

The BEXAR GROWL

Volume 12 Issue 2

January 2006

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF USS BEXAR APA 237



Items of Special Interest

- *Did you spend a Christmas or New Year's onboard the BEXAR? See if your holiday was anything like the ones in our cover stories.*
- *Dates for the 2006 Bexar Reunion are announced on page two!*
- *Mail Call on page three has a thank you letter on behalf of Jeff Shenkman for the card sent to him by the 2005 reunion attendees.*
- *An explanation of the Remembrance Table at the reunion is found on page three.*
- *A very important letter from ML&RS, Inc regarding changes for the upcoming year is on page five. Be sure to read it carefully.*

HOLIDAY MEMORIES OF USS BEXAR

Editor's note: An e-mail request was sent out for stories about a Christmas or New Year's spent on board the USS Bexar. The following stories were received. Thanks to all who responded.

My name is Ray J. Butler, and I served aboard the Bexar as a radarman. New Year's Eve 1946, I and a couple of guys from the Navigation Division had liberty in San Diego. The town was full with so many servicemen and beefed up squads of Shore Patrol, Military Police and Air Police, that we could see that there was trouble brewing. So, we decided to go back aboard ship and celebrate there. We

bought a watermelon, scooped out the insides and put in a fifth of Schenleys Black Label and put the plug back in place. We managed to sneak it past the Officer of the Deck and went to the radio shack to consume our prize. In the course of the evening, we were feeling no pain, and turned on the radio, picking up messages from other ships anchored in the bay. There were many like us that were wanting to swap cases of beer for a case of the hard stuff. Everyone was using disguised code names like "USS Whiskey Bottle" or "Completely Loaded". The airways got pretty wild and were interrupted frequently by the Coronado Ship Control monitors asking us to

'clear the air.' By midnight, the situation accelerated and I flipped on the PA system and wished everyone a "Happy New Year" and pumped up a portable foghorn and gave it a blast. The OD shut everything down and ordered us to our quarters shortly thereafter. Not a bad New Year's Eve, even if we did stay aboard!!!

Ray Butler

I spent Christmas Day on the Bexar in Yokohama, Japan in 1945. We took the 5th Air Force on board for their return back to the states. What surprised me was that they all were fed a turkey dinner on board that

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

day. I believe there were about 2,000 troops.

Donald Webb

The Bexar left Okinawa on 27 November 1957, combat loaded with 3rd Bn 1st Marines. We proceeded to the area of Dingalen Bay in the Philippines and conducted a PHIB-LINK exercise with a task force of amphibious ships. We had completed the exercise and started back to Okinawa to return the Marines when we were diverted to the waters off Indonesia. There was some internal troubles there, and we were standing by (about a week) for the possibility of evacuating American citizens if it got too bad. Apparently things cooled down and the task force was released and headed for Subic Bay, Philippines. We arrived on Christmas Day 1957.

In those days nobody went on liberty except in dress uniform, unless they were an officer. The Marines embarked and all the ships were given base liberty because the only clothes they had were two sets of fatigues and 3 pair of skivvies. Well, the EM club was wrecked in about 30 minutes, and while I never personally saw any of it, I heard that Marines were begging, borrowing, and stealing Navy uniforms so they could get into town (Olongapo City). I really don't remember much about that Christmas dinner, but I'm sure it was topped off with San Miguel because, after almost a month underway, everybody was anxious to hit the beach. I do have a memory of New Year's Eve.

Most of the task force was still in Subic on New Year's Eve, but many of the Marine personnel had left for Okinawa. What stands out in my memory of that New Year's Eve night was myself and RM1 John Sparks, after touring what seemed like quite a few of the cultural centers of Olongapo, were sitting in a local café around midnight having a bowl of soup when the big glass window

broke as two fighting drunks came crashing through. The hard-hats came, but we just finished up and wandered off to explore the next honky-tonk.

We stayed pier-side in Subic for a total of five weeks before getting underway on 2 February for Sasebo, Japan. I think everybody was ready to leave.

Jim Engelken

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Available after 10/05 issue **\$2688.50**

Received since 10/05 issue

\$265.00+\$35.00 for art charge=\$300.00

Available for 01/06 issue **\$2988.50**

Expended for 01/06 issue **\$ 167.73**

(Mailed to subscription members only)

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Please send your \$5.00 subscription for the newsletter to ML&RS at our address below.

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

USS BEXAR REUNION

SEPT. 28—OCT. 1,
2006

CHICAGO, IL

HILTON LISLE HOTEL

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.

WELCOME ABOARD!



Jim Infield
(1955-59) DC3 Eng

Ernest Shea
(1950-53) SN/BM3 BtGrp, 4th, 5th

At the request of your association, we will no longer publish the addresses and phone numbers of the new shipmates. If you would like to have an address, please contact ML&RS at our address on page two.



TAPS

The Growl was notified of the following shipmates' deaths since the last newsletter was published. Our deepest sympathy goes to the families and friends of the deceased.

Mark Fowler
(1946-47) EM 3/c Elec
Died August 20, 2005

Vernon Pittman
(1953-54) SN/QM3 Ops
Died December 15, 2005

Edgar Boudinot
(1965-66) Captain CO
Died January 8, 2006

DUES REMINDER: Be sure to send in your voluntary contribution of \$5.00 for the Bexar Growl. Send to ML&RS, Inc. address page two.



MAIL CALL

Bexar Reunion Attendees,

Thank you very much to all the members of the Bexar Washington, DC Reunion Group who signed the card for Shipmate Jeff Shenkman (1967-68). I forwarded the card to Jeff's family in Connecticut and I'm certain they will appreciate it immensely.

I would also like to thank the Bexar Shipmates and their families for making me feel welcome at the reunion. Jeffrey's mom couldn't wait to hear about it and to learn about his shipmates. I have to admit that as the reunion approached, I was feeling uncertain as to whether there would be anyone there who remembered him since the ship had such a long history. So I was pleasantly surprised when the first two men I encountered that day at the hotel, (Bob Grember and Victor Weiers) served with Jeffrey and remembered him well. I had a swell time at the reunion and am learning quite a bit about the surface Navy. Hope to see many of you in the future.

Best regards,
Jerry Tierney

Hi Dina,

In arranging my pictures from the Bexar September reunion, I found a picture of the table set up for the missing reunion member. There is a picture of the poem that went along with the table. Lois read it at the banquet. May I suggest, if possible, that in the next issue of the Bexar Growl, that the poem be printed in its entirety.

Ed and Janet Poenicke

The poem the Poenicke's refer to is actually not a poem, but an expla-

nation of the place setting for the Remembrance Table. It is as follows:

REMEMBRANCE TABLE

This table is a way of recognizing the kindred feeling that members of our profession of arms are missing from our midst. They were our comrades in arms. They are unable to be with us, so we will remember them this way.

SMALL TABLE: This small table is set for one. It symbolizes each member of our Armed Forces who died while defending our Country. Also, these soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who were not as fortunate as we, and have passed away.

WHITE TABLECLOTH: The white tablecloth symbolizes the purity of their intentions to respond to their country's call to arms.

SINGLE RED ROSE: Displayed in a vase, it reminds us of the families and loved ones who keep the faith even though the missing will not return.

RED RIBBON: The red ribbon is tied prominently to the vase to remind us of the blood they shed defending our country and our way of life.

SLICE OF LEMON: A slice of lemon on a bread plate is to remind us of their bitter fate.

PILE OF SALT: The pile of salt on the plate is symbolic of the tears shed by the families whose husbands, brothers, and sons will not return.

GLASS INVERTED AND ONE CHAIR: The glass is inverted and the chair is empty because they cannot be with us today.

Remember, we who served with them and called them our friends, we depended on their skills and dedication and we relied on them. Do not forsake their memories. Pray for them and always remember them.

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

WEBSITE REMINDER

For many of you, you already know that I set up and maintain a website for our association. Some, who may not be online, may not though. It is to them I address this. Even if you are not online, we'd like you to participate and be a part of our website. I have two photo album pages. One is for the Latest Reunion and the other is titled Then and Now and is intended to display old Navy and/or personal pictures. Maybe you have a wedding photo of a child or grandchild's wedding with you in it. Why not post it? A birth photo would be good too! Or your silver or golden wedding anniversary. We want this site to be a family experience too. Your family would get a kick out of seeing themselves online and I have plenty of posting space. Just identify the people in any picture and indicate the occasion, date and location and mail it to me at the address below. If it's a picture you need returned, say so and I'll return it. If someone in the family is online, they

can send it to me via e-mail attachment. It's quick and easy and you don't have to part with precious pictures, even temporarily. I've included that address below also.

It's your association and your site. Participate and enjoy it and have your friends and family stop by and visit. We realize that for a host of reasons, many members can't attend reunions. What better reason then is there to get involved in this way with our website. We have a Guest Log wherein you can add any comments you wish. Hope to see a post there by YOU soon!

Thanks,
Bob Weiss (Webmaster)

Regular mail to:
USS BEXAR REUNION ASSN
PO Box 303
Brookhaven, NY 11719-0303

Email to: ussbexar@verizon.net

Website located at:
<http://www.ussbexar-apa237.org/>

SEE ARTICLE ON PAGE FIVE FOR EXPLANATION OF THIS COUPON

Return this coupon if you want to receive all future mailings from us on paper via US Postal Mail:

Reunion Group: _____
(ship or unit name)

Your name: _____

Your mailing address: _____

Your phone number: _____

Return this coupon to:
ML&RS, INC
PO DRAWER 11399
HICKORY, NC 28603

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

From: Military Locator & Reunion Service, Inc

The information contained in this letter is very important! Please read it very carefully and respond as necessary! **You must respond as indicated in this message to continue receiving information about your reunion through the US Postal mail!**

Big changes are going on here at ML&RS, Inc! They're not going to happen overnight, but the process has begun. As you are certainly aware, rising costs for hotel rooms, meal prices and fuel for autos and tour buses makes for a more expensive reunion! We are doing everything we can to keep our costs to a minimum. However, prices continue to rise, including postage (which has gone up again the first of this year). In an effort to offer you and your fellow attendees the lowest possible cost, we are going to make some changes to the way things have been done in the past. We hope you will work with us to implement these changes as smoothly as possible!

Due to the multitude of requests we have received over the last few years, we are going to now upgrade our web site to include a variety of information pertaining to your reunion. There will be a small web site within our company's web site for each of the reunion groups we work with. The main page for each group will contain basic information about the upcoming reunion, as well as links to several other pages, including but not limited to lists of those who have signed up, the actual registration packet as a web page, a link to the profiles that were previously printed in the Sentimental Journal, newsletters, and after the reunion a link that can be used to order copies of the memory books that will now be included as part of the reunion package. Also, we will not duplicate anything your group already has on their

web page. We will do our best to keep personal information secure. Addresses and phone numbers will not be published. Email addresses will only be published with permission.

Beginning with the 2006 reunions, we will be discontinuing our memorabilia sales, including the Sentimental Journal. There are so many web sites out there now where hats, t-shirts, etc can be ordered, and the turn-around time is just a matter of days. When we first started this business, this was not the case. We began offering these items as a service to the reunion groups who didn't know where else to order items. Due to the increased availability of memorabilia, our sales have declined over the last few years, and it is no longer cost effective for us to continue offering these items. Also, there are a lot of groups who prefer to sell the items themselves as a fund raiser for the association. We certainly do not wish to compete with your association sales!

In place of the Sentimental Journal, we will begin including a 2006 Memory Book as the memorabilia item given away at the reunion. This will replace the note cards, clocks, pens, etc that have been given in the past. However, they will not be given at the reunion, they will be sent to each attendee (who signs up for one of the Option Packages or orders one as part of their Individual Option) following the reunion. The 2006 Memory Book will contain photos from the reunion and "then and now" photos that have been submitted prior to the reunion each year. The very popular profiles will now be accessible from the web site.

The web sites will be developed and published in the order the reunions are held this year. The USS PURDY reunion will be the first one, in case you want to see an example of the new web site format. Go to www.mlrsinc.com/purdy. At some point in the near future, we plan to add on-line registration capabilities to each group's web site. That probably won't happen this year, but I do foresee it happening soon. That is

another feature we got a lot of requests for.

Once the group's web site is up and running we will discontinue the majority of the paper mailings we send out. Newsletters, Surveys, Introductory Letters and Questionnaires, and the Registration Material will all be available on the web site. We do realize that there are still some people who do not have or do not want internet access. Because of this, **we will continue paper mailings to those who let us know they want their info via the postal mail.**

You must return the "coupon" on page four of this newsletter if you wish to continue receiving paper copies of the various material we send out – newsletters, registration material, surveys, etc.

If you do not mail in this coupon, we are assuming you have internet access and can obtain all the necessary reunion information off your group's web site.

Your group's web site will be www.mlrsinc.com/bexar. It may not be up and running when you get this letter, but it will be soon. I have already assigned the web addresses to each group, so I could let you know in this message what the address will be. Be sure to visit the site frequently and take advantage of the information that will be/is available there. If your profile is not listed in the Crew Profiles, then be sure to submit yours via www.mlrsinc.com/questionnaire.htm!

As we strive to provide you and your reunion group with the best possible value for your reunion dollar, it is sometimes necessary to change the way some things are done. Our ultimate goal is to offer each and every reunion attendee a great reunion at a reasonable price. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions, comments or suggestions!

Respectfully,
Dina Coffey
Office Manager
ML&RS, Inc