

## Getting to Know . . .

### Zeb Dickey Alford AAFA #0295



*Zeb furnished AAFA a copy of his biography written in December 1996 which appears below. It was edited slightly to meet AAFA requirements. He also sent a clipping of a newspaper article from 1999 part of which follows the biography. Zeb and Joan were present at the 1989 meeting in Houston and he joined AAFA in April the following year at which time he gave each of his four daughters a gift membership. Zeb and Joan were also present at the meeting in San Antonio last year.*

#### Navy Days

Zeb was born in McComb, Pike Co., Mississippi, in 1925. After graduating from McComb High School in January 1943, he joined the Navy the next day and attended LSU for one semester. He started his Navy career as a seaman apprentice in the V-12 program at Tulane University on July 1, 1943. He entered the Naval Academy in 1944. After graduation in 1947, he served aboard USS CHARLES R. WARE, an Atlantic Fleet destroyer.

He married Margaret Lewis of Birmingham, Alabama, in March of 1948. They have four daughters Patti, Peggy, Jane, Katie. They have two grandchildren Samantha and Lane.

After graduation from Submarine School in 1949, he served aboard three diesel submarines USS CUTLASS, USS CHARR, and USS CAVALLA. He also served on both the Submarine Squadron and Flotilla staffs in San Diego. In 1957 he received an MS (Operations Analysis) degree from the Postgraduate School, Monterey, California. Zeb was selected for the Nuclear Power Program in 1958. In addition to graduating from the Nuclear Power School that year, he qualified on both the West Milton Nuclear Prototype and the Combustion Engineering Nuclear Prototype before reporting as Executive Officer of the new construction nuclear submarine USS TULLIBEE. This was the smallest, quietest, and slowest nuclear attack submarine built for our Navy. It also had the first spherical array large active sonar system. This system

became the sonar suit for all the nuclear attack submarines built since then.

After attending Charm School (Admiral Rickover's staff) for six months, he reported in 1962 as Commanding Officer of the nuclear attack submarine USS SHARK. SHARK was the fastest US nuclear submarine built until the new SEAWOLF was commissioned in 1996. During the Cuban missile crisis SHARK was ordered from operations north of the Soviet Union to Norfolk, Va., at best speed. SHARK set a North Atlantic crossing record for a USA submarine that still stands. After commanding SHARK for two years, he was ordered to the submarine section of the staff of the CNO [Chief Naval Operations]. His major duties involved the loss of THRESHER investigation for CNO/Secretary of the Navy and the resulting reports to the Congress. This led to the Sub-Safe Program. No submarine that has gone through that program has been lost at sea since then. He was ordered to command the Polaris nuclear submarine USS SAM HOUSTON in 1965. The extended overhaul during 1966-1967 at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, was the first ship yard installation of the Sub-Safe modifications. Everything worked. Zeb was ordered to the staff of the Secretary of the Navy in 1968 and served there in the office of Program Appraisal for a year before becoming Executive Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Navy (now Senator John Warner, R-Va.) in 1969. Zeb attended the National War College in 1970-1971 and reported as Commanding Officer, Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, in 1971. Zeb retired from the Navy in September

1973 with the rank of Captain, USN.

## ELECTRIC UTILITY DAYS

Zeb's second career has been in energy. Since entering this field he has become President of three different energy companies. He joined New England Electric System (NEES), a major northeastern electric utility company in late 1973-- just in time for Israel to fight the Mideast War of 1973. This war resulted in the oil embargo against the USA and Holland by Saudi Arabia. This action by the Saudis caused our Government to create the Federal Energy Office, which

caused the gasoline lines to form and caused his company to come within five days of running out of fuel oil. In rapid succession Zeb became Manager of fuel Supply and then President of NEES' new oil and gas exploration subsidiary. They did not run out of fuel oil, as they were lucky enough to find some oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico, and the exploration program grew to a hundred million dollars a year program in four years. Besides doing joint ventures with various exploration companies, NEES also built a coal-fired coal ship, the only such ship in the USA today. The SS ENERGY INDEPENDENCE was Zeb's last project at NEES.

He never got to build the nuclear plant he joined the company to build. The President gave the site we needed (a Naval Air Station in RI) to the bird watchers. In 1981 Zeb joined classmate Don Crawford, Chairman and CEO of Gulf States Utilities in Beaumont, Texas, as President and CEO of the new oil and gas exploration program. Within two years, after a courageous fight, Don died of ALS and Zeb left the company.

In 1984 he married Joan Chasan of Houston, Texas, and Long Island, New York. In 1985 he started a new company, Dolphin Energy, Inc., and began to market natural gas to major utilities on both coasts. The company grew with Zeb doing the trading of natural gas, setting the contracts, scheduling the pipeline deliveries, and finding new markets. Joan soon left her business as a stock broker and joined Dolphin Energy, Inc., as Treasurer and CFO.

Zeb's wide energy experience has included worldwide buying of all major fossil fuels, natural gas, and coal, as well as running major exploration programs for two large electric utilities.



Zeb aboard USS SAM HOUSTON in 1967

Zeb is currently active in the Navy League, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Naval Order, the Republican party, and Senior Olympics (tennis). Last year [1997] he is appeared in his first movie Evening Star as an extra.

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Houston Chronicle Wednesday,  
July 21, 1999

### **Alford leads crusade to fix WWII sub**

*The following contains  
excerpts from an article of the  
same name and date by  
CAROL E. VAUGHN,  
ThisWeek Correspondent.*

Retired Capt Zeb Alford spent two years of his life aboard the USS Cavalla Naval submarine during the Cold War era.

So it seemed only natural that Alford, a Memorial-area resident, would accept a challenge to become chairman of a restoration committee dedicated to bringing the submarine, which dates back to World War II back to life.

Housed at Galveston at Seawolf Park, the Cavalla is one of two submarines on display in Texas. The other is a Japanese sub in a Fredericksburg museum.

Last September, the Galveston Park Board threatened to scrap the submarine after sighting a declining interest in the

## HOUSTON DAYS

naval landmark. In addition, the sub hadn't seen many improvements since two retired submarine veterans brought it to Galveston shores in 1973.

A corroded topside deck requires about \$250,000 worth of restoration. The ship's insides need leak repair, cleaning and painting.

"It's kind of how you've left your attic for the past 25 years," said Alford, who resides in Ethan's Glen, west of Memorial Drive.

The Galveston Park Board agreed to join efforts with the submarine veterans, pledging \$50,000 towards the deck restoration. The Strake Foundation, an active supporter of the Cavalla since 1971, gave \$15,000 toward the campaign.

A web site address <www.deepdomain.olm.net> has collected more than \$11,000 in individual donations for the Cavalla.

But perhaps the biggest show of support said the captain, is the "spit and polish" efforts of the Submarine Veterans of WW II and U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc., post-WW II submariners.

Once the Navy's shining star of WW II, the Cavalla is responsible for sinking one of the Japanese aircraft carriers that launched the attack on Pearl Harbor.



Joan and Zeb, San Antonio AAFA Meeting, 1999

The "tiny tafel" below shows Zeb's Alford ancestry.

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A.num	Name	Birth date	Birth place
1	Zeb Dickey Alford	Feb 18 1925	McComb, Pike Co., MS
2	James Burton Alford	Mar 1 1895	McComb, Pike Co., MS
3	Doris Dean Dickey	Sep 11 1895	Pike Co., MS
4	James Barney Alford	Nov 29 1870	Pike Co., MS
5	Ettie J. Warner	Oct 9 1871	
8	Barnabas S. Alford	Dec 24 1845	Pike Co., MS
9	Anna Rebecca Norman	Apr 11 1845	Pike Co., MS
16	Seaborn John Alford	Oct 11 1807	Washington Parish, LA
17	Mary C. Felder	Sep 23 1813	Pike Co., MS
32	Jacob Alford	Aug 15 1761	Bute Co., NC
33	Frances Seaborn	Abt 1766	Virginia
64	Julius Alford	Sep ___ 1717	St. Peter's Parish, New Kent C
65	Lucy _____		
128	James Alford	Abt ___ 1687	Probably New Kent Co., VA
256	John Alford (No proof that John was father of James)	Abt ___ 1645	Probably Virginia