring me immediately from Ozbourn to report for duty to the Commanding General, Special Weapons Center, Kirtland AFB in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I was flabbergasted and thought it must be an error of some kind. I immediately called Charlie in San Diego to discuss the matter and he agreed that there must be an error somewhere and that he would look into the matter. Next day he called back to say that the orders were valid and that he would return to the ship the next day. The "immediate" designation on my orders meant that I was to report without delay so within a couple of days we were packed up and on the way to New Mexico. I had no clue as to what might lay ahead.

To be continued: "My first insight to the Atomic World"

Some Tin Can Miscellany

U.S.S. Callaghan (DD 792) of the Fletcher class was the last United States destroyer to be sunk during WWII. During the night of 28-29 July 1945 while awaiting relief on the picket line off Okinawa by U.S.S. Laws (DD 558), a Japanese kamikaze aircraft slipped through the screen and crashed into the after deck house. The aircraft's bomb detonated in the after engine room and the magazines for the number 3 and 4 five inch guns exploded. Just two hours later the ship sank taking 47 men down with her.

THE SHIPS EMBLEM CONTEST & THE SHIZURA HOTEL

Bill Jones came aboard the Ozbourn in June of 1951 as a radarman striker. He later became an RD3. This is his story of a 72 spent in an R&R facility in Japan.

"It was early October of 1952 and we were anchored in Yokosuka. An announcement was circulated around the ship saying the Ozbourn needed an official emblem and a contest would be conducted involving all the enlisted men on board. They would submit designs of a proposed ship's emblem. The artist whose design was chosen would be granted a special R&R liberty for himself and one friend at the Shizura Hotel in a town called Numazu, about an hours train ride south of Yokosuka. The Shizura Hotel was a famous R&R spot for military personnel, many of whom had been in combat.

I had noticed that Jesse Hover had a natural talent for drawing and art in general which later was to become his life's career. We surmised that if we created enough entries into this emblem contest we would have a very good chance of winning. So we set our plan into action. I would help him dream up the designs and he would lay them out, first as a sketch, then with some modifications as a finished colored design on a sheet of typing paper. Between the two of us it was easy to think up various subjects as we continued to stockpile our entries. Finally, when the deadline for the contest approached, we submitted our stack of entries which probably totaled a dozen and a half. Ours plus the other entries were on display in the mess hall to be judged. As anticipated, ours far outnumbered all the other entries combined. With Hover's artistic touch, the drawings we submitted were done in greater detail and with greater precision. The judging took place and not to our surprise we won! So we were set and on our way to the Shizura Hotel at the very next weekend opportunity.



Bill Jones and his dinghy!

Within a weekend or two we were given a seventy-two hour liberty and the necessary paperwork allowing us to register and stay at the Shizura Hotel without having to pay a dime! To get there we caught the train heading south to the town of Numazu and from the station there an easy rickshaw ride to the hotel. It was a wonderful small hotel situated right on the beach. The water, although a part of the ocean was sheltered by an inlet, hence there were no waves or breakers. There were picnic tables, boats to rent including sailboats, a nice dining room and comfortable individual rooms. This was definitely for R&R.

We quickly settled in and had a "cool one" out on the deck by the water. A bonus was the very nice looking Japanese girls who served us in the dining room. We were extraordinarily pleased with the Japanese-style baths there. They were much larger and deeper than an American bathtub. Although these are typically communal baths for the Japanese, these particular ones at the Shizura were reserved for the military guests. At least a couple of times during that weekend I

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The Stars and Stripes Forever

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found myself relaxing in one of these baths, up to my neck in hot water—literally speaking—and enjoying it to the fullest. Hover took his turn as well.

We rented sailboats and sailed the waters of the bay and rowboats to paddle around in. There were always a great number of Japanese children around ready to sell us souvenirs if we were willing to bargain. Hover seemed to be good at that. I was busy snapping pictures.

We got to know two of the waitresses particularly well. Hover always had a way of attracting the girls so it wasn't long before we were getting special treatment with the service in the dining room—extra attention, extra drinks and lots of accompanying giggles. Hover took a liking to a girl named Peggy, and I thought Norma was attractive. The Shizura had strict rules about their girls fraternizing with the military personnel who were staying there. In spite of that ruling, we still managed to receive a lot of extra attention.

Our weekend at the hotel was over all too quickly and we returned to the Ozborn. We were happy to discover we rated liberty again that very next weekend. This would normally not have been the case but our stay at the Shizura was not to be counted as regular liberty.



Bernardino, Jones and Hover on R&R

That next weekend we were on our way on the train again, heading for Numazu and the Shizura Hotel. This time a couple of other guys from the “O” Division came along. I guess their curiosity was too much having heard of our previous weekend. One guy who came with us this second weekend was Dan Bernardino, a radioman.

Using Hover's persistence, he and I were able to convince Peggy and Norma to go out to dinner at a different Japanese restaurant away from the hotel. That was the only way we could actually carry on much of a conversation with the girls as back at the Shizura they were always on duty and scrutinized by their Japanese boss. The girls chose the restaurant, and using a taxi, we arrived there and were ushered upstairs to this very quaint and authentic Japanese restaurant. The meal was also authentic Japanese and it was obvious the girls knew the manager. We had a great time; the girls could now talk, laugh and giggle without fear of being reprimanded by a boss. It was a very nice evening. This weekend also went by very quickly. We went to the Shizura Hotel one more time during our stay in Japan. It was a truly delightful place and certainly one of the most enjoyable experiences I had in Japan.”