

USS SHIELDS DD-596 All Eras Reunion Association

Newsletter July 2007

Jene P. Cain
Editor

This Newsletter Sent to 1,099 Former Crew Members, Families & Guests
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Final Reminder for the All Era Reunion September 9-13, 2007 in Branson, Missouri



From the various correspondences I have been receiving, shipmates are excited and looking forward to being together again. If you have not attended one of the Association's reunions consider this fact, many of those who are signing on have joined us in previous reunions. They do so because this is a special time in their lives. Your Association does everything possible to insure you will have a memorable and enjoyable time and repeat attendance bears this out.

July 9, 2007 is the Critical Date for Best Rates & Availability

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 e-mail her at pamb@bransommilitaryreunions.com 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. If you do not have your original forms, contact Pam and she will handle your registration.

Editor's note: Branson will be my 4th reunion. Every one has been different, but the camaraderie remains a constant. I enjoy the company of shipmates with whom I served and I enjoy the friendship of shipmates from other eras. This is a very special time. If you have not attended a reunion, please consider joining us. I do not think you will be disappointed.

Dues for 2007 Due

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.

Shields Officers Made Admiral

Two officers, Frank C. Collins, LCDR, 60-62 and Stephen R. Loeffler, LTJG, 69-71 went on in their Navy careers and made the rank of Admiral.

Oldest Living Shields Shipmate Sol William Gold, SN, 44-45

Born October 2, 1910



Sol, pictured here with his Great Granddaughter Kira Weisz, and in the second photo on board the Shields. These photos and story are courtesy of his son Rob.

Sol lives in an assisted living facility in Las Vegas and fortunately is visited frequently by his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Sadly, his wife Toby Gold of 70 years passed away in May of 2007.

Sol also served in the Coast Guard. He was the Commander of the Santa Monica, CA Chapter of the Jewish War Veterans in the 1970's.

Sol was a letter carrier and last summer he received an award from the President of the National Association of Letter Carriers at their convention for being a member for 75 years.

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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.

Keep Your Contact Information Up to Date

After every mailing, Bob Carl receives the undeliverable newsletters due to expired forwarding. Jim Dorough now has to make long distance calls and the Association pays extra postage to re-mail to the shipmates new address. Please, when you put in your changes 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.

Eldest Living Shipmates

Below is a list prepared by Jim Dorough of the 11 eldest living officers and 10 enlisted shipmates. If Jim missed you, please contact him with your birth date. (Newest in boldface type)

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

Gold, Sol W., SN, 44-45, 10-2-1910 *New*
Hafner, Ben L., SC3, 44-45, 1-1917
Sabasta, Tony, MM2, 45, 3-20-1917
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

The Only Known Surviving USS Shields DD-596 Shipmate to have Received the PURPLE HEART

Robinson, Jack W., LTJG, 51-52

Currently living in Woodlands, Texas
Jack received the Purple Heart while serving during WW II on another ship. If others received the Purple Heart during their military service please let Jim know.



Recently Passed Shipmates

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

McLellan, Richard S., EMFN, 71-72
Phillippy, John G., SK1, 51-55
Sipes, Gerald E., S1, 45-46
Wofford, Broadus W., GM3, 52-54

Surviving USS Shields COs

In order of command:

Wolff, William F., CDR, 71-72
Traweek, Billy B., CDR, 70-71
Forsyth, Robert J., CDR, 68-70
Rohrer, Paul W., CPTN, 66-68
Ursettie, Howard J., CDR, 63-65
Wessel, Robert L., CPTN, 61-63
Sperandio, Joseph L., CDR, 60-61
Battson, Arthur L., CDR, 60-61
Finley, Miles R., CDR, 50-52
Dupre, Marcy M., CDR, 45-46
McDaniel, George T., LCDR, 45



Got 35mm Slides?

During the reunions, shipmates have asked me about converting their 35mm slides onto a CD or storing them in their computer. The cost at photo processing stores can be expensive, and that cost increases for higher resolution.

Jim Dorough and I have scanners capable of copying slides on to a computer and then creating a CD. We decided to bring those scanners to the Branson reunion. If you are interested in learning about the process and the costs for scanners, we will be happy to help. For the most part these scanners will also do photos, documents and film negatives.

We cannot predict demand; however, if you would like to bring some of your slides along we can scan them at the reunion and provide you with a CD. There will be no charge. We will not be able to do hundreds of slides however; my scanner can handle up to 16 slides at one time. The price of scanners has dropped in recent years and you can buy a reasonably good one for well under \$100.00.



SEA STORIES

Did the Crew Sink a Japanese Submarine?

“We were escorting some other ships from Leyte to Okinawa and I had a bridge watch one day when the sonar picked up a possible sub. I looked aft when a depth charge was fired and saw the resulting surface “boil” which was fairly well defined and dark with possible debris. Sub? Maybe.”
Submitted by Richard Hensley, S1, 45-46, with permission



Photographer, unknown, probably the Torpedoman. Submitted by Coleen Cavara Phelps. Bob Phelps, TM1, 45-46 dropped the depth charge

The following is from Jack Ramsey. “I am recording the following information to confirm, certify and validate the fact that the USS Shields did sink a Japanese submarine. August 11, 1945 the Shields was on escort duty to Okinawa when we made submarine contact and we were called to general quarters. My station was inside the #5 gun mount. Through the open and latched access hatch, I had full view of the port side stern. Suddenly, the Japanese sub came out of the water bow first at about a 45 degree angle. It came out of the water about 25-30 feet. No conning tower was visible, nor were any identifying marks. The sub sank back underwater at about the same angle it came out. The entire episode lasted perhaps 45 seconds. It appeared the sub was trying to ram us, in some “last ditch” effort to sink the Shields.”
From Jack Ramsey, COX, 45-46

Editors Note: From these accounts, it would appear we did sink a two man Japanese sub. I welcome additional input on this story.

SEA STORIES CONTINUED

Philip E. Riley, S1C, 44-45, submitted the following two stories.

Jim Dorough tells me every ship that sailed the Pacific has a typhoon story. I'm sure that must be true, but the first typhoon encountered by the Shields had an added twist. I'm calling it 'A Miss is as Good as a Mile'. But it can still scare the bejeebers out of you until you are sure the miss is actually going to be a miss.

Giving you a time frame for this story: it was after the first atomic bomb had fallen on Hiroshima and every ship in Subic Bay had fired off it's supply of pyrotechnic shells (idiot fools had fired live ammo just to see the tracer shells streaking across the sky). And it was before Big Boy, the second atomic bomb, had fallen on Nagasaki and the Japanese had surrendered. The Shields was underway from the Philippines to Okinawa leading a squadron of three destroyers to replace or relieve ships on the early warning picket line between the Japanese Islands and Okinawa. No one formally announced that this is what we were going up there for but with all the destroyers that had been sunk or damaged by the kamikaze that was a pretty good guess.

We were pleasantly surprised when we came in sight of the anchorage in Okinawa and observed that every ship of the fleet was flying Victor-Jig from its yardarm.

Now getting back to the typhoon: The four ships with the Shields in the lead were in formation in a diagonal line spread out so the next ship was 1350 off the right fantail of the leading ship by at least 50 yards. We were getting along pretty well in spite of increasing wind that made it nearly impossible to stand on deck. Soon the waves that crashed over the bow had spray as high as the bridge and washed the full length of the 'flat deck Fletcher.'

Then, the Shields lost steerage with the rudder stuck in a turn to starboard. We were soon wallowing in the trough and taking rolls of about 400 instead of facing into the wind. Our uncontrolled course to starboard was taking us into the path of the following ship in line. There were some anxious moments as we came closer and closer, but we cleared her fantail by about twenty yards. The people in after steering finally got us pointed in the right direction. Still it wasn't exactly smooth sailing from there on. Even after the storm had abated some the sea was still choppy. But we could breathe a lot easier and more of us could keep some food down.

---A Miss is as Good as a Mile.

Commander George B. Madden, '44-'45, first Captain of the USS Shields DD-596 was a salty guy. I always assumed he was senior to other destroyer commanders with whom we worked. We were always first in line in any formation of escort vessels; and first to be given a berth when it came time to tie up to a wharf or drop anchor. This assumption took hold in my mind as early as our shakedown cruise in San Diego.

I remember a morning about daybreak when both his "saltiness" and seniority became apparent. We were at sea off the coast of California with other Navy ships in view, when we received a message from a second destroyer, DD-598. The message read, "Glad to have caught up with you at last. Standing by for orders." We reported this message to the Officer of the Deck, who told us we should wake the captain and deliver it. So guess who got the job of waking the captain. None other than Riley, the lowly seaman signalman striker. I blew through the speaker tube into the captain's cabin and said "good morning Captain" a couple of times until I got a response, and then read the message. It didn't take long for Captain Madden to come out on deck in a bathrobe with his reply. "Suggest you stand on your head in the corner and whistle the Star Spangled Banner."

I have wondered since that time if the captain of the 598 had been a plebe at the Academy under Upper Classman George Madden, and this was an exchange familiar to both of them.



Notes & Comments from Shipmates

The following was submitted by Jim Sewell, LTJG, 57-60

Hello former shipmates and ex-snipes . . . I just finished reading the just-received (and very well done) Shields newsletter. Hey, that grounding on Tripod Reef happened just two years before our time! Do you remember hearing anything about it? I don't. Never heard of Captain Winters either. If the sonar dome was wasted, maybe that's why we got that whiz bang SQS 26 sonar while the rest of the division had SQS 4.

Are you going to the Branson reunion? We're going and hope to see you there.

Editors Note: At the time of this writing, we expect to include 2 Plans of the Day from 1945. We received these from Richard Hensley, S1, 44-46, with our thanks. If they are not included in this mailing, they will be included the future.