

BALCH/PORTERFIELD REUNION ASSOCIATION



November 2011

Greetings Shipmates:

The reunion in Williamsburg, VA turned out to be a fantastic time despite the closing of our original hotel due to damage from Hurricane Irene. The Williamsburg Chamber of Commerce/Visitors' Bureau came to our rescue on very short notice, less than a week. We faxed all our contract information to them from the original hotel, which they sent out to several hotels. Within an hour, we had proposals from six hotels. Embassy Suites had best the proposal that met our needs and within six hours on Wednesday, Sept. 7 we had a signed contract with them. Once we arrived, the staff bent over backward to take care of us. So what could have been a disaster, turned out to be one of the best reunions we've ever attended. We cannot say enough about the staff and facilities at Embassy Suites. We would recommend this hotel to anyone for a personal visit or a reunion.

We have received word that the original hotel is now in receivership and will be auctioned off. Hurricane Irene might have been a blessing in disguise for our group. The staff there had been very helpful and we had visited several times, but after the hurricane, no one from there ever contacted us to let us know they were closed. We found out when our niece drove by and found a sign on the door. To say we were upset with them would be an understatement, but we had to let go of that and get the job done. We love Williamsburg and visit Jim's sister there often and were glad to be able to introduce our Balch-Porterfield friends to the city. Many of you got to meet Jim's sister Mary and her family at the banquet. Mary was also there one afternoon and visited with the guys.

Our welcome buffet was Monday evening. On Tuesday, we went to historic Jamestown where we had our Memorial Service. Then we went to Yorktown Victory Center. Wednesday was a free day. People went to Colonial Williamsburg, shopped or stayed at the hotel and visited. We had pizzas that evening. On Thursday, we toured Naval Station Norfolk and visited the Mariner's Museum in Newport News. The Ironclad Monitor is being restored there and we had a guided tour of the Monitor exhibits. We had lunch at the museum. On Friday we had our business meeting and banquet. Our entertainment was a local country singer, Johnny St. Clair, who happens to be married to our niece Allison. He put on a great show and the attendees really enjoyed his music.

There will not be a mini-reunion in Kerrville, TX next Memorial Day weekend as the next reunion will be held there in September. John Bryan and Desiree Centalozza will be our reunion hosts and we hear they have some really good plans in store. We'll ask them to do a write-up for the next reunion about what they have planned. We're really excited about going as we've never been able to attend a mini.



U.S.S. BALCH DD363



U.S.S. PORTERFIELD DD682

Please note that Jim's email address has changed. It is now jwsilerbtc@gmail.com. We've also removed our cell phone numbers from the contact information at the end of the newsletter. Our cell phones are only on when we're away from home as we have almost no signal at home, so our land line (540-483-5727) is always the best one to call.

Sam Thomas asked if he could write something for each newsletter and we said absolutely! The first installment is included in this newsletter. We hope everyone enjoys it. I know we enjoy getting his letters and phone calls.

Pat & Claudia Fisher want to thank everyone for the cards that were sent after the sudden, tragic passing of their grandson's wife. If you'd like to send them a card, the address is: 18493 730th Ave., Colo, IA 50056.

We received an email from Kathy Loudon, wife of John, Porterfield, RM2, 60-64. After the reunion, John was not feeling well. He had surgery on Monday, October 31. We received an email today, Nov. 4 that he was having some nausea but was progressing. If you'd like to send John a card, the address is: 15447 Charles St., Omaha, NE 68154.

Diane Essig had surgery shortly after the reunion. She is doing very well. If you'd like to send her a card, the address is: 255 Winchester Ave., Reedsport, OR 97467.

We received an email from Francis Marinaro, son of Alexander J. Marinaro. He is trying to determine if his father served aboard the Balch. He is not on our roster. His father had written a narrative about his service, which included the Balch being either steaming into or out of (information differs in two places in the narrative) Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. He is still living but his memory is failing so his son can't get clarification from him. If anyone has any information that could verify that Mr. Marinaro was indeed aboard the Balch, please notify Francis at fmarinaro1@verizon.net or fmarinaro@iname.com.

If your address, phone number or email address changes, please be sure to notify us as soon as possible. We want to be able to continue sending you newsletters.

If you know of anyone who is ill or has passed away, please let us know.

Also, if you are in contact with a shipmate who does not receive newsletters, please send us contact information so we can add them to our mailing list.

If you have a ship's baseball cap, be sure to wear it when you are out and about. You never know when a former crew member might be living near you who doesn't even know this association exists. Your cap will be sure to attract the attention of crew members.

We have 1,174 names on our roster, living and deceased. Over all the years both ships were in commission, there had to be many thousands. We just need to find them! So, if you know the whereabouts of any crew members, check in with them to see if they're receiving newsletters and if not, send us addresses and/or email addresses.

Fair winds and smooth sailing
Jim & Pat Siler

BALCH/PORTERFIELD REUNION ASSOCIATION



FROM AN OLD SHIPMATE :

Its with a great deal of saddness that I have to report the passing away of an old friend and shipmate--Frank Kurtz. He passed away on the 3rd of October, at the age of 95 years and was buried in San Diego on October 10th with full military services. Everyone from the Balch/Porterfield Reunion Association that knew Frank loved and respected our old shipmate. Frank put the Balch in commiss-ion in 1936 and is the last Plank Owner from the Balch that we know of. Frank was a sailors-sailor and put 32 years in the regular navy. He retired as a top kick warrant. Even after all those years in the navy, they wanted him to stay. That shows you what the navy thought of Frank.

I think about all the times that we visited him at his home in San Diego. Of course, I had to play golf with Frank, boy could hit that golf ball. If anyone would like to send a note to his family, the information is below.

Richard Kurtz (Franks Son)
4931 Mt. Etna Drive
San Diego, CA. 92117

When Richard called me about Frank, I slowly walked up to my bench. I sat a spell, reminisced about some of the good old days--Then I said goodbye to my old buddy, Frank Kurtz.

Talked to Peg Miller (Bill Miller--Fall River Reunion 1982--Porterfield 43/45). the other day. Peg is okay health wise and hopes to make the reunion in Texas. She did join us at Myrtle Beach. I have a few stories to tell about Bill in a future bulletin.

Talked to Mary Hutton (Augie DeWolf--Balch 41/43). Mary has a few minor health problems and also hopes to join us in Texas.

Talked to Frank (Ski) Koslowski (Balch 42/45). Ski is pushing 93 years and has trouble walking. He is trying to get someone to help him get to Texas next year. Ski came aboard the Balch a short time after I did, probably around April of 1942. He came aboard with a couple of great shipmates--Tug Boat Smith and Tony Skura.

I keep in close touch with Dave Spencer. He is looking forward to seeing us in Texas next year.

Had a nice conversation with Gene Beckstrom (Porterfield 43/46). He was our first chaplain. He is a retired minister up in the northern part of MN. His wife Gloria has a few health problems. He would like to make another reunion.

IN CLOSING--I don't know what happened--'ALONG LIFE'S PATHWAY' but when we started the reunion association many years ago, I was one of the youngest-- Now I am one of the oldest.

I don't know how many more reunions I can make. I would sure like to see every-one at least one more time.

TRY AND MAKE IT TO

TEXAS



U.S.S. BALCH DD363



U.S.S. PORTERFIELD DD682

Address Changes

If your address, email address or phone number changes, please notify us as soon as possible. We would appreciate hearing from the people below what their phone numbers are.

Paul Bengtson
Porterfield, TM2, 63-65
512 St. Louis Ave.
Rockford, IL 61104
Paulcheryl67@aol.com
Paul cell: 231-215-2466
Cheryl cell: 231-215-3378

Jan Bivens
910 Whippoorwill Ln.
Mansfield, OH 44906
janboop9@aol.com

Samuel "Ed" Chupp
Porterfield, GM2, 43-45
samuelchupp@bellsouth.net

George Coenen
Porterfield, ETR2, 63-66
2807 Caldera Blvd.
Midland, TX 79705-2609

Jim Gamble
Porterfield, EM3, 67-69
11402 Casa Blanca St.
Yucaipa, CA 92399-9740

William "Bill" Harris
Porterfield, EM2, 63-65
vetsailor66rwb@att.net

Denis Howard
Porterfield, E3, 61-63
440 Hummingbird Dr.
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86403-4928

Phil Lane
Porterfield, MM1, 53-57
philphran@q.com

Paul McKee
Balch, YN2, 36-38
1705 Skylyn Dr. Apt. 237
Spartanburg, SC 29307-1016

Ken Parker
Porterfield, QM3, 51-55
5678 Lord Cecil St.
San Diego, CA 92122-3147

Richard Syslo
Porterfield, MM3, 64-68
dickpolsyslo@gmail.com

Vance Trube
Porterfield, RD3, 58-60
vanjt@gmail.com

Edward Tuter
Porterfield, MM3, 66
ed.leah.tuter@gmail.com

Norman A. Vogel
Balch, RDM2, 42-45
7033 W Shadow Lake Dr.
Circle Pines, MN 55014-1930

Marvin Westcott
Balch, SM1, 41-44
1800 Beach Dr., Unit 109
Gulfport, MS 39507-1555

Additions to Roster

Kent Carmain, wife Dorothy
Balch, TM, 42-43
1624 N Denver St
Stillwater, OK 74075-8503
405-385-0941
kentcarmain@att.net

Eugene A. Dodds
Porterfield, FT3, 64-66
2185 S Reese Rd.
Reese, MI 48757-9444

Robert B. Hutchins
Porterfield, BTFN, 65-58
1106 11th St. #3
Rock Springs, WY 82901
307-922-3504

Vernon B. Ulrich
Porterfield, BT3 (Oil King) 53-57
PO Box 1983
McCall, ID 83638-1983

Additions to Memorial List

Some of these names may have appeared in a previous newsletter, but I want to make sure they are mentioned.

Melvin T. "Mel" Adkins
Porterfield, SM2, 63-66
Died Apr. 21, 2009

Dan Bostic
Porterfield, YN, 51-53
Died Mar. 18, 2008
Twin of Donald
Died Mar. 14, 2005

Kenneth Don Franklin
Porterfield, SN, 54-58
Died Oct. 21, 2010

Norbert Holomayer
Balch (rate/years unknown)
Died Mar. 22, 2008

Doyle "Pinky" Jobe
Porterfield, QMSN, 51-53
Died Aug. 8, 2001

Frank Kurtz
Balch, FN1/c, 36-38
Died Oct. 3, 2011

James Robert Mowat
Balch, 41
Died June 23, 1977

Christ "The Greek" Norris
Porterfield, RM1, 51-54
Died Sept. 5, 2011

William "Bill" Roach
Porterfield, YN3, 54-56
Died Dec. 20, 2010

Roy R. "Steamboat" Saul
Porterfield, SN, 54-55
Died Apr. 2, 2010

Expense Report

Fiscal Year Ending October, 31, 2011

<u>Item</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Balance 10/31/10			\$ 10,458.72
<u>Income - non-reunion related</u>			
Cap & Decal sales		\$ 316.80	
Donations		<u>\$ 813.00</u>	
Total non-reunion related income		\$ 1,129.80	
Balance			\$ 11,588.52
<u>Expenses - non-reunion related</u>			
Cap expenses	\$ 50.83		
Newsletter - printing & postage	<u>\$ 810.52</u>		
Total non-reunion related expenses	\$ 861.35		
Balance			\$ 10,727.17
<u>Reunion Income</u>			
Registrations		\$ 370.00	
Kitty		\$ 1,010.00	
Raffle		\$ 190.00	
50/50		\$ 315.00	
Activities		<u>\$ 6,982.00</u>	
Total reunion income		\$ 8,867.00	
Balance			\$ 19,594.17
<u>Reunion Expenses</u>			
Wreath	\$ 150.00		
Bus Transportation	\$ 1,759.12		
Monday night banquet	\$ 1,104.79		
Friday night banquet	\$ 2,057.92		
Quarterdeck - food & beverages	\$ 473.54		
Entertainment - Friday	\$ 500.00		
Printing, engraving, & mailing	\$ 134.84		
Advance for 2012 reunion	\$ 400.00		
Tuesday activities	\$ 720.00		
Thursday activities	\$ 441.00		
Thursday lunch	<u>\$ 420.00</u>		
Total reunion expenses	\$ 8,161.21		
Bank balance 10/31/11			\$ 11,432.96

Agent Orange

From Military.com

Approximately 20 million gallons of herbicides were used in Vietnam between 1962 and 1971 to remove unwanted plant life and leaves which otherwise provided cover for enemy forces during the Vietnam Conflict. Shortly following their military service in Vietnam, some veterans reported a variety of health problems and concerns which some of them attributed to exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has developed a comprehensive program to respond to these medical problems and concerns. The principal elements of this program include quality healthcare services, disability compensation for veterans with service-connected illnesses, scientific research and outreach and education.

Related Agent Orange News and Information Links:

[Ischemic heart disease, Parkinson's disease and chronic B-cell blood cancers including hairy cell leukemia added to the list of presumptive diseases.](#)

[IOM Identifies Link with Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia, Principi Extends Benefits](#)

[Veterans Benefits for those exposed to Agent Orange](#)

[Agent Orange Handbook 1302.1 - 2006](#)

[Veterans Health Initiative \(VHI\) Agent Orange](#)

[DoD Report on Herbicides Used Outside of Vietnam](#)

[VA Clinical Programs and Initiatives Information](#)

(We would encourage any veteran with in-country Vietnam service and diagnosed diabetes mellitus to contact his or her local VA office (1-800-827-1000) for information and assistance on applying for benefits. Or you may apply on-line) <http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp>

~~~~~

The information above was posted on the Military.com website. If the links don't work from this page, go to the following website: <http://www.military.com/benefits/content/veterans-health-care/agent-orange.html> You'll have to type the address into your browser.

As space allows, we'll post information on Agent Orange and Asbestos exposure. Many of you are trying to get benefits and disabilities from the VA for these conditions. We hope by printing some of these articles, you can get some information to help with your claims.

## Contact Information

Jim and Pat Siler  
835 Claybanks Drive  
Callaway, VA 24067-4524

Email Jim: jwsilerbtc@gmail.com  
Email Pat: silerpugs@yahoo.com  
Phone/Fax: 540-483-5727

## Website

<http://www.balch-porterfield.org>

The Balch-Porterfield Reunion Association website was managed by Jeff Shaffer for many years. We owe him a debt of gratitude for all his hard work. Pat Siler has taken it over and is in the process of updating the site. Please be patient while this is being done.

The main page has been updated and the Roster and Memorial List will be the next to be done. This newsletter will be posted on the website along with previous newsletters.

## Facebook

We are on Facebook. If you're on Facebook, type USS Porterfield in the search box and then click on "Ask to Join." There are already quite a few members and they are posting and putting up photos. We also post information on Asbestosis and Agent Orange issues in an effort to get the word out to people. There's also a "Chat" feature.

If you're not on Facebook and would like to join, it's simple and free. Go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and follow the instructions to sign up. We suggest once you've joined, to go into the security and privacy settings and make your page private so only your friends can see what's on your page.

## Baseball Caps

We have baseball caps for sale. The price is \$12.00, which includes shipping. At reunions, the price will be \$10.00. Please indicate which ship you were on. This increase is due to the increase in postage and cost of boxes.

To purchase, send a check payable to **Balch-Porterfield Reunion Association** to Jim Siler, 835 Claybanks Drive, Callaway VA 24067-4524.

## Patches

We have two patches and a decal for sale.

The first patch, with the Pacific Ocean globe with Pride of the Pacific on it, was issued during the Korean Conflict (price \$4.00) and the second patch, with a seahorse and spear came out in the 60's (price \$4.00). The decal is the same design as the 60's patch, with the seahorse (price \$1.00).

To purchase, send a check payable to **Balch-Porterfield Reunion Association** to Jim Siler, 835 Claybanks Drive, Callaway VA 24067-4524.