

January 21, 1996

Mr. Jerome M. Fien:

Dear Jerry:

Will miracles never cease! I was pleasantly surprised by your phone call answering my blind letter. Yours was one of two Jerome Fiens in the State of New Jersey and since I had remembered that you were from Newark when aboard the Evans, I took a flier that you might still be located in the State. Had you not told me who was calling, I still think I would have recognized you as your voice sounded just like it did 50 years ago.

I thought you might like to know how this all started. In late 1993, I discovered a notice in the American Legion magazine announcing a Frank E. Evans reunion to be held in October 1993 in Granbury, TX (?). I wrote to get information only to get an answer after the reunion had taken place. However, the reply indicated a Third Annual Reunion would take place in Las Vegas, October 21-24, 1994. Included with this announcement from the USS Frank E. Evans Association, Inc., was a list of some 225 former Evans sailors including the names of John H. Harrier, Eldon Kiehler, and Mrs. Gwen Ozenberger, (Ozzie's widow). I immediately wrote to both Harrier and Kiehler. About a week later I got a call from Gwen Ozenberger from Spokane, WA, who had seen my name on a new list distributed by the Association. She bent my ear for over an hour, telling me all about what had happened to Ozzie after the Evans was de-commissioned, his further service and his eventual death while on shore duty in the Washington area. She also said that she had just talked to C. V. (Daisy) Wilhoit, who after completing his naval career (academy grad), had worked at a civilian job on the West Coast and after retiring from that job, moved back to his old haunts in Townsend, TN.

John Harrier attended the Las Vegas October 1994 reunion and said that he had a great time. He was one of seven of the original crew there. Other than John, the only name I recognized was Harrington who was a Y2/c (I also remember we had a Y/1c named Lally). John said that at Las Vegas it was announced the Fourth Annual Reunion would be in Charleston, SC, September 10-14, 1995 and that he hoped that my wife and I would plan to go.

Since leaving the ship in San Francisco in April 1946, I had only been able to keep in touch with Don Sibbett and Carl Annexstad via Christmas cards. I then set out to try to locate all others with whom I had lost contact and this became quite a task but has been fun and with a lot of rewards in the form of good memories. I'll summarize my efforts thus far and send you a list with addresses as soon as it is completed.

LOCATED	KNOWN DECEASED	STILL MISSING
John Annegers, MD	Harry Smith	Chris Fitzgerald
Jerry Fien	William J. Hughes	Jim O'Brien
Don Sibbett	Bill Platt	Bob Glass
Fred Atkins	Elmer Ozenberger	Dake Chamberlain
Bob Bendure	Julius Young	Jack Wassmer
John Harrier	Bob Kirby	Lex Taylor
Daisy Wilhoit	Milton Eisenberg	Pete Alyea
Don Merriman	Frank D. Schwartz	Ray Heintskill
Dave Schreiber		
John Cornwell		
Hank O'Keeffe		
Carl Annexstad		

The wife and I journeyed to Charleston last September and thoroughly enjoyed three great days with the Atkins, Annexstaads, O'Keeffes, Kiehlers, Schreibers, and with John Harrier (widowed) and John Cornwell, whose wife was on the West Coast visiting her family. Our group was tagged in the 1940 group, others 1950 and 1960. The ship served in WWII, was re-commissioned for Korea and again Viet Nam. You may or may not know that on 3 June 1969, the Evans was in a collision with the Australian carrier Melbourne in operations off Viet Nam and was sliced in two. The forward section of the ship sank in 5400 feet of water within two minutes. Seventy-four lives were lost. The ship was struck from the Naval Register in 1969.

As I may have mentioned, I purchased a CD ROM software called Phone Disc to try and locate others. Think I mentioned that there were two Fiens and that yours was the first I tried. Besides spending two more years at sea in a destroyer during Korea, I managed to work 40 years for American Electric Power Company. My how time flies. Bring me up to date on your activities. I plan to send your name and address to the Evans Association, unless you have some objection. Also - the Fifth Evans Reunion is being planned for Texas in the fall of 1968.

Cordially,

Jack A. Druckemiller