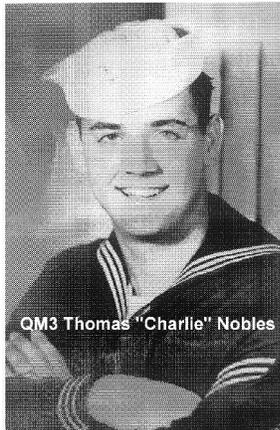


QM3 THOMAS E. "CHARLIE" NOBLES



I Thomas E. Nobles was born 23 November 1932, at Punta Gorda, Florida. The library there was dedicated to my uncle Pascal Bernard Nobles, "Buster". I have brown hair and my eyes are blue. My ancestry is British. My siblings were Daniel, Teddy, and Mickey.

My rearing took place at South 6th Street, in Chipley, Florida. My hobbies included hunting, fishing, and telling stories. I was a Boy Scout and loved to camp out. My favorite holiday was Christmas. I once dressed up and played Santa Claus. I played football at Chipley High School, where I graduated in 1950.

From Chipley, Florida I went off to enlist in the Navy being sworn in 4 January 1951, and then going to basic training at NTC Great Lakes. I was received for duty on board USS FRANK E. EVANS (DD 754) 14 May 1951. My battle station was the 20mm machine gun on the starboard side. I became a quartermaster, eventually going to Signaling School in Maryland. I served until 12 September 1954; 3 years 4 months.

My best friend was Francis Hayes who owned a barbershop in Chipley. James Nettles was my long time friend. Rob Roy Ashmore was my best man when I wed Catherine on Thanksgiving Day in 1954. My children are Thomas Jr., Mark, & Beth, and my grandchildren are Mandee & Katie. We currently live at 1211 SE 27th St. Ocala, Florida 34471.

Post Navy, I became a student at Florida State University, where I graduated in 1959 with a major in politics. In 1956, at 24, I ran for State Representative, but lost the election.

My first job was with the Florida State Road Department (DOT) for \$75.00/month. While a student at FSU I had a paper route for the Tallahassee Democrat, which covered 200 square miles. After graduation from FSU, I went to work for Lobrano Machinery Co. I was employed as a salesman for Ring Power Corporation, a division of Caterpillar Inc., and was also Deputy Director of Administration for the Florida Department of Transportation.

In 1964, June, I found three lost boys, and was considered a hero by some. In 1974, I obtained my real estate license. I wrote a book, While Climbing Tom's Mountain - "Events"

Excerpts from Tom's book...

THREE TOURS TO KOREA U.S. NAVY

After boot camp and a short leave to go home, I was sent by troop ship to Yokohama, Japan where I waited to catch USS Frank E. Evans, (DD 754). She was on a tour of duty to Korea at the time. I would be assigned to her for over three years. On the day that my ship came into the harbor and stopped for fuel, (14 May 1951) she received about eight or ten "gung-ho" sailors that had a lot to learn! After a few days in port at Yokosuka, we headed back to Korea to continue the bombardment of railroad lines along the seacoast, and keeping watch for mines that had been placed strategically in our path requiring destruction when we found one.

Some of our duty was in Wonsan Harbor, North Korea. We would stay out in the harbor every day and for a time, we received enemy fire from tanks or gun emplacements at the same time each day, requiring our ship to go in a circular

route returning the gunfire with our shipboard guns. My battle station was on the top deck where the higher 5"-38 twin gun mount was located, I was assigned to the 20mm machine gun on the ship's starboard side. When the ship turned where the big guns were pointing back towards us, the concussion was terrible, I am hard of hearing in my left ear today, because of the concussion from those guns on my left side!

One day, we were allowed to take cover on the deck below our battle station because we had complained about the concussion of the big guns. Along the outer bulkhead (wall), we stored our rubber links of hose used to refuel at sea. I took cover behind those hose units! When the firing was over, I found a hole in the bulkhead where I had taken cover, and on the deck I found a piece of shrapnel that had gone through the steel plated bulkhead and hit a hose that absorbed the energy. I was so lucky that it didn't hit me, and that I wasn't still at my battle station where we didn't have anything between us and the flying shrapnel. Four of our sailors on the bridge received Purple Hearts because they got some "scratches" from the flying shrapnel.

I made three tours of duty to Korea from the United States, and had tons of experiences that might be interesting if I could just remember them. Once, I had the opportunity to go aboard a submarine and take an undersea ride. I really enjoyed that because when the seas get rough a surface ship goes thru mortal hell! Sometimes I would find fish on the bridge, which is quite a distance up from the water's surface. We were all very nervous when we had to be out on deck during bad weather!

As soon as I was eligible, I "struck" for (went after) a specialized duty, so that I wasn't called every time there was a crappie detail to be done. I elected to be a Quartermaster. In the Navy, that means you are involved in navigation and visual communications. Before I was in the Navy, those were separated. One could be a Quartermaster and work on navigation, or a Signaller and be involved with visual communications. Both jobs were together when I was there, but it may be separated again, now. While I had to learn to read and send semaphore, flashing light, and flag signals, I concentrated on navigation because that is where they needed some help. When I became a 3rd class Petty Officer, our crew was made up of one Chief Petty Officer (Chief Wilbur Goode) and one other 3rd class Petty Officer, and the rest were Quartermaster Seaman. That other 3rd class Petty Officer, J. A. (Jim) Brayton, had been called back into service and was a bit older than the rest of us, and of course we kinda looked up to him. He was married and had a couple of kids, and besides being senior to us all, he was our friend and one that we could all go to for advice. Since my duties were in navigation mostly, I dealt a lot with Chief Goode who taught me a lot about navigation as he was nearing retirement with 30 years of service in the USN.

(Note: On Friday, November 13th, 1998, I received a letter from Jim Brayton, who I had not heard from since we were both discharged in 1954. He was in Juneau, Alaska. I immediately called him after reading his letter. Later, I sent him a copy of my book! While Climbing Tom's Mountain - "EVENTS")

I also got along good with our Captain. He was Commander N. D. Salmon, and he liked to help me or let me help him "shoot the stars" to determine our location at sea. One significant thing that I recall about him is that he signed his name, leaving a "picture" of a fish, for his signature! Not being much of an artist, that really impressed me. Another thing that I remember was on our trip back to the USA, we were sailing along in very calm weather and he would help me plan my trip home from Long Beach, California to Chipley, Florida. He seemed to think of everything. He even suggested that I get the Medical Corpsman to issue a "sleeping" pill to assure that I would sleep on the first leg of my trip home. You see, we had planned that I would take four guys with me on the way home, and he felt that we would be wide awake on the first leg, and then when we would start to get sleepy, we could all get sleepy and whoever was driving could become dangerous for lack of sleep.

Well, it didn't work that way, and probably we were lucky for it because I think that I pushed that car across Texas. We were not out of California before we started having fuel problems. It just didn't seem to be getting enough fuel. We changed fuel pumps a couple of times, and eventually we left the fuel cap off and I finally made it home. I had bought that car from a shipmate, George W. Zubeck from Minneapolis, Minnesota and left it in Long Beach with Jim Brayton's wife, Elaine, who kept it in operating condition while we had a tour of duty to Korea. I traded that jewel off for a 1953 Ford and finished my tour of duty in the Navy with that car and kept it until I was married and a student at Florida State University.

My ship took me to the Far East on three different tours of duty, and when they like to tell young people to join the Navy and see the world, they were not kidding! We visited Hawaii on almost every crossing of the mighty Pacific ocean, and for a small town country boy, that was impressive enough, but we went to a lot of places that I had only read about in school. We sometimes stopped on Guam to refuel on our way to Japan. We went into Okinawa on one occasion, and Taiwan as I previously mentioned. We went into port at Hong Kong on three or four visits. I got the opportunity to visit Hong Kong again about 1994 en route to Vietnam, and it sure had changed! I guess my perspective was somewhat different 45 or so years ago, than it is today (1999)!

Since I worked with our ship's captain, I arranged to place a bunk in our "chart house," where most of the calculations were done after we "shot the stars." This gave me the opportunity to live in "private" quarters aboard ship, which only a few high-ranking officers were provided, and I liked that. Sometimes I think that I would have made a good admiral, but I couldn't even make the ensign rank! I wanted to spruce up the chart house so I remembered that my mother had put a sweet potato in a jar of glass of water, and pretty soon it would sprout greenery all around it. I started looking for a potato in every port that we were extended liberty (leave) in, but I never found one in the Far East. My mother had a "green thumb" and could grow anything, but I didn't inherit that trait. But I think even I could have grown a pretty green vine if I could have found a sweet potato!

During my entire naval career, three years and eight months, I was known as "Charlie Nobles," and there was a good reason for it. You see, on every ship, the galley smoke-stack is called "the Charlie Noble" and since my last name was Nobles, it was easy for them to call me "Charlie!"

A few years after I was discharged and going to school at FSU, I had a paper route which started on Sunday morning just after Saturday midnight. One Saturday night, while I was waiting for the presses to run, I walked down the street to a diner, which was across the street from the Greyhound Bus Station. As I approached the corner where the diner was located, I noticed a guy coming from the bus station. It was an old Navy shipmate! His name was DaRe, and he had served as a fireman aboard my ship. The pronunciation of his name, Da-Ray, and I mention this because his brother back in California was a well-known movie star who had changed his name from Al DaRe, to "Aldo Ray," when he tried out for a part in a movie out there. He had been in the Navy himself, a frogman, and was a deputy sheriff until he was successful in his try-out for a movie role. I visited with DaRe for a while before his bus left and my route was ready.



Aldo Ray

Once, when my ship was in Kobe, Japan for a few days, I went over to the Army base Enlisted Men's Club, and after a while I heard a black soldier say that he was from Florida, so I asked him where in Florida was he from? I about had a heart attack when he told me that he was from Chipley, Florida, and then we did some visiting! He had been raised by Rex Nelson, a farmer there and uncle to

Florida's Insurance Commissioner Bill Nelson, now, 2008, U.S. Senator. Rex felt about him, the soldier, as if he was his own son, and when I wrote home about meeting the soldier from Chipley, my mother told Rex about it and he was grateful that somebody from Chipley had seen his boy!

I mentioned earlier about the statement that "you can join the Navy and see the world," and as far as I know that was a true story on my enlistment. Actually, it began before I was sworn into service. My friend, Rudolph Stembridge knocked on my door one day, and asked if I wanted to join the Navy. He had heard from some of our friends that I was contemplating doing it soon. We joined up and were sworn into the USN on January 4, 1951. We were sent to Montgomery, Alabama before we were sworn in, and then to Birmingham by bus, then to the Great Lakes Naval Training Command at Great Lakes, Illinois where we went through boot camp. I saw my first television there, and while in boot camp a person in the Chicago area was found that was almost frozen to death. At least the woman's temperature got to the lowest point on record, and still lived! I think she had taken on a large supply of "anti-freeze" earlier and that was credited with her survival! I mention this to point out that this old Florida boy went straight to the "snow country" as soon as I became a sailor (to be), and since I wore a short sleeved shirt without a jacket, I nearly caught pneumonia and I didn't have any "anti-freeze."

When we graduated from boot camp, they shipped us by troop train to California, before giving us a 14 day leave. When we returned, our travels continued. After a couple of years, I was sent to a Signaling School at Bainbridge, Maryland, and that four months pretty well rounded out my travels over the USA, because it allowed me to visit Washington, DC where Opal Harrell from Chipley and some of her friends showed me the sights around the Capital. I also attended a baseball game between the New York Yankees and the Philadelphia Athletics who were managed by Connie Mack. Later, I visited New York City, and really enjoyed some of the shows on Broadway. They allowed servicemen in uniform to attend free, and that sure was a blessing since me and my buddies were broke! You see, we stopped at the Ringside Bar across the street from Madison Square Garden, where we met some very friendly New Yorkers, and what they didn't get in the bar, I spent showing my southern gentlemanly manner by insisting on driving the girls home by taxi instead of using the subway. After paying the cab bill when we got the girls home, we learned that riding the subway for a quarter, was more "gentlemanly" for southern boys than riding taxi cabs!

Although everything in the service was not so great, I believe that every person should spend one enlistment with a branch of our Armed Forces. Most would see the world that they had only read about in their younger years, and it would help prepare our people to be good law-abiding citizens.

THE REST OF THE STORY

I mentioned that I made contact with Jim Brayton, my shipmate aboard USS Frank E. Evans (DD 754) during the Korean war. I was so astounded about talking with someone who shared that very important period in life, I started searching for other old shipmates. I have to say "old," because it has been nearly 50 years since we used that ship as our home address.

My problem was remembering names, then after I started getting names, I found that without pictures (during that time period), I was lost when I located someone. After boot camp, about 20 of us were assigned to USS Frank E. Evans. The next shipmate I located was Bill Rawls, a "boot" with me from Pensacola. He still had his Boot Camp Booklet with names and pictures of everyone in our company at Great Lakes Training Center, just North of Chicago, where we found that it really gets cold in January and February when we were up there. Bill brought that booklet when he visited me a short time later, and I really began to make contacts.

I would call a shipmate as I got his location and phone number. Afterwards I wrote a letter, and sent some information about the other guys that I had located. Soon, I was locating guys so fast, I had four or five I had talked to and had to send them the info. I wrote a letter and addressed it to all of them, saying I was going to use the "newsletter approach" and let one letter fit them all. A few days later, I was talking with Ronnie Sattterly in Galveston, Texas when he asked, "Charlie, when are you gonna send out another newsletter?" Well, I've done newsletters before so I decided that I'd try that every month or so. It was like finding a "bream bed" while fishing! They were just as eager to hear something from or about the old gang as I was when I got that letter from Brayton. They all let me know they appreciated the news, and it gave me something to do after I retired from my job.

About "Charlie," that was what I was known as aboard ship. You see, they taught us in boot camp, that the ship's galley (kitchen) smokestack, is called the "Charlie Noble" and having Nobles for my surname, it just fit. Otherwise I would have been just "Nobles!" One thing they warned us about the old salts in the Navy, was that they would send a new man out of boot camp to get "Charlie Noble" and believe me that happens. It is a bit aggravating for the guy whose name is Noble or Nobles, too!

Soon after I realized that names were so important, I contacted someone in Washington, D.C. and learned where I could order roster lists of the ship's company, so I ordered two of them as each one covers two years, and besides giving names, it allows me to tell when a shipmate came aboard for duty, when he went on leave, went to school, the hospital; and when he returned for duty. It shows all promotions, and almost everything one did while assigned to the ship. I expect to have a lot of guys interested in looking at the daily logs over at our reunion association meeting in Denver, Colorado in September!

I have always liked people, and this endeavor is so interesting because all of us have "climbed our own mountain," since we had the same mailing address about 50 years ago! When I find a new "old shipmate," it does me a lot of good to notice their interest was just like mine when I started locating these guys. Now, I'm eager to see how "ugly" those old guys are when we meet in Denver. It sure has given me something to do since I was willing to call it quits, and retire!