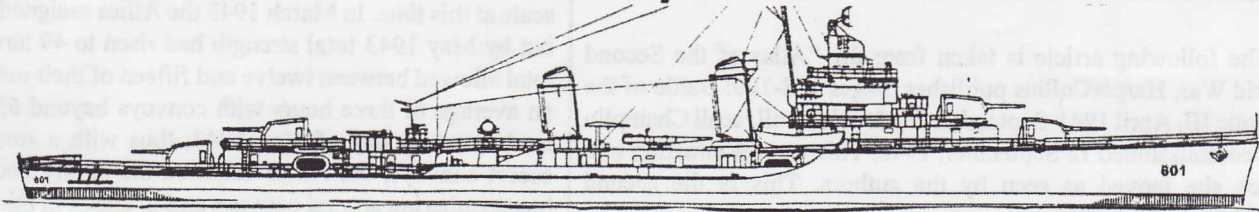


# USS Champlin DD-601



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## THE SEAWEED

Spring 2004

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### USS CHAMPLIN REUNION: BUFFALO, NY

Dick Berman, chairman of our 2004 Reunion, to be held in Buffalo, NY, reports that several shipmates and their spouses have already signed up for the tours and made reservations with the hotel. The list now includes shipmates Lou Gilbert, Charlie Meahan, Hal Medvedeff, Tom Morton, Nat Lerner, Norm Prewitt, Larry Suter, Joe Trecarico, and, of course, Dick Berman himself. Doris Higgins is also planning to be there. The reservation form will be found on the cover page of this issue. Detach, complete the form and mail it to Richard Berman, 221 Route 199, Red Hook, NY 12571-2380, (845)-758-1014. If you have any questions, just write or call Dick. He will have the answer you need - or will get it.

**Date:** 29 September - 3 October, 2004

**Place:** Buffalo, Erie County, New York

**Hotel:** Adam's Mark Hotel, 120 Church Street, Buffalo, NY 14202, located downtown and a two block walk to a free trolley on Main Street running to restaurants, theaters, etc. The hotel rate is \$77.00 per night plus 13.25% tax equals \$87.20. Self-parking fee is \$5.25 daily with in and out privileges. The \$77.00 rate will be honored for those wishing to arrive one day early and staying after the reunion for two additional nights. On-premises Deco restaurant, Tiffany Rose Lounge in an open-air atmosphere and Players sports action bar with sandwiches, appetizers and beverages available. Breakfast will be discounted 15%.

**Reservations:** Cutoff date is 29 August, 2004 at the \$77.00 rate, after that date, on a space available basis at the high contract rate or rate available at that time. A deposit is required equal to the room rate and tax for the first night. Use a credit card. This is a refundable deposit if the hotel receives notice of a cancellation at least 72 hours prior to scheduled arrival. To reserve call 1-716-845-5100, ask for "Reservations" and identify yourself as part of the USS Champlin DD601 Reunion Group. The hotel will provide a reservation number for your records. I suggest that you reserve your room now; do not wait until June, July or August as this is a busy hotel and space may not be available. Airport and Amtrac (downtown station) shuttle service available. Call hotel directly at (716) 845-5100. For those driving, advise me when returning your Tour Reservation Form and directions will be sent by mail.

**Tours:** Reservations must be received by 29 August 2004 with check payable to *Champlin Reunion Group* and mailed to Richard Berman at the address above.

**Thursday 30 September 2004:** 10:00 a.m. We will visit Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park, which contains USS Little Rock (Cruiser), USS The Sullivans DD-537, USS Croaker, a WWII submarine, various Air Force aircraft, Army tanks and a museum. We will hold our memorial service on the fantail of the USS Sullivans. We will depart at approximately 12:30 p.m. to enjoy lunch dockside along the Erie Canal followed by a two hour cruise through Locks 33 and 34 on the Erie Canal. Our lunch, a picnic-style buffet, will knock your socks off (trust me on this). Cost: \$51.00 per person.

**Friday, 1 October, 2004.** A guided city tour of Buffalo includes millionaire's row of homes and Forest Lawn Cemetery with a brief stop at the grave site of Stephen Champlin. Then on to the Erie County Historical Society, an original building from the Pan-Am Exposition of 1901. Much to see. Then we head to Niagara Falls for a buffet luncheon overlooking the Falls at the Penthouse Restaurant, view Horseshoe Falls from the Table Rock and the picturesque Floral Clock. Cost: \$44.00 per person.

*The price of the tours includes all admissions, guide service, lunch and transportation as well as gratuities at the restaurants.*

On **Saturday, 2 October, 2004** we will hold the **Annual Meeting** of the USS Champlin Reunion Group at 10:00 a.m. in a room to be announced. In the evening at 6:30 p.m., the **Annual Banquet:** Choice of Chicken Wellington @ \$32.00, Prime Rib @ \$35.00 and Baked Haddock @ \$32.00. All tax and gratuity included. Like to flirt with Lady Luck? Two casinos are nearby - one across the border (Canada) and one in Niagara Falls, NY. **If you cross the border you must have a passport or birth certificate for identification.** Nothing else is acceptable. Be advised, we'd hate to lose you before the super banquet is over! Okay, that's all. Now, stop reading, turn to the cover page, complete the Reservation Form, detach and mail it to Dick Berman, then come back here and . . . read on.

### DUES ARE DUE AGAIN

I know, I know. . . you were reminded of this in the last issue. But not everyone paid attention nor did they pay their dues. So. . . I'm reminding your again. Send your dues of \$15.00 or your subscription payment of \$5.00 to Norman Prewitt, Sec./Treas., 2049 Eastridge Drive, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024-2869. Thankee very kindly.

## A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE: 1941-1943

The following article is taken from the "Atlas of the Second World War, HarperCollins publisher, pages 108-109: Battle of the Atlantic III, April 1941-September 1943". You will recall Champlin was commissioned 12 September, 1942. This was the situation into which she moved as seen by the authors. This is the second installment in the series.

"Given the dependence of their future operations - especially the build-up and supply for Operation *Overlord* - upon the defeat of the U-boats, the Americans and British agreed at the Casablanca conference (January 1943) that priority had to be placed upon winning the battle of the Atlantic. By March 1943 the increased U-boat losses indicated that a major new aspect of the struggle was developing: additional very long-range aircraft were allocated to the battle, and their intervention is generally considered to have been crucial to the defeat of the U-boats in May 1943.

"In reality, the losses sustained by the U-boats in May 1943 were the result not of any single cause, however important, but of a combination of factors. The defeat of the U-boat campaign against Allied shipping lay not simply in the reverses sustained in May 1943 - when 41 U-boats were destroyed - but in the fact that in July and August 1943 the U-boat arm sustained defeats of similar severity. Though losses in these months - 37 and 25 respectively - were less than in May they were sustained by a force that had regrouped and reorganized after the May debacle, and had intended to mount a sustained, massed offensive to regain the initiative. Thus the losses in July and August were more profound than those of May, and August 1943 marked the real Allied victory in the battle of the Atlantic; thereafter, the U-boat arm was never again able to mount a sustained threat to Allied communications in the North Atlantic. After August 1943 the primary role of the U-boats was to tie down and distract disproportionately large Allied naval forces whilst a new generation of submarines was developed.

"The Allied victory in the North Atlantic between May and August 1943 was the product of four related developments: the organizational, tactical and technical superiority of convoy escorts over the U-boats became apparent for the first time; Allied air power became increasingly effective; better intelligence concerning U-boat movements became available to the Allies via *Ultra* intercepts; and finally German errors in the conduct of operations. Possibly the Allied victory might have been won before Spring 1943 had it not been for Operation Torch (Editor: The Anglo-American invasion of northwest Africa), which tied down substantial escort forces until this time, but in this period various technical developments - ship-borne radar and direction-finding equipment, improved asdic detection equipment, more powerful depth-charges, and new and more accurate firing patterns - allowed convoys to be accorded an adequate scale of escort protection. In its conventional form, the submarine was incapable of the tactical or technological development required to counter the increases in escort numbers and advances of anti-submarine technology: further, in its conventional form the submarine could not withstand the introduction of Allied air power to the battle of the Atlantic in Spring 1943.

"The latter took three forms - the escort carrier, very long range (VLR) patrol aircraft operating in direct support of the convoys, and

standard patrols over transit areas. All three forms were small-scale at this time. In March 1943 the Allies assigned patrol duties, but by May 1943 total strength had risen to 49 aircraft, and this total allowed between twelve and fifteen of their number to spend an average of three hours with convoys beyond 650 miles from land on every day of May 1943; thus with a small number of escort convoys, the Allies acquired the ability both to harry U-boats gathering around convoys and to attack in mid-ocean where U-boats had to run on the surface in order to recharge their batteries. The Spring months witnessed a German attempt to counter the Allied ability to find surfaced submarines as they crossed the Bay of Biscay at night, by sailing in daylight and fighting the aircraft in the process: this error provided the patrols with their only period of substantial success in the entire war.

"The combination of air power and increased escort effectiveness was, in technical terms, decisive in bringing about the defeat of the U-boat arm. Nevertheless, that U-boat arm was anyway at that time in qualitative decline because of the enforced dilution arising from its rapid expansion in previous years. In any event, even had the success of 1942 been sustained throughout 1943, this could not have secured a German victory for the extension of convoy struck at the very effectiveness of a U-boat service that achieved its greatest returns at the expense of merchantmen sailing independently. More importantly, by March 1943, US shipyard production had outstripped Allied shipping losses. It was with this complex of factors that the critical point of the battle of the Atlantic was passed in 1943, ensuring the Allies against defeat.

"June 1943 was the quietest month in the North Atlantic: U-boats concentrated on soft targets off the west coast of Africa and Brazil, rising numbers of escorts and difficulties in deciphering the new Allied codes introduced in May led Donitz (head of the German U-Boat fleet) to recall U-boats for the fitting of new anti-aircraft and schnorkel devices, and to attempt to persuade Hitler to encourage more Navy/Lufwaffe cooperation. In July 1943 Allied ship production exceeded, for the first time, losses from enemy action. Thereafter, the Allies produced an average of 5000 gross tons more per month than they lost. By Sept., however, U-boats returned to the North Atlantic in numbers with new tactics: the use of schnorkel to recharge batteries while submerged, the Spanish coast route to the North Atlantic and increased use of mid-Atlantic refueling led to an increase in sinkings. The U-boats had by no means given up the fight."

## SPUDS' TAKE ON PENN YAN

In response to the background of the name Penn Yan, NY in the Winter 2004 issue, Jim "Spuds" Robertson writes: "The following is not about the Champlin, but I thought you would enjoy it anyway. Many years ago I was part of a counseling institute at Syracuse University. There were about forty of us, and we represented all parts of the country. One of the young ladies told us that she was from Pann Yan, NY. I wasn't sure of the pronunciation, so I asked her to spell it. 'P-e-n-n Y-a-n,' she told me. 'Oh,' I said, 'Penn Yan as in Pennsylvania.'

"That's right, Pann Yan.

"I see. Penn Yan like penny."

"Right, PANN YAN."

"I thought I'd try once more. "Penn as in pencil or pen."

"That's correct, PANN, PANN, PANN!"

"This must have been one of the dumbest conversations I have ever been in, but I had the deep sagacity not to say so."

(Editor's note: After reading Spud's story, I began to listen more closely to the natives pronunciation - and sure enough that young lady was right on target. . . Pann Yan, no matter how it's spelled.)

## PREWITT'S OUTLOOK

From the Prewitt's via E-Mail: "Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming -- WOW--What a Ride!"

## JACK BRAWDY'S EXPERIENCE

"Hello - To whom this may concern: I am searching for information on my family and have reason to believe that a crew member of the USS Champlin, John Alexander Brawdy, may be my uncle. Do you have any idea of how I could contact him? Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Bob Brawdy". On February 19, 2002, Bill Gustin received this e-mail message and he sent it on to me.

The very next day I sent this Bob Brawdy the following message: "Thanks to my good friend and shipmate Bill Gustin you have found John Alexander Brawdy who may be your uncle. Since receiving your message I have been looking through some old "Family tree papers and the possibility exists that I am indeed your uncle. Please e-mail me and let me know what you know that would establish such a relationship." This preliminary correspondence and subsequent information between the two of us proved this Bob Brawdy was indeed my nephew, the son of my brother Paul (deceased) who had secretly married a second time, and produced two sons, Bob and a brother Patrick.

Thanks to Bill for sending me this e-mail, we have been corresponding ever since. Bob's wife is a genealogist and after they found me, they decided to trace all the Brawdys they could find. With the help of the Pittsburgh branch of the family we have had tremendous success in our family tree finds.

Sometime before all this happened, I had bought myself a webtv system and one of the first things I looked for on the Internet was the Champlin web site, found the Deck Log and added my name to the list of shipmates signing. To me it was a great way of letting the grandkids know that I had served on the Champ and had been part of that brave ship's crew.

I have in front of me a loose-leaf binder, the thickness of the average city's telephone book. It's full of information about ancestral Brawdys. None of this would be possible if Bob Brawdy, my newly found nephew, hadn't seen my name in the 601 Log while surfing the Internet one day. To all former shipmates of the Champlin who haven't done so, put your name in the log, not only for the grandkids but the possibility of "dividends". . . it sure paid off for me.

## HARRY CUTHBERT RECALLS

"Dear Bill, Will, or as I once called you, Gus: I think it's time to acknowledge your service to your shipmates by creating the website and publishing " The Seaweed ". If you have decided to retire from these labors, I doubt anyone else will be prepared to devote the time, or have the talent to continue.

You have asked me several times to write some recollections of life aboard Champlin, which I have hesitated to do since I was one of the last four crew to join the ship at Pearl Harbor before heading west to finish off the enemy. We radar strikers; Gerry Cruthers, Dick Williams, Ken Harvey and I (all V-12 disappointments) joined an experienced gang of radar operators who welcomed us into their watches without any resentment or ill will. I was only shot at one time, off Wake Island, so there is nothing heroic to recall. My battle station as a talker in CIC did have me standing where I was facing aft, looking out an open hatch, and saw the splashes made by the 8" Jap rounds as they fell between us and the Can steaming on station behind us. We soon made a hard turn to Port and scurried out of the range of those enemy guns. Do you remember seeing the CV Franklin limping back to Pearl with burned out flight deck and gaping holes made by Kamikazes ? We were fortunate not to have left harbor a month earlier !!!

Would you believe I drank my first can of beer when the Captain allowed the crew to have a beach party in Buckner Bay, with many GI cans full of frozen beer guarded by CPOs until our boat arrived on dry sand. I can still see some of those chiefs holding cans under their open mouths as they gradually opened the beer sending a stream of pure alcohol at the target.(the cans were still frozen). I remember how good it was to be able to run up and down the beach after being aboard for so many weeks without real exercise. (The beer was good when it was thawed out.)

If you want stories of life aboard during my comparatively short and peaceful sea duty, I could write a book.

Please say hello to Jerry Estes if you see him at the reunion. He was a good teacher and patient friend to us latecomers and an example for us to follow. My best to you and any other living C-Division Champlin crewmen. (Today's Navy with 40% females would not be my cup of tea !)

My wife and I are getting along fine, although she has some serious arthritis in the knees. I am blessed with no aches or pains for which I thank God every morning when I awake !! Yours sincerely, Harry (Hank) Cuthbert

## MORE FROM THE PREWITT'S (VIA E-MAIL)

The USS Constitution (Old Ironsides) as a combat vessel carried 48,600 gallons of fresh (remember that figure) water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators (fresh water distillers). However, let it be noted that according to her log: "On July 27, 1798, the USS Constitution sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping."

Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum. Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine. On 18 November, she set sail for England. In the ensuing days she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 English merchantmen, salvaging only the rum aboard each. By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, and though unarmed, she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whiskey distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home.

The USS Constitution arrived in Boston on 20 February 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whiskey and 38,600 gallons of stagnant water. GO NAVY

(Ed. No wonder they were called the "good old days"!

### SEAWEED'S NEW WORLD HEADQUARTERS

It's now a done deal. By the time some of you receive this issue of the Seaweed, the Mini-reunion will be over and the Seaweed will have moved to its new home on Keuka Lake. The new address is 626 East Bluff Drive, Penn Yan, NY 14527 and the new telephone



number is (315) 536-9329. Keuka Lake is shaped like a "Y" as you can see from the picture to the left. The new World Headquarters of The Seaweed is located about six miles north of the bluff you see in the center of the image, on the left side of the right arm of the "Y". If any of you are in the neighborhood, just drop by and see our new

home. While the location is new, we have really moved into. . . .

### CHAMPLIN COUNTRY

Look at these pictures: The first road sign "Champlin Road" is located about four miles northwest of our new place and the second road sign "Champlin Ave." is located about six miles north in the very heart of downtown metropolitan Penn Yan.

There are eighteen, count 'em, eighteen Champlins listed in the local phone directory. Even better, there is a local pub, "Lloyd's Limited" owned and operated by a member of the local Champlin family. So, if you promise to behave, you might even get to eat and have a "wet" at Lloyd's when you visit. Life is good, ain't it!

### CHAMPLIN JOBS

In the last issue of The Seaweed, shipmate Joe Szalay wrote, "One of the things all of us could write about is what was our job on the

ship?" I had been mulling over a similar idea, so I sent the following E-Mail to several shipmates: "Ahoy shipmates: I'm looking for stories for the May issue of The Seaweed. Give me your recollections and memories of life aboard the Champlin, I am especially interested in a description of your rating aboard Champlin. What did you do? What were the daily chores and responsibilities of that rating? Where were you located aboard Champlin to perform those duties? What was your training to perform those duties? Where did you receive that training? Over what period of time (weeks, months) did that training take place? Approximately how many shipmates were involved in your particular rating? Who do you remember from your Champlin days in your rating? For example: what the heck is a watertender? What did a Carpenter's Mate do aboard a metal ship?" So far, I have received the following responses:

### FROM LOU GILBERT

"Dear Bill, You are asking a lot of one fingered typers who are not proficient in computer operation, but because I know how hard you work to do your thing, I will try. A watertender derives his title from the fact that he controlled the level of water in the boiler, an important thing, as too much could overflow and flood the generator while too little could damage tubes, and put the boiler out of commission. As time passed the rating took on more tasks. The higher the rating the more responsibility right up to being in charge. You must maintain a steady steam pressure under all conditions, maintain and service all equipment and distribute jobs to your gang if you are in charge. You also are involved with fueling and keeping oil and water tanks full and in good condition. The water for the boilers must be far purer than washing and drinking water. This is the evaporator operator's job in the engine room. The hotter the climate the less pure water can be made, resulting in salt water showers and saltier drinking water. From what I have there is no such rating as watertender in today's Navy. The firerooms on destroyers were located about midship, the forward one behind the forward engine room, and the after aft of the after engine room. If I remember correctly the forward fireroom provided steam for the starboard screw and the aft for the port screw. As far as I know there was no school for firemen or watertenders. You were trained by your petty officers. My mentor was a great teacher. He was 'old', in his mid thirties, to this 18 year old. Of course he was regular Navy. His name was Chester Grabowski, who became chief on the Champ. 'Garbo', as we called him, put in his twenty years and retired to California. He came to one reunion in Savannah and has passed away. He was one the crew members from the cruiser Marblehead, which had been in China since 1936 with the Yangsee river patrol. Some of the others were (John E.) Rathke and Jimmy Lubbock who was at one time the middle weight champ of the Pacific fleet. I know he was good because he couldn't find anyone dumb enough to spar with him except me. He beat the hell out of me regularly. There were usually about 15 men assigned to each fireroom. I worked in both, because. as you got upgraded you sometimes got moved. Some of the names I remember: Earl (Arnold) Simerly, Alfred Oeldemann, Pappy (William) Welch, Pappy Harrington, Martin

Cover, Hugh Wells, (Fred) Peabody, (Edwin) Monsen, T. (Ted) Chief (Joseph) Kratochvil, Monk (John) Strubank, (James) Ropog, (George) Beretsky, (Andrew) Matlack, are all I can think of now. I'm sure I'll think of more later. These are all fireroom personnel. I am going to mail you some facts about the Champ that George Styles compiled a long time ago that should be good material for the Seaweed. That's it for now. Hope you and Bev are well."

### **HAROLD MALAN**

"In answer to your recollection of memories on USS Champlin; My rating was GM3 Class. I was a mechanic on 20 mm guns, kept antiaircraft guns working. Worked on main deck. My training was about 3 months at Great Lakes, IL Gunnery School. There were 3 or 4 Gunners Mates I worked with: Chief Gunner's Mate (Taisto) Ranta and Joe Vecchione. I was on the ship from around September 1943 until October 8, 1945. I remember our ship being fired on by the U-boat (U 856) in the North Atlantic killing the Captain. Our ship was repaired at Brooklyn Navy Yard. While there my wife and I got married 60 years ago last April 18, 1944. I was also on the ship during the invasions of Italy and Southern France. I went to Pacific in time to make the battles off of Okinawa. I hope this is the information you wanted. By Rita Malan for Harold Malan."

### **GERALD CRUTHERS**

"After spending time in the Navy V-12 program, I went to boot camp at Great Lakes; from there I boarded a troop train and crossed the country to Mare Island in San Francisco. There I boarded the USS Saratoga for the trip to Hawaii. I remember climbing that long ladder from the dock to the flight deck carrying that seabag with hammock and mattress. I was determined to make it, and I did. One day while standing in the chow line, a sailor came along trying to crash the line; we went to high school together, and he had just married my cousin He was on the sub that fished the future President Bush out of the Pacific. After landing in Hawaii I was transferred to Camp Caitlin where I went to school to become a radar operator; I believe it was a six week course. It was really quite a nice camp. Then the USS Champlin came sailing by, and I was transferred to it. Aboard the Champ I was assigned to CIC (Combat Intelligence Center). The first time that we went out to sea I became so seasick that I wanted to die. Finally, Mark Leonard said to me that I had to eat something. So, I had some chicken, and that did the trick; I wasn't sick again, and that included going through the typhoon off of Okinawa. I met a lot of nice people on the Champlin but became friendly with one signalman, and this friendship has lasted for almost 60 years."

### **BOB LA VORRNA**

"When I enlisted at age seventeen I had been working part time in a large wholesale bakery where I did nothing but fill jelly doughnuts. After boot camp at Green Bay, WI, when interviewed for assignment, I asked for submarine duty. On hearing I had worked in a bakery they sent me to the Lake Charles, LA. Naval Base for training at the base bakery. The C.P.O. in charge was from my

home town, Paterson, NJ, so all I did for eight weeks was deliver fresh rolls and pastries to the officers quarters each morning. They then promoted me to Baker third class, handed me a navy bakery manual and assigned me to the Champlin as ships baker. By the way, by this time I had turned eighteen so I was an old salt already, right. Having never had a baker aboard before the expectations were high. I believe that prior to my arrival the cooks did the baking which consisted mostly of biscuits and some cakes. There was no bakery aboard ship so we worked in the galley at night after the cooks were finished. By "we" I mean George Styles and I. Thank God for him as he was a bit older than I and together we managed to do a good job. We began work after the cooks finished dinner which was eight p.m. and we worked until dawn alert most nights. There was no mixing machine aboard so we had to scour out the sink and mix the bread dough by hand. there we stood side by side kneading dough and singing songs to ease our misery. Lou Esposito would come down for coffee from the bridge when he had the duty and sing along making us a musical trio. With the aid of the bakery manual we made a good variety of pies, cakes and sweet rolls along with the twenty to thirty loaves of bread each night. I grew up fast on the 'Champ' and thanks to George I stayed out of trouble as he was a good example of clean living. I think about those hard nights in the galley but they have now become a pleasant memory. My battle station was pointer in gun mount four where Larry Suter was trainer and George Purple was gun captain. In addition to Larry Suter I also remember Joe Tricarico, Joe Macaluso, Chuck Meehan and Carl Olson. Another baker came aboard Champlin, and I was transferred to the new USS Sarsfield DD-837 at Boston MA. I was given fifteen days leave which I spent marrying Helen Frances Agnes Wilson.. On May 6<sup>th</sup> we celebrated fifty-nine years together. By the way, baking became my lifetime profession. I now work in a bakery three days a week, starting at 4 a.m..Bless all our shipmates."

### **FRANK KOSTER**

Hi Skivywaver, (Was that the top or bottom of the skivies?) Well here goes--- Electrician's Mate (EM). aka bulb snatcher. Duties: Stand watch at main switchboard in Engine Room, stand or sit watch in After Steering Room, maintain gyro-compass and show the 8 p.m. movies between stacks #1 & #2. The Electrical Shack was located on starboard side, just aft of ladder going to main deck. I received sixteen weeks of EM school at Sampson NTS ( I think you are familiar with that place) I recollect seven to ten men in EM gang aboard ship. I remember Pinky (Frank H.)Miller CEM, Larry Larkin EM1/c, Charlie Post EM1/c, (William C.) Gillette EM2/c, Dick Crowell EM3/c, Bob Lowery F2/c, Chester Pisiak F1/c, Johnson & Miller F2/c. Also, Lt. Fred Weber, LJG (John H.)Keyes & LTJ (RogerG.) Goodeve; all Engineering Officers.

. A Watertenders duty, where I briefly served, is to tend the water gauges for the fore & aft boilers, clean the various tips on the burners, punches (cleans) tubes in boiler. Louie Gilbert can give you better info on this. Also keep the coffee pot going. breathe in all the "Good Air"emitted by the asbestos on the steam pipes. The Carpenters Mate that I knew repaired my briarwood pipe that I

smoked in my leisure time. That's it 'Old Skivywaver'. Oh! I almost forgot. . . In regards to your questions: The forward fireroom was under #1 stack. The after fireroom was under #2 stack. Engineer room between Firerooms. The after Steering Room is below fantail & used when steering from the bridge is knocked out. Gyro, (as I recollect) was in the CIC area. What I really recollect is when Dick Crowell & I picked up an electron tube for the Gyro at the supply shop in the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The cobble stone blocks were wet, I slipped, the tube went up in the air, then you saw 2 EM's in slow motion trying to make a shoestring catch. (the catch failed & we were in hot water) As you know, a Gyro is a Greek sandwich. That was not me up any mast, especially at sea. You have a photo of me up #1 stack. This qualified me to climb telephone poles for 39 years. The Electrical Gang other than standing watch at the main switchboard, showing the first rate movies between the stacks, also did daily compartment inspections pertaining to 'expired' bulbs, loose wiring etc. Hope everything is going on schedule at the Lake. Love to your better half from both of us Rebs. Frank(Ex-Bulb Snatcher)"

### JOE RAGUSA

Bill, I came on board in March 1945 as a deckhand in the second division. The boss had me chipping paint and repainting. I was in the second division and enjoyed every day aboard ship, with all the men that I met. My duties in an emergency were in the upper handling room of number 4 mount. That's where I hurt my left hand, it got caught in the hoist from the magazine to the handling room. Seamen First Class Joseph A. Ragusa

### FROM THE CHAMPLIN WEB SITE'S LOG

**Dale Strubank** writes,(dalestrubank@ameritech.net) from Macomb Twp., Michigan," Great site. My father served on Champlin in WWII. I see some of his old buddies: Jim Ropog, Arnold Simerly & Louis Goldberg (Gilbert) on the ships roster. To read the stories was like hearing my Dad tell them all over again. I have a couple of his old pictures, if you are interested, for your site. My brother served on the Shasta & I served on the Shangri-la , so I guess we took after Dad. Best regards, Dale Strubank."

**Vishal Bhatt** E-Mails from India:"A very nice well-designed web site. I explored every page and many of the links. Some of the U-Boat links, when coupled with your web site, bring both sides of the battle into perspective. Congratulations on being Earthlink's Homepage contest winner."

**Renee Bernius (Pierce)** E-Mails "Just wondering if the Robert Bernius listed is part of my family tree. My family lives mostly in Illinois. Just wondering. If you see this Robert, can you please write me. Bernius is kind of a unique name. God Bless, Renee."

**Chris Bonnavier Jr.** E-Mails:" My Grandfather was on board the Champlin. This site is great. He always used to tell me stories about his time there when I was a child. I have been researching what happened to her and where she's gone since. Its great to see all this great info. He sure would have loved seeing this site. George Edward Bonnavier S1c: His casket flag, tour bars and a picture of the ship adorn my fireplace mantel..Thank you. Wondering if anyone has any old pictures of him? If so I would pay money for

time needed. Thank you again."

And, from the USS Champlin Web Site:

**Dan and Joanie McLain**, [DJ@profirefighter.com](mailto:DJ@profirefighter.com) , ask about : Basil N. Rittenhouse, Jr. CDR. "Hi there, I was very excited to find this website. Basil Rittenhouse was a very close friend to my wife's family. He eventually retired from the navy as a Rear Admiral. I have a picture of him along with his Admiral Shoulder Boards. I wish I knew more about him. Thanks, Dan McLain

**Karen Miller** notes that, "My father, Warren Murbach, served on the USS Champlain. He e-mailed me to have me check out the Winter 2004 edition of The Seaweed on-line. Unfortunately, the site does not have the newsletter past Spring 2002. Can you please either send me the Winter 2004 The Seaweed, or let me know when the website has been updated?"

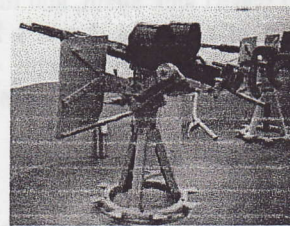
### JOSEPH FRANCIS VECCHIONE GM2/C

Sad news from Helen Vecchione: " Please forgive me for not notifying you sooner. My husband, Joe, passed away on December 6<sup>th</sup>. He was always so proud of his service in the Navy and so proud of the USS Champlin."

"On October 12st, Joe took a very bad fall getting out of bed. He knew right away he had broken his leg.. He was in Kingston Hospital three weeks. But because his brain tumor was back, they couldn't perform surgery. From Kingston Hospital an ambulance brought him to a Nursing Home, which was not too far from our home, so we were able to spend most of the day with him. He couldn't come home. After three or four weeks in the Nursing Home, he developed pneumonia and became badly dehydrated, so he was sent back to the hospital. He just couldn't make it. We miss him, his sense of humor, and his strong love for family."

According to the Seaweed's records, Joe was born 28 January 1911. He enlisted at New York City on 3 April 1942. He came aboard Champlin on 19 November 1942 and served 1085 days until he was transferred for discharge on 8 November 1945. He was discharged from the Navy at Lido Beach, NY 9 November 1945.

Bev and I had the pleasure of dining with Joe and Helen at the Mini-Reunion last year. They were great company and we thoroughly enjoyed swapping stories of our Champlin days and memories of the various reunions. and other events. We will miss him at great deal. What a shipmate!



The Empty Gun Mount



## REUNION GROUP NEWS

### CHAMPLIN REFERENCES

#### Books:

*Hitler's U-boat War, The Hunted 1942-1945*, Clay Blair, Random House, Pg. 56.

*Janes Fighting Ships of World War II*, published 2001 by Random House Group, Ltd., Pg. 282

*Operation Dragoon*, William B. Breuer, Jove Books, Pg. 214.

*The Battle of the Atlantic 1939-1943*, Volume I, Samuel E. Morison, Little, Brown & Co., Pages 357 and 358.

*The Two Ocean War*, Adm. Samuel E. Morison, Little, Brown & Co., Page 362.

*U-Boats Destroyed*, Paul Kemp, Arms & Armor, pgs. 107, 181.

*United States Destroyer Operations in World War II*, Theodore Roscoe, (1953) Naval Institute Press, pages 282, 302, 320, 321, 335, 375 and 545.

World War II Encyclopedia.

#### Magazines:

*Sea Classics*, Challenge Publications, Vol. 32 #9, March 1999, "Red Anzio" by Irwin J. Kappes.

#### Newspapers/Newsletters:

*The Tin Can Sailor*: Vol. 25, No. 1, page 3.

*The Tin Can Sailor*: Vol. 25, No. 4, page 32.

#### Internet:

<http://uboat.net/boats/u130.htm>

<http://uboat.net/boats/u856.htm>

[www.usschamplin.com](http://www.usschamplin.com)

[www.destroyers.org](http://www.destroyers.org) (Tin Can Sailors Web Site)

[www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/DD/DD-601\\_Champlin.html](http://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USN/ships/DD/DD-601_Champlin.html)

### CHAMPLIN SHIP'S STORES

**Baseball style cap**, specify either navy blue with white lettering or white with navy blue lettering, "USS Champlin DD-601": \$10.00 including shipping. Also, 3" diameter cloth emblems (patches), navy blue and gold (can be sewn on ties, jackets, caps, etc.): \$3.00 including shipping. In stock. Order from Norman Prewitt, 2049 East Ridge Drive, Excelsior Springs, MO 64024-2869, (816) 630-7272.

**Sweatshirt, T-shirt and light weight jacket** with large action picture of the USS Champlin DD-601 at sea, imprinted in navy blue. Sweatshirt: \$15.00, T-shirt \$7.50 and Jacket \$19.00. In stock. Order from Robert E. McAfee, 817 Winters Street, West Palm Beach, FL 33405-4545 (561) 586-8389

### GONE. . . TOO SOON

Vecchione, Joseph, d. 12/06/2003

### CHANGING BERTHS

Cowen, Jack B. 2 Grove Islet Drive #B1006, Miami FL 33133-

4119, (305) 859-4975.

**Gustin**, William D., 626 East Bluff Drive, Penn Yan, NY 14527 (315) 536-9329. (After 6/1/04)

**Porter**, Janet, 727 Medallion Drive, Fayetteville, PA 17222-1087, (717) 352-8655

**Nelson**, Mrs. Merlin D., 503 Idaho Box 87, Centerville, SD 57014

**Raley**, George F. Change phone # to: (585) 554-6198

**Suter**, Larry E-mail: [kevinjduffy256@hotmail.com](mailto:kevinjduffy256@hotmail.com)

### FROM THE FLAGBAG

Odds and ends, bits and pieces - mostly questions needing answers.

**Deck Names?** I am having difficulty in remembering the names of the various decks aboard Champlin. (Actually, I'm having trouble remembering most everything, but what the heck) If the main deck is the deck one used when coming aboard at the quarterdeck, what were the following decks called?

1. The deck one used when going forward toward the bow, up a ladder from the main deck, on which was located the officers quarters and (I think) the captain's quarters and mount one.
2. The deck above the officer's quarters on which the CIC shack was located, directly below the bridge.
3. The deck above the main deck on which the torpedo tubes, 40mm guns and the large searchlight were located, reached by a catwalk as I recall and where movies were shown..

**Radio Shack?** Where the heck was it located? On the same deck as CIC?

**CIC & IC Shacks:** If CIC was the acronym for Combat Intelligence Center, what the heck did IC stand for. As I recall it was located aft of the mess hall.

From Irwin Kappes' "Battle of Ormoc Bay Association" newsletter:

It seems an old sailor and an old marine were sitting at the VFW arguing about who'd had the tougher career. "I did 30 years in the Corps," the marine declared proudly, "and fought in three of my country's wars. Fresh out of boot camp, I hit the beach at Okinawa, clawed my way up the blood-soaked sand and eventually took out an entire enemy machine gun nest with a single grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea alongside General MacArthur. We pushed the enemy inch by bloody inch all the war to the Chinese border, always under a barrage of artillery and small arms fire. Finally, as a gunny sergeant, I did three consecutive combat tours in Vietnam. We humped through the mud and razor grass for 14 hours a day, plagued by rain and mosquitos, ducking under sniper fire all day and mortar fire all night. In a fire fight, we'd fire until our arms ached and our guns were empty. Then we'd charge the enemy with bayonets."

"Ah", said the sailor with a dismissive wave of his hand, "All shore duty, huh?"



**2004 USS CHAMPLIN REUNION REGISTRATION FORM**

September 29 - October 3, 2004 Buffalo, NY

Make check payable to : Champlin Reunion Group. Mail check and registration form to: Richard Berman, 221 Route 199, Red Hook, NY 12571

Hotel Reservations: Make your own reservations directly with the Adam's Mark Hotel, 120 Church Street, Buffalo, NY 14202 or call 1-716-845-5100 and ask for "Reservations".

Sep. 30 Tour - Naval & Military Park Tour, Dockside Lunch, Erie Canal Cruise # \_\_\_\_ @ \$51.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Oct. 1 Tour -Guided tour of Buffalo, Champlin Grave Site, Lunch, Horseshoe Falls # \_\_\_\_ @ \$44.00 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Oct. 2 Banquet: # \_\_\_\_ Chicken @ \$32.00; # \_\_\_\_ Prime Rib @ \$35.00. # \_\_\_\_ Haddock @ \$32.00 . . . \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Write check as soon as possible, no later than 8/21/04. Please print name and address below Total Check: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name ..... Spouse or Guest .....

Address: ..... Phone # .....