

LST534 Newsletter

April/May/June 2000

Volume 3, Issue 2

Captain George B. Olson

It was late January 2000 and I was at work in New York at my desk, when a call came in. "Linda, line one, a George Olson is calling." After 2 1/2 years of searching for the first Captain of the LST534, with no success, all of a sudden his family found us.

Captain Olson had two children. George, Jr. born February 13, 1940 and Darleen born July 22, 1942. I interviewed both of them and here is their story.

Question: Do you remember your dad being on the LST534?

George: Yes, very well. I was four or five at the time. Being the Captain of a ship and fighting in the war was very exciting for me. He was my hero.

Darleen: No, not really.

Question: Did your father ever talk about his time on board the LST534, or as Captain?

George: When he came home in 1945, I was just starting school. He made a model of the ship and explained how it worked... how the small boats were lowered, how the bow doors opened, how the ramp to the tank deck worked. All very exciting for a five year old.

He told me lots of stories about following the minesweepers across the channel, about how far some of the LST's would get out of line, about the "buzz" bombs. He was very proud of the many safe crossings that they made after D-Day. He said the average for that time period was 12 (the LST534 made 26).

Question: What wartime experiences did your father discuss?

George: He told me many stories about depth charging the German U-boats, how the whole ship would shudder when they went off. Stories about trying to pick up survivors, sometimes with success, sometimes not. He talked of nasty storms of the North Atlantic and how the ship would take green water up to the bridge.

Question: What did your father do in the US Navy after his duty aboard the LST534?

Darleen: Well, 1945 he was at Terminal Island, 1947 in Hunters Point, 1948 aboard the USS Agawam which carried gasoline and he was the Executive Officer. In 1949 he was on Treasure Island, 1952 in Pearl Harbor, 1953 in Yokosuka, 1956, Monterey Post Graduate School and he retired in 1958.

Question: Do you remember him coming home?

Darleen: No. My mother told me that every time a man in a Navy uniform would walk by, I would point and call him "Daddy, because we had a picture of him in uniform.

George: Yes, I remember him coming home many times. After the LST was the best however. It was the first time he got to stay home for over two years. It was the first time we had Christmas together as a family. Santa brought me my first Lionel electric train that year (1945). Yes, I still have it.

Question: Tell us about your life at home while your father was away.

George...In early 1944 we moved to Richmond, California to live with two of my father's sisters whose husbands were away at war. There was lots of family around, eight kids in all. They were mostly older, but it was great fun. I hardly knew my father at that age, so I don't think I missed him much. I wasn't affected much by the war. About all I remember was the blackouts, so everybody had to be home before dark. If anybody came over, we had to turn the lights out before opening the door.

Question: Your father was well liked by the men who served under him... any insight as to why?

George: The first thing that comes to mind is that he came up through the ranks so he understood what the enlisted men were all about. I think he treated them as he would have wanted to be treated. He also had a keen sense of humor, although the men might not have known it.

Darleen: I'm not sure. He probably acted different around his peers compared to his family.

Question: Your father certainly had the respect of the men on board. What do you think allowed him to gain such respect?

Darleen: I would guess his ability to make a decision and stick by it, especially concerning discipline matters. I remember one time when I was in high school. I came home five minutes late past my curfew so he put me on restriction for a month. Meanwhile, my friends had planned a surprise going away party for me. My father didn't let me go to my own party. My mother used to say he ran our house like a ship.

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George: He was really fair about things. Live by the rules and everything was fine, break them and you were in big trouble.

Question: What peaked your interest in searching for the LST534?

George: What started my interest in finding out about the 534 was to build a model of the ship as a sort of tribute to my father and the crew that went to Normandy. I didn't have any pictures of the ship to base a model on, so I started looking.

Question: Is the video or website providing insight into your father's life from your perspective?

Darleen: Yes, I used to think he was only strict with us at home, but after reading about the life and death decisions he had to make during the war I now realize that he trained himself to be in strict control. Lives depended on it.

In the next issue I will print George Jr's story of his father's life.

For those of you interested in contacting Captain Olson's son his information is:

George Olson
786 Seely Avenue
Aromas, CA 95000
Phone (831) 726-3706
Email: railrax@yahoo.com

Captain Olson's daughter can be reached at:

Darleen Olson Mead
15-2726 Lai Street
Pahoa, Hawaii 96778-9214
Phone: (808) 965-7770
Email: Darleen@hialoha.net

George Olson Jr. and his wife, Lyn will be at our reunion in Buffalo, with pictures in hand and stories to tell.

We are also trying to convince Darleen and her husband to make the long trip East.

I can't wait! Plan now to attend!

Birthdays

April 1

Angelo Cumella, S1c (SK)
11 Freeport Circle
Toms River, NJ 08757

April 14

Alex Fielder, Lt (sg)
5950 Ambassador Drive
Fairfield, OH 45014

May 17

Duncan Robey, MoMM3c
8301 Tieton Drive #87
Yakima, WA 98908

May 17

Jim Miller, Phm1c
1452 S. Ellsworth Road #2211
Mesa, AZ 85208

May 19

Alpheus A. Deville, S1c
50 Deville Cutoff Rd,
Deville, LA 71328

June 26

Leroy Spencer Graham, MoMM2c
6943 Berwyn Ave
Chicago, IL 60656

July 11

Bill McAndrews, HA2c
P.O. Box 781546
Wichita, KS 67278-1546

July 13

Jim Sarres, Lt. (sg)
1010 N. Westfield St, #510
Oshkosh, WI 54902-8771

July 16

Lawrence Killian, S1c
Rural Route 4
Dallas, PA 18612

July 17

Spencer James, R1M3c
40 Fulton Ave.
Poughkeepsie, NY 12603

July 18

Harold Makinster, SM2c
1132 19th Ave
Longview WA 98632

Sympathy

We have lost another two shipmates.

Donald Sabin, S1c, passed away on December 10, 1999. Don was a huge fan of the reunion of the LST534 crew. He never felt like traveling to the conventions however. Late last summer he took ill, was hospitalized and recovered enough to go into a rehabilitation facility.

His funeral and cremation were simple, as he would have wanted. His ashes are spread upon the waters of Newport, Rhode Island. His time in the Navy, in two wars, meant a lot to him. Don, may you rest in peace.

Robert Foy, SF3c, passed away on March 27, 2000. His wife told me that his kidneys had failed two years ago and he had been on kidney dialysis. These treatments took a lot out of him. He was eighty years old. Mrs. Foy also said that he really enjoyed the documentary and looked forward to the newsletters. Our sympathies go out to the Foy family.

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The National D-Day Museum

The National D-Day Museum will officially open June 6, 2000 in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Grand Opening is a five day program that takes place throughout different locations in New Orleans, beginning June 2.

The National D-Day Museum celebrates the American Spirit, the teamwork, optimism, courage and sacrifice of the men and women who won World War II, and promotes the exploration and expression of these values by future generations.

The Road To Victory is an area at the entrance of the museum with engraved bricks. If you are interested in having a brick inscribed and placed on *The Road To Victory* you can call (504) 525-1544 for information. Each brick costs \$100.00. I am ordering a brick that says, "We thank the crew of the LST534".

Don't forget if you are ever in New Orleans, be sure to visit the National D-Day Museum, or visit them on the internet at www.ddaymuseum.org.

Email Addresses

Looks like we are going to have to get into the age of technology and post all of your email addresses. Send me yours.

- ◆ Linda Alvers
LKA62@aol.com
- ◆ Cindy Alvers Zarate
csa220@aol.com
- ◆ Norris Long
nclong@mailbug.com
- ◆ Oscar & Helen Cress
hcress@msn.com
- ◆ George Olson (Capt. Son)
railrax@yahoo.com
- ◆ Darleen Olson Mead
Darleen@hialoha.net
- ◆ Duncan Robey
robeyak@aol.com

Get Well Wishes

Let's all make a special effort to send a get well card to our shipmates who are not feeling their best.

Alfred Ellis, F1c
28910 Ann Arbor Trail
Westland, MI 48185-1829

Calvin Hesse, F1c
5045 Highway 956
Weiner, AR 72479-9244

Larry Lord, Lt (jg)
4215 Sotal Drive
Las Cruces, NM 88011

Reunion Update

The third reunion of the LST534 will be held in Buffalo, New York in conjunction with the US LST Association annual convention being held August 30-September 4. Sign up as soon as possible with the LST Association at 1-800-228-5870.

Several shipmates and their wives have expressed an interest in visiting New York City either before or after the convention. Be thinking about this. I'll let you know the details a bit later. If you have any preferences or suggestions, please call me at 1-800-237-1224.

The reunion tape of the 1999 San Diego Reunion is now available for rental. See the enclosed order form for details.

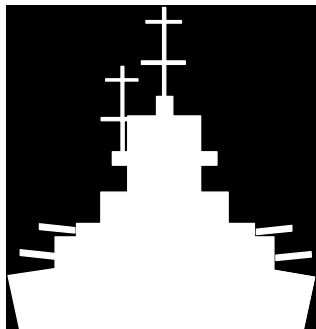
New Addresses:

Please make the following changes to your addresses:

Oscar Cress
9841 41st Street North
Pinellas Park, FL 33782
Phone: (727) 217-9472

Jim Sarres
1010 N. Westfield Street, #510
Oshkosh, WI 54902-8771
Phone: (920) 235-4048
(Same number)

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62 W 62nd Street
Apt. 26B
New York, New York 10023



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Just For Fun

Just for Fun
Is a column
meaning just
that – FUN.

Jim Sarres has
graciously
volunteered to
keep this
column going.

We all know
how Judge
Sarres can
keep us
laughing!

Thanks Jim.

Jokes By Jim

A lady approaches her priest and tells him, "Father, I have a problem. I have two female talking parrots, they only know how to say one thing."

"What do they say?" he priest inquired.

"They only know how to say, "Hi we're prostitutes. Want to have some fun?"

"That's terrible!" the priest exclaimed, "but I have a solution to your problem. Bring your two female parrots over to my house and I will put them with my two male talking parrots that I taught to pray and read the bible. "My parrots will teach your parrots to stop saying that terrible phrase and your female parrots will learn to praise and worship."

"Thank you!" the woman responded.

The next day the woman brings her female parrots to the priest's house. His two male parrots are holding rosary beads and praying in their cage.

The lady puts her two female parrots in with the male parrots.

Immediately the female parrots say, "Hi, we're prostitutes, want to have some fun?"

One male parrot looks over at the other male parrot and exclaims, "Put the beads away. Our prayers have been answered!"

**NAUTICAL TERMS will
return in the next issue!**