

The BEXAR BROWN

Volume 9 Issue 4

July 2003

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS BEXAR APA-237



Items of Special Interest

- *Some important information for those planning to attend the 2003 reunion. See the news in the cover story.*
- *WELCOME MAT on page two has twelve new members. Addresses can be obtained from Bob Weiss.*
- *MAIL CALL on page three has news from a soldier in Iraq. We hope to hear more later.*
- *"In Memory Of..." on page four remembers Capt. Robert Giffen.*
- *A new feature, "Your Health and You," begins on page five. Learn the basic facts about prostate cancer.*

SAN ANTONIO REUNION BUSINESS MEETING NOTE

For all those folks planning on attending this reunion, please note the following: Shipmate Bob Weiss has discussed this with me and he contacted Chambers of Commerce and Tourist Information Depts of some cities in areas of the country which we are due to consider as sites for our 2004 reunion and others. He has now, or will have, brochures for the following venues and will set them up in the hospitality room in San Antonio at the Sheraton Four Points:

INDIANAPOLIS, IN
MILWAUKEE, WI
TUCSON, AZ

ALBUQUERQUE, NM
LAS VEGAS, NV
PORTLAND, OR
BUFFALO, NY

If any of you have other cities which you'd like to be considered in the voting, please contact that city, obtain the brochure packet and bring it to the reunion. When you check in with our MLRS site representative, Lois Nangle, she should be at a desk just outside our hospitality room and there will be a separate table inside just to display brochures for the 2004 reunion venue consideration. I do encourage all, as soon as you get set-

tled in, to stop by and look them over so you will have an idea of your preferences when it comes time to propose sites for voting upon. If you find yourself with some free time between meals and activities, that's also a good time to stop by and check things out. We're doing this, because every year it seems we are pressed for time when it comes to the business meeting, and it's an important decision. This should help to prepare us a bit. Please consider the other folks and after you've finished, leave each neatly in a tray in

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which you found them.

Oops! Almost forgot. Remember... we're still looking for a shipmate or spouse/girlfriend (sorry!, choice of one only) to volunteer and take some informal minutes of our meeting, so we can have a reference record of items discussed and voted upon. Lois, our favorite MLRS representative, has been doing that; however, it really is NOT her responsibility. Heck, you'll even have a title. Business Meeting Secretary, but no compensation. Remember guys and gals, our association charges no membership fees and no annual dues and that's unusual and we take pride in the fact that we rely on our collective volunteerism to keep things running efficiently.

Thanks a bunch!
James 'Jim' Redding
Shipmate Reunion Representative

ATTN: E-MAIL DIRECTORY MEMBERS

Please remember to check your listed e-mail account and empty it from time to time. Though you may not realize it, your server 'automatically' REJECTS all e-mails once you have exceeded their predetermined mail quota. A single attachment with multiple audio/video files can initiate exceeding your quota limitations. When that occurs, I have no choice but to delete you, as the software refuses to send that particular mailing group UNLESS said address is removed.

Thanks,
Bob Weiss



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.

If you think you recognize a former shipmate and wish to make contact, please contact your association Membership Secretary for additional information. His contact information is indicated on the last page, last column of this newsletter.

*Richard Howard
(1962-64) EM3 E Div*

*Dennis McCoy
(1961-65) MM3 M Div*

*Edward Ruwaldt
ENS/LTJG*

*E. H. Smith
BM3 2nd Boat Group*

*Robert Giffen, Jr
(1960-61) Capt*

Jack Sigler

*Edward Kobs
(1960-61) EM3 E Div*

Danny Francis

David Gregory

Wilhelmus Peters

*John Sabow
(1966-69) MM2 M Div*

*Bill Swann
(1959-61) QM3 Nav*

2003 REUNION

SAN ANTONIO, TX OCTOBER 2-5

SHERATON FOUR POINTS RIVERWALK NORTH

Registration packets will be mailed
90 days prior to the reunion.



TAPS

The Growl was notified of the following shipmate's death since the last newsletter was published. Our deepest sympathy goes to the widow, family and friends of the deceased.

*Robert C. Giffen, Jr. (1960-61)
Captain C/O
Died 16 April 2003
See "In Memory Of..." article on
page 4*

EAST VS. WEST

Panama is the only place in the world where you can see the sun rise on the Pacific Ocean and set on the Atlantic. This is caused by the way the isthmus bends. Travelers in the canal actually move from west to east to go from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

PONDERINGS BY GEORGE CARLIN

- Why is the third hand on a watch called the second hand?
- If a word were misspelled in the dictionary, how would we ever know?
- Why does "slow down" and "slow up" mean the same thing?
- Why does "fat chance" and "slim chance" mean the same thing?
- Why do "tug" boats push their barges?

Not-For-Profit Ship's Store

Through the efforts of some of your shipmates this enterprise has come to fruition. For items indicated, necessary minimum purchases all have been made and sold to obtain these low prices. Now you all may individually order direct.

BUMPER STICKER (4" by 11")



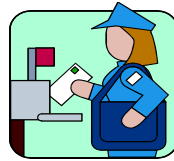
Cost: \$4.00 (includes shipping)
Check or M/O payable to:
Photovision, Inc.
and notated USS BEXAR
Mail to:
Photovision, Inc.
P.O. Box 313
Riverton, N. J. 08077

EMBROIDERED PATCH (3")



Cost: \$3.25 (includes shipping)
Check or M/O payable to:
John Flynn
And notated USS BEXAR
Mail to:
John Flynn
P.O. Box 23518
Washington, D.C. 20026

MAIL CALL



ML&RS,

We, as grandparents of Brian, want to thank you for the nice article you wrote in the GROWL. We couldn't send any updates, because we weren't receiving any news from him. Now we know why. Brian and his Co. spent 5 weeks in and around An Nasariyah—that's where the ambush happened. We are so thankful that all his Co. got out O.K. On April 21 he was able to call his mother. His Co. was sent to Kuwait City and getting ready to return to Fort Hood, TX. They arrived there last night. Haven't talked to him yet. He talked to his father from Germany.

We like to thank everyone who prayed for him and all the men and women, for their safe return. He is scheduled to return to Iraq on police action in about 5 months. Thank you for your interest.

Don and Jo Grant

Editor's note: Mr. & Mrs. Grant, please keep us informed about Brian and share any stories he has with us, if possible.

Dear James Redding,

I read in the latest Sea Classic Magazine that you are having a reunion of the APA 237 USS Bexar. I wonder if you could help me?

I was a soldier transported from Batangas, Philippines to Tatetama, Japan on Surrender Day on the Lavaca APA 180. I understand the Lavaca is of the same class as the Bexar.

I am making a model of the Lavaca and have some plans to work from. It would be very helpful for me to have any photos that you or your friends might have that

would show any deck details. I would be willing to pay for any expenses that might occur. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Wilburt Olsen
16107 Gold Bar Blvd
Gold Bar, WA 98251
360-793-7772
jole7772@aol.com

ML&RS,

Below is an article that I wrote to our local paper, addressing the protesters. In our area, as others, the paper was full of their solution to the Middle East, with no concern to our troops. We have family members serving in the area and want them home safely, but support them 100%. One is serving with the 103rd Fighter Wing and two others are on standby here in the states. I have received a lot of feed back from this article, but have to say most of them were of a "well done" nature.

My Proposition to the War Protesters

To the Editor:

I have the answer for all of you who are protesting against our president, our country and the men and women in the armed forces. For every man, woman and child who lives in Iraq and wants to be freed from a brutal dictatorship that uses torture and murder, I propose that protesters take their place.

There is good in this. Thousands of Iraqi people will be free for the first time, and you can continue to protest against a country and a president. Surely, if you think President Bush is deserving of protest, you must certainly agree that Saddam Hussein is worthy as well.

But there is some bad news also. If you speak out in protest against Saddam, you might lose your tongue. Or if you're lucky, you could be sent to prison where they still use the guillotine.

Feel lucky you live in the greatest country in the world. I want my grand-

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children to be able to go to New York or Washington, DC and fly in an airplane without fear.

Protesting only ends up hurting the men and women of the military who sacrifice their lives for your freedom. I know; I served in Vietnam. The cost of freedom has never been cheap. Again, if you don't love it, you can leave it. You do have a choice.

Jim Durkee
Oxford, NH

ML&RS,

Below is a little story that I thought some might enjoy, and hopefully a few will remember also. This is a true incident.

THE ALMOST BEXAR MASCOT?

How many Bexar sailors remember the day the Bexar almost had a K-9 mascot?

On the cruise of 67-68, the Bexar was anchored off the coast of South Viet Nam, near the city of Vung Tau. We were support ship for the River Forces operating in the Delta area. The crew was allowed to go ashore into the Vung Tau area on certain occasions. On one of these trips, as the mike boat was leaving shore to go back to the Bexar, and we were a good distance out in the bay, someone noticed a person swimming from shore toward the mike boat. The coxswain slowed and turned back to pick up the swimmer, and that is when we all noticed that he was carrying a dog also. We picked them both up and continued onto the Bexar. The dog was later returned to shore, as we all know, no animals allowed. Does anyone else recall this incident and who the sailor was?

Jim Durkee

In Memory Of...

ROBERT CARLISLE GIFFEN JR., CAPT (Ret), son of the late Vice-Admiral, Robert C. 'Ike' Giffen and Elsie H. Giffen, passed away on 16 April 2003. He is survived by his wife, Grace, and his son, Robert C. Giffen III and daughter Dagmar G. Cosby. Captain and Mrs. Giffen have four grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Bob Giffen was 88 years of age and had been Commanding Officer of the USS BEXAR from 22 July 1960 through 31 May 1961. He was a proud and highly decorated veteran of the submarine service, among other career assignments, and served in World War II and the Korean War and during the Vietnam War era.

Among his assignments were; the submarine S-30(SS-135), USS Gunard (SS-254), USS Snapper (SS-185), USS Roncador (SS-301), USS Greenfish (SS-351) as Captain and the USS Bexar (APA-237).

During World War II he made four (4) combat patrols in the Silent Service. He was the skipper during the Magellan (Around the World) Cruise, when we transported Indonesian troops to the Belgian Congo (in 1960) as part of a United Nations mission to put down a terrorist insurrection in Leopoldville. He left the Bexar for Submarine Flotilla 7, Japan and later commissioned Submarine Squadron 15 in Guam (the first Polaris missile equipped squadron in the Pacific). He also served tours with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the OPNAV staff in Washington, D.C.. During his distinguished career he earned...the Silver Star (w/ Gold Star), Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Nat'l. Defense Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, Submarine Combat Insignia (w/ 3 stars), American Defense-Atlantic Campaign Medal, European-Middle East Theatre Medal, Korean Medal, United Nations-Pacific Theatre Medal and World War II Victory Medal.

He retired from active duty in the Navy in 1967 to his hometown of Annapolis, MD. He then worked for the Maryland National Bank and the Westinghouse Corporation prior to his full retirement in '75. He dedicated himself to volunteer work in the immediate Annapolis area for about 10 years and tended to his family-owned Christmas tree farm.

All too often, during my attempts at locating former shipmates, I am advised that the individual passed away many years before and we simply list that death in the TAPS column. Without going into great detail the contact I made, with Capt. Giffen's son, was as a result of an ongoing fruitless attempt, spanning about 6 months, to reach the Captain. Sensing that something might have been amiss I reached out to his son and found out that his Dad had just passed 3 days earlier! I was shocked and saddened, because as a young man (SK3, aboard the Bexar, at that time) I had a quite casual, though memorable, conversation with him just prior to my transfer off the Bexar to Japan and his transfer, three months later...also to Japan.

Sufficed to state here that Bob Giffen was a true gentleman, an excellent skipper and flag-rank officer who was well-liked and respected by his crew....officer and enlisted alike. He never had an aloof attitude when it came to his enlisted men and his subtle style of quiet leadership was key. As I told his son, I think his easy-going style was borne of his sub service experience, wherein a few men in close quarters, must learn to function as a single unit to fulfill their mission. A lesser individual, with the submarine service as his first love might manifest a degree of resentment at a surface command. Not this man. I recall how with a big smile and pride he would read the "Well done!" accolades, issued by one command jurisdiction and then another, as we transitted the globe. He couldn't have been prouder of where he was and of his crew. In my years

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aboard the Bexar I never heard a bad word spoken of him and that, in and of itself, is exceptional. I shall always regret not having had the opportunity to shake his hand just one more time and to tell him of the very positive impression he made on me,...as a young man at that time. There are... but a few times in one's life when you shake the hand of a person you respect, look them in the eye and you connect! That you really connect. And you just know it and you know they do too.

Four score and eight is a full life and he departed it as he lived it..., in quiet dignity. Rest in Peace Bob Giffen. I'll long remember your warm smile. Your shipmates miss you.

20 April 2003
Robert 'Bob' Weiss

STATUS OF US NAVY as of July 2, 2003

Navy Personnel

Active Duty: 381,224

- Officers: 56,097
- Enlisted: 321,941

Midshipmen: 3,186

Ready Reserve: 152,209 (As of 31 May)

- Selected Reserves: 87,194
- Individually Ready Reserves: 65,015

Personnel on deployment: 44,031

Navy Department Civilian Employees: 184,114 (as of 30 Apr)

Ships & Submarines

Ships: 302

Ships Underway (away from home-port): 135 (45% of total)

On Deployment: 112 ships (37% of total)

Submarines underway: 24 (45%)

On Deployment: 16 (30%)

YOUR HEALTH AND YOU

The latest on various health issues of concern to members and their loved ones
Submitted by **Bob Weiss**

Basic Facts About Prostate Cancer

It is estimated that 209,000 new cases of prostate cancer will be diagnosed in the United States this year. That makes prostate cancer the most common cancer among American men, except for skin cancer. Over 40,000 deaths due to prostate cancer are expected to occur this year.

The good news is that the outlook for men diagnosed with prostate cancer is better than ever. Fifty-eight percent of all prostate cancers are found early, while the tumor is still localized, and the five-year survival rate for these men is 99 percent.

What is the prostate gland and how does it function?

The prostate is a gland about the size of a walnut that is situated below the urinary bladder and in front of the rectum. The urethra (a long tube that carries urine out of the body) passes through the prostate.

The prostate gland produces a fluid that serves as the vehicle for sperm. Although there will be implications if the prostate gland is removed, it is not an essential organ and the body can function without it.

Are all prostate tumors cancerous?

Many men, especially as they age, are affected by an overgrowth of prostate tissue. At times, this tissue overgrowth is benign, meaning that the cells do not contain cancer. This prostate condition is called benign prostatic hypertrophy or BPH. Other times, abnormal cancerous cells characterize the overgrowth of tissue and this is referred to as a malignancy or cancer of the prostate.

Early prostate cancer often has no warning signs. Since there is no

known cure for the disease, early detection is the best bet for increasing the life expectancy of those men who develop the disease.

Who Is at Risk for Developing Prostate Cancer?

Researchers still do not know what causes prostate cancer. They have, however, been able to identify risk factors that consistently have been associated with prostate cancer. The role that some of the identified risk factors play in the development of prostate cancer is less clear because research studies have provided conflicting results in some areas.

Age: After age 50, the chance of developing prostate cancer begins to increase. Over 80 percent of all prostate cancers occur in men 65 years and older.

Race: Prostate cancer is twice as prevalent among African-American males as it is among their Caucasian-American counterparts.

Ethnicity: Prostate cancer is most common in North America and northwestern Europe. It occurs less frequently in Asia, Africa, Central America, and South America.

Diet: The results of most studies show that men who eat a high-fat diet have an increased chance of developing prostate cancer. Some research has shown that men who eat higher-fat diets tend to eat less fruits and vegetables and more dairy products. These factors may also play a part in the development of prostate cancer.

Recent studies have shown that a diet high in lycopenes (found in

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higher levels in colorful fruits and vegetables) and selenium, may lower the risk of developing prostate cancer.

Exercise: Maintaining a healthy weight along with regular physical activity may reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

Family history: Prostate cancer appears to have a genetic link. Having a father or brother with the disease doubles a man's risk of developing it. The risk gets even greater if several relatives have been affected, particularly if they were young at the time of diagnosis. The recent discovery of the HPC1 gene will soon give more information about the inherited risk of prostate cancer. Tests to find abnormal prostate cancer genes may one day become available to help identify men at increased risk for developing prostate cancer.

Vasectomy: Men who have undergone vasectomy (a surgical procedure that renders them sterile) may have an increased risk of getting prostate cancer, according to some studies. Findings in this area have been inconsistent; while some studies have shown an increased risk after vasectomy, others have not.

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 \$5.00 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.

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

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.

Some 70% of all Americans have visited either Disneyland or Disney World.

SUBSCRIPTION REMINDER

From now on, only those who have paid the \$5.00 dues will be receiving the *Bexar Growl*. The new subscription year begins when the memorabilia order forms are sent out after each reunion. Please encourage any of your former shipmates that you are still in contact with to make their dues payment so they can receive the newsletter. We also highly recommend (O.K.—beg) that you write a letter or article describing any memorable event or your general experience while on board the BEXAR. Send in your stories to Military Locator & Reunion Service at our address below. Let's have a newsletter filled with *your* stories from now on.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Funds available after 04/03 issue
\$1811.22
 Funds received since 04/03 issue
\$40.00
 Total available for 07/03 issue
\$1851.22
 Funds expended for 07/03 issue
\$138.66
Bal remaining for 10/03 issue
\$1712.56

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