



Zeb Alford
1925 - 2009
AAFA #0295

Zeb Dickey Alford

Mar 18 1925 - Aug 4 2009
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[A nearly identical article was published in the Houston Chronicle from August 9 to August 16, but the online version cut off the last 6 paragraphs.]

GALVESTON COUNTY DAILY NEWS

Galveston, Galveston Co., TX

Monday, 17 August 2009

Zeb Dickey Alford, retired U.S. Navy Captain, 84, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday the 4th of August 2009, the eve of his 25th wedding anniversary. Zeb suffered a heart attack the previous evening while playing tennis at his home causing him to fall back hard on his head.

Zeb was born in McComb, Mississippi, on the 18th of March 1925, to James and Doris Alford. His two younger brothers James Burton, Jr., and Van Henry both pre deceased him. He leaves his second wife and soul mate Joan Chasan Alford of Houston and Syosset, New York, whom he married in 1984. He also leaves four daughters by his first wife Margaret Lewis of Albuquerque, New Mexico, and Birmingham, Alabama: Patti, Peggy, Jane and Katie; and two grandchildren Samantha and Lane. Other immediate survivors include Joan's mother Rosalind; brother Bruce and wife Gail; sister Diana; and their children.

The U.S. Navy was Zeb's great passion in life from grade school days. He made many contributions to the Navy during his thirty-year career and post retirement activities. His many speeches on military strategy and geopolitics to Navy, civic, Rotary, Memorial and other groups ranged from the "History of the U.S. Navy's Birthday" through "Submarines: from Containment to Preemption." He often quoted Admiral Nimitz's words in 1945 that, "The submarine will become the capital ship of the Navy." He served on six capital ships of the U.S. Navy.

The day after graduating from McComb High School in January 1943, Zeb joined the Navy. He attended LSU for one semester, and then he started his Navy career as a seaman apprentice in the V-12 program at Tulane University on the 1st of July 1943. He entered the Naval Academy in 1944.

Zeb graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1947 and served two

years aboard USS CHARLES R. WARE, an Atlantic Fleet destroyer.

The rest of Zeb's twenty-six years as an officer in the Navy was spent building and operating submarines during the "Cold War," a war the US won Zeb liked to point out, without a shot being fired. Zeb served on three diesel subs, and then three nuclear subs. Zeb was captain of two nuclear subs.

Upon graduation from Submarine School in 1949, he served aboard the diesel submarines: USS CUTLASS, USS CHARR and USS CAVALLA. Zeb's activities aboard CAVALLA involved interactions with carrier groups and large sonar arrays. In 1957 Zeb attended the Navy Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where he received his MS in Operations Analysis. Next he received the prestigious honor of being selected for the Nuclear Power Program under Admiral Rickover in 1958. He was assigned as Executive Officer [XO] of the nuclear submarine USS TULLIBEE.

Zeb's work aboard TULLIBEE with his very good friend and sonar officer David Hinkle, has affected the sonar systems of submarines to this day, including the USS TEXAS commissioned in Galveston a few years ago.

After serving on Admiral Rickover's staff Zeb was assigned in 1962 as the Commanding Officer of the nuclear submarine USS SHARK. The SHARK set a speed record for a North Atlantic crossing during the 1963 Cuban Missile Crisis that still stands.

After commanding SHARK for two years Zeb was ordered to the submarine section of the staff of the CNO (Chief of Naval Operations.) His major duties included the loss of USS THRESHER investigation for CNO/Secretary of the Navy and the resulting reports to Congress, which led to the Sub-Safe Program.

In 1965 Zeb was assigned as Commanding Officer of the Polaris nuclear submarine USS SAM HOUSTON. In 1968 Zeb was ordered to the staff of Secretary of the Navy where he served in the Office of Program Appraisal before becoming Executive Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Navy (now Sen. John Warner) in 1969. After attending the National War College in 1970-1971 he was assigned as Commanding Officer, Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba in 1971. Zeb retired from the navy in September 1973 with the rank of Captain, USN.

Zeb's medals, awarded by the Navy include: Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Expeditionary Medal, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal, W.W.II Victory Medal, Navy Occupation Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal (with Bronze Star), Korean

Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Expert Pistol Shot Medal (with Bronze E), and Cold War Recognition Certificate.

Zeb's second career started in energy in 1973 with New England Electric System (NEES.) He was soon appointed Manager of Fuel Supply and then President of NEES's new oil and gas subsidiary when he had the oil embargo crisis of 1973 to contend with. Besides joint ventures with various exploration companies, NEES also built a coal-fired coal ship, the only such ship known to be in the US.

In 1985 Zeb started a new company, Dolphin Energy, Inc. in Houston, Texas, that marketed natural gas to major utilities on both coasts. His wife Joan, a stock broker and financial advisor, helped him as Treasurer and CFO of Dolphin Energy, Inc.

Zeb had a labor of love in the restoration of the World War II submarine USS CAVALLA, now in Galveston in Seawolf Park on Pelican Island. He had served on this submarine for two years during the Cold War era and rose to the position of XO. This submarine had the marked distinction of having sunk one of the Japanese fleet aircraft carriers, the Shokaku, that had attacked the U.S. at Pearl Harbor. In its post W.W.II era, the CAVALLA became a "submarine killer."

In 1998 Zeb was asked to head a "SAVE THE CAVALLA" steering committee and then, in mid-1999, became chairman of the CAVALLA HISTORICAL FOUNDATION [CHF] a restoration committee dedicated to bringing the submarine back to life. Zeb raised large sums of private money from many generous Houston donors and received a great deal of hard work and devotion from

organizations such as the Submarine Veterans of W.W.II, the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., post-W.W.II submariners and many others. Zeb served as Chairman of the CHF's Board from 1999 through 2004, and as Chairman Emeritus and Board Member since then. He loved giving guided tours of the boat he had served on and was happy to have found an excellent curator, John McMichael. The CHF is restoring a W.W.II era destroyer escort, USS STEWART, also located at Seawolf Park.

Captain Zeb's legacy and vision of a memorial to all the submariners, sailors and servicemen lost during their service to our country is a major mission of the CAVALLA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION.

Zeb also served on the Commissioning Committee for the "latest, greatest" nuclear submarine USS TEXAS (SSN 775.) This ship was commissioned in Galveston on September 9, 2006.

On the very day Zeb started his journey on eternal patrol, he had just returned from the Change of Command ceremony for the USS TEXAS held the 31st of July 2009, in Groton, Connecticut, and Newport, Rhode Island. At the Change of Command ceremony he had hoped to visit with his old friend and classmate Dave Hinkle (founder of Sonalysts), with whom he had served on USS CAVALLA, but he arrived too late. Zeb was asked to give the eulogy at his funeral and gave a very moving tribute to his friend.

Zeb was an active member of several Navy organizations such as the Naval Submarine League, the Navy League of the U.S., the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Naval Order of the U.S., The National War College Alumni Association, the

Republican Party and Senior Olympics (tennis.) He also organized a regular meeting group of tennis players who played two courts of tennis at Ethan's Glen (where he lived) every Monday evening for over twenty years. Everyone in these organizations and others will miss Zeb's happy smile, good nature, optimistic outlook, and most of all, endless sea stories!

Zeb was also active in the Republican Party and on the board of his town home community. He served as Presidential elector in the 1996 Presidential election and as an election judge in the 2008 Presidential election as well as a delegate to all state and other conventions since 1966. He was an honorary member of the Sons of the Republic of Texas.

Friends are cordially invited to a visitation with the family from five o'clock in the afternoon until eight o'clock in the evening on Thursday the 20th of August 2009, at Geo. H. Lewis & Sons at 1010 Bering Drive in Houston.

A memorial service will be conducted at ten o'clock in the morning on Friday the 21st of August 2009, in the Sanctuary of Second Baptist Church at 6400 Woodway Drive in Houston, where Rev. Biff Johnson is to officiate.

In lieu of the usual remembrances, the family requests with gratitude, that memorial contributions in Zeb's name be directed to the Cavalla Historical Foundation, 2504 Church Street, Galveston, TX, 77550 and to the March of Dimes, 3000 Wesleyan, Suite 100, Houston, TX, 77027.

"Be strong and courageous. Be not afraid; neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee

whithersoever thou goest." [Joshua 1:9]

Arrangements are under the direction of Geo. H. Lewis & Sons Funeral Directors, 1010 Bering Drive, Houston, TX 77057 (713) 789-3005

In another article:

Subsim.com

"The Web's #1 Sub Simulation Resource"

Zeb was born in McComb, 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, and entered the Naval Academy in 1944.

After graduation in 1947, he served as an Ensign aboard USS Charles R. Ware, an Atlantic Fleet destroyer. After graduation from Submarine School in 1949, he served aboard three diesel submarines and three nuclear submarines.

Zeb joined the nuclear Navy in 1958 when selected by Admiral Rickover, the father of the nuclear Navy. After nuclear school, his first nuclear assignment, as Executive Officer, was building and commissioning a new nuclear prototype in Connecticut. He was Executive Officer and commissioned the first nuclear submarine designed to find and kill other nuclear submarines,

USS Tullibee. Every new class of nuclear attack submarines built since then has included updated versions of the active and passive sonar systems and the sound quieting methods of Tullibee. He attended Charm School (Admiral Rickover's staff) for six months; then, as a Lieutenant Commander, here reported in 1962 as Commanding Officer of the nuclear attack submarine USS Shark. Shark was the first class of single screw, whale-shaped, high-speed, nuclear submarines. She was the fastest submarine ever built at that time.

As a Navy Commander in 1965, he became the Commanding Officer of the Polaris nuclear submarine USS Sam Houston. He became Executive Assistant to the Undersecretary of the Navy (now Senator John Warner [R-Va.]).

Zeb attended the National War College in 1970-71 and reported as Commanding Officer, Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba, in 1971.

Zeb retired from the Navy in September 1973. Zeb's second career has been in energy. Since entering this field he has become President of three different energy companies. In 1984 Zeb married Joan Chasan of Houston, Texas, and Long Island, New York. He has four grown daughters from a previous marriage.

In 1985 he started a new company, Dolphin Energy, Inc., and began to market natural gas to major utilities on both coasts.

Zeb was active in tennis, the Navy League, the Naval Academy Alumni Association, the Naval Order, and the Republican Party. He was elected a delegate to the state party conventions in 1996, 2000, and 2004. He was elected a member of the Texas

Electoral College that met in Austin, Texas, in December 1996.

In 1999 Zeb became Chairman of the Cavalla Historical Foundation, which raised money to restore the WWII submarine USS Cavalla (SSK 244) and the DE-238 USS Stewart, both located at Seawolf Park, Galveston Bay, Texas. Today they both have been restored and are open to the public for visits.

Tuesday evening, Aug 4, Capt. Zeb passed away after he suffered a heart attack Sunday evening and hitting his head on the tennis court.

Zeb had just returned from attending the Change of Command of the USS TEXAS and delivering the eulogy at Dave Hinkle's (Sonalysts founder) funeral. Zeb and Dave had served together on Cavalla SSK. Zeb also served as aid to Warner and

Lehman. He remained an active and cheerful individual, frequently speaking about Submarines, keeping up to date on Submarine technology and when he spoke, he always pointed out that the true Capital Ship of the U.S. Navy was the submarine, not some target.

AAFA NOTES: Zeb is scheduled to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia on 30 November 2009.

We published "[Getting to Know Zeb Dickey Alford](#)" in the Spring 2000 issue of *AAFA ACTION*. It includes a biography that was written in 1996, a newspaper article from the *Houston Chronicle*, 21 July 1999, and several photos.

We published the obituaries of his mother, Doris Dickey Alford, in the Mississippi Obituaries compilation; and his brother Van Henry Alford in the Louisiana Obituaries compilation.

Zeb and his wife Joan attended AAFA's annual meetings in Houston, 1989, and in San Antonio, 1999. He joined AAFA in April 1990 and gave each of his four daughters a gift membership.

See AAFA's published genealogy [Seaborn John Alford 1807 LA](#) for more information on this family.

His lineage: Zeb Dickey 1925 MS1, James Burton 1895 MS2, James Barney 1878 MS3, Barnabas Seaborn 1845 MS4, Seaborn John 1807 LA5, Jacob 1761 NC6, Julius 1717 VA7, James 1687 VA8, John 1645 VA⁹.

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.

HOUSTON DAYS



Zeb aboard USS SAM HOUSTON in 1967

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 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.

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

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 ta fel" below shows Zeb's Alford ancestry.

A

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	Abt ___ 1645	Probably Virginia
	(No proof that John was father of James)		

I cannot tell you how much he will be missed. Capt. Zeb was a fine man, he served as a Captain of two subs in the US Navy. He was a founder and catalyst for the Cavalla restoration. He was one of the first Cavalla men I interviewed in 1997 and he was the guest speaker at the 2004 Subsim Meet in Galveston. Most of all, he was my friend.

Salute. Zeb, you will be missed.

Neal

From: Pat D. Fite <patdfite@comcast.net>
Subject: Zeb D. Alford
To: "Gilbert K. Alford" <GilAlford@Yahoo.com>
Date: Friday, August 14, 2009, 1:21 PM

Hi Gil, I never did see a longer obituary in the Chronicle. I guess I just missed it.

I had lunch with a friend yesterday; she had told me that her husband Chuck LeMaster was playing tennis with someone who fell and hit his head and probably had had a heart attack. They were playing on the tennis courts where they lived. Chuck never said the man's name, but told me that he had died. Chuck's wife, Roberta, said his name was Zeb Alford. I was quite surprised and told her that I have been very involved in the Alford family since Lloyd's grandmother was an Alford.

I am sorry, but I will not be able to attend the reunion in Dallas.

Pat

ALFORD



ZEB DICKEY ALFORD, retired US Navy Captain, 84, passed away unexpectedly on Tuesday, the 4th of August 2009, the eve of his 25th wedding anniversary. Zeb suffered a heart attack the previous evening while playing tennis at his home causing him to fall back hard on his head.

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Geo. H. Lewis & Sons
Funerals & Cremations



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