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USS Zellars Outlasts Most Sumner Ships

While the USS Allen M. Sumner, DD-692 was being (“euphemistically”) turned into razor blades, the USS Zellars, DD-777 was being sold to Iran.

Like the Sumner, the Zellars served in World War II, Korea, the Cuban Missile and many Mediterranean Cruises.

Because most of the targets on Okinawa were located well inland in accordance with Japan’s relatively new strategy of defense in depth, Zellars’ 5-inch guns usually

deferred to the larger caliber batteries on board the battleships and cruisers while she provided them with antisubmarine and anti-aircraft protection.

After the 1 April amphibious assault of Okinawa, she continued to screen the larger ships of TG 54.3 and provided call fire in support of the troops ashore. Her combat service, however, proved extremely short; less than a month, in fact.

On the afternoon of 12 April, she was screening the battleship Tennessee

when three Japanese “Jills” made a coordinated attack on her. They came at the destroyer’s port quarter from an altitude of about 15 feet above water. Zellars rang up 25 knots to unmask all batteries and opened fire. She

splashed the lead attacker at a range of 1,800 yards (1,600 m) and caught the second some 3,000 yards (2,700 m) away. The destroyer then shifted fire to the third intruder and began scoring 40-millimeter hits on him. The Japanese pilot, however, pressed home

his attack and crashed into Zellars’ port side, forward of the bridge in her number 2 handling room.

His 500-kilogram bomb tore through several light bulkheads before exploding on the starboard side of the ship in the scullery. She temporarily lost all power, and the fireroom had to be secured. Meanwhile, the after 20-millimeter guns continued to ward off additional tormentors and



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE . . .

Greetings to all my Summer shipmates
As we are getting past the winter of 2022,
I hope everyone will be able to get out and
enjoy a beautiful spring this year. This is my
favorite time of the year as the temperature



Frank DiBello

starts rising and all
the foliage starts
blooming with
all the beautiful
colors.

It doesn't look as
if we are going to
be able to have a
2022 reunion. This
pandemic is contin-
uing to alter our
lives in the worst
possible ways at

this time in our lives. Hopefully our medical
scientists and researchers can put a end to
this pandemic soon.

If anyone has any ideas about how we
might be able to get together by using video
technology where we can visit virtually,
please let me know.

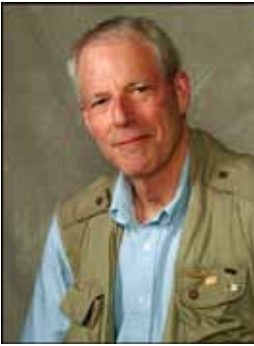
Maybe we can at least be able to see and
speak to each other. I am not technically ca-
pable of pulling this off, but if someone can
step up to the plate and make this happen, I
am sure it would be greatly appreciated by
all.

Looking forward to seeing y'all soon (Es-
pecially you Fred).

Fair winds and following seas

Frank DiBello, President

USS Allen M. Summer Reunion Association



By Don Hayden
TM3 (1961-62)



My last day aboard the USS Allen M. Sumner, DD-692

was 30 December 1962 while stationed in Mayport, Fla.

On 4 January 1963 I reported to the USS Yellowstone, AD-27 where I



would stay until my discharge the following year.

Although the Yellowstone was

slated to begin a 5-month cruise to the Mediterranean Sea the following April there was a joke circulating around Mayport that to do that would require "digging out the coffee grounds from under the keel."

Shortly after coming aboard the Yellowstone, I became acquainted with David Clawson, another second class torpedoman who had been transferred from the USS Zeller, DD-777.

While on the bridge during the aforementioned cruise we alternated on the helm and engine order telegraph.

Otherwise we serviced torpedoes of various descriptions (while playing

cribbage, pinochle and "acey-ducey.")

I even taught the guys how to play bridge.

I kept a diary during the cruise which I called my "Oh Lord Log" signifying how many days I had left.

Two of my other friends were John Gaffee, GM2nd and Robert Page, GM2nd. Although my true discharge date was 12 October 1964 I got an early discharge day in September to return to the University of Tulsa (my father who was dean facilitated that).

My friend Clawson got out in October, returned to Chicago and was married in early February 1965. I took the train to be in the wedding and remained in contact for awhile.

Eventually we lost track of each other until I decided to see if I could make contact again. Using a computer program search I found a David (and Linda) Clawson living in Albuquerque, N. M.

I called the telephone listed and when Linda answered I recognized her voice immediately. Contact was now reestablished!

Interesting enough: 1) The Clawsons had traveled to Chicago via I-44 (which runs through Tulsa).

2) My nephew and I had gone to Albuquerque several times to attend football games with the University of New Mexico. Hmm!

Eventually we all got together, had supper and Clawson presented me with the Yellowstone cruise book.

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Zellars

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plane. That evening, she limped into Kerama Retto with extensive damage. After temporary patching, the destroyer headed back toward the United States and arrived at Terminal Island, California, on 1 June. During some two and one-half months in which the ship underwent repairs and overhaul, World War II ended.

Late in June 1950, communist forces from North Korea moved south and invaded the Republic of Korea. As a result, Zellars departed Norfolk in

August in company with the other destroyers of Destroyer Division (DesDiv) 162 and headed for the Far East. She and her division mates arrived in Yokosuka, Japan, early in October; provisioned, and set sail for Korean waters. The destroyer remained in the Korean War zone for nine months.

During that time, her primary missions were gunfire support for United Nations troops ashore and coastal surveillance as well as antisubmarine protection for the larger American warships against an underwater threat that never materialized.

assisted in splashing another

As soon as she arrived on station in October 1950, she took part in the opening of Wonsan harbor. Late in November, the Chinese intervened in the conflict driving the United Nations troops into a southward retreat. Zellars initially supported the retirement of a South Korean division down the east coast and then provided gunfire support to the marines in the defensive perimeter around Wonsan



USS Zellara (DD-777) is an Allen M. Sumner-class destroyer, was laid down on 24 December 1943 at Seattle Wash. by the Todd Pacific Shipyards Inc.; launched on 19 July 1944 sponsored by Mrs. Thomas M. Zellars; and commissioned on 25 October 1944 .

while the Army's 3rd Infantry Division was evacuated by sea.

In mid-December, the warship moved north from Wonsan to Hŭngnam to provide gunfire support during the evacuation of another coastal enclave held by retreating United Nations forces.

She remained in Korean waters for another six months after the November–December evacuations and ranged both coasts of Korea delivering gunfire in support of the ground troops and interdicting coastal logistics.

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The destroyer returned to the United States in July 1951 and resumed duty with the Atlantic Fleet. Upon her return, she concentrated increasingly upon honing her antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capability.

Over the next eight years, training in ASW tactics was emphasized on five extended cruises to European and Mediterranean waters and in exercises in the western Atlantic and in the Caribbean Sea

Late in 1959, Zellars entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and began Mark II Fleet Rehabilitation and Modernization (FRAM) overhaul and alterations.

The addition of more up-to-date equipment added years to her projected service life and greatly enhanced her ASW capability.

The most noticeable change was the addition of a flight deck and stowage area for an ASW helicopter. These modifications were completed in June 1960; and the ship moved south to a new home port, Mayport, Fla.

Between June 1960 and December 1965, Zellars made five deployments

to European waters. Four of those assignments consisted of duty in the Mediterranean with the 6th Fleet and the remaining one involved a midshipman summer cruise to northern European ports.

Her duties with the 2nd Fleet in the western Atlantic and Caribbean consisted for the most part of training and yard overhauls but were highlighted by participation in operations enforcing the Cuban quarantine in the fall of 1962 and occasional duty supporting the Polaris missile test program.

(It was in December 1962 the editor was transferred from the Sumner to the USS Yellowstone, AD-27 with which he made a lifelong acquaintance who was transferred from the Zellars.)

In August 1964, Zellars moved to Newport, Rhode Island, her new home port. In 1966, she re-

mained in the western Atlantic for the entire year, breaking her training routine between mid-May and mid-September for regular overhaul at the Boston Naval Shipyard.



Official Seal Imperial Iranian Navy

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More than half of 1967 was taken up by the NATO exercise Operation "Matchmaker III," an experiment designed to determine what problems might arise from combined operations of ships of various nations and to test solutions to those problems.

The operation began in mid-January 1967 and lasted until mid-August.

It took her first to the West Indies, thence across the Atlantic to the waters around northern Europe, up over the Arctic Circle and finally to the coasts of New England and Canada.

The warship returned to Newport on 10 October and, one month later, moved to New York where she became a Naval Reserve training ship.

That duty constituted her mission for the remaining 16 months of her active career.

Zellers was decommissioned on 19 March 1971, and her name was struck from the Navy List.

Set aside for sale to the Iranian government, she was moved to the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard where she underwent extensive modification over the next 20 months.

Renamed Babr (Tiger) (DDG-7), she was commissioned in the Imperial Iranian Navy on 12 October 1973 at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

As of 1998, she remained active with the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy,

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**At the Bluebird Club in Naples, Italy
June 1964**

**USS Yellowstone AD-27 (Supplier to the A.M. Sumner)
(L-R) David Clawson, TM2; John Gaffey, GM2;
Robert Page, GM2 and Don Hayden, TM2**

Membership Renewal Form

Due to changes in the structure of our organization shipmates need to be aware of whether or not they have renewed membership. Our membership is based on a regular calendar year. If the year "22, 23 or greater or L, etc. after your name on the newsletter mailing label does not reflect the upcoming **Reunion** year, you need to renew your membership.

This quarterly form will appear in the Winter and Spring issues of this newsletter and note that you need to renew your membership in the USS Allen M. Sumner Reunion Association. If you cannot afford the \$15, send what you can (if anything) as we will not deny a shipmate membership because of a hardship. And no one else needs to know.

For Sumner renewals, send to Pete Dromms, Reunion Association Treasurer at 301 Park Ln., North Syracuse, NY 13212-2143

Name_____ Spouse_____
Address_____
City_____ State_____ Zip_____
(A/C)_____ Primary Phone_____ Other Phone_____
E-Mail Address_____
Years on Sumner - From_____ To_____
Rate/Rank on Sumner_____
Retired from Navy (Yes/No)_____
Retired Rate or Rank _____
Other info you wish to share _____
Make Checks Payable to USS A.M. Sumner Association, 301 Park Ln., North Syracuse, NY 13212-2143



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