

USS SHIELDS DD-596 Reunion Association

Newsletter April 2007

Jene P. Cain
Editor

This Newsletter Sent to 1,100 Former Crew Members, Families & Guests

2007 All Era Reunion September 9-13, 2007 in Branson, Missouri



Our Destination will be the Grand Plaza Hotel

The hotel is located in the heart of Branson just off Highway 76 Country Boulevard. It overlooks the breathtaking Ozark Mountains. The location is within walking distance to some of Branson's biggest stars, as well as outlet shopping.

Please see the registration and information sheets sent with your January 2007 mail out for the details. **Pam Brown** at **Gatherings Plus** will be handling all the hotel reservations and registrations for activities. Contact her at 417-338-4048 or pamb@interlinc.net for questions. The reunion website is: <http://www.reunionproregistration.com/ussshields.htm> At this site, you can see who has registered, print a copy of the registration form and more.

Dues for 2007 Due

Bravo Zulu shipmates! Our dues are running well ahead of last year at this time, thanks to all who have sent in checks. Your dues support the printing and postage for newsletters and they cover the expenses of locating shipmates and maintaining the master contact list.

Your dues do not support reunion activities; these activities are self-sustaining. All board members and friends of the board volunteer; no one receives compensation in the Association. If you have not paid, please complete the dues form in the January 2007 mail out. Don't forget to note your birth date, include your check and drop it in the mail.

Eldest Living Shipmates

Below is a list prepared by Jim Durough of the eldest living officers and enlisted shipmates. If Jim missed you please contact him with your birth date.

Officers

Gardner, Don W., LTJG, 44-45, 4-14-1912
Weidman, John H., LTJG, 45, 3-15-1915
Schweizer, Jack R., CDR, 49-50, 8-27-1915
McDaniel, George T., LCDR, 45, 5-21-1916
Hoblitzell, Paul C., LTJG, 44-45, 1916
Metze, George M., LCDR, 52-54, 1916
Jepsen, Edward P., LT, 50, 3-17-1917
Teeters, David R., LT, 49-50, 4-11-1918
Robinson, Jack W., LTJG, 51-52, 10-28-1918
Goodell, Trenor F., ENS, 44-45, 12-29-1918
Fredell, Erling W., LT, 49, 12-1918

Enlisted

Sabasta, Tony, MM2, 45, 3-20-1917
Hafner, Ben L., SC3, 44-45, 1-1917
Trusty, Clinton N., SK1, 57-58, 1-1918
Komoroski, Clement J., S1, 45, 10-2-1919
Reifsnnyder, Robert A., FC3, 44-45, 5-21-1920
Cromer, Harold E., WT1, 44-45, 1920
Groux, Robert H., SFC, 44-45, 1920
Kowalski, Arthur A., BMC, 52-55, 1920
Phelps, Robert W., TM1, 44-46, 5-3-1921
Grandjean, James J., QM2, 50-52, 12-11-1921
Hendrickson, Jack M., MM2, 45-46, 1921
Purdy, William V., WT1, 45-46, 1921



Recently Passed Shipmates

We received notification since publishing our last newsletter, of the following former shipmate's passing:

Baird, Richard V., ETSN, 50
Brendle, Clyde E., SF2, 58-61
Broyard, Calvin G., SN, 50
Dagenais, Edmund R., ENFN, 55-58
Handchen, Harold L., FC1, 44-45
Holtke, Lyle F., SN, 51-52
Lumbert, Albert W., SO2, 44-45
Olsen, Harry O., MM2, 50-52
Skoglund, Paul D., GM2, 70-72
Smolich, George R., SN, 50-51
Van Winkle, Charles F., MM1, 44-46

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Note: Ed Velasquez and Bob Lamphere handle the ship's store. If you need to have a dues form re-mailed contact Jim Dorough.

Please Keep Your Contact Information Up to Date

After every mail out 12-15 letters marked undeliverable are returned to Bob Carl. That requires long distance calls and extra postage to re-mail to the new address. This takes additional time and money. Please, when you put in your change of address at the post office contact Jim Dorough with the address change as well. This simple step on your part will save further cost and time. Thank you to all our shipmates who have been updating their information.

Number of Shipmates by State from the Mail Out List

Jim Dorough did a breakdown of where shipmates live and the table below shows those results.

AK	3	MS	6
AL	28	MT	11
AR	25	NC	24
AZ	44	ND	3
CA	210	NE	12
CO	23	NH	6
CT	8	NJ	11
DC	1	NM	20
DE	2	NV	23
Fiji Islands	1	NY	21
FL	50	OH	26
GA	25	OK	26
IA	22	OR	41
ID	13	PA	16
IL	30	RI	2
IN	13	SC	22
KS	16	SD	3
KY	13	TN	15
LA	16	TX	68
MA	4	UT	15
MD	5	VA	23
ME	4	WA	61
MI	35	WI	18
MN	26	WV	7
MO	26	WY	3



SEA STORIES

The following was submitted by
Alex Leondis, LTJG, 52-55

The 1955 Grounding of USS Shields (Est. 15 Mar 1955)

The engineers got up around 0400 hrs, to fire up the boilers and get under way for an anti-submarine exercise (drill) to test how well the ship and crew could perform in accordance with the operation order (Op Order).

When the sun came up, it was a beautiful sunny day in Pearl Harbor. A few miles south, on the open sea, there was a gentle sea with mild winds. These comments are written about fifty years later mostly by memory but with some notes from 1955. These remarks are written mostly by Alex Leondis, Engineer Officer and others listed here: Bill (W.C.) Hansen, BT Petty Officer; Nat Hawks, Navigator.

Getting underway and proceeding to the designated area were without incident. The drill was intended to cause no damage to any vessel or personnel and non-fragmentation hand grenades were used to simulate the explosion of depth charges.

The drill went fairly well for all personnel except for Capt. Winters who was displeased with the failure to get any report from the Submarine of a simulated direct hit. At the conclusion of the drill, the Capt. told the Exec. (LCDR Preston Hoggard) to call a meeting in the wardroom, of all officers not actually on watch, to discuss the results of the drill and to emphasize the reasons why the drill was a failure and to take corrective action (or words to that effect). The Capt. made sure that the course was set for the entrance of Pearl Harbor and went to his sea cabin, behind the bridge to get a few minutes rest.

The word was passed over the squawk box (public address system) and all the officers, except for the Capt., the OOD, the Junior OOD and the CIC watch officer were assembled in the wardroom (Compartment (Compt.) A-102L AC) for the critique. The Exec. explained that the Capt. felt that we did not do a good job and that we must work on the problems so that next time the Capt. would be better pleased. (This is by memory.) Then the ASW Officer started to explain that there were many reports from the submarine that the detonation was reported to be close to 100 yards aft of the sub and that was what we were

supposed to do. He felt that all personnel did a good job. Then the Exec. explained that he had also read the Op Order and knew that the targeted position was a designated spot aft of the sub and that what the ASW Officer said was true. But the Capt. was still displeased, so lets get down to what we must do to finish this critique. Then another officer said, why didn't you simply tell the Capt. that the Op Order said the target was aft of the sub so that he would understand we did the drill correctly? Then the Exec. said that he tried but the Capt. did not want to listen to more about the drill at this time and wanted to get ready for entering port. So the critique continued for about twenty minutes with the same points made over and over again with the same result until the squawk box called away the "Special Sea and Anchor Detail." Bill Hansen remembered that the time was about 1600 hours.

At that time the Capt. put on his tie and cap and went out to the bridge. At or about that time the Capt. saw Chief Sanford (QMC) and told the Chief that his shirt and tie were not clean and that he should go below and put on a clean shirt and tie. Then the Chief retired to the CPO mess room to get a cup of coffee and avoid causing the Capt. any further displeasure. The Chief was not on watch and did not feel that he was needed to help, since there were enough people on the bridge without him.

When Mr. Hawks arrived on the bridge, he started to determine the ship's position as he was concerned about whether or not the position was correct.

About that time the Capt. asked the signalmen on the bridge to ask for information about the Capt. of a nearby large navy vessel, which I believe was an aircraft carrier. The reply from the other large vessel was that you are standing into bad water, or something similar.

Then Mr. Hawks had just determined that the ship was indeed in bad water and started a change of course when the ship hit Tripod Reef while steaming at about 20 knots on a course close to north.

I was on watch in the After Engine Room with the normal crew on the port engine throttle. When the ship hit the reef, I saw the main steam line, just above the throttle-man's head move, due to the impact, about eight inches up and down. I told the men in the engine room that we must stay away from the joints in the steam line since we might get burned and to close the throttle which is the normal procedure in case of severe vibration or enough noise to indicate a major derangement of the engine. We called the other engine room to insure that they were closing Nr. 1 throttle, and the fire rooms had reduced the fire

under the boilers. Then I asked one of the crew to check for any leak of the lubrication oil system, since we had some trouble with a leak which had been recently repaired and I was concerned that we could get burned with the hot oil. Next I opened the hatch on the main deck and looked at the water near the starboard side of the ship. I saw the wake of our own ship moving from aft to forward and could feel the ship hitting something. I presumed that we hit the ground. We were not hard aground, but were bouncing on the reef.

At the time of the grounding, Bill Hansen was getting something to eat (chow-down) in the forward mess hall (Compt. A-304L). Bill was the lead Petty Officer in charge of the After Fire Room. He remembered that the Coke machine near him had jumped up about two feet above the deck at the time of the collision. At that time Hansen left his food and ran to his Fire Room to tend to the hot boiler.

I sent word to the other fire rooms to watch the condition of the boilers and to stand-by for further information about the engines, as I was going to the bridge to see what needed to be done.

I ran up the port side ladder to the bridge and after a minute or so got to the Capt. to discuss what to do. Capt. Winters was not crying, but there were tears running down his face. He told me that he wanted to back down to see if we could get off the rocks. I told the Capt. that it would be better to try to back down using only the port screw since the starboard shaft was much longer and would be in greater danger if it were damaged. The Capt. agreed so I called the engine rooms to make the needed arrangement and the port screw started slowly backing. It became clear shortly that all we were going to do was to walk the stern of our ship to the starboard side as the screw was lifting the stern and then dropping it as the blades of the screw went below the ship. This continued for several seconds as the Capt. was watching. It seemed to be an eternity before the Capt. said that this will not help; secure the engines and we will wait for a sea going tug to pull us off. I said "Aye Capt." and went down below to the engine rooms to watch the engines being secured, but keeping the auxiliaries on-line.

A while later the tug arrived and the deck crew made fast a line to pull us off. It went slowly for a time but gradually there was less contact and then we were free. I don't remember exactly how we cared for the turbines that were badly treated due to the sudden stop and the warping of hot rotors without the jacking gear. When we were in good water we engaged the jacking gear and kept the lube oil running to minimize damage to the gears. As I remember, the turbine wheels were

rubbing for a while but seemed free after several minutes.

A day or so later we were placed in dry dock and were able to examine the damage to the ship's bottom. Lt. Lloyd Miller was our first engineering officer for the Korean War. I was taught a great deal about the ship and how to deal with the problems that can happen with a ship by Mr. Miller. He made sure that I knew how to read the BuShips Manuals and how to comply with these regulations. So I read the necessary information that I must write, and did the best that I could. Below is a copy of my first rough statement: (The Smooth Log contains the final version).

"17 MAR 1955 - (To be copied into Engineering Log).

The Engineer Officer, having made an inspection of the underwater part of the ship, on docking 17 Mar 1955, in compliance with BuShips Manual, Ch. 7, made the following report:

The sonar dome was smashed upward, aft, and to port. The metal sound dome skirt and the ships structure to which it bolts appeared undamaged. The sonar transducer was forced upward into the transducer shaft. The transducer itself was leaking. The underwater telephone transducer was bent aft and was cut off just below the upper flange. The lower part was missing. The underwater log sword arm was bent well aft and slightly to starboard.

Two rivets were found to be leaking oil from C-1-F on port side of keel. Both shafts, struts, and the rudder appeared to be undamaged. Some paint was scraped from the rudder on both sides at the bottom.

The port propeller was the more severely damaged and had sections up to about 2 feet in radius missing from the blades. The maximum thickness of the blades, where broken, was 2.25 inches. Some remaining parts of the blades were bent forward and some aft. The starboard propeller had sections up to 4 inches in radius missing. The maximum thickness of the blades where broken was 0.75 inch. The bending of the blades was mostly forward, but some small sections were bent aft.

The hull appeared undamaged except for some small rivet leaks noted above."

The above report was signed by A. F. Leondis, LTJG, Engr. Officer.

That is the end of this Rough Log entry. As I read this fifty years later, I believe that something was incorrectly copied, in that the underwater log sword arm was bent well to starboard and slightly aft.

We were told that BuShips decided that the damaged parts of the ship would be repaired or replaced and that we should present the CSMP

(Current Ships Maintenance Program) so that any additional needed work could be done while we were laid-up in dry dock.

In addition to several small items, we requested that the After Engine Room (Nr. 2) main condenser be examined to replace the eroded tubes which had recently caused a significant loss of vacuum and were plugged to stop the leak. This leak was also a loss of drinking (or distilled) water, because of the feed water lost due to excess salt.

We also requested that one of the steam injection nozzles, which was leaking, on the number two high pressure turbine be repaired to prevent the need for astern power; simply to stop the engine when the engine order indicator called for "Stop".

When the condenser was opened, we found several pieces of coral rock that we thought came from Tripod Reef. This was shown to Capt. Winters who then expressed his displeasure in finding the rocks.

The next night, I was awakened by the Engineering Messenger when the Petty Officer on watch in the After Eng. Room told the messenger to tell me that the Yard personnel had started to take apart the Nr. 2 high pressure turbine because they had dropped a tool into the turbine. I quickly pulled on some khakis and ran to the Engine Room to talk to the yard workman who felt very badly and explained that it was his mistake and that he had been trying for several hours to remove the wrench by using a permanent magnet connected to a wire rod, but decided he could not get it out. He showed me that the permanent magnet could not be maneuvered past the shaft and the turbine blades so that then he told his foreman, the only alternative was to open the turbine casing in order to remove the wrench. The worst part about this, in my opinion, was that they would never be able to put all the asbestos insulation back in place and that they would ask the ships crew (the engineers) to do all that dirty work. I then told the workmen from the Yard to give me a few hours to see if I could get the wrench out using an electro magnet. The Yard people decided to let me have a little time and see what the ship's crew could do.

At that time, as I remember, our shipmates were getting up anyway, so I asked the messenger to locate P.O. Thompson, the Internal Communication (IC) Electrician, most of the Repair Division and the Assistant Engineering Officer LTJG Joe Heimbach. Thompson was a remarkable person in that he knew where everything was stored and he could accomplish a small miracle in a short time. I asked him to find a spare part telephone relay with a small size and a strong coil with an iron armature so that we could make an electro magnet on the end of a

flexible twin wire to pull out the lost wrench. After a few questions, Thompson knew just what we needed. Then I asked Mr. Heimbach to talk to the electricians and get them to open up the degaussing control panel which was near the high pressure turbine and set up a jury rig connection to drive the electro magnet that Thompson was getting and also fire up the direct current for the degaussing system. Next I told the rest of the electricians to locate a wire that is long enough to reach this distance and include a standard lamp socket in series so that they could figure the size of lamp (light bulb) needed to act as a ballast, since the direct current could over heat the coil and burn it out. I told our crew that the lamp would act as a switch by screwing the lamp in to turn on and screwing out to turn off. Then we would also know if the current was working.

I don't remember the size of the lamp that Thompson wanted, but it worked like a charm and gave off a glow when turned on. To lower the magnet, the power needed to be off, or else the magnet would stick to the blades and never go down. Everyone stood clear when the electricians were ready and Mr. Heimbach held the socket and lamp. I climbed on top of the open steam manifold nozzle (with all pockets empty) and lowered the magnet down. After about 5 seconds (which seemed like an hour) the magnet clattered some and reached the bottom. I told Mr. Heimbach "power on" and the lamp started to glow. Then I started pulling the wire and after some resistance the magnet came up, but no wrench.

Our hearts fell, but I called "power off" and lowered the magnet on the end of the wire the second time. We heard the same clattering as the magnet touched the blades and the shaft. Thank God that we were not under way as this was fairly easy with our good old Ship on solid ground. At the bottom I called "power on" and the glow came again. Then there was another endless wait as the rig was slowly raised, inch after inch. Then I could see it coming. The lost wrench was almost in reach. After a few more inches the wrench was clear of the nozzle block and I made the final grab and got it! I remember that I asked the workman at this time "Is this the wrench that was dropped?" He said "Yes." Then I asked him "Is that the only thing that was dropped in the turbine?" And again he said "Yes." Then I told him that the wrench will be returned to you in a short time, please finish with the nozzle, but I need to tell the Capt. that we got the wrench and let him see it. (It was a small tee wrench, perhaps four inches wide and about the same length.) I told my crew "thank you for a job well done" and please put everything back in order, as we will not disassemble the turbine today.

I took the wrench and magnet assembly to the Captain and Commodore R. H. Holmes

(of Destroyer Division 172) who was in the Captain's Quarters and told them this story. They were greatly pleased. I believe that was the only time that I had a face to face contact with the Commodore.

It was a little later, in the passage way near the officers staterooms (Compt. A-205L) that four of the younger officers told me that they thought that the Capt. would be able to find an excuse so that he would not be accused of being at fault for running the ship aground. After some discussion I said that the grounding of a ship is an offense that no navy captain can explain away and as a direct result, Capt. Winters will be removed, perhaps within a month. The younger officers disagreed and to make a point of this issue, we made a wager that the looser(s) would buy a bottle of wine for the winner(s) at a good restaurant when we get to a good port.

Well, a few days later there was a Court-Martial held for the officers who were involved in the grounding. I was not in attendance except for a short time when I was told to enter the wardroom and testify for the assembled Court. After asking who I was, an officer asked "What was the condition of the engines of the Shields prior to the grounding?" I answered "Good." Then the officer said "Thank you, you are excused." I had been thinking before attending the Court, that I could not say Excellent, because of the problems with the engines that needed repairs, but it was not the time to mention that.

A letter was given to me on or about 3 April 1955, which reads:

U. S. S. SHIELDS (DD 596) DD596/KE-ln
C/O FLEET POST OFFICE P15
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA Serial: 202
3 April 1955

From: Commanding Officer, U.S.S. SHIELDS
(DD 596)
To: LTJG A. F. LEONDIS, 510738/1105, USNR
Subj: Commendations

1. During this ship's emergency shipyard availability in Pearl Harbor, T.H., from 17 March 1955 to 23 March 1955, your prompt inventive and expeditious action in removing foreign matter from the number 2 high pressure turbine was the major factor in the ship's being able to meet its current operating schedule outside CONUS. In addition, your action saved the United States Government and the Navy Department uncountable man hours, money, and material.

2. For such action, you are hereby commended.

/S/ R. H. HOLMES
(end of letter)

For an unknown reason, I do not remember what happened during the next few weeks, but I

remember getting a good dinner and a free toast to the Shields to pay off the wager, with one of the young men. I think it was in Yokosuka, but not too sure.

The following was submitted by Philip E. Riley S1C '44-'45 With assist from George Belcher, COL, MC, USAFRRet

I was a member of the Pre-Commissioning Detail and a "Plank Owner" of the Shields, DD 596. Somewhere along the way in San Francisco Bremerton, or San Diego I had bought a pair of Ocarinas I carried along in my "ditty bag". There wasn't much time to fool around with them while we were on "Shakedown", but after we headed out into the Pacific and were standing sunrise and sunset alerts another member of the signal gang and I learned to play them.

There were often times in the evening when we had an audience gathered around the flag bags waiting to go to their battle stations on or near the bridge The captain's sea cabin was within ear shot of our performances; and, as it turned out later, he must also have been a listener.

Late in the war (probably after VJ Day), we were operating with the aircraft carrier Boxer and were taking on fuel from a tanker while underway. The Boxer was alongside the tanker on her (the Boxer's) starboard side. The Shields was alongside on our port side. Midway through the fueling operation the Boxer's band came out on the flight deck to serenade us Captain Madden was sitting in the steel chair he had had welded to the bulkhead on the port side of the bridge.

After hearing the band for a minute or two he bounced out on the deck and declared, "I'll be damned if I will be outdone by an aircraft carrier, break out the "sweet potatoes"! So at the Captain's Command SM2C Hettrick and I went into the wheel house, stood by a microphone suspended from the overhead and played our ocarinas. The bull horn speaker on top of the bridge was directed toward the Boxer, and we answered each number played by the Boxer's band with one of our own until we had finished fueling and another destroyer pulled alongside.



Editors Note: Thanks to Alex and Gene for their sea stories. There are more in my file for future publication. I welcome these stories see the contact information for my e-mail address. I prefer e-mail however if you wish to snail mail them that works as well.

These stories not only appear here, Jim Durough copies and places them in the memories book, which is always available at reunions for all to read and enjoy.

USS SHIELDS DD-596 REUNION ASSOCIATION

March 13, 2007

Dear Shipmates and Friends:

It is again my pleasure to correspond with you on behalf of your association Board of Directors. At our annual meeting last fall in San Diego two additional shipmates stepped forward to volunteer their time and talents towards making our association a responsive and productive organization. We have welcomed aboard Harvey Fine and Bob Lanphere and asked them to serve as historian and ship's store coordinator respectively. They are now busy at work as we try to expand our mission and provide our shipmates with even more information and services. Ed Velasquez, Bob Carl, Jim Dorough and Roger Brotherton continue to serve in their previous capacities and with their standard level of excellence. We are truly blessed to have such capable and willing men on our team.

Our reunion gathering this year is going to be somewhat different than those in years past. The board has decided that it may be fun to get together in a more informal atmosphere, enjoy a few Branson shows, kick back, relax and toss down a few beers together. We have moved the meeting to a more centralized location in hopes that travel expenses can be held down and some more of our mid-America and Eastern shipmates can find a way to attend. We encourage you to come by car, plane, boat (Good Luck!) or RV. We are still missing some of the better sea stories. Did you know that the WWII vets claim that the SHIELDS sank a Japanese sub and never got credit for it?

We continue to ask you for your dues contribution so that we may continue to locate and keep in contact with shipmates. However, we do not have a policy that excludes any shipmate (dues or no dues) from our communications or gatherings. If you can contribute one year and miss the next that's okay also, but without the support of our shipmates we cannot meet our printing and mailing costs. The \$25 that you contribute just might help us locate that shipmate that you vowed that you would keep in touch with but who has fallen off the face of the earth.

Once in awhile one of our members becomes aware of a shipmate who is in distress because of financial or health issues to him or his immediate family. In many cases the burden can be lightened if he could just hear from some of his old shipmates. In other cases it seems that the problem goes deeper but that just hearing some encouraging words could be of great comfort. Unfortunately your association is not in a position to offer or solicit financial assistance for shipmates in this predicament but we would like to do something and we are looking for suggestions. Would it be appropriate for us to list those in distress in our newsletter (with the shipmate's permission, of course)? If you become aware of a condition that you feel could be helped by contacts from shipmates could you take the time to contact the Board, get a list of fellow shipmates that served with the distressed shipmate, and notify them of the situation? We would appreciate your input.

Now that we have an official ship's historian (Harvey Fine) we have a coordinated effort to collect memorabilia and correspondence that you might be willing to pass on to the Reunion Association. We will be sharing these items with our shipmates at our annual gathering and will make sure that they are eventually passed on to an appropriate museum. If you don't care to part with the real thing, a photograph and explanation will work just fine. We would like to compile a detailed ship's history also and so anything that you have, or can write, about the ship's movements would be appreciated. We are going to make every effort to make sure that the USS SHIELDS gets her proper place in the annals of naval history.

In closing I would like to thank you, my shipmates, for your camaraderie, your interest in our warship and your help in making this a fun and rewarding relationship.

Wishing you calm winds and following seas,

JACK BLANN
President