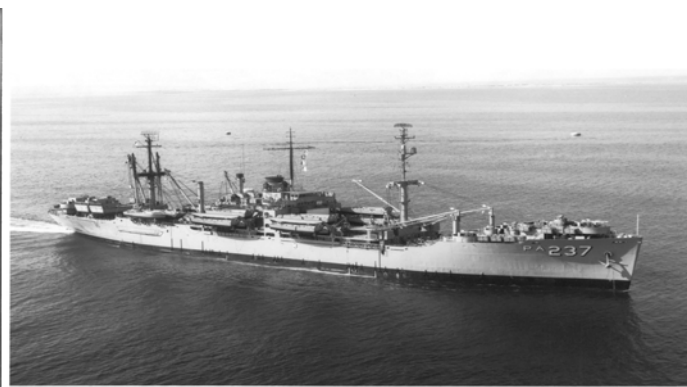


The BEXAR BROWN

Volume 7, Issue 3

April 2002

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF US BEXAR APA-237



Items of Special Interest

- Please take inspiration from our cover story and send in some of your memories of the Bexar.
- WELCOME MAT on pages two and three has twenty-five newly found shipmates.
- If you'd be interested in a USS Bexar bumper sticker, see page four.
- Another newspaper article about the loss of four lives due to Typhoon Ellen is on page four.
- If you remember the mythical "Aggressor" as told on page six, please write to us and tell what you remember.

MEMORIES FROM THE BEXAR

One year our captain liked to bring the ship in to dock himself, I think he thought it had brakes because he would come in too fast. At the time I stood throttle watch at General Quarters and going in and out of port. The first time he brought the ship in, I could hear the bow watch on my headphones telling the distance from the dock. Well he started getting excited because we were coming in too fast and getting too close. When we would come in, we normally would come in slow then I was called to go astern to stop the ship. I had a red zone on my steam gage, I had to stay out of it or

things would shut down.

Well, we hit the dock and did some damage. Since then, when the captain would bring the ship in I would holler down to the boiler room for more steam so I could get more power to the engine. The extra power made the ship shake real bad, but we didn't hit any more docks.

Then there was the time we were playing war games on Borneo and at the time I was engineer on a LCVP. We were told by radio to stay for a while. As we started backing away, one of the LVCP's got a little sideways, and with the ramp

down the coxswain put it in forward and gunned the engine. The next thing we saw was the stern sticking out of the water with the crew sitting on it.

I remember when we were tied up in Hong Kong harbor. There was another ship coming in, as they were putting the Officers' Gig in the water from a davit. As the boat hit the water the crew released the bow first. It was the funniest thing looking at that Gig with the bow under water. I'll bet somebody got in some big trouble over that!

(Continued on page 2)

I had a lot of memories and made a lot of friends while on the BEXAR, I wish the best to all of them!

Ronald E. Schilling MM2
2545 Conroy Dr.
North Palm Beach, Fl. 33403
Gto0@bellsouth.net

STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION

The BEXAR GROWL is the official publication of the USS BEXAR Association. From now on it will be published quarterly in January, April, July, and October, *subject to receiving sufficient funding*. The Newsletter is currently funded by annual subscription of \$10.00 per annum, per member and all other monies raised/donated are added to this fund. 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.

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

It should be understood that this newsletter is for the participation in , by and for the enjoyment of all Bexar shipmates. That it is also recognized that many shipmates for reasons of health, distance/travel, etc. are not able to attend reunions and may feel left out is a concern. To address this, we urge

these folks, most especially, to write in letters and articles that reflect on memorable experiences/incidents/shipmates. You may be surprised that such may provoke a former shipmate to seek you out, via phone, regular mail or e-mail to reminisce and get reacquainted. That is the main reason for maintaining and disseminating the mailing list... to provide "contact" information. Don't pass up the experience.

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"Our Reunions work So You don't have To"

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Funds available after 01/02 issue
\$2033.21

Funds received since 01/02 issue
\$80.00

Total available for 04/02 issue
\$2113.21

Funds expended for 04/02 issue
\$130.41

**Bal remaining for 07/02 issue
\$1982.80**

Thank you for your loyal support. Your contributions keep the Bexar Growl going.

**2002 REUNION
SEPTEMBER 26-29
CHARLESTON, SC
TOWN & COUNTRY
INN**

INCORRECT ADDRESSES

Many of you have a copy of the mailing list either sent via e-mail attachment from Dina or included with the *Sentimental Journal* you purchased. Please take the time to look through it and you will see that there are a large number of shipmates who have become "orphans" in that they never advised MLRS as to their change of address resulting in contact with them being lost completely. They are now simply noted by the remark **INCORRECT ADDRESS**. As you look through, maybe you will recognize some that you know and will be able to furnish us with their contact information. Some of these folks are prior reunion attendees. Remember, a group is only as good as the dedication of its members.



WELCOME MAT

The following shipmates were located since the last newsletter was published. Welcome Aboard! We hope to see you at the next reunion. You are invited to become an active member of the association.

*Gary Roedemeier (1964-66)
Ltjg 2nd Div
6207 Walnut Ridge Trail
Prospect, KY 40059
502-228-5730
roedy_97@yahoo.com*

*Rickey Boyette (1968-69) EN3 Div A
27 West Elcliff
Spokane, WA 99218
509-466-7873
rangeric@omnicast.net*

(Continued from page 2)

Logan Grayson (1963-67) EN1 Div A
701 S 5th St
Ponca City, OK 74601-6346
580-762-9374
loganlg@cableone.net

Cort Schuster (1967) IC3 Div E
5103 Morton Rd
New Bern, NC 28562
252-639-9904
mschuster@coastalnet.com

Roland Desfosses (1964-67)
EM2 Div E
PO Box 204
San Miguel, CA 93451
805-467-3912
rolo858@yahoo.com

John Hura (1964-67) DK3 Supply
33328 177th Pl SE
Auburn, WA 98092
253-939-2493
j.huraotr@attbi.com

Peter Cummings (1960-63)
SN 1st/Boat Group/Supply
682 Ohio St, Ledgewood 2 Apt 35
Bangor, ME 04401
207-947-3251
peterc@npt.lin.k12.me.us

Bernie Korst (1960-64)
SN/FN/BT3 Deck Div B
22387 Nordkyn Ln NW
Poulsko, WA 98370
360-697-2912
bkorst@msn.com

Marvin Tabor, Jr. (1961-63) Lt Supply
432 Curahee Ridge Rd
Toccoa, GA 30577
706-779-3946
mtaborsc@carol.net

Harold Hoover (1952-54) SH3
6735 Mineral Dr
San Diego, CA 92119
619-465-2462
halnan1@cox.net

Neilon Rowan (1951-54) QM1 OC Div
9273 Lightsey Ln
College Station, TX 77845
979-846-8579
nrowan@alpha1.net

Robert Garcia (1961-64) SN 2nd Div
1124 Rio Cicade Way
Sacramento, CA 95831
916-424-4861
sosacguy@aol.com

Jack Decker (1953-55) FN Boat Grp
1028 Eaton Green
Charlotte, MI 48813
517-541-1101

Kent Shelton (1962-63) FN Div A
PO Box 547
Sutter Creek, CA 95685
209-267-0023
k7shelton@webtv.net

Henry Robinson (1952-56)
EN2 Div A
863 25th St SE
Rochester, MN 55904-2909
507-282-5231
mnlicoldrt66@msn.com

Bob Schultz
274 S Belair Dr
Apache Junction, AZ 85219

Bruce Wellington (1948) SN Supply
10102 115th Ave N
Largo, FL 33773
727-392-2978
bunglesnitch@ozline.net

James Rome (1954-55)
ENS/LTJG Deck/ Ops
218 Chandler Ln
Corpus Christi, TX 78404-1602
361-882-5979
chan218@juno.com

Jack Wolff (1947-48) ET2 Comm
7922 Sailboat Key Blvd #202
So. Pasadena, FL 33707
727-367-1417
jwolff@ieee.org

George DeWald (1949-50)
SKSN Supply
15 Rachel Ln
Springville, NY 14141
716-592-0468
geolb@aol.com

John Zerbe
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Tucson, AZ 85701
520-907-9845

Wayne Emerson (1945-46)
PH3 Div H
PO Box 187
Eagle Grove, IA 50533
emervet@goldfieldaccess.net

William Oviedo (1951) ENFN Aux
4906 E Brown Rd #17
Mesa, AZ 85205
480-830-4484

James Keeran (1959-61)
BMC Div B & M
512 Butternut
Royal Oak, MI 48073
248-288-3407

Manuel Barrientos, Jr. (1962-63)
BM3 Boat Group
PO Box 170263
Irving, TX 75017-0263
214-682-5459
manuel@panamericanpersonnel.com



TAPS

The Growl was notified of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter was published. The deaths are not necessarily recent but were just learned of. Our deepest sympathy goes to the widows, families and friends of the deceased.

Kenneth Bentle
Died 1993

Michael Bemsko (1946-48)
Died 1996

LCSR C.M Hart (1961)
Date unknown

Jose Cunes
Died February 1994



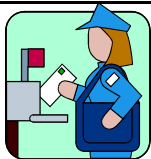
USS BEXAR BUMPER STICKERS

I have made contact with a company who specializes in military bumper stickers and he has made them available at a group rate of \$4.00 each, including postage/shipping. I offered them, initially, to the members of the e-mail directory and we met the minimum to lock-in that price. I don't make a cent from this. I just thought that it made a nice "pride item" to display and ... who knows...sometime, somewhere, a former shipmate may notice one of them. They are multi-colored (5 colors), about 11" by 4" and are very sharp looking. If anyone is interested, just make out a check/money order payable to PHOTOVISION, INC. for \$4.00 times the number desired and on the payment indicate somewhere (USS BEXAR). Mail to:

Tom Beitz, Pres.
Photovision, Inc
P O Box 313
Riverton, NJ 08077

They will be mailed back to you direct at whatever address you show on the envelope, unless you include a note indicating otherwise.

Bob Weiss



MAIL CALL

The following are old newspaper articles sent to the Growl —one about the Bexar's fatal encounter with Typhoon Ellen in August of 1959.

FAR EAST STORM VICTIMS

4 on U.S. Navy Ship Killed by Huge Wave

YOKOSUKA, Japan (AP)—Heavy seas generated by Typhoon Ellen caused the death of four sailors on the U.S. Navy's attack transport Bexar, the Navy announced today.

The Navy said the 455-foot long Bexar was en route to Okinawa Sunday when a huge wave broke over her bow, washing two men overboard and knocking seven others against the anchor windlass and a bulwark. Two of the latter died of their injuries.

Another crewman rescued one of the two men overboard, then was drowned himself. The other man overboard was not found.

A probe into the tragedy was opened at sea aboard the carrier Lexington by a board headed by Rear Adm. W.E. Gentner, commander of Carrier Division 7.

Ens. Robert D. Stannus, of San Antonio, Tex., was identified by the Navy as the "heroic officer...who voluntarily dove into heavy seas" and saved Marine Cpl. Hileo J. Henning, Yakima, Wash. Ens. Stannus lost his own life.

The other men killed were Marine Pfc. George R. Homes, Otter Creek, Maine; Navy Fireman Apprentice James R. Taylor, San Diego, Calif; and Machinist's Mate Fireman Sylvon R. Richens, Roosevelt, Utah.

In the U.S. Navy hospital here, "in fair condition" the Navy said are Fireman Joe R. Talbott, Bloomington, Tex; Machinist's Mate Fireman Joseph H. Fisher, Eugene, Ore; and Seaman Dwayne P. Daunch, Grand Prairie, Tex.

Two sailors, in addition to Henning, treated for minor injuries and back on duty, were identified as a personnel man, Eugene A. Galvin, San Diego, Calif, and boatswain's Mate Clifford L. Prather, McAllen, Tex.

The big wave washed two men—Henning and Taylor—

overboard and knocked several others standing on the forecandle into the side of the ship with such fury that Holmes and Richens were fatally injured. Lifeboats were torn loose.

"Taylor was never seen after the wave hit the bow. An eight-hour search was unsuccessful," said the Navy.

Henning, afloat in the water, was clinging to an inflatable life craft washed overboard.

The skipper called for volunteers. Stannus, wearing a life jacket and lifeline, jumped in and brought Henning to other rescuers.

But on his return to the ship, Stannus got caught in one of the ship's rolls and was pulled under the ship, the Navy said.

Marines Get Revenge on Cobra

KOTA BELUD, North Borneo (S&S)—The Marines were attacked and beaten in only one engagement in Operation Saddle Up.

The attack came from a 3-foot cobra which bit PFC Paul J. Commander while the marine was on a night rescue patrol.

Three days later, members of the same recon party were moving along a jungle trail when they spied a black cobra. They outflanked the snake, cornered it and captured it alive.

Later they boxed it up and sent it out to the command ship as a souvenir of the operation. Commander is recovering from the effects of the bite.

Robert A. Benson Receives Naval Commendation

Robert A. Benson, DCCA; U.S. Navy of 6233 Freckles Road, Lakewood, was commended by the commanding officer of the attack transport USS Bexar at Yokosuka, Japan on October 17 for his outstanding

performance of duty in fighting serious engineroom fire on the Bexar September 30.

Benson, chief damage control aboard the Bexar, was cited for his courageous action in entering the hot, smoke-filled engineroom to combat the fire.

Fifteen other crew members of the Bexar also received recognition for their quick and efficient action in controlling the fire which broke out while the ship was at anchor in Okinawa.

Before entering the service in October, 1942, Chief Benson was graduated from Hower Vocational High, Akron, Ohio.

SPEECH BY JOHN McCAIN

As you may know, I spent five and one half years as a prisoner of war during the Vietnam War. In the early years of our imprisonment, the NVA kept us in solitary confinement or two or three to a cell.

In the 1971 the NVA moved us from these conditions of isolation into large rooms with as many as 30 to 40 men to a room.

This was, as you can imagine, a wonderful change and was a direct result of the efforts of millions of Americans on behalf of a few hundred POWs 10,000 miles from home.

One of the men who moved into my room was a young man named Mike Christian. Mike came from a small town near Selma, Alabama. He didn't wear a pair of shoes until he was 13 years old. At 17, he enlisted in the US Navy. He later earned a commission by going to Officer Training School. Then he became a Naval Flight Officer and was shot down and captured in 1967.

Mike had a keen and deep appreciation of the opportunities this country—and our military—provide for people who want to work and want to succeed. As part of the change in treatment, the Vietnamese allowed some prisoners to receive packages

from home. In some of these packages were handkerchiefs, scarves and other items of clothing. Mike got himself a bamboo needle. Over a period of a couple of months, he created an American flag and sewed on the inside of his shirt.

Every afternoon, before we had a bowl of soup, we would hang Mike's shirt on the wall of the cell and say the Pledge of Allegiance. I know the Pledge of Allegiance may not seem the most important part of our day now, but I can assure you that in that stark cell it was indeed the most important and meaningful event.

One day the Vietnamese searched our cell, as they did periodically, and discovered Mike's shirt with the flag sewn inside, and removed it. That evening they returned, opened the door of the cell, and for the benefit of us all, beat Mike Christian severely for the next couple of hours. Then, they opened the door of the cell and threw him in. We cleaned him up as well as we could.

The cell in which we lived had a concrete slab in the middle on which we slept. Four naked light bulbs hung in each corner of the room. As said, we tried to clean up Mike as well as we could. After the excitement died down, I looked in the corner of the room, and sitting there beneath that dim light bulb with a piece of red cloth, another shirt and his bamboo needle, was my friend, Mike Christian. He was sitting there with his eyes almost shut from the beating he had received, making another American flag.

He was not making the flag because it made Mike Christian feel better. He was making that flag because he knew how important it was to us to be able to pledge allegiance to our flag and our country.

So the next time you say the Pledge of Allegiance, you must never forget the sacrifice and courage that thousands of Americans have made to build our nation and promote freedom around the world. You must remember our duty, our honor, and our country.

"I pledge allegiance to the flag of

the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE ON LINE

The Newsletter for the USS BEXAR reunion is available to download from the Military Locator & Reunion Service Inc web site.

If you are able to visit our web site and download the Newsletter, and therefore do not need a paper copy mailed to you, please let us know.

Please visit our web site at www.mlrsinc.com, then follow the link labeled Reunions, then scroll down until you see the listing for the USS BEXAR. Click on the button labeled Newsletters, and in a few minutes the newsletter should appear on your screen. (As a side note - it took about 4 minutes on my computer). This will only work if you have Adobe Reader 4.0 or higher. You can also download this viewer for free from our web site.

If this works for you and you would like to receive all future mailings from us in this method, please send me an e-mail requesting to subscribe to the BEXAR E-mail Roster. Each time something new is available, we will send you an e-mail informing you something new is available on the web site. **Please let us know if your e-mail address changes so you don't miss any important information.**

To subscribe to the BEXAR E-mail Roster please send an e-mail to SubscribeMLRS@aol.com, put the phrase SUBSCRIBE BEXAR in the Subject line and type your name and e-mail address in the body of your e-mail. You will be placed in the e-mail roster.

Your name and postal mailing address will remain in our computers and will appear on all mailing lists, etc distributed to other members of your group.

If you have any question regarding this, do not hesitate to ask!

Dina Coffey

The following are articles taken from *The Growl* dated Monday 14 November 1949. This 1949 issue was sent to us by Robert L. Greene from *Naguatuck, CT*. We have used several articles from the issue previously and will continue to do so as space allows.

Mythical "Aggressor" Haunts Alert U.S. Defensive Forces

By Gladwin Hill

Honolulu—The United States' dummy enemy, the mythical dictatorship of "Aggressor", has been defeated in battle again, but it is still fighting and still is in hypothetical possession of key sections of North America from Alaska to the Caribbean.

"Aggressor," replete with its own fictitious history, language and distinctive military organization, was created by the United States Army after World War II. It has an actual existence in a headquarters staff and warehouses full of curious equipment at Fort Riley, Kans. "Aggressor" was conceived as the remedy to serious deficiencies observed during the war in the standard old-time training method by which our troops were opposed only by their own comrades in identical uniforms and using similar equipment and tactics which put them at something of a loss initially when they came up against a really alien foe.

For this purpose a Regular Army unit was established at Fort Riley that could be the nucleus for "opposition" forces in successive maneuvers, train supplementary troops for this purpose and provide specialized equipment and techniques.

Their principle equipment includes inflated rubber guns, tanks and vehicles, distinctively marked for aerial and ground reconnaissance, which can easily be transported and shifted quickly around in combat to simulate different

situations; a large repertoire of small explosive and pyrotechnics; a complete alien military organization with different branches, ranks and uniforms vaguely resembling those of several European countries, and a polyglot language devised to hamper intelligence.

"Aggressor," temporarily headquartered here at Fort Shafter, was dealt another blow when a "Western Task Force" of one hundred ships and thirty-eight thousand Army, Navy and Marine personnel from the West Coast executed an amphibious landing on the main Hawaiian island of Oahu.

Putting up only token opposition the "Aggressor" forces, which numbered nine thousand in this engagement, cannot hope to win a victory. They are the punching bag for which umpires measure the attacking forces' proficiency. But "Aggressors'" bad fortune in battle are matched by its resiliency. The Army has recently received word that "Aggressors" foothold in Alaska is threatening alarming expansion and is making a plan for a campaign this winter to rout the enemy yet another time.

OPEN LETTER

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDER OF TROOPS USS BEXAR

11 November 1949

SUBJECT: Letter of Appreciation
TO: Commanding Officer, USS Bexar,
APA-237

On behalf of the Officers and men of the Third Battalion, Ninth United States Infantry, I wish to take this opportunity to express to you, your Officers, and Ship's Company, our sincere appreciation for a most joyous association while aboard your ship, the "Bexar."

From the very first time aboard, the Bexar reflected most outwardly that an attitude of friendliness prevailed, and it has proven true throughout the entire Operation MIKI. The cooperative spirit on the part of all divisions

throughout the ship has been forever present. The efficient manner in which the members of the ship's company performed their respective duties during the practice and tactical landings made it possible for the landing force to successfully accomplish its mission.

These days of close association have made it possible for us of the Third BLT to respect the accomplishments of your ship, and to salute the "Bexar" for another job "Well Done."

D.M. McMains
Lt Col Inf
Commanding Officer

The Things Money Can't Buy

Written by R.L. Crandall

The late George Horace Lorimer, for many years editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, once wrote these words: "It is a good thing to have money and the things money can buy, but it is good, too, to check up once in a while and make sure you haven't lost the things money can't buy."

The things money can't buy would make a long list. Here are some of them:

Money can't buy real friendship. Friendship must be earned.

Money can't buy a clear conscience. Square dealing is the price tag.

Money can't buy the glow of good health. Clean living is the secret.

Money can't buy happiness. Happiness is a mental attitude that comes from making others happy.

Money can't buy sunsets, singing birds and the music of wind in the trees. These are free as the air.

Money can't buy inward Peace. Peace is the result of a constructive philosophy of life.

Money can't buy character. Character is what we are and what we want to make of ourselves.