



Shipmates  
of the  
Navy Weather Service Community

Separate write-ups were prepared for:

LT William (Bill) F. O'Neil as the oldest shipmate in the community...97 years old

LT George F. Buie as the longest serving shipmate in the community...71 years

AGC L. R. (Mike) Rhine as one of the last two WWII ERA POW's in the community

CWO-3 Walter Winfrey USN - RET

CWO Walter Winfrey was born on 24 April 1915. He enlisted in January 1936, served in USS WEST VIRGINIA (BB 48) for the duration of his first enlistment and was honorably discharged. Walt reenlisted in April 1940, and attended AG "A" School Class 4020 from November 1940 until May 1941 and AG "B" School Class 4603 (B-3) during late 1946 at Lakehurst, NJ. His assignment from AG "A" School was to NAS Seattle, WA. After a few months, he was transferred to Dutch Harbor, AK for further transfer to Kiska, AK, arriving on Kiska in December 1941. He was one of the 10 man Weather Station when the Japanese invaded Kiska on 06 June 1942. AerM 3/c Winfrey was wounded in the right thigh by the Japanese landing force and was able to successfully evade capture for 11 days. Later, he was transported to Japan as a Prisoner Of War (POW), surviving the brutal treatment as a POW until his release on August 31, 1945. His was fire-bombed out of one POW Camp by B-29s. Walt retired from Instructor Duty at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey on 30 April 1957.

AG1 Victor B. Milford USN - RET

AG1 Victor (Vic) B. Milford was born in Calhoun Falls, South Carolina on May 02, 1918. He entered the Navy during January 1940 and became an AG striker three weeks before transferring to Lakehurst, N.J. for AG "A" School Class 4020 that convened November 01, 1940 and graduated January 24, 1941. He was in AG "B" School Class 4808 (B-8) that convened February 02, 1948 and graduated May 07, 1948. Vic retired from the Navy while stationed at FWC Alameda in July 1961. Most of his assignments were to independent duty at small commands. Some of his other duty stations included NAS San Pedro, USS Henderson (AP-1), PhibPac, NPGS Monterey, and Kwajalein Atoll for the 1946 Atomic Bomb Test. He mentioned to me about a snow event at NAS Whidbey Island that he had forecast and no one believed him. After Vic retired, he first owned a supermarket in Hayward, CA and then a book binding company in Stockton, CA.

#### CDR Fred Olsen USN - RET

CDR Fred Olsen is the oldest Northwest Chapter member, by a whole lot, and is very active in chapter functions. Fred is 92 years old and continues to drive his vehicle to chapter meetings. He graduated from the University of Washington and was in the ROTC program, in June 1942. His first Weather assignment was in the weather office at NAS Pensacola in October 1943. He had many assignments including being the 7th Feet Meteorologist in the Early 1960's. Fred retired in 1969 after 27 years of service.

#### CDR Don Cruse USN - RET

CDR Don Cruse was born December 18, 1920 in El Paso, TX. Don joined the Navy on July 13, 1938, on a minority cruise, received boot training at NTC San Diego, CA and was discharged on December 18, 1941. He attended Group II Communications School then a long string of shipboard assignments began. He successfully competed and was selected to attend a Naval Academy Preparatory Class at the Naval Operating Base, Norfolk, VA. Because of poor vision, he was dropped from the class and returned to the fleet. During the fall of 1940, he was selected to attend the Primary Aerographer School, Class 4020 from November 01, 1940 to January 24, 1941. After graduation he was advanced to Petty Officer 3<sup>rd</sup> Class. It was back to sea with assignments on the USS Ranger (CV-4) and the USS Wasp (CV-7). He was serving onboard the USS Wasp when it was sunk in September 1942. Don went through rehab and was issued a new sea bag and was assigned to Fleet Air Wing 8 at NAS Alameda, CA. During September 1943, he received orders to the USS Liscome Bay (CVE-56) and it was sunk in November 1943. Another sea bag was issued at the Receiving Station on Yerba Buena (Goat) Island, San Francisco, CA and orders kept him in the Bay area for his next three assignments. Don advanced to Chief Petty Officer in December 1944 and was ordered back to sea. He was serving onboard the USS Intrepid (CV-11) when it was hit by Kamikaze aircraft. Don transferred from the USS Intrepid in Tokyo Bay during October 1945 and was discharged in November 1945 at the Receiving Station San Diego, CA. He worked as a Junior Meteorologist for Pan American Airways until February 1946, when he reenlisted in the Navy. Orders were to the Receiving Station, San Pedro, CA then to Fleet Air Wing 14 at NAS North Island. During June 1946, he was transferred to Clinton, OK to decommission the station and from there onto NAF Annapolis, MD where married Marge in September 1947. From there in January 1948, he was ordered to Lakehurst, NJ to attend AERM School - Class C-4. After graduating, he was assigned to Fleet Air Wing -1 onboard NAS Agana, Guam. Don was serving at NAS Anacostia, Washington DC when he was commissioned as a Limited Duty Officer, Ensign (ENS) - Aviation Operations. In July 1952, his next assignment was to London, England along with an advancement to Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG) – Aerology. From June 1954 to June 1961, his assignments were in Navy Security along with advancements to Lieutenant (LT) and Lieutenant Commander (LCDR) in the Washington DC area and London, England. From June 1961 through June 1964 assignments were at FWF Yokosuka and NAS Atsugi, Japan. His last tour on active duty was at the Head Quarters Naval Weather Service, Washington Navy Yard DC, from June 1964 until his retirement, as a Commander (CDR), after 30 years active duty in November 1968.

AGC George W. Mannion USN – REL

AGC George W. Mannion was born in Marshall, MN on July 10, 1922. He joined the Navy in 1940 and received boot training at Great Lakes, IL. His first duty station was the USS California BB-44 home ported in Pearl Harbor, HI. Primary duties were in the Gunnery Department as a fire control technician computing ranging solutions for the ships 14 inch guns. Collateral duties were that of Librarian for the ship. During November 1941, George received orders to report to Lakehurst, NJ to attend Aerographers Mate AG “A” School and was a member of Class 4124 graduating on January 23, 1942. After graduating from school his first duty station as a Navy Weatherman was Auckland, New Zealand. Other assignments during WW II included; Noumea, Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Tinian and Iwo Jima. During this time he served on various ships; The USS Maryland BB-46, USS Cambria APA-36, USS Auburn AGC-10 and USS Curtiss AV-4. George never attended AG “B” school but received his appointment to Chief Petty Officer while serving onboard the USS Curtiss AV-4. He returned to the states in May 1945 and was discharged while serving as the Leading Chief of the Weather Office at the Naval Air Station, Santa Rosa, CA. George began working for the Weather Bureau in 1947 and in 1948 transferred to Oakland, CA Office working there until his retirement in 1977. George now resides in Sacramento, CA.

George received a citation for excellent service in the performance of his duties on the staff of the Amphibious Group Commander from Sept. 24, 1943 to April 22, 1945 and on the staff of an Amphibious Force Commander April 22, 1945 to May 5, 1945. By his tireless efforts and constant devotion to duty Chief Aerographer's Mate Mannion rendered valuable assistance in preparing weather charts, weather forecasts, ballistic data, sounding-ranging information, and meteorological data for the Force Commander and for dissemination to units under his command. He demonstrated exceptional ability, initiative, and leadership, which contributed materially to the success of operations for the capture and occupation of Tarawa, Apamama, Majuro, and Eniwetok, Saipan, and Tinian Islands and Iwo Jima. His efficient, loyal service and performance of duty give evidence of his great value to the Naval Service.

LCDR William D. Bridge USN - RET

LCDR William D. Bridge was born in Latrobe, PA on November 23, 1928 and entered the Navy Midshipman Program after completing high school in 1946. During September 1947, he was selected to attend Aviation Ground School – Flight Training and received his Aviation Wings in May 1949. Bill entered Post Graduate School in June 1953 graduating with a degree in meteorology in December 1954. His first assignment in the Naval Weather Community was at the FWC Panama Canal. He was the Officer in Charge of the AG “B” and AG “C” schools at NATTC Lakehurst, NJ from June 1956 through June 1959. During the early 1960’s, his assignment was as the ship’s Meteorologist and Division Officer of OA Division onboard the USS Hancock (CVA-19), home ported at NAS Alameda, CA. From June 1962 through June 1965, Bill was assigned to Project SHAD as the Senior Line Officer and the Meteorologist for the Project. In June 1965, LCDR Bridge reported to FWF, San Diego, CA as the Executive Officer and during the last six months on active duty was the Officer-In-Charge. He was transferred to the retired list on February 01, 1968.