



1943 - 1978

# Abnaki Courier

February, 2014

Phone--- 515-210-9780

**Annual dues \$15.00**

E-mail--- Marcemgr@Yahoo.com

If the last line on your address label is not (2014) or greater you may owe some dues. Send dues to:

**Ruiz, Marce ---- 2555 142nd ST ---- Urbandale, IA 50323**

\*\*\*\*\*



## Second Notice!!!

The 26<sup>th</sup> annual Abnaki Reunion will be in  
**Colorado Springs, Colorado**  
Wednesday August 13 - Sunday 17, 2014

**Your Host**  
(About 1951)@

### The Academy Hotel

8110 N. Academy Blvd.  
Colorado Springs, Colorado  
80920

\$89.00/Day + Tax

Toll Free: 800-766-8524

Fax: 719-598-5965

Remember!

It is your responsibility to  
make your own reservations



Don Fries



Pete Pilgrim

### Widows

Once again all the activities listed in the registration form are free for you (*except the balloon ride*). Our widows are very special to us and contribute a lot to the reunions. This year we had three join us in Charlotte and are hoping for more in Colorado Springs. Please come and bring along family or friends!!!

**For more information e-mail Pete at: [petepilg@aol.com](mailto:petepilg@aol.com) or call 319-393-9104**

**Or**

**Don Fries at: [donwfries@gmail.com](mailto:donwfries@gmail.com) or call 678-525-7925**

This is our hotel



**Room Rate Includes:**  
FREE Hot Daily Breakfast  
With made to order omelet  
and waffle bar.

**FREE:** HBO Movies,  
Wireless high speed  
internet, Business Center,  
Fitness Center, Local calls  
and RV Parking

Free shuttle to and from the Airport

## P.O.D

### Wednesday

This is registration day. We will have self-registration in the hospitality room starting as soon as the hotel will let us have the room. We have nothing planned for this day except to hang out in the hospitality room and tell a lot of sea stories that many of you have heard before, so... if you want to explore the country side this would be a good time to do it.

### Thursday: Tour #1 ...

We will load the bus at the hotel (See time on the program) and take a short ride to the US Air Force Academy. We plan to first go to the Visitor's Center where we will pick up our guide and then on to the Cadet's Chapel. We will be there about 30 minutes, or enough time for everyone to see what they want to see and then back to the Visitor's Center with all it's exhibits, a snack bar and a gift shop. A 14-minute movie highlighting the Academy experience is shown throughout the day. Our guide will escort us to a viewing area overlooking some of the building and --- field--- and explain the various activities. The exhibit area features displays on history and cadet life with specially designed exhibits to explain the academy's four "pillars of excellence Self-guided tour maps and information on the academy are available at the information desk. For additional information call the front desk at 719-333-2025.



From the Academy we will take the bus to a local restaurants for lunch (included in the tour) and then on to explore **The Garden of The Gods**. This will only take an hour or so and then back to the hotel.

Around 17:30 we will assemble in the hospitality room for the **OFFICIAL WELCOME ABOARD** where we will have food, drink and entertainment☺ After a few words of welcome from Don Fries the program will be turned over to Doris McCraw for a fun filled evening. ☺



Doris McCraw

### Friday:

We will load the bus at the hotel in plenty of time(See Program) to arrive at the **ROYAL GORGE** in time for lunch (included in the tour), a good look at the bridge, bungee jump, ride the tram, or whatever turns you on☺, and then back to the hotel. We should be back to the hotel in plenty of time for a little rest if needed or... maybe a shopping trip around town☺ And... then once again we will assemble in the hospitality room around 17:30 for some food, drink and fun for all. We are planning a **TACO** and **CHILI** supper made from elk meat provided by our very own **mountain man**, Darrel Plank. We are also planning some other activities not yet finalized.

### Saturday:

Before most of us are out of bed those of you who are going for the balloon ride will start the day at daylight somewhere over Colorado Springs, drifting wherever the wind takes you,. This is a chance to see Colorado Springs and surrounding area like most people will only see in pictures. With **Captain Gary "Burner" Born** (*USS Abnaki 1963-66*) in command you will drift gently above the city and country side in one of his beautiful balloons. *Continued on page 7.*



Captain "Burner"  
Soaring with the eagles

# USS Abnaki (ATF96) Reunion Registration Form

*Please complete the following form and return it ASAP to....*

**Fries, Don , 2901 Barbara Ln. , Marietta, GA. 30062**

For more information e-mail: petepilg@aol.com, or phone: 319-393-9104

Or: e-mail: donwfries@gmail.com, Call: 678-525-7925

**Please make check payable to: USS Abnaki Reunion Association**

**To insure your reservation for these activities this form must be returned no later than 7-15-2014  
All prices include Tax & Tip**

Day	Time	Event	Cost	Time	#	Total
Wednesday	10:00	Registration	\$10.00	X		
Thursday	09:30	Tour #1	\$22.00	X		
	17:30	Welcome Aboard	\$16.00	X		
Friday	10:00	Tour #2	\$32.00	X		
	17.30	Friday Night Bash	\$16.00	X		
Saturday	07:00	Balloon Ride	\$150.00	X		
	17:00	Banquet	\$32.00	X		

There is no registration fee for anyone under eighteen.

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**THE BANQUET WILL BE SERVED BUFFET STYLE**

**Banquet Menu**

**Garden Salad with Various dressings, Hot Rolls with butter, Seasonal Fresh Vegetables, Au Gratin Potatoes, Carved Roast Beef and Turkey, Assorted Sliced Cakes , Iced Tea, Water,**

*Please feel free to bring as many guests as you like including but not limited to Parents, Grandparents, Children, Grand Children, Great Grand Children, Cousins, Uncles/Aunts, Friends, Friend's Friends or relatives. Reunions are for kicking back and relaxing, so bring them on!!! The more the better!*

**Please!!!**

See page #2 for a brief description of these events

Please show you and your guest's name the way you want them to show on the "Name Badges"

Also show your **name, rate and year/years** served aboard Abnaki

*Please type or print*


*Use a separate sheet for additional names*



**Don't forget!**

As usual, we will be having our Saturday evening raffle. You really don't want to miss out on this because no telling what kind of TREASURE you might come up with. So ... if you would like to contribute something to be raffled for this worthwhile cause, bring it on!

Remember, everything listed on this page (*Except the balloon ride*) is free for widows. Just fill out the form for everything you want to do and then place a "W" in the "Total Column", and we will take care of it from there! *We'll see you in Colorado Springs!!! ☺*

## More Abnaki Memories

*Pete Pilgrim 1946-49*

In my last story I was reminiscing my first deployment to WesPac when me and nine other guys went aboard the USS Whorton AP-7 in San Francisco and 15 days later arrived in Yokosuka, Japan and then on to the Abnaki that was swinging on a buoy in Yokohama. As I remember it we didn't do anything the first day except find our bunks, locate the head (only one), eat supper and catch some rack time. The next day they had us all chipping paint on the fantail. This is the first time I remember meeting Jack Bains. Jack was the ships Yeoman and while we were chipping away he came back to the fantail with a clipboard and got some information from us, what I do not remember, but he noted it all on his clip board, chatted for a while and left.

As I remember Jack he marched to a different drummer than most of us. He left the ship in the spring of 1946 and I never heard from him again until the fall of 1996 at the reunion in Green Valley, AZ. Some of this story is from my own recollection and a lot of it is from what he told me at the several reunions we attended.

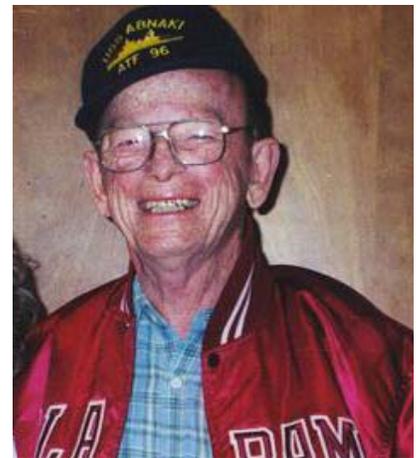


This picture was taken at the Yokosuka, Japan EM club in the spring of 1946  
L-R Lee Jesse, unknown, Doc Robberson, Jack Bans

Jack grew up in Oneonta, AL, a little town about 40 miles northeast of Birmingham AL. According to Jack his Navy time started in the spring of 1945. He was about to be drafted into the army so he decided to beat them to the punch and join the Navy. It took a little convincing but finally his dad agreed and the whole family loaded into the car and headed for the recruiting station in Birmingham. Jack said that he distinctly remembers his DADDY telling the recruiter that his son was there to sign up for the duration of the war and not a day longer. What he really signed up for was the duration and six months. *I think Jack forgot about the six months* 😊

Anyway he was soon on his way to Boot Camp in Great Lakes, IL. After several weeks of training he was soon on a troop ship headed for WesPac. Late one night, after a few days at sea, he was awoken by, what he described as loud booms and shouts of joy from all over the ship. As it turned out the loud booms were the ships guns going off and the shouts of joy were from all the crew and passengers that had just found out that the Japanese had surrendered.

Of course this was great news for everyone, and Jack, thinking since the war was over the ship would simply turn around and head back to the States. You can imagine his disappointment when he found out that the Navy had other plans. It was week or two later when he found out what his "near future" held for him. Instead of heading home the transport ship held it course and finally stopped over at Eniwetok, Atoll where Jack and several others were transferred to the Abnaki. As soon as all the new men were aboard they were mustered on the fantail to receive their assignments. It seems that the Ship's Yeoman was being sent back to the States soon and they were in need of a replacement for him. Back then they had a pretty simple selection process. They simply ask if anyone



Jack1996

could type. Jack was the only one that raised his hand so he was selected for the job. *Anyone who ever has had correspondence with Jack might wonder just how good his typing skill was* 😊

Shortly after Jack reported aboard, the Abnaki headed for Japan. I am not sure exactly when she arrived in Tokyo Bay but she was there for the signing of the surrender documents on September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1945. On September 20<sup>th</sup> the USS Alabama passed close by as she was steaming out of the bay and heading for home. Jack was doing OK until the band started playing “California Here I Come” That is when Jack just about lost it. He was one homesick young sailor!



USS Alabama (BB-60)  
Departed Yokosuka: 20 September 1945

Another thing I remember about Jack is how he would win in the frequent crap games that took place in various places throughout the ship. I have no idea what his scheme was but I never saw him roll the dice. Instead of rolling the dice he would stand back and bet on other people. I have no idea how much money he made but it was more than he could legally send home, so... he devised a way to get around that too. If I remember correctly he told me that he saved enough to put a down payment on a house after leaving the Navy. Not bad for a guy that was in the Navy for a little over a year. 😊

After the war was over almost all the old crew was soon headed home. Most of them were like Jack and had signed up for the duration and six months. Obviously they could not let them all go at the same time so the Navy had devised a point system that went something like this. Each person was assigned so many points for; length of service, married, how many children, time overseas, and other stuff like that, and... it was Jack's job to maintain these records. You can imagine that it did not take Jack long to figure out a way to cook the books and get a lot of people home, including himself, a few days early.



F. W. Pennington & A. B. Cheadle  
1946

I don't remember seeing Captain Wally, (Abnaki's first skipper), more than a half dozen times during the few months I served under him but who could forget someone who could pass for W. C. Fields. He looked, walked and talked just like him. Anyway, one day the Captain happened to walk by the office and notice a huge stack of envelopes on the desk and asked Jack what they were. It seems that Jack just could not get it out of his mind that his DADDY had told the recruiter that his son was signing up until the war was over and not a day longer. So... he decided to contact all ninety six U. S. Senators and inquire as to why he was not allowed to return home immediately. Jack had went into great detail in the letters about how his family tree dated back many years in their state and had always supported them in every election, etc. Not wanting to lose the support of any of their constituents he received a reply from every one of them 😊 When Jack told the Captain about it the OLD MAN got pissed and started muttering in a typical W.C. Fields fashion saying things like, don't you know that is illegal, I could have you Courts Martialed, Etc. Jack, not the least bit perturbed, responded with, ok I will just write some more letters. With that the OLD MAN stormed away mumbling some unprintable but mostly unintelligible things. That ended that episode of Jack's adventures aboard Abnaki, but wait... there is more to come!

## Our Crazy Captain

Shortly after the letter thing Captain Wally got his orders and was relieved by LTCDR Davis Menshen. It must have been one hell of a shock to Menshen (an academy man) when Captain Wally showed up wearing an aloha shirt during the change of command ceremony. ☺

We all know that the Navy did a few crazy things back in those days but... this guy should never have been in command of anything. I was in the Navy for 21 years and never saw anything that came close to the crazy crap he came up with. The first thing I remember about him was that he decided that the crew needed to get in better physical condition so he started holding muster on the pier and do an hour of calisthenics. This included everyone not on watch, the old fat chiefs, all the officers except the XO and men on the sick list. Naturally this did not go over well with the crew especially the people who had gone through the war, been gone from the States for many months, and wanted nothing more than to go home.



BM1/c Strickler  
*Trying to steal Susie's cigar*

The second thing I remember him for was when he had all hands shining the mess deck with steel wool and metal polish. I have no idea what it was all about or why he was pissed off with the crew. Probably someone did some petty thing that set him off so he figured that he would teach the crew a lesson. That didn't last very long because we would take a handful of steel wool, scrub a little and then throw it over the side. Pretty soon all the steel wool we had aboard was gone! ☺

I could go on and on and on chronicling the escapades of Captain Menshen, but that is a story for another day. The last time I remember seeing him was one Sunday afternoon when we were supposed to be tied up in one of the drydocks in Yokosuka. For some reason I had been ashore and decided to go back to the ship. Just before I reached the drydock I saw the ship pulling away. I just stood there for a while watching it head out of the shipyard when suddenly it turned around and came back in and, after ramming the pier several times, tie up. ☺ (Along with all his other faults he was a terrible ship handler.) It seems that he had decided to go see his girlfriend in Yokohama so he just got underway and headed out. However, the BIG GUY there (SOPA) had a different idea. In about fifteen minutes I saw him leave the ship in full dress whites, never to be seen again! ☺

Jack had already left the ship and was probably safely back in Alabama before Captain Menshen was relieved. Jack's last noble effort to help the crew was to write a letter to Captain Menshen's mother telling her that if she had any influence over her son that she should tell him to settle down and give the crew a break. ☺ I doubt that the letter did any good but it was a good try!

Jack was honorably discharged from the Navy in the spring of 1946, returned to Oneonta, AL., bought a home with his gambling winnings, went to school on the GI bill, married the love of his life, raised a beautiful family and had a successful career as a lawyer. Jack was a loyal shipmate and a great friend. Both he and his beloved wife Peggy are greatly missed and much loved by all who knew them.



Jack and his Beloved Peggy  
*Milwaukee, WI. 1997*

Continued from Page #2

With a panoramic (360 degree) view the beauty and grandeur of this area is like you have never seen before. It will just about take your breath away. As you can guess the balloon can carry a limited number of people. **In this case it is eight so...** it will be first come first served. *(The priority will be determined by the date the registration is received at Don's mailbox)* So... get your registration back to us ASAP!!! This is a chance of a lifetime, and... some lucky person will win a **FREE flight** , so... **don't miss out!**

It should be noted that Burner is giving all Abnaki people a \$50.00 discount. For those of you who, are not interested in going up in the balloon, may want to tag along with the Chase Crew and observe them in action. If you are interested let us know, I we can arrange it, and it would be FUN AND FREE.

For the rest of us this will be another day (on your own) to roam around town or do anything that turns you on☺ Starting at about 17:30 we will have the pre-banquet activities followed by the banquet and then some post-banquet stuff. It is gonna be a ball so come prepared to eat, drink and kick up your heels. Whenever these activities end will be the conclusion of the reunion but... please feel free to stay around a few days longer to see a lot of the other sites and sounds of **Colorado Springs**.



**Received this note from Almeda Andreolli**

Just wanted to let you know how much I enjoyed the November issue of the Courier. Back in the 50s I had visited Colorado Springs and visited all the sights that the article mentioned. It was an armchair trip that I enjoyed a second time. I am sure that all who attend the reunion will have a wonderful time. Unfortunately I am not in a position to join the reunion but I will be with all of you in spirit. Love to all, Almeda

*Ed Note: Sure wish Almeda and all of our widows could join us.*

**Uniform Supplies**

The following items may be ordered from the Abnaki *(Joe Colombara, Supply Officer)* supply department.

**Allow 60 days for the delivery of orders.** Orders will be delivered to the reunion at the below prices.

If you wish to have your order shipped please see shipping and handling charges below.

**Please indicate size---Small---Medium---Large---Extra Large---XX Large (All Super Quality)**

**Polo - Shirts**

Color	Logo Colors	Quantity	Size	Cost	Total
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Ship			\$27.00	
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Silver Ship			\$27.00	
White	Navy Blue Name, Number, Ship			\$27.00	

**Note: Add \$2.00 Ea. For XX Large Sizes.**

Sub-Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Caps**

Color	Logo Colors	Quantity	Cost
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Ship	X	\$14.00
Navy Blue	Gold Name, Number, Silver Ship	X	\$14.00
White	Navy Blue Name, Number, Ship	X	\$14.00

If your order exceeds the schedule shown below contact Joe Colombara

Sub-Total \_\_\_\_\_

**S & H-Charges.** One shirt, or one shirt and one cap \$7.50. Two Caps \$5.00. One cap \$5.00-Grand Total \_\_\_\_\_

(Please enclose check with order)

Please mail or call orders to: Joe Colombara, 720 E. Country Ln, Collinsville, IL. 62234

Phone 618-344-8869 . E-mail..... joec96@att.net

Note: Make check payable to Joe Colombara. All profits go directly to the Abnaki Sailors Association.

**Special**

Jackets - light quilted with full embroidery on the back. \$75.00

\$80.00 with your name on right breast (Includes Shipping)

**Special Notice**

*Joe's supplier has notified him that he will need a minimum order of four jackets so... please give him a call before ordering jackets.*

*“Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Anyone Who Threatens It”*



**Important** ↓

USS Abnaki (ATF 96)

If the last line on your address label is not (2014) or greater you may owe some dues.  
Send dues (\$15.00) to: Ruiz, Marce ---- 2555 142nd ST ---- Urbandale, IA 50323

B. “Pete” Pilgrim 46-49  
U.S.S. Abnaki (A.T.F. 96)  
4746 “E” Ave. N.E.  
Cedar Rapids IA. 52402