

GRIGGS-GRUNDY NEWS

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 3

September 2003

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS GRIGGS AND GRUNDY



Special Points of Interest

- *Do you remember 1945? Art Thom has a great way to remember it. His wife saved all his letters and he shared some with us. See the cover story.*
- *Page three and four has the story of one man's life since he left the USS Griggs. See MAIL CALL.*
- *Page four has an article to help you in getting a medal. Addresses and phone number are given for your information.*
- *We need more stories from you for the next issue. Please let us hear your memories of those long-ago days.*

LOOKING BACK TO OCTOBER, 1945

Dear Shipmates,
While thinking about the up-coming Griggs/Grundy Reunion in October, I thought it might be interesting to look back to another October, 1945 to see what was going on with these two sister ships. My wife, Shirley, had saved all my letters written to her, so the following excerpts are from October 3 to October 31.

October 3
Arrived here in Leyte this morning. Never been under such a burning sun. Just came from a movie which we had topside for a change. You can see the lights of a pretty good sized town. Guess the name is Tacloban on Leyte.

October 4
We haven't had anything fresh to eat for quite awhile. Haven't taken on any provisions since June 17th and when you figure we have 500 people to feed everyday and 1500 more when we have troops... We're getting fresh provisions tomorrow though. We are definitely going back to Japan to land on the 25th. I don't know how many times we will make trips. As soon as I find out that we are coming back and where to, I will write.

October 7
Do not come out to the West Coast until I find out when we will come back. I think I will have plenty of time to tell you when I find

out. It will be a long way back with stops all the way, so a letter should reach you easily. Everyone seems so sure that we will be "state-side bound" after this trip. That was purely scuttle-butt about the Grundy at "Pasca." But a week ago, I did hear on the radio that they were heading home from the Philippines with high-point men.

Too bad about the cat with its head in a tin can. Heh! Heh! If I had a tin can big enough, I'd put the captain's cat's head in it and throw it over the side! That cat is like an elephant. I try to pet it and he bites me.

This is Sunday and a holiday routine. I am writing to you listening to the 4th game of the World Series.

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We are underway for Mindanao. We are going to load troops at Mindanao and land them in Japan again. I understand this time it will be some place on Kyushu.

October 8

My darling Noni—This will probably be just a short little note. Just wanted to tell you that you can draw your red pencil line from Mindanao to Matsuyama, Shikoku instead of the island of Kyushu as I said yesterday's letter. That's where our orders say we will be going...

October 12

...we're on our way back to Leyte where we're going to pick up a bake oven. We are all loaded now and have a pretty easy load. About 700 troops and about 150 trucks, jeeps and trailers. Easy to load and unload again. This time we land on 22 October. Guess this ship will not be de-commissioned and turned over to the Merchant Marine as was the original schedule. It will be a permanent amphib Navy ship.

October 14

This is Sunday and we are back at Leyte again near a small town called Tacloban and instead of going ashore, I stayed aboard, went to church, sunned awhile, read papers and magazines, wrote letters and slept. That sun down here near the equator is killing around noon. Sweetheart, I will write more later tonight. Maybe then I will have a couple of your letters to answer (I hope!). Boy, oh boy!! I'm back and I got ten letters! No Christmas boxes please, Honey. The way I figure, we will be back to the states before Christmas, but will be back out again by the time Christmas comes. I think we will be together a little before our 2nd anniversary (May 6). Saw the following in an August issue of Reader's Digest. On a baby announcement, the following was written: "Baby has mother's features and father's fix-

tures." Cute, huh?

October 15

Just a quick line to thank my extra special perfect wife for an extra special package I received containing socks, reading material, etc. Just this morning I tried to darn a pair of socks. Can never make a smooth darn. Always it turns out a lump! Darling, those magazines are the best and newest ones on the ship. I'm going to keep them locked up until I read them, cause they have a habit of disappearing. After I've read them, I'll take them into the ward room to let others read them. We shove off to pick up our convoy at 4:30 tomorrow morning. That means there will be about a two week interval in my letters, but remember my love for you during those two weeks and the time will go fast.

October 19

...very glad to receive more white socks cause the others you sent are done for. Thank your mom for the p. j.'s and I will bring them home with me as I have not worn p.j.'s for months. Have received four Esquires and never realized that there were so many stories in them. Fad aboard ship seems to be Gin Rummy now. Last two days have been sunny, cool and wonderful. Expect to find it very cold this time in Japan. Scuttle-butt continues to fly thick and fast. We have received letters lately from Commander Atlantic Fleet asking for allowance and requirement lists. This would indicate that this ship would be in the Atlantic in post war Navy. Course, by that time, we may all be home.

October 23

Still sitting here off Matsuyama, Japan, in the process of unloading. Unloading is proceeding pretty slowly because there is an eleven foot drop in tides which only lets us unload about six hours and then knock off six. Red Beach is right in the front yards of some of the local inhabitants. Japanese police keep them all in their homes. The houses are pretty modern but rather flimsy looking. There is an electric train which

runs (and has a station) right along the beach. A very good main highway (leading to the town) runs about one hundred yards from the beach which makes for a good vehicle unloading. The land is very hilly and almost mountainous. Every single hill, no matter how straight up and down, is cultivated almost to the summit using a system of terraces. It looks very picturesque to me. Quite a change in climate after being almost on the equator. It is a welcome change though. Sweetheart, I have only one thing for sure to tell you, and that is that as soon as we finish unloading, we are assigned to "Magic Carpet" duty. Whether we will bring troops all the way to the states or only half way, I don't know. The Old Man seems pretty certain that we're going to wind up on the East Coast so you see, anything can happen. Also, we could start for the states from a forward area and get to Pearl and be sent out. Boat group has now been put into the ship's company because of the loss due to discharges.

October 31

Here we are on Guam, dearest, and we're heading for the states. I don't think there are any stops scheduled between which means when we leave here it will take 12-14 days to reach the coast. We're bringing back 1,900 discharges. Right now everyone seems to say we go to Los Angeles. If that is true, we will really go to San Pedro which is 35 miles from L.A....we are going back out again shortly, probably within five days. My dearest, I can't tell you whether to come or not. I don't know whether to follow my head or my heart. I can't tell you not to come because you think I don't love you and I won't have that happen for anything. With all the officers leaving that are being discharged, I have become "R" Division Officer, Ass't. 1st Lieutenant and Ass't Damage Control Officer...a lot of work in checking, signing for and ordering equipment. Anyway, a letter will follow this one telling you (if I can find out) where we will come in. Don't decide anything until you receive this other letter.

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Hope this brought back some memories of that October way back in 1945. I wanted to include more of the "personal" correspondence between myself and Shirley but she censored it! Looking forward to our reunion 2003 in Asheville, NC.

Sincerely,
Art Thom
928 Parker Ave
Roseville, MN 55113

Editor's Note: I want to thank Mr. Thom for sharing his correspondence with us. Now, can someone fill in some details on a few things? What was the scuttle-butt about the Grundy at "Pasca?" What's the story on the Captain's cat? Mr. Thom, did your wife meet you when you got home? Please let us hear from you if you know the answers to these questions.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

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*Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc
PO Drawer 11399
Hickory, NC 28603*

*828-256-6008 (voice)
828-256-6559 (fax)*

*Dinamlrs@aol.com (e-mail)
mlrsnewsletters@aol.com (newsletter e-mail)
www.mlrsinc.com*

"Our Reunions Work, So You Don't Have To."

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The GRIGGS-GRUNDY NEWS is the official publication of the USS GRIGGS-GRUNDY Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in March, June, Sept., and Dec. *subject to receiving sufficient funding.* The Newsletter is funded by voluntary contributions from the membership. All members are encouraged to support the voice of the NEWS. A financial statement appears in each issue of the newsletter.

The newsletter is intended to be a vehicle for the members to express opinions, make suggestions and especially share experiences.

Unless otherwise stated, the views and opinions printed in the newsletter are those of the article's writer, and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the Association leadership or the Editor of the Newsletter.

All letters and stories submitted will be considered for publication, except unsigned letters will not be published. Letters requesting the writer's name be withheld will be honored, but published on a space available basis. Signed letters with no restrictions will be given priority.

Letters demeaning to another shipmate will not be printed; letters espousing a political position will not be printed.

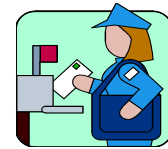
ML&RS, Inc. is not responsible for the accuracy of articles submitted for publication. It would be an monumental task to check each story. Therefore, we rely on the author to research each article.

The editor reserves the right to edit letters to conform to space limitations and grammar.

You are encouraged to actively participate in the newsletter family, by submitting your stories and suggestions.

THE BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

Of the Blue Ridge Parkway's 469 miles, more than half are through the rugged beauty of N C.



MAIL CALL

The following is excerpts from a letter sent to us by Joseph Locke.

Hi Joe,

It's been a long time—57 years! Saw your address in the Griggs reunion notebook yesterday and had to write. I think often of you and Carl and our time on the Griggs and our adventures ashore. Don't think I even said goodbye when I left the ship. Those were better days and better friends than we knew. Would have gone to the reunion, but my health would not allow it. I am pretty much an invalid now. I have kidney dialysis four days a week and can no longer drive. It was good to hear that you were alive and attended the reunion and disappointing that I could not spend a couple of days with you.

Have a picture of you and I taken in some supper club (Earl Carroll's?) in California on my wall. In the 1950s and 1960s talked with Carl a few times on the phone. I saw him one time.

A lot has happened in all our lives since 1946. The following is summary of mine:

In March 1946 Mr. Rex got Dale Davidson and I together and told us that one of us would go to RDM2C and the other would get a transfer and a 20 day leave. It was our choice. Dale said he would like the RDM2C and I said fine, I would take the leave. I may have left the ship that same day. Following my leave I was assigned to APA 234 USS Ballinger. Good ship. Good Captain. On the Ballinger I was senior radar NCO. Was also the ship's jeep driver. We went to Sasebo, Japan. While there I made several short trips to Nagasaki driving around the A-bomb crater showing it to the ship's officers. On the way back to the states the captain asked me to

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stay aboard while the ship went to Bikini Atoll for the A-bomb tests. He offered me RDM2C if I made the trip, but I said no because we would not be back in time for me to start college and go out for football in August. I was discharged about June 20, 1946.

In August 1946 I enrolled at Ohio State University and went out for football. Because of injuries, I never accomplished what I was capable of, however, I did play defensive tackle in the 1950 Rose Bowl game which OSU won. We were co-champions of the Big Ten in 1949. I was also a shot putter on the OSU track team. I grew an inch taller and 30 pounds heavier than when you knew me. At OSU I was a member of SAE fraternity. I graduated from OSU in June 1950 and went to work for the Ohio Division of Wildlife. I have many good memories from my years at OSU.

I got married in 1951 and we had children in 1952, 1954 and 1956—a girl and two boys. From them we have two granddaughters. In 1956 we built a house north of Columbus. In 1960 I went back to OSU part time working on an MS degree. In 1962 got an MS in zoology, changed jobs and moved to Homer, IL, near Champaign-Urbana and the University of Illinois. In 1975 I received a PhD degree in plant ecology from the U of I. My professional career was that of a wildlife research ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey which is associated with the University of Illinois. In 1977 we bought an unfinished cabin on the edge of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in northern Minnesota near Ely. I retired in 1989. In the early 1990s I spent a lot of time training and running beagles in field trials.

My health started to fail in 1996 and had radiation for prostate cancer in 1997. Damn near killed me. About that time I was also diagnosed for diabetes, chronic lymphocemic leukemia, and my kidneys were beginning to fail. These are all blood related and led to my

major difficulty—peripheral neuropathy which is a condition wherein the nerves of the arms, legs and shoulders degenerate. This, in turn, leads to atrophy of dependent muscle tissue, loss of strength and loss of coordination. I now weigh about 160 pounds. Most of my life I weighed 230-260. I manage to shower, shave, dress and get around the house with a walker, but must use a wheelchair elsewhere. I cannot trust my legs to drive and am very dependent on my wife who is marvelous.

In 1997 we sold the cabin because I could no longer do the maintenance. In June 2000 they started me on dialysis which I will be on for the rest of my life—four times a week. In 2001 we started having a new house built and moved in last July. This one is half the size of the old two story monster we lived in for 40 years—and only one floor. Still have pictures to hang and landscaping to do next spring.

While difficult now, mine has been a full and enjoyable life. There was a lot of hunting, fishing, running the beagles and doing work I liked with men who I liked and respected. There will come a time when I must go to a nursing home, but for now, we manage. And I look at the pictures on my wall and remember. Should you ever be in this part of the world, let me know and plan to stop. If you have time, I would like to hear something of your life.

Your old shipmate,
Bill Edwards
407 W Second St
Homer, IL 61849
edwardhouse@aol.com
217-896-2254

**2003 REUNION
OCT. 13-16
RAMADA PLAZA
HOTEL
ASHEVILLE, NC**

GETTING A MEDAL

Military service medals are issued by the appropriate branch. Inquiries should be sent to the branch of service as follows:

Navy, Marines and Coast Guard veterans contact:

Navy Liaison Office National Personnel Records, Room 3475
9700 Page Ave
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Army veterans contact:

U.S. Reserve Personnel Center
Attn: ARPC-VFE
National Personnel Records
9700 Page Ave
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

Air Force veterans contact:

U. S. Air Force
National Personnel Records
9700 Page Ave
St. Louis, MO 63132-5100

The request should include the following:

- Veterans full name, printed or typed.
- Veteran's signature or that of the veteran's next of kin, if the veteran is deceased.
- Branch of service.
- Veteran's service number or Social Security number.
- Dates of service, or a close approximation.
- A photocopy of the veteran's discharge papers.

Anyone interested can also call the Veterans Administration at 1-800-827-1000, 8 am to 4:15 pm weekdays, and request Form 180, called the "Request Pertaining to Military Records." Complete the form and send it to the appropriate military branch.