

USS SOMERS

First Reunion A Huge Hit

Tommy and Mary Anne Goforth handed a thank you gift and card from Chuck Mitchell on behalf of the attending reunion crewmembers for their wonderful hospitality & friendship.



It was quite a time in Cameron, Oklahoma April 24-26, 2010. Twenty "old salts" reunited to reestablish friendships of long ago...45 years or so! Guys from the '61, '63 and '65 Westpac cruises aboard the USS Somers (DD947). Sea stories abounded, laughter

filled the air, and a tear or two was shed. As the crew arrived one, two and three at a time, sometimes the license plate was a clue; other times it was a voice from the past that helped an old Sailor recognize and old friend. And friends we are!

****NOW HEAR THIS****



In 1965, Russ Hartley found a few cutout dolls in the "rag" barrel in Main Control. We were bound for Westpac. Russ' wife Sherline was expecting their first child, a girl. He would not see her until she was 7 months old. So, he cut them out, began to sew and with the help of HM1 "Doc" Montgomery, acquired some stuffing material and there you have it - the best gift a daughter could get from her Dad far, far away.

And 45 years later made sure Dad would safely return them to her.

USS Somers Crewmembers Association in Full Swing

It's alive and well. The "Association" lives! After numerous telephone calls, Internet research and thumbing through pages of information, we are official. The Association has filed for and received a Federal Employee Identification Number and has filled out the necessary paperwork with New York State. Following

membership approval of the Association's Constitution and Bylaws, they and other financial statements will be sent to the Division of Finance and Taxation. We have an email address (somersdd947@gmail.com) and will be researching a link to post photos that were taken at the reunion for all to access.

A Trip Worth Making - Reunion Highlights

It was 1,231 miles from Central NY and 1,400+ miles from Joshua Tree, California but no matter the distance those determined to make it to the reunion would not be deterred. Twenty men representing 14 states made the trip to once again share sea stories, reminisce about the "old days" and reacquaint after 45 years. It was amazing, no one changed a bit! There were words still recognizable. "SuuuEee." Not sure where that came from but maybe John (Buck) Buckman can help solve it. Did we have a good time? No, we had a "great" time.



Above Photo: L to R: Steve Lewis, Ron Hulme, Bill (Hutch) Hutchens, Mr. Michael Demeter and Jerry (Jeff) Jeffrey stand by the hotel sign in Poteau, Oklahoma.

Hey Jeff, what's in the bag?

Mr. Michael Demeter



Thanks to Mr. Demeter for his generosity in bringing the 11X14 photocopies of the Somers for those present. It was a gesture that was appreciated by all. In addition to the photo, he also brought a DVD of the 1965 Westpac cruise. A copy is being made for all that were present compliments of the Association.

An Officer and a Gentleman, your presence was welcomed by all.

And thank you for your initiative and guidance in helping us form the USS Somers Crewmembers Association.

Mike Buckman is shown here with his vintage 1929 Model "A" Ford. Mike and brother Buck towed this awesome relic from Sturgis, KY and made it available for any of the members to drive around and enjoy themselves. At times I think he took his life in his hands. Mike, you're braver than I am. As I had the pleasure of getting behind the wheel, I could see Mike cringe as I grinded the gears from first to third. Sorry Mike.



Unfortunately, some of us couldn't get behind the wheel for one reason or another...right Roy? Was it really your height that was in the way? Or was it girth?

Thanks for a great time Mike. To allow a bunch of guys behind the wheel of this beauty took courage, for sure.

Buck and Mike also brought some local Kentucky "flavor" to the reunion that was shared by most. In "Ball" jars no less. A treat not to over indulge in for sure, right Ron? Dang!

Word is one of the pints was lost and later found when a member got home and unpacked. It's amazing what you may find in a nasty old boot. Right Gary? You dog you!



PROPER DRESS: L to R: Tom Goforth and Delbert Long ponder how the guys didn't get the word on proper dress.



L to R: Bill (Hutch) Hutchens, Gary Rose, Chuck Mitchell, John (Buck) Buckman, Jerry (Jeff) Jeffrey, Bob Plante and Roy Lindberg.



Hutch and his \$50 Somers Cap. Hutch, \$50! Banks got his for \$25! Word is he got a discount if he got someone else to call for one. I think he owes you.



Hey Banks. Are you awake or are you sleeping? Now that takes practice! Mr. Demeter, I'm surprised you didn't catch this.

We Need Pictures

It would be great if any of you that took pictures while at the reunion would send me copies. It may cost you a couple of bucks, but it'll be worth the trouble. Send them by snail mail or email. Once this work slows down a bit, I'd like to scan them to a web site for everyone to access. Those who don't have access to the Internet, I can send you a complete set in the mail for your photo albums. Tommy and Hutch have sent me theirs and Garland has emailed me a bunch as well. Keep them coming.

Membership

I've received a few membership dues in the mail and thanks to all of you. We need to get 100% participation. One of the criteria of the Association is to set a budget and in order to do that we need to know what we have to work with. I'd like your ideas to plan something we all can do together at the next reunion, whether it's a dinner, poker tournament, a night out in beautiful downtown Poteau, or a casino night. Send me your ideas. I know if its left up to me and you guys don't enjoy it, I'll never live it down. After all, I do know you guys!

Looking for a Shipmate?

Get as much information to me concerning who we're looking for and I'll go to work to see if we can find him. The minimum we need is a full name, including a middle name or initial, and last known city and state. The more the merrier. And I'm sure these guys wouldn't mind being found.

In Memoriam

We lost two fine individuals on our '65 cruise. Commander Jackson Vereen and Seaman Jimmy C. Stinnett. I believe they are and will be with us until we leave this earth to join them. I'd like to honor them somehow as well as others we have since lost. Please share your ideas. We owe this to them and their families for their unselfish service to our Country.

The Girls



Front Row: Ruth Goforth, Toni, Susan Broussard. Standing: Brenda Tankersley, Linda Mitchell, Sherline Hartley, Mary Anne Goforth, JoAnn Hutchens and Dannell Tapley.

Well, we all know who did the all the work at the reunion. And the cooking, the serving, back and forth to the store, the dishes and the clean up and the clean up! You'll certainly not get any argument from me. We thank all of you for everything you did. All the men know it's a tough job...that's why we avoid do it! Each of you certainly deserve an "atta girl" for making this "special time"

A very special time for a bunch of Sailors who probably never cleaned up after themselves. We understand where our place is and as your reading this, your heads are nodding and your probably thinking, "Oh yeah." Your special ladies and I'm so happy I had the opportunity to meet all of you and I'm sure everyone feels the same. A hearty Thank You from the Crew.



CLASS - FORREST SHERMAN As Built.

Displacement 4619 Tons (Full), Dimensions, 418' 6"(oa) x 44' 11" x 15' (Max)

Armament 3 x 5"/54 DP (3x1), 4 x 3"/50 (2x2), 2 Hedgehog ASW Mortars,
4 x 21" tt.(4x1) 6 x 12.75" Mk 32 ASW TT (2x3).

Machinery, 70,000 SHP; Geared Turbines, 2 screws

Speed, 33 Knots, Range 4500 NM@ 20 Knots, Crew 324.

Operational and Building Data

Laid down by Bath Iron Works, Bath ME March 4 1957.

Launched May 30 1958 and commissioned April 9 1959.

Decommissioned April 11 1966 for conversion to DDG.

Reclassified as Guided Missile Destroyer DDG-34 March 15 1967.

Decommissioned November 19 1982.

Stricken April 26 1988.

Fate Sunk as a target 7/22/98.

For the record:

1. 20 crewmembers attended the first reunion. The official dates were April 24-26, 2010.
 2. 14 States were represented.
 3. 7 wives attended.
 4. 30 folks attended the reunion.
 5. 20 members have paid their dues
 6. 33 of the crew are on the mailing list.
 7. **PRESENT:** 1 Officer
 8. 9 Boiler Techs
 9. 6 Machinists Mates
 10. 1 Torpedoman
 11. 1 Radioman
 12. 1 Commissaryman
 13. 1 Seaman
 14. 17 drove/rode
 15. 2 flew
 16. 1 was at home the whole time. (That's you Tommy).
 17. **NOT ATTENDING:** 5 BT's, 3 MM's, 2 RM's, 2 Seaman, 1 Fireman
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The next Newsletter will be August-September 2010

Thanks to Garland Broussard for all his help in the past three weeks.

Thanks to Tommy & Mary Anne Goforth, Bill & JoAnn Hutchens, Garland & Susan Broussard for sending/emailing pictures.

Bob Plante

Secretary/Treasurer

Editor