

President

Tom Pieper

The Orion Veterans Historical Organization has completed another very successful year with a great reunion in Grapevine, Texas hosted by Martha and Ted Swenson. And again we were blessed with great weather, interesting sites, and dedicated shipmates. Thanks to all for being there, helping, and of course, enjoying. We look forward to the next reunion in Nashville, Tenn.

We continue to change the organization from what it was under the tutelage of Mary and Dave Peckinpugh. Several of the changes that we talked about last year are in place and appear to be functioning quite well. The Scuttlebutt is now on schedule and is under the editorial of Mrs. Fran Wright.

The web site is in place, up-to-date and has all pertinent Orion information on it. We are constantly updating it to insure it meets our needs. It is known as: USSOrion.org. We are always

verifying email addresses so we can also communicate that way. So if you go to the ussorian.org site and check on yourself by looking at the shipmates list and your email address, home address or phone number isn't correct please notify John Bellis via email at [orionveterans@gmail.com](mailto:orionveterans@gmail.com) or by telephone 1-309-361-4346 and get it corrected.

There is a concern about the reunions. The attendance has slipped quite dramatically over the last few years. The by-laws say they must be self sufficient but with the attendance being as low as it was this year that becomes quite impossible. We have included a survey in the Scuttlebutt which I hope you will take the time to complete.

We hope you and yours had a Happy Thanksgiving and would also like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous and Safe New Year!

Tom and Lorraine

USS Orion (AS-18) Veterans Historical Organization

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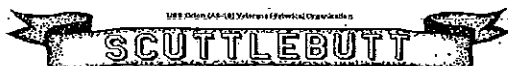
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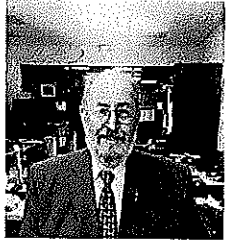
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2015 REUNION TO BE HELD IN NASHVILLE, TN

Nashville, the home of country music, so grab a partner and head towards Nashville, TN in the Fall of 2015. Roy Smith has volunteered to be the host and he is busy making arrangements. In fact Roy stopped in Nashville on his way home to Pleasant Grove, NC from Grapevine, TX to get the activities rolling. Prices, activities and dates have not been finalized to date but registration forms and a final schedule will be sent at a later date. Some of the activities tentative planned include a tour of The Hermitage (home of President Andrew Jackson), a visit to the Country Music Hall of Fame and a tour of the Ryman Auditorium, tickets to the Grand Ole Opry, and a dinner cruise and show. Who knows what else Roy may have in store for us. Plan to come and see what the Orion Reunions are all about, meet new friends, visit new places, renew old friendships and just have fun!!



Roy Smith

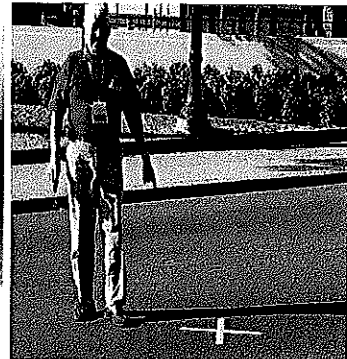
2014 REUNION—GRAPEVINE, TX



Tyler Junior College Apache Belle with Orion Shipmates



Franklin Maynor trying out to be an Apache Belle



Tom Pieper points to the 'X' that marks the spot where John Kennedy was assassinated.



The Cattle Drive at Fort Worth, TX



Lots of wine to sample on the wine tour



Waiting to tour the George W. Bush Library

USS Orion Veterans  
Historical Organization  
1404 Canterbury Road  
Tarboro, NC 27886

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## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

(copied from the *SOJOURNERS' WEEKLY*—December 16, 1988 US NAVY

Like the light of a fiery meteorite streaking through the night sky it is becoming increasingly apparent that the destiny of all persons on this planet is moving to an apex of total interrelatedness. As our world grows smaller and smaller due to modern transportation systems and advanced technological communications, the message is resoundingly clear... "that no man (person) is an island." We are now discovering that we can no longer be independent, rather, we are interdependent. The coffee we drink come from Central America; the soap we wash with comes from Europe; and the oil that our drives our vast industries comes from Africa and the Middle East. The Commanding Officer relies on his crew and officers, and they rely on their Captain. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated.... "we are all interwoven on a common garment."

Cultures, languages, nations and religions which were historically isolated from the western world are now brought into our living room by TV. We now know that industrial air pollution generated in the US causes acid rain in Canada. Researchers inform us that drug/alcohol abuse, crime, poor education and other social ills are not only individual problems but community problems.

For better or worse we are here together from the cradle to the grave. We are here on this tiny speck of dust in the universe called Earth. We are here together; officers and enlisted, male and female, Hispanic, Black, Native American, White, American and Italian. We are here together: urban dweller, farmer, northerner and southerner. Thus, since we are here.... "together," we must attempt to create an environment which manifests "unity in the midst of diversity." This unison begins with the recognition that all beings are Children of God —sacred and possessing infinite worth. This vision informs us that we are responsible for our action, realizing that the decisions we make often effect others, such as families, friends, the Command and our Country.

Perhaps now that the "me generation" and the yuppie fads are finally dying our due to overcharged credit cards and loss of middle managerial corporate positions, we can look once again at the things that are truly important....like a kind word, a helping hand, and being a good neighbor. And, maybe if our faith endures, we may even learn what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves. After all, isn't that the meaning of life in the final analysis?

Derek K. Ross, Chaplain, USS ORION/SUBRON 22

Note: At the present, we are without a Chaplain for our organization. Dave Rodes, our honorary chaplain resigned following the death of his Mother, wife of Dusty Rodes, former Chaplain who passed away in 2011. If you know a shipmate that would like the honor of being the Chaplain for the group, please notify Tom Pieper, our President at [ttp@fuse.net](mailto:ttp@fuse.net).



From Franklin Maynor—attendee at Reunion in 2013 and 2014.....

I found out about the Orion reunion by wearing a hat with USS Orion on it. I met a guy who had served on the Orion in the 60's. He loaned me copies of his Scuttlebutts and I found out about the reunion.

The first year we attended was in 2013 in Wilmington, NC. My wife and I both had a great time. Everyone made us feel such a part of everything. I got to see a couple shipmates that I had not seen or heard from since 1952.

We attended this year in Grapevine, TX and it was another great, fun time. My wife and I are both looking forward to 2015 in Nashville, TN.

If any of you have never attended one of these reunions, please seriously think about it. We are sure you will have a great time. I wish I had known about the reunions many years ago."

**SEA STORIES**....submitted by Chuck Micele, a former EMCS (SS) selected for LDO in 1965.

My first duty station as an officer was Orion. I served for 3 + years from June 65 till Dec 67, just before I made Lt. and went to Deep Sea Diver School. The first "Sea Story" is when I was the Main Propulsion Assistant or the "Assistant Engineer".

We were getting underway for "Operation Spring Board" down in the Caribbean. The weather report was for "HEAVY weather. I told the LPO in the two engine room and the fire room to lash down for heavy weather. Well as the weather got worse and worse as we steamed out to sea I made an inspection to see how well things were secured. Much to my surprise the after engine room wasn't prepared at all. Trash cans, spare engine heads, spare valves etc were sliding all over the place. I called the DCA (Damage Control Assistant) to rig me a stinger into the after engine room and send a welder with it. He did and I escorted the welder into the after engine room and when a loose item slid by I had him weld it to the deck. The LPO was ticked but he hadn't prepared properly. I never had that problem again.

The second "Sea Story" was later and concerned the First Lt. and Diving Officer. I'd like to add here that I later served with him on the Kittiwake ASR13. He was the XO and I the Engineer and Diving officer. (I had completed Deep Sea Diving School in Washington DC.)

We were again down in the Caribbean. We were releasing weather balloons several time a day. We were retrieving some of them. One night in Port the 1st LT came back about 1/2 in the bag and turned into his stateroom fully dressed in his work khakis ready for the next day. Another officer got one of the deflated weather balloons that we had retrieved and called on me to inflate it with compressed air. Fast forward to "Officers Call" the next morning and the 1st Lt was trapped in his bunk. Not a problem. Having been a Boatswain Mate he withdrew his "Sea-mans" knife and punctured the balloon. Well much to all of our surprise those balloons were filled with powder. His stateroom disappeared in a cloud. It took the Steward's days to clean it all up.

**Does anyone remember being a 'party' to this sea story?**



**Storekeeper, Larry Snyder has various Orion items available for sale. From patches to hats to jackets to shirts. Go to our website [www.ussorion.org](http://www.ussorion.org) for the complete listing and prices or you can e-mail Larry for additional information.**

**E-mail [rowleyrunner@gmail.com](mailto:rowleyrunner@gmail.com) or call (319)939-3668.**



First Time Reunion Attendee  
David Schrieber 90-92



Women enjoying the evenings playing  
cards at the Reunion

## TAPS

Ernie Baynum -47-50  
SNGM, 3rd Div.

Died October 28, 2014

Ernie and his granddaughter,  
Amber Peters

hosted our reunion in  
2011 in Ft. Mitchell, KY/  
Cincinnati, OH

**Minutes of the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**  
**Embassy Suites DFW North**  
**Grapevine, Texas**

The 26<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the USS Orion (AS-18) Veterans Historical Organization was convened on Monday, October 6, 2014 and called to order at 5:48 p.m. by President Tom Pieper. Bob Podgorski led the invocation prayer followed by Vice-President Jack Prendergast leading the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Pieper welcomed all in attendance and a quorum was established for the meeting.

President Pieper then introduced Martha Swenson, one of the co-hosts along with her husband Ted.

Martha Swenson introduced our guest speaker: Councilwoman Sharon Spencer of Grapevine. Councilwoman Spencer welcomed us to Grapevine and the great State of Texas. She further stated what a personal honor it was for her to be speaking to a group of Navy veterans as her Father served in the Navy during World War II. She further provided a little history of Grapevine explaining during World War II the main mode of commercial transportation in and out of the city was the railroad. When young men came back from the war, they were met and embraced by their loved ones at the train station. A statue entitled "The First Embrace" stands on the grounds of the old depot in their honor and is one of the most visited places in Grapevine. Councilwoman Spencer then read a proclamation from the Mayor of Grapevine stating that Monday, October 6, 2014 was "OVHO Reunion Day". She presented the proclamation to President Pieper

President Pieper introduced reunion guests: JoAnn Hermann and Kathy Pieper. The following officers were introduced: President Tom Pieper, Vice-President Jack Prendergast, Secretary/Treasurer John Bellis, Storekeeper Larry Snyder, Scuttlebutt Editor Frances Wright, and Ted Swenson of the Auditing Committee..

First-time reunion attendee David Schrieber was introduced, but was not in attendance at the meeting. However, he had been present at several of the reunion tours.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

President Pieper introduced Secretary/Treasurer John Bellis. Mr. Bellis stated the minutes of the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting were published in the December, 2013 issue of the Scuttlebutt and if there were no objections, suggested a motion to approve the minutes as published. A motion was made, seconded, and the motion carried. Therefore the minutes were approved.

There was no annual financial report presented at this time. Storekeeper Larry Snyder gave an update on the Ship's Store finances. He further stated the Ship's Store had new black tee-shirts in stock. However, due to a change in vendors, the cost had increased and a new price sheet would be forthcoming. The price sheet and available merchandise will be available for viewing our web-site: [ussorion.org](http://ussorion.org). However, you cannot order through the web-site. You may call in an order, or print the order form and mail it to him. Credit cards are currently not accepted.

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

President Pieper began a discussion regarding an article in the in the August, 2014 Scuttlebutt concerning the efforts of a Chicago-based submarine veterans organization (USS Chicago Base Submarine Veterans), and a similar Northeast Illinois/Southeast Wisconsin-based organization (Crash Dive Base) to raise funds to build a memorial on Chicago's Riverwalk, on the south bank of the Chicago River, to honor U.S. Submarines and crews lost in service to the United States. After brief discussion, a motion was made to donate \$100 to their fundraising efforts on behalf of the OVHO. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

President Pieper informed all present of the passing of Alberta Rodas, wife of our late and long-time Chaplain "Dusty" Rodas. He further stated an Executive Decision was made and a \$100 donation was made to the Bonita Park, Capitan, N.M. in honor and memory of Alberta and Dusty on behalf of the OVHO. Additionally, with the passing of his mother Alberta, our Honorary Chaplain David Rodas submitted his resignation. As such, we are currently without a Chaplain. Tom asked for volunteers and no one stepped forward. Therefore, the discussion was tabled for future consideration.

President Pieper stated the 2015 reunion originally scheduled for Long Beach, California has been cancelled. Tom asked those in attendance to consider hosting the 2015 reunion. A general discussion regarding the annual reunion began. Some topics of discussion were: A current trend of decreasing attendance; down from 103 in 2010 to 32 this year; overall participant costs; state of the economy; average age of the attendees; locations; time of year reunions are held; how to increase attendance and attract younger veterans, etc. A questionnaire will be developed and included in the December Scuttlebutt to get input from the membership. As a result of discussions, Mr. Roy Smith agreed to host the 2015 reunion and has targeted Nashville, TN. Preliminary details (dates and hotel) will be in the December Scuttlebutt. Tom Pieper, John Bellis, Francis Wright, and Martha Swenson offered to lend Roy a hand if/when needed.

President Pieper opened the floor up for general discussion. All agreed the City of Grapevine and its citizens have been very gracious and accommodating during our stay, and was there anything we could do to show our appreciation. The Grapevine Heritage Foundation is currently raising funds by selling "brick pavers" that can be inscribed to mark a special date.

A motion was to donate funds (\$100) to purchase a brick to commemorate the USS ORION(AS-18) REUNION 2014. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

There being no more new business, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

#### **DINNER**

At the dinner Monday evening:

Early Bird drawing winner-Free Room (one night): Art Mager  
First to register for reunion: Jack Prendergast (2 years in a row!!!)

50/50 Raffle drawing winners: The total take was \$ 911.00.

Winners were JoAnn Hermann and Harold Wright.  
Both were present. (A first!!!)

Recorded by:  
Secretary John Bellis



## REUNION ROUNDUP

Grapevine, Texas, located between Dallas and Ft. Worth and near the DFW airport was the site of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual USS Orion reunion October 2-7 courtesy of Martha and Ted Swenson. Since attending our first reunion in Boston in 2004, I have been amazed each year by the quality of accommodations, tours and fun that the hosts provide for the enjoyment of members who attend. Sadly, only 32 were able to make it this time but we all thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The Maynors and Strackas returned for the second time and it was good to see Bob and Phyllis Podgorski again; Lt. David Schriber came to several events for the first time; he served from 1990-92 and currently lives in Dallas. Guests included JoAnn Herrman, sister of Jean Ehmen, who is becoming a regular as this was her third visit and our daughter, Kathy, who lives in nearby Richardson.

We checked into the Embassy Suite Hotel on Thursday. Everyone arrived early enough to avoid a storm which rolled in around 4:30 EXCEPT for guess who? Jack (Prendy) and Bev Prendergast were supposed to deplane late in the afternoon but were detoured to Houston because of the weather and didn't arrive until 1:00AM Friday morning! At least the storm brought in some cooler, less humid weather. Tours of the American Airlines C.R. Smith Museum or a Texas Wine Tour were offered Friday morning. Though I didn't go on either, those that did enjoyed them. That evening, we went to the Texas Star Dinner Theater for some good food and a "gripping" Old West mystery. The five talented cast members provided lots of laughs especially when they deviated from the script with adlib references to current events. They also just happened to choose from the audience the correct folks from our group who fit the parts, i.e. shooting an apple from Roy Smith's head, Martha Swenson as the Captain's "comforter" and Jack Prendergast and Ted Swenson in other roles. Our group was acknowledged by the cast at the end of the show. As Filiberto Islas was unable to attend at the last minute, thought there would be no "can you top this?" banter later in the Hospitality Room but Ted Swenson and Harold Wright managed to keep up with Prendy. Ask him to tell you the one about the skeleton in the bar. I wonder if the chocolate wine someone bought on the tour made the jokes funnier than they really were???

On Saturday, we boarded a vintage coach car for a ride to Ft. Worth where we were on our own to tour the city and have lunch. After the cattle drive, we returned to Grapevine via bus and had a nice stopover at "The Main St. Bistro & Bakery" for delicious sandwiches, fries and drinks before heading next door to attend the Grapevine Opry for an enjoyable evening of country entertainment which included a twelve year old young lady who won an "American has Talent" contest; she has a tremendous voice and presence onstage. Once again, our group was recognized by the cast before their weekly patriotic tribute. Upon returning, most went to the Hospitality room which was actually two rooms, one with the TV, bar and comfy chairs and then another room containing a large table and a dozen chairs. Since the guys were interested in the playoff games, the ladies adjourned to the boardroom to play a card game called "Chase the Ace" or "S\*#!W your neighbor". As none of us had change, we used pretzels for coins. One small problem arose when someone began eating hers before the game began (chocolate wine again???) I would tell you more but took a sacred oath that "what happened in the boardroom would stay there" .....

The hotel provided an awesome breakfast each morning which included custom made omelets. Since none of the tours began very early in the morning, it was nice to enjoy a leisurely breakfast and the company of the other members of the group. There was also a "Manager's Reception" each evening featuring an open bar and snacks. On Sunday morning, we took off at 11:30 for a drive into Dallas to Perkins Chapel on the campus of Southern Methodist University. A very personable Pastor Stephen Rankin was kind enough to sponsor the group for the Memorial Service at the chapel and spoke the invocation. Fifteen shipmates were remembered as well as Alberta Rodes, beloved wife of Chaplain Dusty, who passed on September 4. Presentation of the Colors and Taps was provided by a group from the Naval Station in Ft. Worth. Tom Pieper, Jack Prendergast, John Bellis and Ted Swenson also took part in the service. We then took a brief ride to the George W. Bush Library & Museum also located on the campus. Tom & I have visited several of these presidential sites and find them very interesting as this one. Afterwards we toured a bit of Dallas including a stop at Dealey Plaza, the assassination site of JFK. No matter how many times you see it, it is still eerie to relive those awful days in November, 1963. The names we first heard during that time: the grassy knoll, school book depository and motorcade route are all too familiar when you come upon the scene. An X now marks the spot on Elm St. which is forever etched in our memories. We then proceeded on a scenic drive to the Lonesome Dove Ranch for a Texas BBQ. The folks there were very hospitable and food was delicious. We had time to tour the grounds before returning to the hotel for another round of frivolity.

There were no planned tours on Monday but lots of us took advantage of this to shop in the many venues around the hotel. It was nice to see "Welcome USS Orion" signs posted in all the store windows in downtown Grapevine. The business meeting was held at 5:30 during which Tom expressed concern at the declining reunion attendance; a questionnaire will be included in the next Scuttlebutt to try and get input as to the reasons for this. The meeting was followed by a sit-down dinner. Martha and Ted had arranged for one last surprise, an appearance by the Tyler Junior College Apache Belles. Ten members of the troupe plus one fellow, entertained us with their Rockette-like dance revue which included a medley of "Texas" tunes. For this routine, they were dressed in their boots, cowboy hats and fringed shirts/skirts. They very graciously came out to greet all of us in the audience. Martha had one of them pick the winners of the 50/50 raffle and for the first time ever both were present, JoAnn Herrman and Harold Wright! Art & Carol Mager's name was drawn for the early bird prize and received a free night's lodging.

Ted, Martha and all the folks in Grapevine went out of their way to make us feel welcome and glad we were there. A big thank you to them for all the hard work that went into providing another successful reunion. That may sound "old hat" but it is difficult to come up with new adjectives to describe the gratitude we feel for those who take on the job of hosting.

The "Good Lord Willing and the Creek don't rise" we hope to see everyone in Nashville in 2015 thanks to Roy Smith. Take care and God Bless!

----- Lorraine Pieper

## Orion Reunion Survey!

Over the past few years our reunions have been spread throughout the country going basically from the East to the West and then to the Midwest using whatever city we could in which we had a shipmate that was willing to sponsor it. Attendance has varied greatly over these years but recently the attendance has declined in spite of what we thought were excellent sites: Albuquerque (International Air Balloon Festival), Wilmington, Dallas, etc. And our average attendance over the years has only represented a mere 10 percent of the organization. In a quest to understand your feelings about our reunions I wish to ask you to take a few minutes to answer a questionnaire about our reunions, our planning and what we can improve on. It will only take a few minutes and a simple postage stamp. Your response will be greatly appreciated.

Please remember these reunions are for you! We plan and work to make these reunions acceptable to you, our shipmates. If we are not meeting your needs then it's imperative that you answer this survey.

Have you attended any reunion? And will you attend again?

What do you think of our choices of cities? And of our dates?

Are the prices of the reunions excessive, reasonable, etc? Motels, tours, etc.

Are the reunions of the proper length? Currently we plan 3 days and is that too long, etc?

Do you have any suggestions for our future reunion?

Have you ever attended a reunion and afterwards said: 'I'll never go back? If so, Why?

What will it take to have you attend the reunion?

Are you willing to volunteer to host a reunion?

Simply fill out the survey above, fold it, tape the long side and end near the address, place a stamp, and then mail it.

Thanks,

Tom

Place Tape Here

From: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Tom Pieper  
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