

CHAPTER 1

FRANCIS M. GAMBACORTA

WAR PATROL REPORT #1

19 NOVEMBER 1944 - 13 JANUARY 1945

**COMMANDING OFFICER SEA POACHER CONFIDENTIAL LETTER
22406/A4-3 SERIAL 02 DATED 13 JANUARY 1945**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Provided herein is a copy of the original report retyped by me and the SEA POACHER Association President William Brinkman in 2007 from copies of original records maintained at the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT, and kindly provided to us by Ken Johnson. The wording/grammar has not been altered. Where new acronyms are used, parens [] have been added to denote their meaning. This report was declassified at some later date. Where referred go to www.seapoacher.com website.

A note on Captain Gambacorta. His first command was the Submarine S-40, and with SEA POACHER, he completed 13 World War II patrols. He subsequently commanded the Destroyer BUCKLEY which was followed by the AKA WYANDOT in Antarctica. Following Navy retirement, he received a Ph.D. in Italian Literature from Rutgers University with special expertise in writings about Dante's Inferno. He then spent 10 years teaching at Long Island University where he specialized in languages and student administration. Upon this retirement he achieved Professor Emeritus status. Captain Gambacorta passed away in Williamsburg, Virginia in 2000 at the age of 87. He is buried at the U. S. Naval Academy Cemetery.

(A) PROLOGUE

22 February 1944. Keel laid Navy Yard Portsmouth, N.H.

20 May 1944. Launched.

31 July 1944. Commissioned.

14 August 1944. Ship accepted. Reported to COMSUBLANT for training.

15 August – 20 September 1944. Conducted shakedown training period.

20 September 1944. Departed New London, Conn. for Balboa, C.Z. [Canal Zone]

1 – 9 October 1944. Voyage repairs and four days training in C.Z.

9 October 1944. Departed Balboa, C.Z. for Pearl Harbor, T.H. [Territory of Hawaii] Reported for duty in Submarines Pacific Fleet.

25 October 1944. Arrived Pearl Harbor and received voyage repairs. Installed ST Periscope, Depth Charge Direction Indicator, VHF [Very High Frequency], APR, SPA-1 Radar Detector, 40 mm gun in place of 20 mm gun, Main Engine Detached Circulating Water Pumps.

3 – 16 November 1944. Conducted final training.

17 – 18 November 1944. Loaded ship for patrol – depermed.

19 November 1944. Readiness for sea.

(B) NARRATIVE

19 November 1944. Departed Pearl Harbor en route Patrol Area via Saipan in accordance with Commander Task Force Seventeen Operation Order 387-44 of November 18, 1944, in company with USS SEA OWL (Commander Bennett, Group Commander) and USS PIRANHA; escorted by PC-571. 1852 Formed scouting line on base course 270 degrees True [270T] with SEA OWL in center, PIRANHA ten miles to north and SEA POACHER ten miles to south.

20 November - 1 December 1944. Underway in company with SEA OWL and PIRANHA on scouting line en route Saipan. Conducted training dives, drills, instruction, fire control problems and fired all guns. Sighted our friendly plane. (Aircraft (AC) contact #1).

1 December 1944 (K) [Time Zone Kilo]. 0703 Made rendezvous with SEA OWL, PIRANHA and PC-1126 and proceeded to Saipan in company. 1123 Moored in nest alongside USS FULTON at Tanapag Harbor, Saipan.

1-3 December 1944 (I) [Time Zone India]. Achieved voyage repairs, fuel and exchanged twelve gas torpedoes for electrics.

3 December 1944 (I). 1000 Departed and made rendezvous with escort, AM-152. 1150 Task group formed and proceeded in accordance with routine instructions. 1505 Lookout sighted periscope abaft port beam. Turned away at four engine speed and at 1507 after lookout sighted torpedo wake crossing our wake about four hundred yards from port to starboard. Captain on bridge at this time could not confirm wake. Evaded on surface. Sent report to CTG 17.7 and to group in company. Reported it as possible periscope and torpedo wake sighting. Have been zig zagging by course clock. 1657 Rejoined formation. 1800 Escort left formation.

4 December 1944 (I). 1145 AC contact #2. 1318 AC contact #3. 1323 AC contact #4.

5 December 1944 (I). 0536 Submerged for trim. 0640 Surfaced.

6 December 1944 (I). 0600 Submerged. 0625 Surfaced. 0745 AC contact #5. 0830 AC contact #6. 1240 AC contact #7. 2120 Received message information to us about SUNFISH leaving

area. 2123 Received dispatch from Group Commander about conducting submerged patrol tomorrow at discretion and assignment for coordinated submerged patrol on the 8th, prior to entering area. Seas have picked up and have had to slow down to prevent damage from water going down hatch.

7 December 1944 (I). 0145 Slowing down again due to heavy seas. 0345 Horton, Scott, QM2c, USN, suffered lacerations over night by having been knocked down by large wave. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: This section is very difficult to read.*) 0640 Submerged about sixty miles south of group commanders provided (one word unreadable) position on pack frequency. PIRANHA received but not SEA OWL. On submerged days will go deep for a bathythermograph card once a day. Periscope observations will be continuous unless too much air activity is present. 0650 Received message from COMSUBPAC about SEA DEVIL and PLAICE leaving our area. I imagine we'll go in tonight. 1200 AC contact #8. 1752 Surfaced.

8 December 1944 (I). 0025 Radar contact on land at 40 miles, 327T, believed to be Yaku Shima. At this time Navigator obtained a fix with the few stars peeping out. 0110 Radar fix and star fix checked, changed course to 270T and increased speed. 0220 Sighted Yaku Shima about 35,000 yards, changed course to 280T, trying to get across tonight. Have two radar interferences astern but can't seem to get a proper recognition out of them. 0340 Radar contact 5,000 yards bearing 260T. Identified as small patrol boat. Evaded on surface. 0622 Submerged and decided to patrol close to Kuchinoyerabu Wan anchorage to investigate possible warship anchorage. 0958 Sighted several small ships, looked like fishing boats in anchorage, distant about 2 miles. Ship Contact #3. 1008 AC contact #9 (Sally). 1800 Surfaced, headed at best speed to the northwest with the possibility of hearing from other boats about yesterday's contact. 2103 Received contact report from REDFISH on radar contact. Changed course to north and went to four engine speed. 2137 REDFISH reported enemy position at Lat. 31-31N, Long. 127-58E at 2125. 2242 Enemy position Lat. 31-29N, Long. 129-10E. REDFISH sent more reports. Enemy seems to be zigging radically. It's nip and tuck. From radio transmissions, PIRANHA, SEA OWL, PLAICE and we are on the scene. Had interference on SJ at various times but could not get any recognition signals exchanged. 2340 PLAICE reported radar contact but that's all.

9 December 1944 (I). 0115 Exchanged SJ recognition with SEA DEVIL. She asked if we had witnessed first attack at 0028. We replied "negative." 0300 From information available, contact is beyond our reach, heading for Nagasaki probably. Decided to turn around and head for own area. 0450 Changed course to 090T to pass Tsurikaka Light abeam to port. 0500 Received message from PLAICE saying she had scored four hits on two destroyers at 0130. A position at time of her contact would have been valuable at 2340. Intend to patrol towards Noma and Bono Misaki. Have strong saturation pip on APR from land based radar on Shimo Koshiki Shima. Beam has been steady on us. Came to 180T and at 0629 submerged. 1333 AC contact #10. 1410 AC contact #11. Had continuous APR contact on 155-157 mcs, all night. Believe it may come from Iwo Jima.

10 December 1944 (I). 0053 Sighted fixed white lights on land between Bono and Noma Misaki. 0520 Submerged about eight miles from Kaimon Misaki. ST periscope is wonderful for navigation submerged in early morning. Picks up land between 20 to 30 thousand yards. We figure shipping has to round this point to get along coast up Bono Misaki. This spot has deep

water and sediment chart and shows conditions favorable for us. 0852 Began a series of four approaches on sightings on masts coming around the bend just as we had hoped. First two were small sampans with deck loads. Third looked like a PC [Patrol Craft], very rusty, fourth was peculiar grey painted job. He was making five knots on the expected track but proceeded by two erratically maneuvering small trawlers. These were flying the Japanese flag and the international "JIG" flag. The grey job had numeral one and possibly an "Xray" painted on the side. He was also flying the Japanese merchant flag. A sketch is attached and the closest description is a comparison to one of our net tenders. His tonnage about 500 tons. On all sightings sound picked them up first and when first sighted, due to the Mirage affect, targets looked respectable until they closed. Land background made it very hard to see them. They all hugged the coast on a steady course 287T - 107T. They were off the beach about two miles. Let them (4 to 5 unreadable words) of patrol. 1027 AC contact #12. 1045 AC contact #13. Believe he may have sighted us, went deep. 1500 Sighted the net tender and trawlers previously identified. They were acting suspicious. 10?? Surfaced, decided to patrol off Danjo Gunto tomorrow (2 to 3 words unreadable) and shift sub-area the next day. Had usual APR contacts during evening. Turned on SD once when contact was strong on us, but only land was picked up.

11 December 1944 (I). 1019 AC contact #14 (Rufe). 1346 AC contact #15 (Mavis). 1814 Surfaced. 1900 SJ out of commission, failure described in radar paragraph. It seems keying is not beneficial. 2000 SJ back in commission.

12 December 1944 (I). 0049 SJ contact on Danjo Gunto 315T, distant 43,940 yards. 0300 Converted #4 FBT [Fuel Ballast Tank] to MBT [Main Ballast Tank], flushed it out. 0630 Exchanged recognition signals with PIRANHA on SJ. 0645 Submerged. 1817 Surfaced. 1835 SJ radar contact 080T, distance 35,000 yards on Danjo Gunto. 1932 Received message from Group Commander canceling tonight's rendezvous. 1950 Received message from Group Commander regarding information in his sub-area. 2037 Sighted orange light about 4,000 to 6,000 yards distant, bearing 283T. No SJ contact. Must be a fishing boat. (Ship contact #7). 2040 Received message about B-29's being over area tomorrow. 2100 SJ contact is Tori Shima 070T, distant 9,000 yards. Sent our information to SEA OWL and PIRANHA.

13 December 1944 (I). Am going to patrol off O Shima tomorrow for any traffic going along coast. 0105 SJ interference, not own SJ. Appeared all over the screen Position Lat. 32-31N, Long. 128-20.8E. 0600 SJ contact on Fukae Shima bearing 345T, distant 46,000 yards. 0620 Submerged. During day patrolled close to O Shima hoping to intercept traffic hugging coast. 1340 Surfaced. Patrolling across probable routes from Nagasaki and Sasebo. 1908 Sighted two lights. (Ship contact #8). Looked like fishing boats, avoided.

14 December 1944 (I). 0530 Radar contact on Fukae Jima 000T, distant 19 miles. 0602 Submerged about 20,000 yards from O Shima. 0915 Ship contact #9. Looked like SC [Submarine Chaser] type patrol boat. Here's hoping something bigger comes thru. 1115 Ship contact #10. Sampan. 1135 Ship contact #11. Sampan. 1624 Ship contact #12. Patrol craft, SC type. 1835 Surfaced. 1945 Received orders from Group Commander to new station for coordinated patrol south of Danjo Gunto. Proceeded and at 2345 Commenced patrolling on new station.

15 December 1944 (I). 0633 Submerged, patrolling along designated line 245T - 065T. 1813 Surfaced. 1855 Exchanged SJ recognition with SEA OWL. 1922 SJ contact on Danjo Gunto bearing 051T, distant 20 miles. Usual 93 mcs Radar on APR from Danjo Gunto.

16 December 1944 (I). 0641 Submerged. 0745 Sighted Danjo Gunto bearing 000T, distant 12 miles. 1821 Surfaced. 1853 Received orders from Group Commander to discontinue coordinated submerged patrol and return to independent patrol in assigned areas. 1905 SJ contact on Danjo Gunto bearing 020T, distance 21 miles. Intend to patrol south of Amakusa Shima tomorrow. Have only one day left in this sub-area.

17 December 1944 (I). 0007 Informed PIRANHA we are entering her sub-area. 0226 SJ contact on Fukae Shima 035T, distance 43,450 yards. 0450 Ship contact #13. Sighted light of fishing boat, distant about 5,000 yards. Evaded. 0530 Exchanged recognition signals with PIRANHA. 0606 Submerged. Ship contact #14. 0707. Sighted smoke bearing 055T, distant about 10 miles. Tracked and at (Ship contact #14). 0820 Identified ship as hospital ship similar to MIKASA MARU (AH17), page 133 ONI 222J. She came down on about 170T, then changed to about 240T. Her actions weren't quite clear. 1834 Surfaced, am patrolling off Shiro SE Light which is burning. Before surfacing searchlight loom to east of Shiro SE was noted. 1845 Received message from Group commander canceling rendezvous for tonight. 2200 Received COMSUBPAC's message 170957 regarding lifeguard duties. 2223 Group Commander asked PIRANHA and SEA POACHER our approximate positions, at 0600 on the 18th we replied. 2323 Received orders from Group Commander interchanging lifeguard stations.

18 December 1944 (I). 0050 SJ contact bearing 164T, range 27,750 yards. Contact tracked as Fukae Shima. For a while we thought our long awaited contact had been made. Radar reported two large and two small pips. They were various rocks off the coast. 0116 Returned to patrol point and resumed patrol on a line 310T - 130T across expected enemy track. 0545 Changed course to take station off Shiro SE. 0626 Submerged. 1055 Aircraft contact #16. 1306 Ship contact #17. Two luggers came down by Shiro SE light and then changed course to 270T. 1810 Sighted (one word unreadable) searchlight bearing 103T. 1825 Surfaced. 1852 Aircraft contact #17. Running lights, radar indications on APR. 1940 Received message that B-29's would be over as originally scheduled tomorrow morning. 1945 Aircraft contact #18. Running lights, radar indications on APR. (May have been same plane as #17). 2015 Aircraft contact #19. (Running lights on). 2210 Sighted Shiro SE Light bearing 110T, distant 10 miles.

19 December 1944 (I). 0336 Sent weather report to Group Commander. 0400 Started guarding plane frequency. 0550 Ship contact #18, bearing 008T, 9,300 yards by SJ. Went to flank speed and tracked targets at 14 knots on course 080T. At 7,000 yards sighted target, looked like destroyer or small freighter. Could not close as it was getting light and he was not far from port. We needed another hour of darkness. 0626 Abandoned chase. 0637 Submerged. Guarded plan frequency with SD mast periodically and then continuously during raid. Heard NPM [Presumed to be Navy Radio Station Midway] and received traffic from China but didn't hear from planes. 1837 Surfaced into very heavy seas.

20 December 1944 (I). 0213 Sighted light on Gyu To bearing 280T, distant 18 miles. 0220 SJ contact on Saishu To bearing 263T, 37,000 yards. Intend to patrol along traffic lane south of this

island tomorrow. 0400 Received message that all planes had returned safely. 0630 Submerged off Saishu To. 1830 Surfaced and patrolled to east across traffic lanes. 2335 Ship contact #19. SJ contact on single ship bearing 196T, 9,600 yards. Went to battle stations and at 2359 (Attack #1) fired four torpedoes. *EDITOR'S NOTE: Mark 18-1 torpedoes were fired.*

All missed - target believed to be destroyer or destroyer escort. Torpedoes were set at four feet. Target's course and speed tracked on for seven minutes after firing. Believe target size was over estimated or torpedoes ran under. Target was not alerted till end of run explosion of one torpedo. Fired with unfavorable track because of APR radar indication from target at about 795 megacycles. Also I think all hands, including myself, were too anxious to get that first ship.

21 December 1944 (I). 0016 Target was circling and then headed towards us, showing signs he knew something was amiss. Cleared area and cut astern of him and patrolled back along track he had come hoping he was an advance scout only. 0600 Sighted light on Saishu To bearing 245T, 18 miles. 0610 Radar contact on Saishu To bearing 245T, 17 miles. 0640 Submerged running towards San To. 1318 Ship contact #20. Sampan. 1822 Surfaced.

22 December 1944 (I). 0030 Ship contact #21. SJ contact bearing 040T, 12,960 yards on single ship. Commenced approach. From tracking it looked very much like last night's friend. He was zigging every five minutes radically on base course 270T at 13.5 knots. Radarman said he showed same size pip. Decided to get a look at him. Sighted him at 5,000 yards, came to attack course and made him out to a PC type at 3,500 yards. Decided not to shoot and turned away. Our wake was bright. They either were asleep or didn't want to see us. Went back along his track. 0620 Submerged. 1636 Heard about fourteen depth charge explosions at a distance. We are west of Fukae Shima, SEA OWL may be south of it. 1644 Changed course towards Fukae Shima. 1826 Surfaced, bright moonlight, clear night. 1903 SJ interference bearing 172T. 1910 Received message from Group Commander canceling scheduled rendezvous. Receipted by PIRANHA and us. 1920 Saturation pip on APR on 150 mcs. Has been getting stronger for past 15 minutes. 1923 SJ contact bearing 245T, 4000 yards, nothing there visually. SD clear. SJ tracked to 11,000 yards, SD picked up plane at 6 miles opening. SJ interference disappeared. Plane must be heading for SEA OWL or PIRANHA. (Aircraft contact #19). 1930 Sighted ship bearing 262T, about 5,000 yards. (Ship contact #22). 1931 SJ picked up target, identified as friendly submarine by its interference. Could not exchange recognition signals. 2056 SJ contact at 1,000 yards, bearing 040T. Swung at full speed on four and at 2057 sighted definite periscope about 500 yards on starboard quarter. Evaded at flank speed. (Ship contact #23). 2120 Asked PIRANHA and SEA OWL if they had been submerged at that time. Both replied "negative." 2127 (Ship contact #24). SJ contact, range 1,400 yards, bearing 225T. Turned away at flank speed and evaded. Possible periscope. These clear moonlit nights are going to be nerve racking in this area. SJ tracked contact in to 800 yards then lost it in our wake. 2150 Reported periscope sighting to PIRANHA and SEA OWL. 2225 Received message from SEA OWL saying there was a hunt on between Fukae Shima and Danjo Gunto, that she has submerged twice for radar planes, most A/S but no targets.

23 December 1944 (I). 0125 Visual contact on object bearing 095T. Turned away at high speed. Slowed to listen. Possible screws. It's very dark now. 0158 SJ contact on Danjo Gunto bearing 070T, 27 miles. 0219 SJ contact bearing 185T, 5950 yards (Ship contact #25). Turned away and

tracked on course 290T, 11 knots. Pip disappeared from SJ screen as suddenly as it appeared at 9,700 yards. Put on speed and evaded. Could be patrol boat. 0420 SJ interference bearing 060T. Commenced exchanging recognition signals. 0425 Sighted what appeared to be four torpedo wakes on port side. Evaded at flank speed with OOD and Captain bracing themselves for the coming explosion. Looking back now they may have been porpoises but they sure were straight and well spread. 0436 Exchanged SJ recognition with PIRANHA and asked her if she had fired torpedoes. Could not get an answer. 0510 Saturation pip on APR at 154 mcs. Nothing on SD. 0514 Quartermaster sighted possible plane about 2 degree elevation abaft port beam. (Aircraft contact #20). 0515 Submerged. 0540 Aircraft contact #21. Started to surface. Clear on SD. Saturation pip on APR, decided to stay submerged. Patrolling across track from Uji Gunto. 1828 Surfaced. 2110 Received message about plane searches over area for next ten days.

24 December 1944 (I). Heading to patrol in Osumi Gunto. 0435 Saturation pip on 150 mcs on APR. SD had planes at six and 10 miles. Night is very dark, slowed to cut down phosphorescent wake. Saturation pip went on and off. SD lost contact. Turned SD on just about 3 seconds about 4 times. (Aircraft contact #22). 0616 Submerged. 1820 Surfaced.

25 December 1944 (I). 0124 Contact on land, bearing 065T, 18 miles, identified as ???kaki Shima. 0556 Aircraft contact #23, SJ contact on plane opening at 2850 yards, looked like big bomber or transport plane. 0624 Submerged; used SD antenna to listen to China and to B-29's. 1500 Had Xmas Dinner. 1829 Surfaced. 1850 Aircraft contact #24. SJ picked him up at 5,000 yards, opening to 6,600 and lost it. Strong APR signal. 2140 Sighted Uji Gunto bearing 100T, 25 miles.

26 December 1944 (I). 0050 SJ interference from direction of Uji Gunto from enemy radar. 0220 Aircraft contact #25 and #26 and at 0225 sighted two aircraft about 5 miles, elevation angle 2 degrees and at 0228 submerged with the two heading towards us and saturation pips on APR. 0323 Surfaced. 0326 Aircraft contact #27 by sight and APR. Lost sight of him opening out. 0552 Aircraft contact #28 saturation pip. Sighted him, SJ picked him up at 9,000 yards closing, looked like four engine bomber from his exhausts. Submerged at 1500, went under at range of 3,200 yards and settled at 140 feet waiting for the bomb, but nothing was dropped. Decided to stay down. From observation of these radar planes, it seems like they are locating us when we surface and before diving time. 1518 Heard distant depth charge explosions. 1520 Aircraft contact #29 - Rufe. 1604 - 1654 Heard distant depth charge explosions. Have been using SD mast to listen to China broadcast and to planes. Have received China very well but nothing from planes. 1825 Surfaced - heavy seas. 1930 Received message from China regarding four unidentified ships at 31-50N, 128-15E, but no time of contact. We were close to that position during the day. It would help if planes broadcast their contacts on the hour so that on submerged patrol you could plan to listen. Am going to send this message to Comnavgroup China on tomorrow night's schedule. 2050 Received message from Comnavgroup China that he will give exact times planes will be over nightly and of special broadcast of contacts at 1500 daily on 12465 kcs. 2215 Ship contact #26. Radar contact on single ship at 8,000 yards bearing 240T. Tracked as six knots, course 010T. Sighted small patrol type at 7000 yards. Bright moonlight. Lost contact by sight and at 10,000 yards lost radar contact. Contact not regained. Am heading to western part of area keeping away from shore radar. So far not picked up by radar planes or shore radar stations.

27 December 1944 (I). 0323 Received message from China saying planes will not be over today due weather. 0620 SJ radar interference. Exchanged recognition signals with PIRANHA. 0635 Submerged. 1100 Received message on SD antenna from China. 1320 Surfaced. 1920 Saturation pip on APR. 1931 Plane at 4 miles on SD. Aircraft contact #30. 1932 Submerged. 1959 Surfaced. 2017 Saturation pip on APR. Aircraft contact #31. 2021 Submerged. 2056 Surfaced. 2155 Received message from Group Commander canceling rendezvous. Shifted sub-area. Reported negative results and many radar planes to him. 2340 Saturation pip on APR. Aircraft contact #32. 2342 Submerged when saturation pip steadied on us. 2347 heard distant explosion. It's a bright moonlit night and it's hard to even see the exhausts from planes. Am diving on a steady saturation signal. The immediate need for a high frequency aircraft detector is felt in this area. It has to pick up planes at any altitude. The SJ has picked up planes the SD can't pick up.

28 December 1944 (I) 0042 Lookout sighted plane, 8 degrees elevation. Aircraft contact #33. 0043 Submerged. 0197 Surfaced. 0445 Ship contact #27. SJ contact bearing 020T, distant 10,000 yards. Tracked two targets on base course 270T zigging 30 degrees each way every six minutes. 0600 Came to attack course. Pips showed small targets and from visual sighting aboard identified targets as PC type and turned away. There were radar indications from this group but (four or five unreadable words) an unexpected zig towards us as we were heading in. Experienced SJ interference from this group as we were heading away. Decided to get on their track hoping they were sweeping ahead for something bigger. 0632 Submerged. 0900 Raised SD to listen to planes. Received messages from China but none from planes. 1825 Surfaced. 1940 Submerged, Aircraft contact #34. Submerged on a steady saturation pip of 156 megacycles. No SD indication. Bright moonlight.

29 December 1944 (I). 0417 Sighted Fukae Shima bearing 050T, 17 miles. 0442 Ship contact #28. SJ contact bearing 072T, 8100 yards. Tracked on course 240T, 12 knots. Sighted visually, looked like patrol boat. Evaded. 0543 Submerged. 1100 Received message plane search cancelled for today due weather. 1820 Surfaced. 1907 Delivered message to Comnavgroup China suggesting planes transmit on the half hour in order not to miss anything when submerged. Had strong APR indications on shore based radar from Danjo Gunto and Fukae Shima when crossing between the two. Have had various APR aircraft frequency signals tonight but none strong. 2000 Converted #3 FBT to a MBT.

30 December 1944 (I). 0349 Aircraft contact #35. Sighted lighted large plane visually crossing our stern. No APR indications. 0400 Received message from China that planes would broadcast contacts every half hour. 0650 Submerged. 1300 Received (two words unreadable) contacts all well to the northwest of us. 1905 Received (four or five words unreadable) (must be DRUM, 17.1.16) regarding (three words unreadable) course North, speed 7 at 1200 this morning. Heading south to intercept. Informed SEA OWL of intentions. 2055 SEA OWL on (one word unreadable) position and asking for information. 2112 Relayed (one word unreadable) contact report to SEA OWL and my position. He is on enemy (one word unreadable) position circle. 2120 Came to 090T, night is bright, full moon, occasionally overcast. Am sweeping to the east in case enemy should change course to pass to east of Uji Gunto and then intend to sweep back to west and north. 2322 Ship contact #29. Sighted what appeared to be patrol boat off Uji Gunto. Have strong APR contact on 158 mcs. This has been on us since we approached Koshiki Shima. Various APR aircraft contacts, SD out of commission.

31 December 1944 (I) 0022 Ship contact #30. Sighted same object or patrol boat about five miles. Could not make it out. Could be patrol boat or small fishing boat. Bearing changed fast. Came around and evaded on four engines when at 0030 sighted plane (Aircraft contact #36) diving on us elevation of 40 degrees. 0032 Submerged, rigged for depth charge and silent running. No bomb or depth charges, no screws heard on sound. Plane may have dropped something because sound heard a peculiar swish - (six or seven words unreadable). 0137 Surfaced. 0200 SJ contact 600 yards, bearing 248T, our course 300T. Evaded. Lost contact. Could have been a periscope. I don't think boat sighted was a submarine, but it's possible. 0245 Experienced SJ friendly interference, should be SEA OWL. Searched to the northwest crossing enemy's 0200 and 0400 position circles. 0625 Submerged. Am convinced we are being picked up by shore radar. Plane appeared after shore radar had frequently steadied on us. If enemy is using subs in conjunction with planes for anti-submarine work, that explains the absence of bombs. 0800 Heard various distant depth charge explosions during morning and again in afternoon. 1100 Received message from Comnavgroup China saying plane searches cancelled for today. 1223 Aircraft contact #37 - Topsy. 1540 Aircraft contact #38. 1825 Surfaced.

1 January 1945 (I). 0345 Received (three words unreadable) search will be conducted today. Am heading (three words unreadable) Gunto. 0614 Submerged (two words unreadable) from planes and Comnavgroup China on SD (one word unreadable). 1032 Aircraft contact #38. Very rough today. Seas pick up from strength one to five in a matter of minutes. 1840 Surfaced. 1857 Received message from Group Commander canceling rendezvous. (two words unreadable) patrol position near Lat. 32-25N, Long. 129-??E. There were quite a few contacts from planes but all of them to the west of us.

2 January 1945 (I). 0125 Took large quantities of water down hatch and main induction from a pooping sea. No damage except a few grounds. 0635 Submerged. 0735 Aircraft contact #40 Rufe. 1144 Ship Contact #31. Heard screws on JP. 1146 Sighted mast bearing 323T, about 5 miles. Identified as patrol boat. 1212 Aircraft contact #41 - Mavis. 1329 Aircraft contact #42 - Rufe. (Making a wide circle over us). 1715 Aircraft contact #43 - Mavis. 1833 Aircraft contact #44. Sighted plane bearing 220T at about 2 degrees elevation, about 3 miles. Had APR saturation pip on 158 mcs. Submerged. 2045 APR contact 152 mcs, strength 5. Aircraft contact #45. Submerged. 2115 Surfaced. 2207 Received word from Group Commander to patrol own area independently. 2320 APR contact varying from strength 2 to 5, keying. Decided to wait him out as night is a moonlit clear night. He lobed at us at strength five, reached saturation pip a couple of times, weakened, then came in steady saturation pip when at 2325 Aircraft contact #46. OOD sighted plane dead ahead elevation 2 degrees, distance 1 - 2 miles, heading directly at us. Submerged. From now on I will submerge whenever APR strength shows he is steady on us. SD is out of commission. 2332 Sound contact, light screws bearing 327T. Ship contact #32. 2340 Came up for a look. First I thought it was a submarine. Then when I saw his bow and bow wave identified him as PC boat, range about 1500 yards by ST radar. He had a small starboard angle and making knots. Went deep (rigged for depth charge and silent running). No depth charges. He went over us, stopped, started up, came in again and faded away. He was only listening, not sure of contact.

3 January 1945 (I). 0018 Sound reported distant pinging. 0036 Sound heard light screws. 0106

Periscope depth, nothing in sight or on radar screen (ST radar). 0143 Surfaced. The bright night had acquired a nice blanket of overcast. 0415 Ship contact #33. Sighted PC or SC type about six miles distant on opposite course. 0635 Submerged. 0948 Heard distant depth charge explosions. 1100 Heard distant depth charge explosions. 1200 Received contact report from China planes of convoy of 8 freighters and 4 destroyers at 32-13N, 128-55E, course 24°T, speed?. Headed south and tried to raise planes requesting a follow up on this contact as we are in position to intercept this evening. No success, so at 1311 surfaced and headed 205T on 4 engines. We can expect to cross their position circle about 1700 - 1800. 1635 Ship contact #34. SJ contact bearing 210T, 7350 yards. Visibility about 7350 yards. Turned away to start tracking. Recognized SJ interference from contact. He headed away also. Steadied SJ on him but could not exchange recognition with him. Lost contact at 10,000 yards. 1700 Broadcast my position on wolf pack frequency. 1710 BARB receipted for it. 1732 Asked BARB his position. BARB gave me his position, course and speed and said she had negative contact. That puts him well to east of us. Could not pick up SJ interference again. 1745 Submerged on enemy's 1800 position circle. Did this to escape detection from any evening search planes. 1800 Heard two distant explosions. 1830 Surfaced on course 205T, four engine speed. Intend to search across enemy track for possible courses along restricted area. 1947 SJ interference 000T. 1949 Exchanged recognition signals with BARB. 2029 Informed BARB of negative contact. 2130 Asked BARB her search plan giving my position. 2240 BARB informed us of her search and that she would stop searching at 2300. Am heading on 306T across enemy's possible courses for 10 - 12 knot positions. 2347 Received COMSUBPAC message 031011 regarding lifeguard station on the sixth.

4 January 1945 (I). 0213 Secured from search and headed back to area. 0615 Received message from Group Commander exchanging position for life guard on the sixth between SEA OWL and SEA POACHER. Our position 33-30N, 128-00E for lifeguard station. 0658 Sighted Saishu To bearing 030T, distant about 30 miles. 0700 Submerged. 116 Aircraft contact #47. 1500 Received contacts from China. Shows 6 freighters scattered on easterly course about 150 miles outside of Shanghai. Maybe the Panzers found last night's convoy. 1832 Surfaced. 1910 Received message from Comnavgroup China reporting plane contacts and requesting weather from SEA OWL and Spot. 1931 PICUDA reported mines at 30-32N, 125-12E. 2117 Ship contact #35. Sighted four lighted small craft about 5,000 yards, believed to be fishing boats. We are about 10 miles east of Saishu To. 2225 Received message from Group Commander to transmit weather to China. 2335 Delivered weather message to Comnavgroup China.

5 January 1945 (I). 0410 Received message from Comnavgroup China reporting receipt of our weather message and expecting to search as usual. Am patrolling south and east Saishu To to intercept possible plane contacts. 0611 have saturation pip on 151 mcs, steady on us. He has been steadily increasing for past ten minutes and sweeping. 0612 Submerged. Listened to planes on SD mast. 1115 Received message from Comnavgroup China saying search had been discontinued and requesting weather as soon after 1900 schedule tonight as possible. 1830 Surfaced, heavy seas. Prepared weather message. 1900 Comnavgroup China sent same message as at 1100. Started to send weather but someone else started in, probably SEA OWL. 2015 Group Commander told us not to transmit to China tonight, at same time decoded SEA OWL's weather report.

6 January 1945 (I). 0340 Received message from Comnavgroup China that strike is on as scheduled and excepting for weather. 0600. Had (two words unreadable) contact, looks like yesterday's friend. 0620 Submerged at Lat. 33-30N, Long. 128-00E, our lifeguard station. Listening on SD mast. 0956 Heard one distant explosion. 1010 Heard 3 distant bomb explosions. 1037 From here on things went on fast over aircraft frequency, chronological order may be wrong. Heard plane 254 calling BOWLING ALLEY, and answered him. 1047 Plane reported down 35 miles SE according to procedure. He asked how he was being heard. We told him strength five and at 1049 rogered. He seemed excited. Told him to give us his position. The first position is near to PIRANHA. He replied "180 from geographical point." As he insisted on our position, made a serious bust and sent him "72 BOWLING ALLEY 292" our position. This is entirely wrong I realize now but he seemed excited and I thought he might head for us. Also I said "BOWLING ALLEY CHARLIE," thinking that would help him as our point is designated as CHARLIE. Also transmitted: "This is BOWLING ALLEY repeat both positions." Received. 1051 "BOWLING ALLEY BOWLING ALLEY 35 miles southeast crew bailed out 35 miles southeast." 1052 Receipted for message. 1055 Called PIRANHA asking if she got the message. No reply. 1056 Someone, evidently a plane sent: "BOWLING ALLEY BOWLING ALLEY how about the boys bearing 180." 1057 Asked PIRANHA again if she had received report. 1100 Received "This is BOWLING ALLEY ROGER" (May be PIRANHA). 1104 Asked PIRANHA again. 1105 SEA OWL sent to PIRANHA "35 BOWLING ALLEY 135 over," using wolf pack calls, a good idea. 1105 Decoded contact report from planes; convoy one DD, one cruiser, four unknown ships, course 275, speed 15 knots. 1130 SEA OWL called us and told us plane down 71 miles 260T from reference point and that she had to dive. We are 38 miles north of this position. 1140 Surfaced, full on four engines. About this time Japs jammed distress frequently very efficiently. SJ out of commission. Rough following sea. 1210 Decoded plane contact of 3 BB's [Battleships], three Fox Able 33-15N, 127-50E, 10 others by radar contacts, course 275, speed 15. No time given of contact. 1215 Decoded contact report from planes saying: "0216 Z one carrier, two heavy cruisers, three destroyers, 32-07N, 127-50E. 1340 SEA OWL reported B-29 down to PIRANHA at 32-20N, 129-15E. No parachutes seen. 1355 Arrived at reported position of downed plane and commenced search. Reported our position to SEA OWL. 1415 SEA OWL sent us message saying "71 BOWLING ALLEY 260 did not bail out where X He said quote We are trying to make it in unquote when last heard over." 1419 Decided to submerge and keep listening here. 1430 Decoded two other contacts at 33-35N, 130-22E and 33-00N, 130-20E, either anchored or beached. 1531 Asked SEA OWL if she had further information on planes. No reply or receipt. 1610 Decoded contact of 1 doubtful at 32-50N, 125-55E, course 265, radar contact. 1633 Heard series of 10 distant explosions. 1648 Aircraft contact #49. Sighted plane 3 miles away. Rufe. 1655 Lost sight of plane. 1700 Decoded contact of one doubtful at 32-55N, 122-05E, course 200. 1711 Heard planes talking to each other using call WAUKEGAN TILL 1800. 1731 Heard series of several distant explosions. 1850 SJ back in commission. 1902 Surfaced. 1940 Received message from Comnavgroup China about ship convoy at 33-15N, 127-50E, course 275, speed 15 at 1105 this morning. Also reported one ditching heard broadcasting 71 BOWLING ALLEY 260. That's the one we searched for but had gone on. There's a big question mark now. 1950 Group Commander cancelled rendezvous and to comply independently to Opord. 2000 Received message from Group Commander info to us, action SILVERSIDES, fixing rendezvous at 0200 (I), 8th telling PIRANHA to shift to voice and saying SEA POACHER proceed toward 30-00N, 130-00E, same night. 2015 Tried unsuccessfully to find out from PIRANHA and SEA OWL if PIRANHA had received cancellation of rendezvous. Proceeded

south towards Tori Shima (in case PIRANHA wants rendezvous) for shift of area. 2125 Received report on contact report of 16 ship convoy from COMSUBPAC. 2225 SJ contact on Tori Shima at 4,000 yards. Sensitivity of SJ has gone down about 50 percent.

7 January 1945 (I). Passed south of (two words unreadable) to patrol towards Uji Gunto. 0520 Received message from Comnavgroup China repeating all plane contacts. Lots of ships went through yesterday. 0630 Sighted Uji Shima bearing 090T, about 30 miles. 0646 Submerged. 1830 Surfaced. 2000 Sent my position to SILVERSIDES and TAUTOG who are coming into area today. 2045 PIRANHA reported her position to SILVERSIDES, TAUTOG and us. She is to the south.

8 January 1945 (I). 0424 Submerged for APR contact on 156 mcs, saturation strength steady on us. Picked up 148 mcs radar on Yaku Shima. 0506 Surfaced heading towards Kuchinoerabu Wan to take a look for any anchored ships. 0621 Submerged. 0800 Experienced strong currents setting us into island. Last time we experienced very little current. Sighted radar installation, sketch under RADAR Section, on top of mountain at Lat. 30-28N, Long. 130-10E. This installation is new since December 8. At that time we thought we saw construction going on. To the right was sighted AA guns and possible searchlight. Also a large slit cut into mountain was noticed which could house coast defense guns. 1200 Mist and rain interrupted any further search into anchorage. 1821 Surfaced, proceeded to leave area in accordance with OpOrd. 2320 Received message from PIRANHA saying attack complete, 8 unidentified ships, enemy course 220T, speed 10. Her position 29-55N, 130-16E at 2310. Our position Lat. 29-50N, Long. 131-30E. 2338 Changed course to 249T and full on four engines to intercept. We sure are just a little too late. Were there at 1930 tonight. 2340 Sent PIRANHA my position, course and speed.

9 January 1945 (I). 0204 SJ interference bearing 295T, believed to be PIRANHA. 0210 Received message from PIRANHA of small contact at Lat. 29-38N, Long. 130-15E, course 180T, speed 8. 0300 Received message from PIRANHA saying one small contact at Lat. 29-32N, Long. 130-14E, enemy course 000T, speed 7. 0308 Sent PIRANHA message giving our position and asking for search instructions. 0333 Exchanged SJ recognition with PIRANHA. 0340 PIRANHA answered she could not regain contact and was discontinuing search. 0402 Discontinued search and headed east. 0634 Submerged. 1823 Surfaced. 2055 Tried to transmit on 4235 kcs to NPM our departure message to COMSUBPAC. Japs jammed efficiently. 2115 Made another attempt to transmit on 4235 kcs. Again jammed. Japs asked for V's, strength signal, etc. 2305 Received orders from COMSUBPAC for routing to Guam for refit. 2321 Finally delivered our message to NPM on 8470 kcs.

10 January 1945 (I). Aircraft contact #51. No radar indications. Picked up plane by SJ. Passed directly overhead. 0430 Decoded PIRANHA's second message to COMSUBPAC.

11 January 1945 (I). 0620 Submerged for trim. 0646 Surfaced. 0650 Received COMSUBPAC's 101806 regarding routing to Guam. 1215 Aircraft contact #52, B-24.

12 January 1945 (I). 1635 Submerged for trim. 1645 Surfaced. 1648 Aircraft contact #53, B-24.

13 January 1945 (I). 0530 Arrived rendezvous and joined PIRANHA and HENLEY, proceeded to Guam. 1129 Moored alongside USS SPERRY in Apra Harbor, Guam.

(C) WEATHER

Pearl to Saipan – Fine weather with seas amount 2 to 4, perfect conditions for Navigator until last two nights when sights could not be taken until midnight. Saipan to Area - Seas increasing to amounts with overcast and rain, moderately high winds. Area 9 Generally 8/10 overcast. Temperatures from 40 F to 54 F. Winds northerly, weather and sea extremely variable, entire dependant on the shifting winds which blew up and subsided un-predictably. About 1/3 of the time, night bridge watches were miserably cold and wet and submerged operations created the nick-name “USS SEA BROACHER.” Only a few nights and one day of flat calm were experienced. Seas were extremely phosphorescent at all times.

(D) TIDAL DATA

CURRENTS

Between Pearl and Saipan an easterly set averaging about 1 knot contradicted pilot chart. Possibly result of Bendix Log error but also observed by SEA OWL and PIRANHA. East of SAISHU TO an average easterly current of 0.5 knot was experienced. In vicinity of SHIRO SE and south of SAISHU TO 0.5 knot E-W currents developed. Between OKINOERABU SHIMA and YAKU SHIMA a 1.5 knot current setting south and off OKINERABU WAN a current of 2 knots setting 125T was experienced submerged, shifting to 1.7 knots on 090T in TOKARA KAIKYO. Currents on the whole were variable and unpredictable. Submerged drifts were, for the most part, about 0.5 knots. Surface drift was largely dependant on wind and sea. The direction of the set was particularly unpredictable around the islands in the SE corner of the area.

(E) NAVIGATION AIDS

BONO MISAKI appeared as a steady white light at irregular intervals, perhaps turned on when a ship passes. Other lights sighted along the coast between here and KAIMON MISAKI may have similar purpose. SHIRO SE 33-11N, 128- 48E, Reduced visibility, changed to Q. F1.W. KOSHIKI JIMA 33-18N, 129-10E. Normal. GYU TO 33-29N, 126-58E. Possibly increased visibility, (sighted at 20 miles with binoculars instead of charted 12), period of 5 seconds, instead of 6 seconds. KYOBUN TO 34-01N, 127-18E. Normal-possibly increased visibility. KYOBUN TO On 613 foot peak of SAN TO at 34- 01.5N, 127-17.8E are several new structures and three towers. Navigation is extremely simple in this area as long as radar functions properly. The steep to rocky islands and coast line are ideal for radar fixes, and the definite tangents and well charted peaks cut in beautifully for a Navigator resigned to the low islands and “not a safe guide for navigation” charts of the southern areas.

(F) SHIP CONTACTS

EDITOR’S NOTE: Ship contacts are summarized in this Section, however, all of the information

is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for summary details.

(G) AIRCRAFT CONTACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE Aircraft contacts are summarized in extensive tables in this Section, however, all of the general information is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for summary details.

(H) ATTACK DATA

EDITOR'S NOTE Torpedo attack data are summarized in this Section, however, all general information is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for details.

(I) MINES

No mine fields or mine-laying activities were observed. Restricted area boundaries were strictly observed.

(J) ANTI-SUBMARINE MEASURES AND EVASION TACTICS

Anti-submarine measures in this area consist of patrol boats, radar equipped planes, submarines and shore based radar detectors. From the fact that we have not been bombed or depth charged, the assumption can be made that they were negligible, but I believe we were spotted by planes or shore radar except for days I purposely stayed outside of shore radar or when weather was bad and planes didn't fly. After the many radar plane contacts, I decided to experiment a few times, which could have ended disastrously if the plane bombed us. From information gathered prior to going on patrol, I understood that when a plane's radar showed a steadily increasing strength on the detector, it was time to submerge when it reached strength three. I tried a few times to wait the plane out, this at night. The tactics seem to be for the plane to pick us up, approach (shown by pip increase to saturation strength), and then come in to attack using double lobing. I know that the plane definitely sighted us a few times. These were on moonlit nights. Contacts were, of course, more frequent on those nights.

Times of flights were usually after sunset and before diving time. On clear nights, it was any time during the night. There was an indication that a plane would come out after we had steady radar pips on us from shore radars. The possibility of a anti-submarine team composed of radar planes, submarines, or patrol boats was indicated. One night when group was exchanging stations north of DANJO GUNTO, we sighted definite periscope, at same time radar planes were overhead. The possibility that this may have been SEA OWL exists but she and PIRANHA replied they weren't submerged at that time. Another night off UJI GUNTO we submerged for radar plane after sighting him and soon after heard screws coming towards. On looking through radar periscope, identified target as PC, headed right for us, range 1050 yards. On another occasion while evading small patrol off UJI GUNTO which was closing fast, had to submerge for radar plane diving on us. Later on surfacing had a definite radar pip at about 600 yards, clear moonlit night, possible periscope. The absence of any bombs furthers the conclusion that a coordinated team was in operation. On December 23, 1944, after having sighted periscope,

another possible periscope by radar, possible submarine surfacing, radar planes overhead, at 0425 sighted four torpedo wakes. The water was phosphorescent and again I say they may have been porpoises but I still have my doubts. The tracks showed a definite spread and were straight. Also we had no porpoises sighted after this time.

(K) MAJOR DEFECTS AND DAMAGE

ENGINEERING

Ball bearings on # 2 fuel oil purifier burned out four times. Renewed entire bearing assembly on first casualty, renewed only ball bearings second and third times and finally interchanged entire bearing assemblies of # 2 fuel oil purifier and # 1 lube oil purifier. Since then no trouble has been noted in the operation of either purifier.

(L) RADIO

1. Signals on one or more frequencies employed by NPM were readable at all times. Jamming was experienced as noted in countermeasures section. There is a voice circuit (one of our own) near the 9690 kcs frequency which makes copying difficult at times. All COMSUBPAC serials were received.
2. Reception on the Wolf Pack frequencies was satisfactory. Japanese shore installations utilize these and adjacent frequencies. Japanese transmissions were heard from time to time when within about fifty miles of Japanese islands but there was no attempt to jam.
3. No major radio casualties were experienced.
4. A total of five transmissions were made not including Wolf Pack transmissions. Two messages were sent to FULTON, two to radio Chunking, and one to Pearl. A little difficulty was experienced in transmitting to Pearl due to jamming by the enemy on 4245 kcs, upon shift to 8470 kcs the message was easily cleared.
5. An additional high frequency receiver could be utilized to advantage.

(M) RADAR

Operation of the SJ radar was very satisfactory for most of the patrol. Several nights of poor sensitivity were encountered brought about by a poor TR tube but since very few spares were to be had (2 were allotted) this tube could not be renewed as often as desired. Failure of an 807 Bias generator tube and the opening of the inductance L-1 threw the gear out of commission for four hours. Since inductance L-1 is not carried as a spare, 1000 volts had to be tapped off the receiver indicator rectifier and lead to the transmitter to supply bias and keep alive voltage. This gear also served as an excellent communications device for recognition over short ranges.

The SD aircraft warning radar was used for short "quick look" in the area, especially after being driven down by aircraft. About midway during the patrol this gear went out of commission and remained so for the remainder of the patrol. But its loss was not sorely felt.

The new ST radar with periscope antenna has wonderful possibilities, but we were unable to give it a fair test. It was used very handily when submerged for obtaining land cuts in reduced

visibility and sweeping before surfacing. This gear was not in operation as much as SJ and had no troubles. The frequency has more of a tendency to drift than the SJ so that an automatic frequency control would help greatly.

The A.P.R. was used, with some degree of success, as an aircraft warning device but no definite relationship between the "Pip" height and range of plane was established. A saturation or "strength 5" contact was judged as a range close enough to dive.

Representative ranges are as below:

SJ

Land	50,000 yds	E2	Height 1,500 ft
PC	10,000 yds	E3	

ST

Land	30,000 yds	E2	Antenna 4 ft above water.
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SD

Land	40 miles	E2	5,000 ft
Aircraft	30 miles	E2	?

Troubles-Remedy:

Motor on SD stopped. 8014 tubes burned out. Repaired motor, replaced 8014. Operation restored.

SJ - Loss of sensitivity, no water return. T.R. tube defective. Replaced T.R. tube and returned. No transmitter pulse, no output. No bias on transmitter. L-1 burned out. No spare on board so 1000 volts tapped off bleeder of 2 x 2 on receiver indicator lead to transmitter through spare leads in cables for bias generator and "keep alive." Operation restored.

SPA- Sweep on CRT sputtering. 2 X 2 gone bad. Replaced and restored operation.

(N) SOUND GEAR AND SOUND CONDITIONS

Sound conditions in the area were excellent. Sampans of 200 tons making 9 knots were picked up at an average range of about 8000 yards. JP usually picked up targets at slightly longer ranges than JK or QB and outside of periscope range. No defects in sound gear were noted. DCDI was not put to the test.

(O) DENSITY LAYERS

EDITOR'S NOTE Twenty-five bathythermograph recordings were made to depths of 410 feet. Half the observations indicated isothermal conditions; the others showed a negative gradient varying from 60 to 330 feet. Details can be found on the SEA POACHER website

(P) HEALTH, FOOD, AND HABITABILITY

Health of officers and crew is excellent there being only two sick days (due to conjunctivitis) during the patrol and practically no evidence of patrol fatigue. Minor ailments were treated as below:

Headaches – 51
Constipation – 16
Colds - 17
Lacerations, minor - 27
Sprains - 2
Conjunctivitis - 3
Parasitic skin infection - 23
Diarrhea - 2

Food was fair with a definite improvement in the latter part of the patrol. The lack of a good baker was sorely felt, the bread and pastry, at best, never being better than fair. Fresh eggs, potatoes, and meats lasted right up to the end of the patrol. The turning sour of 8 gallons of stabilized cream, trade name "Avoset" was much regretted. This product is supposed to keep at least 6 months if properly cooled. It is recommended that supply officers attempt to date stocks received. The ice cream freezer was used continuously and performed valiantly.

Habitability was extremely good. On station one air conditioning unit was used at all times, keeping the boat dry and comfortable. The booster blower and forward battery air conditioning installed by Sub Base Pearl were required, even with injection below 70 Degrees and atmosphere below 50 degrees, to make the forward battery comfortable. This installation is greatly appreciated by forward battery dwellers.

(Q) PERSONNEL

Personnel situation, as a whole, is very good. The greatest defect in the crew is the immaturity of a large percentage, there being thirty men under 21 years of age at this time. They must be weaned, and the process is frequently slow. The loss by attrition and weeding from the fitting out period to departure on war patrol amounted to 14 men and was absolutely necessary. It is believed that a large amount of this difficulty could be dissolved by adherence to the policy of assigning only volunteers over 21 to submarine duty except in very special cases and by sending old submariners who no longer desire to fight in submarines back to general service. The problem of immature personnel was most bothersome in the (remainder of page unreadable).

The lack of a baker was sorely felt. None of our cooks can make decent bread or pastry. Our best delicacies were produced by PITSTICK, R.E., EM1c and BOYAJIAN, K., EM3c.

Extra men and an extra officer were carried and became essential to our organization. It is planned to carry 78 men and 9 officers henceforth in order to provide extra men for training and for maintaining continuous radar, sound, and APR watches.

Morale booster equipment number one is the movie projector. It is recommended that more of the "Community sing" type of short subjects be included in the reels provided. The crew's response to them is amazing. The turntable and radio broadcast recordings provided by Sub Supply at Pearl likewise provided much entertainment.

- (a) Men on board during patrol - 77
- (b) Men qualified at start of patrol - 32

- (c) Men qualified at end of patrol - 32
- (d) Men making first war patrol - 52
- (e) Men advanced in rating - 3

R) MILES STEAMED-FUEL USED

Pearl Harbor to Saipan	4082 mi - 44,130 gal.
Saipan to Area	1426 mi - 18,280 gal.
In Area	5512 mi - 48,890 gal.
Area to Guam	1629 mi - 21,140 gal.

(S) DURATION 55

Days enroute to area - 17.5 (includes 2 days in Saipan)	
Days in area	32
Days enroute to base	5.5
Days submerged	32

(T) FACTORS OF ENDURANCE REMAINING

Torpedoes	Fuel-gal.	Provisions-days	Personnel factor - days
P 20	30,040	21	14

Factor terminating patrol: ComSubPac Opord. 387-44.

(U) RADIO AND RADAR COUNTER MEASURES

Radar - No enemy counter measures were observed. However there was slight evidence of our SJ being observed. In approach any of the islands to within SJ range we were usually met by radar planes or PC boats. However, it is hard to tell if this was by chance or design. Counter measures employed by us consisted only of our use of APR. A new installation of radar was observed on Kuchinoerabu Shima constructed between 8 December 1944 and 8 January 1945. Located on Banyago Mine, highest point on western end of island. Lat 30-28N, Long. 130-10.7E. Several poles with cross bars about 5-10 feet long and two lower structures were observed.

Radio - Every morning when the time tick starts the jamming begins. It sounds as though the key is being held down. Modulation change is slight. Amplitude varies. When MSG is being transmitted amplification increases.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Several tables of radar frequencies observed and characteristics, as well as jamming by the enemy, are contained in this Section. See SEA POACHER website for details.

(V) REMARKS

1. MK 18-1 Torpedoes. Standard routines were followed and torpedoes were maintained without difficulty. Torpedo No. 56534, a new one, developed a 150 volt ground: trouble was traced to a grounded negative motor brush connector. Corrected by bending connector inboard from torpedo

hull and re-insulating with fish paper and friction tape.

2. Winter clothing is still completely unsatisfactory even in the well above freezing temperatures of this area. Another plug for a fleece lined, water proof, snap-fastened coverall suit with zipper collar type hood, to be worn with water-proof aviation type boots is registered. Other essentials are a flap pocket for lens paper and sunglasses, elastic wristlets to prevent water running down sleeves while wearer is using binoculars, the later being secured to the coverall sleeves so they may be pulled off quickly and not lost.

* * *

FROM TASK GROUP 17.10, CARE OF FLEET POST OFFICE, SAN FRANCISCO,
CALIFORNIA 17 JANUARY 1945
CONFIDENTIAL

FIRST ENDORSEMENT TO CO SEA POACHER REPORT

From: The Commander Task Group SEVENTEEN POINT TEN
To: The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet
Via: (1) The Commander Submarine Force, United States Fleet
(2) The Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

Subject: U.S.S. SEA POACHER - Report of First War Patrol

1. The first war patrol of the SEA POACHER was conducted in the northern portion of the East China Sea. This patrol was of fifty-five days' duration, of which thirty-two days were spent in the area. SEA POACHER was a member of a coordinated attack group consisting of SEA OWL, PIRANHA, and SEA POACHER under the command of Commander Carter L. Bennett, U.S.N. This was the commanding officer's first patrol in command of a fleet type submarine.

2. The patrol was marked by the lack of suitable torpedo targets despite the previous good patrols made in this area. One attack was made on a small vessel thought to be a destroyer or destroyer escort, on December 21st. This was a night surface radar attack. Four Mk. 18-1 torpedoes were fired at a range of 2,180 yards, depth set four feet, track angles averaging 130 degrees port. Target showed indications of having radar on the A.P.R. No hits were made, although one end of run explosion was heard. The following night a P.C. type patrol boat was sighted in approximately this position which behaved in about the same manner as the target of the previous night. The commanding officer feels that he may have fired at this P.C. boat which could account for the misses.

3. The increased use of radar-equipped planes by the Japanese is very apparent. From a study of the track chart, a night radar plane patrol covering the southwesterly approaches to Nagasaki is indicated patrolling about ninety miles off Kyushu in the vicinity of Nanjo Gunto. Strong indication of shore-based radar on Danjo Gunto, Yaku Shima, Shimo Kosiki and Fukaw Shima, were observed and a possible new radar installation was seen on Kuchinoerabu Shima.

4. Particular attention is invited to the comments of the commanding officer under Section "J" describing the possible coordinated use of radar-equipped planes, shore radar stations, submarines, and patrol boats by the enemy.

5. The new ST radar could not be used against a torpedo target, but it proved its value for navigational purposes when operating submerged off the coast.

6. The SEA POACHER returned from patrol apparently in very good material condition, and it is expected her refit will be completed in the normal period by the SPERRY and Submarine Division One Hundred One relief-crew.

7. The commanding officer, officers, and crew are to be congratulated on a well-conducted patrol, and it is hoped that more targets will be found on the next run.

Signed G. L. Russell

* * *

Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, Care of Fleet Post Office,
San Francisco, California

CONFIDENTIAL 29 January 1945

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to SEA POACHER Report of First War Patrol.

NOTE: THIS REPORT WILL BE DESTROYED PRIOR TO ENTERING PATROL AREA

COMBSUBPAC PATROL REPORT NO. 647
U.S.S. SEA POACHER - FIRST WAR PATROL

From: The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet
To; The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet
Via: The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subject: U.S.S. SEA POACHER (SS406) - Report of First War Patrol
(19 November, 1944, to 13 January, 1945)

1. The first war patrol of the SEA POACHER, under the command of Commander F.M. Gambacorta, U.S. Navy, was conducted in the Northern part of the East China Seas. The SEA POACHER, along with the U.S.S. PIRANHA (SS389) and the U.S.S. SEA OWL (SS405), formed a coordinated attack group with Commander C.L. Bennett, U.S. Navy, as group commander. The SEA POACHER also performed lifeguard services as well as offensive patrol.
2. The SEA POACHER on her first war patrol contacted many small ships but no worthwhile targets despite thorough area coverage. Enemy anti-submarine countermeasures were heavy, and the SEA POACHER obtained much valuable training from this patrol which will pay dividends in her next one.
3. Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for this patrol is not authorized.

J.H. Brown, Jr., Deputy ComSubPac

DISTRIBUTION:

(Complete Reports) to Cominch, CNO, Cincpac, ICPOA, Comservpac, Cinclant, Comsubslant, S/M School NL, CO S/M Base PH, Comsopac, Comsowespac, Comsubsowespac, CTG 71.9, Comnorpac, Comsubspac, ComsubspacAD, SUB AD MI, All Squadron and Div. Commanders Pacific, Substrainpac, All Submarines Pacific

Signed E.J. Auer, Asst. Flag Secretary

CHAPTER 2

FRANCIS M. GAMBACORTA

WAR PATROL REPORT #2

7 FEBRUARY - 27 MARCH 1945

COMMANDING OFFICER SEA POACHER CONFIDENTIAL LETTER DATED 27 March 1945

EDITOR'S NOTE: Provided herein is a copy of the original report retyped by me and the SEA POACHER Association Vice President Jack Merrill in 2007 from copies of original records maintained at the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT, and kindly provided to us by Ken Johnson. The wording/grammar has not been altered. Where new acronyms are used, parens [] have been added to denote their meaning. This report was declassified at some later date. Where referred, go to www.seapoacher.com website.

(A). PROLOGUE

13 January 1945. Arrived Guam from First War Patrol. Refit accomplished with utmost efficiency by the USS SPERRY (AS12) and SubDiv 101 relief crew. During refit the ship was dry docked to repack the starboard shaft. The port propeller had one six (6) inch crack in the leading edge of one blade. Propeller renewed. In addition to routine items, the following alterations were accomplished during refit:

- (1) Installed hand speed input on DRAI [Dead Reckoning Analyzer Indicator].
- (2) Installed traveling nut type lower limit switch on periscope hoist. BuShips Ltr SS/S24-9(815) of 4/4/44.
- (3) Installation of a larger vent (1/2 inch) in the air line to the hydraulic accumulator. BuShips Ltr SS/S21 (815) of 4/23/43.

The officers and crew spent an excellent rest period at Camp Dealey. We received four (4) days post repair and four (4) days training period with Commander L. P. Stone, USN, (ComSubDiv82), as training officer.

7 February 1945. Ready for sea. Lieutenant Commander R. K. R. Worthington, USN, 81257 was transferred to SubDiv101. Lieutenant (jg) R. P. Combs, USNR 91674 and Ensign B. C. Young USNR 338149 reported aboard for duty.

(B) NARRATIVE

February 7, 1945 (I) (Times minus 9). 1400 Departed in accordance ComSubPac Operation Order, 39-45. Escort is USS OSMUS (DE701). The following Officers and Chief Petty Officers are serving on board with war patrols completed shown alongside their names:

9 CMDR F. M. GAMBACORTA, USN
 10 LT W.R. LILLIOTT, USN
 4 LT W. W. GASKINS, USNR
 4 LT P.E. LACOUTURE, USN
 1 LT R. H. GALLEMORE, USN
 3 LTjg W. H. BALCKEN, USNR
 1 Ens R. D. COBB, USNR
 1 Ens J. A. BRINK, USNR
 1 Ens B. G. YOUNG, USNR
 11 ZELINA, G. CTM, USN
 5 NETTLESHIP, F. W. JR. CEM, USN
 1 EMERY, E. T. Jr. CMoMM, USN
 7 CLINK, E. W. CMoMM, USN
 5 DAVIS, W. H. CMoMM (T), USN
 6 SHAFER, D. R. CY (T), USN
 3 D SMITH, F. S. CPhM (AA), USN

Our task unit designation is 17.15.3 and our orders read to join USS PLAICE, T.U. 17.15.1, and USS SCABBARDFISH, T.U. 17.15.2, with Cmdr C. B. Stevens in PLAICE as ComTaskGroup 17.15. Our mission is to patrol north and east of the island of Formosa. 1500 Exchanged calls with USS PIPEFISH who was proceeding into Guam. 1519 Made trim dive. 1600 Surfaced. 1626 Submerged for one hour's anti-submarine exercise with OSMUS who requested it. This was appreciated by both of us. OSMUS told us we were perfectly safe to proceed on operations. 2025 Released escort at entrance to Funnel, proceeded with SOA of 13 knots. Experienced SJ interference during night, possible from Latta's group, but could get no recognition exchanged.

8 February 1945. Conducting daily drills, dives, and fire control problems enroute area. Plan to stay on surface as far west as possible, conducting a submerged patrol in area. Zigzagging by Arma course clock. SD secured in standby condition. APR manned continuously, SJ on continuously at night or during periods of low visibility, except in direction of land when it will make irregular sweeps. Will conduct continuous periscope patrol when submerged unless heavy weather is encountered. 0745 Air contact #1 B-24, friendly. 0810 Received orders from CTG 17-7 to proceed to 20-30N, 133-30E and thence to assigned areas in order to cover new safety line placed into effect by Opord 73. 1010 Fired 5 inch gun for practice. 1200 Position Lat. 17-05N, Long. 141-46E. 1440 Air contact #2 B-24, friendly.

9 February 1945. 1200 Position Lat. 19-37N, Long. 137-17E.

10 February 1945. 0330 Received message 091158 from Group Commander telling us we are Wolf Six of Task Group Fifteen, now a combined pack, to patrol north of Babuyan and Calayan Islands, to disregard his local instructions and to avoid BATFISH in Babuyan Channel. Our new unit designation is T.U. 17.15.6. 1200 Position Lat. 20-51N, Long. 132-34E. 1405 Headed west at Lat. 21N, to comply with Group Commander's orders. 2215 Sent my first to Group Commander telling him we do not have his 021714 and information on my original orders regarding area. 2250 Received ComSubPac's orders to PLAICE and SCABBARDFISH to move into new areas, where we are to join. 2251 Changed course to 289T and assumed T.U. 17.15.3

designation.

11 February 1945. 1200 Position Lat. 21-55N, Long. 126-58E.

12 February 1945. 0030 Delivered message to Group Commander asking for instruction and reporting our arrival SE corner of area at 0600 today. 0045 Group Commander assigned sub areas to each ship in pack according his previous local instructions. Changed course to NW towards Yonakuni Island. 0408 Received PLAICE's 5th to ComSubPac relaying to us cancellation of his 09158 and placing former instructions back in affect. 0650 Submerged for periscope patrol. 0800 Set clocks back to zone -8 time. All times will be so from now on unless otherwise specified. 1200 Position Lat. 23-57N, Long. 123-01E. 1535 Sighted Iriomote Island bearing 023T, distance about 30 miles. 1605 Air contact #3 Sally. 1826 Surfaced. 2200 Radar contact on coast of Formosa 270T, distance 80,000 yards. 2230 Exchanged SJ recognition with SCABBARD FISH bearing 105T.

13 February 1945. 0555 Submerged across traffic lane to north coast of Formosa. Seas rough. 1200 Position Lat. 25-16N, Long. 123-16E. 1312 Sighted Uotsuri Shima bearing 018T, distant 15 miles. 1812 Surfaced.

14 February 1945. 0556 Submerged. 1035 Sento Shosho distant 30 miles, bearing 023T. 1200 Position Lat. 25-17N, Long. 123-09E. 1830 Surfaced. 2008 SJ interchange, could not exchange recognition.

15 February 1945. 0105 SJ contact on Iriomote Jima bearing 150T, distant 40 miles. 0415 SJ contact on Uotsuri Jima bearing 000T, distant 33 miles. 0554 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-24N, Long 123-23E. 1825 Surfaced. 2033 Converted #3 Fuel Ballast Tank to Ballast Tank. 2242 SJ contact on Yonakuni and Iriomote Islands.

16 February 1945. 0555 Submerged. 0625 Sighted Iriomote Shima bearing 215T. 0932 Sighted Iriomote Shima, bearing 141T. 1200 Position Lat. 24-35N, Long. 123-26E. 1816 Surfaced, patrolling between Iriomote Jima and Uotsuri Jima.

17 February 1945. 0020 SJ contact on Uotsuri Jima bearing 010T, 70,000 yards. 0225 SJ contact 295T, 17,500 yards, range came in to 11,850 yards then lost target. Believe it may have been a plane. Had APR contact at 520, 215 and 240 mcs. Contact at 520 mcs came on with saturation strength and then started sweeping. 0605 Submerged off Uotsuri Shima. 1200 Position Lat. 25-36N, Long. 123-28E. 1822 Surfaced. 2330 Received ComSubPac's Serial 69 detailing lifeguard duties for one submarine of this group.

18 February 1945. 0025 Group Commander detailed SCABBARD FISH for lifeguard duty till the 19th and then PLAICE would take over above duties. 0603 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-32N, Long 123-20E. 1440 Air contact #4. Sally, about 7 miles distant on westerly course, evidently patrolling. 1823 Surfaced.

19 February 1945. 0540 Submerged off Iriomote Jima. 1127 Sighted small fishing boat along the coast of Iriomote Shima. 1200 Position Lat. 24-30N, Long. 123-37E. 1910 Received message

from group Commander about guarding WoPac [Wolf Pack] Frequency by lifeguard sub. 2004 Asked Group Commander for info in his sub area and who lifeguard sub was, since his message had been action to us only. 2115 Received answer from Group Commander. PLAICE will take over lifeguard duties at midnight.

20 February 1945. 0000 Shifted sub areas as previously scheduled by Group Commander. 0553 Submerged off Hoka Sho. Seas very rough, rolled 10 degrees at 80 feet. Took looks every 10-15 minutes instead of the usual high periscope watch. 1200 Position Lat. 25-15N, Long. 122-14E. 1811 Surfaced. 1858 Exchanged recognition with PLAICE.

21 February 1945. 0530 Saturation contact on APR at 99 mcs, came on at once. Has not been picked up before. Believe it's land based. 0548 Submerged. Hoka Sho, Menka Sho, and Kahei Sho north of Formosa give excellent radar cuts in order to keep position in this terrible weather. It has been overcast, rough and raining since the day we entered this area. 1200 Position Lat. 25-17N, Long. 122-15E. 1805 Sighted floating object about 800 yards away, bearing 000T. 1816 Surfaced, searched for object. 1836 Sighted object, it was aircraft belly tank. 1836 SJ contact on Samucho Koku bearing 234T, distant 38,800 yards.

22 February 1945. 0237 PLAICE informed us his SJ is out of commission. 1015 SJ contact on Hoka Sho bearing 300T, distance 26,000 yards. 0550 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-21N, Long. 122-14E. 1825 Surfaced. 1831 SJ contact on Hoka Sho bearing 337T, distance 26,000 yards. 1845 APR contact, 155 mcs. Believe it's on one of the islands N.E. of Formosa. 2050 Exchanged SJ recognition signals with PLAICE, bearing 230T.

23 February 1945. 0515 SJ contact on Hoka Sho, 310T. Distant 29,150 yards. 0550 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-10N, Long. 122-15E. 1820 Surfaced. 1850 SJ contact Hoka Sho bearing 298T, 31,250 yards. 1905 Exchanged recognition signals with PLAICE on the SJ.

24 February 1945. 0550 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-11N, Long. 122-20E. 1825 Surfaced. 1908 Received contact report from SPIKEFISH regarding convoy of 6 AK's and 4 escorts at Lat. 29-05N, Long. 127-24E, speed seven, course 210, at 0900 this morning. Hope they keep on coming as SPIKEFISH said. For speed 6-13 knots possible arrival my patrol point is from 1100 on the 25th to 1700 on the 26th. 1929 SJ contact on Hoka Sho bearing 334T, distant 42,200 yards. 1935 Received Serial nine three from ComSubPac assigning us lifeguard duty from March one until departure or until relieved. 2250 APR interference 156 mcs, 500 pulse rate. Swung ship, seems to come from Hoka Sho.

25 February 1945. 0245 Decoded message from Group Commander to ComSubPac requesting one week's extension in area for PLAICE. SCABBARDFISH does not desire extension. 0530 SJ radar contact on Menka Sho bearing 283T, distance 30,800 yards. 0607 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-20N, Long. 122-16E. 1845 Surfaced. 1846 SJ contact on Menka Sho, 006T, 18,000 yards. 2035 Decoded message from ComSubPac to Group Commander granting his one week's extension in patrol area.

26 February 1945. 0443 SJ contact on Menka Sho, bearing 275T, distance 27,200 yards. 0549 Submerged. 1200 Position Lat. 25-21N, Long. 122-20E. 1418 Visibility poor, heavy seas, so

surfaced hoping SPIKEFISH contact was around. 1604 Submerged when SJ contact closed from 7,000 yards to 2,000 quickly. JOOD sighted two engine bomber on opposite and parallel course about a mile away, elevation 5 degrees. Rigged for depth charge on the way down. Air contact #5. 1620 Came to periscope depth, all clear. 1827 Surfaced. 2010 Delivered our scheduled weather message in accordance with ComSubPac's Op-plan 2-45 to Radio Midway. Also asked ComSubPac what type planes would be operating during our lifeguard duty. 2248 SJ contact 250T, 9,500 yards. Tracked two ships on base course 080T, speed six knots. At 7,400 yards could make them out as small, may be patrol craft searching. Their course changes were erratic. Went back and forth toward them to get a better look. There is a full moon but completely overcast. Ship contact #1.

27 February 1945. 0005 Sent contact report to task group. 0140 Decided to go around those two small boats and see if they were sweeping ahead of something more important. Lost contact at 12,800 yards. Later in the morning when they were sighted these were wooden luggers of about one hundred tons. Our radar is getting phenomenal ranges this patrol, 50 miles on land is not unusual. 0245 Ship contact #2. Sighted object on horizon bearing 355T and at 0250 SJ contact bearing 354T, distant 11,250 yards. Could see 3 maybe 4 blobs through ST periscope, looked small, radar sometimes reported four to six pips, all mushy. 0349 Sent contact report to PLAICE and SCABBARD FISH of 4 targets, course 080T, speed 10, and position Lat. 25-26N, Long 122-30E. Went full on four engines and pulled ahead for submerged attack. Those ships were inside restricted area but outside of 100 fathoms. 0400 Targets changed course to 055T, sent out contact report to Pack. Now only had two pips. Could see only two objects. 0437 Targets changed course to 030T, sent contact report for Pack. Lost contact at 12,000 yards. Pulled ahead and then came in to generated 3,000 off track, generated range of 14,000. Could not regain contact and reported same to Pack. 0532 SJ contact on Uotsure Shima, bearing 060T, range 60,000 yards, searching ahead of expected track. 0544 Ship contact #3. Sighted two small boats bearing 245T, about five miles distant, now getting very bright, completely clear sky and full moon, unheard of in this locality. This is the first day we have seen one bit of clear sky. 0545 Submerged as SJ called out range of 10,000 yards. Identified targets as armed trawler and one lugger similar to type on right had side of page 139, ONI [Office of Naval Intelligence] 222 J. 0645 Targets reversed course. I believe those two are first group contacted last night. 0649 Sighted numerous masts on the horizon bearing 270T, in the direction our two friends were going. I began licking my chops and also worried we had been sucked in by the two small boats. Conducted approach on what ended up as small fleet of 12 similar and smoking wooden luggers plus one armed trawler who seemed to be hovering around them and keeping them together. Due to the mirage effect prevailing from the distance it looked like a huge convoy coming up. Group was on course 070T, speed six knots headed to pass clear of Uotsuri Shima. Gun action was considered but the possibility of aircraft and armed trawler, plus guns of some kind on all twelve of them made it inadvisable. Also we may have found shipping lane and some normal target may come out. 0840 Sighted Uotsuri Shima, bearing 070T, about forty miles distant. 0856 Air contact #6. Sighted two planes. OOD did not identify them as they were flying low and circling. Looked like two engine bombers. Sea is smooth with long swells and visibility is unlimited today for first time in the area. Up to now it has been constantly overcast, raining and very heavy seas with long high swells. Went deep for 15 minutes. 0934 Heard one distant depth charge explosion. 1200 Position Lat. 25-31N, Long 122-51E. 1828 Surfaced. 1910 SJ contact on Uotsuri Shima, bearing 053T, distant 65,000 yards. 1923 SJ contact bearing 180T, 17,000 yards. Went to four engines and lost contact at 15,000

yards. From change of bearing and range it could be a plane. No APR contact, SD shows all clear. 2030 Received message from ComSubPac saying he believed B-24's and B-25's with fighter cover were being used in our coming lifeguard duty. 2120 SJ contact bearing 232T, distant 30,000 yards. Lost contact at 22,000 and can not regain it at four engine speed. Had various others during the night. Pips were mushy and plot shows erratic bearing change. At all times lost contact a few thousand yards after picking contact up. Radarman explains it as cloud formations, and explains loss of contact due to increasing elevation as we approach contact. 2200 Exchanged recognition signals with PLAICE. Received message on SJ from PLAICE saying she had contacted periscope in the middle of lifeguard area while she was on the surface. Gave her dope on my contact at 15 miles and losing it at 11 miles.

28 February 1945. 0005 Sent message to PLAICE requesting recommendation regarding necessity of manning lifeguard frequency during night, that we would relieve her midnight tonight and asking which sub-area she would cover. 0155 Received answer from PLAICE saying she believed it was for base transmissions after planes have returned and that she would patrol sub-area Fur until SCABBARDFISH left and then both Fur and Wool. Also that she sighted floating mine at Lat. 24-54N, Long 122-40E at midnight. 0523 SJ contact on Formosa, northeast. tip bearing 234T, 62,000 yards. 0545 Submerged. 0800 Sighted Hoka Sho bearing 316T, distant 20 miles. 1200 Position Lat. 25-15N, Long 122-14E. 1449 Air contact #7. Zeke, bearing 215T, about 10 miles distant elevation angle 3 degrees, going westerly direction where he disappeared. 1830 Surfaced. 1833 SJ contact on Hoka Sho, bearing 317T, 11,400 yards. Again began all evening tracking on various SJ contacts ranging from 14,000 to 50,000 yards. Each had same characteristic of mushiness as compared to land pips and disappeared on closing at various ranges when others would be picked up. All were in direction of high land on Formosa and at times gave indications of course and speed. Radar officer and technician are explaining it as ionized clouds, or some form of window jamming, but can't believe the later. There were clouds all around horizon, full moon under overcast, clear horizon. 2130 Received message of plane sighting six large and eight small ships in Keelung Harbor at noon today from ComSubPac. Am patrolling outside. 2300 PLAICE told SCABBARDFISH to take station at Lat. 24-51N, Long. 123-19E. 2330 Sent contact report to pack on radar contact 22 miles, 233T from Lat. 25-16N, Long. 122-42E, but at 2335 cancelled my contact when I became convinced it was cloud formation. 2350 Group Commander suggested I cover area outside Keelung Harbor while not life guarding as he is joining SCABBARDFISH off Ishigaki Jima, leaving area empty. 2356 Sent message to Group Commander info SCABBARDFISH asking whether he had experienced same contacts on SJ and reported my contact of morning of the twenty-seventh, also whether he had been able to lifeguard on surface.

1 March 1945. 0000 Relieved PLAICE of lifeguard duty, manned lifeguard frequency. Heard some pilots talking back and forth. 0120 Received message from Group Commander saying he had had one mushy contact at 17 miles tonight, had night APR contact at 155 mcs, not aircraft, plus definite daylight periscope sighting and therefore recommended that I submerge in the daytime. 0545 Air contact #8. Submerged on sighting aircraft bearing 000T, about 1 1/2 miles away on parallel and diverging course, we are on 190T. Have just entered lifeguard area. Plane was not identified, looked small. No APR contact. 0800 Commenced guarding life guarding frequency at SD depth. (Text not readable) 1200 Position Lat. 24-53N., Long. 122-31E. 1725 Heard distant bomb explosions. 1830 Surfaced, headed to patrol outside Keelung. 1850 SJ

contact 12,500 yards, bearing 081T. Bearing changed fast and lost contact, believed aircraft. Air contact #9. 1918 SJ contact on Formosa, 95,000 yards, bearing 240T. 2214 SJ contact on Menka Sho, bearing 325T, 21,250 yards. 2150 Decoded message to DRUM and PLAICE directing them to search for aviator at Lat. 24-40N, Long 125E.

2 March 1945. 0058 Ship contact #4, SJ contact bearing 009T, distant 8,100 yards. Closed to 5,600 yards during the tracking with bright moonlight, occasionally overcast. Made out small boat either patrol or lugger, course 075T, speed seven. From size and type radar pip decided it to be wooden ship. Lost contact at 8,600 yards. 0553 Have APR contact 156 mcs, PRF 500. Swung ship and determined it came from either Samucho Kaku or Peitau Kaku. Experiencing SEA POACHER APR direction finder invented by Pitstick, R. E. EM1. It consists of a plug in wire to APR antenna attached to metal grounded shield which is moved around by hand to determine maximum intensity. So far it's only an experiment. 0544 Submerged. 0800 Commenced guarding lifeguard frequency at SD depth. 1200 Position Lat. 24-49N, Long. 122-29E. 1834 Surfaced. 2040 Delivered weather message to NPM for ComSubPac, also suggested cutting down lifeguard frequencies with WoPac communications. Also reported contact of twenty-seventh on the luggers.

3 March 1945. 0550 Submerged. 0800 Commenced guarding lifeguard frequency. 1200 Position Lat. 24-42N. Long. 122-18E. 1825 Surfaced. 1922 SJ contact on Hoka Sho bearing 310T, 38,400 yards. 2015 Converted #5 F.B.T. to M.B.T. 2105 Received message from ComSubPac telling us missed serials did not concern us and that hours of guarding life guarding frequency could not be reduced.

4 March 1945. 0540 Submerged. 0800 Commenced guarding lifeguard frequency. 1200 Position Lat. 24-55N, Long. 122-24E. 1210 Air contact #10. Sighted aircraft bearing 263T, about 12 miles distant, elevation angle 1 degree on southerly course. No distress heard on lifeguard frequency and plane not identified. 1836 Surfaced. 2220 SJ contact on Menka Sho bearing 326T, 42,000 yards.

5 March 1945. 0545 Submerged in lifeguard area. 0800 Commenced guarding lifeguard frequency. 1200 Position Lat. 24-51N, Long. 122-28E. 1827 Surfaced, Yonakuni Jima bearing 128T, 44,500 yards. Decided to go down along coast of Formosa south of lifeguard area. Seas calm for a change. 1847 SJ radar interference 125T, could not exchange signals. Must be PLAICE. 2300 Barometer rose, wind and seas picked up suddenly.

6 March 1945. 0600 Entered lifeguard area barely making headway into mountainous seas. Pilot off area confirms this weather for this time of year. Remained on surface. 0800 Commenced guarding lifeguard frequency. 1200 Position Lat. 24-52N, Long. 122-30E. 1305 Submerged, no distress having been heard and I doubt seriously that any planes were up in this dirty weather. 1827 Surfaced patrolling at 3 knots speed into mountainous seas.

7 March 1945. 0430 Received very welcome message modifying lifeguard duty for planes from Philippines. We were given definite strike time for today, plus plane type and calls. Our planes today are P-51, time of strike 1030-1130 HOW time. This message was info to KINGFISH and ICEFISH who are headed into this area. PLAICE leaves tomorrow night. 0555 Submerged. Seas

have moderated somewhat, conducting normal periscope patrol. 1019 Surfaced, manned lifeguard frequency, strike is from 1030-1130. 1135 Submerged. Nothing heard on lifeguard frequency except from planes that seemed carrier based. No distress heard nor did fighter cover appear. Called them on VHF but no reply. 1200 Position Lat. 24-15N, Long 122-29E. 1832 Surfaced, very heavy seas. 2030 SJ contact on Hoka Sho bearing 318T, 42,000 yards. 2045 Received message from ComSubPac saying that we were required to be on surface and guarding lifeguard frequency if and when notified in advance that strikes will be conducted and to patrol station at other times close enough so we can return to station on twelve hours notice.

8 March 1945. 0000 Decided to patrol off islands northeast of Keelung since with these very heavy seas we can't make much speed. 0415 SJ contact on Menka Sho 290T, 30,450 yards. 0550 Submerged. A 3 knot northeasterly current is being experienced. 1200 Position Lat. 25-120N, Long 122-19E. 1830 Surfaced. 2115 SJ contact on Uotsuri Shima, bearing 000T, distance 60,000 yards.

9 March 1945. 0145 Group Commander in PLAICE reported he was leaving area and told us to patrol independently. 0335 SJ contact on Iriomote Jima, distant 40 miles, bearing 180T. 0528 Submerged off Ishigaki Jima hoping some traffic is going in or out. 1320 Air contact #11. Three unidentified bombers flying low, in formation about 15 miles distant, bearing 170T, on northerly course. 1835 Surfaced about 13 miles from Ishigaki Jima.

10 March 1945. 0535 Submerged off Ishigaki Jima for one more day. 1200 Position Lat. 24-37N, Long 124-05E. 1839 Surfaced about eleven miles off Ishigaki. Decided to go off Uotsuri tomorrow.

11 March 1945. 0533 Submerged about ten miles off Uotsuri. 1200 Position Lat. 25-35N, Long. 123-20E. 1848 Surfaced about eleven miles off Uotsuri. Decided to go south along coast and patrol off Karenko tomorrow. 1935 Received message from ComSubPac asking SEA OWL, PIRANHA, PUFFER and us to report interference on lifeguard frequency caused by administrative traffic. 2046 Asked ICEFISH and KINGFISH where they were patrolling. 2058 Received word from ICEFISH they were patrolling east of 123E. 2203 Replied to ComSubPac's message saying we had heard voice traffic suggesting control tower and carrier based plane traffic.

12 March 1945. 0550 Submerged about fourteen miles east of Karenko 1100 Visibility cleared and can make out steep coast of Formosa distant 10 miles by radar. 1200 Position Lat. 23-44N, Long. 121-42E. 1836 Surfaced. 2015 Sighted navigational lights of Karenko. 2305 ICEFISH requested rendezvous at Lat. 25N, Long. 123E. at 0030 (I) on the 14th.

13 March 1945. 0000 Replied affirmative on rendezvous with ICEFISH. 0120 Swung ship to determine direction of APR contact on 016T. We were using our APR Direction Finder Antenna Mod.1. The modification consists of making the antenna shield parabolic and seems to give one definite sharp beam. In this case it indicated direction of Suo Wan on east coast of Formosa. This antenna is explained in further detail under Radar Section. 0152 Air contact #12. SJ contact bearing 280T, 14,550 yards, changed bearing fast and lost at 17,550 yards, traveling in southerly direction. 0530 Submerged ten miles off Menka Sho. Seas all glassy and sky completely clear, a

most unusual occurrence in this area, where the opposite usually exists. 1200 Position Lat. 25-15N, Long. 122-15E. 1856 Surfaced. Menka Sho bears 354T, 14,700 yards. 1920 Exchanged SJ interference bearing 180T, could not exchange recognition. 2010 Air contact #13. Sighted red light or aircraft coming toward us no APR or SJ contact. Submerged. 2030 Surfaced, headed for rendezvous with ICEFISH. 2308 SJ interference bearing 125T. 2336 SJ contact on ICEFISH at 9,050 yards. Asked ICEFISH to stay on steady course and speed in order to maneuver alongside to pass over cylinder containing area information by line throwing gun. ICEFISH took course 270T, speed 5 knots. 2358 Maneuvered alongside and passed over cylinder by line throwing gun. Exchanged information by megaphone. ICEFISH told us she would relieve us of life guarding duty and patrol west of 123E. Told me it was satisfactory to patrol off Iriomote Island tomorrow and that he would inform KINGFISH.

14 March 1945. 0028 Parted company with ICEFISH and headed towards Iriomote Island. 0047 Lost radar contact on ICEFISH at 12,700 yards. 0135 Received message from ICEFISH to KINGFISH and us, giving patrol positions for ICEFISH and KINGFISH and telling latter to keep clear of Iriomote the 14th. 0255 Sighted possible aircraft exhaust and submerged. Air contact #14. No APR, elevation angle about 4 degrees, SD clear. 0320 Surfaced, very clear night. 0513 Submerged about ten miles off Iriomote Jima. 1107 Heard several burst of gunfire, JP heard splashes. All clear on the periscope, very clear day and calm seas. 1200 Position Lat. 24-23N, Long. 123-37E. 1846 Surfaced. 1930 Received routing orders from ComSubPac to Saipan for fuel and onward routing to Midway for refit. 2350 SJ experience phenomenal range of 100 miles on Formosa. Clear night with ideal atmospheric conditions for this to happen. Explained under Radar Section. Turned towards and tracked for 35 minutes till definite land contours could be seen on PPT.

15 March 1945. 0227 Departed patrol area. 0527 Submerged for trim. 0544 Surfaced. 0900 Set clocks ahead to zone -9 time. 1200 Position Lat. 22-15N, Long. 125-26E. 1310 Air contact #15. Two engine bomber on westerly course, six miles distant, about 2 degrees elevation, not identified. Submerged. 1334 Surfaced. 1430 Received routing message from CTC 17.7 to Saipan.

16 March 1945. 0031 Delivered arrival message to CTG 17.7 at Saipan and requested dawn rendezvous on 19th. 1200 Position Lat. 20-41N, Long 131-01E. 2015 Converted #4 F.B. Tank to M.B. Tank. 2200 Entered joint zone.

17 March 1945. 0808 Air contact #16. 8 miles distant, flying low on westerly course. Did not reply to IFF [Identification Friend or Foe]. 0822 Submerged for trim. 0837 Surfaced. 1200 Position Lat. 18-51N, Long. 136-11E.

18 March 1945. 0130 Exchanged SJ recognition with DEVILFISH who passed on opposite course. 0806 SJ contact 2700 yards, bearing 080T, definitely not plane. Could not sight anything. Avoided on four engines. Radar PIP was definite and solid, both on A scope and PPI [Plan Position Indicator] scope. 1200 Position Lat. 15-50.8N, Long. 141-20E.

19 March 1945. 0005 Received message designating SC775 as our escort into Saipan. Had various aircraft contacts during night. 0545 Rendezvous made with escort and proceeded to

Saipan. 1541 Moored alongside USS FULTON at Tanapag Harbor. Received fuel.

20 March 1945. 1338 Underway from alongside FULTON. Strong wind rough seas. While twisting in very confined space astern FULTON, nicked port screw on anchor chain of USS HAMUL (AD-23). Requested diver from FULTON and proceeded to clear anchorage ground. Executive Officer went over the side after we anchored to inspect screw. Too rough to see anything so returned to tender. 1458 Moored alongside FULTON. Diver's inspection revealed damage about six inches long on edges of two blades of port screw, stern diving gear and starboard screw undamaged. 1710 Temporary repairs completed by divers. 1720 Rendezvous made with escort SC775 and cleared harbor. Seas extremely rough heading into the sea, able to make ten knots only. 2355 Released escort giving him a sincere thanks for he was taking a beating in this sea.

21 – 27 March 1945. Enroute Midway Island, experiencing very heavy weather for first four days cutting our advance down to 8 - 9 knots at times, shipping seas continuously. Requested rendezvous 0900 27th west Long.

27 March 1945. 1014 Moored port side to USS AEGIR at Midway.

(C) WEATHER

The weather was as expected for this season off the north east coast of Formosa during the period 12 February to 14 March 1945. Weather was completely overcast with force (5) winds and (4) seas from the northeast. The only exception was a calm period during full moon. Periscope observations were difficult except when in the trough or heading with the seas.

(D) TIDAL INFORMATION

In the area Lat. 24-30 to 25-30N, Long. 122 to 124-E, the current was generally north to north east with a drift of about 1.5 to 2 knots. *EDITOR'S NOTE: See SEA POACHER website for details.*

(E) NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

No identifiable navigational aids were sighted. On 12 March 1945, two lights were sighted in the vicinity of Karenko Anchorage from position 23-56N, 121-48E. One of the lights was flashing but with no uniform characteristics, the other light was steady. The SJ radar was invaluable as a navigation aid near land. No celestial observations were made due to completely overcast weather. Kahei Sho position of 25-25.3N, 121-56.5E was determined by SJ radar fixes to be from 2,000 to 2,500 yards north of its present charted position.

(F) SHIP CONTACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ship contacts are summarized this Section, however, all of the information is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for summary details.

(G) AIRCRAFT CONTACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE Aircraft contacts are summarized in extensive tables in this Section, however, all of the general information is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for summary details.

(H) ATTACK DATA

No attacks made

(I) MINES

No mines encountered or mine laying operations observed.

(J) ANTI-SUBMARINE MEASURE AND EVACION TACTICS

Anti-submarine measures consisted of normal day aircraft anti-submarine sweeps. No surface patrols were in evidence. Of note is the almost complete absence of night aircraft. This may be due to constant strong winds and overcast. Planes were in evidence the last night when calm and clear weather existed.

(K) MAJOR DEFECTS

Sanitary Tanks. The method of waste disposal by a direct opening from water closets to sanitary tanks is considered to be unsatisfactory. This arrangement, despite almost daily flushing of sanitary tanks results in a diffusion of gases and malodors throughout the ship while submerged, which cannot help but be somewhat injurious to health and which certainly decreases the ships habitability. The following recommendation for the prevention of this situation is submitted: (1) That the officer's water closet and crew's water closets in the After Battery be fitted with a waste receptacle of the type employed on heads which discharge directly to sea. This receptacle would have the usual quick closing valve and stop check valve, thus preventing a sea between sanitary tanks and the ship.

(L) RADIO

Radio reception NPM was about usual. One ComSubPac serial was missed. The addition of the new frequency, 9050 kcs, was a help. 9090 continued to be the most reliable frequency. 9090 is difficult to copy at time because the tape slips and there is a broadcast station very near it (sounds like Spanish). 9090 is good until 1600Z after which the signal tends to fade and there is jamming, which would be like a series of dits. Log of radio reception is being forwarded to ComSubPac Administrative command as requested by dispatch.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Numerous other details on the radio reception are provided in this section. See SEA POACHER website for details.

China broadcasts of NKN were received satisfactorily. Wolfpack communications were satisfactory. There were no messages for us on the lifeguard frequencies. The only thing heard on the lifeguard frequencies sounded like carrier and tower normal traffic on 4475 kcs. Nothing

was heard on CHF. Calls heard coming in are as follows: SAPPHIRE, HURBAND, BIVOUACK, RUBBER BOXER, CHICKADEE, AUGUST, RHUBARB ROBSPIERE, DOODLEBUG, DOLLAR BOX, ASHLAND, BALLOT BOX, CEDRIC, COMMANO, WAGON PLAYMATE, ST. MARYS, OUTFLANK, PRIVATEER, ROBERT, BUZZRD, AFFECTION, IRISHMAN, UNCLE JOY FIREFLY. Only one occasion did we hear traffic which sounded as though a raid was in progress. We do not know where this came from and we received no messages from planes testing communications or indication they were in distress. This was received on 4475 kcs, and all we heard was talk both by bombardier and pilot of a plan on a bombing run.

No trouble was experienced in delivery of ship to shore traffic on the 4235 series. We were unable to raise any shore station to transmit to CTG 17.7 on either 4515 or 8310 between 0015 and 0139Z on 26 March. In both cases the message was finally sent with ease to NPN on 8470. We cannot understand why we were unable to transmit these direct to Saipan on the area frequency.

(M) RADAR

SJ-I. Performance of this equipment was very good. The difficulty encountered with the T-R tube failing on the last patrol was absent this time. The defective clamp holding the tube was repaired so as not to crimp the rim. No major defects were encountered beyond the ordinary tube failures and these were detected by testing before surfacing. As before, we used the radar without restraint, sweeping continuously and took frequent navigational cuts on the islands with little evidence of being detected. On one occasion the APR got a contact at 153 mcs fairly steady immediately after taking a cut on Iriomote Jima. Ranges obtained were very good although we did not have any ship contacts to enable us to form a good opinion. Land, 2,900 foot peaks, were contacted at 115,000 yards and 90,000 yards was a common range. 180 foot peaks were used for navigation cuts at ranges of 45,000-50,000 yards. The only ship contacts were small wooden luggers at a range of 10,000 yards. While leaving the area a range of 228,000 was obtained on Formosa. A 1,150 pulse rate gave us 140,000 yards on the initial sweep and the second trip echo was a range of 84,000. yards.

ST. We were still able to give this equipment a proper test. No ship contacts were made to enable us to test its worth but ranges of 16,000 yards were obtained on a DE during training periods. On patrol it was used for submerged navigational ranges of 30,000 to 35,000 yards on 700 to 1,000 islands. But, although the ranges are good for an antenna height of about 4 feet, the operation was not reliable. Constant attention had to be given the gear to keep it in operational condition and it still was not dependable. One day a 35,000 yard range would be obtained while the next, for no apparent reason, no contact would be gotten at 15,000 yards on the same target. At one time replacing the T-R tube and crystal gave us a greater range but since operational characteristics have changed even without any repairs to the set we feel this is not the real reason behind the poor response.

SD-4. Since we only used the SD enroute and for a few quick sweeps in the area we can only assume that it was working up to par. One plane contact was gotten at 8 miles before entering the patrol area and land was gotten at 30-40 miles several times in the area.

APR-SPA. The few aircraft contacts we had while surfaced were not detected by it. Several land based radars were intercepted as noted on the contact report. An attempt was made to construct a directional antenna to be used on the bridge. It consisted of a dipole with parabolic

reflector but although it gave a directional indication within ten degrees on two stations, we have not had an opportunity to give it a fair test. Two contacts at 80 mc and 166 mc were experimented with a beam width of 10 to 40 degrees was found in the antenna. If the suitably designed antenna of this sort were available a lot more valuable information could be obtained. The idea of swinging the ship with a varying contact never produced the desired results. The antenna dipole was 9 inches, corresponding to the length of the APR antenna and was mounted 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ (?) from the rear of the parabolic reflector. Reflector was 10 inches wide with a 9 inch opening and 9 inches deep. The coaxial cable was brought in the rear of the reflector, the antenna conductor being grounded to the reflector. Operation simply consisted of rotating the antenna by hand on the bridge or on the periscope sheers until a maximum signal was obtained.

Radar Casualties and Repairs

SJ-1. A high voltage of .3 kw with magnetron current off scale was traced to a faulty VR150 in the bias network. This and a gassy 5D21 were replaced to restore operation. No time was lost since the trouble was discovered and corrected before surfacing in the evening. A reduction in sensitivity and I.F. Gain was traced to the I.F. strip and corrected by replacing the I.F. tube.

ST. Complete loss of sensitivity was encountered, so the TR tube, crystal and 5D21 were replaced, set was retuned and a 38,000 card range obtained.

SD-4. No trouble.

APR-SPA. Focus gets progressively bad on the scope. Voltages are taken on the high voltage bleeder and a low voltage found in the focus anode. Since all resistances seemed good, a 1 meg resistor was put in parallel with R118 and sharp focus was again obtained. Complete loss of an indication on the SPA scope was traced to a loss of high voltage to the tube. The transformer was checked and found to have an open winding in the 1800 volt section. Transformer was replaced and operation was restored.

(N) SONAR

The only opportunity to check operation of sound conditions was on a group of small wooden luggers which was heard at a range of 8,000 yards on all sound units.

(O) DENSITY LAYERS

EDITOR'S NOTE Eleven bathythermograph recordings were made to depths of 410 feet. Most of the observations indicated isothermal conditions. Details on these observations can be found on the SEA POACHER website

(P) HEALTH, FOOD AND HABITABILITY

HEALTH. The health of the officers and crew in general has been excellent.

FOOD. The food was uniformly good and well prepared for the entire patrol. The baker received during last refit has performed very well.

HABITABILITY. The overall habitability for officers and men was very good. Heads and sanitary tanks have been a constant source of trouble. At times the air was most unpleasant.

(Q) PERSONNEL

- (a) Number of men detached after previous patrol: 8
- (b) Number of men on board during patrol: 78
- (c) Number of men qualified at start of patrol: 61
- (d) Number of men qualified at end of patrol: 74
- (e) Number of unqualified men making their first patrol: 7

Daily instruction for the crew is held by officers and leading petty officers. The morale of the crew is very high in spite of having made no contact with the enemy. All officers performed very well and three that were received from submarine school during the commissioning period will be ready for qualification during coming refit.

(R) MILES STEAMED – FUEL USED

Guam to Area	1522 miles	18,290 gal.
In Area	4531 miles	38,240 gal.
Area to Midway via Saipan	3879 miles	61,924 gal.

(S) DURATION

Not Readable.

(T) FACTORS OF ENDURANCE REMAINING

Torpedoes	Fuel	Provisions-Days	Personnel Factor-Days
24	38,900 gals	30	:30

Limiting factor this patrol: Operation order.

(U) COMMUNICATIONS, RADAR, AND SONAR

EDITOR'S NOTE This details eight instances of jamming. See SEA POACHER website for details.

(V) REMARKS None were noted.

* * *

FROM COMMANDER SUBMARINE DIVISION TWO FORTY-ONE, CONFIDENTIAL
FIRST ENDORSEMENT TO CO SEA POACHER REPORT DATED 27 MARCH 1945

FROM: The Commander Submarine Division TWO FORTY-ONE
TO : The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
VIA : (1) The Commander Submarine Squadron TWENTY-FOUR
(2) The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet.
(3) The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet

SUBJECT: USS SEA POACHER (SS406) Report of War Patrol Number Two.

1. The second war patrol of the SEA POACHER was conducted in the area northeast of Formosa. No attacks were made.
- 2 Only four contacts were made, they were small escorts, armed trawlers or wooden luggers. No attacks were made.
3. In addition to patrolling the SEA POACHER had lifeguard duty. She was not called upon for rescue.
4. The Commanding Officer, Officers and crew of the SEA POACHER are congratulated on the completion of this arduous patrol.

Signed: D.F. WILLIAMSON

* * *

SECOND ENDORSEMENT (Not Readable)

* * *

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to SEA POACHER Report of Second War Patrol
COMSUBPAC PATROL REPORT NO. 717

FROM: The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet.
TO : The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
VIA : The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

SUBJECT: USS SEA POACHER (SS406) Report of Second War Patrol
(7 February to 27 March 1945)

1. The second war patrol of the SEA POACHER, under the command of Commander F. M. Gambacorta, USN, was conducted in areas along the Northeast Coast of Formosa. The SEA POACHER was part of a coordinated attack group commanded by the Commanding Officer of the USS PLAICE (SS-390).
2. It is regretted that this long patrol, under adverse weather conditions, resulted in no contacts worthy of torpedo fire or opportunity to affect rescue. The Force Commander wishes the SEA POACHER better luck next time.
3. Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for this patrol is not authorized

Signed: MERRILL COMSTOCK

CHAPTER 3

CHARLES F. LEIGH

WAR PATROL REPORT #3

26 APRIL 1945 – 19 MAY 1945

COMMANDING OFFICER SEA POACHER CONFIDENTIAL LETTER DATED 19 MAY 1945

EDITOR'S NOTE: Provided herein is a copy of the original report retyped by SEA POACHER Association Vice President Jack Merrill in 2007 from copies of original records maintained at the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT, and kindly provided to us by Ken Johnson. The wording/grammar has not been altered. Where new acronyms are used, parens [] have been added to denote their meaning. This report was declassified at some later date. Where referred, go to www.seapoacher.com website. A track chart for this Patrol was meticulously prepared by Richard Clubb and is provided in the Photo Section.

A note on Captain Leigh. The only information I could find was on the Internet at www.rddesigns.com/subs/s-boats4.html where there are 1944 photos of him assuming command of the Submarine S-42 in Alaska. (See References.)

(A) PROLOGUE

27 March 1945. Arrived Midway from second war patrol. Refit was accomplished by Submarine Division 241 and USS AEGIR. In addition to normal refit the following alterations were installed: (1) T.D.M. sound equipment; (2) F.M. radio equipment, (3) Loran navigational equipment. The refit was completed satisfactorily on 11 April 1945. During refit the following officers were detached:

Commander F. M. Gambacorta, USN
LT W. R. Lilliott, USNR, Executive Officer
LTJG W. H. Balcken, USNR, Radar Officer

The following officers reported aboard:

LCDR C. F. Leigh, USN, Commanding Officer
ENS L. W. Davis, USN, Assistant First Lieutenant
ENS P. V. Purkrabek, USN, Radar Officer.

Fifteen men were transferred to SubDiv 241 and fifteen men were received. Training was commenced on 15 April and completed on 23 April. This included one nights training as a

coordinated attack. Commander D.F. WILLIAMSON, USN, was training officer.

(B) NARRATIVE

Name	Rank Rate	File No. Ser. No.	No. War Patrols (Including Sea Poacher's Third Patrol)
C. F. LEIGH	LCDR	82442	9
W.W. Gaskins	LT	135232	6
P. E. LaCouture	LT	159071	6
R.H. Gallemore	LT	165539	3
R. P. Combs	LTJG	91674	5
J. A. Brink	LTJG	313153	3
B. C. Young	ENS	338149	2
R. D. Cobb	ENS	341187	3
L. W. Davis	ENS	338562	1
P. V. Purkrabek	ENS	389933	1
Clink, E. W	CMoMM	291-44-38	9
Davis, W. H.	CMoMM	287-19-80	7
Hobbs, D. D.	CCS	336-70-26	1
Nettleship, F.W.	CEM	385-58-25	7
Shafer, D. R.	CT(T)	258-28-60	8
Smith, F. S.	CPhM(T)	223-21-72	5

26 April 1945. 1625 Underway for patrol area in company with PIPER, POMFRET and PLAICE, forming a coordinated attack group which is to be joined later by the STERLET. 1803 Burned insulation off blowout coil in starboard main motor control cubicle. Send visual message to Midway signal tower requesting delivery of two spares by motor launch and returned to entrance buoy. 2040 Blowout coil reinsulated and reinstalled. Having received two spares aboard, departed for patrol area the second time. This coil operated satisfactorily the remainder of patrol, but on first inspection it was not known that it could be reinsulated satisfactorily.

27 April 1945. (UNREADABLE) by calendar.

28 April 1945. 0510 (UNREADABLE) Conducted daily training dives (UNREADABLE) approaches enroute to area with USS PLAICE. 1200 Position Lat. 28-51N, Long. 178-47E.

29 April 1945. 0000 Enroute area. 1200 Position Lat. 30-45N, Long. 173-07E.

30 April 1945. 0000 Enroute area. 0930 Sunk floating mine with small arms and 20mm gunfire at Lat. 32-55N, Long 168-26E. 1200 Position Lat. 33-17N, Long. 169-30E.

1 May 1945. 0000 Enroute area. 1200 Position Lat. 36-45N, Long. 165-48E.

2 May 1945 0000 Enroute area. 1200 Position Lat. 39-37N, Long 162-28E.

3 May 1945 0000 Enroute area. 1200 Position Lat. 43-15N, Long. 157-44E. Proceeded independently to assigned rotating area in accordance with dispatch received from Pack Commander. 1245 Seas rough, submerged to routine torpedoes and tubes. 1705 Surfaced.

4 May 1945 0000 Enroute area. 0620 Submerged to complete routine of torpedoes and tubes. 1100 Surfaced. 1200 Position Lat. 44-23N, Long. 155-46E. 1330 Test fired 40mm and 20mm and fired primers in 5 inch guns.

5 May 1945. 0000 Enroute area. 0007 Converted #3 F.B.T. to M.B.T. and submerged to flush it. 0022 Surfaced. 0407 SJ radar contact on Shimushiru Island bearing 320T, Distance 70,000 yards. Still have SJ radar interference from two different bearings, presumably PLAICE and POMFRET. Exchanged recognition signals with PLAICE only. 1100 Having passed through Kita Uruppo Suido, sighted Shimushiru bearing 115T, distance 9,000 yards. 1200 Position Lat. 46-59N, Long 151-49E. Patrolling on surface following coastlines of the islands at a distance off shore for three to six miles. Visibility varying between poor and fair. Frequently had to change course radically to avoid hitting large obstinate whales which refused to get out of our way. 2130 Headed west to patrol Paramiushiru-Soya route.

6 May 1945. 0000 Patrolling area. 1200 Position Lat. 48-02N, Long. 149-11E. 1451 Submerged for trim dive. 1508 Surfaced and changed course to north easterly direction to follow traffic route. Weather calm, fog variable, snow at times. 1617 Ship contact #1. Made radar contact bearing 245T, 17,000 yards. Tracked ship at 13 knots, course 065j steady course. 1656 Dove 15,000 yards ahead and 4,000 yards off his track. S.T. picked up target at 9,000 yards. 1730 Sighted 4 goal poster AK through the haze at 3,000 yards. 1733 Saw huge USSR painted along side with Russian flags. Let him go by at 1,400 yards range. The two signal identification hoist was not flown. However, his lightly loaded Condition and ex-American appearance convinced me he was no Jap in disguise.

7 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrolling along Soya-Paramiushiru route. 1200 Position Lat. 49-35N, Long. 151-03E. Calibrated Bendix Log with chips and stop watch at various speeds in flat calm sea. At speeds above ten knots errors of one knot in log. Error first noted when yesterdays target decreased one knot in speed after we submerged for trim dive.

8 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrol Suyo route. 1200 Position Lat. 48-22N, Long. 149-46E.

9 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrol Suyu route 1200 Position Lat. 48-47N, Long. 149-34E.

10 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrol Suyu route. 1200 Position Lat 48-46N, Long. 148-59E. Continued eastward towards Kurile Islands chain.

11 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrol. 0533 Sighted Shimushiro To bearing 110T distance 19 miles. 0644 Patrolled along coast of Shimushiro at distance of three miles to seven miles. Sighted several buildings and two definite towers in Une Ura. No boats or ships in Shimushiru Wan. 0848 Ship contact #2. High periscope and bridge watch were able to make out several vessels anchored in a group along north coast of Shimushiru from Taki Ura to Nisei Ina. Ship contact #3. At about the same time a sub-chaser was sighted patrolling along the coast northwards toward

those vessels. We were apparently undetected in the haze at a distance of about 9,000 yards from all of them. Torpedo attack #1. Commenced approach. 0903 Submerged and continued approach. 0923 Could make out three stack aft trawlers, one larger stack amidships trawler and sub-chaser through periscope. These vessels are sometimes designated as fishing tenders. All had two masts except the largest which had two masts forward and two aft with island and stack midships. Continued approach on largest (stack midships). No current apparent throughout approach. Two fathometer readings taken during approach, one at 160 fathoms and next at 60 fathoms. Haze prevented accurate navigational fixes. So with S.T. range of 5,000 yards on land and about 4,000 yards on target. At 1037 Fired six torpedoes with zero gyro angle at three foot depth setting. An anchored target, 80 degree port angle on bow. Sea state one. No torpedo ran erratic, none porpoised. All left trails and threw up frequent small spouts of spray. Five torpedoes were heard and seen to explode, one of which was seen to hit the target forward of bridge. Target went down by the bow after part still intact, no flames. Commenced periscope evasion of S.C. who was running down torpedo tracks So slowed to a stop about 1,000 yards distance between us and target. Exact times of above occurrence not recorded. 1051 Periscope evasion not too successful, went to 300 feet. During the next half hour only seven depth charges were dropped, none too close. 1110 NAC with ten minute delay as we were beyond depth for KAE. Weather NAC was of assistance is not known. Depth charges all aft and on port side, according to D.C.R. some deeper than 300 feet. Bad vibration above Conning Tower at 80 R.P.M submerged. 1200 Periscope depth. SC not visible in the haze. Position Lat. 47-10N, Long 152-03E. 1300 Headed back towards position of attack. 1520 Haze lifted sufficiently to see the three remaining trawlers and SC underway close to coast on a southerly course, speed eight to ten knots. Attempted to keep contact for a deck gun attack. 1654 SC dropped one depth charge at a distance of about 6,000 yards. 1800 Lost visual and sound contact. 1820 Surfaced and chased at three engine speed. Unable to regain contact before heavy fog set in. Targets apparently tied up in Shimushiru Wak. The range was not closed more before firing due to uncertainty of charted depth and the knowledge that all torpedoes would have range to spare. Possible the type of target did not warrant the expenditure of six torpedoes; however the uncertainty of performance at shallow depth settings caused me to shoot six at this small target. Tonnage was estimated at 400 tons. Target was over 200 feet by periscope measurement and appeared at least three times as long as the SC. *EDITOR'S NOTE: Fired from tubes 1, 3, and 5 were Mark 23 torpedoes, whereas fired from tubes 2, 4, and 6 were Mark 14 – 3A torpedoes.*

12 May 1945. 0000 Surface patrol of westside of Kurile Island chain. 1200 Position Lat. 47-04N, Long. 151-09.

13 May 1945. 0000 Decided to take a look into Matsuwa. Due to currents of up to five knots off the island decided to approach from north. 0715 Sighted Raikoke To bearing 155T, distance 20,000 yards. 0800 Headed south. 0900 Passed Raikoke about 3 miles abeam to starboard. Matsuwa visible about ten miles distance. APR had two strong contacts apparently from Matsuwa. 0945 Submerged at a distance of about 6 miles from Banjo to, Matsuwa. Visibility varying from good to fair. 1200 Position Lat. 48-05N, Long 153-20E. 1220 Ship contact #4. Sighted small subchaser patrolling off southeast entrance to Yamato Wan, distance about 4,000 yards. Remained in sight until about 1,700 but did not get closer than 1,000 yards at any time. 1437 Ship contact #5. Sighted two ships in Yamato Wan bearing 345T, distance about 13,000 yards. Both letting out puffs of smoke at about ten minutes intervals. Those ships, a MARU and

APC or DE had previously been obscured by haze and Banjo To. 1439 Went to battle stations and commenced approach. Thought at first both were underway because neither had an angle on the bow consistent with a ship at anchor with a southerly tide. AK heading 150T, escort vessel heading 090T. Both AK and escort vessel looked in good condition. After checking information bulletin pictures, decided AK was the one pictured aground on page 57 of CinCPac Information Bulletin No. 60-45. Did not consider it advisable to go in after escort vessel only. 1540 Secured from battle station. 1819 Surfaced and headed west between Matsua and Rashowa for designated rendezvous with Mac's Mops. APR indications strong from Matsuwa.

14 May 1945. 0000 Enroute rendezvous with Mac's Mops. 0530 Decoded message canceling rendezvous and coordinated sweep which was to begin at 1000. Headed south to patrol off Uruppo To in accordance with instructions from Group Commander 12 Position Lat. 47-7N, Long. 150-4E. 2200 Changed course to 230T to patrol off coast on Uruppo To at a distance of seven to ten miles.

15 May 1945. 0000 Patrolling of coast Uruppo To. 0240 Changed course to 200T to close coast. 0500 Changed course to 130T. 0540 Made radar contact bearing 188T, distance 8,350 yards. Ship contact #6. Tracked targets on course 240T, speed 4 1/2 knots, heading from Uruppo To to Yetirafu Jima. 0636 Targets split up into four separate pips so went to battle stations gun action. 0645 Sighted four small fishermen or cargo luggers in column, distance 1,000 yards. One and two masted wooded, motor driven luggers with small deck house, Japanese ensigns painted on bow, approximately 100 tons each. Came in on starboard quarter of last ship in column and commenced attack when range reached 750 yards. During firing of first 20mm magazine the end of the gun blew off for a length of six inches from the muzzle and wounded three members of 5 inch gun crew. 20mm gunners were not aware of this until told by O.O.D. To our best knowledge an insert projectile shell was loaded as the first cartridge. Exact instant the accident occurred is not known. 5 inch gun crew believed wounds were from return fire of the four small craft. COOLEY, R. H., SM3c, (sight setter) was rendered unconscious when a piece of shrapnel penetrated his helmet, lacerated his ear and entered left mastoid region of his head. CARTER, C. C., EM3c, (fuse setter) continued in action for about five minutes with flesh punctures and lacerations in his back, from one of which a fragment of the gun barrel, 4 x 1 1/2 was removed. This fragment finally confirmed the source of the wounds. NEWELL, B.E. GM1c, (gun captain) received laceration of right forearm from a fragment, but this was not serious enough to keep him out of action. All ships turned towards and closed range. Last ship was stopped by hits, so swung to right, and raked each of remaining targets who then turned away and proceeded on original course at an increased speed of about 10 knots. Completed turn to right and resumed fire to starboard on stopped target. His fuel tank burst into flames which spread along entire deck. Saw one 5 inch shell explode directly below three Japs, who had sought refuge in the bow, blasting them into the air. 0657 Left target gutted and burning furiously from stem to stern. Closed remaining targets at four engine speed. 0715 Sighted them in column distance 1,000 yards, and circled to come in on port beam from ahead. Commenced divided fire on all three targets. Stopped last lugger in column and concentrated fire on him. Haze lifted at this time showing coast of Etorufu To distance 7,000 yards, and four other small craft on other side of column. Last lugger burst into flames along entire length when fuel tanks were ignited. Swept new targets with automatic weapons fire. Ranges varied from 750 to 200 yards. Effect of many 5 inch hits were disappointing due to failure of some to detonate. 0730 Decided to break off gun

action due to lifting of fog and proximity of coast. In addition ammunition train to guns was beginning to slow up. Headed off in a northerly direction to patrol off Uruppo To and get reorganized. Continued firing with 40mm gun while still in effective range. 1200 Position Lat. 46-22N, Long. 149-30E. It was believed that the condition of the wounded men was not critical but it was considered inadvisable to keep those men aboard for thirty more days without a doctor's attention unless the military situation in this area required it. Too much stock of remaining ammunition and decided to expend it on the small radio tower and building on Shimushiru before departing for Midway. Speeded up to four engine speed to arrive there before dark. 1455 Rounded Boroton To at a distance of two miles and headed east towards Shimushiru which was visible 20 miles away. No activity visible on Boroton. 1800 Sighting no activity in Shimushiru Wan went to gun action stations and headed out westerly towards Ume Ura. In the valley behind this inlet there are a group of about a dozen small buildings from which smoke had previously been noted, and radio towers estimated height 50 feet. CinCPAC Bulletin 60-43 reports the existence of a radio transmitter at an unknown location on Shimushiru. The radio installation at Ume Ura is the only one seen by this vessel along the western shore of this island. 1819 Gun Action #2. Opened fire with 5 inch gun on beach installation at initial range of 5,500 yards. 1827 With range of 4,000 yards opened fire with 40 mm and 50 Caliber machine guns. 1835 With range yards secured action having expended 42 rounds of 5 inch/25 caliber and 90 rounds of 40mm. No return fire was observed. Fully fifty percent of the 5 inch ammunition ricocheted off target area without exploding. Many bounced half way up on the mountain before detonating and some never did detonate. There was no great hurry or excitement in this bombardment and there is no doubt that every fuse was set properly. It is disappointing to see a 5 inch tracer shell hit buildings and go through. One fire was started which burned with a yellowish smoke. Total damage was probably slight. 1837 Headed out of Shimashiru Wan at four engine speed. 1850 Rounded Aron Nism and headed for Midway on course 136T. 2130 Headed on course 090T and attempted to send message to ComSubPac notifying them of decision to depart area. 2310 Interference of jamming by nearby radio station made transmission impossible, resumed course 136T.

16 May 1945. 0000 Underway at 80-90 on four engines on course 136T, enroute Midway. 0715 Sent dispatch to ComSubPac telling of decision to depart area. No trouble was encountered with jamming. 1125 Received message from ComSubPacAdCom directing us to proceed at best speed to Midway. 1200 Position Lat. 43-48N, Long 156-20E. 1700 Changed time to (-10) (K).

17 May 1945. 0000 Underway enroute Midway at 80-90 on four engines. 1200 Position Lat. 39-07N, Long. 167-24E. 1300 Set clocks ahead one hour to zone time (-11) (L).

18 May 1945. 0000 Underway at 80-90 on four engines enroute Midway. 1200 Position Lat. 39-08N, Long. 162-24E. 1335 Received dispatch informing us USS SICARD was standing by to transfer doctor or take aboard our patients. Apparently use of the words "badly wounded" in our dispatch was the wrong choice. 1545 Secured #3 main engine to investigate noise, went ahead 80-90 on three main engines. 1550 Went ahead full power on three engines. 1640 While in process of getting off message, requesting Midway rendezvous and stating that condition of wounded men was not critical, learned that #3 main engine blower had disintegrated. Decided we could still make rendezvous at full on three main engines if weather remained calm.

19 May 1945. 0000 Underway at full on three main engines enroute Midway. 1200 Position Lat. 30-19N, Long. 173-55E. 1400 Completed converting #4 FBT to MBT. Sea calm enough that is was not necessary to reduce speed. When blown dry this added about 1/3 knot. 2400 Changed time to zone time -12(M)

19 May 1945. 0000 Underway enroute Midway. 1200 Position Lat. 28-25N, Long. 178-53E. Arrived Midway

EDITOR'S NOTE: I initially thought the above two 19 May entries were in error and that a mistake had been made. However, Association Vice President Jack Merrill reminded me of the time change on the first 19 May entry, and SEA POACHER lost a day crossing the International Date Line.

(C) WEATHER

Weather enroute to and from the area was moderate. No rough weather was encountered in the area. There was considerable fog and the temperature remained around 32F. Skies were 90-100% overcast all the time.

(D) TIDAL INFORMATION

Set in general agreed with current chart H.O. [Hydrographic Office] 10,057-A. Along east coast of Matsuwa a set of 185T and drift of 2.4 knots was encountered.

(E) NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

Radar was relied on for navigation in the area. No navigation lights were observed. During entire patrol Loran Navigational Gear was of little value due to excessive distance from stations.

(F) SHIP CONTACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ship contacts are summarized in this Section, however, all of the general information is provided in the Narrative. See SEA POACHER website for details.

(G) AIRCRAFT CONTACTS None.

(H) ATTACK DATA

Gun Attack No. 1. Time: 0635 on 5/15/45 at Lat. 45-35N, Long. 149-12E. Sunk Two fishing luggers of about 100 tons each, and damaged or Probably Sunk: Two fishing luggers of about 100 tons each. Damage determined by: Visual observation. Details of Action. 0540 Contact was made on four enemy luggers by SJ radar, range 8,350 yards. Visibility was poor, approximately 1,000 yards. Commenced tracking. 0636 Took stations for gun action. 0645 Sighted four enemy cargo luggers on course 240T, speed about 5 knots, range 1,200 yards, proceeding in column. Commenced firing all guns (one 5 inch/25 cal., one 20mm, one 40mm, two 50 cal and two .30

cal. machine guns). During firing of first magazine 20mm gun barrel exploded causing three casualties to 5 inch gun crew. 0657 Last ship in column left burning and gutted by hits from all guns, commenced closing remaining three targets which were headed for Etorufu To. 0715 Sighted the three remaining luggers plus four other small craft. Opened fire with all guns scoring hits in the three large luggers. Small craft were swept with automatic weapons fire. One lugger stopped and burnt furiously. He was completely gutted by fire and 5 inch shell hits. 0730 Gun action broken off due to lifting of fog and proximity of coast which was plainly visible 7,000 yards away. All guns were locally controlled. Firing ranges varied between 750 and 200 yards. Only opposition was sporadic and ineffective fire from 25mm and smaller caliber automatic weapons. 30 and 50 cal. machine gun fire was particularly effective in reducing this opposition. In spite of high percentage of hits at close range, expenditure of ammunition was high due to ineffectiveness of incendiary ammunition to set fire to targets. Due to smoke and fogging of sights, the 5 inch obtained but 50% hits. With the exception of a 50 cal. machine gun cocking lever bolt which broke during the action and the 20mm casualty, all guns performed excellently. The cause of the explosion of the 20mm barrel is unknown. The first shell in the magazine was a blind loaded projectile. The gun had been routinely and inspected at regular frequent intervals. The casualty occurred same time during firing of first magazine and cleanly severed about 6 inches of the muzzle end of the barrel. The barrel was replaced and the gun performed satisfactorily throughout the remainder of the action. The following ammunition was expended: 45 rounds of 5 inch cal. H.C.-S.P.DPW, 172 rounds of 40mm HE, 1260 rounds of 20mm, 1500 rounds of 50 cal. (m.g.), and 1700 rounds of 30 cal. (m.g.)

Gun Attack No. 2. Time: 1819 5/15/45 at Lat. 46-51N, Long. 151-45.4E. Target Data Damage Inflicted. Shore bombardment of group of buildings and two radio towers which are located in valley behind Ume Ura on the island of Shimushiru. Radio towers are about fifty feet high. The ten or twelve buildings varying in type; Quonset huts, houses, shacks and tents. Lat. 46-51N, Long 151-47E. Many 5 inch hits and 40mm hits were seen on the buildings without any apparent great damage. Only one fire was started and this burned with yellowish smoke. Details of Action. 1819 In calm sea opened fire with 5 inch gun at range 5,500 yards. 1827 With range to target 4,000 yards opened fire with 40mm and 50 cal machine guns target 2,900 yards, ceased firing, having expended the following ammunition: 42 rounds of 5 inch/25 cal. HC-SPDN; 90 rounds of 40 mm HE; and 100 rounds of 50 caliber. All guns locally controlled and no casualties were experienced. No opposition of any kind was encountered. Fully 50% of the 5 inch HC-SPDN failed to detonate properly. Fuses were properly set and answer can only be faulty ammunition.

Torpedo Attack No. 1. Time: 1037 11 May 1945 Lat. 47-08N, Long 152-08E. Target Data Damage Inflicted. Description: One four masted island and stack amidships trawler or fishing tender or about 400 tons, steel ship, steam powered. Estimated length 210 feet. Ships Sunk: One. Damage determined by: Periscope Observation. *EDITOR'S NOTE: For more details see the SEA POACHER website.*

(I) MINES

One spherical type floating mine was sunk by 20mm gunfire in position Lat. 32-55.5N, Long. 168-26.5E.

(J) ANTI-SUBMARINE MEASURES AND EVASION TACTICS.

Only anti-submarine measures encountered were two SCS-1 type vessels. One patrolling off Shimushiru near targets of torpedo attack No. 1. Usual listening tactics were employed. None of the depth charges dropped, were close. Other SCS-1 was sighted patrolling within 100 fathom curve off Yamato Wan on Matsuwa using same listening tactics.

(K) MAJOR DEFECTS AND DAMAGE

1. Hull and Machinery. On April 26 during the trim dive, smoke was discovered in the starboard main cubicle and the starboard shaft was stopped. On inspection the blowout coil of the auxiliary switch (BS27) of the bus selector switch assembly was found to be smoking. The coil was removed and the solder joint at one of the lugs was discovered to be defective, causing increased resistance and heating of the coil. The insulating brushings were carbonized and were renewed. The coil was reinsulated with fish paper and glyptol and the lug was resoldered. The coil was reinstalled and no trouble has been experienced since. Two space coils were obtained from SEA OWL at Midway. At 1545 on 18 May an unusual noise was heard in the blower of #3 main engine. The engine was immediately secured. Examination revealed that both lobes of the scavenger blower had disintegrated. The engine remained out of commission during the rest of the patrol. No trouble had previously been experienced during its 2133 hours of operation. At the time of the casualty the engine was running at 690 RPM with 930 K.W. load and all pressures and temperatures were normal.

2. Ordinance and Gunnery. Much trouble was had with the hydraulic firing system of the 5 inch/25 gun. Since this difficulty has not occurred before and since no mechanical defects or leakage of the system could be detected, trouble is attributed to the 30 degree weather. System had to be adjusted, bled, topped off, and worked out twice daily to be kept in working order.

(L) RADAR

Need for a rubber cushion between bottom of trombone adapter and periscope well valve guide to eliminate loud clanking noise every time the ST scope is raised. No time was lost due to casualties. SD-4 Performance was excellent. SD was used only a few times and there were no aircraft in the area.

(M) SONAR GEAR AND SOUND CONDITIONS

The sound conditions were poor. Range of detection of a 5,000 ton freighter making 12 knots was 11,000 yards by JP-1 and 4,200 yards by QB-JK/QC. The torpedo detection modification equipment was kept operating continuously except when stopped for repair and greasing, the total time of continuous operation was 430 hours. Two failures of the equipment occurred, the first on 1 May when the stylus stopped making a trace. All tubes were removed and tested and found good. All circuits in the recorder unit were examined and found in good order. The trouble was traced to the keying switch in the keying assembly, the two-way coil spring which holds the switch contacts open was found to be broken, the end was threaded through the contact trigger and bent since no spare was available. The following day the spring broke again and was this

time too short to be repaired the same way. No spring or suitable size and shape could be found aboard so limit switch was removed and replaced by an ordinary micro-switch, this would not fit inside the keying switch box because no satisfactory means of keying could be devised, so was installed on top of the box by using long screws and drilling through the box, a small strip of CRS was drilled and attached to the lug screw head of the keying switch. This arrangement is found to be more satisfactory than the original installation having given no trouble in over 300 hours of operation. It is suggested that a more satisfactory type of switch be installed to replace the Square D switch in the present installation because the spring will not stand the stress of continuous operation over a long period of time. The second failure of the torpedo detection modification occurred 12 May when the rheostat on the 230VDC supply line burned up, evidently due to the fact that its insulation voltage is only 300 volts. When on finishing rate during a battery charge the voltage jumps to as much as 340 volts. This was fixed temporarily by soldering strips of copper across the gap on the rheostat. This is not a very satisfactory voltage arrangement because it necessitates securing the chemical recorder during the finishing rate. Although there has not been any failure of the training mechanism as yet, the training gears have become increasingly noisy during the patrol. This has not been caused by lack of lubrication as the training mechanism has been thoroughly greased after every 72 hours of operation.

(N) DENSITY LIMITS

All cards showed isothermal.

(O) HEALTH, FOOD AND HABITABILITY

1. Health was good. The following cases were treated by Pharmacist's Mate:

Headaches - 0	Toothaches - 2
Colds - 29	Minor infections - 3
Fungus infections - 5	Sinusitis - 1
Constipation - 11	Vertigo - 1
Lacerations - 10	Urticaria - 1
Conjunctivitis - 1	Wounds (from 20mm gun explosion) - 4
Sprains - 4	Burns - 1

2. The food was excellent. It was nutritious, well prepared, appetizing, ample and sufficiently varied.

3. Habitability was good. Air conditioning was secured while in patrol area.

(P) NOT FOUND IN THE REPORT

(Q) PERSONNEL

- (a) Number of men detached after previous patrol - 15
- (b) Number of men on board during patrol - 78
- (c) Number of men qualified at start of patrol - 61

- (d) Number of men qualified at end of patrol - 62
(e) Number of men unqualified making their first patrol - 14

The performance of duty of all officers and men was very satisfactory.

(R) MILES STEAMED - FUEL USED

Base to area	1,773 miles	19,680 gallons
In area	3,228 miles	26,440 gallons
Area to Midway	1,700 miles	28,770 gallons

(S) DURATION

Days enroute area - 6
Days in area - 13
Days enroute Midway - 5
Days submerged - 2

(T) FACTORS OF ENDURANCE RAMAINING

Torpedoes - 18
Fuel - 44,750 gallons
Provision Days - 45
Personnel Factor Days - 40
Limiting factor this patrol: Injuries sustained by two men.

(U) RADAR AND RADAR COUNTERMEASURES

EDITOR'S NOTE: For details see the SEA POACHER website.

* * *

FIRST ENDORSMENT to USS SEA POACHER (SS406) Report Dated 19 May 1945

From: The Commander Submarine Division TWO-FORTY-ONE
To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: The Commander Submarine Squadron TWENTY-FOUR
The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, Administrative
The Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Subject: USS SEA POACHER (SS406) Report of Third War Patrol

1. The third war patrol of the USS SEA POACHER was conducted in the Kurile Area. The SEA POACHER was a member of a coordinated attack group with the USS PLAICE, POMFRET, STERLET and PIPER in which the Commanding Officer USS PIPER was OTC. During the

period the SEA POACHER was with the group she patrolled an assigned area.

2. The SEA POACHER'S patrol was of 24 days duration of which 13 days was spent in the area. Excellent area coverage was made. A Russian merchantman, four anchored Jap trawlers, two small Jap escort vessels and four small Jap fishing vessels were contacted.

3. A torpedo attack was made on the trawlers at anchor:

ATTACK #1: Six torpedoes were fired at a small four masted trawler (EC 400 tons) at anchor. Range 4000 yards Zero gyro angle, depth set 3 feet. One torpedo was seen to hit and the trawler sink. The four fishing luggers (EC 100 tons) were engaged in gun action.

GUN ATTACK #1: Two fishing luggers (100 tons each) were destroyed by numerous 5 inch and 40 mm hits. Two fishing luggers (100 tons each) were damaged by 5 inch and smaller caliber hits.

4. During the gun attack on firing the first pan of shells from the 20mm gun an explosion occurred blowing off about six inches of the end of the 20mm gun barrel. This explosion caused injuries to four men. The injury to two of the men was sufficient to cause them to be hospitalized.

5. The SEA POACHER will be given a routine refit in which a major job will be the renewal of #3 Main Engine Blower.

6. The Commanding Officer, officers and crew are congratulated on completion of this excellently conducted patrol, damage done to the enemy and their return to port with such high morale.

SIGNATURE UNREADABLE

* * *

SECOND ENDORSEMENT to CO, USS SEAPOACHER Report Dated 19 May 1945

From: The Commander Submarine Squadron TWENTY-FOUR

To: The Commander-in-Chief, United States Fleet.

Via: (1) The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet.

(2) The Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Fleet.

Subject: USS SEA POACHER D Report of War Patrol Number THREE

1. Forwarded, concurring in the remarks of Commander Submarine Division TWO HUNDRED FORTY ONE.

2. The exact cause of the 20mm explosion can never be determined but it is believed that some error in loading or handling the magazine resulted in the first projectile being improperly loaded.

3. The Commander Submarine Squadron TWENTY-FOUR congratulates the Commanding Officer, officers and crew of USS SEA POACHER on the completion of a very well conducted

aggressive patrol. It is regretted that the patrol was cut short by an unfortunate accident which resulted in the injury of four members of the crew. It is hoped that the fine spirit of this ship will be regarded by more worthy torpedo targets on her next patrol.

Signed F. E. FENNO

* * *

THIRD ENDORSEMENT to SEA POACHER Report of Third War Patrol
COMSUBPAC PATROL REPORT NO. 770

From: The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet.
To: The Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Via: The Commander in Chief, US Pacific Fleet.

Subject: USS SEA POACHER (SS406) Report of Third War Patrol (26 April to 19 May 1945)

1. The Third war patrol of the SEA POACHER, under the command of Lieutenant Commander C. F. Leigh, US Navy, was conducted in the Kurile Island area. The SEA POACHER was a member of a coordinated attack group consisting of the PLAICE, the POMFRET, the STERLET, and the PIPER, with the commanding officer of the PIPER as the group commander
2. The unfortunate injury of four members of the five-inch gun crew due to the explosion of the barrel of a twenty-millimeter gun cut short this aggressive alert patrol. The SEA POACHER, however, took full advantage of every opportunity to damage the enemy during her thirteen days in area. One torpedo attack accounted for a large four-masted trawler, and an aggressive gun attack resulted in the destruction of two fishing luggers and in damage to two more. Upon departing the area the SEA POACHER bombarded the radio towers on the island of Shimushiru.
3. Award of Submarine Combat Insignia for this patrol is authorized.
4. The Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, congratulates the commanding officer, officers, and men of the SEA POACHER for this aggressive patrol. The SEA POACHER is credited with have inflicted the following damage upon the enemy during this patrol:

S U N K

1 SMC (Trawler)	(EC)	500 Tons (Attack No. 1)
1 MIS (Fishing Lugger)	(EC)	100 tons (Gun Attack No. 1)
1 MIS (Fishing Lugger)	(EC)	100 tons (Gun Attack No. 1)

TOTAL SUNK 700 tons.

D A M A G E D

1 MIS (Fishing Lugger)	(EC)	100 tons (Gun Attack No. 1)
1 MIS (Fishing Lugger)	(EC)	100 tons (Gun Attack No. 1)

TOTAL DAMAGED 200 tons.

TOTAL SUNK & DAMAGED 900 tons

Shore bombardment of radio towers on Shimushiru Island.

Signed: MERRILL COMSTOCK

EDITOR'S NOTE: The film for this War Patrol (see References) shows SEA POACHER underway from Midway, mine firings and their blowing up, gun action against an enemy surface ship, and several targets burning and sinking. Then, as a result of the 20 mm gun blowing up, there is a scene showing Carter and Cooley wounded with Doc Smith operating. This is followed by the painting of several Japanese flags on the sail. Heading for home, flags are streamed indicating seven merchants were sunk on this Patrol. Upon arrival in Midway, there are 100s of persons on the pier including a band. The wounded sailors are shown being taken off the boat by stretcher. Medals are awarded to a few crew members. SEA POACHER is again underway with a dog on board. She may have moored to a tender. Then she is shown returning to port with another band and welcoming party on the pier.

"We've got the torpedo damage temporarily shored up, the fires are out and soon will have the ship back on an even keel. But I would suggest, sir, that if you have to take any more torpedoes, you take 'em on the starboard side."

*Commander H.R. Healy, Carrier LEXINGTON Damage Control Officer,
In a report to Captain F.C. Sherman, Commanding Officer. Shortly after
This message, the Ship suffered devastating explosions and had to be abandoned
And sunk by torpedoes of the Destroyer PHELPS in the Coral Sea, 8 May 1942.
From Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC*

"Before we're through with 'em, the Japanese language will be spoken only in hell."

*Rear Admiral William F. Halsey, from the Bridge of the Carrier ENTERPRISE
As he returned to Pearl Harbor and saw the destruction of the U.S. Fleet. From
Timothy B. Benford, The World War II Quiz and Fact Book, 1982, Volume
2, Page 180, Harper and Row, New York, NY*

CHAPTER 4

CHARLES F. LEIGH

WAR PATROL REPORT #4

16 JUNE 1945 – 11 AUGUST 1945

EDITOR'S NOTE: Provided herein is a copy of the original report retyped by SEA POACHER Association Vice President Jack Merrill in 2007 from copies of original records maintained at the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT, and kindly provided to us by Ken Johnson. The wording/grammar has not been altered. Where acronyms are used, parens [] have been added to denote their meaning. This report was declassified at some later date. A track chart for this Patrol was meticulously prepared by Richard Clubb and is provided in the Photo Section. Where referred, go to www.seapoacher.com website.

(A) PROLOGUE

Arrived Midway on 19 May 1945 from third war patrol. Refit was satisfactorily accomplished by Submarine Base-Midway, and Submarine Division 322. Received athletic trophy for third successful refit. A five day training period was conducted with Commander D. L. WHELCHER as training officer. One day was occupied with special weapons training and approximately one day with calibration, experimentation and practice with the D.U. loop. Nine men were transferred and nine men were received.

(B) NARRATIVE

Name	Rank/Rate	Serial Number	Number War Patrols
C.F. LEIGH	LCDR	82442	10
W. W. GASKINS	LT	135232	7
P.E. LACOUTOUR	LT	159071	4
R. H. GALLAMORE	LT	165539	4
R.P. COMBS	LT	91674	6
J.A. BRINK	LTJG	313153	4
B.C. YOUNG	ENS	338149	3
R.D. COBB	ENS	341187	4
L.W. DAVIS	ENS	338562	2
P.V. PURKRABEK	ENS	389933	2
CLINK, E.W.	CMoMM	291-44-38	10
HOBBS, D.D	CCS	336-70-26	2
DAVIS, W.H.	CMoMM(T)	287-19-80	8
SHAFFER, D.R.	CY(T)	258-28-60	9
SMITH, F.S.	CPhM(T)	223-21-72	6
BROWN, M.M. Jr.	CTM (AA)(T)	272-20-84	8

HELDEN, E.W.	CEM(AA)(T)	311-57-69	4
RUSSELL, R.W.	CRM(AA)(T)	648-23-63	7

16 June 1945. 1600 (Y) Underway for patrol area. Daily training dives were conducted enroute to area.

17 June 1945. Dropped from calendar.

18 June 1945. 0000(M) Enroute Patrol Area. 1045(M) Sank mine at Lat. 28-37N, Long. 179-39E. 1200(M) Position Lat. 28-54N, Long. 178-23E. 1339(M) Submerged to put pressure test on all loaded torpedoes. None flooded this time. 1412(M) Surfaced. 1505(M) Exploded mine at Lat. 29-10N, Long. 177-13E.

19 June 1945. 0000(M) Enroute area. 1200(M) Position Lat. 30-20N, Long. 173-26E.

20 June 1945. 0000(L) Enroute area. 0045(L) Decoded ComSubPac's message instructing us to proceed at best sustained speed to Guam. 1200(L) Position lat. 28-58N, Long. 167-32E.

21 June 1945. 0000(L) Enroute Guam. 1002(L) Sank mine at Lat. 25-05N, Long. 163-03E. 2200(L) Position Lat. 24-42N, Long 162-41E.

22 June 1945. 0000(L) Enroute Guam. 0510(L) Converted #3 F.B.T. to M.B.T. 1200(L) Position Lat 20-17N Long. 150-43E. 1723(L) Sighted USS THORNBAC. 1800(L) Took position on starboard beam USS THORNBAC to proceed in company to Guam.

23 June 1945. 0000(L) Enroute Guam. 1200(L) Position Lat. 18-25N, Long. 151-53E. 1600(L) Set clocks back one hour to conform to -10 time zone.

24 June 1945. 0000(K) Enroute Guam. 0235(K) Contacted two friendly planes, not bothered. 0735(K) Sighted Almagan Island and Pagan Island. 1140(K) Passed between Pagan and Almagan. 1200(K) Position Lat. 17-43N, Long. 145-44E. 1920(K) Sank metal buoy or mine at Lat. 16-35N, Long. 144-55E with small arms fire.

25 June 1945. 0000(K) Enroute Guam. During night contacted many friendly planes and several surface craft. 0700(K) Rendezvoused with destroyer escort USS DOHERTY. 0955(K) Moored alongside USS HOLLAND at Port Apra, Guam.

26 June 1945. 0000(K) Moored alongside USS HOLLAND at Port Apra, Guam. 1801(K) Underway enroute Saipan. 1824(K) Joined escort USS YMS-374, and USS ANGLER and USS THORNBAC.

27 June 1945. 0000(K) Enroute Saipan. 0747(K) Moored Tanapag Harbor in nest alongside USS ORION. 1500(K) Set clocks back one hour to conform to -9 zone time. 1405(I) Underway from Saipan enroute Lifeguard league in company with USS MORAY, USS ANGLER, USS CARP, USS CERO, USS LAPON, escorted by USS PRESTON (DE371). 1920(I) Escort released.

28 June 1945. 0000(I) Enroute Lifeguard league. Many friendly aircraft contacted during night and day. 1200(I) Position Lat. 17-51N, Long 143-03E.

29 June 1945. 0000(I) Enroute Lifeguard league. 1200(I) Position Lat. 21-19N, Long. 139-22E.

30 June 1945. 0000(I) Enroute Lifeguard league, still many friendly planes. 1200(I) Position Lat. 25-58N, Long. 139-33E.

1 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute Lifeguard league. Friendly aircraft contacts night and day. 0515(I) Sank spherical steel object (mine?) by .30 caliber rifle fire at Lat. 29-18N, Long. 139-28E. 0930(I) Entered assigned group area. Headed west at one engine speed at bottom of area "Mouth." 1200(I) Position Lat. 30-09N, Long. 139-00E. 1415(I) Proceeded independently to northwest portion of area Mouth in accordance with message received from Commanding Officer USS MORAY, group commander. Received instructions also to guard Wopaco. However, we ignored this as we are unable to guard Wopaco, 4475 kcs, and Sub Fox simultaneously. 1725(I) Received word of survivor in life jacket at distance of 115 miles from us. Headed for him at four engine speed. SEA ROBIN gave ETA three hours earlier than we could arrive. 1830(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 30-52N, Long. 138-28E. 1900(I) Confirmed distance and bearing of survivor by VHF from Dumbo, who passed 5 miles from us, returning to base from scene. 2140(I) Heard SEA ROBIN report recovery of survivor, so resumed one engine speed to head for assigned area.

2 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute assigned area. 0130(I) Decoded ComSubPac's message assigning position for fighter strike at 1100 tomorrow. Headed for position. 0804(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 32-13.5N, Long 139-53E. 0807(I) Rounded AOGA SHIMA at 10 miles distance. 1045(I) Ship Contact No. 1. Lat. 32-55N, Long. 140-07E. Radar and sight contact on a correctly marked hospital ship, not zig zagging, enroute from vicinity of HACHIJO JIMA toward CHICHI JIMA on course 160T, speed 10 knots. Eased around him to eastward, not closing him more than 10,000 yards. 1130(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 32-51N, Long. 140-16E. 1200(I) Received news of air raid on IWO which explains reason for strike not occurring. Position Lat. 32-56N, Long. 140-17E. 1350(I) Submerged for two unidentified planes that were closing and did not answer IFF or VHF. Remained submerged to routine torpedoes. 1819(I) Surfaced and headed to patrol area north of HACHIJO.

3 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling north of HACHIJO. 0113(I) Submerged for unidentified plane that was closing fast. 0131(I) Surfaced. 1100(I) In position for lifeguard duty. Fighter strike apparently called off for bad weather. 1200(I) Position Lat. 33-10N, Long. 140-21E. 1247(I) Sank mine at Lat. 33-01N, Long. 140-20E. 1320(I) Friendly aircraft reported fighter strike postponed indefinitely. 1420(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 33-09N, Long. 140-19E. 1705(I) Submerged for trim dive and to replace equalizing rheostat in port main motor controller. 1945(I) Surfaced, patrolling north of HACHIJO. 1214-2225(I) S.J. radar contact on unidentified plane. Did not close less than ten miles.

4 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling north of HACHIJO. 0045(I) Submerged for unidentified aircraft which passed 1400 yards astern. No response on VHF or IFF. 0107(I) Surfaced. 0210(I) Submerged for closing aircraft. As we were submerging identified it by VHF as friendly and he

reported no enemy activity in our vicinity. 0220(I) Surfaced and proceeded to lifeguard station. 0932(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 33-11N, Long. 140-26.5E. 1100(I) Rendezvoused with air cover on lifeguard station. 1200(I) Position Lat. 32-58N, Long. 140-20E. 1442(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 33-19N, Long. 140-23E. 1444(I) Raid completed, none down, escorting aircraft departed. 1535(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 33-19N, Long. 140-21E. 1633(I) Submerged for float type Zero which was tracked in from 14 miles to 5 miles on SJ radar. 1950(I) Surfaced. 2137(I) Proceeded to lifeguard station for fighter strike for July 5th. Various friendly aircraft encountered during the night. 2234(I) Sent SEA POACHER FIRST to ComSubPac.

5 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute lifeguard station. 0915(I) Rendezvoused with escorting aircraft on lifeguard station off Sumisu Shima. Many friendly fighters heading north. 1200(I) Position Lat. 31-25N, Long. 140-24E. 1410(I) Last of returning fighters passed south. None down. Air escort departed for base. SEA POACHER headed for initial point of first anti-picket boat sweep. Various friendly aircraft during afternoon.

6 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute sweep area. Converted #3 F.B.T. to M.B.T. 0700(I) Submerged. 0714(I) Surfaced. 0813(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 30-16.5N, Long. 143-17E. 1113(I) Friendly aircraft. 1200(I) Position Lat. 30-06N, Long. 143-50E.

7 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute sweep area. 0135(I) Radar interference 096T, no answer to our radar signals. 0204(I) SJ radar contact 059T, range 14,000 yards. 0217(I) Succeeded in exchanging radar recognition signals with USS ASPRO at range of 9,000 yards. No response on FM radio. 0225(I) Friendly aircraft. 0755(I) Sighted USS KINGFISH by high periscope, exchanged radar recognition signals. Reception poor on FM at 10,000 yards. 1129(I) Friendly PBM [Aircraft] sighted at fourteen miles. 1200(I) Position Lat. 29-04N, Long. 146-21E. 1230(I) Entered air surface zone to proceed to initial sweep point some 30 miles inside air surface zone. 1735(I) Rendezvoused with USS THORNBARK and received information informing us of patrol station following sweep. 1740(I) Sighted USS ANGLER. 1900(I) Commenced anti-picket boat sweep. 2230(I) Entered joint zone again.

8 July 1945. 0000(I) Conducting sweep. 0442(I) Friendly aircraft contact. 1200(I) Position Lat. 30-17N, Long. 145-07E. 1315(I) Submerged. 1329(I) Surfaced.

9 July 1945. 0000(I) Conducting sweep. 0426(I) Radar contact friendly aircraft. 0930(I) Sighted friendly B-24. 1200(I) Position Lat. 32-52N, Long. 142-36E. 1234(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 32-55N, Long. 142-34E. 1544(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 33-14N, Long. 142-12E. 1930(I) Sweep completed, changed course to 000T at four engine speed. 2006(I) Radar contact USS ANGLER bearing 015(T), distance 7 1/2 miles. 2259(I) Submerged for radar equipped plane closing from 335T. Believe ANGLER fired recognition rocket to eastward of us. 2335(I) Surfaced. Plane contacts at 22 and 20 miles on SD. Position Lat 34-44N, Long. 141-43E. 2341(I) Near plane closed to 8 miles and far one to 16 miles. 2353(I) Submerged with near plane closing fast on steady bearing.

10 July 1945. 0000(I) Submerged as before. 0050(I) Surfaced. 0105(I) SJ radar contact on two planes at 10 and 13.5 miles. 0110(I) Near plane into four miles and closing fast on steady bearing, submerged. These planes were definitely equipped with radar and did not answer IFF or

VHF. Night was very dark and slightly hazy. As we were nearly up to 35N, decided to wait this guy out. Sure hoped he would stick around till our carrier boys got here in three hours. 0338(I) Surfaced in morning twilight. Friendly surface craft radar interference to southeast. Manned lifeguard circuits. Sighted many friendly aircraft during morning and enjoyed listening in on results over VHF. 0748(I) Sighted USS ANGLER. By searchlight he reported being bothered also by planes during night. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-07N, Long. 141-35N. 1206(I) Sighted coast of HONSHU. Our assigned patrol area is area three from Lat. 37N to Lat. 37-20N. 1458(I) Submerged 15 miles east of Yotsukura. 2014(I) Surfaced and patrolled about seven miles off coast. 2230(I) Ship Contact No. 2. Lat. 37-10N, Long. 141-03E. Made radar contact on small unident at about 9,500 yards, bearing 252T. Commenced tracking. Target tracked along ten fathom curve, course 000T, speed 7 knots, 3,500-4,000 yards off beach. 2328(I) Went to battle stations and commenced to close target for a look. Thought he was probably too small for torpedo target but wanted to see him to make certain. 2337(I) Flooded forward tubes #3, 4, 5, and 6. Sighted target through forward T.B.T. at 2,500 yards. Target appeared to be the size of an American PC boat. 2345(I) Opened outer doors forward, speed 2/3, 10 knots. 2347(I) Torpedo Attack No. 1. Lat. 37-20N, Long. 141-04E. Fired three Mark 14-3A torpedoes at 1500 yards range, torpedo tracks 135-140 starboard, depth set 3 feet. Torpedo 64028 from tube #3 ran erratic, taking a 20-30 left gyro with 10 right gyro setting. Others ran normal leaving a good wake and appeared to go right under target. Target did not maneuver until after torpedoes had passed by. No hits. Possible end-of-run explosion was felt at 4 1/2 minutes after first torpedo was fired; torpedo probably having hit the beach. The large track was the result of the inability of the Commanding Officer to make up his mind whether target was "worth while." Misses attributed to large track and small size of target. 2348(I) Came left with full rudder and went ahead 4 engine speed. 2350(I) Target took off away from us at increased speed toward the beach and fired about six rounds of small caliber tracer shells (about 30 MM size) down torpedo tracks. 2400(I) Secured from battle stations, reload completed.

11 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling about seven miles off coast. 0018(I) Ship Contact No. 3. Lat. 37-07N, Long 141-10E. SJ radar contact on small craft bearing 186T, 10,000 yards. Commenced tracking. 0042(I) Target tracked 000T, speed 9 1/2 knots. No bigger than last contact. Too dark for good gun action, therefore decided to let him go by. Patrolled south along coast 7-10 miles off beach. 0315(I) Exchanged recognition signals by SJ radar with friendly submarine bearing 074T, probably USS RUNNER. 0436(I) Submerged with Shioya Saki bearing 250T, distance six miles. Patrolled north along coast about 5 miles off shore. 0816(I) Ship Contact No. 4. Lat. 37-10N, Long 141-2.5E. Sighted small fisherman bearing 326T, distance 5 miles, lying too. He remained in sight until 1130. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-13.5N, Long 141-08E. Reversed course to 180T. 1950(I) Surfaced about ten miles east of Shioya Saki. Patrolled off shore about ten miles.

12 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling off coast about five miles. 0801(I) Ship Contact No. 5. Lat. 37-17N, Long 141-02E. Visibility fair in haze, intermittent showers. Sighted three small fishermen about one mile off beach. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-20N, Long. 141-08E. 1513(I) Sighted transport type aircraft flying on southerly course above surface haze along coast, distance about 10 miles. Not sighted by him. Commenced easing out toward second sweep area. 1712 (I) Clear of 100 fathom curve, submerged to pressure test the three reloaded torpedoes. One was completely dry, two others leaked only one gallon each after ten minutes at 90 feet pressure. 1955(I) Surfaced, seas and wind increasing.

13 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute to sweep area. Weather getting worse. 0010(I) SJ radar contact bearing 266T on 178 mc radar equipped plane. Did not close less than 4 miles and was heading in easterly direction. Commenced keying SD radar at about 1 minute interval. 0105(I) SD and SJ plane contact at about seven miles. Plane again did not close more than four miles, and contact was lost at 26 miles. He either did not contact us or was looking for bigger game. Seas rough, sky overcast, dark and stormy. 1200(I) Position Lat. 36-36N, Long. 144-34E. 1552(I) Sighted USS ANGLER. 1740(I) Sighted USS THORNBAC.

14 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute sweep area. 0438(I) Sighted U.S. Submarine. 0940(I) Received dispatch delaying sweep twenty-four hours. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-42N, Long. 146-53E. 1725(I) Submerged. 1738(I) Surfaced.

15 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute sweep area. 0550(I) Sighted friendly aircraft (Privateer), exchanged greetings by VHF. 0735(I) Sighted same airplane again. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-27N, Long. 147-17E. 1422(I) Sighted USS THORNBAC. 1510(I) Sighted USS ANGLER. 1535(I) Completed exchange of movies with USS THORNBAC via breeches buoy. 1700(I) On station, commenced second anti-picket boat sweep.

16 July 1945. 0000(I) Conducting sweep, Encountered numerous friendly planes during day, mostly Liberators, some who requested navigational fixes. 1200(I) Position Lat. 36-24N, Long. 144-49E. 1740(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 36-05N, Long. 144-21E. 1915(I) TDM contact bearing 045j relative, swung right with full rudder and increased speed, sound passed rapidly down our starboard side in spite of swing to right. Not definitely torpedoes yet did not sound like fish. Lat. 35-56N, Long. 144-05E. 1930(I) Sweep completed, went ahead four engine speed on course 180T.

17 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute to area south of Lat. 33N, at four engine speed, course 180T. 0730(I) Slowed to 2/3 speed on one engine. Various friendly aircraft during day. 1130(I) Sighted friendly submarine, probably USS ANGLER. 1200(I) Position Lat. 32-45N, Long. 144-05E. 1517(I) Submerged. 1642(I) Surfaced. 1850(I) Sighted mine at Lat. 32-29.5N, Long 144-24E, could not sink it due to darkness.

18 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling south of Lat. 33N. 1200(I) Position Lat. 32-47N, Long. 144-39E. 2200(I) Decoded ComSubPac dispatch directing us to proceed to patrol areas.

19 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute patrol area. Friendly aircraft during night and day. 0658(I) Sank mine at Lat. 32-27N, Long. 143-02E. 1200(I) Position Lat. 32-30N, Long. 141-55E. 2330(I) Entire Army Air force commenced passing overhead enroute TOKYO.

20 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute patrol area. 0220(I) Exchanged radar recognition with USS ASPRO. 0300(I) Last of friendly aircraft. 1200(I) Position Lat. 36-53N, Long. 141-44E. 1257(I) Submerged. 1323(I) Surfaced. Patrolling along coast line 7-12 miles off shore. 2055(I) Ship Contact No. 6, Lat 37-45N, Long. 141-06E. Radar contact bearing 340T, distance 8,500 yards on two wooden sea trucks (Sugar Dogs). These vessels were tracked for two hours on course 180T, speed 7 knots, paralleling coast 2-3 miles off beach. Moon bright, visibility excellent, sea flat

calm. They could be seen by naked eye at 5,000 yards. We remained about 6,000 yards from them circling at slow speed to eastward to come in on their port quarter. Vessels were in column 300 yards apart. They did not change course or speed until we stopped them. Apparently they did not see us or recognize us for an American submarine. 2255(I) Gun Attack No. 1, Lat 37-29N, Long. 141-06E. Commenced firing divided fire. Larger target range 900 yards (5 inch gun forward 40 MM, 1-50 cal., 1-30 cal.) other target range 600 yards (after 40 MM, 1-20 MM, 1-50 cal., 1-30 cal.). Targets were stopped cold by initial salvos. Any return fire was promptly squelched by that hail of lead. We stopped, twisted, backed and circled to keep the range between a maximum of 300 yards and a minimum of 50 yards. Numerous fires were started, only to be extinguished by 5 hits. The firing was slow and deliberate after initial bursts. Hits were practically 100%. These wooden vessels only sank part way. One's bow, part of his mast, and top of deck houses still remained above the water level. Other vessel either broke in two, or else part of his bow of deck house floated away from other part. About fifteen men of those topside still think that we ended up with three, even though all admit having only two vessels at the beginning. Targets were wooded sea trucks (Sugar Dogs), EC 300 tons and 200 tons, about 130 and 110 foot length (ref. ONI [Office of Naval Intelligence] 208-J supplement #2, pages 63 and 93) 2330(I) Secured from gun action. Further expenditure of ammunition believed worthless. Cleared area to southeastward. *(EDITOR'S NOTE: Ammunition expended included 40 five inch rounds, 547 40 mm rounds, 420 rounds 20 mm, 1200 rounds 50 caliber, and 1994 rounds 30 caliber.)*

21 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling off coast. 0100(I) Eased out from coast. During morning converted #4 F.B.T. to M.B.T. and overhauled all guns, etc. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-03N, Long. 141-59E. 1340(I) Submerged to flush out tanks. 1401(I) Surfaced.

22 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling off coast 5-10 miles. Thick surface haze during day. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-23N, Long. 141-20E. Commenced opening out to eastward. 1530(I) Sent SEA POACHER SECOND to ComSubPac reporting destruction of certain publications. Eased in toward coast. 2230(I) Ship Contact No. 7, Lat 37-22N, Long. 141-03.5E. Radar contact 5,000 yards. Weather was wet, fairly large swells. Tracked for one hour on course 180T-190T, speed 7 knots, along 10 fathom curve about two miles off the beach. Went to gun action stations, came in on port quarter of target. Sky overcast. Target visible without glasses at 1200 yards. 2339(I) Gun Action No. 2, Lat 37-16.5N, Long. 141-03.5E. Man in deck house lighted a cigarette. At 335 yards range, commenced firing all guns. Target was stopped by initial salvos. Only five hits out of seven shot with 5 inch gun due to target being obscured by smoke. 2344(I) Ceased firing, target burning brightly. Closed target to about 100 feet. In light of flames six or more men were seen, all entirely naked except for breechcloths. Several jumped over the side, others were shouting furiously and running around on windward side of flames. It looked as if fire would completely destroy target so we did not waste ammunition on it but pulled off a ways. Target was standard wooded sea truck (Sugar Dog), EC about 120 feet long. (Ref. pages 63 and 93 ONI 208-J Supplement #2). *(EDITOR'S NOTE: Ammunition expended included 7 rounds five inch, 86 rounds of 40 mm, 270 rounds of 20 mm, 300 rounds of 50 caliber, and 350 rounds of 30 caliber.)*

23 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling in area. 0011(I) Target still burning brightly, a series of small explosions started. 0020(I) One large explosion demolished target. Lat. 37-16N, Long. 141-03E. 0342(I) Started heading out from coast, overhauled all guns. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-10N, Long.

142-01E. Headed in for coast. 1404(I) Submerged. 1424(I) Surfaced. 2315 Ship Contact No. 8, Lat. 37-22N, Long. 141-06E. Radar contact 326T, range 8,600 yards. Sky slightly overcast. Moon bright through haze. Tracked target for one hour on course 180T, speed about 9 knots, paralleling coast about two to three miles off shore. We circled to eastward keeping 6,000 yards from him, and then closed him from astern. Target apparently did not sight us and did not alter course or speed until (further text is missing here).

24 July 1945. 0033(I) Gun Attack No. 3. Lat. 37-10N, Long. 141-04.5E. We opened fire to starboard with all guns at 300 yard range. 5 inch hit him amidships under bridge with first shot. Target billowed smoke from bridge, and smoke and flames shot up from his stack. Target swung abruptly right in a 180 turn, slowed to a stop. We swung right with him, ceasing fire with automatic weapons so 5 inch could see target clearly, getting ten hits for eleven shots. His bridge and superstructure caught fire. Secured 5 inch and turned .30 caliber machine guns loose on men who were apparently attempting to man his after gun. Target brightly illuminated by flames. 30 calibers detonated some depth charges on his stern which blew off in a tremendous explosion. Target upended bow sticking high out of water and rapidly sank stern first. Much shrapnel from the explosion landed on our decks. Target was believed to be steel hulled, standard whale killer type (XPE), EC 300 tons, one gun forward and smaller gun aft. Similar to Shonen Maru class (Page 146 ONI 208-J Supplement #2). 0803(I) Submerged to routine torpedoes. 1200(I) Position Lat. 37-38N, Long 142-32E. 1237(I) Surfaced. Headed north for area shift to area One. 2055(I) SD radar contact on unidentified plane that did not close more than 12 miles. We were 15 miles off beach at the time. *EDITOR'S NOTE: Ammunition expended included 11 rounds 5 inch, 15 rounds of 40 mm, 120 rounds 20 mm, 100 rounds 50 caliber, and 300 rounds 30 caliber. According to uboat.net website <http://uboat.net/allies/warships/ship/3139.html> this vessel sunk was the Japanese Guard boat Kiru Maru No. 2 of 334 BRT.*

25 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling along 100 fathom curve enroute area One. 0100(I) After tracking USS ANGLER for twenty minutes, with no SJ interference from them, finally exchanged SJ recognition signals at same time as VHF contact was made. Closed ANGLER and held VHF conversation, giving them our dope. 0725(I) Sighted USS THORNBAC 0820(I) Completed exchange of movies by breeches buoy and various dope by megaphone. 1200(I) Position Lat. 40-38.3N, Long. 142-56E. 1305(I) SD radar contact on unidentified plane, did not close less than 6 miles, not sighted. 1810(I) Radar contact ERIMO SAKI, 002T, 58,000 yards. Intend to patrol along coast west of ERMIO SAKI. 2000(I) Sighted ERIMO SAKI.

26 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling south coast HOKKAIDO 10,000 yards off beach. 0150(I) Ship Contact No. 9, Lat. 42-10N, Long. 142-36.5E. Radar contact 351T, 8,400 yards. Tracked target for one hour on course 120T, speed 7 knots, paralleling coast two miles off beach. Circled far out and came in astern of him as sea was flat calm, visibility excellent, full moon to southward. None of these vessels keep a lookout aft. 0310(I) Gun Attack No. 4, Lat. 42-06N, Long. 142-50E. Opened fire to port with 5 inch and all automatic weapons except 40mm. (Those in standby due to ammunition running low). Range was 450 yards at initial salvo. 17 hits with 5 inch obtained out of 18 salvos. Only miss was due to one shot going through hole made by another shot. Target stopped on first shot. Caught fire after small arms had hit repeatedly. Decided against letting him burn up because of proximity to Shamani. So kept hitting him until he sank, putting out fires. Target took 30 degree list to port, and then settled down leaving only masts and top of deck

house protruding. 0314(I) Secured all guns and cleared area to southward. Target sunk as much as possible for it to sink. Vessel was a wooden sea truck (Sugar Dog), EC 300 tons, 130 feet long, (Ref. ONI 208-J Supplement #2, pages 63 and 93). (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Ammunition expended included 18 rounds 5 inch, 120 rounds 20 mm, 150 rounds 50 caliber, and 350 rounds 30 caliber.*) Patrolling south of Erimo Saki about 12-15 miles from the coast. Visibility variable. 0944(I) SD radar contact on unidentified plane that did not close more than three miles. 1200(I) Position Lat. 41-40N, Long. 143-15E. 1315(I) Sighted man floating in kapok life jacket at Lat. 41-41N, Long 142-55E. 1330(I) Brought man aboard. Identified as uniformed Jap naval enlisted man, dead about a week from concussion or exposure. Well preserved in cold water. Removed identification cloth, money and various papers of possible intelligence value and dumped him overboard again. He must have been a very loyal Jap for he carried newspaper pictures of two Jap Naval Admirals. A couple of our go gettum boys had weasy stomachs on seeing him close up. 1405(I) SD and SJ contact on unidentified aircraft. Closed only to 12 miles. 1707(I) Submerged. 1940(I) Surfaced. Patrolled along south eastern coast of Hokkaido 5-8 miles off shore. Clear night, unlimited visibility.

27 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling along eastern coast of Hokkaido, 5 miles off beach. Fairly foggy. Not even an APR contact around Kushiro or Akkeshi. 1200(I) Position Lat. 42-46N, Long. 143-59E. Visibility good in afternoon. 1306(I) Ship Contact No. 10, Lat. 42-02.5N, Long. 142-50E. Radar and sight contact bearing 235T, 6,750 yards, on fishing lugger, who sighted us, circled twice and let out clouds of black smoke from small diesel stack and headed for Biro. Closed target at four engine speed, manning gun action stations. 1325(I) Gun Attack No. 5, Lat 42-02.5N, Long 142-50E. Opened fire to starboard at 500 yard range. Target disintegrated after four 5 inch gun hits and left nothing floating but a few boxes, baskets and debris. (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Ammunition expended included 6 rounds of 5 inch, 10 rounds 40 mm, 120 rounds 20 mm, 300 rounds 50 caliber, and 400 rounds 30 caliber.*) Two men were still alive and attempted to hide, placing wooden baskets over their heads. One refused to come aboard and was shot. The other man, after we placed a few near misses close to him, decided to come aboard. He had several scalp wounds, and a bullet or shrapnel hole in his leg. He is an Army Superior Private, one of the eight soldiers who were aboard the lugger. All were regularly assigned to this fishing job to supply food for their army unit. Target was single masted; diesel driven fishing lugger about 60 feet long, 50 tons, armed only with a few rifles. 1440(I) SJ screen and PPI had definite strong radar interference bearing 235T, not from a U.S. Submarine. This was about 15 miles south of Erimo Saki. Visibility poor in fog. This was the beginning of a four hour effort to find a target without success. ST and SJ were operated only intermittently and bearings taken on interference until the interference was lost at 2000(I). Interference showed up only occasionally during this 1 hour and 20 minutes but was strong, and we were able to take a bearing by listening on SJ. With twelve knot arbitrary speed, target course was 168T from Lat. 41-40N, Long. 143-20E. No contact was ever made. 2357(I) Headed back for Hokkaido.

28 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute south coast Hokkaido. During day visibility was good with intermittent surface haze. Patrolled along coast in westerly direction about five miles off beach. Many buildings, factories, barracks, small cities and villages, railroad trains, bridges, etc. were seen. It would have been very easy to bombard almost any of these at 4,000 yard range or less. 1130(I) Ship Contact No. 11, Lat 42-07N, Long. 142-55.5E. Three small fishing sampans were sighted, all within 1,000 yards of the beach. They did not appear worth the risk in this shallow

water close to coast in good visibility. 1200(I) Position Lat. 42-02.5N, Long. 142-50E. 1550(I) Sighted tremendous bomber or transport plane flying on westerly course over the land, bearing 290T, distance 13,000 yards. Not bothered. 1614(I) Headed for area Two.

29 July 1945. 0000(I) Enroute area Two. 1030(I) Commenced patrolling along coast about seven miles off shore. 1145(I) Sighted unidentified plane bearing 260T, distance 12,000 yards, flying on northerly course along the coast. Not bothered. 1200(I) Position Lat. 39-16N, Long. 142-07E. 1205(I) Submerged to close Osaki. Visibility fairly good, infrequent slight haze. 1606(I) Ship Contact No. 12, Lat. 39-12.5, Long. 141-58E. Sound contact on sampan which was seen to be proceeding in northerly direction along coast very close to breakers. 1720(I) Ship Contact No. 13. Lat. 39-15N, Long 141-59E. Sighted sampan proceeding in southerly direction close along coast. 1954(I) Surfaced and patrolled along coast about five miles off beach. 1055(I) Exchanged radar recognition signals with USS THORNBAC bearing 160T.

30 July 1945. 0000(I) Patrolling along coast. 0132(I) Passed mine abeam to starboard at distance of 150 feet at Lat. 38-33.4N, Long. 142-42E. 0432(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 38-38N, Long. 141-45E. Patrolling on surface, coast plainly visible about seven miles distant. 0543(I) Sank mine at Lat. 38-44N, Long. 141-51E. 0745(I) Exploded mine at Lat. 39-00N, Long. 142-02E. 1200(I) Position Lat. 39-12N, Long 142-06E. 1455(I) Ship Contact No. 14, Lat. 38-49N, Long 141-40E. Sighted unidentified small craft (lugger size or larger) bearing 235T, distance 6,000 yards, which was proceeding in a southwesterly direction entering Kesennuma Wan. 1502(I) Ship Contact No. 15, Lat. 38-50N, Long 141-39E. Sighted lugger bearing 254T, range 6,000 yards on southerly course. Went to gun action stations and intended to get this one before he could enter Kesennuma. 1525(I) Secured from gun action stations as target cut inside (unreadable) rocks on Kurosaki Shima. We could have been sighted easily by either one of these two vessels. 1627(I) unidentified aircraft contact on SJ and SD at 5 miles closing from 160T. 1628(I) Submerged. 1815(I) Surfaced. Visibility variable, mostly foggy. Decided to pullout from land to area of majority of plotted contacts of recent patrols. Feel certain there are no ships out there now however. 2210(I) Exchanged signals by radar with USS THORNBAC. 2337(I) Voice conference with THORNBAC completed. She will work lower half area Two tomorrow; we will take upper part. Also planned joint bombardment for 1st.

31 July 1945. SEA POACHER one year old today. 0000(I) Proceeding to upper half Area Two. 0056(I) At Lat. 38-40N, Long. 142-15E, lookouts and OOD's all sighted an object which they believed to be a midget sub at distance of 600 yards. We turned away and bent on the knots to only lose radar contact at 1500 yards. After much discussion of appearance, lack of wake, low radar ranges, etc., decided to investigate object when visibility got good. Thought it might be a life raft. 0330(I) Began search, visibility poor due to fog, passed much debris and fishing floats, etc. 0540(I) Sighted stern end of Japanese wooden vessel. Rudder, four bladed propellers, counter and various lengths of side planking protruded above the water. Several Japanese characters were painted in white on the grey stern. This derelict solved the mystery of last night's midget sub. It was one mile south of its previously plotted position. 1200(I) Position Lat. 38-03N, Long. 142-03E. Patrolling along coast, visibility improving. 1255(I) Visibility fairly good. Submerged for SD aircraft contact at 3 miles, closing. Visibility excellent all afternoon, no activity seen around Kamaishi. 946(I) Surfaced and proceeded to rendezvous with THORNBAC. 2200(I) Exchanged radar calls with THORNBAC.

1 August 1945. 0000(I) Proceeding in company with USS THORNBACk to rendezvous position. 1140(I) Sighted Hokkaido bearing 035T, 13.5 miles, visibility fairly good. 1200(I) Position Lat. 41-52N, Long 142-53E 1300(I) Held conference about bombardment via megaphone with USS ANGLER and USS THORNBACk. Decided to proceed in column, THORNBACk, ANGLER, and SEA POACHER in that order, 500 to 1000 yard interval, then execute a column movement to parallel beach, opening fire together. Target to be power station at Urakawa. 1310(I) Went ahead four engine speed to close beach. 1326(I) Went to gun action stations, manned only 5 inch gun and after 40 MM. 1400(I) Followed in column movement to right approximately 500 yards astern ANGLER. Visibility was good. 1409(I) THORNBACk and ANGLER opened fire, all slowed to about five knots. 1416(I) Gun Action No. 6 Lat. 42-09.5N, Long. 142-47E. All along the coast at this spot there were coal mines, railroad tracks, many buildings and houses, boats hauled up on beach, etc. We opened fire on apparent target of THORNBACk. After three shots ceased fire on that target as it was evident that the range, about 6,000 yards, was excessive for accurate shooting. Fire was then shifted to the large groups of buildings, range 4,000 yards. These consisted of about fifty buildings, mostly frame structures of various types. Unfortunately, some were probably houses. A railroad track ran through the center of this group. There were several boats drawn up on the beach, largest about 40 feet long. Hits were about 80 percent in target area, a couple landing on the beach and a couple going over to burst on the hillside behind town. All shells burst with tremendous explosions and much smoke. A number of gaping holes were plainly seen in the roofs of buildings. One shell landed in midst of boats and knocked one off its supports. Only about 50% of the 40 MM shells hit in target area due to excessive range for that gun. 1426(I) All 5 inch and 40 MM ammunition having been expended secured from gun action stations and opened out from coast to southward at four engine speed. 32 rounds 5 inch and 120 rounds 40MM were expended in bombardment. 1600(I) SD radar contact on aircraft at 15 miles, closing. Submerged to 150 feet when plane was at five miles still closing but not sighted. Visibility clear. 1605(I) Two aerial bombs, neither one close, no damage. 1825(I) Surfaced and proceeded eastward for Midway rounding ERIMO SAKI at twenty miles.

2 August 1945. 0000(I) Enroute Midway. 0100(I) Exchanged radar recognition signals with USS SENNET bearing 020T. 1200(I) Position Lat. 43-00N, Long. 149-13E. 1300(I) Set clocks ahead one hour to conform to -10 time zone. During afternoon converted #5 F.B.T. to M.B.T.

3 August 1945. 0000(K) Enroute Midway. 1200(K) Position Lat 42-33N, Long 158-11E. 1700(K) Sent SEA POACHER THIRD to ComSubPac reporting departure from area. *EDITOR'S NOTE: The original documentation notes that Page 26 of the original narrative is missing.*

4 August 1945. 0000(K) Enroute Midway. 1200(K) Position Lat. 37-37N, Long. 164-37E. 1500(K) Set clocks ahead one hour to zone time (-11).

5 August 1945. 0000(L) Enroute Midway. 1200(L) Position Lat. 32-49N, Long. 170-29E. 1600(L) Set clocks ahead one hour to zone (-12).

6 August 1945. 0000(M) Enroute Midway. Set clocks back 24 hours to zone (-/12). 1200(Y) Position Lat 28-10N, Long. 177-51W. 1440(Y) Moored Midway.

7 August 1945. 0000(Y) Moored at Midway. 1200(Y) Position Lat. 27-34N, Long. 177-11W.

8 August 1945. 0000(Y) Enroute Pearl Harbor. 1200(Y) Position Lat. 23-51N, Long. 173-30W,

9 August 1945. 0000(Y) Enroute Pearl Harbor. 0900(Y) Set clocks ahead one hour to zone (-/11). 1200(X) Position Lat. 22-14N, Long. 167-56W.

10 August 1945. 0000(X) Enroute Pearl Harbor. 1200(X) Position Lat. 20-54N, Long. 162-25W. 1600(X) Set clocks ahead one hour to zone -/10).

11 August 1945. 0000(W) Enroute Pearl Harbor. Moored Pearl Harbor.

(C) WEATHER

Weather was moderate. Considerable fog was encountered in the patrol area. Seas were flat calm in area entire period of patrol.

(D) TIDES

Set in general agreed with current charts.

(E) NAVIGATIONAL AIDS

Navigation in areas 1, 2, and 3 was primarily by radar, fathometer and occasional use of identifiable landmarks. Aviation charts furnished us were of the greatest help.

(F) SHIP CONTACTS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Provided in Narrative. See SEA POACHER website for details.

(G) AIRCRAFT CONTACTS

In lifeguard area only two daytime plane contacts were definitely enemy. While attempting to clear launching area after completion of first antipicket boat sweep we were bothered for several hours by two unidentified radar equipped aircraft, who could not be contacted either by VHF or IFF. In areas two and three approximately one large transport or bomber was sighted each day paralleling the coast, not venturing further than three miles from the beach. In area one, one transport was sighted over the land and three planes were contacted on S.D. Two hours after completion of joint bombardment one plane dropped two bombs on us, not close.

(H) ATTACK DATA

EDITOR'S NOTE: Attack data are summarized in this Section, however, all general information is provided in the Narrative Section (B). See SEA POACHER website for details.

(I) MINES

A total of 21 drifting mines were encountered during this patrol, of which 19 were destroyed by small arms fire. Of those destroyed, 14 actually exploded upon being hit, the remainder sinking. All were of spherical horned type. Two Springfield rifles with armor piercing ammunition were our mine destroyer equipment. *EDITOR'S NOTE: The two mines not destroyed were due to darkness. See SEA POACHER website for specific mine locations.*

(J) ANTISUBMARINE TACTICS AND EVASIVE MANEUVERS

Several unidentified aircraft drove us down on dark night of July 9-10, but no bombing or depth charging resulted. On 1 August after daylight shelling of shore installations at Urakawa a single plane detected by SD at 15 miles closed to 5 miles before we submerged. We received two aerial bombs, not close. Plane was never sighted due to partial overcast. XPC sunk in gun attack #3 did not appear to be engaged in anti-submarine patrol at that time,

(K) MAJOR DEFECTS AND DAMAGES

Hull and Machinery: None. Ordnance and Gunnery: Mark 14-3A Torpedo #64028 ran erratic in torpedo attack No 1. On being fired from tube #3 with 10° right gyro being set, this torpedo took about twenty to thirty degrees left gyro. Depth was set at three feet, sea flat calm, own ship's speed 10 knots. No fault has been found in fire control or tube mechanism.

(L) RADIO

At least one, generally two or more of the Sub Fox frequencies were able to be copied at all time. 13655 kc and 9050 kc were the best frequencies. There were no casualties in the radio receivers. Only casualty with the TBL was the antenna output meter burned out. It was replaced from spares. Four transmissions were made to RPN and NPM with no difficulty. The Wolfpack frequencies were guarded continuously when a receiver was available, that is, at all times receiver was not in use on lifeguard frequency. Wolfpack was used only once for pack communications in area. Jamming was encountered on Wolfpack frequencies consisting of C.W. Random Keying and did not hinder communications to any serious extent. The lifeguard frequency was also jammed heavily during strikes, but with C.W. Random Keying and by voice transmissions, could usually be countered by careful receiver tuning. The SCR 610 was satisfactory up to ranges of 12,000 yards. CHF was used frequently in communication with planes and satisfactory up to ranges of 22 miles.

(M) RADAR

SJ-1 performance was excellent. Two hours of operating time was lost while the power switch was being replaced in the control unit; otherwise only routine maintenance was required. Once a friendly submarine was picked up at a range of 25,000 yards. Average range on submarine was 13,000 yards. Perhaps the constant use of SJ radar in the area made our presence known to the

enemy; however this did not bring on any apparent anti-submarine measures. ST - Performance was average. Due to critical tuning it was difficult to keep set at maximum sensitivity. Maximum range on land was 35,000 yards (submarine surfaced). SD-4 performance was very good. Routine maintenance required. The SD was keyed practically all the time while on the surface. Maximum range on aircraft was 45 miles (submarine surfaced).

(N) SONAR GEAR AND SOUND CONDITIONS

The QB with torpedo detection modification was used almost continuously. Only minor casualties occurred in the (unreadable), the most frequent being keying switch failure. After substituting an ordinary micro switch in place of the equipment spare, this trouble was eliminated. The sound conditions were good on station. No enemy sonar ranging was encountered.

(O) DENSITY LAYERS

The density layers encountered were normal for these areas. Off the coast of Honshu a salinity gradient of 10,000-13,000 pounds was found between 10 and 20 miles outside the 100 fathom curve. It is felt that the Submarine Supplement to the Sailing Directions would be much more valuable with the addition of charts showing surface buoyancy changes due to salinity for the several seasons. *EDITOR'S NOTE: Specific information on the density layers is available at the SEA POACHER website.*

(P) HEALTH, FOOD, AND HABITABILITY

Health was good. After each gun action there were many headaches among members of the 5 inch gun crew. All cases were treated satisfactorily by the Pharmacist's Mate. Food was excellent. It was nutritious, well prepared, appetizing, ample and sufficiently varied. Habitability was good.

(Q) PERSONNEL

- (a) Number of men detached after previous patrol 9
 - (b) Number of men on board during patrol 78
 - (c) Number of men qualified at start of patrol 57
 - (d) Number of men qualified at the end of patrol 68
 - (e) Number of men unqualified making their first patrol 9
- The performance of duty of all officers and men were very satisfactory.

(R) MILES STEAMED, FUEL USED

MIDWAY-Saipan (via GUAM)	3044 miles	41,670 gallons.
Saipan-Area	1212 miles	11,960 gallons
In Area	7147 miles	56,525 gallons
Area-PEARL (via MIDWAY)	3500 miles	55,000 gallons

(S) DURATION (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Not readable.*)

(T) FACTORS OF ENDURANCE REMAINING (*EDITOR'S NOTE: Not readable.*)

(U) COMMUNICATIONS, RADAR, SONAR COUNTERMEASURES

(*EDITOR'S NOTE: See SEA POACHER website for details.*)

(V) REMARKS

Dividing the patrol into periods of life guarding, anti-picket boat sweeping, and area patrolling made the time pass very quickly. Targets encountered were more suitable for gun attacks than for torpedo attacks. Increased ammunition stowage space is believed desirable even at the expense of fewer torpedoes. Shallow water used by small vessels made special weapons attacks impossible. The Jap soldier prisoner was shackled during stay aboard, but otherwise was not treated with undue harshness. No attempt was made at extensive questioning of prisoner but our Guamanian mess boy, Carbullido, did good service as interpreter for what talking was necessary. Every attempt was made to prevent familiarity with the crew

EDITORS NOTE: The film for this War Patrol (see References) shows the SEA POACHER getting underway from Midway, night firings, probably machine repairs, the crew enjoying the chow, a dog on board, shooting mines with the .50 caliber, a rendezvous with another submarine at sea and a highline transfer to exchange movies, gun action again an enemy surface craft, the picking up and searching of a Japanese sailor at sea, the Japanese sailor wounded and in very poor condition, medical treatment provided to the Japanese sailor, the inability of the Japanese sailor to feed himself and being spoon fed by a SEA POACHER sailor, and being given a cigarette.

Also shown is the recovery of a dead Japanese sailor, a search of his clothing, and then his return to the sea. The film then shows a meeting with two other U.S. submarines, the 5 inch deck gun and loading, shore bombardment with the 40 mm, the return to Midway with flags showing 1 warship and 5 merchants sunk during the Patrol. A band and many personnel are on the pier with warm greetings. The Japanese sailor is shown hooded and walking under his own power. He is transferred to the Shore Patrol and carried away in a jeep.

SEA POACHER is again underway, semaphore is shown with a surface contact, and then the scene shifts to arrival in another port. Again there is a band on the pier, and the crew is shown eating fruit and reading mail.

Then our boat is again at sea and a camera has been placed on the bow. It shows SEA POACHER submerging and surfacing three times. This is followed by several superstructure shots, a swim call or dolphin initiation, and then the boat is passing under a large bridge followed by another swim call.

Finally, the SEA POACHER is shown mooring at what must be Pearl Harbor. Again there is a huge welcome, and the pier and boat become enveloped with women, wives, and young children. The film concludes with the words "The End."

CHAPTER 5

RALPH COBB 1944 - 1945

**I REMEMBER GROWING UP UNDERWATER,
COMMISSIONING AND ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER,
OUR OFFICERS AND CREW, THE FIRST WAR PATROL,
SEA SICKNESS TRAINING, A DANGEROUS HIKE IN GUAM,
THE SECOND WAR PATROL,
A NEW SKIPPER AND DIFFERENT TACTICS,
THE THIRD WAR PATROL, THE FOURTH WAR PATROL,
NO LONGER A GREEN KID,
A SAD FOOTNOTE TO CAPTAIN LEIGH, AND A FINAL AFTERWORD**

GROWING UP UNDERWATER

The following is based on a talk I gave at the SEA POACHER Reunion on 20 May 2006 at the Ramada Inn Plaza in Virginia Beach, Virginia. I am one of SEA POACHER'S Plank Owners, and I think the only Commissioned Officer left from that group. I was asked to tell you about my experiences on the SEA POACHER during World War II. Since any memoir should have a title, I've chosen to call this "Growing Up Underwater."

I would like to thank my daughter Susan Felts for typing this manuscript and for preparing photos on disk.

COMMISSIONING AND ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER

Both SEA POACHER and I were commissioned in 1944; she at the Portsmouth Navy Yard, and I at the University of Michigan Naval ROTC Unit. In early 1944 the Pacific war was heating up and more junior officers were needed, so BUPERS decided to commission the NROTC junior classes a year early.

SEA POACHER was even more precocious, taking only a bit over five months from keel laying to commissioning. This was a record for the Navy sub construction program at the time, and probably not matched since. Despite the frenzied pace, the Yard personnel must have done a good job, because everything worked, held together, and brought us home!

I had only two weeks' notice of our accelerated commissioning date of February 28, 1944. Joyce and I were engaged and had planned to be married after my commissioning in June of 1945, but she was able to organize a short notice ceremony at her home. We were joined on February 29, an unusual date, but apparently a lucky one, as we are still together.

I had requested submarine duty, so I stepped off the train in New London two days later, with my bride clutching my hand, and hailed a cab to take us to the Crocker House - a hostelry that in no way resembled the Ramada Plaza Resort! The next day was frigidly wet and miserable - a typical New England March day, and we were both at low ebb.

A cheerful cabby rescued us and dropped us at The Skipper's Dock, where a couple of

bowls of restorative lobster bisque saved our lives and certainly our marriage.

The next day I reported to the Submarine Base for duty. I was so green that I addressed the Chief Yeoman as "Sir" and barely refrained from saluting him. (I can still see the look of disdain that crossed his face.) I was assigned to the O-10, one of the World War I era school boats to await the start of the next Sub School term a month later. We rented a room in New London from Mrs. Carolyn Irvin, a fine lady whose husband CDR William Irvin was skippering a sub on patrol in the Pacific. We were ready then to start learning our respective wartime roles.

The school session ended June 30. Since I had requested a new construction assignment, we left our Norwich, CT apartment and headed for Portsmouth, NH in our first car. It was a 1932 Chevy two door with, as we learned later, a fabric roof that leaked buckets. We got a third floor apartment in an old beach front resort hotel in York Beach, ME, with a great view from our kitchen window of Nubble Light and Boone Island Light on the horizon.

I reported to SEA POACHER the next day and met some of the officers and chiefs, and began to get acquainted with my new home. I was designated Assistant Engineering Officer; my boss was LT R. "Whitey" White, the Engineering Officer. In addition, as most junior officer, I became Commissary Officer. At sea, I would be a Junior Officer of the Deck, do some decoding when I came off watch, sometimes be a Diving Officer, and of course was responsible for the dreaded Battery Log Book. (I wonder whatever was done with all those pages I filled with columns of numbers copied from the EM's rough notes and transcribed painstakingly in ink.)

OUR OFFICERS AND CREW

In addition to the "what, where and when," I'd like to tell you about some of the great people I served with and got to know in my admittedly short submarine career, starting with LCDR Roby Palmer, Executive Officer of the NROTC Unit back in Ann Arbor when I arrived there in 1941. Commander Palmer was a fine figure of a naval officer. He had served on NAUTILUS and would return to sea duty shortly, but while at Ann Arbor he sparked an interest in the submarine service that never left me.

Few of the SEA POACHER officers (thank goodness) were as green as I. LCDR Frank Gambacorta, with service in S-boats, commanded. He was a real "people person" and well liked. LCDR Bob Worthington, another Naval Academy graduate and probably the most technically able officer I ever met, was the XO. He was a skilled seaman and well versed in all aspects of submarine warfare. He had been XO on SILVERSIDE (as he would often mention) and after our first patrol he left to command BALAO, garnering a Navy Cross on his first patrol. After the war he commanded the boat that rescued the crew of a sister sub that had foundered in heavy seas after a battery explosion off Norway. (A personal note: when I qualified in submarines, Bob Worthington presented one of his gold dolphin insignias to me which I still have.)

LT Bill Lilliott, a reservist, had nine patrols in GREENLING. He was our Third Officer and a real free spirit, but thoroughly professional when that was called for. His sub background was comparable to Worthington's, but he seldom mentioned it. LT Roy Gallemore, another Academy man, was Torpedo and Gunnery Officer. He had experience in the surface Navy, but previously none in subs. Another real professional, he had an easy good humor about him and was a mentor to the junior officers.

LT "Rusty" Combs joined us in Pearl on the way out. He had joined the Merchant Marine in his teen years, and had survived at least one torpedoing when on a tanker in the Caribbean. After transferring to the Navy, he served on SUNFISH before coming to SEA POACHER. With

his Merchant Marine background, he was no "spit and polish" sailor of course, but he was a good seaman, commanded the 5 inch gun crew expertly, was colorful, and a good shipmate both afloat and ashore. I served as his JOOD for most of our time at sea.

We also had a great bunch of chiefs and ratings, most of them well seasoned submarine veterans: Ed Clink, CMOMM and COB; Frederick "Doc" Smith, HC; Don Schafer, CY; Willford Bailey, SM1C; "Scotty" Horton, QM1C, and later, George Zelina, CTM/COB and Del Hobbs, CCS.

Both Zelina and Hobbs defined the term "salty old chiefs." Zelina would sit by the Control Room manifold, continually sipping coffee (with a lump of butter in each cup "to prevent ulcers.") We counted over 30 cups of coffee in a typical day. After the third patrol, he left us to go the hospital with - what else? - A bleeding ulcer.

Hobbs ran the Galley with an iron hand. He was a bit eccentric - one of the other chiefs said, "He's OK. He's just seen the sterns of too many transports at Subic." Hobbs would stand at the gangway as his men carried stores aboard from the tenders, checking the weight of each case of meat. If any were underweight, they were rejected and returned to the tender for exchange. He made my job as Commissary Officer easy! He even taught me how to disjoint a chicken and gave me a Navy - issued boning knife to do it with. I still have that knife.

It is really unfair to the rest to list these few, because I liked and learned from each one of the SEA POACHER officers and crew, but the above were some of the more memorable (and/or colorful) ones who have lodged in my "memory chip" these past 60-odd years.

THE FIRST WAR PATROL

We left the States on 20 September 1944, and headed for the Pacific via the Canal, stopping at Pearl for more training and Saipan to top off. From there we proceeded to our patrol area in the East China Sea in company with SEA OWL and PIRANHA.

The first patrol was uneventful, except for constant foul weather and unrelenting A/S activity. Afterward we proceeded to Guam for rest and refit. There, Bob Worthington was detached and Bill Lilliott became XO and Navigator.

SEA SICKNESS TRAINING

We also gained two "rookies;" Steward's Mates Enrique Cruz and Eddie Carbullido, who were native to Guam and had never been to sea. As Commissary Officer, I took on their training, which started shortly after we got underway. Both were very young and immediately became deathly seasick, especially Cruz. When they stayed in their bunks the next morning, I knew it would be a very long patrol unless I did something. I also knew I had to get them up or the recovery period would be lengthy, so I roused them out, and put them to cleaning the Officer's Head. I told them if they felt sick to throw up there, but to keep on scrubbing.

By lunchtime they had recovered, and their malady never recurred.

A DANGEROUS HIKE IN GUAM

During our R&R break at Camp Dealey, Guam, Roy Gallemore and I went on a hike to the interior of the island, and came upon an observation outpost manned that day by a lone Army National Guardsman. He claimed to have been away from the States since the beginning of the

war (three years), apparently with no prospect of returning until the hostilities' eventual end. He gave each of us a frozen beer from his food locker before we left and sent us on our way.

We were unarmed, and learned later that some Japanese were still hiding out in those hills. Oblivious to any such dangers, we blundered back to camp unharmed.

THE SECOND WAR PATROL

Our next patrol off Formosa and the Nansei Islands (with SCABBORDFISH and PLAICE) was also uneventful; no worthwhile targets, and even the flyboys stayed aloft, giving us no shot at a daring rescue mission. We headed for Midway via Saipan for our second rest camp, where it soon appeared that our luck might change.

A NEW SKIPPER AND DIFFERENT TACTICS

At Midway, LCDR "Chuck" Leigh relieved CDR Gambacorta as CO. Bill Lilliott left also and LT Warden "Wardy" Gaskins became XO and Navigator. Captain Leigh had war patrol experience on S-42 including Command, and came to us from three patrols as XO on SILVERSIDES, where he was awarded a Silver Star. He was also said to be the first of his Naval Academy class to command a fleet boat.

I remember him as a stocky, feisty "Bantam Rooster" of a man, a varsity wrestler, and very combative in a good-humored way. Immediately after the change of command ceremony, he called all the officers together in the Wardroom and outlined his combat plans, which primarily would involve surface gun action.

I don't know if the tactics he described to us were his, or whether he'd been reading Gene Fluckey's patrol reports on BARB, but I do know he got our attention immediately. His plans made sense: the remaining Japanese targets were small, and tended to hug the shallow coastal waters, mainly at night.

We had radar and most Japanese ships at that time did not. He also theorized that any lookouts would tend to be few, sleepy and mainly watching ahead. So we would surface, track the targets on radar from astern, while making ready to shoot, and only then come abeam of them quickly and begin shooting.

THE THIRD WAR PATROL

Our third patrol, and first with Captain Leigh, was in the Kuriles, north of Hokkaido, in an attack group with four other boats. Our first action was a conventional submerged torpedo attack, resulting in our first sinking and our first (and only) depth charge attack. The attacking vessel was alert but inept, and SEA POACHER suffered no damage from the eight charges dropped.

The first opportunity to test Captain Leigh's tactics came a few days later when we found a group of four fishing luggers in a dense fog and engaged them with our guns. All four were damaged or sunk. Unfortunately however, one of our 20 mm shells exploded close aboard and injured three of the gun crew; two quite seriously. Captain Leigh requested and received permission to break off our patrol and return to Midway so that the wounded men could receive proper treatment.

THE FOURTH WAR PATROL

After rest and refit at Midway, we got underway for our fourth (and last) patrol, via Guam and Saipan, in company with THORNBAC and ANGLER. Our patrol area was off the east coasts of Honshu and Hokkaido. We sank five small coastwise cargo vessels in four separate night surface attacks. All were hit and stopped by our first salvos.

The climax came on the fifth attack, also at night. The target turned out to be an armed A/S vessel, and like the others was stopped by our first volley and set afire. We stopped shooting, but immediately saw that the crew were trying to man their deck guns. Willford Bailey, SM1, requested and got permission to fire his 30-caliber machine gun, at a range of probably 100 yards. He got immediate and spectacular results. He apparently set off the depth charges in the target's stern racks and everything blew sky high. I had a ringside seat from the twin 40 mm gun mount, and I confess I jumped nearly as high myself, coming down in an open ammo hatch and skinning my shin. Doc Smith tried to persuade me later that I could get a Purple Heart for my "wound." Fortunately, none of our people were hit by flying chunks of metal or other debris, although quite a few pieces landed on our decks. (I didn't usually have this good a view of the action.) Our 40 mm platform was aft of the Conning Tower, and the Captain took a dim view of firing through the periscope shears. Dick Pitstick, EM1, was on deck with his trusty camera and captured the explosion on film. Check the photographic section in this book.

We sank one more small ship (a fishing lugger) in a daylight gun attack and captured a survivor who was a Japanese Army Private. After realizing that he was not to be executed, he became a happy and cordial adjunct to the crew. We felt that the Marine squad at Midway, who marched down to the pier and took him away in shackles, was overdoing it a bit.

We returned to Midway, after the obligatory departing expenditure of ammo at a couple of Japanese shore installations, and after participating in picket boat sweeps clearing the way for Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet on its way to hit Honshu.

The last real excitement, although momentary, was chilling. I was standing my deck watch when I spotted a plane in the clear blue sky and yelled, "Dive! Dive! Dive!" A single bomb landed in our wake as we passed periscope depth, but obviously it missed.

Aside from exploding some floating mines with rifle fire, we saw no more action as we headed east and left the western Pacific to the big boys.

REST AND RELAXATION AT THE ROYAL HAWAIIAN

We had a short stop in Midway before proceeding to Pearl, where we were when the big bombs dropped on Japan and the war ended. While in Pearl an ALNAV came through with my name, among the many other promotions. I was suddenly no longer a lowly green Ensign, but a salty LTJG.

One funny episode in Pearl sticks in my memory. I was detailed to take a busload of the crew to a city park in Honolulu for an afternoon barbecue/beer bust. Going there was just fine, but getting the bunch back to the boat afterwards was hairy. I didn't mind the shouting and singing, but pouring beer on the pedestrians and flinging the cans into top-down convertibles made me fear the loss of my new half-stripe. Thanks to an unflappable bus driver we made it back safely.

After rest camp at the Royal Hawaiian, we were fortunate enough to be sent home

immediately, reaching New London on 30 September 1945. "A year and ten days!" as my wife likes to remind me still.

NO LONGER A GREEN KID

Pride, or maybe vanity, compels me to tell a story about the best compliment I think I've ever received. Charley Thieme, a bona fide Texan, was a MM and a good one. He pretty much ruled the After Engine Room. He and I had a running joke and eventually a ten dollar bet, as to which of us would be the first over the side when the war ended.

Charley's "points" came up before mine (no surprise) and I made sure to meet him with \$10 as he headed for the brow for the last time. He said, in his Texan drawl, "Mr. Cobb, you were just a green kid when you came on board, but you got to be a pretty good officer." I could not have asked for a better or more eloquent send off as I prepared to head for Ann Arbor to resume my "other" education.

A SAD FOOTNOTE ON CAPTAIN LEIGH

He was relieved while we were in New London, and we never saw him again. We heard that he was later assigned to a U.S. Embassy in South America as Naval Attaché, where he caught some tropic disease and "rested his oars."

A FINAL AFTERWORD

I've been thinking about this for a long time, but the words just wouldn't gel I don't know if they have yet, but I'd like to try and add this final thought to my "memoir."

This recital makes SEA POACHER'S patrols sound like a lark, and in many ways it was. We didn't suffer heavy depth charge attacks, or flooding, or worse, as so many did.

The boat came back safely. While three men were seriously wounded (some life threatening) in the gun action on the Third Patrol, they were returned to port for medical treatment and they did recover well.

So, did we do less than some of our brothers in arms?

Should we somehow feel a sense of shortcoming or even of guilt?

Some 60+ years after the fact, I've concluded the answer is a resounding absolutely "No!" Like the men of WAHOO and BARB (and even of SCORPION), we voluntarily put ourselves in harm's way, went where we were ordered, and did our duty to the best of our abilities.

Had the circumstances been different, the results might also have been. Not necessarily better nor worse, but different.

In a submarine, just doing your job properly and well means you might have unknowingly saved a shipmate's life, or even the boat itself.

The Cooks who secured the Main Induction on a dive, the 17 year old Radar Tech who spotted the tell-tale blip indicating a hostile plane, the Lookouts on watch on the Bridge - each had multiple choices to foul up, but each did his job thoroughly and well, making possible a "happy ending."

I came to this conclusion when SEA POACHER Shipmate Billy Williams approached me at our reunion in 2004.

He said, "Mr. Cobb, Thanks for saving my life!"

I was dumb-struck, even when he went on to explain that he had been on watch in the periscope shears when we had to make a quick dive, and he didn't hear the order to "Clear the Bridge." My entirely unremarkable job, as Junior Officer of the Deck (JOOD), was to make sure everybody got below safely, which I did by tapping on his boot and waving him below.

If we had found convoys of big ships in our patrol areas we'd have sunk some of them. I believe we performed well and honorably, because that's the kind of shipmates I was fortunate to have on SEA POACHER.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I believe Ralph is being too modest. SEA POACHER entered WWII late when the number of Japanese targets were significantly reduced and mostly close to shore. They sank at least nine ships including a Japanese warship with guns forward and aft and with depth charges. The warship was not a friendly encounter. Still SEA POACHER chose to attack in a dangerous surface gunfire action rather than a submerged torpedo attack. The SEA POACHER'S performance in WWII was magnificent. Those words also apply to her subsequent crews that defended our Nation during the Cold War from 2 September 1945 through decommissioning.

"I saw the submariners, the way they stood aloof and silent, watching their pigboat with loving eyes. They are alone in the Navy. I admired the PT boys. And I often wondered how the aviators had the courage to go out day after day, and I forgave their boasting. But the submariners! In the entire fleet they stand apart."

James Michener, Tales of the South Pacific

"Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners."

Sir Winston Churchill

"We are outnumbered; there is only one thing to do. We must attack!"

*Admiral Andrew Cunningham, before attacking
the Italian Fleet at Taranto, November 1940*

"Any commander who fails to exceed his authority is not of much use to his subordinates."

Admiral Arleigh Burke

CHAPTER 6

BLISS NISONGER 1944

I REMEMBER SUBMARINE SAILORS HAD TO BE NUTS AND OUR CHRISTMAS 1944 MENU

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was first published in the Submarine Newsletter TINOSA Blatt in August 1981. It is reprinted here from the SEA POACHER Association website.

SUBMARINE SAILORS HAD TO BE NUTS

If you went through New London for submarine training you may have been questioned at some time by a Doctor Stein. He was the head shrink for submarine sailors.

To make a long story short he asked (edited) very personal questions during his examination mostly related to sex. The responses he received determined if you passed or failed his criteria for submarine duty. He, Stein, bless his ever-loving bones, needed attention toward the end of the war. We sailors who had undergone his stamp of approval made light of the situation by saying that Doctor Stein had flunked all the sane sailors and let the nuts take over the submarine service.

You know, when I think about it, he may have been correct. Stop and think, how many so called normal people would do what submarine sailors did without hesitation or the need to take a vote of everyone concerned to see if it should be or not be done.

OUR CHRISTMAS 1944 MENU

Give us this day, our daily bread, lead us not into mine fields - While we lurk and make
approaches - Press us gently, hide our broaches.
Keep our vessel rigged for dive, Take us back to "Her" alive,
Merry Xmas! Hear our hymn! Guard, Oh Lord, our precious "Trim."

Turkey Broth	Shrimp Cocktail	
Roast Turkey	Baked Ham	
Creamed Whipped Potatoes	Candied Yams	
Peas, Fresh Frozen	Giblet Gravy	
Bread Dressing		
Ripe Olives	Stuffed Olives	
Cranberry Sauce	Mustard Sauce	
Sweet Pickles		
Shelled Nuts	Mixed Nuts	Hard Candy
Plum Pudding	Fruit Cake	Ice Cream
Xmas Music	Cigars	

ADDED ATTRACTION: BOB HOPE IN "LET'S FACE IT"

WORLD WAR II SLOGANS

"A SECRET ONCE TOLD IS NOT SECRET AT ALL."

"A SLIP OF THE LIP MAY SINK A SHIP."

"BETTER BE SILENT THAN SORRY."

"BUY BONDS TO BUY BOMBS TO BOMB BUMS."

"CAN YOU KEEP A SECRET? O.K. KEEP IT!"

*"HONORABLE JAP SPY REPORTS: VERY COLD IN USA,
COFFEE, LIQUOR AND TIRES ARE FROZEN"*

"IN A RESTAURANT, LOOSEN YOUR BELT NOT YOUR TONGUE."

"INITIATIVE IS DOING THE RIGHT THING WITHOUT BEING TOLD."

"LICK WAR STAMPS TO LICK THE AXIS."

"LOOSE TALK SINKS SHIPS."

"MAKE IT DO/WEAR IT OUT/USE IT UP/OR DO WITHOUT."

"SILENCE IS GOLDEN."

"SPIES ARE HABITUALLY INQUISITIVE."

"THE SILENT SPHINX--IT SEES ALL AND TELLS NOTHING."

"THERE IS MANY A SLIP TWIXT CUP AND LIP."

"WAR IS SWEET TO THEM WHO KNOW IT NOT."

"WILFUL WASTE BRINGS WOEFUL WANT."

"WORDS ARE LIKE RAZORS: THEY MAY BE USED TO CUT YOUR THROAT."

Don Martin, PATROL, Submarine Base Pearl Harbor Newspaper, 1942-1945

CHAPTER 7

WARDEN W. GASKINS 1945

I REMEMBER REPORTING THE SHIP'S HISTORY AND SEA DOGS: MASCOTS OF THE SILENT SERVICE

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the request of Commander Submarine Force Atlantic, SEA POACHER was required to provide a Ship's History following World War II. Accordingly, on 13 October 1945, under SEA POACHER letter A12 Serial 60, a report was sent by Captain Leigh and signed by XO W.W. Gaskins By Direction. This letter, initially provided for this book by Plank Owner Ralph Cobb, has now been forwarded for archival in the Ship's History by Vice President Jack Merrill. This excellent concise report covers the period from 22 February 1944 through 30 September 1945. However, much of what is contained is provided in earlier Chapters by Gambacorta, Leigh, and Cobb. Accordingly this Chapter notes only those few events that were not included earlier.

REPORTING THE SHIP'S HISTORY

8-9 September 1944. SEA POACHER departed New London en route to Provincetown, Mass. Made an experimental, submerged mine plant and returned.

18 December 1944. Though disappointment was large at the lack of success (no sinkings on Patrol 1), there was no lack of excitement as the anti-submarine efforts of the enemy kept all hands alert. Besides a never ending stream of marauding aircraft, the ship was attacked twice by torpedoes which were fortunately and skillfully avoided by the timely action of the OOD's Lieutenant W.R. Lilliott and Lieutenant P.E. Lacouture.

25 December 1944. Christmas was celebrated with a traditional turkey dinner while the SEA POACHER was submerged near Kusakaki Shima.

14 January 1945. During the rest period the crew was victorious in an athletic tournament played with the PIRANHA and SEA OWL. A suitable plaque was presented to the ship.

12 February 1945. This patrol was entirely uneventful. No contacts worthy of torpedo fire were encountered and fourteen days spent as a life guard submarine resulted in no rescues.

27 March 1945. Refit-Midway. The crew and officers left ship for rest center Gooneyville. During this refit the crew was again victorious in athletic contests, played this time against PLAICE.

19 May 1945. Refit-Midway. The crew, again resting at Gooneyville, won its third athletic contest this time in competition with the LIONFISH. This plaque, recording the SEA

POACHER'S athletic prowess, was proudly hung in the Crew's Mess beside the two previous awards.

8 June 1945. Submarine combat awards were presented by Captain F.W. Fenno to officers and crew for a successful third patrol.

16 June 1945. Letters of commendation from the Commander Submarine Squadron Twenty-Four were read by the Commanding Officer to Smith, F.S., CPhM, and Davis, W.H., CMoMM for meritorious service during the third patrol.

27 July 1945. Also on this patrol (#4) 19 floating mines were sunk or exploded by rifle fire.

24 August 1945. LT Gaskins and QM1c Horton, Pointer on Forward Deck Gun, were awarded CINCPACFLEET letters of commendation for their excellent service on SEA POACHER'S third war patrol.

7 September 1945. Departed Pearl Harbor flying a Homeward-Bound Pennant.

30 September 1945. Arrived New London.

SEA DOGS: MASCOTS OF THE SILENT SERVICE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Later in this Book, Jack Dubbs and Bill Buckley will discuss dogs on submarines. In particular, SPADE and CHIEF. There will be some confusion as to what dog is which as well as to their tenure on SEA POACHER. It may forever remain a mystery or something that can be solved at the next Reunion. In any case, this background on Dogs on Submarines was published by William Galvani, Director of the Submarine Force Library and Museum in Groton, CT, in a SEA POACHER Association Newsletter (See References.) None of the stories pertain directly to SEA POACHER or do they? Portions of his article follow:

Sailors have been taking dogs to sea since a pair of canines shipped out with Noah. Nevertheless, the picture of the floppy-eared poodle, looking as jaunty and confident as the young submariners who surrounded her, surprised me. What was the dog's name? Why was it on a submarine?

I published an appeal for information in *Polaris*, the monthly magazine of the Submarine Veterans of World War II. In poured letters with photographs, ID cards, service records, and newspaper stories.

Submariners' pets were usually small and of mixed breed. Crews acquired them through purchase and gift or in trade for a case of two of beer. One dog even dashed aboard a sub as the boat was getting underway. The dogs cheered and amused the men during their long war patrols. They helped relieve the tension and weariness of hours of silent running or nights of surface attacks. The men doted on the dogs. They fed them steak and bacon; they gave them ID cards and service records; they took them on liberty all over the Pacific, and more than one mascot acquired a taste for beer. Crews made their pet's leashes and collars, complete with combat submarine insignia and service stars. Some dogs wore special coats emblazoned with the boat's war record. At least one even went to captain's mast.

Garbo was the perfect submarine mascot. A mongrel puppy so small she could be concealed in a white sailor's hat, she made 15 war patrols on the GAR. Her home was in the FTR, but whenever underway her station was all the way forward on the bull nose and she barked. On every patrol she toured the boat from stem to stern, and upon arrival in each compartment, the crew would come to attention. She owned the boat and knew it. Under the heaviest depth charge attacks, when the gauges were leaking, light bulbs breaking, and fires breaking out, Garbo remained as playful as ever. Some of the crew noted that she should have been given a medal for keeping our spirits and morale up when we needed it most. While anyone was welcome to pet her, only the Skipper and a Cook could pick her up. One night while on the surface, she stepped off the cigarette deck and vanished into the darkness. The CO immediately began a "dog overboard" search, and she was found and saved. Between patrols, she stayed with the crew in their hotel. She joined in ship parties, and like some of her two-legged shipmates, she did not know her limit. After lapping up too much beer, she tended to blunder into furniture.

Skeeter was the HALIBUT mascot. and a swashbuckler. Obtained at Lefty's Bar in San Francisco in 1944, she appeared at captain's mast twice, which may be a canine record. He was first charged with disturbing the peace in the Forward Battery, and being surly and belligerent. The CO dismissed it with a warning. Skeeter's second trip to mast came when he mistook a CPO's leg for a fire hydrant.

Sugie belonged to BESUGO. He made the shakedown cruise and all war patrols. He liked beer and whiskey, disdained gilly, and would in a pinch, drink a pink lady. Submarine food suited him fine, and he especially enjoyed sitting in a chair while the crew spoon fed him. His appetite did not stop there. He chewed gum and swallowed it. He would eat soap if someone did not keep an eye on him, and he especially liked to chew up the skipper's socks.

Some others were not so fortunate. Potshot survived three war patrols aboard HOE only to be run over and killed by a torpedo truck during a routine stop in Pearl Harbor. Myrna, mascot of the SAWFISH, was another casualty. Smuggled aboard as a pup, at the end of nine war patrols, she was in R&R in Guam, sleeping under a table of her sailors. When joined by another sailor, the table collapsed, crushing her. The crew was depressed for weeks.

Myrna's mother, Luau, was a plank owner on SPADEFISH, who was lured aboard by a 1944 steak in Vallejo by her crew. The CO's first war patrol report noted that Luau had "contributed greatly to the morale with her ready playfulness with all hands. She was a bit perturbed by the depth charges, but soon recovered with only a slight case of nerves.

Finally. If Hollywood had dreamed of a sea dog, it would have been Betty, a toy white poodle who was the mascot of WHALE. She came board in Honolulu in 1943, prevailing over the protests of the Executive Officer by licking the Captain's hand. She was then designated Dog First Class, issued service and medical records, and given the run of the ship. She avoided the noisy engine rooms and hid in the Control Room during gunnery practice. The crew took her on liberty in Pearl Harbor. Betty was a girl getter. It did not take long for the poodle's escorts to strike up conversations with their mascot's attractive admirers. After the first war patrol, the weather was so bad at Midway, the sub was ordered to remain outside the harbor until conditions improved. Unwilling to linger where his vessel might become a target for Japanese submarines, the CO entered port anyway. The irate port captain met the sub at the pier and yelled at the CO. While the boat was going alongside, he came aboard and continued to argue. Tiring of this abuse, Betty slashed an eight-inch rip in the port captain's pant leg. A subsequent admiral's inquiry in Pearl Harbor exonerated the CO. Betty had only been defending her crew. The port captain was relieved of his duties.

Victory and the end of the war meant the breaking up of most submarine crews. Those mentioned mostly went home with a crew member. Porches, lawns, and cats replaced steel hulls, tile decks, and depth charges.

"To the most exalted son of heaven. May this elevate you a little higher."

*Inscribed on a torpedo warhead in GURNARD'S Forward
Torpedo Room on her third war patrol in the East China Sea,
6 September - 28 October 1943.*

"We shall never forget that it was our submarines that held the lines against the enemy while our fleets replaced losses and repaired wounds."

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did. So throw off the bowlines, Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream."

Mark Twain (Samuel Langhorne Clemens)

"The United States Navy is the envy of every other Navy in the world. They don't want to be like us – they want to be us."

Admiral Leighton Smith

"Just sight, track, shoot and sink."

*CDR Dudley W. Morton, Commanding Officer, WAHOO,
Newsweek Magazine, May 3, 1943. From Naval
Historical Center, Washington, DC*

On 6 May 1944 GURNARD attacked a convoy in Celebes Sea sinking three large Marus and damaging a fourth. The escorts came down on them with a vengeance. Delbert Ryder was counting the depth charges at a mess table. Asked Glenn Milhorn: "What does a depth charge cost?"

*Making a wild guess he said \$600. Delbert remarked: "Dam we're
Going to bankrupt those SOBs."*

OOD: "Where did all this oil come?" referring to the mess under the Dive Station.

A GANGER: "Well sir, there was all these dinosaurs and they all died. Then they were covered up and after millions of years they decayed."

The OOD walked off before the story could be finished.

Author Unknown

"I have passed by more lighthouses submerged than you have light poles on shore."

Paul Ferris, RM2 (SS), BLACKFISH and GREENFISH

CHAPTER 8

BOB COOLEY 1945

I REMEMBER SEA POACHER'S THIRD WAR PATROL A SUBMARINER'S BRUSH WITH DEATH, AND HAWAII SIXTY YEARS LATER

EDITOR'S NOTE: This was copied by me from a video tape during a presentation given by Bob at a SEA POACHER Reunion on 23 February 2007 in Bartow, Florida. I finally got his email address correct and we communicated. On 10 September 2007 Bob sent a few changes to the article and also added more information.

SEA POACHER'S THIRD WAR PATROL

Let's go back to May 15, 1945 on SEA POACHER'S Third War Patrol. We were in the Kurile Islands off the Northern Coast of Russia. We made contact with several blips on radar. Captain Leigh, the Inter-Collegiate Boxing Champion at the Naval Academy, was only 26 years old; only 26 years! That's hard to believe today with some of the kids the way they are.

He was out there to get ships, and we ran into six little inter-island freighters. Captain Leigh was very concerned about torpedo costs and did not want to spend a whole lot of money on them. A torpedo back then cost about \$10,000 and was a big expense. But he wanted to battle them and didn't see that these targets were worth a torpedo. So he called everyone to Battle Stations about 5 in the morning. I was a Signalman and Quartermaster. He decided to surface and use all our guns - the five inch and the 20 mm up forward, and the 20 mm aft, and anything we had that could fire ammunition.

So we surfaced about 6 a.m. It was very foggy and the opening range about 600 yards. We were all set. I had the telephone talker's helmet on, and the earphones were underneath it. I was wearing a helmet. Thank goodness I did because otherwise I would not be here telling you about it now. We were going forward and the message that came from the Conning Tower was to "Fire Everything."

Everything went off - the big guns and the little guns. The six freighters were just following each other and their patterns were not hard to come by. Just as soon as we made the first shot, I hit the deck and tried to get up. I couldn't. All I could see was a pool of blood and with that I passed out. About that time the Gunnery Officer came down from the Conning Tower. I was in the middle of the area where they were passing shells. The Gunnery Officer looked into my eyes, which were up in my head, felt my pulse, and I didn't have one. He said "Throw Him Overboard!"

I was 19 years old and it is hard for me to tell this part of it, but the biggest guy on our ship was Ted Znuj. We have been trying to find Ted for years but have not been able to. We had the spelling of his name wrong. He was 6 foot 5 inches tall and just under the height limit. He picked me up and put me under the Cigarette Deck, where I was not causing any problem with the passing of the ammunition.

When we were through, we had sunk three of the freighters and two others were on fire.

The Chief Pharmacist's Mate Smith came topside, took me below, and I came to in the Chief's Quarters. Three others besides myself were hurt or injured. Mine was a head injury. Our 26 year old en route Captain came to me and said "We have to take you back to the underground hospital at Midway Island, but we would like us to blow up several radio stations along shore as you go." So here he was actually asking me for permission. The Skipper was asking a 19 year old and is wet behind the ears. I don't know what I told him. Anyway, we did blow up several on the way back. I went into the Midway hospital for six weeks. It was only after I got better that the Gunnery Officer, knowing I was going to recover, told me what he was going to do, because they couldn't sacrifice the lives of 62 other men for one man.

During a battle, I am most grateful for Ted Znuj, and I just found out that he passed away last year without us locating him. My wife is still trying to find the rest of his family to let them know the whole story. It would mean a lot to them and certainly would mean a lot to us.

So to bring you up to date, let me tell you how it happened. We were submerged all night long, and it was cold. It was in the 50s in the water. When we surfaced, the 20 mm was right above me. When the word went out to fire everything, they all went off at the same time. I was near the 5 inch and the 20 mm. The first shot from the 20 mm got stuck in the ice in the barrel. The second shot came right behind it and they exploded. It blew 8 inches off the barrel and several of the pieces found shipmates; some in their backs. But the Chief Pharmacist's mate could take care of that. But mine was above the ear, and at the Midway Hospital they took the shrapnel out. I was there 6 weeks, and I have to say that God undoubtedly had something else for me to do. I was 19 then and am 81 now, so I am very grateful.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bob was questioned as to the identity of the Gunnery Officer, but refused to say who it was. Your Editor knows, but will let that pass. It should also be noted that Clarence Carter was also seriously injured during this event. A third Shipmate Bobbie Newell received less serious injuries, partly due to the fact, according to George Boyajian, that he had eight layers of clothing on, and the shrapnel could not penetrate that far into him. They good naturedly kidded him about his Purple Heart. During this presentation by Bob he wore the original helmet with shrapnel hole over his left ear.

A SUBMARINER'S BRUSH WITH DEATH

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appeared in the Tampa Tribune on November 11, 2001. The article was titled: SUBMARINER'S BRUSH WITH DEATH - Taken for dead, the wounded sailor almost was tossed overboard. It was written by B.C. Manion. It was also reprinted in the SEA POACHER Association Newsletter July 2005 – See References.

Bob edited this thing a bit in September 2007, and added a few more years from 2001, but it will not be hard to follow. Got to love it.

SUNSET PARK, Florida. It was about 6 in the morning of May 15, 1945, when the submarine USS SEA POACHER SS406 surfaced off the Kurile Islands and engaged in battle with six small Japanese freighters.

Third class signalman Bob Cooley was a sight setter on a five-inch gun on the bow of the 300-foot submarine. The 19-year-old Cooley was wearing a helmet to protect the telephone he was talking into as he took information from the tower." If I hadn't had that helmet, I would not be here today," said Cooley, now 76.

"The opening range was 600 yards. It was foggy. You'd go into a fog bank and come out of a fog bank" Cooley said. As he fired his five-inch shell, others fired guns on a deck above him and at other locations on the boat. "We all shot at the same time," Cooley said. One gunner shot a 20mm gun on the cigarette deck above Cooley. "The first shell that he shot didn't leave the barrel of the gun," Cooley said. Ice had formed within the gun's barrel. The second shell exploded upon the first, shattering the barrel and sending shrapnel flying, Cooley said.

Cooley was hit. "I opened my eyes, and all I could see was a pool of blood," he said. Then he blacked out. "I don't remember anything until I came to, below," Cooley said. He later learned that he was nearly thrown overboard by the gunnery officer. "You can't jeopardize the life of 63 men for one man. He felt my pulse, and I had none. My eyes were rolling back in my head," Cooley said. But as the gunnery officer prepared to throw him over, another man intervened. "Ted Znuj, a big kid from Notre Dame picked me up and moved me under the cigarette deck," Cooley said. "I lay there until the battle was over," Cooley said.

After the battle, the chief pharmacist came top side and picked up Cooley. Three men had been injured. The other two suffered superficial wounds that could be treated on the boat. But Cooley had to be taken to a hospital at Midway, where he stayed for six weeks.

All three men received the Purple Heart.

After recuperating, Cooley went home on leave and then returned to Pearl Harbor to finish out his service, serving on the USS SEA LION.

The event, which occurred so many years ago, has had a lasting impact on the Sunset Park man's life. "I don't let things bother me. I think how fortunate I am to be here. My life could have been over when I was 19," Cooley said.

Instead, he went on to marry Carolyn, his wife of 53 years. They have two married children and a grandson.

The couple has been active in Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church, and Cooley was the announcer for Plant High football games for four years. He has sold insurance for 48 years.

His close brush with death makes him grateful for each day. "I had a second chance." When he reflects upon the current war, he turns to prayer. "My prayers are that we will always have a minimum loss of life," Cooley said.

HAWAII SIXTY YEARS LATER

Yes, sixty years later, my wife Carolyn and I were vacationing in Hawaii, on the Island of Kauai. Early one day, I returned to the condo after a morning jog, and my wife realized that something was very wrong with me, as my face was some what distorted, and my speech was blurred.

Emergency tests and procedures began as soon as possible at the Wilcox Memorial Hospital In Lihue, and it was determined that I had experienced a small stroke and that it would be necessary for me to spend the night in the Hospital.

To my absolute amazement, I was assigned to Room Number 406 (does that sound familiar?) on 15 May 2005.

That was the 60th anniversary of my SEA POACHER injuries.

CHAPTER 9

ROBERT SMIDUTZ 1945

I REMEMBER VOLUNTEERING AND I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following article appeared in The Advertiser-Tribune Web Edition, Tiffin, Ohio, on 12 December 2001. It was written by Ryan Good, Staff Writer, and was titled: World War II Veteran Receives High School Diploma.

VOLUNTEERING AND I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT

Fifty-eight years after he left school to join in the war effort; one Tiffin resident received his high school diploma Tuesday. Robert Smidutz, 76, was awarded his diploma Tuesday at Oak Harbor High School, the school he left at the age of 17 to join the Navy in the midst of World War II.

"It wrapped my whole life together. It made me feel whole," Smidutz said of receiving his diploma. "My cup runneth over. My mother would have been awfully proud. I went looking for an Oldsmobile and found a Cadillac," he said, sitting in his Ella Street home after the ceremony. Along with his diploma, Smidutz was given an Ohio flag, flown over the Statehouse in Columbus in his honor, an Oak Harbor High School cap and gown, a white rose, and a cake.

Smidutz's uncle was killed in North Africa in the war. The youngster wanted to join the fight after learning of his uncle's death. "I wanted to avenge his death," Smidutz said. He told his Father he wanted to go and fight, but his Father only wanted him to go into naval service. "My Dad wouldn't sign my papers to go in the Army. He wouldn't sign in the Air Force," Smidutz said. He enlisted and was taken by the Navy in 1943, five months away from graduating high school.

After requesting submarine duty twice and being turned down, a third request for sub duty was granted. The war veteran said being on a submarine required an extensive knowledge of the boat. "You had to know every man's job on there. You had to know what tank you were standing over. That's as close to comradeship as you can get," Smidutz said of his training. Being certified to work on a submarine was "a pretty proud thing to have," he said.

Smidutz served aboard three submarines: the U.S.S. DRUM, which was a flagship; the U.S.S. SEA POACHER; and the U.S.S. SAWFISH. On all three he worked in torpedo rooms. All three ships survived the war.

The SAWFISH was given a Presidential Unit Citation for enemy tonnage sunk. Despite his pride in his service, Smidutz isn't one to start relaying war stories. "It's enough to say I was on them. I don't even talk about them to my kids," he said, adding that over time some of the stories he heard and some he experienced have run together. "I've seen all these things happen. Your mind plays tricks on you," Smidutz said.

Smidutz served a 27-month tour of duty in the Pacific Ocean, in places including Hawaii, Midway, the Marshall Islands, Guam, Saipan, the Philippines and Formosa. He said "The experience in itself helps you grow up." But, "I don't want to experience it again," Smidutz said.

After the fighting ended, Smidutz had a chance to spend two years on board the SAWFISH in Europe as part of a goodwill tour, but decided against going. "I wanted to come home," he said.

The veteran said he has very few pictures of his experiences. He said when he was discharged in 1946, many of the pictures he took with his shipmates were stolen from his luggage. Many of the remaining pictures were ruined when raccoons chewed a hole in the roof of his Mother's house in Oak Harbor, allowing rain and snow in the house over where many of the pictures were kept. "I have no pictures of the guys I was with. It's all up here now," Smidutz said, index finger tapping his temple.

Smidutz came to Tiffin after being discharged and met his wife Rita (Shultz) on Nov. 8, 1948, six years to the day after his Uncle was killed. They were married in October 1949. They have four children. Their seventh grandchild, Courtney, was born in October.

Smidutz said any war veteran in his situation should get their diploma. "Guys should get out there and if they're eligible for it, get it. They should see their service representative and ask questions," Smidutz said.

Smidutz said the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11 were not quite like hearing that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese 60 years earlier. He said initially he thought it could have been an accident, but after the second plane crashed into the World Trade Center, he was shocked. "Then when the second plane hit, we were dumbfounded by it," he said. "Everybody in America lost a little something."

Sea-Fever

*I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;*

*And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face and a gray dawn breaking.*

*I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;*

*And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.*

*I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;*

*And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream with the long trick's over.*

John Masefield

CHAPTER 10

DAVE GREEN 1945-1946

I REMEMBER SEA POACHER'S LAST WAR PATROLS

EDITOR' NOTE: This article was initially published in the SEA POACHER Association Newsletter in December 2003. See References.

SEA POACHER'S LAST WAR PATROLS

I went aboard SEA POACHER in March 1945 in Midway. We made the last two war patrols, the third and fourth for SS406. My first patrol was to the North Pacific as they had issued us cold weather gear. As we proceeded north toward the Kurile Island area we sank a Jap trawler. A Jap sub chaser began to come after us. We had to get in deeper water and rig for silent running. They dropped several depth charges around and near the spot they thought we were. We felt the concussions but sustained no damage. Later we sent two fishing boats to the bottom in a surface attack. During this attack our 20 millimeter gun blew up and injured three crew members who were manning the five inch gun. Two were seriously injured while the third had a gash on his arm. We kidded him about receiving the Purple Heart for something a Band-Aid would cover. The crew members lived through it. We had to cut our patrol short and return to Midway.

After R&R and repairs we got underway on my second patrol. We stopped at Guam and Saipan and then headed north to the east coast of Honshu and Hokkaido where we sank several trawlers, one of which turned out to be a man-o-war, as when it was hit it blew sky high. We sank several mines, and also shelled two radio stations. While we were running between Big Ricks close to shore, we could see chickens flying and trains running on tracks. We talked about a shore party but the captain said "no." Our radar picked up a plane coming in our direction, so we had to dive and get into deep water. We continued our patrol with a stop at Midway to pick up some Jap prisoners and went to Pearl Harbor for R&R and an overhaul. While in Pearl Harbor the war ended.

"Of all the branches of men in the Forces, there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariner. Great deeds are done in the air and on the land; nevertheless, nothing surpasses your exploits."

Winston Churchill.

"Without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it, everything honorable and glorious."

President George Washington

"There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting and enslaving than the life at sea."

Joseph Conrad

CHAPTER 11

KENNETH CRAGO 1946 SUBMITTED BY HIS WIFE BERTIE LOU CRAGO

I REMEMBER 1944 BOOT CAMP AND ENGINEMAN TRAINING, SUBMARINE TRAINING, ASSIGNMENT TO THE GATO, PICKING UP FLIERS AND A DIVE BOMBER ATTACK, IN TOKYO BAY FOR THE JAPANESE SURRENDER, ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER, AND DISCHARGE IN GUADALCANAL

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following was sent to Jack Merrill by Bertie Lou Crago in August 2007. It was written by Ken in 2002 as a class project for his Grand Daughter Emily Wheeler. Ken now has Alzheimer's disease. I have done no editing to Ken's 2002 writing except for formatting with subsection titles. Although there is only a small section related to SEA POACHER, it is very interesting. And because it gives a glimpse of what it was like during WWII, it is included in its entirety. Some aspects of the Guadalcanal episode are confusing, but so are some aspects in other chapters, including mine.

Bertie Lou also noted she did not meet Ken until he was out of college and the Navy, and has no additional information regards his time on SEA POACHER. She also said this book will be cherished by our family, even though Ken may not understand what it is all about. He put together a lovely collage of pictures of his Navy days which she has in the den. A smile of remembrance (I hope) is good recognition for him.

1944 BOOT CAMP AND ENGINEMAN TRAINING

I did not have a choice at the beginning of my navy career. I passed my physical for the service. Then I was given a choice as to the branch of the service where I would serve. I went to Navy boot camp in Chicago, at Navy Pier. Navy was always my choice of service. The basic training in boot camp is where you learn when and how to say "yes sir and no sir." I was determined to go into service immediately after high school at the age of 18 because my only brother John was already in a Japanese prison camp after making the Bataan Death March. After Boot Camp I was tested for my skill levels. As a result of the test I was sent to the Chicago School of Diesel Engine training.

SUBMARINE TRAINING

Then I asked to become a part of the submarine service. I then went to the East coast to train on a submarine in Groton, Connecticut. I had to train on how to take care of problems anywhere on the ship. I had to know the general operation of the whole ship. Like how to

submerge and come back up. From Groton, I was sent across the US on an OLD train to California. Then I was placed on a small ship to transfer to Hawaii. I worked on a supply ship for a short time. We would go out to the islands to deliver what supplies were needed.

ASSIGNMENT TO THE GATO

From this supply ship, I was assigned to the USS GATO (SS-212). This took place on the island of Guam. There were two or three subs on Guam taking on new personnel to replace those going home. Later, I found out that one of three was never found after they left Guam. I had a good friend on that ship. It could have been me.

I was fortunate to be assigned to the GATO. I was a replacement on the GATO and worked in the Engine Room. The GATO was designed to do rescue mission work as it was nearing the end of the War. The center of the War was now Japan.

PICKING UP FLIERS AND A DIVE BOMBER ATTACK

The GATO picked up 6 fliers that were shot down in the bay off the coast of Japan. While in rescue operation, the GATO was attacked by a Japanese dive bomber shooting at the men. The men on the top deck returned fire and scared the bomber off. I was below in the Engine Room and the whole ship shook. The fliers were put on board and taken back to Guam. The GATO went on back to Hawaii. These six fliers were waiting on the shore to greet the GATO when it came into the base. They threw a big THANKFUL party which no one forgot.

After the GATO was serviced in Hawaii, it returned to duty again near the coast of Japan. The surrender was being planned, and the GATO was invited to be in the bay for the surrender ceremony.

IN TOKYO BAY FOR THE JAPANESE SURRENDER

While in the bay I had to work on one of the engines for 3 days. After the surrender ceremony next to the USS MISSOURI (BB-63), "Mighty Mo," we were told to take the ship to New York to be put out of commission.

ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER

Since I had enlisted for 6 years I was assigned to another ship, possibly the USS SEA POACHER (SS-406). We were in Panama for several months. I had a short furlough assignment to go home, because my brother was going to get home shortly. After my furlough, I had to return to New York to help get the GATO de-commissioned.

DISCHARGED AT GUADALCANAL

The Navy decided they had all the men they needed, so I decided Guadalcanal was not for me. They didn't seem to know what was going on after the War. I was discharged at Guadalcanal in 1947. Guadalcanal was "Hell."

CHAPTER 12

MORRIS EZELL 1946

I REMEMBER THE PANAMA CANAL AND BASEBALL

THE PANAMA CANAL AND BASEBALL

This does not qualify as a "war story", but out of sub school, I reported aboard SEA POACHER in Portsmouth in May 1946, just 28 days after my marriage to Mary Louise Melanson. We sailed down the East coast, through the Panama Canal, and to Balboa on the Pacific side. Before SEA POACHER I served three years in the Pacific aboard the Battleship TENNESSEE as a Signalman. I went to sub school from Japan, immediately after the surrender. While there I became dual rated as a Quartermaster/Signalman Second Class. Because of that training, I had the good fortune to steer SEA POACHER through the Panama Canal.

We operated with a squadron which included the SEA OWL, SEA ROBIN, and others. When in port, we had an organized baseball league that played in a full sized stadium on the Marine base. Each submarine had a team and the submarine tender had three teams. It was a sporty league, with some players who were previously "pros." I was the playing coach for our team. The stakes for each game was a keg of beer, with the loser buying. It was much fun.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The above article was obtained from the SEA POACHER website and newsletter. Marsha (Ezell) Ward, daughter of Morris and Mary Ezell, wrote to me in September 2007. She said her family knew how important her Dad's experiences on the SEA POACHER and TENNESSEE were to him. She said she was thrilled to learn about this book, and will be honored to read and remember those men and women who served our country so bravely during this time. Thanks to everyone for making the book a reality.

THE NAVY HYMN

The "Navy Hymn" is Eternal Father, Strong to Save. The original words were written as a poem in 1860 by William Whiting of Winchester, England, for a student who was about to sail for the United States. The melody, published in 1861, was composed by fellow Englishman, Rev. John Bacchus Dykes, and an Episcopalian clergyman.

*Verse 1: Eternal Father, strong to save, Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep Its own appointed limits keep;
Oh, hear us when we cry to Thee, For those in peril on the sea!*

Verse 7, for submarines directly, was added by David B. Miller in 1965.

*Verse 7: Lord God, our power evermore, Whose arm doth reach the ocean floor,
Dive with our men beneath the sea; Traverse the depths protectively.
O hear us when we pray, and keep Them safe from peril in the deep.*

CHAPTER 13

JOHN SOHL 1946

I REMEMBER SEA POACHER PARTIES, MOVING UP IN THE RATINGS, GETTING MY REVENGE AND THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER, AND OTHER THOUGHTS ON SEA POACHER

EDITOR'S NOTE: John's eyesight is perhaps worse than mine, but that is not saying a lot. I copied this from a telephone conversation we had on 25 September 2007.

SEA POACHER PARTIES

In 1946, I was at a SEA POACHER party in Portsmouth and a photo was taken. There was an officer in the front row. We met 4 to 7 years later in Dade City. I do not recall the name, but we both recalled being on SEA POACHER. I had signed up for a period to end the war, six months, or age 21.

MOVING UP IN THE RATINGS

It turned out to be six months. We went to sea, rammed a barge big time off Cuba, went to St. Thomas, and then the Canal Zone. I was a Seaman First Class Radioman Striker and asked the XO to take the exam for third class. It didn't happen. I was only aboard for six months and never got my dolphins. I did get third and then second. Then I was sent to Miami for seven years.

GETTING MY REVENGE AND THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER

I had no money for my son to go to college, so he went to the Naval Academy as John Sohl, III. Upon graduation, he met with Admiral Rickover and went to submarine and nuclear power schools. He later served on POGY, SNOOK, and the Trident Submarine GEORGIA as Executive Officer. My son then became CO of the Fast Attack HOUSTON (SSN-713) which was used for the filming of the *Hunt for Red October* during his tour of duty. He later married a girl also in the Navy, who worked in Industrial Hygiene and later OSHA. She retired as a Navy Captain, and he has to still refer to her as "Yes Maam and No Maam!"

OTHER THOUGHTS ON SEA POACHER

I remember a dive where we hit 600 feet but obviously it all turned out well. In 1957, I was on a Naval Reserve cruise in Charleston and on SEA POACHER we did a Battle Surface. It was a steep surface, and we popped out of the water. The CO went to the Bridge, but we sank back. The CO was inundated as was the Conning Tower and Control. Immediately thereafter the COB said "The Smoking Lamp is out, and there was hydrogen in the boat!"

It was scary.

CHAPTER 14

LEON EGGLESTON 1947 – 1948

I REMEMBER WHERE WE WERE AND WENT, AND A DIVING BELL EXERCISE RESCUE

WHERE WE WERE AND WENT

I am from Marion, Wisconsin and graduated from Wisconsin Dells High School. In the spring of 1946 I enlisted in the Navy and went to boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois. This was followed by a course in Basic Engineering at Great Lakes which then led me to Submarine School in New London, Diesel School, and assignment to the SEA POACHER in 1947.

At the time, she was in dry dock in Portsmouth, NH. Upon completion, we sailed to GITMO and conducted training exercises with destroyers.

Our next tour was in Panama, and I remember going through the Canal at least seven times. I was subsequently discharged from the Navy in Jacksonville in 1948.

A DIVING BELL EXERCISE RESCUE

The only experience of any consequence was when SEA POACHER laid on the ocean bottom in the Pacific and waited for a diving bell exercise rescue.

It never happened.

*"When you shoot at a destroyer and miss, it's like hitting a wildcat in the a** with a banjo!"*
Chief Steward Dogan on GURNARD WWI.

"Hell, I had that cigar in my mouth to keep my teeth from chattering."
CDR Harley F. Cope, USN, Commanding Officer SALINAS,
a Navy Tanker torpedoed off Iceland on 30 October 1941. His
reply back in port when complimented on how he maintained
his calmness during the attack, when he went to the Bridge with
a cigar clenched in his teeth. In Walter Karig, *Battle Report:*
The Atlantic War, New York, Rosehard, 1945, pp. 77-79.

*"During the Cold War with the Soviet Union from 1948 to 1991, the U.S. Navy launched
More than 2,000 secret missions against the Kremlin. The men who manned these
'Underwater U-2s' have gone largely unheralded.*
David Colley, for VFW Magazine, 2007

CHAPTER 15

RICHARD FERRIS 1947 - 1949

I REMEMBER IT BEING UNEVENTFUL, SUNK ON THE BOTTOM WITH SALVAGE OPERATION TRAINING, THE CHRISTMAS MENUS OF 1948 -1949, AND NOT SURE WHERE WE WERE

IT BEING UNEVENTFUL

My time aboard, from 1947 thru 1949 seemed to be an uneventful period. Most of our time was spent being a target for anti-submarine forces, and as a decoy for any other Navy activity that the brass could dream up.

I do remember lying on the bottom for 14 hours while rescue forces could practice finding us and taking some guys to the surface in the diving bell. Not very exciting, but it was nice to know they could do it.

Another small incident was diving and leaving two guys topside. We were in Hampton Roads so were up and down frequently. They were picked up by a fishing boat and returned to the boat unhurt but a little p***** and very wet. I can't remember enough of this, so please go to Pete Amunrud's Chapter for all the details on this event.

And of course, I have fond memories of those SEA POACHER shipmates and have always valued my time in the Navy.

THE 1947 SHIP'S PARTY IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

I don't remember the reason for this, but it happened on 18 September 1947 at the Pannaway Club in Portsmouth. Formal invitations were sent by CO Robert Huston and XO Bill Crawford. You had to present your invitation at the door to gain admittance. The menu included:

Potato Chips
Olives Pickles
Sliced Turkey Baked Ham
Buttered Rolls
Potato Salad
Cake Coffee
Refreshments served at the bar

SUNK ON THE BOTTOM WITH SALVAGE OPERATION TRAINING

Sometime in late 1947 or 1948, SEA POACHER was given the dubious honor of pretending to have been sunk, and the crew was to be rescued by a submarine rescue vessel. It was probably the USS KITTIWAKE (ASR-13), which was commissioned in 1946 and operated along the east coast during workup and training.

We left our base at Balboa, Canal Zone early one morning and sailed into the Pacific. When reaching an area of suitable depth, probably 160 - 200 feet, we radioed an ersatz sinking report giving our general location. SEA POACHER then settled quietly to the bottom and awaited a rescue. Most of us thought this would be a lark, and we would soon be back in port for early liberty. We did routine daily tasks and the hours dragged.

As we settled into the mud the air conditioning didn't work, and the air became foul. The smoking lamp was put out and all extra activities were cancelled. The crew was told to limit their moving about. Ten hours passed - then twelve. It quit being fun.

The rescue ship finally located us and began positioning themselves directly above. We could follow most of their activity through the audio sonar on the top deck. Hard hat divers were sent down to attach guide lines and position the escape bell directly over the Forward Escape Trunk.

It was kind of weird hearing foot steps on deck while we were submerged. The bell was attached, a token number of crew (I don't remember who or how many) entered the trunk and were taken to the surface in the diving bell. After about 14 hours we were free of the rescue vessel and ready to go home. SEA POACHER must have liked resting in the mud, because the Skipper had to do some "rocking of the boat" to get her to break free and surface.

That is how I remember the exercise. After all it was 60 years ago, and memory gets blurry over that span of time. I would welcome any additional information or clarification of my version from shipmates who were aboard at the time.

THE CHRISTMAS MENUS OF 1948 -49 AND NOT SURE WHERE WE WERE

EDITOR'S NOTE: These menus were provided by Bill Brinkman for inclusion here. There may have been one more ingredient, as it will appear later in other chapters. We have it on good authority that the Frozen Egg Nog was "spiked" by the Skipper.

1948

Fresh Fruit Cup			
Roast Tom Turkey		Oven Baked Ham	
Oyster Dressing	Giblet Gravy	Candied Sweet Potatoes	
Fresh Buttered Peas	Cranberry Sauce	Mixed Sweet Pickles	
Stuffed Celery Heart		Stuffed Green Olives	
Pumpkin Pie	Fruit Cake	Mixed Nuts	Candy
Cigars		Cigarettes	
Frozen Egg Nog			

1949

Fresh Fruit Ambrosia			
Roast Tom Turkey		Chestnut Dressing	
Giblet Gravy	Cranberry Sauce	Whipped Potatoes with Cheese	
Candied Sweet Potatoes with Marshmallows		Buttered Fresh Frozen Peas	
Stuffed Olives		Pickles	Celery Radishes
Mincemeat Pie	Ice Cream	Fruit Cake	Mixed Nuts Candy
Cigars		Cigarettes	Frozen Egg Nog

CHAPTER 16

CHARLES DONNELLY 1948 - 1951

**I REMEMBER MORE ABOUT MENUS, AN ENCOUNTER WITH
PRESIDENT TRUMAN, TOO MUCH BARRACK'S NOISE FOR
MARGARET TRUMAN, THE COUGAR ON DUVAL STREET,
FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE, PROMOTION DUNKING,
SEEING ERNEST EMINGWAY,
LOSING ENGINEMAN HENRY ROBERTSON,
AND MIXING WITH THE OFFICERS AND NURSES,**

MORE ABOUT MENUS

Okay, Rick in the previous chapter had to say some things about menus, but here is the straight scoop as I was Head Mess Cook for most of this period. Let me tell you about the 1949 Thanksgiving Day Dinner if you really want to know what it was about.

First of all the prayer was: "And therefore, I, William Bradford, (by the grace of God today, And the franchise of this good people), governor of Plymouth, say – Though virtue of vested power – ye shall gather with one accord, And hold in the month of November, thanksgiving unto the Lord. THE FIRST THANKSGIVING DAY.

And now the menu, and BOY did the 80 of us starve:

30 Pounds Shrimp Cocktail
10 Stalks Stuffed Celery Hearts
Stuffed Olives, Radishes, Pickles
125 Pounds Roast Tom Turkey and Giblet Gravy
45 Pounds Baked Spiced Ham
75 Pounds Whipped Potatoes
30 Pounds Candied Yams with Nuts and Marshmallows
10 Pounds Buttered Peas 13 Cans Cranberry Sauce
Assorted Fruits (Oranges and Apples)
5 Gallons Ice Cream
10 Three Pound Fruit Cakes
6 Mincemeat Pies with Hard Sauce
6 Apple Pies 6 Pumpkin Pies
50 Pounds Candy 75 Pounds Nuts
3 Boxes of Cigars 15 Cartons of Cigarettes

AN ENCOUNTER WITH PRESIDENT TRUMAN

This happened at the Key West submarine base sometime in 1950 during the Presidency of Harry Truman. To my knowledge none of the Officers on SEA POACHER ever knew about this encounter with the President's Secret Service personnel.

I had just finished an equalizer battery charge of about 30 hours and was heading back to the barracks to sleep when a jeep approached me and told me I had to go down back streets because the President was headed this way on his morning walk. As a smart and cocky young sailor, I kept on walking. As I passed the President, I saluted him and said "Good Morning, Sir" and he said "Good Morning, Son."

A couple of minutes later that same jeep returned. I was manhandled and thrown into it. They took me to the Captain-in-Charge and threatened to court marshal me for not obeying their orders. I commenced to tell them it would not look good if I told the News Medium that on a secured submarine base a sailor had to go down a back street to avoid seeing the Commander-in-Chief of all the U.S. Armed Forces. Why should I have to sneak down a back street?

After a lengthy lecture they made me sit there in the office until I was about asleep. Then there was another lecture, and they finally let me go to the barracks. I was told I was stopped because my uniform was dirty, and not appropriate for the President to see. I returned to the barracks and slept for 10 hours and never heard about it again.

TOO MUCH BARRACK'S NOISE FOR MARGARET TRUMAN

A couple of days later I encountered one of the same Secret Service Agents; this time it was about the noise in the barracks. The barracks on base was right near the Little White House in Key West. It seems the noise in the barracks was interfering with the President's Daughter Margaret listening to a concert. The noise happened to be a couple of boys who were playing around and one of them accidentally went out the second story window. It was more noise and commotion than there was injury to the sailor or the barracks. The Secret Service Agent never said a word to me, and I said nothing to him.

THE COUGAR ON DUVAL STREET

At the North end of Duval Street in Key West there is a property with a stone wall about two foot high and flat on top. A very large tree sets close to the corner just inside the wall. As Jack Dubbs, a Buddy and myself, turned the corner there was a large coal black Cougar on the ledge attached to a leash, at the end of the leash was a very, and I mean very, beautiful well endowed girl. It scared the hell right out of us. As it turned out she and the Cougar were a stage show act some where there in Key West. I can't speak for Jack, but I know I will never forget the Cougar or the girl that scared us.

FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE

I remember the movie "The Frogmen" I had a small part in it and was one of the people chosen to hold the lines while the Frogmen got in the rubber boat. But that part of the movie ended up on the cutting and editing floor. If I recall correctly Dana Andrews took twelve of us sailors out to dinner and a show. The next morning they found him sleeping under some shrubbery near the base Administration Building with a big hangover.

PROMOTION DUNKING

I also remember the day I was promoted to Second Class Petty Officer. As was custom my fellow buddies threw me overboard while we were docked. Unknown to me and others, my Mother and Father were on the dock and could not understand what was happening to there son they had come to visit.

SEEING ERNEST HEMINGWAY

Ernest Hemingway was sure some thing else to see, and I remember his so called beach party. On the way to South Beach I saw a unique scene. First came Mr. Hemingway, then a person holding his umbrella, next a person caring his beach chair, then a person with his typewriter and table, and at the end of the line a person carrying his lunch basket. What a procession!

When they arrived at the beach the umbrella went into the sand, then the chair and table were set up for the typewriter, and last the lunch basket and drinks. His so called assistants were made to associate with the other people on the Beach.

LOSING ENGINEMAN HENRY ROBERTSON

Some time in 1950 Engineman Henry Robertson died while aboard of Polio. As a result the SEA POACHER was sent to GITMO where the boat and crew were quarantined, for about three weeks if I remember correctly.

When we arrived back in Key West, a couple of petty officers and myself bought from Mrs. Robertson a 1939 twelve cylinder Lafayette Touring Car that Henry had owned. We used the car to make runs to Miami and different points along the Keys.

I personally went to Miami doing 90 miles per hour, as the engine had a water injection system to give it more power when you wanted more speed. The car drove like a tank or big truck; big, heavy and too clumsy to handle. Also, the glove compartment had an air pressurized water tank.

Use you own judgment as to what use it could serve. To this day I have no idea where the car is.

MIXING WITH THE OFFICERS AND NURSES

One night while on duty the Captain asked me to go to the car pool and get a station wagon he had arranged to use. Then I was to go to the Mess Hall and pick up a couple of picnic baskets, then to the Officer's Club to pick up a package, and then meet him and other officers at 1730 at the Officers Beach with the baskets and package.

Arriving at the Beach I was told to go to the Nurses Quarters, pick up eight nurses and bring them to the Beach. Then I was asked to join the picnic and swimming as there were eight nurses and only seven officers.

As a Second Class Petty officer I ended up with the lowest ranking nurse. A good time was had by all. When I had all persons involved returned home, and the place cleaned up it was 2:00 a.m.

I was requested not to reveal where or what I was doing out that late.

CHAPTER 17

JOHN (JACK) DUBBS 1948 - 1951

**I REMEMBER SEA POACHER IN THE CANAL ZONE,
TWO FIVE INCH GUNS ABOARD OUR BOAT,
TRIPS TO HAVANA FOR BOOZE,
MARGARET TRUMAN'S SINGING ABILITY, OUR DOG SPADE,
BLUE MOON QUEENS OF PANAMA,
AND MY FRIEND HENRY ROBERTSON**

SEA POACHER IN THE CANAL ZONE

I came aboard in October 1948. We were stationed in Balboa on the Pacific side, although we were part of the Atlantic Fleet. At that time, if you were in town and a shooting occurred, it was time to get to the other side of the street. One side was Panama; the other was the Canal Zone and Safety.

You could set your watch to it like clockwork. Around noon there would be a huge downpour, and then it would stop as abruptly as it had started. Then the steam would begin rising from the jungle.

Wives were permitted to accompany the boat during a transit of the Canal. And we always had an Alligator Watch.

A joke of course, played upon a new member of the crew. This guy, newly out of sub school, was given the "honor" of protecting the boat and crew during the Canal transit. (If there were any alligators out there, they would probably have been more afraid of us than we of them.) In any case, the "honored" Alligator Watch was decked out with gun belt, leggings, helmet, and carbine rifle. It was required that he keep a vigilant watch as we moved through the Canal. (I hope I can find a photograph of this.)

The merchants and other larger ships had priority going through the Canal, which meant we often had to "lie too" and wait for them to pass. This wait was most refreshing in that we were able to have swim call in the fresh water Gatun Lake.

We had one crew member, and for secrecy will only call him "Scrounge." He was an Auxiliaryman, and would cruise the Panamanian interior in this Model A or T car. The natives knew him well and would often wave or shout to him "Hi Scrounge."

Another major event was New Years Eve 1948 in Panama. I had the duty and we needed to do something to celebrate.

And we did get a lot of complaints from across the pier for firing beer cans out of the signal gun in the After Torpedo Room.

When it was time to leave the Panama Squadron and head north, Scrounge decided it was time for his old car to go as well.

Just before departure, he showed up on the pier, and left his vehicle in gear and let it cascade into the depths of the Canal Zone.

So ended my adventure in Panama.

TWO FIVE INCH GUNS ABOARD OUR BOAT

There seems to be some question as to SEA POACHER having five inch guns aboard both fore and aft. I have photos that say we did in 1948, and I presume they were aboard in WWII. In regard to this, they were going to film the movie THE FROGMEN on the west coast of the United States, but they wanted a boat with two five inch guns. The only one was SEA POACHER on the east coast. and that is why it was selected for the movie.

Yes, I was there for the filming. Richard Widmark was cordial and friendly, but mostly kept to himself in the Forward Battery. Dana Andrews was much more personable, and joined the crew on liberty whenever possible. He was very sociable and fun to be with. Never saw Gary Merrill or the rest of the cast.

TRIPS TO HAVANA FOR BOOZE

Chuck Donnelly and I have many of the same recollections. So I will not repeat his contributions. In 1948 it was only a short run to Havana from Key West, and we would go there often to stock up like before ship parties or holidays. We had deck guns both forward and aft with a huge ammunition locker. All the ammunition in the locker would be off-loaded before leaving Key West.

In Havana, at one of the rum factories, we would load up with one case for enlisted, and two cases for chiefs and officers. At the factory, there would be tables extending for at least 100 feet to sample all you wanted. Once purchased, it all went into the ammunition locker, which would easily pass customs. The married guys who were living ashore had no problems storing their case, but we single guys living in the barracks or on the boat did. We could usually talk the married pukes to store ours.

We had a great sharing Captain as well. Those Christmas 1948 and 1949 dinner menus included Egg Nog. Our ice cream machine was used in the making of it, as well as several bottles of rum kindly provided by the Skipper, who also did the honors of pouring it into the machine. Now was SEA POACHER a great boat or what?

MARGARET TRUMAN'S SINGING ABILITY

My good friend Chuck Donnelly in an earlier Chapter spoke of an episode with Margaret Truman. It is correct except sometimes Margaret would go into her singing routine, which left a lot to be desired. Some of those in the barracks would mimic her with a few cat calls of their own. This usually resulted in a visit to the barracks by the Secret Service or the Shore Patrol.

OUR DOG SPADE

SEA POACHER had some good dog mascots, and Spade was one of the best. I remember him about January 1950. He would often nestle in the barrel of the 5 inch gun, and I have a photo of that (See photo section.)

Spade would never “do do” below decks, and was always kind enough to do it topside. On one occasion he must have been holding it for some time, when he did relieve himself on the Bridge. As I recall, the OOD and both lookouts had to retreat to the Conning Tower.

Later in a transit to GITMO, Spade apparently became constipated and was taken to the GITMO dispensary for treatment. Rumor had it that he was “put down.” But what we think really happened is that the Medics adopted him, and Spade never returned to SEA POACHER.

BLUE MOON QUEENS OF PANAMA

The street girls and bar maids in Panama were known as ‘Blue Moon Queens.’ Have you ever listened to the song ‘Blue Moon’ I believe made popular by Vaughn Monroe or Andy Williams. The song speaks for itself and I have often wondered it were a fact or a coincidence.

EDITOR’S NOTE: While Jack probably remembers it, here it is for the rest of us. Blue Moon. You saw me standing alone, without a dream in my heart, without a love of my own. Blue Moon. You knew just what I was there for, you heard me saying a prayer for, someone I really could care for. And then there suddenly appeared before me, the only one my arms would ever hold, I heard someone whisper ‘Please adore me’ and when I looked the moon had turned to gold. Blue Moon, now I ‘m no longer alone, without a dream in my heart, without a love of my own.

MY FRIEND HENRY ROBERTSON

He was a good buddy. Henry would often take my watch and let me go off on liberty. Once I came back from a rough night in Key West totally smashed and passed out in my bunk. My bunk was right below Henry’s. The next morning he thought I was dead.

Henry complained of chest and arm pains just a day before his death. He died of Spinal Meningitis, a highly contagious disease. I verified this from his medical records as well as discussions with his wife. We were in Santiago when he passed on, and we were quarantined in an underground hospital at GITMO for a couple of weeks. Yes, these were several Quonset huts that served as this hospital, and they were buried underground. Not certain as to why.

Henry’s death was not conveyed well to his wife. Apparently the base commander just sent a representative over to her home and told her of it. No SEA POACHER personnel were involved in it, and the CO was very upset about it.

"They also serve those who only stand and wait."

Eleanor Rickover, referring to submarine families.

"In each submarine there are men who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to each other. These men are ultimately responsible to themselves and each other for all aspects of operation of their submarine. They are the crew. They are the ship."

The Submariner's Creed (Excerpt)

CHAPTER 18

GEORGE WYSE 1948 - 1952

**I REMEMBER IT BEING 55 YEARS AGO, LIBERTY IN HAVANA,
DIVING WITH A SHIPMATE STILL ON DECK,
RESCUING THE BLIMP, FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE,
A DEATH AT SEA, AND THE CUBAN BEER CALLED HATUEY**

IT BEING 55 YEARS AGO

I have tried very hard to recall my past years on the SEA POACHER. I went aboard in 1948. She was in Panama and part of Squadron 6. I was on her for four years, when I transferred to the CHIVO (SS-341).

We operated in the South Atlantic, even though we were stationed on the Pacific side of the Canal. About 1950, the Squadron was broke up. A third of the boats went to New London, another third got Norfolk, and the last third, including SEA POACHER, got Key West.

We used to operate with the PC Sonar School and boats. We would go out and lie on the bottom most of the day while they tried to find us.

It was boring duty.

LIBERTY IN HAVANA

The good duty about Key West was you could fly to Havana, Cuba for \$23 round trip. At that time Batista was President, and it was great sitting at the Rum Factories all day drinking frozen daiquiris.

DIVING WITH A SHIPMATE STILL ON DECK

When we came up from Panama, we had to go to Norfolk for "Degaussing" to get rid of any magnetic fields on POACHER. Well, one time, after going through the degaussing range, we went for out for sea trials.

There was a problem of some sort in the forward superstructure. The Officer of the Deck sent a Motor Mac named MacPherson up to check out the problem. While MacPherson was in the superstructure, the OOD said "Dive Dive."

And down we went.

It didn't take too long before they realized he was still up there.

We immediately surfaced. They found him floating some distance from us. We went to him, and he swam toward us. They pulled him aboard and he was a mess.

It seems the minute he heard the valves open, he scrambled out and swam as hard as he could away from the boat.

Unfortunately, he was swimming in a school of jelly fish, the kind with stingers. He had red bites all over his chest.

He was okay and that was the main thing. I don't remember what happened to the OOD.

RESCUING THE BLIMP

We were operating around 1950 with a blimp off the East coast of Florida. The blimp developed a problem. They had to throw out everything from the cabin so they could at least stay in the air, about 10 feet about the water.

We threw them a tow line, and brought them to an airfield nearby. This was in the Miami Herald Newspaper and on the front page. It sure looked funny to us towing a blimp.

FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE

They made part of the Hollywood movie "The Frogmen" on board the POACHER. Richard Widmark, Dana Andrews, and Gary Merrill were the stars. We would go to sea, and they would have the Frogmen get into rubber life rafts while we were moving along.

Then we would retrieve them.

They took some footage with us tied up at the dock. They had big sun reflectors on the Conning Tower. They would wet the Tower real good, then rock the cameras to give the illusion that we were at sea, while they showed the movie stars being Navy heroes.

They were going to shoot the underwater scenes off Key West, but the water was not clear enough. So we went to Puerto Rico for those shots.

A DEATH AT SEA

Coming up from Panama one time, we had a guy die on board. His name was Robertson. We went to straight to GITMO, and they put all of us in an underground hospital for 2 weeks. I don't remember what he died from.

THE CUBAN BEER CALLED HATUEY

One time we headed for GITMO for some R&R. They said we were going to have a ball game there. The duty officer ordered 210 cases of the Cuban One-Eyed Indian Hatuey Beer.

We all went to the ball field, but there was NO beer!

Finally a big flat bed tractor trailer came loaded with large wooden cases. They were full of beer!

But there was a major problem: Their cases held 144 bottles, not 24 like ours.

I think I even have a photo of the truck somewhere.

There were a great bunch of guys on the POACHER while I was there. As for individual unique stories, I don't remember enough of the details to make them interesting.

Wishing you a big success with the book. I sure hope my health improves enough so I can attend the May 2008 Reunion.

Only the Good Lord knows what the future holds.

CHAPTER 19

G. D. (BILL) HELLMER 1949 – 1950

I REMEMBER GETTING A SEA POACHER SOUVENIR

In 1949 I served aboard the SEA POACHER as an Auxiliaryman. It was reported to us that the Head in the Crew's Quarters would not flush. We ran an auger into it! No avail! Next we took the stool off, but could not locate the problem. We decided to blow it out. We set the flush valve to open into the tank and put the pressure to it. Again nothing happened. In desperation the plan was made to blow it in board. We drew straws to see who would stand on the bucket to cover the hole, and who would turn on the pressure. I lost! It was agreed that I would get everything that came out.

With every thing ready we built up the air pressure. Nothing happened, so more pressure was applied. Then, a loud bang occurred with a clang in my bucket. There was a thick fog over the entire area with small particles pasted all over everything. The bucket with me on it had tipped up. My co-worker with his hand on the pressure valve was covered from head to toe. When the air cleared, on the deck was a Ronson cigarette lighter. My SEA POACHER souvenir!

OLD IRONSIDES

The USS CONSTITUTION (Old Ironsides) as a combat vessel carried 48,600 gallons of fresh water for her crew of 475 officers and men. This was sufficient to last six months of sustained operations at sea. She carried no evaporators.

However let it be noted that according to her log "On July 27, 1798, she sailed from Boston with a full complement of 475 officers and men, 48,600 gallons of fresh water, 7,400 cannon shot, 11,600 pounds of black powder and 79,400 gallons of rum."

Her mission: "To destroy and harass English shipping." Making Jamaica on 6 October, she took on 826 pounds of flour and 68,300 gallons of rum.

Then she headed for the Azores, arriving there 12 November. She provisioned with 550 pounds of beef and 64,300 gallons of Portuguese wine.

On 18 November, she set sail for England. There she defeated five British men-of-war and captured and scuttled 12 merchantmen, salvaging only the rum aboard each.

By 26 January, her powder and shot were exhausted. Nevertheless, although unarmed she made a night raid up the Firth of Clyde in Scotland. Her landing party captured a whisky distillery and transferred 40,000 gallons of single malt Scotch aboard by dawn. Then she headed home. She arrived in Boston on 20 February, 1799, with no cannon shot, no food, no powder, no rum, no wine, no whisky, and 38,600 gallons of stagnant water. Reenlistment was 100 percent.

Provided by LT Richard Raish, SC, USNR, May 2007

CHAPTER 20

LEO CARR 1949-1951

I REMEMBER A DEATH AT SEA AND BEING TOSSED BETWEEN TWO PIERS

A DEATH AT SEA

It was a Friday in March 1950. We had been operating off GITMO providing ASW services to some destroyers, when we were sent to Santiago, Cuba (about 50 miles west) for weekend liberty. I was Senior Throttleman for the Forward Engine Room, and Henry (Hank) Robertson worked for me. He was the designated Throttleman for the Maneuvering Watch Operations. We were approaching Santiago that afternoon and were about 20 to 30 minutes into the Maneuvering Watch, when the FER Oiler called the Bridge, and said that Hank was sick. I was topside and went below to relieve him.

Hank went forward with the Pharmacist's Mate, and laid down in the forward port corner of the After Battery Crew's Berthing Area which was pretty much a closed off area. We were not allowed in. A Cuban medical doctor arrived and he also could not diagnose what the problem was either with Hank.

Most of the crew went on liberty that evening. Hank apparently passed away about 2100 in the Crew's Berthing Area. The Area was isolated and no one was allowed in. Apparently, the Skipper had radioed GITMO and a plan of action had been worked out. I was on liberty and around 2200, our officers and other crew members were rounding up our guys ashore and sending them back to SEA POACHER.

Saturday morning, with everyone aboard, we were underway for GITMO. We were flying the Queen Flag, which meant Quarantine. Upon mooring there were lots of armed Marines. And no one was allowed on or off, except for medics from the base hospital. Then Hank's remains were taken off to the Hospital probably for an autopsy.

Sunday morning, the entire crew, except for one topside and one below decks watch, were taken off the boat and transferred to the Underground Hospital on the north side of the base. These were Quonset huts buried beneath the ground. The officers had one hut and the enlisted two. Every four hours the Marines would come and pick up two of our guys to go back to the SEA POACHER to stand the two watches, and bring the off going watch back to the boat.

We were kept there for about two weeks or so. Each and every day, all of us were given a physical examination. There was not much to do at this isolated location, so they let us construct a pistol range, archery range, and provided us with cards and games. Before too long all the ammunition was gone and all the arrows were broken. Then they provided us with movies and two cans of beer per man per day.

We were finally released back to the boat, and she set sail for Key West. That is everyone but myself. I had to go on emergency leave to Norfolk, since my Daughter was down with Pneumonia. It was a very lonely experience watching SEA POACHER sail away.

I then boarded an amphibious aircraft (PBM) for the return stateside. There was so much booze aboard that aircraft that it took four JATO (Jet Assisted Take Off) Bottles to get the plane

off the water. There were two aircraft and we encountered very stiff winds. It resulted in our using too much fuel and we could not make Norfolk. There was ice and freezing rain and the only thing open was Cherry Point, North Carolina. With ice on the runway, we were brought in on a cross wind for a very hairy landing. The other PBM also made it down safely. The next morning we were refueled, and with no flight plan required, since we were going from one military base to another we made Norfolk.

BEING TOSSED BETWEEN TWO PIERS

It was later in 1950 when I made Engineman First. I was no more than 135 pounds. Now we had two giant First Class Enginemen already on board, and they were huge. Edwin Smith and Ebrue Smojice if the truth be told. Remember those five finger piers in Key West. For my initiation, they threw me so hard from Pier 1 that I almost landed on Pier 2.

THE CREATION

"In the beginning was the word and the word was God and all else was darkness and void without form. So God created the heavens and the earth. He created the sun and the moon and the stars so that the light might pierce the darkness. And the earth God divided between the land and the sea and these He filled with many assorted creatures.

And the dark smelly creatures that inhabited the land, God called ARMY and dressed them accordingly like trees and bushes. And the flighty creatures of the air, He called AIR FORCE and these he clothed in uniforms of light blue to match the sky.

The creatures who sailed on the surface of the sea, God called SKIMMERS. Then, with a twinkle in His eye and a sense of humor that only He could have, God gave them big gray targets to sail on. He gave them many splendid uniforms to wear. He gave them many wonderful and exotic places to visit. He gave them pen and paper so they could write home every week. He gave them afternoons off, movies and ice cream makers and he gave them a laundry to keep their splendid uniforms clean. When you are God, you tend to get carried away.

And on the 7th day, God rested. On the 8th day at 0700, God looked down on the earth and He was not happy. So He thought about His labors and in His infinite wisdom, God created a "divine creature" which he called a SUBMARINER.

And the SUBMARINERS that he created in His own Image were to be of the deep, and to them He gave the Dolphin insignia. He gave them black messengers of death to roam the depths of the seas, waging war against the forces of Satan and evil! He gave them submarine pay so they might entertain the ladies on Saturday nights, and impress the Hell out of the SKIMMERS. And at the end of the 8th day, God looked down on the earth and saw that all was good, but still God was not happy. In the course of His labors He had forgotten one thing. He himself did not have a submariner's dolphin. He thought about it and He thought about it and finally satisfied Himself, knowing that not just anybody could be a SUBMARINER!

Rear Admiral Jay Donnelly

CHAPTER 21

PETER AMUNRUD 1949 - 1952

I REMEMBER BABY ALLIGATORS IN THE BILGES, COMPUTER DRIVEN OR POINT AND SHOOT DECK GUNS, GUYS LEFT TOPSIDE WHEN DIVING, LIFE IN KEY WEST, POLICE TAXIS FOR THE CREW, SEA POACHER CHARACTERS, AND THE 2000TH DIVE

BABY ALLIGATORS IN THE BILGES

I was aboard SEA POACHER from early 1949 to June of 1952. I reported aboard at Key West where SEA POACHER had just arrived after the breakup of the Squadron in Panama. We were only in Key West a short time and departed for Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine for overhaul. I soon became aware of some very strange nicknames attached to some of my fellow shipmates, but let's hold this for a bit later.

On board there were some baby alligators in the Engine Room bilges that were brought aboard in Panama. I did not witness this, but so the story goes, one of the baby alligators wound up in the swimming pool of the Hilton Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where we stopped en route from Panama.

Needless to say, that event canceled the invitation from the Hilton to swim in their pool. The remaining alligators did not last long in the colder climate at Portsmouth, although I did see the last survivor at a local pub.

He was on the bar, with free beer poured in front of him.

COMPUTER DRIVEN OR POINT AND SHOOT DECK GUNS

When SEA POACHER was first built, and sometimes a subject of controversy, she was outfitted with two 5 inch 25 guns, one forward and one aft. In the forward port corner of the After Battery crew quarters, there was a plotting station with a small "wind-up" computer and a stable element, which corrected the gun orders to compensate for the pitch and roll of the boat.

Here, the Gun Boss would determine the train and elevation angles, and transmit them to the guns electrically. Our two Gunners Mates considered this a "Mickey Mouse" arrangement, and preferred the point and shoot method. Worth it or not, the plotting station did take up the space of three bunks.

The plot station and the guns were all removed when the boat went thru Guppy conversion in 1951.

GUYS LEFT TOPSIDE WHEN DIVING

Late in 1949, SEA POACHER was returning to Key West from the shipyard overhaul and stopped at Norfolk for sound tests. The tests required us to dive, run the test range and then surface. About a 45 minute evolution, I believe.

During one of the surface periods, a First Class Auxiliaryman named Donald McPherson and the Chief Auxiliaryman named Fern Christianson went under the forward superstructure to check something that was causing a problem.

The Skipper (CDR Ustick) was the OOD at the time, and was the one who gave them permission to go out on deck. While they were under the superstructure, the Skipper was relieved to go for lunch, but he did not tell the oncoming OOD about the men up forward under the superstructure.

Later, the boat submerged. The men got out of the superstructure, but only in time to swim away from the submerging boat. An hour or so later, SEA POACHER was back on the surface when a fishing boat came alongside with two very wet and tired individuals who had been rescued.

MacPhearson was a huge individual (his nickname was "Bear Cub") and once on board, he had to be slightly restrained from attacking the Skipper and/or the OOD. The survivors were taken below and given medicinal spirits to warm them up.

I believe MacPhearson was later awarded the Navy Lifesaving Medal, because he kept Chief Christianson from drowning.

LIFE IN KEY WEST

Sea duty in the Key West area and the Caribbean was really good, I thought. We visited ports in Cuba, Puerto Rico and in the Gulf of Mexico. During the summers, there would be a couple hurricanes to ride out. Otherwise I enjoyed being at sea.

When at Key West there were two piers that happened to be convenient locations at night for window-peeping. If we were tied up at one of those piers, we could raise Number Two periscope and window-peep some of the upper floors of the La Concha Hotel in town.

Our submarine barracks at Key West was across the street from the "Little White House" where President Truman liked to visit. The POACHER crew was on the Building third floor and from the balcony we could look down into the back yard of the President's Quarters.

There were times when Secret Service agents had to come up and ask us to be quiet because our card games got a little noisy, I guess. Several times, as we were on our way to the boat for daily operations, we met President Harry on his early morning walk with his entourage of Secret Service Agents and various Navy dignitaries. I'm sure they all hated the early morning affair they were forced into, but that's protocol. The President was very happy though, and waved to everybody along his route.

Our Key West Squadron had a converted landing craft that was rigged for fishing. Several times, we reserved the boat for a whole day of fishing in Key West waters. The reservation included a coxswain and engineer, plus the fuel.

Today this would be unbelievable, but each man was also given a five pound box of shrimp for bait, plus an extra box for chum. We really caught lots of fish and at practically no cost to us.

For a period of time, we were shorthanded in crew members and I, as a Seaman, stood lookout watches with Chief Hospital Corpsman Maurice Demers. "Doc" Demers did not have to do this, but he volunteered because we were short of crew.

Demers was a decorated hero of World War II, and his story is told in other Submarine publications. I believe he was awarded the Silver Star and promoted to Warrant Officer, but reverted back to Chief after the war so that he could remain in Submarines.

It was truly an honor to know and serve with him.

POLICE TAXIS FOR THE CREW

In May 1952; SEA POACHER visited Galveston for a local celebration called "Splash Day" which is the official opening of the beaches on the Gulf of Mexico. Once moored the crew was called to quarters topside.

The Mayor of Galveston, the Chief of Police and other dignitaries came aboard and welcomed the crew. When the Mayor spoke, he stated that the local taxi companies were on strike and if we needed transportation, while on liberty, just call the police.

Well, I think you can visualize what happened.

For the next couple days, police cars were transporting inebriated sailors from one bar to the next. The Mayor also held up a map of the city and related certain areas of the city to stay clear of.

He also pointed out the local "red light" district, and stated "Go here for the good stuff."

SEA POACHER CHARACTERS

Every boat has its "characters." One of the funniest I remember on SEA POACHER was an engineman named Mace. Supposedly, he had a steel plate in his skull from an accident, and he would frequently be warned not to drink too much hot coffee for fear it would heat up his plate. His nickname was "Hard Patch," which was very fitting.

We made several trips to GITMO for operations and during a slack period we would have a beer ball game on the base. The beer purchased was Cuban beer, named Hatuey and I believe there were thirty six bottles to a case. Anyway, on the label of the bottle was the profile image of a Spanish Indian Chief. We had a Chief Electrician on board named Kemp whose profile was an almost exact replica of the label on the bottle.

Needless to say, his nickname was "Hatuey".

We had an ET aboard who had a difficult time earning his dolphins. Once he did qualify and made 3rd class, he started to stand below decks watches. At that time, the below decks watch carried a .45 caliber pistol with an ammo clip.

His name was Edwards and evidently he was bored one night on the mid watch. He jacked a round into the chamber and let go five rounds in the Crew's Mess. His story was that the weapon started firing, and he just couldn't get it stopped. Well, he survived the affair and stayed on board, but he acquired the nickname "Trigger."

THE 2000TH DIVE

I was aboard June 3, 1952 when we recorded the 2000th dive. Shortly after that, I was transferred to New London and to another boat. Now, at the tender age of 76, I still have fond memories of my days aboard SEA POACHER. I can recall many good shipmates and officers, and many of the ports we visited.

What a good boat and a wonderful period of my life!

CHAPTER 22

BOB ABBOTT 1949 - 1952

I REMEMBER A DEATH ONBOARD AND QUARANTINED IN GITMO, DERELICT BUOY, SEA POACHER MISSING IN ACTION, BATTERY WATER IN THE BILGES, A SNEAKY BATTERY CELL, ALL BACK EMERGENCY, AND MANNING THE RAILS FOR PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

A DEATH ONBOARD AND QUARANTINED IN GITMO

It was a Friday following operations out of GITMO in the spring of 1950. The Ship's crew was holding field day to clean up in preparation for liberty in Santiago. Sometime during the afternoon Engineman Second Class Henry Robertson H reported ill. Our Chief Pharmacist couldn't determine the problem other than he was extremely ill.

Upon reaching Santiago, a local doctor was summoned to check on our crewman. He was having severe respiratory problems. The local doctor did what he could, but our crewman didn't make it through the night. Sadly, he succumbed to Polio which during the 1950's, as everyone knows, was a threatening problem which touched nearly everyone in one way or another.

Upon returning to GITMO our shipmate was shipped back to his family in the States. Our entire crew was ordered to be quarantined for two weeks in the Underground Hospital for observation for Polio symptoms. Of course we were supposed to take it easy while awaiting any developments indicating symptoms of Polio.

To make our quarantine bearable, our gunner's mate set up a pistol practice range so we could hone our skills. Also, we had golf clubs and balls to knock about when the heat wasn't overbearing. A beer wagon made a nightly call so we were insured of not running low on refreshments. Movies, beer, and conversation pretty much rounded out the day. As I recall the beer was treated to last in tropical climate. Boy! What a headache it could cause. Of course Chief Kemp was always ready to retell sea stories and further our education in the ways of the submarine Navy.

After two weeks in confinement, no additional cases of Polio were determined, and we were sent back to resume our duties on the POACHER.

DERELICT BUOY

Returning to our duty station in Key West, after completing a yard overhaul in Portsmouth, we were steaming off the Virginia coast when a derelict buoy was spotted in the sea lane. Of course, the buoy presented a navigational hazard and our Skipper decided that to further sea lane safety the buoy should be destroyed and sent to Davy Jones Locker. The Skipper called upon our gunner's mate to do away with it. The first attempt to disable the buoy was to shoot it with a .30 caliber rifle. Of course, the buoy simply shrugged off this feeble attempt. Next, the .50 caliber machine gun was given the opportunity to subdue this menace to safe navigation. Alas, it too was no match for the mighty buoy. Everyone on the bridge was chagrined that we were not

able to sink the wayward buoy. At last someone suggested that it might be time to haul out the 20 mm to do battle with this worthy foe. I'm not sure, but I believe it took more than one shot with the 20 mm to put an end to this seagoing derelict. On that day we left the ocean sea lane a safer place and void of menacing buoys! At least we weren't forced to load the 5 inch deck gun to do battle with this nemesis.

As an aside, the 5 inch guns were thunderous and shook the entire boat. I don't think we ever hit a target. In fact, target towing ships always let out extra line to preclude being hit by us during target practice. The 5 inch was for sinking surface ships, and the 20 and 40 mm for fending off enemy aircraft.

SEA POACHER MISSING IN ACTION

During a Sonar School operation with ships stationed in GITMO, SEA POACHER was required to submerge and remain so until signaled to surface and resume operations. Our Skipper dutifully followed his orders, and we remained submerged for what seemed an interminable time. We thought perhaps that the sonar groups were not very adept at locating us. Maybe they were just beginners we thought.

After several hours, our Skipper decided that something was certainly amiss. He ordered us to surface. Upon surfacing, we discovered that we were considered missing and that the entire GITMO base was on alert for search and rescue operations. We were ordered to return. Apparently, a faulty transducer prevented us from receiving orders from the surface sonar ships. Thus, we were biding our time awaiting orders to surface which never came.

On our return to port we noticed that nearly all of the destroyers operating out of GITMO were out to sea! Needless to say we were not in good stead with the crews of the local ships which were sent out to search for us.

BATTERY WATER IN THE BILGES

During overhaul in Portsmouth, SEA POACHER was put into dry dock for superstructure, hull, and other modifications. Of course normal below deck watches were carried out even though there wasn't much going on to require same.

As you might expect almost every compartment was undergoing some type of improvement and or modification, but every day requirements and operations continued. One of these usual and inconsequential operations was the requirement to replenish the supply of distilled battery water carried in the storage tanks aboard the boat.

To replenish the battery water while the POACHER was in dry dock required that a portable 500 gallon distilled water tank be located along side the dry dock, and a hose connected between the portable tank and the battery water filling connection aboard the boat. This was done and the supply tank valve turned on.

After the tank had been emptied, the hose was disconnected and preparations made to secure the operation. Alas, all did not go well as connections from the fresh water distilling equipment to the battery water tanks had been left disconnected and rather than having battery water tanks full of distilled water, the Forward Engine Room bilge had absorbed the full load of distilled water.

I don't recall who had the below decks watch on that particular day, but I'm quite certain that he was quite taken aback when he discovered that this had occurred on his watch!

A SNEAKY BATTERY CELL

During our overhaul we were refitted with new batteries in both compartments. Access patches both forward and after was removed. The old batteries were removed and new ones installed. Resealing of the access holes was done upon completion.

Our first sea trial was a little scary as the access patches leaked under pressure. I guess this is what sea trials were all about since we were able to return to the Yard and have the leaks repaired.

Later, after leaving the Yard and resuming normal operations, it was discovered that one of the After Battery cells had lifted up a few inches. The only thing stopping the cell from lifting further was the links between the adjacent batteries. Needless to say this caused major concerns about the condition of the entire battery complement.

Immediately, we were given orders to run equalizer charges and take many cell voltage and specific gravity readings, and forward the results to bureaus for review. I'm not sure how many readings, charges and discharges were conducted before the safety and integrity of the battery cells were deemed to be satisfactory, but it seemed endless! In fact, I'm not sure that these batteries were not still on board the SEA POACHER when she was sold to Peru. I don't think anyone ever came up with a reason for the cell lifting.

ALL BACK EMERGENCY

As anyone who has been stationed in Key West knows incoming boats sometimes had a rough time negotiating the quay wall inlet to the mooring slips utilized by the submarines. Sometimes the current would catch the incoming boats and force them toward the wall. I'm sure that this caused many gray hairs for the officers manning the Bridge during the incoming maneuvering watch.

On one such an approach by the SEA POACHER, all was going smoothly during the watch for Chief Brendleman and myself, who were manning the Maneuvering Room controls during the incoming watch. We were proceeding under power as usual with two diesel engines fired up and providing power.

Just as we thought everything was progressing smoothly we received the order from the Bridge "ALL BACK EMERGENCY." As per regulations we immediately switched to battery power and made turns for the EMERGENCY BACK situation. In the meantime, we signaled the engine room to light off the remaining two diesel engines. Once the additional engines were on line we switched from battery propulsion to diesel-electric and continued with the "ALL BACK EMERGENCY" turns.

After what seemed an eternity of feeling the churning power of our screws vibrating the boat, we received the long awaited order from the bridge "ALL STOP."

Needless to say we were greatly relieved that we had neither heard nor felt any impact or scraping noises coming from the hull of our boat.

After receiving a "Well Done" from the Bridge OOD, we continued on into our mooring slip with no additional problems. I understand that you could see the billowing black exhaust smoke from our four diesel engines from quite a distance.

MANNING THE RAILS FOR PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

During the 1950's President Harry S. Truman loved to spend time at the Summer White House located on the Key West base. We would often see the President accompanied by his Secret Service cadre on his way to spend time on the beach. In fact, the President visited the Summer White House so often that the local command group decided that all boats in the harbor should honor him by manning the rails on his next visit. Everyone was decked out in their summer white uniforms and had received instructions on their specific stations during the upcoming ceremony. Actually, it appeared that this would be a very spectacular presentation and all hands were looking forward to the President's visit.

As the time approached for the President's arrival, word was received that he would not be traveling along the prescribed route to accept the honor. Every one was truly disappointed that the show didn't go off as planned. However, all was not lost since those lucky enough to have liberty were in proper uniform and ready to go!

I don't believe we ever had another opportunity to extend this honor to President Truman.

"Too much ship to throw away for one small hole."

Commander John Hyde upon deciding to not scuttle BERGALL after a 5 inch enemy shell ripped a 5 foot hole in her pressure hull just above the waterline, 2000 miles from home, Second War Patrol, 15 December 1944, From Mike Brand

"Another Running Gun battle.....Destroyer Gunning, WAHOO Running."

WAHOO CO, after hitting a convoy, now out of fish, and heading for the barn, From Larry Derouin

"Sonar - Conn: Report all contacts in preparation in coming to periscope depth"

"Conn - Sonar: I hold no contacts - how about you?"

"Sonar - Conn: Supervisor to the Conn."

Author Unknown

"Battery acid is kinda tangy but it takes the skin off your lip."

ETSN Robert Shoemaker

"Target? Damned if I can see the horizon."

On a very dark night while approaching a sampan in April 1944, the OOD asked TM Kelly on the PETO (SS-265) gun crew, "Can you see the target," Kelly replied with the above. From Mike Walsh

CHAPTER 23

WILLIAM BUCKLEY 1950 - 1956

**I REMEMBER CHIEF-THE SEA POACHER MASCOT,
A HARRY TALE- YES REGARDS PRESIDENT TRUMAN,
CUBAN RUM RUNS, BEER WITH A BIGWIG,
FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE, RESCUING THE BLIMP,
RIG FOR DIVE PROBLEMS – AFTER BATTERY FLOODING,
ASSAULT OF THE FROZEN CHICKEN,
THE 2000TH AND 3000TH SEA POACHER DIVES,
HOLIDAY MENUS, LOST ENROUTE TO NEW ORLEANS,
THE GITMO CAPER, THE BIG BLAST IN GALVESTON,
THE WORLD’S WORST LIBERTY PORT,
SICK CALL ADVENTURES, AND TRANSFERRED AT LAST**

CHIEF - THE SEA POACHER MASCOT

The “Chief” in my time was not the first seadog to serve on SEA POACHER. I learned from other shipmates, that the first one actually made war patrols! I understand he was killed in an automobile accident in front of the Royal Hawaiian in Pearl Harbor.

When I reported aboard in September 1950 Chief was already there as our pooch mascot. I think he came about in 1948 after the boat had left Panama, and I do not know who shipped him on board either. He was just there.

I thought he was named Chief as he was light brown in color. However, I have it on good authority (scuttlebutt from the After Battery, of course) this was not the case. He was called Chief, because he sat on his rear end all day and growled at people.

Chief was a liberty hound (no pun intended), and although he had a permanent liberty card he didn’t go ashore every night in Key West. When he did go he would sit by the brow and wait for whom ever he was going with. There were three or four bars just outside the Key West main gate, and they all knew him. Each had a bowl with his name on it. When the guys would order a round he would get one also. The problem with that was, like some of his liberty buddies, he may have consumed a little too much. When that happened no way could he coordinate all four of his legs. Since he was a pleasant drunk someone always volunteered to carry him back to the boat.

However, he was a real dungaree dog, did not like khaki uniforms and would not go on liberty with anyone dressed that way. No one seemed to know why.

It was time again for one of those all expense paid trips to GITMO. The day we got underway Chief had what appeared to be a classic hangover. The next day he was no better. That evening there was concern as he was not improving. The next morning it was decided to have Doc take a look at him. Doc had only been aboard for about three weeks so no one really knew him.

After loudly proclaiming he was a Corpsman and not a vet, the guys talked him into looking at Chief anyway. He looked him over and stuffed a couple of pills in him. They were probably APCs. Another day went by and Chief was obviously getting worse. Doc looked at him again. I don't know if he gave him a shot or more pills. Several hours later Chief "shipped his oars." For some reason, it was weeks before any one came to sick call.

As a part of preparing this manuscript for the Book, I went through a box of 1950 photos. On the forward 40 mm gun deck was a banner reading "Merry Christmas" and a black dog. The photo was titled "Spade." So SEA POACHER had at least three mascots.

A HARRY TALE - YES REGARDS PRESIDENT TRUMAN

Ah, those were the days. POACHER had left the Pacific and Panama in late 1948. She had reported to SUBRON 4 in Key West, a great homeport and a real Navy town. Tourist and shrimpers also poured money into the city coffers.

Until 1951 and the Korean War build up, OPTAR (Operating Target) funds were slim. There were days when we didn't go out on daily operations because of fuel cost money even then. Crews were not fully manned and it was not unusual for the COB (Chief of the Boat) to go down the waterfront and press gang a few watch standers for a days ops.

This was great for us nonqualified dinks; because you could get a lot more done on quals while import. The COB had already warned us 9 months be damned, if we weren't done when we reached the shipyard, it would be surface city.

Now even in paradise, there are bound to be some thorns. Ours was our President Harry Truman. The little White House was located three blocks from our barracks (not the other way around). The barracks was an original Conch building, i.e. wood frame that would bend with the wind and had survived more than one hurricane. The Post Office was on the first floor and our barracks was on the third. There was no air conditioning, but with the windows open it was pleasant.

The problem with open windows and young sailors is that sound carries from radios when played at about 90 decibels. So here would come one of the Secret Service's finest and request, suggest, and/or demand the damn thing be turned off or else. Seems the noise bothered Harry during his nightly poker games. I think Harry spent as much time in Key West as we did.

We would be there when Harry was, and the S.S.WILLIAMSBURG was always moored forward of the Tender. The Tender had a regulation that no one would look over the side forward because Margaret (President Truman's Daughter) might be sun bathing. Those words never filtered down to Pier 5, and you guessed it – SEA POACHER. Two of our seamen went to draw bales of rags and that cargo hole was right on the tenders bow. The MAA immediately captured one of our guys. The other seaman went back to the boat and explained what had happened to the COB. The COB headed for the Tender. I don't know what transpired between the CMMA and the COB, but the COB obviously won.

One of our officers was finishing his qualifications and needed an exercise torpedo firing. How did this involve Harry you ask? Simple answer was Harry always took an early morning walk around the base and waterfront. Orders were that all buildings and shops could not open until Harry finished his walk. I don't remember the time they could open but I think it was 0700.

So off went the merry gang of forwarded roomers to make ready a MK 14 exercise shot. We arrived at the shop at 0700 and it was still locked. This was very unusual as the Warrant-in-

Charge was a stickler on opening and closing the shop. The LPO looked around and no one was in sight. He told one of the guys to go to the Admin Building and ask that the shop be opened

No sooner than said a noise was heard. It sounded like it might have come from the Dempsey Dumpster next to the shop. The LPO opened the door to the Dumpster and here stood the duty TM with key in hand. His next question was "Is he gone?" Harry was apparently a little late on his walk and the Secret Service's finest saw the duty TM. They opened the dumpster and deposited him inside. Other than Harry, Key West was great.

CUBAN RUM RUNS

From 1948 until about early 1952 the best liberty port on the east coast was Havana, Cuba. Any thing you wanted (and some things that you didn't) were available as long as you had enough Yankee bucks.

The drill was the boat made weekly operations and on Friday when you surfaced you were closer to Havana than Key West. So we went into Havana for liberty on Friday night and Saturday, and underway back to Key West on Sunday, tie up late in the afternoon, and start a two week upkeep on Monday.

Friday night three of us stopped at one of the "Sailor's Bars" close to the harbor. We had a drink and ordered another. Some guy comes running into the bar and goes in the back. Next thing we see are cops pouring in. We hear a shot and then it's the cops dragging this guy out. The bartender said the guy was a merchant seaman who frequented the bar, until he ran out of money. Your guess is as good as mine as to why the cops were after him.

Saturday morning the liberty party, almost in toto, reported to Barcardi Garden's. This was a fantastic botanical garden with a huge bar in the center. Bartenders could make any rum drink known to man. From 0900 until 1200 drinks were FREE for the American Bluejacket. You ask yourself why nine till noon drinking rum? But remember the sun was over the yardarm in London at that time. When you left you were given a bottle of rum; the flavor of your choice. Being young and foolish in those days I always took Banana Rum. As far as the free drinks were concerned, if you went into a regular bar a rum and coke was 15 cents, a dime for the coke and a nickel for the rum. Bacardi also had guided tours on the hour. I knew how to make home brew and moonshine, but not rum, so I took the tour. There were huge stainless steel vats at various stages of distilling. The last one was partially disassembled. The tour guide explained that they made perfume in it last week and had to steam clean it before making rum.

The drill was to get the rum back to Key West. Because of customs regulations, we were not allowed to bring booze back duty free, as we had not been out of the country long enough. So we could (unofficially) bring several bottles back. No open bottles and it went to the Forward Torpedo Room. There it was stored in a torpedo tube.

Well two events finally screwed up this good deal. First, the U.S. Custom Agents became aware of the torpedo caper, and one boat had to fire an alcoholic water slug in the channel when they saw a posse of Custom Agents waiting on the pier. Secondly, Castro did his thing to Cuba.

BEER WITH A BIGWIG

It was 1951 and SEA POACHER was in the middle of a Guppy IA conversion at the Charleston Naval Shipyard. While sitting in the barracks after the evening meal up came one of my liberty buddies with a suggestion we go ashore. A couple of other guys also thought that it a

good idea so off we went. We stopped at a couple of bars out side of the gate and things were dull. So we were off to North Charleston where there were two swinging bars. We had a couple beers and next thing we heard was last call. One of the guys said he was not ready to go back to the boat and suggested we go to the Merchant Seaman Club which stayed open all night.

Off we went. We got there, and it was somewhat of a disreputable looking joint. We went inside, and I was surprised that the Sanitation Department hadn't closed it down. The other guys saw someone they knew at one of the tables and went over. I took an open seat at the bar, and ordered a beer. Next to me was an older white haired gentleman talking to a couple of younger men. I thought it a little strange that they all were wearing coats and ties.

I was just about finished with my beer when the older gent turned and started talking to me. He saw my empty beer and ordered one for me. He quickly found out that I was in the Navy and then started telling me how great our Navy was. I recall telling him what a great liberty port Charleston was. His beer was empty so I bought him one. About that time my buddies came over, and said it was time to go back to the boat. We got in the car and my buddy said to one of the other guys "Can we really ride in the same car with him? After all he chooses to drink with the VIPs and not us lowly seamen." I was confused.

He said "You know who you were drinking with don't you?" I said "No." They said it was L. Mendel Rivers and his bodyguards. I said "Who in the hell is L Mendel Rivers. The reply was a very powerful Congressman from South Carolina. I guess the moral to this story is when drinking at an after hours bar never talk to a stranger as he may be your Congressional person.

EDITOR'S NOTE: L. Mendel Rivers served in the U.S. House of Representatives for nearly 30 years and was Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. The nuclear submarine SSN-686 was named after him.

FILMING THE FROGMEN MOVIE

I recall a couple of things about filming the movie which was in 1951. The boat moored in Key West along side the Mole in front of the base Administration Building several days before the filming of Frogmen started. The stalwart deck gang task was to give the boat a beauty treatment for the filming. Late in the afternoon all of the chipping, scraping, and priming of rust spots was completed. First thing next morning spray painting began. We finished the paint job and it looked almost as good as a new car. There we stood aft of the sail, cleaning the spray equipment, and admiring our paint job. Then, out of the blue, a sea gull landed on the turtleback. First thing it did is what sea gulls did best. It cr***** on the turtleback. This infuriated the leading seaman. He looked down and saw a hose coupling, picked it up, and threw it from just aft of the sail to the turtleback. I have no idea what the odds were of hitting the stupid bird, but you guessed it. It started to do the next thing sea gulls do best and that was to flail around and squawk. I also don't know what the odds were that a junior officer would step out of the Admin Building at just that moment and see what had happened. He immediately ran to the boat and demanded to know who had thrown the missile that injured the gull. He was going to put one or all of us on report since sea gulls were protected by the government. The fast thinking leading seaman asked the officer to wait a minute. He went below and found the XO. He confessed to what had transpired, and the XO came topside. The XO and junior officer went forward and had a lengthy discussion. The XO obviously wins this one as the junior officer leaves in a huff. Next morning at quarters the XO told us to lay off of the gulls.

Later on, there were seven or eight of us standing on the Quay wall, in front of the Admin

Building on a beautiful sunny day. We were using fire hoses to spray water over SEA POACHER whenever the cameramen told us to. This was the filming of an at sea storm scene. Richard Widmark closeted himself in the Wardroom and Dana Andrews spent most of his time in the Crew's Mess or just wandering around the boat. They had very different personalities.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have watched this 1952 released movie totally from start to finish and the SEA POACHER scenes at least three times. The sea storm scene must have been cut as it is not there. On the Internet, it also says that the UDT stuntmen were paid \$50 a day for their work. I'll bet we could have done it cheaper.

THE 2000TH AND 3000TH SEA POACHER DIVES

The 2000th dive occurred on 3 June 1952 and the 3000th on 22 July 1955. Both were in the Key West Operating Areas. I guess that works out to be about 317 dives per year.

RESCUING THE BLIMP 10 JULY 1952

It was a typical July day in Key West, warm early on with isolated small rain cells starting to develop and no doubt a waterspout or two later on. SEA POACHER had just completed her face lift (Guppy conversion). The Charleston Naval Shipyard cranes had lifted the two 5 inch 25 guns, two 40 mm guns, and the Chief Gunners Mate off the boat. We were overhauled from bow to stern.

We were back into the routine for boats in Squadron 4. This consisted of daily operations, weekly operations (occasionally we would get a weekend in Havana or Kingston), sprinkled with two-week refits. Once or twice a year we would get a 30-day fully paid trip to beautiful, sunny GITMO and, every year or so, a Mediterranean trip or Artic Circle Cruise, sometimes called a Northern Run.

We were in the daily operation cycle and that usually meant running sonar target for the USS SANSFIELD, an old WWII destroyer but fitted with state-of-the-art sonar. She would take the sonar students out to sea to practice what they were taught in class.

However, this day was a little different. We were to run sonar exercises with a blimp from ZX-11 Squadron which was stationed at Naval Air Station Boca Chica. We proceeded to our operations area and dove to commence the days exercise. The blimp started looking for us, and occasionally hovered and lowered a sonar transducer to listen.

I don't remember what time it was since I didn't own a watch. It was, however, before the noon meal. We had been running for a couple of hours and off went the Claxton "SURFACE SURFACE SURFACE." Then the COB opened the door to the After Battery berthing. He looked at me and another seaman and said to get a lifejacket and follow him.

Following the COB on deck, the first thing we saw was the blimp motionless, about 100 feet off the water and with its propellers on both engines bent backwards. The COB said to break out #2, 3, and 4 mooring lines and flake them out on deck. We would bend the mooring lines together and hook them to the blimp's tether.

We started hauling the lines out, and the next thing I knew there were two junior officers telling to do this and that. None of it appeared to be what the COB had directed. I looked like I did not know what to do, and the other seaman had a similar problem.

The COB immediately came running up to us and said, "If you two ever want to go on liberty before your enlistment is up, do just what I told you." Since the other seaman and I

weren't idiots, it is obvious what we did. We finished bending #2 and 3 mooring lines together when my buddy said, "I wonder what the Captain is saying?" I looked up and the Captain was leaning out on the port side of the Conning Tower and was hollering something. I didn't know what he was saying and apparently no one else was listening to him. But it was not important to us, because we had our orders from the COB.

Once we had all three lines bent together and #2 secured to #4 cleat, the Captain started backing the boat and the blimp reduced altitude. The COB caught the blimp tether and bent it to #4 line. We then got underway towing the blimp.

The blimp was having a problem maintaining altitude so they jettisoned about everything that was not firmly affixed. We were able to take some high tech equipment on board. Apparently they had an electrical fire but were able to extinguish it. Now things were going well, but not for long.

We ran into a rain cell. Seas were 3 to 4 feet and wind gusts were 35 to 40 knots. The temperature dropped, the blimp gas started to shrink, and then the blimp started to bend in the center. Immediately "Abandon Blimp Ship" was ordered. Crew and observers hit the water, but the three pilots stayed on board. We fished the guys out of the water. The blimp came down putting the cabin in the water. We got underway, and the blimp cleared the water. Before long, we moved out of the rain cell, and the blimp inflated itself. We towed merrily along.

After towing for about 3 1/2 hours, we were approaching NAS Boca Chica and the water started to shoal. We came to "All Stop." Coming out from Boca Chica was an Aviation Rescue boat (AVR). It came along side, we passed the end of #2 line to the AVR, and it proceeded toward Boca Chica with the blimp.

We headed for the barn. The Captain made a perfect one-mooring line landing. We secured #1 line. The base had scrounged up a section of wire rope which we tied to #4 cleat. Liberty commenced.

The next morning a little after 0700 the topside watch passed the word down that there was a pickup truck with our mooring lines on the pier. The seaman gang went topside. I noticed an officer from Boca Chica came aboard, and he went below. We unloaded the lines, secured #2 and 3 spring lines, and replaced #4's wire with our line.

We finished about 5 minutes before morning quarters topside. The Executive Officer went over the plan for the day and other routine items but did not dismiss us. Shortly thereafter, the Captain came to our quarters (never heard of that before).

The CO read a letter from the Commanding Officer, NAS Boca Chica, commending him and SEA POACHER for saving the Navy a very expensive blimp. He then, in front of God and everybody (crew included), explained in great detail to all, who was in charge of the boat and what he expected of them on his boat. Not a bad day for the crew though. The Captain commended the COB and the rest of us and commenced early liberty for the Crew.

EDITOR'S NOTE This story with photograph appeared on the back cover of All Hands Magazine shortly thereafter but the date is unknown. The story was also a featured article in the LIFE Magazine Issue of 25 August 1952 under the title: A SUBMARINE RESCUES A DISABLED BLIMP. UNDERSEA CRAFT MAKES NAVAL HISTORY BY TOWING LIGHTER-THAN-AIR SHIP THROUGH STORMY WIND AND WATER. There are excellent photographs of this as well.

The story details how the blimp acted like a balloon and rose up to 3,000 feet, how its priceless equipment was saved by placing it onto a rubber raft which SEA POACHER recovered.

Also, sparks from the radio twice started fires in the gondola, full of gasoline fumes, but they were extinguished. And once during the 3.5 hours tow it was slammed back in the ocean so hard that the three men remaining aboard were deep in the water.

According to LIFE, the blimp had to spend all night outside the harbor entrance at Boca Chica because the channel through the reefs was too tricky to navigate at night. However, at dawn the tow was completed, marking the first time in history that a blimp, whose chief war time function was to destroy submarines, was actually rescued by a submarine.

HOLIDAY MENUS

I saved some of them. Thanksgiving 1952 in the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet the Prayer was:

”Ah! On Thanksgiving Day, when from East and from West
From North and from South come the pilgrim and guest,
When the gray-haired New England sees round his board
The old broken links of affection restored,
When the care-wearied man seeks his mother once more,
And the worn matron smiles where the girl smiles before,
What moistens the lip and brightens the eye?
What calls back the past like the rich pumpkin pie?”

-John Greenleaf Whittier

Roast Turkey	Baked Virginia Ham
Oyster Dressing	Giblet Gravy
Mashed Potatoes	Buttered Peas
Boiled Sweet Potatoes	Buttered Corn
Cranberry Sauce	Combination Salad
Stuffed Green Olives	Celery Stalks
Ripe Olives	Sweet Pickles
Hot Parker House Rolls	Bread and Butter
Fruit Cake	Mince Pie
Pumpkin Pie	Ice Cream
Mixed Nuts	Hard Candy
Coffee	Milk
Cigars	Cigarettes

We had the same menu on Christmas 1952, and we were still operating in the Mediterranean. In 1954 we were back in Key West and the Christmas menu was again similar except the Crew, always listed in all menus, were now grouped under the categories of SNIPES, BELLY ROBBERS, DECK APES, SPARE GEAR, SANITARY ENGINEERS, BULB SNATCHERS, PICKLE PUSHERS, RADIO GIRLS, AND TWIDGETS.

And everyone, except the CO, XO, and Senior Watch Officer, had these very clever nicknames.

RIG FOR DIVE PROBLEMS – AFTER BATTERY FLOODING

It was another routine day sailing out to our Key West operating area. I was mess cooking (again). The word was passed to rig for dive. The other mess cook and I rigged the Crew's Mess and reported its completion. A short time later the sound powered phone rang and asked if the After Battery was rigged for dive. I opened the door to the berthing compartment and asked if the After Battery was rigged for dive. A voice from the other end of the compartment said YES, and I reported it rigged. A short while later it was "DIVE DIVE" and down we went. Within a minute or so it was "SURFACE SURFACE SURFACE" and up we came.

Shortly the word came back for me to report to the XO. I thought my special request for enrollment in the Armed Forces Institute must be on the XO's desk. I had quit high school and joined the Navy. But to join I had to get my Mother to sign the enlistment papers. My conscience started to bother me so it was time to start working on that diploma.

Boy was I ever wrong. The XO was very highly irritated. The first thing I heard was "You have made a false report that has hazarded the boat. Pack your sea bag. When we enter port tonight you are going to the Tender." He had no sooner said that when the COB came out of the Goat Locker. He asked the XO "Which officer was going to the tender with him?" He did not wait for a reply and headed for the coffee pot. The XO was now very tight jawed. It took him a minute to regain his composure. He then told me to resume my duties, and he would talk to me later over this incident.

I headed for the Crew's Mess at flank speed. I tried to keep out of sight and started to peel potatoes like there was no tomorrow. The COB came back to top off his coffee. He told me to not pack, because I was not going anywhere. He then asked me and the other mess cook if we recognized the voice from the After Battery. Neither of us did. It was the end of the problem. You know it has been over 50 years now and the XO has still not gotten around to talking to me about the incident.

ASSAULT OF THE FROZEN CHICKEN

The 1MC called for an all hands working party. We were in Key West and needed to load stores prior to a cruise. I was in the middle of my third tour of mess cooking. So here I was in the Crew's Mess handling boxes of food being passed down the After Battery Hatch. We got to a box of frozen chickens which was too large to come down the hatch. With an enterprising crew topside they broke open the box, and started dropping frozen chickens down the Hatch to me and now I'm passing them to the other mess cook to go in the freezer. I had just caught one, turned to pass it off, and here comes a shipmate pushing past me and up the After Battery Hatch. However, he didn't get very far before the next frozen chicken landed on his head. We picked him up off the deck and called for the Corpsman. Three or four stitches later he went topside, but not thru the After Battery Hatch. We finished loading stores and got on our merry way.

Two days later I was summoned to the Wardroom to provide testimony to the base legal officer, as part of a JAG Manual investigation, as to whether the injury was done in the line of duty and could have been avoided.

No, seriously, this was not a major injury. Our shipmate was not angry for being at the wrong place at the wrong time, and we were all acquitted of this deed. I made TM3 in the middle of my third mess cooking assignment. When I showed my crow to the COB he said "Go back to mess cooking, and I will tell you when you are relieved." I was able to go from Seaman to TM1

in six years while on SEA POACHER. Was anyone else aboard our boat for six full years?

LOST ENROUTE TO NEW ORLEANS

I don't remember the exact year. The scuttlebutt had it we were going to get weekend liberty in New Orleans, but it didn't quite end up that way. The XO, at quarters, prior to getting underway told us we were going into the Gulf of Mexico for a couple of weeks, then up the Mississippi River on the weekend to pick up Naval Reserves, and then back into the Gulf for operations. Oh well, you couldn't win them all.

We operated during the week with ASW P2Vs out of Boca Chica. A nice bunch of guys. During break operations we would surface, and they would buzz us and drop a canister. We would fish it out and low and behold it contained a Miami Herald and the latest magazines.

We finished operations on a Thursday and headed for the mouth of the Mississippi River. After steaming all night we started looking for the sea buoy in the early hours of the morning. I was the starboard lookout and could see absolutely nothing, nor could any body else. The Captain came to the Bridge and hollered down below to the Navigator asking for our position. It then became obvious the Navigator was not sure. The Captain was not a happy camper.

Just before the false dawn started to break, I saw a number of lights on the starboard bow and reported the same. The false dawn broke and now we can see structures in the Gulf. We were about 300 yards off one which turned out to be an oil rig.

A couple of roughnecks were standing there waving to us. Then the OOD, not yet dolphin qualified, hollered over "Hey Buddy - Where in the hell are we?" I wasn't sure if the Captain was going to strangle the OOD, or in a brief fit of anger have a heart attack. But the Captain did not loose his composure. In reply to the OOD's question one of the roughnecks said "If you are bound for New Orleans you missed the sea buoy about 65 miles back."

We reversed course and soon sighted the sea buoy. So it was up the Mississippi on four engines for a rendezvous with a tug bringing the New Orleans Submarine Reserve Division on board us. Arriving at the rendezvous point some what early, the Captain looked over on the bank and saw a somewhat ram shackled pier with a fish bait and beer sign on a store.

Flooding down a couple of feet, we eased along side the pier, and tied up. The XO passed the word "Liberty commences for 30 minutes." Christmas had come early. The liberty party went ashore, and I followed the COB. He stopped and told the Top Side Watch that if just one can of beer came aboard there would be two very sorry sailors. It turned out that was not necessary. But I have to tell you it was amazing how much beer a thirsty sailor can drink in 30 minutes.

We were back aboard and underway. A short time later we sighted the tug, picked up the reserves, and headed for the Gulf. We spent the weekend diving, angling, dangling, and running drills. Some of the reserves had war patrol pins and others just dolphins. The rest had never been onboard a boat before, but they got their moneys worth. We got them back to New Orleans, and then it was back to another week of playing hide and seek with the P2Vs.

THE GITMO CAPER

The date of this event will remain unstated. I am certain the reader will understand why so let's just say in the 1950s. We were off again on an all expense paid month in beautiful GITMO, a snug, sheltered, deep water harbor on the mountainous coast of Cuba. Fifty feet off of the cliffs and you were in 100 fathoms of water.

In those days the Atlantic Fleet did its refresher training and certification of its surface skimmers at GITMO. The base had a cadre of highly trained officers and enlisted men who conducted the training, its evaluation, and certification. ASW, AAW, and surface to surface warfare exercises were all included. I don't know how they did the surface stuff. I also can't imagine how they could talk a pilot into towing a sled that ships fired live ammo at, but I did know the ASW bit.

Squadron 4 provided the boats for ASW, and this was our turn. For the boats this meant four weeks of daily operations. So it meant early up and late to bed every day except for the weekend. It also meant at least one weekend in Kingston, Port au Prince, Cap Haitian or some other Spa for weekend liberty.

Prior to departure from Key West the torpedo gang would go to the base Torpedo Shop, and we would draw a newly overhauled MK 14-3A torpedo which was good for ten exercise firings. We would do the preliminary checks and adjustments, and then load the fish on the boat. This time around we loaded it in Tube #5. Don't forget good old Tube #5.

We made it to GITMO and had a couple of routine days of hide and seek with the surface skimmers. They were very civilized folks in that they ceased exercises over the noon meal. This gave us the opportunity to conduct exercise torpedo firing. But, if we didn't complete from start to finish before 1300 the exercise commander would have some disparaging remarks to our Skipper. So we were a bit hesitant, but finally got our chance. At 1100 it was Battle Stations Torpedo and away we went. The firing officer was making a submarine qualification shot so he was very anxious to see all go well. He made the final approach, marked bearings, and fired Tube #5. It took off hot, straight, and normal.

When the surface alarm went off, we blew water out of #5. On the surface, the torpedo gang and several seamen went on deck thru the Escape Trunk and rigged the torpedo retrieval king post and boom. At the same time the torpedo loading skid was rigged and the hatch opened. While this was in process the OOD was off chasing the fish. We slipped a strap around it, brought it on board, and set it in the skid. While the fish was being lowered into the torpedo room the rest of us disassembled the retrieval gear and stowed it for sea. Now all hands laid below, we rigged for dive, and dive we did. Exercise complete and within the time allotted.

The torpedo gang finished the post firing steps on the fish and then started the preliminary checks and adjustments. It was just after the evening meal when the prelims were done and time for the finals. The prelims did not require an officer to verify, but the finals did.

The Gun Boss was sitting in the Wardroom playing cards when we requested he come forward and witness the finals. He said he would be there shortly. About 25 or 30 minutes went by and no Gun Boss. Then what do we see next but the Gun Boss stepping thru the water tight door wearing only a bath towel on his way to the shower. So I said in a loud voice that we had finished tube loading and were securing for the night. However this was overheard by the Gun Boss who said we couldn't do that without his verification. I said do it now or the fish wouldn't be ready for tomorrow.

The Gun Boss came forward and looked down at the fish which is partially loaded in Tube #5. He stepped down into the lower flats and observed the removal of the safety stick and verified the speed set on high. His next check was to verify the gyro pot set on zero. There were two ways to accomplish this check. You either laid flat on the deck or crouched down with a mirror and a flashlight. It was obvious that neither could be done holding a towel with one hand. So he dropped the towel and crouched down with the mirror and light and lo and behold who should step thru the water tight door but the Captain. The Skipper stopped, looked a little

puzzled, and then broke out with a big grin, which was followed with a very stern look. Then in a very loud voice said “ Mr.----- are the boys showing you the golden rivet” and stepped into the head. The voice was instantly recognized and up comes the Gun Boss. He hit his head on the mine table, shook his head, grabbed his towel, and was off to the Wardroom. We finished loading the fish and it was agreed what has transpired should go no further. Our Gun Boss had suffered enough embarrassment without the rest of the crew making it worse.

Two days later it was another firing exercise. It was also a carbon copy of the previous firing exercise. In port, and after the evening meal, it was again time for the finals to be verified by an officer. The Gun Boss was told “Sir, we need you too.” He was off instantly to the fish in Tube #5, witnessed the checks, and returned to the wardroom. From that day on until the day he was transferred, when we needed something all it took was “Sir we need you too” to get an instant response.

THE BIG BLAST IN GALVESTON – MARDI GRAS?

Well it was spring time in the gulf, and SEA POACHER was out punching holes in the ocean again. This time it was hide and seek with our ASW P2V buddies out of NAS Boca Chica. Exercises were over, and we are off for weekend liberty in Galveston.

Why Galveston of all places one would ask? In the early 1950s the city had a promotional, big blast, or something, to officially open the Texas beaches to tourists. I think this one was called “Splash Day” or something else as nutty as this week was. It could have been Mardi Gras.

As you can tell this will lead somewhere. Well some slick Willie in their local Chamber of Commerce Public Relations Department dreams up this idea of Neptunus Rex (Parade Marshall for the event) to arise from the deep, on a submarine, which would put him ashore to kick off the affair. Of all the submarines our Navy had SEA POACHER won the honor? –Yes!

We reached the sea buoy, and there was a boat to meet us with good old Rex. He came aboard (it was obvious the party had already started) and into Galveston Bay we went. We made the pier on time and there was a crowd of media people, tourists, and nondescript others. Rex went ashore with all the pomp and pageantry befitting his exalted status. Thus began the parade and blast. On the boat it was titivate as we would be having general visiting. SEA POACHER was ready and the XO commenced liberty.

The evening meal was over and our intrepid group of three suited up in blues and were off and running. At the first bar, no sooner than sitting down, here came a free round of beer. Stops in subsequent bars brought the same response. It was several bars later when one of the lads, three sheets into the wind, decided it was time to go back to the boat. The other two were not ready, but followed him out to make sure he would get back okay.

Our lad then sits himself down on the curb. Prior to leaving the boat the scuttlebutt was the XO had talked to the Chief of Police, and they had agreed we would not put shore patrol ashore. If some of our guys got out of line, the cops would return them to the boat, and the XO would take it from there. Our lad was sure that was going to happen.

Shortly thereafter along comes a squad car. The officer gets out and starts talking to our stalwart lad. Our guy thinks this is his ride back to the boat and starts to get in the car. That was not what the officer had in mind. More discussion ensues with the officer who had already reached his threshold of pain. He told our lad he is going to get a ride, but it was going to be to the police station and he would be charged with public drunkenness. Off they went.

At this point another one of our lads goes back into the bar. He gets on the phone and calls the police station. Once connected with the desk sergeant (he had also been called a sea lawyer more than once), he introduced himself as the SEA POACHER XO. He told the sergeant he had just witnessed one of his men being arrested and stated the man should have been. He then asked the sergeant if he would return the sailor to the submarine to be dealt with accordingly. That sounded reasonable to the sergeant.

None of our other guys were present when our lad appeared before the desk sergeant so what actually transpired is not known to me. What did happen was the officer drove our lad back to the boat.

A small number of our troops were on dungaree liberty on the pier when the squad car arrived. Out came two police officers and our intrepid lad. The officer followed him to the brow making sure that our lad didn't do a one eighty back ashore. By this time our lad has sobered up a little.

Remembering his manners he turned to the officers and thanked them for the ride. Then the dummy tells the officers that if they had taken him back to the boat to start with they would not have wasted their time at the police station

You can imagine the frame of mind the police officers were in after that. The squad car burned rubber for at least 100 feet. And, the dungaree liberty party agreed that if they went into town it would not be wearing Navy blues

THE WORLD'S WORST LIBERTY PORT

After returning from a Med trip there was considerable discussion as to whether Izmir, Turkey; Valletta, Malta; or Cap Haitian, Haiti was the worst liberty port we had ever seen. I was certain Malta won the dubious award.

We had been in Malta a couple of days, and I decided to go ashore. My running mate and I headed for "The Gut" which was the only place for sailors (of any Navy) to go. The place deserved its name. We had a few beers (even submarine sailors wouldn't eat any of that food) and got into a discussion with a couple of British sailors. They were on the boat tied up inboard of us. There was a tender stationed there and at this time there was three British boats along side it. We were outboard.

We all decided it was time to go back onboard so we all walked back to the tender. We crossed over and one of the Brits invited us to his boat for a night cap. Nothing wrong with that since they can drink on board. We ended up in the Radio Shack and partook of a ration of Navy issue grog (150 proof rum tasting like molasses). We bid our adieu and went back aboard SEA POACHER.

Next day I had the afternoon topside watch. I had been on watch about 30 minutes when I heard a commotion on the tender. So here comes four of Her Majesties finest carrying a very reluctant sailor. They stuffed him down a hatch and returned ashore.

About an hour later it was the same drill with the only difference is this one was wearing civilian clothes. I was in the process of turning over the watch.

My relief asked what was going on. I noticed the watch on the boat inboard of us and it was one of the Brits we had been drinking with the night before. I asked him what was happening. He said nothing special, but the boat they were on was deploying for a two year tour in the Far East that night.

He said they probably didn't want to leave their love nest. Then he laughed and said after

liberty in the China station they would have forgotten Malta even existed.

My thoughts were if there was any pushing, shoving, or other physical action with our guys it would not be for anyone going ashore but would be to get back to the boat.

If you have never visited Malta, my advice is don't!

SICK CALL ADVENTURES

Well the boat was finally back in Key West and guess who was mess cooking again. We were in upkeep and it was hot and humid as was usual for that time of year.

I got up and went to wash up before breakfast. First thing I noticed was a rash on my fingers. I started looking for Doc immediately. The thought never crossed my mind that this might short tour me on messing cooking. Obviously I was concerned for the health and well being of my shipmates.

Doc took a look and said he was not sure what caused the rash. He told me to go to sick call on the Tender. He also said to ask the doctor what the rash was, and when he gave me a prescription to let him know what it was.

I followed his directions and headed to the Tender. The doctor looked at my hand and said a classic case of Athlete's Foot. Seeing that I was puzzled he explained advance cases did that. He gave me a tube of some kind of goop, and said to always wear sandals without socks to keep my feet dry.

I found Doc and told him Athlete's Foot. He looked very funny at me and asked for the tube of goop. When I handed it to him I noticed he also had a rash on his hands.

Fast forward a couple of years. No, I am not mess cooking anymore having reached the TM2 level. Kiddy cruise was running out, and I had decided to ship over. The Yeoman got all the papers together. Since we were in the Charleston Shipyard I had to go to the hospital for my physical exam.

I go there and was in line with the sick, lame, and lazy. The Corpsman directed me to the vampire line to get blood drawn. Just as I got to the head of that line in runs a third class (with a hash mark). He was still in dress blues. He motioned to me, and I was next. I noticed he seemed somewhat nervous as he was setting up. I said to my self "I hope he didn't close the Merchant Seaman's Club."

He draws the blood, and I hardly felt it. He then said "I guess you noticed the nervousness. This the first blood I have drawn in almost five years as I was just recalled to active duty." I asked him what he did on the out side and he told me he was an auto mechanic.

Fast forward a couple of more years. The boat is on daily ops off Key West, and we are at sea making a MK14 exercise shot ready. Having now made TM1, I was not doing the dirty work. I had the check sheet and was observing and checking off. We got to the part where we installed the propellers. When you put the after one on it took a maul to line up the set screw holes. I was standing behind the guy, and he banged on the screw until it was lined up. Then he tossed the maul over his shoulder. Guess where it landed. You got it. When I finished dancing around, I saw my right little toe had a 45 degree angle. So much for sandals.

When we tied up I headed for the Tender. At sick call, there were 4 or 5 guys ahead of me. The doctor called the first in line into his office, but did not close the door. He apparently looked him over and then very loudly said "You are not ill. Your problem is the new Boson running First Division." He told him to get out and don't come back unless he was ill. Having said that three of the other guys in line left.

I got my turn. I told him I had a broken toe. He looked at me and said "What you want from me - sympathy?" He then said we could do one of two things. First, put you in sickbay for a week and the first time you step on it wrong it breaks again or second, I can tape it up and you go back to work. When you get there put on shoes and no sandals. It will hurt for two or three weeks, but after that it will never bother you again. I took Option 2.

TRANSFERRED AT LAST

Life was going pretty good at the time. I had shipped over, had made TM1, and had a new car paid for. But, for some reason I had the feeling I was missing out on the Navy experience for a career man. I had over five years on SEA POACHER already.

We were scheduled to go to the Shipyard in Charleston again, and maybe I could find a TM1 to swap with me. I did and he talked to his XO, and I to mine. A couple of days later the COB told me "NO WAY." I had to find someone better than that. And I found another guy who I knew was pretty squared away. Same drill but this time the XO tells me "NO GO!" As I turned away I said "Damn another unaccompanied XMAS."

Several days later the XO called me in and said he understood the XMAS bit and if I could find a school in Key West, he would get me a quota. As luck would have it the Underwater Swimmers School had a class from early December to mid-January. The XO was good to his word. So I learned scuba and blowing things up, and spent XMAS with my family. As it turned out this training was invaluable a few years later when THREADFIN was rammed by a Greek freighter in the Suez Canal.

At this point I had concluded the only way off SEA POACHER was shore duty. I gave the Yeoman my chit, and he broke out laughing. The COB came out of the Goat Locker and asked what was so funny. He looked at the chit, grinned and said he had 16 years and no shore duty. I told the Yeoman to put it in anyway. The XO signed off on it. I immediately forgot about shore duty on a reserve boat in New Orleans.

Months went by, and we were in upkeep in Key West. I was in the Forward Room when one of the guys told me the XO wanted to see me, and he was not happy. I went to his Cabin. Sure enough our mild mannered XO was not a happy camper. First thing he said was how did I beat the system, and who did I know that could pull strings?

I told him I had no idea what was going on. He then picked up some papers and handed them to me. You guessed it! They were my shore duty orders to the Navy and Marine Reserve Training Center in Savannah, Georgia. Only a thousand miles from New Orleans but who cared. Certainly not me.

I told the XO, who had only been aboard nine months or so, that I had submitted a chit and it was approved. He then told the Yeoman to bring my service record. Then the XO started flipping through it and sure enough there was the 3 by 5 inch card approved by the previous XO.

After commenting that he should have done his home work, he told me I could transfer any time after the first of the month.

And that, boys and girls sums up the muses of one fifth of a thirty year naval career.

CHAPTER 24

BILL MCKINNEY 1950- 1951

I REMEMBER FILMING “THE FROGMEN” ON SEA POACHER, SOME MORE THOUGHTS ON THE FILMING, THE HAZARDS OF CLEARING THE BRIDGE ON DIVE, A BIT MORE NOSTALGIA, AND PROBLEMS ON A FAST ATTACK NOT SEEN ON SEA POACHER

The movie, "The Frogmen" featuring Richard Widmark, Dana Andrews, and Gary Merrill, had the submarine scenes shot aboard the SEA POACHER in Key West in 1951. The film used Underwater Demolition Team 4 (UDT 4) out of Norfolk, and several members of the crew were extras.

I was chosen to appear in a scene showing members of the submarine crew taking an inflatable raft out of a port side line locker just aft of the after deck gun. Widmark and his frogmen were to launch the raft and proceed on a mission.

I have just recently made arrangements to acquire a copy of a VHS tape of this movie from a man in Ontario, Canada. It is a pretty rare tape.

I had to buy it as my kids never had believed that I was in a movie. The guy who sent me the movie had edited the original label to read “Starring Bill KcKinney.”

The movie was made by 20th Century Fox, and they gave a party for the ship’s crew at a watering hole in Key West upon completion. A scene showing Dana Andrews at the rail of the tender (don't recall the name) had to be delayed a couple of times due to the late hours and overindulgence by Mr. Andrews.

The guys from UDT 4 were true to their profession. On the way in from sea they would go over the side and swim the last several miles.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The above story was found on the Internet at the Submarine Sailor dot com website. (See References.) I saw the movie when it first came out as a 14 year old kid, but could not recall any details.

So I bought it in February 2007 as a DVD. It is a good movie and probably ahead of its time. Besides the three major stars there are also Jeffrey Hunter and Robert Wagner. Hunter has a good part, but Wagner is in it for maybe five seconds and four words only. From what I have read on the Internet, Wagner was an up and coming actor and the studio was giving him major publicity.

There is also a guy playing an officer on our main deck during raft launching that I cannot remember his name. But he has been seen in several movies.

There are no women in it. Having said that, SEA POACHER crew photos show a woman with Widmark on the main deck during the filming.

And when did you ever see a LCDR such as Widmark with his khaki long sleeve shirt sleeves rolled up to his armpits. And did he ever change his shirt? Little did I know that I would report aboard this boat only 8 years later as an Ensign.

SEA POACHER, in her WWII configuration of old sail-cigarette deck-two deck guns,

enters during the latter portion of the movie, and the mission is to blow up a Jap submarine base. She is referred to as SS-259 which is the JACK.

JACK made nine war patrols, but nothing in its history suggests destroying a submarine base, although the movie says it is a true story.

The movie shows a couple of dives and surfaces, a scene in the Forward Torpedo Room, Conning Tower and periscope operations, and activities on the main deck forward.

The main deck looks smaller than I remember. Instead of using the side door in the FTR Escape Hatch, they surfaced to let off the divers for I guess “a Hollywood effect.”

They also show a main deck safety line during all scenes, and the SEA POACHER guys have to lift their heavy raft over it. Would this not have been taken off on diving? I was never a Weapons Officer, so I really don’t know.

Needless to say SEA POACHER and UDT 4 succeeded on this mission to blow up the Jap submarine base.

And in real life, she succeeded on every mission as far as I can tell.

In late August 2007, I was finally successful in contacting Bill, who added some more thoughts.

MORE ON THE FILMING

I remember posting that article on the Internet several years ago. One interesting thing concerns the boat launch scene where I appear.

It was filmed in midday, in bright sunlight. Using Hollywood magic they changed it to a night scene to follow the story.

I did not know this until I watched the film, but we were wearing white hats. One would think that in real life, in order to be as inconspicuous as possible, we would have had on blue watch caps.

If there were crew shots showing a woman on deck with Widmark I must have missed it. I don't recall a woman on the set, either in port or at sea.

THE HAZARDS OF CLEARING THE BRIDGE ON DIVE

Lookout watches in my time were stood in the shears. If you were aboard after the Charleston conversion, you probably are not familiar with the term “shears.”

The “shears” was the superstructure above the Bridge and surrounded the scopes, radar and radio antennas, etc.

On the CLEAR THE BRIDGE command, we would drop about 8 feet to the Bridge, down the ladder to the Conning Tower, down the ladder to the Control Room and on to our stations as the Bow and Stern Planesmen.

This was accomplished in 10 seconds or less. Your feet never touched a step on any of the ladders.

This drill was run over and over until it was done to Skipper Cameron’s satisfaction. You learned very early in life as a lookout that your binoculars had to be swung under our arm while clearing the Bridge to avoid a bloody nose or a black eye.

A BIT MORE NOSTALGIA

While tied up in Key West, the deck watch was almost always greeted by a stroller every morning. His name was Harry S. Truman.

William E. Britt, USSVI Commander of the Holland Club, was a Cook 3rd. Class when I was on the 406. A pretty good one too.

Steak and eggs every Sunday morning when in port.

I wonder if they still do that?

Our Commander Cameron was the Senior Skipper in Squadron 4. As a result we were given the honor of making rum runs to the islands to bring back libations for the Officer's Club. It was stowed everywhere including the tubes and line lockers. Most of the stash in the line lockers belonged to the crew.

PROBLEMS ON A FAST ATTACK NOT SEEN ON SEA POACHER

This clearly is not a SEA POACHER story, but I thought it might be interesting to tell you that it was not all a bed of roses on the "fast attack" diesel boats.

I remember some exciting moments about new construction and at sea on the second HARDER (SS-568). That makes me a "Plank Owner of HARDER."

We were under construction at Electric Boat in Groton when they laid the keel of the NAUTILUS. We were one of six boats designated "high speed attack" boats.

Each set of two boats had a different experimental engine. We had opposed piston Fairbanks which produced 1500 HP at 1545 RPM. We couldn't keep them running due to the high speed and vibrations.

We were an anti-submarine, submarine.

So we spent a lot of time between Iceland and Greenland listening for Russian boats coming out of Murmansk into the North Atlantic.

Once, while on patrol off the coast of Norway, we blew the pit log out of its housing which was in a storeroom in the Forward Torpedo Room.

We took on a lot of water and the walking deck was awash before we secured the room and got enough pressure in it to stop the water.

By that time we were below design depth.

Every time we surfaced we said a little prayer of thanksgiving.

On HARDER we had only one engine room with 3 engines.

Coming back to the States with two engines already OOC, we lost our last engine the second day out of Belfast, Ireland.

A couple of different ships tried to pick up the tow but kept breaking the lines.

Finally a rescue vessel arrived with proper towing gear and towed us to Block Island.

The Skipper had saved enough battery to go up the River under power to save the embarrassment of being towed in.

CHAPTER 25

WILLIAM PARHAMENKO 1951 - 1953

I REMEMBER RESCUING THE BLIMP AND THE MED CRUISE

RESCUING THE BLIMP

The story of rescuing the blimp has been told in earlier chapters, so just let me add my take on it. I was on duty in the Radio Shack. Before the blimp hit the water, and all of their power was knocked out, she was sending us flashlight. However, our Quartermaster on Watch was having difficulty reading it. This was a daily operation and the Chief Quartermaster was in Key West. I was in the Radio Shack, and the Skipper knew I could read light and semaphore. He ordered me to the Bridge where I was stationed in the Port Lookout space. .

We received a radio message from a destroyer escort that was also standing by, saying that they would tow the blimp in. Our Captain Gibson went below and checked some Navy publication to determine whether he or the DE's Captain was the most senior. It turned out our Captain was, and we sent another radio message to the DE directing them to "Stand Off." SEA POACHER would tow in the blimp, which we did. I do not recall who the Quartermaster on Watch was that day, or if they were supposed to know how to read light.

In any case, he had to study light every evening on the GILMORE.

THE MED CRUISE

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is an article from the GILMORE Newspaper called the Globe dated 2 March 1953 originally submitted by William Parhamenko. This article was found by SEA POACHER Association President William Brinkman, retyped by him, and provided herein.

On October 17, 1952, the Captain of the SEA POACHER (LDCR W.R. Gibson) piloted his boat through the choppy waters of Long Island Sound and slipped eastward into the vastness of the Atlantic Ocean. A relatively smooth Atlantic set a leisurely pace for this sleek, grey vessel as she continued her voyage to the Mediterranean Sea. Her mission: To join the United States Sixth fleet in training operations. Thirteen days after her departure from the New London, Conn. Submarine Base, SEA POACHER arrived at the well fortified British Island of Malta, located in the eastern sector of the Mediterranean. She docked alongside submarines of England, Turkey, Greece, and France. The Turkish submarines were those U.S. submarines transferred about 5 years ago to that Nation. SEA POACHER moored alongside a Turkish Sub (the Ex-USS BRILL). Everyone aboard had an opportunity for liberty during the 2 day stay, and although any port should seem welcome after 13 days in Atlantic crossing, liberty on Malta was limited to tours of the city and the buying of Maltese lace and souvenirs.

Tours of the historical City of Valetta were the greatest attraction of Malta, and the SEA POACHER'S crew discovered why it is called the "City of Churches." It seemed that from any point in the city, one can look, and find, in his vicinity, the steeple of a church. The architecture is of great interest. Some of the SEA POACHER crew went aboard one of the English submarines. The difference in inside construction was almost startling. The compartments on the English boats were very large compared to ours. Another great difference was the fact that each

rating in the enlisted grades had their own mess.

Operation "Longstep" awaited the SEA POACHER upon her departure from Malta. The boat was to lie in wait, intercept and "sink" ships of the Sixth Fleet. At the same time, 6th Fleet hunter-killer groups would be on relentless watch for the sub. SEA POACHER was submerged for 12 days during "Longstep" with only her snorkeling equipment breaking the surface occasionally. Official records of "Longstep" are still classified. However, unofficially, it may be said that SEA POACHER was very successful in interception and "sinking" portions of the Fleet with flares, and at the same time evaded all efforts of hunter-killer groups to "destroy" her.

SEA POACHER proceeded to Izmir, Turkey at the conclusion of "Longstep." Finally entering on November 15th, they executed what is known as a "Med moor." This is accomplished by mooring with the stern tied to a quay with the bow facing out to sea, riding to the anchor. In this way, the quay was one of the city streets. Izmir itself is one of Turkey's more important ports and is a trade city of considerable volume in comparison with other ports and nations of the Near East. Souvenir and gift buying commenced here for the SEA POACHER'S crew, and all transactions had to be made in Turkish money. This was little trouble, as a Disbursing Officer was always handy to make the exchange. Naval directives did not allow American dollars to be used ashore. The merchants of Izmir liked to bargain, thus offering a promoters haven to big-dealers who liked to haggle over a price.

Turkish people are on the whole a clean folk, and dress in conventional European clothes, contrary to popular belief. Young women no longer wear veils, although the older women may wear a hood which they sometimes pull together at passing a group of men.

Tours of Izmir and the countryside for as far as 50 miles inland were inexpensive, at the equivalent of 3 or 4 American dollars. The ruins of Ephesus and Pergamum were visited and are excellent examples of ancient Greek cities of about the time of Alexander the Great. One member of SEA POACHER'S crew went boar hunting with a group of American Marines. Results reported: For the Submarine – 1 Boar; for the Marines – 0.

One day about 90 miles off the Aegean Sea after leaving Izmir, the SEA POACHER entered Piraeus, Greece, port of the City of Athens. The sub was to be moored next to the Destroyer Tender, USS EVERGLADES, which lay in the bay outside the harbor of Piraeus, but very rough waters made it necessary to take the boat into the harbor.

During the period SEA POACHER was cruising around waiting to moor next to the EVERGLADES, the boat met an old friend. David Carroll, a Yeoman, formerly attached to the SEA POACHER, but now on shore duty in Athens, puttered up in a borrowed motor launch to give his own style of Greek welcome to the crew. Liberty worked on a 3 section basis in Piraeus, as in all ports, with a duty section, a standby section, and the liberty section. Standby sections could go ashore during the daylight hours for tours of historical section of Athens and nearby, but returned aboard by sunset. Piraeus and Athens were an improvement over Malta and Izmir in respect to liberty, being modern cities and having sufficient night life for all hands. Sight-seeing and touring were at their best around Athens. Packed with history and culture, in spite of 23 centuries of wars, devastation, savagery and brutality, its ruins still excite astonishment. Pages could be filled with descriptions of such architectural wonders as are found on the Acropolis, and the art that has graced these ancient walls.

Following this visit, ten days of operating with "Hunter-Killer" destroyers and aircraft proved to be a real workout and valuable experience was gained. After this, SEA POACHER was ready to head for port and on 2 December, entered the important port of Naples, Italy.

Naples, with many parts of the city still in shambles from bombings of World War II,

plays host to a great deal of Navy now. Naples being an art center, offered paintings, leather work and fine Borcelino hats as the attractions for gift hunters. Overnight liberty was a hit here and many took advantage of luxurious surroundings offered by hotels.

A point of legendary interest of the crew was the Island of Capri, which they saw from a distance when entering and leaving port. The unusual ancient ruins of Pompeii near Naples, which are seldom publicized, created a sensation for those who viewed them. A few members of the crew made a trip to Rome during the stay in Naples. Two day trips proved adequate to visit the Vatican and other architectural landmarks.

Returning again to sea for operations, SEA POACHER was underway for about a week. Then cruising westward we moored in the French port of Cannes. Cannes is one of three towns running along the Mediterranean shore of France, which make up the famed Riviera. SEA POACHER was here at Christmas time and staged a Good Will Christmas party for homeless and under-privileged children. Ten box loads of clothes and toys which were brought from the States were given away and a huge turkey dinner served to the children. For the crew, liberty in Cannes was the best yet. Several men spoke French, which probably helped public relations, although this had never been a pressing issue. While not as modern a resort as Miami, Cannes offered excellent hotels and handsome villas, charming public beaches, etc. Some men on leave during the holiday period went to Paris while others went skiing in the French Alps. One man who visited Paris commented: "If I ever go back on my own, I'll spend all the time in Paris."

Approximately a week later, the SEA POACHER made port at Marseilles, France, in company of the USS MIDWAY and various other ships of the Sixth Fleet. Many parts of town were out-of-bounds, but the city itself, though a Communist strong-hold, provide good liberty, French champagne, etc. Closest brush with the Communist propaganda was in Marseilles, but we met with no demonstrations or violence. Perfume was readily obtainable and prices inexpensive.

From Marseilles, SEA POACHER proceeded with the Aircraft carrier MIDWAY, Cruiser COLUMBUS, Destroyer Tender EVERGLADES and several "tin-cans" to sea for further exercises. After about a week at sea the next port of call was Barcelona, Spain. This was the first visit of the Sixth fleet to Barcelona for over a year. Liberty here was the best in all of Europe and the Near East, and it is the general feeling aboard that this was the garden spot of the Med. Souvenir hunters and gift buyers could well saved all their money for Barcelona, for contrary to most other ports; prices were not made to fluctuate with the arrival of the Sixth fleet. Barcelona is a rich town, with beautiful and interesting architecture. Many English and Americans live there, and the SEA POACHER was visited by the American Ambassador. The Spanish welcomed the Americans "with open arms" and friends were made easily.

Commencing operations once again, the SEA POACHER made runs on the USS LEYTE, FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT and various AKA's and AP's for about a week, and then pulled into Gibraltar, for a fast stop before leaving for Key West and home. The return trip across the Atlantic was peaceful, with good weather prevailing. Thoughts of loved ones at home were prominent and morale reached a new high since the drab, dreary October day nearly four months before, when the Poacher slipped her moorings on the Thames and headed eastward.

We entered Key West channel on February 4th, on a beautiful sunny day. Shortly, she was snugly tied up as had been done many times before, but this time it was different. Wives, sweethearts, children, COMSUBRON Four and the press waited on the pier to welcome us. It was a welcome ending and most pleasant feeling to have returned to the "good old USA."

CHAPTER 26

STEVE KURKJIAN 1952

BY

ROBERT SHVODIAN

I REMEMBER MY UNCLE

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article appears on the SEA POACHER Association website (See References) and was probably in response to a letter from Jack Merrill. Steve served aboard SEA POACHER in 1952.

MY UNCLE

You contacted my cousin, Boston Globe Editor Steven Kurkjian, about Navy Steve Kurkjian. They were uncle and nephew, but Globe Steven Kurkjian didn't really know Navy Steve Kurkjian and contacted me to pass this info on to you.

Navy Steve Kurkjian was my uncle, my mother was his older sister. Steve was born in Boston in 1923 and was raised in Watertown, MA. He attended a trade high school in Waltham, Mass and his parents signed him up for Navy service when Steve was 17.

He served aboard the cruiser LOUISVILLE, at Pearl Harbor and transferred to sub school at New London one week before Dec 7, 1941.

All of his WWII service was aboard Pacific submarines as a motor machinist mate (later EN rating) and he spent a lot of time operating out of Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

I regret that I do not know the name of any of the subs that he served in.

After WWII he served on a sub out of Guam and then was aboard a sub at Charleston, SC. He married a Charleston girl named Lois in 1952 and was stationed or aboard a sub at New London in the mid 1950s.

Later he was divorced and finished his military career with a few years in the Air Force in Vandenberg Air Force Base. He left military service about 1961 and worked for awhile at Boston Navy Yard as a machinist.

During submarine service he suffered some heart damage but never would speak about it.

About 1967 he suffered a major heart attack and changed his style to a very spartan life, riding a bicycle everywhere, and looked after his aged mother. She died at age 96 in 1976, and Steve passed away in November 1977 at the age of 54.

He is buried in Watertown, MA alongside his Mother and Father. Steve's older brother Jeff, was an MIT math major, became a PHD, and eventually became the U.S. Army's #1 Mathematician.

He died just a few weeks ago or I would have referred you to him. One of his sons is ESPN baseball analyst Tim Kurkjian.

That is about all that I can report to you.

CHAPTER 27

BOB MATHENY 1952 – 1956

BY

HIS WIFE ANN MATHENY

I REMEMBER VISITING ERNEST HEMINGWAY

VISITING ERNEST HEMINGWAY

A letter from Bob to his girl friend and subsequent wife (me) dated 30 October 1955 said in part: "The trip to Havana was the best that I have experienced yet. Saturday seven of us went to see E. Hemingway of *Farewell to Arms* success. He received us, gave us gin and made us feel very much at home. We talked books, cars, fighters (both fist and bull), baseball, Jai-Alai, and Cuba.

His remarks came in a thoughtful, halting voice and you could tell he had done a lot in his fantastic life. He showed us his trophies from Africa, books (tons of them), hi-fi system, paintings, collection of liquors (a few I sampled), his wife, pets and the view of Havana from his home. I never met such a great man and never expect to again. I took several pictures and will send you a print as soon as I get them back. My only regret is that I didn't have more time there with him."

We do have a photo of Bob and Hemingway as well as a little note he signed. Bob had asked him to write down a word of wisdom, and he wrote just that: "a word of wisdom" and signed it.

Picture it - State five seas and proceeding to periscope depth during dinnertime. The Mess Cook is delivering a refilled bowl of corn to the Chief's table, and had just arrived at the table when the boat lurches to starboard. The refilled bowl dumped its steaming contents onto the Master Chief's lap "Oops. I guess that's Corn on the COB!"

The Mess Cook

"I believe it is the duty of every man to act as though the fate of the world depends on them. Surely no one man can do it all. But, one man CAN make a difference."

Admiral Hyman. G. Rickover

Even if a submarine should work by a miracle, it will never be used. No country in this world would ever use such a vicious and petty form of warfare!

William Henderson, 1914

CHAPTER 28

GLENN TRUMBLE 1953 - 1955

I REMEMBER PROBLEMS WITH A SEA POACHER ENSIGN, FLATTENING HIM TWICE, KNUCKLE CRUNCHING HIM, THE GUATEMALA TOP SECRET MISSION, A COUPLE OF CAPTAIN'S MASTS, AND THE FLOUR ATTACK

PROBLEMS WITH A SEA POACHER ENSIGN

Looking back it is funny, but at the time it was a nightmare happening.

Mr. Smith was a new Ensign from Boston of all places. I happened to be from Texas. No conflict so far. My surface duty station was on the Radar in the Conning Tower.

When submerged, I went to my duty station on the Sonar and listening equipment mounted below the Control Room. When the diving alarm sounded I had to drop to the Control Room before the deck watch cleared the Conn. I then had to open the hatch to the Sonar Room, drop down, and then close the hatch before anyone stumbled into it on top of me.

I was taught to drop from the Conning Tower to the Control Room without paying much attention to the rungs on the ladder.

My first meeting with Mr. Smith was when he was in the Control Room standing under the Conning Tower hatch with his hand on the rung of the ladder at the time the diving alarm sounded.

FLATTENING HIM TWICE

You're right, I flattened him. He took several minutes while we were submerging to chew my a** out. After that, the Skipper, and I have forgotten his name, chewed Mr. Smith out for keeping me from my duty station for seven minutes. I really don't know if that caused him to initially resent me, or if it was the second time I flattened him.

I wish I could remember our skipper's name. He enjoyed coming into port submerged, getting bearings through the periscope and range with the periscope radar and then surfacing beside the dock with only a few feet to the pier.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Holy Mother of Mine. I wonder what ports the Skipper managed to do this in.

KNUCKLE CRUNCHING HIM

There was no third time as I began going down the ladder more slowly when he was on duty. He just would not stay away from that ladder though.

The third time I just crunched his knuckles under my foot as he was resting with his hand on a rung of the ladder.

THE GUATEMALA TOP SECRET MISSION

After six weeks at sea stopping ships that might be smuggling arms into Guatemala, I had the first topside watch. I wanted my wife to know that we were back in port, so I stepped over the gangway to the pay phone to call her.

Incidentally, our mission to stop arms being shipped into Guatemala was top secret. Of course it was top secret till we boarded our first passenger liner. One of the ships we were after went into Key West and gave up while we were still off the Yucatan Peninsula looking for it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Now what was this all about? This incident is also discussed in chapters that follow.

Well, it was called Operation PBSUCCESS (Presidential Board Success), and was a U.S. CIA organized covert operation that did overthrow the democratically-elected President of Guatemala in 1954. The new government put forth a number of policies that the U.S. Intelligence Community deemed to be Communist in nature, and, suspecting that the Soviet Union was pulling the strings, subsequently fueled a fear of Guatemala becoming a "Soviet Beachhead in the Western Hemisphere."

Within the CIA and the Eisenhower Administration, this was a major concern that found no shortage of believers, given the intensely Anti-Communist McCarthyism prevalent at the time.

The Operation, which was put into motion late in 1953 and concluded in 1954, planned to arm and train an ad-hoc "Liberation Army" of about 400 fighters under the command of an exiled Guatemalan army officer, and to use them in conjunction with a complex and largely experimental diplomatic, economic, and propaganda campaign.

I guess it ended the way we desired. See References.

A COUPLE OF CAPTAIN'S MASTS

Mr. Smith put me on report for leaving my duty station (all of 10 feet) when I tried to call my wife. At the resulting Captain's mast I was given extra duty in the boat's storeroom.

Not long after that I went into the sail to show the repair crew which cable packing was leaking. Of course I had the topside watch at the time and had to leave my duty station about 6 feet this time.

Guess what? Yep, Mr. Smith put me on report again for leaving my duty station. And the Skipper gave me extra duty in the boat's storeroom.

Sometime later I had occasion to get some supplies from the Supply Center. I didn't have the watch, but I was on duty so I was placed on report again for leaving the boat without permission from the duty officer, which of course was Mr. Smith.

This time the Skipper questioned Mr. Smith as to if all he had to do was follow me around to put me on report. He strongly suggested that Mr. Smith might avail himself of the time and the opportunity to become a qualified submariner.

For the record: Mr. Smith never received the trust and respect from the rest of the crew either.

I wish "Mr. Clean Clothes" well, wherever he is. He was called "Mr. Clean Clothes" because he was courting the daughter of the family that owned the laundry in Key West.

THE FLOUR ATTACK

We were part of an anti-submarine exercise. We were to start out about 200 miles east of the Keys and work our way in to an islet just off Key West Harbor. When there, we were to attack the islet with a group of sailors armed with bags of flour.

We were successful in making our way in under a tanker while the search groups were still miles at sea looking for us. When we were about 400 yards from the islet our attack crew went out through the Conning Tower hatch. That way we did not have to surface completely. The bags of flour were sealed in plastic. I don't remember if they used an inflatable raft or just swam ashore.

Anyway the attack was a success. Dawn found the entire islet covered with white flour along with a solitary sentry and his pup-tent.

"They weren't just hull numbers, they were our home addresses. Now the old neighborhood is torn down and gone and all that is left are memories."

Dick Murphy, TIRU

"Submarine life most of the time is hours and hours of boredom with intermittent terror thrown in to keep you on your toes!"

Paul Perris

Bridge: "Helmsman where's your rudder?"

Helmsman: "Back under the After Torpedo Room Sir".

Author Unknown

"You call this bad? I'll tell you what bad is. Bad is passing test depth at 80 feet per second with a thirty degree down bubble. Compared to that, this is a walk in the park."

Author Unknown

The boat was having a swim call and this seaman climbed out of the water and asked the XO why one of his shipmates was carrying a rifle. The XO replied "To shoot you just in case the sharks get you". Needless to say, the seaman never got back in the water.

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 29

EDWIN W. THOMPSON 1953 - 1955

I REMEMBER THE TOP SECRET MISSION, THE BEER ATTACK ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, THE ASSAULT BY SNEAKY NAVY FROGMEN, AND LOCKS ON THE FOOD LOCKER

THE TOP SECRET MISSION

It was a quiet and peaceful day of sunshine, and Key West in 1954 had almost a full squadron of subs moored in the Basin. Duty sections were busy charging batteries, filling water tanks, jamming air, and refueling with 2/3 of the crew scattered over a wide area enjoying liberty, leisure, and the pursuit of happiness.

Suddenly a courier from HQ rushed aboard SEA POACHER and demanded to see the Duty Officer immediately. The Duty Officer responded and was told to get ready for a war patrol ASAP, and sealed orders were to follow. Provisions, fuel, water and ordnance were to be loaded for 90 days. The skipper, wardroom officers, and all personnel were to be recalled post-haste. Some could not be located or contacted, so a recruitment effort was launched to bring aboard a full complement of personnel, borrowed from other boats in the area.

Within 24 hours, SEA POACHER was steaming down the channel with sealed orders embarking on a mission we knew not where or for what purpose. It turned out that there was some type of political uprising in the Yucatan Peninsula and when Captain David Maher opened his orders, we were to patrol the channel between western Cuba and the Yucatan to prevent any outside intervention with the political problem. We were to challenge all marine traffic going in and out of the area to determine their identification, what cargo was being carried, and where they were bound for.

Come to find out later there was a revolution of some sort going on in Guatemala, and we were there to prevent outside intervention by others.

Support was also provided in the form of two destroyer escorts at the north and south end of the channel. It was told that a group of shrimp boats that we had stopped had hastened into Tampa Bay and alerted the news media about being challenged by an unidentified submarine in the Gulf.

Needless to say some panic ensued. One new German freighter became alarmed and rung up flank speed and ran away from us only to be stopped by one of the destroyer escorts on the mission. The freighter had a legitimate destination with legal cargo bound for Texas. They also were telling tales about encountering an unidentified submarine.

After a few days, a mail ship arrived in the area from Key West and transferred some welcome correspondence from home. One of the crew had a nice package from his wife that included a newspaper article showing SEA POACHER steaming down the channel and a full story about where we were and what we were doing.

So much for our TOP SECRET mission.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In mid-October 2007, Ed provided me with a copy of a 1954 GILMORE Globe Newsletter with a front page article on the mission. See References. It was titled NAVY SHIPS TRACKING RED ARMS CARGOES IN CARIBBEAN AREA. Washington (AFPS). Both the State and Navy Departments have confirmed reports that all units of the U.S. Navy in the Caribbean are now maneuvering under special orders to "observe and report" questionable shipping in that area.

The new order stems from the delivery of an arms shipment to Leftist-controlled Guatemala from behind the Iron Curtain. The reasons for the move are twofold: delivery of the arms to Guatemala and constant reports that other shipments are en route there. "What this amounts to is that the Navy is keeping a sharp eye peeled," a State Department official said.

THE BEER ATTACK ON THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER

In 1954 SEA POACHER was assigned to pick up some naval reserve personnel in New Orleans for a weekend training mission. This was the time our Navigator made some position error in the Gulf of Mexico, and we could not find the Mississippi River. (See the Bill Buckley Chapter.)

The arrangement was for us to rendezvous with a motor launch carrying the reservists down the river south of New Orleans to reduce the long trip up and back on the Mississippi. LCDR Maher was still our Skipper, and he was known for watching out for his crew.

We arrived at the rendezvous point before the motor launch, so while holding a stopped position in the River and waiting, a small fishing camp on the West Bank was spotted that was sporting a rather rickety looking dock and a prominent Budweiser sign.

"Who wants a beer break?" shouted the Officer of the Deck, which elicited a positive response from everybody including the Skipper.

We carefully secured ourselves to the dock and almost pulled it out of the mud. Then the SEA POACHER crew, known as Maher's Marauders inundated the little place and quickly bought up all the beer he had. I don't think the poor guy ever had so many customers at one time in his life. I will never forget the look on his face as our boat drifted away leaving his coolers empty. One often wonders what kind of story the guy told his family and friends about the Submarine that attacked and bought up all his beer.

THE ASSAULT BY SNEAKY NAVY FROGMEN

Once while moored at Key West for two weeks of upkeep, our crew was busy cleaning, painting, lubricating, "laying pipe" in the Battery Compartments, etc. I was asked by our Auxiliaries Chief "Zeke Kanaszka" to see about lubricating the squeaky After Torpedo Room hatch. It was close to liberty time, and I had something else on my mind. So I said "Sure Chief, I'll do it first thing in the morning."

It so happened that night, there were Navy frogmen conducting training exercises around the base, and their mission was to sneak aboard a submarine, capture the duty section, and take over the ship. SEA POACHER turned out to be their random target.

It was a dark and moonless night, and the lone topside watch was hanging around the gangway just forward of the doghouse. Two dark and shadowy figures rose out of the water, climbed up on the tank tops on the outboard side of the boat, and proceeded to sneak into the After Torpedo Room.

As they opened the hatch, a loud squeak ensued. The topside watch spotted the intruders, sounded the alarm, and they were caught.

The next morning the auxiliary gang was lauded as the heroes that aborted the Frogman mission. Was the lack of lubrication considered "negligence" or "risk management?"

LOCKS ON THE FOOD LOCKER

Another incident, some time later, involved a new ensign who had just come aboard. He was assigned duty as the Supply and Commissary Officer. He dutifully took the cook down into the Cool Room to take inventory of the supplies and rations.

Of course, with an open door policy on the food supply, the inventory sheets did not match. The sheets were adjusted to show the actual contents, the cook was admonished for not keeping accurate records and a padlock was placed on the Cool Room hatch.

Late that night, the Engine Room crew came off duty and proceeded to the After Battery in search of a midnight snack. "Whoa! How come this thing is locked?"

As any enterprising Engineman would do, they came up with a pair of bolt cutters, removed the lock, and indulged in their midnight quest for food.

Next morning when it was discovered by the new Supply Officer, he stormed into the Skipper's Cabin and screamed "They cut the lock!" The Captain said "What lock?"

"The one on the Cool Room hatch and food is missing" exclaimed our new Ensign.

"We don't put locks on the food supply for the crew" the Captain advised.

"What next?" countered the Ensign. "Order more food" said the Captain.

That was the end of that, and we ate heartily any time we wanted to, and we were a healthy, happy crew.

"It's extremely difficult to second guess the American Navy, because the Americans rarely read their doctrine, and don't feel compelled to follow it when they do."

Attributed to Admiral of the Soviet Fleet, Serge Gorshkov

"What Sir? You would make a ship sail against the wind and tides by lighting a bonfire under her deck? I pray you excuse me. I have no time to listen to such nonsense."

Napoleon Bonaparte, On Robert Fulton's plan to build a steamboat

"You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism."

Erma Brombeck

"I don't know what effect these men will have on the enemy, but, by God, they terrify me."

Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington

CHAPTER 30

DON SCHWARTZ 1954 - 1955

I REMEMBER THE CIA GUATEMALA SECRET MISSION, KICKED OUT OF CAP HAITIAN - HAITI, LIBERTY IN PORT AU PRINCE, SHARK BITES, AND LIBERTY IN PORT EVERGLADES

THE CIA GUATEMALA SECRET MISSION

This was in 1954 and apparently involved the Russians sending in guns and ammunition to Guatemala, or perhaps it was an internal revolution. I had just reported aboard fresh out of Sub School, but I would later earn my Dolphins on SEA POACHER. Initially a Seaman, I later became a Torpedoman.

We suspected it was a CIA operation, especially when we were ordered to paint over our 406 numbers. We took on a full load of food, fuel, and small arms including helmets, throughout the evening and night. They even pulled some ratings off of other boats to fill out our complement.

After slipping out of Key West early in the a.m., we proceeded to somewhere off Central America. There were two submarines, and destroyers, as well as aircraft involved. We flew no flags, and with our 406 numbers painted over, we were like a pirate ship. At night, we ran without our running lights.

We stopped and questioned approximately 50 to 100 ships that appeared to be heading for Guatemala. Air would spot the ships far out, and if they appeared to be heading in the direction of Guatemala, they would inform us, so we could track, then stop, and then question them.

We answered to no one. We had no idea what nation's flag the merchants would be using. Radio was not used. All stopping and questioning was done by light using international code.

This went on for four to five weeks. I believe there was a machine in the Radio Room hooked up directly to the CIA. We all wondered what would have happened had we come across a ship carrying the arms.

When we returned to base, we were shown newspaper articles stating a Russian submarine had been terrorizing ships at sea. So much for the Cold War!

KICKED OUT OF CAP HAITIAN - HAITI

We docked early a.m. in Cap Haitian, and were told that we were the first Navy ship in there for 10 years. We were also informed that there was a dance in the City that evening.

They did not inform us it was a formal, chaperoned dance. We had been drinking all day, and then proceeded to the dance that evening. They really did not want to have anything to do with drunken sailors. Of course, we were a bit rowdy and drunk, and generally making a**** out of ourselves. At this point, the Haitian "military" supplied our shore patrol of three with jeeps and drivers to haul our a**** back to the boat, as we had become more than a bit rowdy.

They wanted us out of there pronto, and informed the Skipper not to come back. Everyone felt sorry for the Skipper. We were really down in the dumps the next day, so the Captain got on the 1MC and said to the crew "Put it behind you and forget it."

LIBERTY IN PORT AU PRINCE

It was a beautiful day and a group of us headed to a hotel high in the mountains overlooking the City. It was off season and the "ex-Navy man" owner took us on tour of his property.

He showed us how his help were carving furniture out of mahogany and melting lime stones. He said the pay was equivalent to 11 cents per day. We lounged around his patio and pool, just drinking and relaxing.

We then sat down to one of the best meals I have ever had. It was served family style, and I can still taste that filet mignon.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Thirty-two years after Don, in 1986, I was on a two week business trip to Haiti. I must have gone to the same place. The area is called Petionville. In contrast to the poverty everywhere else, this area was very prosperous. I also had the best dinner in my life at a wonderful mountain top restaurant overlooking the City.

SHARK BITES

I remember also being at sea and catching this large shark. We had cut the eyes and jaw out, but somehow his tail was still active. It hit a shipmate directly in the a** and nearly threw him overboard.

LIBERTY IN PORT EVERGLADES

We had completed operations and were in port. On the second evening, my buddy and I hitched a ride from the beach area back to the boat. I was around midnight, when he left us off on Route 1 and the road to the docks.

There was a night spot at the intersection, and I figured we should have one more beer. However, my buddy elected to head back to the boat.

I was in uniform and seated at the bar. Next to me was an older gentleman, and he was very talkative. He was rambling on how he owned the JOLLY ROGER, ESCAPE, and other hotels on the beach.

I just figured he had too much to drink.

After a while, he said he was heading home and pulled out his car keys. I suggested I drive him home, which he agreed to. He handed me his keys, and we proceeded over to this brand new Cadillac. Heading out, before long I saw the flashing lights of a police car in the rear view mirror. I decided I had best pull over. The cop comes over to me with a grouchy attitude until he spots my passenger. His attitude changed, and he said "Oh Mr. Gill, I just want to let you know your tail light is out!"

We then proceeded along, and I was wondering who I actually had in the car. Upon arriving at the JOLLY ROGER Hotel, I went into the Lobby. I said I have a Mr. Gill in the car, and he states that he owns this Hotel. They came outside and sure enough it was his Hotel. They helped him inside, and as I was ready to leave he asked me how I was getting back. I said I

would hitch a ride. Mr. Gill said to take his car, and bring it back tomorrow. It was about 3 a.m., and I was not going to argue with him.

The next morning no one would believe my story. But the Cadillac near the pier was pretty good evidence.

Anyway, I drove back to the Hotel, wondering if he would remember giving me the car. Sure enough, he not only remembered, but was very thankful for driving him home. He then tells me of a western theme party at the Hotel that evening, and to bring as many shipmates as I wanted to. He also said to keep the car for a while. Back aboard the boat, it was not easy convincing the guys about the free dinner party.

Well, about 10 of us went. When we arrived he handed each of us a western hat with kerchiefs. It was a grand time. We also partied around the pool area of his other Hotel, the ESCAPE, for three more days. Plus I had the use of that Caddy.

The Captain knew all about this. And our Skipper invited him on board as a guest of SEA POACHER, but he did not show up.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After receiving this article from Don, and since the JOLLY ROGER was a fixture to most all of us, I decided to see what was on the Internet regards this classic hotel on the Fort Lauderdale Beach. (See References.)

It was built by George W. (Bob) Gill, Jr. between 1952 and 1954, and was the first beach hotel in Fort Lauderdale with air conditioning. He also built the ESCAPE, now called the Tiffany House, which was the first hotel with a swimming pool. Both hotels were the first to be open year-round. Mr. Gill also built over 3,000 homes in Fort Lauderdale in the mid-1940s.

The JOLLY ROGER, now called the Sea Club Resort, is a unique example of Mid-Century Modern Architecture with its whimsical pirate ship motif, porthole windows, dramatic lobby with two-story glass wall, and the use of local coral rock throughout. On March 6, 2006, the Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Board recommended that the City Commission approve local Landmark Status for the Sea Club Resort/JOLLY ROGER. The City Commission's consideration of Landmark Status was deferred until May 15, 2007. Its current status is not clear.

The owner is still Mr. Gill, who has been described as "a promotional genius" and the "undisputed innovator and entrepreneur in the hospitality industry," who put Fort Lauderdale Beach on the tourist map.

"Submariners are a special brotherhood, either all come to the surface or no one does. On a submarine, the phrase all for one and one for all is not just a slogan, but reality."

VADM Rudolf Golosov of the Russian Navy

"A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace."

*President Theodore Roosevelt, 2 December 1902,
Message to Congress.*

Diving Officer: "Stern planes man do you have control of your bubble?"

Stern Planes man: "Yes Sir, I have it trapped in the corner, Sir"

Author Unknown

THE U.S. MILITARY CODE OF CONDUCT

Since we are now in the 1955 time frame, it seems appropriate to add this to the writing. Arising from the Korean War, it was first promulgated by President Eisenhower on 17 August 1955. It was reaffirmed in 1964. It was then amended by President Carter in 1977 and again by President Reagan in 1988. It is how every member of the U.S. military is trained to behave, not only in their day-to-day duties, but especially in the face of the Enemy. You all know it:

Article I: I am an American, fighting in the armed forces which guard my country and our way of life. I am prepared to give my life in their defense.

Article II: I will never surrender of my own free will. If in command I will never surrender the members of my command while they still have the means to resist.

Article III: If I am captured, I will continue to resist by all means available. I will make every effort to escape and aid others to escape. I will accept neither parole nor special favors from the enemy.

Article IV: If I become a prisoner of war, I will keep faith with my fellow prisoners. I will give no information nor take part in any action which might be harmful to my comrades. If I am senior, I will take command. If not, I will obey the lawful orders of those appointed over me and will back them up in every way.

Article V: When questioned, should I become a prisoner of war, I am required to give name, rank, service, number, and date of birth. I will evade answering further questions to the utmost of my ability. I will make no oral or written statements disloyal to my country and its allies or harmful to their cause.

Article VI: I will never forget that I am an American, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles which made my country free. I will trust in my God and in the United States of America.

CHAPTER 31

THOMAS (TOMMY) THOMPSON 1955 - 1956

I REMEMBER SUBMARINE QUALIFICATION BY THE CAPTAIN'S WAY

SUBMARINE QUALIFICATION BY THE CAPTAIN'S WAY

I never heard this to ever to happen before or after it happened to me. I got my final qualification in submarines from the Captain and I was blindfolded to make it even more interesting.

This took place on the SEA POACHER in Key West, Florida in August 1956. I was an IC3 at the time. I had been on board 11 months with 6 months of that time spent in the Naval shipyard in Charleston for a ships overhaul, from November until the end of April. Well I had seen the boat, from stem to stern all cut up and I even got to see the inside of the ballast tanks while scrapping them in preparation for painting them. Now after coming out of the yards all I had to do was finish my drawings and go thru the compartments and I would be qualified. Easier said than done.

Being young and having a good time with some of my shipmates was great, but getting qualified was not number one in my book. Then fate intervened and two of my buddies, George Adams and Dave Spence, took leave and I was alone.

Well I saw this as an opportunity to crack down and get my quals done. It's amazing how much you can accomplish in a short time when you put your mind to it. I stayed aboard and worked getting everything that I needed done. In no time I was ready to go through the boat and here is where it all begins.

We were in port for a day and after I had everything together I asked my Chief if I could see the Engineering Officer to get permission to see the XO to make an appointment for a walk thru the boat. Receiving that okay, I went to the Wardroom to see the Engineer. Lunch was just about over and all the officers were still in the wardroom, when I stuck my head in. Captain Polk asked if he could be of any assistance. I replied that I was looking for the Engineer LT Marvin Schenker so that I could make an appointment for a walk thru to get qualified.

The Captain to my surprise asked if I was ready. I said "Yes Sir." Again he asked if I was sure. At this point I was not going to back down and I again answered "Yes, Sir." The Captain then looked at the other officers and said lets give him a blindfold test and asked LT Ken Loposer to get a towel. He then said to me and the other officers "Let's go to the Control Room." Well I didn't know what was in store for me, but I sure found out.

When we entered the Control Room there was only 2 or 3 people there, and they moved out of the way while the Captain was blindfolding me. Then the questioning began. First we started at the air manifold. The Captain asked me to touch the High Pressure blow valves for the Bow Buoyancy tank, and then the Forward and After Group valves. After identifying them, he asked to me to stimulate putting the Low Pressure blower on. That was also accomplished to his satisfaction

He then told me to go to the Trim Manifold, which meant that I had to feel my way from the starboard side of the Control Room to the port side. Now he asked me to stimulate lining up various trim tanks on his command. Each time I followed his command he asked me how did I know it was doing what I lined it up to do, I told him how on each operation I would feel if a tank was either venting or drawing a suction at the 225 pound air manifold, depending on what operation it was performing. At this time I was hearing a lot of background chatter and I didn't realize that we drawing a crowd.

We then worked our way to the Diving Stand where I was to demonstrate how to rig out the Bow Planes. Then the Captain asked me to shift the Bow Planes to the Emergency Power position. This required moving a big selector and removing a cotter pin so the Emergency Wheel could be activated. When that was done the Captain told me to restore everything to normal power. Well I did restore everything but was having a hard time placing the cotter pin back in its small hole. The Captain seeing this laughed and said he would do it for me as I was handicapped for the moment.

Then we moved over to the Diving Manifold where I was asked to point out the various valves for opening the tanks when diving. Then I was asked to secure the air to the ship's whistle which was in the overhead of the compartment which I could do easily, because I had done it many times before and didn't need to see it to actually do it. By this time there were some 30 to 40 people crowding into Control to see what was going on.

Next we came to the Forward Auxiliary Power Distribution Panel where the Captain asked me to call off the various breakers. That accomplished we moved to the I.C. Switchboard. Here I was asked to pull the breaker for the Bow Planes Indicator. I pulled the Stern Plane breaker. When the Captain informed me of what I had done I closed the circuit and pulled the one forward of it which was correct. I was then asked to recognize the various alarm boxes located by the Diving Officer's Station. These were all recognizable because each had a different shape handle for easy recognition.

The next question the Captain asked stumped me. He asked me to go to the DAS – 4 and point it out. I could hear snickering in the background. What was the DAS – 4? I had not heard of it and I told the Captain. He laughed and said would I know it if he called it by what everyone else did, namely the LORAN. I went to it immediately.

The Captain told me to remove my blindfold, and that's when I discovered the wall of people in the Control Room. The Captain told me that if I knew the rest of the boat as well as I knew the Control Room, he would be glad to sign my qualification card.

With that he turned to LT. Loposer and said "Ken take him through the boat." Mr. Loposer and I got together in the Chief's Quarters and we went over my Qual card and he asked some more questions and said he would recommend to the Captain that I be "Qualified in Submarines." I thanked him and said "I wouldn't forget this day."

The next day at morning quarters it was announced that I had qualified. Then Captain Polk pinned my dolphins on, the Electrical gang picked me up, threw me over the side, and pulled me back on board.

My boss IC1 Bill Jahns handed me a chit and said to me to give to the XO. I went to the XO LT Bob Bergs and handed him the chit. He looked at it, then at me and said "I would say that it's true." The chit was for me to stay in that day from daily operations and the reason stated was that "I was all wet."

Thus, that was how I became "Qualified in Submarines." That was over 50 years ago, and I still remember it as if it happened yesterday.

CHAPTER 32

WILLIAM LUTTRELL 1955 - 1956

I REMEMBER KEY WEST TRAILER PARK, CAPTAIN POLK AND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, MOONSHINE AND MATTRESSES, AND INPORT HAVANA CUBA WITH ERNEST HEMINGWAY

KEY WEST TRAILER PARK

I was transferred to SEA POACHER in Key West having completed Submarine School in May of 1955. Upon arrival, there was a severe housing shortage, and the chances of getting into Navy Housing were practically nil. With a wife and two children we rented a 2 room apartment until such time we could find something suitable and affordable. All rentals were very expensive with it being a tourist town.

After searching for quarters for a long time we opted to purchase a 40 foot house trailer. Key West was known for having more than its share of bugs to invade ones home, but at least we had our own bugs, not the neighbors. We moved into a Navy Trailer Park located downtown on White Street and my children entered an elementary school a short distance from us.

My first visit to Charleston was in 1956 when we brought SEA POACHER to the shipyard for a six month overhaul. Believe it or not, we towed our house trailer with an old 1947 Dodge (fluid drive) to North Charleston and parked it in a pine grove on Rivers Avenue and Remount Road where Altman Dodge is now located.

Back in those days driving to Remount from the base was like a country drive. I do remember a couple of places along the way such as MaMa Kate's Drive In and the Air Force Bar and Grill.

CAPTAIN POLK AND STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

Charlie Owens was a happy go lucky person always keeping us entertained. I will ever forget this trick that Charlie pulled that almost got him in trouble. Our Captain at that time was LCDR Thomas Polk who always made sure that strawberry shortcake was served as dessert often.

On this particular trip our cook, Chief Henry Schmidt, had failed to order and have on board the topping of Redi-Whip. That particular day the desert of strawberry shortcake was served without topping and the Captain was very irate.

So to make matters worse, Charlie went to the Galley and made himself a desert and topped it with shaving cream and headed to the Forward Torpedo Room making sure that it was in plain view for all of the officers to see when he passed by the Wardroom.

Needless to say Captain Polk called for the Supply Officer and Chief Schmidt, and the rest is history.

MOONSHINE AND MATTRESSES

We went through a 6 month overhaul in 1956 in Charleston and occupied the Submarine barracks, which was located near the Reynolds Avenue gate. On any Sunday morning you could head to the shower and trip over many quart jars. At that time moonshine was plentiful and a quart could be purchased for about a dollar. During that overhaul we replaced all of the boat's mattresses and before the old ones got thrown in the dumpster I managed to confiscate one that is still with me today and is used when the grandchildren visit.

When we departed Charleston we stopped by Bermuda I thought it was for R&R, but learned while we were there, that it was actually a booze run. Some of the crew saw that the officers were bringing a lot of packages onboard and learned that it was booze. Needless to say the crew jumped on the bandwagon and if the custom officials had inspected us upon our arrival at Key West we would have been in big trouble.

IMPORT HAVANA CUBA WITH ERNEST HEMINGWAY

During my tenure on SEA POACHER we visited Havana, Cuba on several occasions before Fidel Castro managed to overthrow Batista, who was considered a dictator at that time. Taking hindsight and foresight into consideration, Cuba was a lot better off with a dictator.

During those days Havana was influenced by the Mafia. At the time Lucky Luciano had left the U.S. to seek refuge in Havana. He frequented bars and nightclubs and was always seeking out Americans to converse with. The Navy put out a directive forbidding the sailors to be in the company with or talk to him.

My most memorable experience in those days or perhaps of my lifetime was on a Sunday, morning in Havana when one of my shipmates (Bruce Matheny, SO3, now a retired physician living in Kentucky) suggested that we try to locate the home of Ernest Hemingway who was living there. We hired a taxi to take us to his home where we were dropped off in front of a large iron gate, and all we could see was a vast lawn and many trees. We spied a lady leaving the property who appeared to be an employee, and we asked her if she would return to the house and ask Mr. Hemingway if he would allow a group of American sailors to visit with him. She returned with the good news that he would see us and she led us to his home and we were invited in.

The first thing he asked us was, could he fix us a drink, and of course we all agreed. He took water glasses and put a couple of ice cubes in each and poured a very generous amount of gin with very little water. We then proceeded to tour some of his rooms that were adorned with things he had collected over the years, but mainly the walls were covered with guns and trophies of the animals he had bagged on his safaris.

The room where he did all of his writing was, of course, the most interesting. Not fancy at all. His writing desk was very crude - It was more like a draftsman's table high off the floor since his chair was a high stool. I asked him how he went about giving his books their titles. He picked up a couple of lined pad sheets that were covered with scratched out titles with one remaining and it was "The Old Man and the Sea." He told us that during the writing, he and his wife Mary would jot down the prospective titles. After about an hour Mary, appeared and told him it was time for his daily swim. We thanked him and departed.

I firmly believe that Ernest Hemingway invented the words "Cuss like a Sailor." Having spent twenty years in the Navy I have never met a sailor that could top him.

CHAPTER 33

COLVIN R. COCHRANE 1955 - 1956

I REMEMBER MOVING TO CHARLESTON FOR AN OVERHAUL, PURCHASING A MOBILE HOME, RETURNING TO KEY WEST, CAR PROBLEMS, A RUN IN WITH A TRAIN, THE ENDLESS TRIP AND SNAKES, THE SEVEN MILE BRIDGE, TRAILER DAMAGE AND WATER SPOUTS, AND ARRIVING IN KEY WEST

MOVING TO CHARLESTON FOR AN OVERHAUL

The year was 1956. SEA POACHER had left Key West to go to Charleston, South Carolina for an overhaul.

We were living in an apartment in Key West, not thinking about any travel, so we just grabbed our boat and trailer, hooked it to our car, and headed to Charleston. After arriving, we rented a place on Rivers Avenue in North Charleston. The noise, not to even mention the water, was so horrible that we managed to stay there for only two days.

Then we moved from there down to Reynolds Avenue. Now anyone who has ever been on SEA POACHER, and ever lived in Charleston with the Navy Yard, knows about Reynolds Avenue. Well we lived right across from Rivers on Spruill Avenue in a one room apartment.

Everything was in one room. You cooked in this room, and you even took the bed out of the closet at night in this one little room. Despite that, everything was fine, because I could very easily walk right to the shipyard and back.

Things were going perfectly fine in our little one room apartment until one day my wife Joyce went outside and hung up her laundry on the clothes line. The laundry included most of Joyce's lingerie, which was some very fine lingerie. Later, when she went out to retrieve the laundry, it was all gone. At this point I knew something had to happen, and we needed to find a better place to live.

PURCHASING A MOBILE HOME

After talking to some of the guys on the boat, especially Joe Carver and Bill Luttrell, they told me about living in a trailer, and how much they liked it. So Joyce and I went up to a place called St. George where this Judge sold mobile homes right out of his back yard.

We arrived at his house, but he was more interested in showing us this circus he had in his back yard than selling us a trailer. However, we eventually bought a 42 foot long, 8 foot wide trailer that was more than the home of our dreams.

The company brought the trailer to Charleston for us. We put it in Chicora Heights and had never been happier. We certainly never gave it a second thought that we would one day leave Charleston and would have to figure out how to take the trailer with us. Everyone knows that a move to the shipyard is not a permanent transfer and when you do move, you move at your

own expense. But we weren't thinking about that because right now we were in our dream house and things were wonderful.

Eventually the time approached that we would have to make the move back to Key West, and we begin to think about how we might get this 42 foot home of our dreams back to Florida.

I remembered my friend Bill Luttrell, who also had a trailer, had borrowed a hitch from Don Green. Don had one of those perfect tow hitches. It was real nice, because it was store bought.

Bill had taken this hitch down to the shipyard to the Ship Fitters Shop and had one made. I'm here to tell you that you couldn't tell the difference between the store bought hitch and the home made hitch. So low and behold, I grabbed a 20 pound can of coffee and headed up to the Ship Fitters Shop and got one made for myself.

RETURNING TO KEY WEST

The time has now come to pack up and head back to Key West. We were really not thinking about it very much as we began to pack up the car. The car was a 1951 Ford automatic, 6 cylinder and it was something else. Now, with this car, we've got to get back to Florida with a boat trailer, an outboard motor, and a 42 foot mobile home.

Most people probably would have gotten some permits and registration tags to haul all this, but I guess I don't have to tell you, I didn't. I just didn't have time for that stuff, and I figured I would be safe.

My first dilemma was having both a boat trailer and a mobile home to pull. So I took a hack saw and cut the boat trailer into two pieces and stuck those inside the mobile home, along with the outboard motor, my mechanics tool box, and everything else we could fit inside. We were then ready to head out to Florida.

Now you have to realize it is 1956 and there weren't any throughways or interstates. So Joyce and I headed out on our journey. We headed down Hwy 78 toward Augusta.

Don't ask me why we went that way. The only thing I might possibly have been thinking was that maybe due to the time of year, which was summer, that Hwy 17 would probably be blocked up. So we decided to take the other route.

CAR PROBLEMS

Everything was going along just fine as Joyce and I headed back to Key West with our dream home loaded down with all our worldly possessions. It was getting to be around 1400 and the sun had been beating down on our little Ford for hours and needless to say those 6 cylinders began to run hot.

But I remembered Joe Carver telling me one time about how he had blocked his hood up to scoop some air into the engine and helped it run cooler. So I pulled over to the side of the road, got out and found a piece of wood, blocked the hood up just a little bit and tied the hood back down with some rope. And we were again on the way.

I noticed that we could get about an hour or so before the little Ford would start running hot again, and eventually the southern heat proved to be too much for the 1956 little Ford. So the only thing I could think of to do next was to pull over and take the hood completely off. So we pulled over once again.

I went in the trailer, fished around for my tool box, and removed the hood of the car. I put the tool box back inside trailer and added the hood of the car too. You can only picture how much junk is now loaded in this trailer. Now we're back on the road again, with no hood but a cool engine. So we are rocking and rolling south again.

A RUN IN WITH A TRAIN

By late afternoon we had made it to a little place called Waycross, Georgia. During this time, we had had to make some very difficult 90 degree turns, and unbeknownst to me, this had been very harsh on the trailer brake wires. Mostly because, when I hooked up the trailer brake wires, I just twisted them together and put some tape around them to hold them together.

About this time we're coming into Waycross. I looked up ahead and saw a train signal starting to go off, so I immediately reached up to pull on the trailer brakes. To my surprise, there are no brakes.

So, needless to say, I had to make a quick decision and there was pretty much only one to make. As they say, I put the pedal to the metal and floored it.

To this day I'm not sure how close that train came to hitting us, but the train was blowing its horn, the people on the sides of the road were throwing their hands over their faces and heads, and that trailer quaked and shuddered for several minutes after we got across. Now we are really traveling at a high rate of speed and still have no brakes.

Here we are headed into town and no brakes. So the best thing I could think to do was to put the old girl over on the curb, slide all the wheels up against the curb, and drag the wheels. So that's what we did, and I finally got the old girl to slow down enough to stop it with the car brakes.

I got out and took a look at the wires, and sure enough I had pulled the cables loose between the car and the trailer. But as a good submarine sailor, I had numbered all the wires on each end so it was no problem tying and taping them all back together. Now we are on our way again.

THE ENDLESS TRIP AND SNAKES

We drove and drove, and it seemed as if the trip was never going to end. We eventually made it to Florida and the pavement was hot. Snakes were slithering everywhere and Joyce was terrified one of them was going to somehow crawl up into the car. So she kept her feet tucked up under her just in case.

It was now getting late into the night. As we were traveling along, I looked up and saw all these flashing lights ahead. Here I was pulling at night, over length, no permits and no tags. I had only one thought.

I was sure we were going to jail. We eased on down to where the lights were. The police flagged us down and pulled us into the stop. As it turned out they were looking for some escaped convicts.

To this day I don't know why they didn't want to look in our trailer. The only thing I can figure is Joyce and I looked so scared that they just let us go. We continued to drive through the night and into the next morning through the Tamiami Trail, and then we hit the Keys. We were tired and hungry to say the least.

THE SEVEN MILE BRIDGE

Our next big obstacle was when we hit the Seven Mile Bridge. We started to cross it, and I looked up and ahead was a motor grader cutting the grass. Here I am pulling this 42 by 8 foot trailer. I'm about 50 something feet in length, and here is that little motor grader going down that narrow little bridge.

I looked at Joyce and said "You watch the blade, and I'll watch the side of the road and we'll see if we can squeeze by." Well, sure enough we squeezed by and got on down the road.

We were now well into the Keys with still no sleep and still very hungry. It was getting to be about high noon and Joyce was really hungry and thirsty.

My biggest thought was I still hadn't put a single scratch on the trailer yet.

TRAILER DAMAGE AND WATER SPOUTS

As we continued down the road we saw a filling station. We decided to stop and get something to eat and drink. Low and behold, after all we've been through, we pull into this little gas station and they have this low hanging advertisement sign. I pulled under it and scraped the top of the trailer for the first time. But we made it there and went in to get some needed food.

We're sitting inside, sipping our drinks and cooling off just a bit, when out of no where comes a water spout and it dumps tons and tons of water right there on top of our old Ford.

Well, considering the hood was still off, this was not a good thing. It drowned everything inside. It took me a good hour to get everything dried out and working again, but I finally did and we got back on the road.

After 27 hours of straight driving we finally pulled into Key West.

ARRIVING IN KEY WEST

We found a beautiful place to put our dream home on Stock Island right next to the water. As a matter of fact if you walked around the back of the trailer to take a l*** you would be p***** in the ocean.

We had many good times in our dream home trailer.

It traveled with us back to Connecticut and New York, and we filled it with stories that are just too long to tell.

I hope you enjoyed this little story of our trip from Charleston to Key West.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cal sold the boat without the trailer, and I asked him why. He said they had saved and saved to get the outboard motor and trailer, and boats were cheap.

The motor and trailer were new and they were not going to give them up. I was to understand that he was just a third class.

He also said when they got to Key West they bought an air conditioning unit for the trailer. However after the first electrical bill, they sold the A/C unit.

CHAPTER 34

MARVIN SCHENKER 1955 - 1957

I REMEMBER VISITING CAP HAITIEN HAITI, CLAUSTROPHOBIC FEELINGS – SOME CONTAINERS FEEL CONFINING, AND CHOCOLATE LAYER CAKE

VISITING CAP HAITIEN HAITI

SEA POACHER paid a visit to Cap Haitian during a Caribbean training deployment at GITMO. The time was November 1956 and our mission was to provide submarine training services to Navy surface ships during their shakedown training period.

A goal of our Skipper, LCDR Tom Polk, included port visits to allow the crew to “see the world” as sailors were supposed to do. Ports were selected for recreational and educational purposes, so long as their distance from Guantanamo allowed access for weekend breaks in training.

Other ports in Cuba (Santiago) and in Jamaica (Port Antonio and Ocho Rios) were visited most frequently by our submarines. The XO, Bob Bergs, wanted the crew to experience something different. A weekend in Cap Haitian, Haiti was arranged.

Haiti was a poor nation, with a low standard of living and a reputation for interesting Native arts and crafts. We were able to buy souvenir drums, paintings, and wood carvings (with occasional termite populations) at reasonable cost. But a surprise to most of us was the fact that Cap Haitian was the site of the nearby Citadel fortress, a stone structure built on the nearby mountain top by the then Haitian black king to discourage attack by the forces of France. This location had been the capital of the nation after revolt from French domination. A narrow and steep path, wide enough for only a mule or a man, allowed one to climb the mountain for the great view and a look at the marvel of construction of massive stones. It was incredible to learn that the building materials had been moved somehow up the mountain path by slave labor many years before.

A group of us from SEA POACHER arranged with some locals to hire mules for the ascent. Each mule was supplied also with a young black boy with stick to walk alongside and motivate the beasts to climb the path. As memory serves me, our group included the Skipper, XO, LT Ken Loposer, LTJG Jack Sabol, and other crew members. I recall that I, not being a conditioned horseman, experienced discomforting irritation of my posterior as we climbed. At about the half way mark, I asked my beater boy to stop, so that I could dismount and stretch. It felt so good to be off the mule, that I told the boy to give me his stick then mount the mule. I took on the job of mule beater, and enjoyed the remainder of the climb on foot. The Citadel visit proved to be fascinating, due to its size, location, view and history. This anecdote of our visit to Cap Haitian has been among the favorite sea stories of my Navy experiences as a member of the crew of SEA POACHER.

It was a great ship and crew with a wonderful CO and XO. I was the Operations Officer.

CLAUSTROPHOBIC FEELINGS – SOME CONTAINERS FEEL CONFINING

It was November 1956. SEA POACHER, from Submarine Squadron Four in Key West was deployed to GITMO to help train Navy ships in their anti-submarine roles. Our operations were daily. Out early from the submarine pier and back at the pier by early evening.

Many crew and officers who were not in the duty section would go ashore to the base clubs for a few (or more) Hatuey beers, and maybe also to light up a good Cuban cigar, and play liars dice or table shuffleboard. The clubs were usually fairly quiet, few females in sight, and a small number of local base sailors. The ships-in-training crews were restricted to their vessels during weekdays.

One evening at the Officers Club, our small group was pleased to encounter two Navy flight instructors at the bar. They had flown in that day from their stateside Naval Air Station (Memphis I vaguely recall), in a two seat jet trainer, to pick up some rum and cigars for their boss. We all became quite friendly, telling sea and air stories and drinking perhaps more than usual as the camaraderie grew. Our XO talked the flyboys into staying over an extra day to take a ride to sea with us tomorrow. It was agreed, and we all became blood brothers before the intoxicated night was secured.

Next morning was a routine early underway for SEA POACHER, but with the novelty of having our two Lieutenants, wearing wings, on their first submarine cruise. They were given a tour of the boat and briefed about the day's operations, especially the submerging. The briefing, for effect, was slightly distorted. For example, after the vents are open and the OOD comes down the hatch to become the Diving Officer, all is well unless he yells out "Blow Negative." If that happens we are in danger, so grab a tight hold. They got through the dive - a little shook, and ready to be out of this confining sardine can, but ok. They endured the rest of the day submerged with destroyer's echo ranging overhead, and enjoyed a good steak lunch.

Before we surfaced and returned to port, our guests volunteered to bring two jet trainer aircraft to Key West during the following Christmas holiday period - to reciprocate with short air rides for those of us blood brothers who cared to experience the real Navy.

And so it happened that in late December 1956, myself, a Lieutenant and qualified submariner, and a few others from SEA POACHER gathered at Boca Chica Naval Air Station, Key West to greet our friends and prepare for a Navy jet ride. I was first escorted through the ready room, fitted with a life vest, a parachute and a helmet. Then to a sleek jet trainer, helped into the front (trainee) seat after donning my gear. The life vest and parachute harness were properly secured around me, the safety harness was latched and tightened. I was briefed with emphasis on keeping my elbows in tight while aloft, so that in case of an emergency eject, arms would not be cut off on the way out. The helmet then was properly placed and the phone set plugged in. After my host climbed into the aft seat, we checked communications ok, and he asked me if all was well - he was ready to close the overhead clear aircraft hood. I gave him my thumbs up, even though I was feeling quite warm under the Key West sun, and worse, I could not scratch that itch that was developing on my scalp under the hard helmet. I'd live with it.

The jet started to taxi to the runway and very soon we were airborne on a beautiful Key West morning. I felt slightly confined, with elbows tucked in close. My pilot then suggested a few maneuvers be demonstrated. My thumb went up again. From the next moment on, the earth and the sky started rotating - spinning. My stomach quickly became very unsettled. I could not orient - upside down or right side up or some where in between? Hot, nauseous, feeling

extremely confined - craving freedom from this flying, claustrophobic container. No submarine was ever this confining, even under the forward escape hatch.

The time aloft was not very long, based on the report from my waiting spouse - but it seemed an eternity till we coasted to a smooth landing - back on terra firma. I struggled out of aircraft and flying gear, thanked my smiling host. My spouse, commenting on my green complexion, drove me home, stomach still doing loops, to recovery during the rest of the day.

And so, even today, I discount the flier's "wild blue yonder" propaganda. Submarines live in memory as roomy, with plenty of space to move and stretch - and scratch the scalp or whatever. Jet fighter - now that's cause for claustrophobia.

CHOCOLATE LAYER CAKE

SEA POACHER was a good feeder. Great cooks and very conscientious stewards for the Wardroom. They were always eager to please, and their good attitude kept high the spirits of the officers. This in turn made for smoother relations with the whole crew.

We were enjoying a really good lunch in the Wardroom with Captain Polk and XO Berge, and everyone was smiling and upbeat. The conversation covered anticipated forthcoming operations, as well as those recently completed successfully. Lunch was winding down to dessert and the menu listed chocolate layer cake, which would complete a perfect meal. One steward brought out the Captain's dessert first. So here was a nice large serving and very thickly iced on top with chocolate. As the steward retreated to the pantry for more servings, the Skipper looked over the dish in front of him and then called out to the lead steward. "I'm just too full for this big slice of cake - Please cut it in half for me."

The XO picked up on this, saying "I'll take the other half please." The serving was returned to the pantry to carry out the stated wishes. Very shortly thereafter, the cake serving, having been modified, arrived again in the Wardroom, now on two dishes. Before the Captain was placed (appropriately) the upper half (with all the frosting) - and for the XO, the lower half. Laughter shook the wardroom table.

Quartermaster - Bridge "What is that star in the southern sky?"

Bridge - Quartermaster "I believe that is the planet Uranus."

(Long 30 second pause.)

Bridge - Quartermaster Sir, upon further review of the celestial navigation picture, we've determined that "star" is far too small to be Uranus.

Author Unknown

"The wonder is always new that any man can be a sailor"

Ralph Waldo Emerson

From the Conning Officer, looking out the periscope after a broach:

"Diving Officer, I believe we are airborne"

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 35

TED ANTHONY 1955 - 1957

I REMEMBER BEING A PISTOL AND RIFLE MARKSMAN, AND THE GOOD OLD DAYS FIFTY YEARS LATER

BEING A PISTOL AND RIFLE MARKSMAN

I reported aboard SEA POACHER while the boat was in the Yards at Charleston. I did not know that I had two ribbons coming until XO Mr. Bergs called me to his state room, and asked me if I liked to shoot.

Puzzled, I said yes, I do.

He then presented me with the Navy Expert Pistol and Expert Rifle Medals and Ribbons, which he instructed me to wear on my uniform. I was very surprised.

Back in Boot Camp after small arms qualifications, in which I had shot perfect scores with both weapons, I had been awarded medals for the same, but didn't know it until I had reached my first command, and they had caught up with me.

About a month later Mr. Bergs called me again to this stateroom and asked me if I would like to go to the National Open Pistol Match down in Coral Gables, Florida and represent the U.S. Navy.

I was just a kid, and I didn't know what to say. So he smiled and told me he would arrange for orders, and I could go. He also asked of I had a weapon to shoot, which I did not have, so he got one of the 1911A standard .45 Caliber Automatics from the boats armory and gave me permission to get it accurized.

I went to the Marine detachment there at the Yard and got the Armory Sergeant to do the job, and he did a great job on the weapon. Mr. Bergs gave me ten (10) boxes of .45 hard ball ammo and told me to go to the range every day for the next two weeks and practice.

This I did with pleasure.

Then came the day to go.

With orders in hand I went to the Air Force base and caught a DC3 to Opalocka, Florida and then with five other fellows we went to the range. Well, for the next three days we shot and eliminated, and shot and eliminated, and when it was all over I had come out Third Place in the Nation.

I could not believe it myself. I had beat two Marine Master Sergeants and a very p***** off pair of Border Patrol Officers. This was only by a slim margin of one and one half points. Needless to say I was elated.

So back to the boat I went. And Mr. Bergs met me as I got off the plane and he was one proud XO. Lanny I have the news paper clipping of the interview, and I will send it to you as soon as I can find it.

I had almost forgotten about it until one of my shipmates reminded me of it. This is a good NO SH*****!

THE GOOD OLD DAYS FIFTY YEARS LATER

This is what an ex-bubblehead remembers about his first hitch in the Submarine Navy.

1. Sleep on the closet shelf. Replace door with a curtain. Three hours later, have your wife whip open the curtain, shine a flashlight in your eyes, and mumble "Sorry, wrong rack."
2. Repeat back everything anyone says to you.
3. Spend as much time as possible indoors and avoid sun light. Only view the world through the peep hole on your front door.
4. Renovate your bathroom. Build a wall across the middle of your bathtub and move the shower head down to chest level. Shower weekly. Use no more than 2 gallons of water.
5. Buy a trash compactor and use it weekly. Store garbage in the other side of your bath tub.
6. Sit in your car six hours a day with your hands on the wheel and motor running. Don't go anywhere. Install 200 extra oil gauges. Take logs on all gages every 30 minutes.
7. Put lube oil in your humidifier instead of water and set it to "High."
8. Watch only unknown movies with no major stars on TV and then, only at night. Have your family vote on which movie to watch, and then watch a different one.
9. Don't do your wash at home. Pick the most crowded Laundromat you can find.
10. (Optional for A-Division) Leave lawnmower running in your living room six hours a day for proper noise level.
11. Have the paperboy give you a haircut.
12. Take hourly readings on your electric and water meters.
13. Set your alarm clock to go off at random during the night. Then, jump out of bed and get dressed as fast as you can, run to your kitchen with the garden hose while wearing a scuba mask.
14. Once a month take every major appliance completely apart and then put them back together. Ensure you have parts left over.
15. Use 18 scoops of coffee per pot and allow it to sit for 5 or 6 hours before drinking. Never wash any coffee cups.
16. Invite 80 people to come and visit for two months. Limit showers to weekly for all.
17. Have a fluorescent lamp installed on the coffee table bottom and lie under to read books.
18. Put a complicated lock on your basement door and wear key on a neck lanyard.
19. When making cakes, prop up one side of the pan while it is baking. Then spread icing really thick on one side to level off the top.
20. Every so often, yell "Emergency Deep," run into kitchen, and sweep all pots, pans and dishes off the counter to floor. Then, yell at wife for not having it "Stowed for Sea."
21. Put on the headphones from your stereo (don't plug them in). Go and stand in front of your stove. Say (to nobody in particular) "Stove manned and ready." Stand for 3 or 4 hours. Say (once again to nobody in particular) "Stove secured." Roll up the headphone cord and put it away.
22. Buy bunk beds (3 high type) and convert the narrowest hallway into a bedroom.
23. Give your wife more free time. All the ironing goes under the mattress.
24. At night, replace all light bulbs in the living room with red bulbs.
25. Buy all food in cases and line the floor with them.

26. Replace all doorways with windows so that you have to step up and duck through them.
27. Paint the windshield of your car black. Make your wife stand up through the sunroof and give you directions on where to drive. Drive through as many big puddles as possible.
28. Have your kids stand at attention every time you enter the room and make them state quite loudly, "Attention on Deck" or "Make a Hole."
29. Start every story with "This is a no-sh*****."
30. Order a dozen foxtails and tell your family that there will be no liberty until every thing in the house passes the white glove test.
31. Tell your kids there will be a pressure test in the garage next Monday night.
32. Install a Furnace and Air Conditioner that blows directly on you while you are sleeping. Have the controls so they will cycle between hot and cold in a matter of seconds. Also install a multi-channel entertainment system over your rack that doesn't work.
33. Hire 20 drunks to come into you house about 1 in the morning and start cooking.
34. Just have someone eat your a** out over nothing, daily.
35. Go to the market and buy 100 quarts of milk. Pour them into a large white trash bag and secure. Put the bag into the refrigerator and rename it "The Cow."
36. Take the jack handle out of your trunk and install it in the ceiling over your stove. Several times a day, give it 112 turns and yell: "Main Induction Secured."
37. Practice walking quickly with your back to the wall.
38. Cut a twin mattress in half and enclose three sides for your bed. Add a roof that prevents you from sitting up over 10 inches. Then place the mattress on a platform four inches off floor. Place a dead animal under the bed to simulate the smell of your bunkmate's sock.
39. Set your alarm to go off at 10 minute intervals for the first hour of sleep to simulate the various times the watch standers and night crew bump around and wake you up. Place your bed on a rocking table to ensure you are tossed around the remaining three hours.
40. Remove all plants, pictures and decorations. Paint everything gray.
41. Buy 50 cases of toilet paper and lock up all but two rolls. Ensure one is wet at all times.
42. Every 10 weeks, simulate a visit to another port. Go directly to the city slums wearing your best clothes. Find the worst looking place, and ask for the most expensive beer that they carry. Drink as many as you can in four hours. Take a cab home taking the longest possible route. Tip the cabby after he charges you double, because you dress funny and don't speak right.
43. Ensure the water heater is connected to a device that provides water at a rate from a fast drip to a weak trickle, with the temperature alternating rapidly from 2 to 95 degrees F.
44. Be sure every valve in your home has two backups which must be operated to obtain water.
45. Unplug all radios and TVs to completely cut your self off from the outside world.
46. Do not flush toilets for five days to simulate the smell of 40 people using the same commode.
47. Lock the bathrooms twice a day for a two hour period.
48. Practice taking a shower with a quart of water.
49. Work in 19 hour cycles, sleeping only four hours at a time to ensure that your body neither knows nor cares if it day or night.
50. Wash your laundry in a detergent that could be used as an insecticide or sheep dip. Make sure you lose at least one sock and one pair of underwear every other week.

51. Run a tube from your car's exhaust pipe into your living room and yell "Prepare to Snorkel," and start the car. You must breathe the fumes for one hour.
52. Vent your septic tank into the house and yell "Venting Sanitaries Inboard."
53. Ensure that no matter what kind of job you are working on, there is someone standing over you instructing you on how to do it better and faster even though they can't do it themselves.
54. Find out how long it will take to do a job. Give yourself half the time it should take, and then have someone scream at you for not working fast enough.
55. Make sure all your personal belongings will fit in a 2 foot by 2 foot space that has lots of cables running through it.
56. Mount as many sharp-cornered lockers as you can find are in all of the most traveled halls of your house. Leave almost enough room to squeeze by.
57. Hold periodic drills like "Man Overboard" and throw the cat in the pool.
58. Overflow the bathtub and yell "Flooding in the Bathroom."
59. Put your stereo headphone on, stand in front of the stove and yell "Battle Stations Torpedo."
60. Install a fireman's pole and ladder in your living room to practice "Dive-Dive," with your wife sliding down the pole while you time her.
61. Continuously pop your ears to simulate snorkeling.
62. Sit up from 1130 to 0530 in front of your stove to insure it doesn't turn on by accident.
63. Buy a broken exercise bicycle and strap it down to the floor in your kitchen.
64. Eat only food that you get out of a can or have to add water to.
65. Wake up every night at midnight and have a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on stale bread. (Optional- cold beans and weenies, canned ravioli or soup).
66. Make up your family menu a week ahead without looking in your food cabinets.
67. Store your eggs in your garage for two months and then scramble a dozen each morning.
68. Check your refrigerator compressor for "sound shorts."
69. Lock wire the lug nuts on your car.
70. Tag out the steering wheel, gas pedal, brake pedal, transmission and cigarette lighter when you change the oil in your car.
71. Use kool aid on all your breakfast cereals for 2 months.
72. Fill laundry tubs with oil. Lay in them, on your back, and change the washers on the water spigots.
73. While doing laundry, replace liquid fabric softener with diesel fuel, and savor the aroma of AMR2LL.
74. Just for fun, rig 700 PSI air to the bottom of all toilets. Hold a lottery to determine who gets to control the air valves.
75. Knock a glass of water out of someone's hand and yell "SPILL." Shout at them the entire time they clean it up, tell them how worthless they are, and then do it again.
76. Ask for "permission to enter" whenever you go into the kitchen.
77. Rope off a small area of your living room, turn off the AC, put on a suit made of garbage bags and mill around inside the roped off area for an hour with a zip lock bag tied securely around your head.
78. Whenever someone enters a room you're cleaning, shout "up and over" at them, so they'll go through the attic to get to the kitchen.
79. Tell your kids to "go find me a can of relative bearing grease".

80. Whenever the mailman steps onto your porch, shout "Postmaster General - Arriving" so that everyone in the house can hear you.
81. Tell your kids there will be a pressure test in the garage next Monday night. The kid who can take the most turns in the vise will get to stay out later Friday night.
82. Hookup your air compressor to the sewer line to the house and blow a s*** geyser ten feet in the air. Come in side and tell you wife "calmly" you forgot to shut the valve.
83. Make her and the kids clean up the mess.
84. Install the system above where it will cause a 6 inch vacuum in the bedroom.
85. Set an engine in the living room to run through all this. So when you secure from field day, run like a bat out of hell to shut down the engine.
86. Raise hell with the old lady when she serves steak next time. When she says that was the way it came from the store. You ask BURNT?
87. Hire about 20 drunks to come into you house about 1 in the morning and start cooking.
88. Remodel your house so as to rebuild your kitchen in the hall closet. Have your family meet there several times a day to walk around in the closet and bump into each other. Have someone shout "mill around in the After Battery."
89. Post the Uniform Code of Military Justice on the wall across from your toilet. Highlight the parts that begin: "p***** however slight..."
90. Every Friday morning at 7:30, wake the whole house up and inform them someone is trying to steal the car. Then make them clean the house for 3 hours, and serve them lunch with consists of 2 hamburgers that have enough grease in them to change the oil in the car for a year, buns that weigh more than a TDU weight, and French Fries. Then run various drills so that you have to burp into your scuba mask reliving the lunch.
91. Rope off a small area of your living room, turn off the AC, put on a yellow suit and mill around inside the roped off area for an hour with a zip lock bag tied securely around your head. Insure the family critiques your actions afterwards.
92. Work at a golf course maintenance facility so you can water golf cart batteries.
93. When your wife throws open the curtains in your closet make sure that the sewer vent is piped into your rack.
94. Cut a hole in the floor of your house and install batteries. Go down once a day and take specific gravities.
95. Set your alarm to go off at 10 minute intervals for the first hour of sleep to simulate the various times the watch standers and night crew bump around and wake you up. Place your bed on a rocking table to ensure you are tossed around the remaining three hours. Make use of a custom clock that randomly simulates fire alarms, police sirens, helicopter crash alarms, and a new wave rock band.
96. Have week old fruit and vegetables delivered to your garage and wait weeks before eating.
97. Prepare all meals blindfolded using all the spices you can grope for or none at all. Remove the blindfold and eat everything in three minutes.
98. Periodically, shut off all power at the main circuit breaker and run around shouting "fire, fire, fire" and then restore power.
99. Smash your forehead or shins with a hammer every two days to simulate collision injuries sustained aboard Navy ships.
100. When making sandwiches, leave the bread out for six days, or until it is hard and stale.
101. Use fresh milk for only two days after each port visit.

102. Keep the bedroom thermostat at 2 deg C and use only a thin blanket for warmth.
103. Use only spoons which hold a minimum of 1/2 cup at a time.
104. Repaint the interior of your home every month, whether it needs it or not.
105. Every four hours, check all the fluid levels in your car and log the readings. Check the tire pressure and replace air lost from excessive pressure checks. Be sure to place red tags on ignition stating "DANGER: Do Not Operate" while you perform these checks. Inform your neighbor as to placement of the red tags, the results of the checks and have him repeat the checks, because he did not see you perform them.
106. Lock all friends and family outside. Your only means of communication should be with letters that your neighbors have held for at least three weeks, discarding two of five.
107. Surround yourself with 80 people that you don't really know or like: people who smoke, snore like Mack trucks going uphill, and use foul language.
108. Unplug radios and TVs to completely cut yourself off from the outside world. Have a neighbor bring you a Time, Newsweek, or Naval Proceedings from five years ago to keep you abreast of current events.
109. Listen to your favorite CD 6 times/day for two weeks, and then play music that causes acute nausea until you are glad to get back to your favorite CD.
110. Stand on roof once every four days for six hours in the winter and don't let anyone in your house.
111. Spend 3 or 4 hours waxing your floors to perfection. Then, just before they dry, invite the whole neighborhood over to walk across them. Then do it again.
112. Write a procedure in triplicate for every job you do around the house. Have a friend check your work and make a minimum of 5 changes. When finished and forms are ready, have your wife verify that the procedure is correct but make ten changes anyway.
113. Ensure that every room in your house is drastically different in temperature. If no condensation appears when you open a door, the temperature difference is not great enough. Make sure your bedroom only has two temperatures (100F or 20F) and nothing between. Make sure of hourly cycles throughout the night.
114. Drills: Yell "Torpedo Evasion" and run through the house knocking over everything that isn't bolted down.
115. Continuously pop your ears.

WHY SPEAK ENGLISH?

A U.S. Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included Admirals from the U.S., English, Canadian, Australian and French Navies.

At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of the countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks but a French Admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English. He then asked "Why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied "Maybe it's because the Brits, Canadians, Aussies and Americans arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German on two different occasions."

You could have heard a pin drop.

CHAPTER 36

JIM POWERS 1955 - 1959

I REMEMBER COOKING FOR THE CAPTAIN AN ACCIDENT AT SEA, FLOODING IN THE ENGINE ROOM, AND FLOODING IN THE AFTER BATTERY

COOKING FOR THE CAPTAIN

When I reported for duty in Key West, I was a young lad who had no idea what I wanted to do. I had grownup in the restaurant business with my uncle in western Maryland.

I first dropped down the After Battery hatch into the Crew's Mess and found a rough looking First Class cook sitting at one of the tables.

He said "Who are you?" I responded with "I'm a new man reporting aboard, Sir." He said, "Do you know how to cook?" and I said "Yes Sir." That man turned out to be Herman Schmidt who was in charge of all cooks. Next it was "Come with me," and he took me to meet Captain Polk.

"Captain, I got my new cook," he offered. Captain Polk asked me if I wanted to cook on SEA POACHER. I said "Yes Sir." He told me I had the job and could start tomorrow.

Schmidt was on hand the next morning, and when Kelly Strickland came back and placed Captain Polk's order, Schmidt said that I had better fix his eggs like he wanted them, which was scrambled very light. I did it as told, and the Skipper came back appreciative and all was fine.

I kept the job, and in doing so, never had Mess Cook duty, and never had to scrape the superstructure for repainting.

AN ACCIDENT AT SEA – GITMO OR KEY WEST

Another story involved a crew member named Henry Ford, who I believe was an Electrician Striker. He had mess cook duty, and we were getting ready for an inspection. We were submerged and while cleaning the overhead, he had his hand around some vent mechanism. Then they cycled the vents, and unfortunately, one of his fingers was too close, and, well, part of his finger was cut off. He was treated by Doc Brayman, and then picked up by helicopter and taken to the hospital. Not sure where we were at the time.

FLOODING IN THE ENGINE ROOM

There was an Engine Room flooding incident caused by a sea valve rupture. By the time it was controlled, the Engine Room was nearly completely flooded, and we were going down by the stern at a very steep angle.

I can not remember at what depth we finally became neutrally buoyant, but it was well below test depth. I believe it was over 700 feet.

This incident occurred on the first dive of the day, and our air banks were fully charged, which was necessary to get us out of this situation.

I think I did hear that the ships in the area said we popped up like a cork when we surfaced. I remember being in the After Battery Head and the angle to the stern was such that I had one foot on the shower door to remain standing.

Also, when we got back into port, the entire crew, except for the below deck and the topside watches, were just sitting or milling around on the dock.

FLOODING IN THE AFTER BATTERY

There was also some flooding in the After Battery. I believe this occurred when we went back to sea out of Charleston after a major overhaul. We had a "Green Board" when the dive occurred. I think what they decided afterwards was that when we built up pressure in the boat, the After Battery Hatch opened slightly causing the flooding.

The flooding was not all that bad, but did cause an investigation as to the cause. I was on the sound powered phones at the time when the flooding occurred. All that was done at this point was climbing into the hatch and dogging it down.

Of course, the boat surfaced and returned to port.

These incidents occurred a longgggggg time ago, and the exact details have faded.

"If it has got four legs and it is not a chair, if it has got two wings and it flies but is not an aero plane, and if it swims and it is not a submarine, the Cantonese will eat it."

Prince Philip

"Events of October 1962 indicated, as they had all through history, that control of the sea means security. Control of the seas can mean peace. Control of the seas can mean victory. The United States must control the seas if it is to protect your security..."

President John F. Kennedy, 6 June 1963 aboard KITTY HAWK

"Ashes to ashes, dust to dust, it may not run, but shine it must, it may not work, but it will not rust."

A Chief's response, "Why do we have to clean all the time?"

*"Sheesh!, their planesmen are worse than ours! I just saw their whole f***** screw come out of the water!"*

CO FLASHER on scope doing maneuvers with PINTADO

CHAPTER 37

DONALD (WILKIE) WILKINSON 1956 - 1957

I REMEMBER MY SEA POACHER DADDY BEING A PERMANENT BOW PLANESMAN, THE MISSING STOP SIGN, J.B. CARSON'S MUSTACHE, AND HAPPY NEW YEAR 1957

MY SEA POACHER DADDY

In January of 1956, I went aboard SEA POACHER, which was in the Naval Yard at the time. I was a Seaman Apprentice with no idea what I would strike for. I performed regular duties. Those were guard, mess cook, and fire watch for the yard birds. When the overhaul was complete, we set sail for Key West which was her assigned home port.

My first trip with her was to Bermuda. It was also my first liberty out of the States. This was when I made Seaman. After much thought on what to strike for, I was convinced to go for Torpedoman. John Bornowski, TMCA/ENSIGN, also known as "Ski," had sold me on it. I moved my stuff to the Forward Torpedo Room. My bunk was in the honeymoon rack.

This was when I first met J.B. Carson, Torpedoman 1st Class. He was in charge of the Forward Room. He was ALL NAVY and was left over from WWII. He had tattoos all over his body, but you could not see them when he had his uniform on. I took a correspondence course for TM3. J.B. would boat school me on it unrelentlessly. He also would drill me on how to make ready our practice torpedoes. He would say "my hands and fingers are too big to place the igniters. Wilkie, get your skinny Tennessee a** over here." He always checked my work afterward and regularly gave me pop quizzes.

Finally I took the big exam. Waiting for results was very hard. One evening I kept asking the radioman about the rate list. He told me he wasn't paying attention when he typed it that evening. When I came off watch at 4 a.m., there on my new bunk was a Petty Officer patch. I said "Wow! I made 1st Class and only took the test for 3rd!" J.B. was standing nearby and quickly said "You dumb hillbilly! You have to cut two of them off!" He'd taken one of his patches off his work blues for me to have before my next liberty. J.B.'s patch stayed on my dress blues until I was discharged.

J.B. drilled me so much that I knew what page it came from in the book. He was that way with his rookies. He even made bets that I made it the first time. He was a SEA DADDY!

BEING A PERMANENT BOWPLANESMAN

I had just made 3rd class Torpedoman. Anxious to try out my new job; I looked forward to the upcoming practice. We picked up monitoring gear for experimental hydrogen peroxide MK16 torpedoes in Charleston early in the morning. We then continued on to Norfolk to pick up two new fish. From there we proceeded to GITMO.

We were preparing to use live torpedoes to sink a WWII LSD (Landing Ship Dock) being towed. Charlie Owens, our 2nd class in the Forward Torpedo Room, was also ready to get off the

Jeep. Charlie had talked J.B. (my Sea Daddy) into letting me learn that job. We started practicing battle stations two days before the live event.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Somewhere in my submarine education, I have somehow forgotten what the Jeep was. A telephone call from Wilkie enlightened me. Seems the JEEP was the control between the torpedo tubes and the TDC (Torpedo Data Computer) in the Conning Tower and the Fire Control System. It had something to do with call backs, matching angles, and other things with torpedoes in the tube. Now you know why I was never a Weapons Officer.

Here I was on the Jeep, nervous as hell, ready to begin. We had only previously used talk thru drills before. We started our run. I used my headset to communicate with the Conning Tower. All of a sudden, I heard Captain Polk shouting "G** D*** It Wilkie! You dunked me!" You could have cut the silence with a knife after his expletive. Finally the Diving Officer yelled up the hatch "Captain - Wilkie made 3rd class and is now in the Forward Torpedo Room." For over a year I had been his only Bow Planes guy. I had a record of keeping it on the depth he wanted. He had complete trust in me in the Bow Planes.

The Skipper came back with "I don't care if he's made Chief! As long as I am Captain of this ship, Wilkie's going to be on my Bow Planes during Battle Stations." I turned around hearing the conversation over the phones to see J.B. just throw up his hands. He turned to Charlie telling him to take over the Jeep. Two days later we went to live battle stations to sink the LSD. I was also on Captain Polk's Bow Planes. There was one good thing about the event. Upon surfacing, the Bow Planesman became the Starboard Lookout, and I had the opportunity of seeing the LSD blown into two pieces.

And until Captain Polk left SEA POACHER, I stayed on his Bow Planes. Of course, I had to have my bubble man (Stern Planes) there with me. He wasn't very happy about it, but I told Captain Polk I needed him with me to hold the depth. He had also made 3rd class in the Forward Engine Room.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There was a second phone call from Wilkie on 18 June 2007. Now here is a fast talker, and I profess to be a great stenographer, but could not keep up with him. He related story after countless story to me, and I demanded he forward them in writing to me. Donald also said he had dozens of photographs that he would be sending. His final comment was "God takes care of Babies and Ensigns."

What a guy! And while I hesitate to say it he was probably right.

THE MISSING STOP SIGN

It was one of our night out adventures on the strip, off the Charleston shipyard base, while the SEA POACHER was in overhaul. Some of us rug rats went on the strip for the 75 cent pitcher of beer at the EM Club.

Later, coming back to the barracks, we had a little trouble getting back on base. We were walking back to the barracks after the Marines gave us a hard time at the Gate. One of our guys made a bet with a Fireman from Wisconsin that he couldn't pull up the stop sign at the intersection. Our Fireman only weighted 250 pounds or better. All I know is that the gang plank bent when he crossed it.

He could carry two pistons and cranks on each shoulder without grunting. He was drunk enough to take on the bet too. But we were all ripped! He grabbed the sign at the base working it back and forth until it became loose. He just pulled that sucker right out then. Concrete and all.

He heaved it up on his shoulder and carried it back to our barracks on the Second Floor. He set it up right next to the outer door on the bulkhead.

We tapped out forgetting all about that part of our adventure until the next morning. We barely got to our work detail on time, and were courting headaches and nausea intimately

We were questioned later that day by one of MP base security officers. They wanted to know if we had any knowledge about a missing stop sign. I personally told them I was too small, weighing in at 119 pounds, to pick up something of that size. No one else with me was much bigger either. Later that afternoon, the sign was replaced with an even bigger concrete base. I guess they wanted to assure that the next time someone tried it they'd have to see a doctor afterwards. I heard a rumor later that Captain Polk couldn't believe anyone could pick up something that big. He just laughed about it. We never heard anymore about the missing stop sign that just happened to be leaning up against our barracks bulkhead.

J.B. CARSON'S MUSTACHE

In 1957 we were assigned to a mission to the North Atlantic for NATO and then on to the Mediterranean. J.B. took advantage of the long trip to grow his mustache. He told us how he had done this during all of his three patrols during WWII.

He groomed that mustache everyday using bee's wax. When it was long enough he curled it. He was so proud of it. It was at least six inches long on each side by the time we were home.

We pulled into Key West, and everyone was excited about being home. The married men were allowed off first to meet wives and family. J.B. was anxious to show off his mustache.

He kissed his wife and reached out for the baby. The little boy would have nothing to do with him. He screamed and cried. One of the men shouted that J.B. needed to shave off his mustache. J.B. didn't think twice. He returned to the FTR and did just that.

When he returned topside, it was a different story with his son. This time he wouldn't let his Daddy go.

HAPPY NEW YEAR 1957

This was written for the occasion by LT A. K. Loposer. After his name, there appears "With apologies to" and the remainder was apparently accidentally torn off.

The lights are low, the boat is still the temperance egg nog was gone, everyone's had his fill; The duty section dreams of things out of reach, while the rest of the crew frolic on the beach; The guns have roared, the rockets have soared, And of 1956 only memories remain, The whistles have blown, the old year has flown, and MISTRESS SEA POACHER surveys her domain; It's the Isle of KEY WEST, the Naval Base there, and no foes lurking out dare invade her lair. Various Atlantic Fleet Units are moored in the harbour, their liberty parties frolic too, from the mess cooks to the barber; SOPA is COMMANDER of the KEY WEST FORCE, it's his hand that keeps us on a true and steady course, Pier Three is to larboard, the SEA CAT (SS399) to starboard; The power house carries our lights and our load; the movies are over, we've all hit the clover, snuggled away in our GUPPY abode; We've reached the end of a prosperous year, We've started already on the NEW, And our wish tonight is for twelve months of cheer, And a joyous and HAPPY NEW YEAR for YOU!

CHAPTER 38

BEN SHELDON 1956 - 1958

I REMEMBER MARRIED PUKE AND SINGLE GUY DISCRIMINATION, THE RACE TO THE BARN, TOPSIDE WATCH MEMORIES, A CHARLESTON REPORTER TAKES A DIVE, A BUSY SCHEDULE, OPERATION STRIKEBACK IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC, MEDITERRANEAN AND THE CORINTH CANAL, AND SEA POACHER SOFTBALL

MARRIED PUKE AND SINGLE GUY DISCRIMINATION

The SEA POACHER years from 1956-58 were peaceful times. Cuba was open to the U.S. and everyone seemed to get along. It was the sailors that went down there during the 60s that screwed things up.

History has it all wrong. Anyway, our daily operations out of Key West were just routine, nothing to brag about or be ashamed to write home about. I was not married then and learned first hand what discrimination was all about. That is discrimination between the married pukes and the single guys. It went like this.

When the boat was in some port other than Key West, I was given liberty. When we got back to Key West, I had duty. When we got back from the Mediterranean cruise, I had duty for two solid months. During that time, I would occasionally notice large quantities of meat and groceries going up the After Battery hatch.

Doing some Dick Tracy detective work, I learned that it was destined for a picnic and that no single guys were allowed. I later realized that there was logic to this behavior, but at the time it seemed unfair.

I also remember routine boat maintenance and up-keep. Ted Anthony was in charge of the deck crew. His first words were "Okay men, let's turn to and get this job done. We're only going to work for half a day." When noon came around the guys put down their tools and started off. "Where are you going?" shouted Ted. "Well, you said we were going to work half a day." Ted's reply was "That's right, half a day, from sun up to sun down."

That is about all I can think of for now. Oh, there was this unexplained and little talked about situation while operating in the Bermuda Triangle, it seemed as though we were being shadowed by a squadron of old WW II Navy fighter planes.

THE RACE TO THE BARN

At the end of routine daily operations all boats and surface craft head for the barn with the Alpha captain taking the lead and everyone else falling in line by chance or by clever plotting. The word comes down to maneuvering "make turns for 10 knots." And the response is "10 knots, aye aye sir." The Fairbanks engine's go from a nice rumble to a questionable roar. From the bridge it's noted that the starboard after engine is blowing smoke like an Indian scout

using wet grass to get his telegraph going. That's Bill Bailey's engine. He must have worked on a couple of fuel injectors and didn't get them right.

Now the boat following us wants to know if that's some kind of a new distress signal were working on. "No" is the reply. Maneuvering room has their rheostat set for married puke turns, and we are dealing with that now.

As the boat makes its final turn around the Key West sea wall, the screws come to all stop. Now what! A new officer is bringing a boat in for the first time and is having trouble getting it parked. He went in too slow and the current took over.

He won't be the first one to leave a hash mark on a pier.

Now tell me you haven't been there, done that.

TOPSIDE WATCH MEMORIES

Okay, so I made it through the infamous boot camp at Great Lakes, completed Sub school at New London, and was assigned to the SEA POACHER stationed at Key West.

Life could not be better. Nothing ahead, but sandy beaches, girls, free room and board, and a steady pay check. What a life! In a couple of months, I would probably advance from Fireman to Admiral.

Things went pretty much as planned, but it became clear that I wasn't being asked much and was told a lot. I was assigned to the After Engine Room and would answer to Bill Bailey, who would answer to Chief Carden, and he would answer to LT Schenker.

Now I was getting confused so I decided to stick with Bailey and not concern myself with the khaki clan. This worked pretty well until it appeared they all took orders from Fireman Third Class Dale Fate.

Now what? Well I'm told I would be in the third duty section and would have to stand Top Side Watches. This wasn't according to plan, but I went along with it. I would be given a trusty 45 sidearm with one clip of ammo which was never to be touched until transferred to the relieving watch.

Then the shells would be counted and recorded in the Watch Log. That was easy enough. Of course curiosity got the best of me, and when no one was around, I examined this weapon valued very highly by the Navy.

It wasn't a trusty 45, but rather a rusty 45, and there was no need to count the shells because the clip spring was missing. And the open end metal had been rolled over so you couldn't remove them if you wanted to.

Ted Anthony probably figured that one out, but it had a positive outcome. There was not one accidental shooting of a Top Side Watch in all the months that I performed this duty.

Your duties on watch were pretty clear.

First watch for the Captain. When you spotted him (and that's not if, but when you spot him) notify the Duty Officer immediately or become very familiar with a greasy bilge.

Second, watch the mooring lines. If they are getting tighter, it won't be because the tide is going out.

Get the Below Deck's Watch out of the movie and back to the real world.

One of my favorite memories as a Topside Watch comes from a 0200 to 0400, hot, and you can't keep your eyes open in the morning with all the normal sounds adding to the call for sleep.

Resting in the Sail hatch, the better part of common sense told me that if I didn't change this situation, I would probably have to make friends with the Marines stationed down there.

So with great effort I eased myself into a vertical position and carefully negotiated the narrow deck on the port side. Having cleared the Sail, I focused on something looking down the After Engine Room hatch.

Now I'm totally awake and remember being warned that this situation might happen. It was a UDT guy on a mission. I could have just eased up and asked if he needed directions, but decided that might not be the wise thing to do.

So I did and trained this military thing at him, and shouted "Halt – Halt -Who?" I had intended to shout Halt - Halt, Who goes there? But three words were all I could get out before he disappeared over the side.

Who were we to know these guys can't run with those funny shoes they wear. But hop is something they can do, and he did it well.

Hop! Hop! And a splash two feet outboard the ballast tanks; this would make an Olympic high board diver proud. The Below Deck's Watch had to hear about this.

I called down the After Battery hatch where you could always find him.

"What do you want?" he responded.

"I just saved your life!"

"How did you do that?"

I explained the situation.

A moment later he appeared at the top of the hatch and handed me a cup of coffee.

"Is this for me," I asked.

"No, give it to the UDT guy if he comes back."

The below deck watch was James Ochs.

The morning sunrises in Key West were phenomenal. Many times I watched the sun rays as they burned through the scattered clouds. I also watched rain squalls disappear, and be replaced by something just as spectacular.

I have often wondered what my reaction would have been if this base had been named Pearl Harbor. That would be on December 7, and the morning sky was suddenly filled with something we had not drilled for.

A CHARLESTON REPORTER TAKES A DIVE

Here is an article I saved that appeared in the Charleston News Courier on 25 April 1956. It was written by their Reporter L.D. Singleton and titled "Reporter Takes a Dive – Test Run Of Submarine Is Thrilling."

A dramatic contest between men and the sea takes place periodically a scant 50 miles off Charleston. In the deep waters off Carolina is the testing area for submarines which undergo major overhaul at the Charleston Naval Shipyard.

These submersibles of the Atlantic Fleet Submarine Force are put through their sea trial tests after receiving large-scale repairs at the local base. No one can predict with any certainty what will happen when these boats are put through their sea trials.

Yesterday was test day for the SEA POACHER, a guppy-type based at Key West, Florida. The submarine put to sea for the time since going under repairs in mid-November.

Elements of the grueling, 23 hour test run were described by the SEA POACHER'S veteran crew members as "routine." To a land lubber reporter every moment of the trip was like

a new tale out of Jules Verne. There were shallow dives, deep dives, snorkeling, high speed runs - and the craft threw its challenge to the sea. Qualified civilian employees of the shipyard were aboard to help the subs regular crew in pin pointing every defect.

Departing at dawn, the sub maneuvered through the jetties en route to a rendezvous point 40 miles offshore. There would be waiting the USS TILLS, a destroyer escort, which would stand by while the SEA POACHER was put through her paces.

Lt. Cmdr. T. H. Polk, the Sub's Commander, began testing his craft long before arrival at the first dive area. Electronic and mechanical gear were checked and double checked. Soon the boat began to blossom with red tags as defects were detected and marked.

Traveling light for the sea trial, the SEA POACHER rode high in the water as she poured on all power for a speed test. Then the sub arrived in position for her first dive. An officer explained if the sub did not surface within a given period after informing home base she was diving, rescue units would be underway immediately. The TILLS was there to mark the spot. The officer explained how a diving bell is lowered onto the sub's escape hatches in order to remove men from the boat.

The natural question for a reporter to ask was where the nearest such bell was located. "Norfolk," the officer answered glibly.

Center of the diving operation is the Control Room. There Lt. (j.g.) J. O. Rogers, the Engineering Officer, and his men stood by their banks of flashing red and green lights, complicated dials and banks of shining levers.

From the bridge the Officer of the Deck, Lt. (j.g.) Ken Lopusoski gave two blasts of the dive horn. Then he and his two lookouts scrambled down into the Conning Tower as one man. In the Control Room green lights indicated all hatches closed. A sudden rush of air and pressure within the hull was increased. Crew members watched gauges to see if pressure were maintained. If it dropped, it would indicate a leak in the hull. Despite the popping of eardrums, all were relieved as the pressure remained steady.

Diving planes were set and water replaced air in the dive tanks. Slowly the 312-foot mass of steel began to descend. Suddenly, as diesel engines were shut off and power was switched to batteries, the craft became silent, except for the clear but calm voices of men giving orders and others repeating them. As the boat sank beneath the surface of the waves, all motion seemed to cease.

"Hydrogen, sir," a tense voice said suddenly. A quick look at an indicator showed a build-up of hydrogen in the battery rooms. When hydrogen increases to five per cent of the air present, there is immediate danger of explosion. Quickly vents between the battery rooms and other compartments were opened, permitting the gas to disperse. The danger was past.

Into the control room began to come reports of leaks. "Normal," said the Operations Officer, Lt. M. L. Schenker. "There are always small leaks around fittings which protrude through the hull."

Normal to a submariner, perhaps. A reporter naturally wonders about such things. When Captain Polk, a 1944 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, was satisfied with the working of his vessel, the order was passed to surface. Air was blown into dive tanks, and soon could be heard the crashing of waves against the hull.

During the afternoon, the SEA POACHER submerged again and worked with a small Navy sound boat. By making underwater runs past the surface craft with various parts of the sub's equipment working, the undersea craft was able to receive data on how much noise she was making that was detectable to sonar. Elimination of such noises is of utmost importance in

wartime. Key man in this operation was Captain Polk, a veteran of ten years' submarine service. For hours he stood in the broiling heat of the conning tower, straining against the bulky weight of the periscope.

Procedure called for the sub to make repeated passes close to the sound ship. Such close-in work in handling an underwater craft requires the greatest skill and cooperation. The helmsman must respond instantly to the orders of the Captain, the only man who can see the vessel ahead. Officers in the Conning Tower must make lightning mental calculations from data recorded on the periscope to keep the Captain informed of the target ship's range.

Once, a slight miscalculation, and: "Stand by to dive deep," says the Captain, "We may have to go under her." At the last minute the sub responds and passes abeam of the surface craft. Seen through the periscope, three khaki clad figures walking leisurely about the sound boat under clear blue skies presented a distinct contrast to the tense, sweating men working in the artificial light of the sweltering Conning Tower.

The sub's final test came late at night. Proceeding through thick haze to a point where the Continental Shelf begins to drop off, the sub rendezvoused with the TILLS again to make a deep submergence test. Down into the silent waters of the black Atlantic went the boat, down to its maximum test depth. The great pressure soon disclosed new leaks. In one compartment a grease line gave way, and a pencil-sized stream of seawater began to spurt in. Soon the crew had the leak under control.

The test over, the SEA POACHER rose rapidly to the surface and headed home. Men on the SEA POACHER will tell you that only the cream of Navy manpower is considered acceptable for submarine service.

All volunteers, they receive exhaustive physical and psychological screening "before being accepted for training." Officers who make the grade are given six months' training at the Submarine School at New London, Conn., and on operational submarines. Enlisted men receive similar instruction for a period of two months. Only after a minimum of year's service afloat for officers and six months' service for enlisted men do they become eligible to wear the coveted submariner's insignia - a submarine flanked by two dolphins.

That submarine duty is a sought-after assignment is evident in the fact that eight of the SEA POACHER'S nine officers are graduates of the Naval Academy. And what do the crew members think of their service? The answer is seen in the re-enlistment rate. Eighty-five per cent of the crew re-upped last year.

A BUSY SCHEDULE

I remember a lot of ports following our departure from Charleston on 30 April 1956.

May 2	Newport
May 5-6	Bermuda
May 18-21	West Palm Beach
May 23	Key West
October 28	Cape Haitian, Haiti
October 29	GITMO, Cuba
December 4	Key West
February 1957	GITMO
February	Santiago, Cuba

February	Port Au Prince Haiti
February	Jamaica
March 1	Key West
May 12	Miami
May 15	Key West
July 10	Charleston
July 15	Key West
August	Head for the Mediterranean

OPERATION STRIKEBACK IN THE NORTH ATLANTIC

On 19 August 1957 we departed Key West and crossed the Atlantic with Amphibious Group Two, paid a brief Visit to Rothesay, Scotland then proceeded northward for NATO'S Operation Strikeback; a gigantic exercise which took place between Iceland and Norway the last two weeks in September.

Operating as an 'enemy' submarine we made several successful attacks on carrier task forces, and eluded all units searching for us during a 36 hour submerged transit.

MEDITERRANEAN AND THE CORINTH CANAL

Upon completing Strikeback she visited Weymouth, England and Gibraltar in October. With all of us rested and relaxed SEA POACHER steamed into the Mediterranean for two months service with the United States Sixth Fleet. Her ports of call during this period included Piraeus, Greece (the port of Athens); Malta; Patras, Greece; Catania, Sicily, and Gibraltar

The trip's unique experience was the October 29 transit of the Corinth Canal, which connects the Aegean Sea with the Gulf of Corinth and Ionian Sea. The idea for this canal was conceived 2,500 years ago. Julius Caesar, Nero, and Alexander the Great all attempted its construction, but they ceased attempts after only a short time calling it impossible.

Down through the year's spasmodic work was done and it was finally completed in 1897. Only 80 foot wide, with sheer bluffs rising 250 feet on either side, the canal leaves little room for passage. Going through this canal saved us nearly 200 miles of steaming through frequently stormy seas. As far as we could determine, SEA POACHER was the first United States submarine to transit it.

We arrived back in Key West on 2 December 1957.

An article with photo of our voyage appeared in the Key West Citizen the following day.

EDITOR'S NOTE: See Bonnell Chapter for the entire article.

SEA POACHER SOFTBALL

Getting to play softball with the SEA POACHER ball team was an uphill battle. It began in the summer of 1956. I was just an unqualified Fireman, knew no one and was treated as such. The old guys owned the boat so you listened, learned and took advantage of given situations.

That's how I learned of the ball team. I overheard conversations about their wins and losses so they were the ones I brought coffee to.

It wasn't easy to crack that circle.

Persistence prevailed and the clan opened up to me as a new team member. SEA

POACHER then won the Key West Submarine Championship, which included opposing teams from the Tenders BUSHNELL and GILMORE.

The team is shown in the January 2007 SEA POACHER Newsletter. Doc Brayman was the pitcher, John Bornowski caught and also pitched, Ken Loposer held down first, and I went second to short. Who had the duty and who could get out of it determined what position and when you played.

When I first went out with these guys I thought this was going to be a breeze! I couldn't have been more wrong. They got my respect from the first pitch. These guys, for old guys, were good. All good things must come to an end and so it did for 1956. The boat's schedule and operational circumstances left 1957 with no ball time.

So, 1958 was the high light and most memorable of my ball career and I have a trophy as a reminder of these fun times. It began with a winner of the submarine games (not SEA POACHER) in Key West spiking one team (that included me) and going to New London, and also competing with Norfolk. See Photo Section. New London won over Norfolk and then defeating Key West 1 to 0. Now in an elimination match we beat Norfolk, sending them home. Now the pressure was on. We eventually lost to New London 6 to 4.

The Key West Newspaper credited the loss to a wild pitch from Ramsey, who had done a terrific job. My up close and personal account of the loss was that our first baseman, Sears, a Chief off the GILMORE, had a problem falling down for no apparent reason. When New London figured this out, they dropped all their bunts down the first base line. Ramsey had to field the ball, chase the runner and watch the guy on third base. I think Ramsey decided the only way to end this was to throw the ball away, which he did, somewhere in a field behind the home plate bleachers.

Now New London would represent Submarine Force Atlantic Fleet and go to Camp Lajeune, North Carolina for the Atlantic Fleet Championship Series. This team was spiked with the players they hoped would make a winning team. I was fortunate to be chosen to go with them. There our self discipline was tested by a barrage of cadence whistles that seemed to follow you where ever you went.

Fast or slow, the whistles came with each step, and I have to give them credit that they did not miss a beat. It was a different story when the softball uniforms came on. Even as an EN2 they thought I was God. There was no chow line, you went directly to a table and a tray was brought to you. The whistle aggravation was a small price to pay for this. The jungle bunny, jar head mentality was, if it runs shoot it.

If it doesn't, salute it.

The Submarine Force will defeat the Destroyer, Naval Air, Fleet Marine, Amphibious, and Mine Forces.

We did the uniform proud and went undefeated to take home the Atlantic Fleet Softball Championship for the 6th straight year.

The team was now headed for San Diego, California for the Navy Championship Series. However, I had a problem as my discharge papers were waiting for me in Key West.

So my softball career and Navy career came to a close.

EDITOR'S NOTE: According to his Wife Pauline, the only things Ben kept for 1958 were the newspaper clippings and the tournament brackets

CHAPTER 39

KEN BONNELL 1957 - 1958

**I REMEMBER CALLING ON GOD TO ANSWER PROBLEMS,
REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER,
THE KEY WEST CITIZEN 3 DECEMBER 1957 ARTICLE,
A CASE OF RIB EYE STEAKS,
HOW I EVEN GOT INTO SUBMARINES,
WHATEVER THE COB SAYS, MY GREEK COUNTERPART,
MOVIES FOR GREEK KIDS,
AND DISCIPLINING KIDS IN GREECE**

CALLING ON GOD TO ANSWER PROBLEMS

EDITOR'S NOTE: This first part of this article appeared in the SEA POACHER Association Newsletter, Volume 5, Issue 5, in July 2007. The second part, published in the October 2007 Newsletter, was kindly provided by Ken to me in advance.

Probably one of the surest and quickest ways to get an argument started is to express one of two opinions; there is a God or, there is no God. Instantly you will have opponents, and while spirited debate is indeed a delight to the mind and soul, it is unfortunate that religious disagreements often ends in anger, bitterness and, all too often, violent conflict.

For me it is simple faith. I believe there is a God. I believe He exists. He? Yes, for me, it is He. Those in disagreement, while hopefully maintaining a calm and gentle nature, may certainly use whatever comfortable label they prefer, be it She, It or even Big Sky Dude.

Some have ridiculed and scoffed at my simplistic faith in something I cannot prove to their satisfaction. Others get upset when I suggest they too hold just as strong and simple a faith as mine, although in direct opposition, and they cannot prove theirs, either. Okay, enough sermonizing. But it was necessary to set the stage to share with readers an event of my life that not only gave my faith a jump-start, but also makes me suggest to others that there is most certainly the possibility, even if it is not the 100% proof they would like, that my God does exist and has interceded on my behalf.

Three times it has happened; this is one of them.

In 1957, while stationed on a U.S. Navy submarine in Key West, FL, I was promoted to Chief Petty Officer. This promotion meant abandoning the traditional enlisted white hat, bell-bottomed trousers and jumper uniform, and wearing the more civilian-like regular trousers, shirt, tie, and jacket. Using the authorized clothing allowance, I went to a store in Key West to be measured and fitted for my new uniforms. The two brothers who owned the store were being visited at the time by a young nephew from New York City, and they asked if the boy might take my order to get a little experience on how to handle customers.

I agreed and the teenager did a fine job.

Some months after that, I happened to mention to another Chief Petty Officer that my money was almost gone, payday was a couple weeks off, and there wasn't a whole lot of food at our house. He said, as though telling me to take an aspirin for a headache, that whenever he had a problem that seemed to have no solution, he handed it over to the Lord and forgot about it.

Not being at the time what one might call an actively religious person, I probably would have, with a pitying sigh, just shook my head at such innocence. But this calm advice came from a man whose submarine, while on a World War II patrol, had been detected and trapped in shallow waters by Japanese destroyers and unmercifully depth charged for what must have seemed an eternity.

During some point in all the explosions, he desperately promised God that if his life was spared, he would lead, if not a perfect life, certainly a better one. The tortuous pounding gradually lessened and finally ceased, when the enemy ships at last gave up and sailed away.

Oh yes, there are those who would call it just a lucky break, a random fortune of war. For my shipmate, he believed it was God's intervention. "Ken," he said, "the Bible says that even one problem is too much for one man. Give it to God, Ken, believe He'll take care of it and then put it out of your mind."

That night, lying in bed, feeling a bit foolish and embarrassed, I told God about my problem and even not knowing if He'd do anything, the talking made me feel better and dropped quickly off to sleep.

Mid-morning the next day, aboard SEA POACHER, I had a phone call. It was one of the owners of the store where I'd bought my Chief Petty Officer uniforms months and months ago. He asked if I would mind stopping by the store on my way home from the submarine base. Curious as to what in the world he wanted from me after all this time, I drove to the store right after the Ship's noon meal.

When I arrived, the owners greeted me warmly, shaking hands and asking did I recall letting their teenage nephew wait on me for my new uniforms. I said I sure did and what a nice a job the youngster had done. "Did something happen to him," I asked? They quickly assured me he was fine, that it was something else they wanted to discuss with me.

Then they explained in great detail, often interrupting each other, their system of double-checking all sales slips before they were filed. No matter which of them waited on a customer, before the sales slip was filed upstairs in its shoe box (there was one for every month of the year), the other would always double check it for errors.

As for my sales slip, it had been checked three times; first by the nephew, then by both his uncles. So, I'm wondering to myself, why did these guys ask me to come over here, what was going on? They told me,

That very morning (the one after I'd given God the problem), one uncle had gone upstairs to get something and accidentally knocked over a shoe box full of a month's sales slips. As it hit the floor the top flew off and one sales slip fell out. When he picked it up he noticed it was the one their nephew from New York City had written for my order.

He was trying to put it back into the shoe box in the proper order and, more from habit than anything else, ran a casual eye over the figures. Something wasn't right. He checked them again, then rushed downstairs and asked his brother to also check them. He did, shook his head a couple times and checked them again. A \$40 dollar mistake had been made; made in MY favor.

They apologized and hoped I wouldn't be angry or upset. Angry? Upset? From stone broke to all of a quick having forty dollars? Who's angry? Who's upset?

They couldn't get over how curious a thing it was that even with three people involved, such a mistake got by; how curious it was that just one shoe box fell out of its pile; how curious it was that only one sales slip fell out.

I said it was not curious at all, and told them about my having talked to God just the night before about my money problem, and how I asked Him to take care of it. As they counted out the money, they looked at each other and then at me as if to say, "Such a child, such an innocent!"

Back aboard SEA POACHER, I excitedly told my shipmate the wonderful news. He was happy for me and quite amused by my surprise. "Ken," he said with a confident smile, "God never breaks a promise and you must never break one to Him."

Fortunate coincidence? Something without explanation? Just another happy little anecdote of life? Or did God actually hear, and take care of, my problem?

Whatever your opinion, I'm sure you can guess mine.

REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER

When I reported aboard in May 1957 I was greeted by Captain Davis as Chief. I told him I was an RM1. He had the Yeoman get Submarine School New London on the phone and confirmed I'd been selected as a CPO.

They didn't tell me because, according to them, I probably would have quit SUB SCHOOL and gone back to the surface craft. Dummies...I volunteered for the boats, why would I go back to surface skimming? I'd already been on six different ships including AKN, ATF, CVA, AO, CA and DDR types.

SEA POACHER, at the time, was in dry dock in Charleston. So, as an unqualified puke, I had the great opportunity to see every bit of her, inside and out.

Upon actually making Chief, we were in Greece. In addition to getting heaved over the side, I was still unqualified. So there was a lot of fun sending a qualified seaman or 3rd class to roust me out of my bunk as an unqualified puke for School of the Boat.

THE KEY WEST CITIZEN 3 DECEMBER 1957 ARTICLE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Part of this article is provided in the Ben Sheldon article. Here it is in its entirety thanks to Ken. The title was SEA POACHER RETURNS FROM DUTY ABROAD.

The USS Sea Poacher (SS 406), a unit of Submarine Squadron Four, returned to Key West Monday, marking the completion of a 13-week deployment which included participation in the NATO Exercise Strikeback followed by two months of operations with the United States Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean.

The Key West based submarine and her crew were part of the history making force of ships and comprised the largest naval force ever to leave the east coast of the United States.

After crossing the Atlantic in company with Amphibious Group Two, the Sea Poacher called at Rothesay, Scotland, before proceeding to her station for Strikeback, off the coast of Iceland.

Upon the conclusion of the NATO exercises she proceeded to Portland, England, for a three day visit. While in this port a number of the crew made a tour to London.

From Portland the Sea Poacher proceeded to Gibraltar for a brief stop, then to Piraeus, Greece, the port of Athens, for ten days of liberty. Upon leaving Piraeus, the Sea Poacher had the

unique experience of transiting the Corinth Canal, which connects the Aegean Sea with the Gulf of Corinth and the Ionian Sea, cutting off the Peloponnesus from the Greek mainland.

The idea for this canal was conceived in the fifth century B.C. and was attempted by Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, and Nero, all of whom concluded it to be impossible. The attempt at building the canal continued sporadically over the centuries, finally becoming a reality in 1897. Only 80 feet wide, with sheer bluffs rising 250 feet on either side, the canal proved to be a picturesque and most unusual transit.

After further operations with the Sixth Fleet, the Sea Poacher called at Malta; Patras, Greece, and Catania, Sicily, where many of the crew toured to Mt. Etna. After another brief stops at Gibraltar, she pointed her bow toward Key West, making the crossing in twelve days.

The Sea Poacher is commanded by Lt. Cmdr. Carl Davis. Lt. Cmdr Davis and his wife, the former Lavinia Clay Ricketts of Key West, reside with their four sons at 3747 Paula Avenue.

A CASE OF RIB EYE STEAKS

Oh, yes, another thing. After I'd made Chief, I happened to mention one day that rib eye was my favorite meal. A couple nights later, around 2100, comes a knock on the door of our home at 1615 Seidenberg Lane, Key West.

Three drunken SEA POACHER guys are there with a case of rib eyes. I told them to take the blasted thing back to the boat right away. I thought they were all going to cry.

They said it was risky enough to have gotten it off the boat and did I want them to get into trouble if they got caught smuggling it back on board?

We and neighbors had rib eyes for a while.

HOW I EVEN GOT INTO SUBMARINES

Good grief! My memory cells are going crazy!!

How I got into the boats in the first place...get a cup of coffee, this is gonna take a while. I was on a DDR with one Postal Clerk. Being the only one, he couldn't get leave, because the crew wouldn't get mail. He told me, an RM1 at the time, of the problem.

I went to the Operations Officer and suggested I get bonded to pick up and distribute mail, but with no money handling (money orders, stamps, etc.), so the guy could go on leave.

Great idea; I was bonded and the Postal Clerk goes on leave. Months later, our DDR leaves Newport, Rhode Island for GITMO for ORIs (Operational Readiness Inspections) and such. We made a one day layover in some New York yard for what I don't know, but the Postal Clerk goes on liberty, gets into a bar brawl, breaks his ankle, gets hospitalized, and cannot go to GITMO.

So, every day in GITMO the DDR goes out to sea, and I stay behind to pick up the mail! I loafed around the base most of the day, picked up the mail late in the day, and waited for the DDR to come back in. Tough job, but someone had to do it!

One day there was a boat tied on the opposite side of the pier, and when I left the DDR I walked over to take a close look at a submarine. LT Devlin Smith and LTJG Alan Cabot were standing on the pier, and we struck up a conversation in which they said I should consider submarine duty as volunteers were always needed.

Unfortunately I don't know the exact date of that conversation, and the submarine could have actually been SEA POACHER. In fact, it had to have been, because when I got out of

Submarine School and got to her, both officers were not only on board, but they took me through my qualification walk.

Coincidence? Okay, that was in 1957.

WHATEVER THE COB SAYS

Fast forward to 1964 and I'm on the SAM HOUSTON, a Fleet Ballistic Missile submarine as the Gold Crew COB.

The Navigation Officer is one LCDR Devlin Smith! He doesn't remember me, but I do him. He tells me a Navigation Seaman is really needed in the Department and for me to take the kid off Mess Cook duty.

I say no! In the Mess Hall he gets upset and says we'll just go to the XO (CDR Kinnard McKee, later an Admiral and in charge of all the nuke stuff). CDR McKee listens to Mr. Smith. He then asks me and I say the kid gets his tour of Mess Cooking.

The XO looks at Mr. Smith and says, "Whatever the COB says!"

Later on Mr. Smith apologizes for getting upset and questioning my authority. He still didn't remember qualifying me on SEA POACHER, and I never told him.

MY GREEK COUNTERPART

Well, these stories are sure gonna shoot the Hell out this morning and the rest of the day! But here's another little anecdote. As an RM1 in Sub School, I am in line at the Mess Hall for the noon meal. A tap comes on my shoulder and when I turn around, there's a sailor in some foreign uniform pointing to lightning bolts on his sleeve and then mine and saying "Same, Same?"

It turns out the guy is Andreas Politis, a Greek Navy Radioman. He and his crew are in the States being trained on one of our boats that the U.S. is giving to their country. For a number of weeks after that, Andy and I would eat noon meal, and then sit on the steps of the School Building, and I'd teach him English. I'd read something from a newspaper and then he'd read the same thing.

We became good friends and when I left for SEA POACHER, Andy actually had a tear in his eye. We exchanged addresses and promised to write.

Okay, onto SEA POACHER and as sick as I was of Med cruises on that DDR, wouldn't you know my very first boat is headed there, too! One of our ports of call turned out to be Piraeus, Greece! Andy's address is in Athens. I find a cab with a driver who can say more than yes and no in English, and tell him where I want to go.

At the house, sandwiched and crowded amongst others, there's a tall fence. I knock on the gate. A 4 year old boy opens it, looks at me and runs back down the walk alongside the house shouting something I don't understand (as they say, it was all Greek to me). In a minute, out of the house and down the walk comes Andy, my Greek Navy Counterpart.

Boy was he surprised! So I was pulled excitedly into the house, introduced to his wife Despina, their two boys Vassily (William) and Panos (Peter), and their Papoose (Grandfather) and YaYa (Grandmother).

Years later, when I left Sam Houston, I called YNC John Souza, who had left a couple patrols before for shore duty in BUPERS and asked what he had for overseas shore duty.

Guess where? You're right! NAVCOMSTA, Greece. We lived in Kifissia, across the mountain from the Station, and our house was about 15 minutes from Andy's house in Athens.

So for two and a half years our families got to see a lot of each other, and it was a fantastic tour of duty!

How fortunate for me to have crossed paths more than once with people who had influenced my life in ways I could never have imagined.

MOVIES FOR GREEK KIDS

Somebody else on SEA POACHER may remember this next one better than me, as it had to do with showing a movie at a Greek boy's orphanage and giving out hard candy during that 1957 Med. cruise. To our surprise, there was not one giggle, not one snicker, and not one laugh at the cartoon before the movie. I asked someone at the orphanage and was told that cartoons are violent and are never shown to Greek children. Never thought about that, but when you look at a Road Runner cartoon, they sure are violent.

AND DISCIPLINING KIDS IN GREECE

One final story. There was a Steve McQueen movie showing in Athens, and I took my three kids, daughters 12 and 11, son 6. The lady in the ticket booth would not sell me tickets and spoke very little English. She kept saying Oh Hee! Oh Hee! (NO! NO!) Pethia, pethia (children, children). A passing Greek gentleman heard this and kindly explained that the Steve McQueen movie had violence in it and children under 16 were not allowed! The kids were disappointed, but I'd promised them a movie so we walked down the street to the next one.

All the outside info was in Greek, but I decided to take a chance. The movie was a romance and at one point, the hero and heroine are in a barn, he takes off her blouse, leaving her naked from the waist up, and they then sink down out of sight.

A few days later I was telling Andy and Despina about the movies, saying I thought we should have been allowed to see a little violence and less sex. Then Despina got all over me in Greek and much too fast to understand. Andy translated that violence is bad for children, but to see a woman naked from the waist up is natural, it is the way women were created.

Poor Andy, he was doing his best to translate as fast as he could, and when Despina stopped for breath, if I even frowned, she got more excited.

And finally this: in Greece, because it is against the law to cut down a tree and there is plenty of marble, most all the homes have marble floors. One day, in Andy's house, my son Ken was chasing Andy's two sons all through the house. On one trip his two boys ran past my chair. My son failed to make the turn after them, bumped into a small table, and knocked a beautiful glass pitcher and glasses onto the marble floor, smashing everything into bits.

Quick as a flash I grabbed my son's arm. Even quicker, Despina grabbed my arm and rattled something in Greek. Andy said Despina did not want me to punish my son, that the pitcher and glasses could be replaced, but a child could not.

This made a deep and lasting impression on me.

WHY DO WE CALL IT A HAMBURGER?

It's made of beef, so why is it called a hamburger?

This'd be a good place for a segue.

My Navy tanker visited Singapore a while back and several of us visited the Royal Singapore Flying Club. British, veddy, veddy British, just like in the early movies, and an absolute joy! After a few introductions and more than a few refreshments, someone asked if we'd like to fly (in a plane, that is), the only condition being that we guests pay for the petrol.

Being at the time in a gracious and expansive mood, we naturally agreed.

To my total delight the airplanes were of World War I vintage. My shipmates however, muttered and grumbled something about whether the things would actually get off the ground.

Nervously they eyed wooden propellers, engine radiators (yes, like in a car) and thin wires running from cockpit controls out through holes in the canvas body, down along the side to the rear of the plane and back inside the canvas, connecting to the rudder and elevators.

We filled the radiators with water and, after many cranks of a hand-operated gas pump, filled the tanks of two planes with petrol; three dollars worth. Only three? Hmm, did I mention that the 'a while back' was in 1948 or 1949?

Boy, how time flies! (No pun intended.)

At last, we flew out over the harbor and made slow circles around our ship, flying just a few feet above the surface of the water. Once the startled crew identified us happy and brave passengers in those very old planes, they waved and cheered us on.

Later, back at the Club, we were asked if we'd like cheeseburgers. The others said yes, but I asked for just a hamburger. My first bite told me something was amiss. Lifting the top half of the bun, I could see the hamburger...topped with a piece of ham.

"Why," I asked, "is that ham there?" Neither hosts nor houseboy knew, so the chef was summoned. He said that when the last American visitors had asked for cheeseburgers, he didn't know what they were, so they had gone into his kitchen, taught him to shape and cook beef patties, and top each with a slice of cheese.

It makes perfect sense: if a cheeseburger is a beef patty with a slice of cheese, then a hamburger must be a beef patty with a slice of ham!

Wondering if the Royal Singapore Flying Club still existed, so I could send them a copy of this exceptionally well written column a drip with nostalgia, I emailed Singapore. My question ended up in the hands of Diane DiBello at the New York City public relations firm of Spring O'Brien. She telephoned to let me know my question was being researched, and I'd soon have an answer. She was so courteous and helpful I had to mention how nice it was to find southern hospitality wasn't restricted to the South (wonder if she had some 'ya'll kind' of relatives somewhere along the way in her upbringing?)

A few days later the information arrived and...The Royal Singapore Flying Club is now just a memory (sad sigh). In its place is the Republic of Singapore Flying Club (RSFC) (glad sigh). They probably don't use those WWI planes anymore because they have Cessna 172s and TB9Cs.

Flying finances have also changed. Where just a mere half century ago one could fly all afternoon for only three dollars it now costs \$180 per solo hour and \$230 an hour for dual (instructor and student). What with all the things that have changed in Singapore...modern up-to-date aircraft, more education needed for a pilot's license, the increased cost...I hope they still serve a proper hamburger. It was different, but good.

Whew! I think I better call my nurse for a shot, I'm that tired from all that memorying!
And yep, like a blown sanitary, that's all there is.

CHAPTER 40

DAN EBERHARDT 1957 - 1959

**I REMEMBER DAILY OPERATIONS IN KEY WEST,
PAYDAY, TOOLS AND REPLACEMENT PARTS,
WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE,
CROSSING THE NORTH ATLANTIC,
NUMBER TWO SANITARY TANK,
PROBLEMS IN THE AFTER BATTERY,
FLOODING IN THE AFTER ENGINE ROOM,
LIBERTY IN GITMO CITY, KEY WEST POLICE,
AFTER DISCHARGE, AND OLD SHIPMATES**

The following are some of my Navy memories from almost fifty years ago. They may not match yours, but I hope you enjoy them. One of us may be correct.

DAILY OPERATIONS IN KEY WEST

Normal procedure was to go to sea each morning for training and return to port late afternoon. The duty section would stay on board and recharge the air banks and batteries. Sometimes we stayed at sea overnight, usually to sell cigarettes at \$1 a carton.

There were barracks on the base with a wing for each submarine. As I remember, qualified petty officers could live in the barracks when not on duty. The bunks were stacked three high and were about three feet apart, but that was a lot more room than on the boat, and there was a large shower with unlimited water.

The barracks didn't have a mess hall, but if you got up early you could eat breakfast on the boat. The cooks usually waited until after we were docked to serve the evening meal, and most of the married sailors went home for dinner.

Some of them would leave their wives waiting on the pier when we had steak.

I will never forget the smell of diesel fumes and raw sewage as we went to morning quarters. The standard procedure was to blow the sanitary tanks into the bay each morning before going to sea.

Where were the environmental activists?

PAYDAY

On payday, a disbursement officer came aboard with a case full of money. Each crew member had to fill out a form to get paid.

My pay was ninety dollars, and some disbursement officers would say the spelling should be "ninty" and reject my form. I then had to go to the end of the line and fill out a new form. I soon learned to fill out two forms and let them chose the right one.

One payday I had the below decks watch and was headed aft to shut a valve, when a shipmate offered to repay the money he had borrowed. I told him to hold on to it, and I would be right back.

When I got back he had just lost it in a poker game.

TOOLS AND REPLACEMENT PARTS

I was assigned the job of ordering tools and replacement parts. As I remember, we had a catalog which showed the tools and part numbers. You filled out a form and took it to the tender. Sometime later you could pick up your order.

I was advised that when ordering a desirable tool, like a crescent wrench, I should order six and expect to get one. (Many sailors had a small crescent wrench hanging from their belt.) Well, I was told to order a large 36" crescent wrench. I ordered six and received all of them.

When a replacement part was needed, you went to the Tender and described the part. Someone on the Tender would search through some blue prints and provide a part number.

There was a large electric motor with a circulating pump on both ends in the Pump Room. The salt water pump was leaking, and we decided to order a new one. Several sailors on the tender looked for a part number, and someone finally gave me a number to order.

One morning, a week or two later, a large part showed up on the dock. It was a complete assembly; the motor with both pumps. The Supply Officer chewed me out for over spending our allotment and told me to return the assembly.

After explaining the problem to a number of sailors on the Tender, someone informed me that expensive parts like that were charged to another fund, not to the individual submarine.

The supply officer was convinced, and I was off his s*** list.

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

I remember our Captain, LCDR Carl Davis, attempting to stop the swearing on board. I also remember an edict from above that said submarines should be called ships, not boats. Nothing changed.

CROSSING THE NORTH ATLANTIC

We crossed the North Atlantic in October 1957. Almost everyone had the flu and many were seasick. The standard prescription was two whites, a blue and a vitamin too (two APCs, one antihistamine, and a multivitamin) every four hours.

October 4, 1957, the Soviet Union successfully launched Sputnik I. I don't understand why, but it was two or three days before the crew was informed.

The sea was rough and the main induction was introducing a lot of water, so the Captain chose to snorkel on the surface. The waves were large enough to cycle the snorkel valve at times. At meal time you had to hold on to your plate with one hand and try to eat with the other.

Topside watches were cold and wet. Thankfully, I didn't have any topside watches.

After crossing the Atlantic, we stopped in Rothesay, Scotland and tied to the same ship as the NAUTILUS. She had a lot of topside damage, and it was many years later that an article in "Reader's Digest" enlightened me.

NAUTILUS had hit the polar ice cap.

We participated in the STRIKEBACK NATO exercises off the coast of Iceland. Then we visited England; Gibraltar; Malta; Piraeus, Greece; and Catania, Sicily. We went through the Corinth Canal, which was only eighty feet wide.

NUMBER TWO SANITARY TANK

One morning after quarters a chief came looking for the person who blew the sanitary tank. I was that person.

The chief was really p***** because he had used the commode and when he tried to flush, a pressure in the tank rejected his deposit.

After I explained that the tank was blown before reveille and quarters, and that many people had used it before him, he quieted down and agreed that some sick joker must have pressurized the tank.

Number Two Sanitary Tank had two commodes that dumped into it through a large ball valve at the base of each commode. A ninety degree movement of a long handle went from fully closed to fully open.

The after commode valve was closed when the handle was vertical and the forward commode valve was closed when the handle was horizontal. I don't know why they were set up that way, and it did cause some confusion.

One day two unqualified crew members were being taught to blow the sanitary tank. The trainer was in the after stall putting a pressure in the tank when he heard a leak in the forward commode and asked one of the unqualified guys to check the valve.

The unqualified sailor saw that the handle was horizontal and moved it to vertical, fully open, and we had a hell of a mess.

PROBLEMS IN THE AFTER BATTERY

It was 1958 in Key West. I arrived for duty one Monday morning and the below decks watch told me that they hadn't been able to blow Number 2 Sanitary Tank. So I tried to blow it, but couldn't get any pressure in the Tank. As I thought about this problem an electrician came up from the battery well and said "It smells like s*** down there."

A quick look with a flashlight showed water between the cells. We were very lucky that it didn't get to the top of the cells.

That would have been a real disaster.

The source of the problem was a 4-inch diameter elbow that connected the commode to the side of the sanitary tank. It had a hole in it and needed to be replaced. The only access was through the battery well.

Any submariner knows that you do not take large metal objects into the battery well. The electricians covered the path with rubber mats, and I carried the parts and tools. It took at least four trips to complete the repair; some of them while we were under way.

On the first trip, I removed the elbow, covered the hole in the tank with a plate, and took the defective elbow to the Tender. This disabled one of the commodes. The Tender constructed a new elbow, but the lower flange did not line up with the bolts in the side of the tank. So the Tender constructed another new elbow. The bend was still not right and a seam broke when I tightened the nuts. The Tender constructed a third new elbow. This one fit correctly and restored all functions. We now had two commodes.

FLOODING IN THE AFTER ENGINE ROOM

It was still 1958, and the SEA POACHER was moved to GITMO for temporary assignment. There was a chief who had recently transferred from the SEA POACHER to shore duty at GITMO. He was talking to a young sailor about the benefits of submarine duty, and arranged for him to ride with us on daily operations. The first two days were fine, and we almost had a new volunteer.

On the third day we were submerged and working with a surface craft. I was off duty and in my lower bunk in Hogan's Alley when the collision alarm sounded. As I slid out of my bunk, one or two shipmates from higher bunks stepped on my body, and we all headed for our assigned stations.

My damage control station was in the After Torpedo Room, but I only made it to the first watertight door which was dogged shut. James (Milt) Beard and I were now standing in the head and didn't know what was happening.

The boat assumed a large up angle which increased until the bulkhead was more horizontal than the deck. We were both glad that it was an up angle. We broke the surface at quite an angle, didn't collide with the surface ship, and managed to make it back to port.

The young sailor was the first one ashore, and he was not about to volunteer for submarine duty. Many of us slept topside that night because we didn't have any air conditioning.

As I remember it, this is what happened. A flexible coupling which carried salt water to the air conditioning condenser broke and began to flood the After Engine Room. The on-duty engineman secured the room and shut the sea valve for the air conditioner.

The After Torpedo Room was ordered to fire a flare to warn the surface ship searching for us. We were below test depth at one point and too deep to fire the flare.

We lost both bubbles, and someone computed the up angle at 58 degrees. Both generators in the After Engine Room were flooded with salt water and had to be cleaned.

LIBERTY IN GITMO CITY

I remember GITMO City, rum and coke with brown ice cubes. Liberty was on weekend afternoons and buses picked us up at the base gate and returned us before dark.

The buses were met by a Navy chief who encouraged everyone to hire a local guide for protection. We gave the guide a couple of bucks, but he soon got lost and left us on our own.

The shore patrol rounded up all sailors before dark and sent them back to the base.

One Saturday Dale Fate and I were the only submarine sailors on the return bus, and we had a disagreement with the surface craft sailors. The shore patrol pulled us off the bus, took our liberty cards, and brought us back to the base.

The next day Fate asked the duty officer if we could get another liberty card. The duty officer said that there was no yeoman to type the cards, but he would sign them if we could get them typed. I don't remember how Fate did it, but we got new liberty cards and headed for GITMO City. When we got to the gate the same two shore patrol sailors said we couldn't go ashore, because they still had our liberty cards. After we showed our new cards they let us board the bus.

KEY WEST POLICE

It was not unusual for sailors to be charged with DUI. The Key West newspaper listed their names and charges.

Those who hired a lawyer got the charges reduced. I didn't have a car.

I seem to remember an incident in late 1958 or early 1959 with some of the officers and the duty driver, but that may just have been a rumor.

AFTER DISCHARGE

I got out when we were in the shipyard in Charleston. Don't remember how, but I did get back to New Orleans.

National Cash Register hired me to repair cash registers and business machines. I didn't know anything about that business, but I passed their test and they sent me to school many times on different machines. I worked for them in New Orleans, with subsequent transfers to Ohio and California, where I became an international computer system analyst.

I made several international trips and saw some of the world. National Cash Register was bought out by AT&T in the 1990s, and decided, as computers got cheaper and easier to repair, they could operate with fewer people and offered an early out package. So, I retired in 1994.

OLD SHIPMATES

I have seen a few shipmates since my discharge.

Coutu and Fate visited New Orleans while still in the Navy.

I think the Sea Poacher also stopped in New Orleans. I saw Nolan walking on Canal Street one day, and he was actually living in New Orleans at the time.

I visited with Wallin in New York, Taylor in Kentucky, and Rispon in Baton Rouge. I ran into Chiefs Johnson and Brayman in a bar in Fairborn, Ohio one night. They had a bowling team called the "Submariners," and I think they were working for the Post Office. I met James (Milt) Beard at a U. S. Submarine Veterans meeting in San Diego. He lives just a couple of miles from me. Sad to say, but I have lost touch with everyone listed, except Beard and Taylor.

"Submariners are a bunch of intelligent misfits that somehow seem to get along, understand each other and work well together."

Author Unknown

"These dolphins, once you pin them on your chest, leave deep marks, right over your heart, long after the uniforms have been put away."

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 41

CARL DAVIS 1957 – 1959

BY HIS SON CARL DAVIS, II

AND

RAYMOND E. BELL, JR. PhD

BRIGADIER GENERAL, U.S. ARMY (RETIRED)

**I REMEMBER TAKING COMMAND OF SEA POACHER,
NATO EXERCISES OFF GREAT BRITAIN,
THE CORINTH CANAL TRANSIT,
EXERCISES WITH THE SIXTH FLEET,
A CHARLESTON SHIPYARD OVERHAUL,
A LOT OF TORPEDO FIRING EXERCISES,
AND BEING RELIEVED AS COMMANDING OFFICER**

This is for my Dad. For background documentation of source information, we had a Brigadier General Raymond E. Bell, a retired Army officer helping us on preparing a biography of Dad and his years of service on seven submarines.

General Bell inspected the deck logs of the various submarines Dad was on, reviewed fitness reports, and interviewed a number of persons who worked with Dad. So I based my submission on information he collected. General Bell did the yeoman's work on gathering information in order to write this monograph about Dad's service.

TAKING COMMAND OF SEA POACHER

On July 25, 1957, LCDR Carl Davis took command of SEA POACHER from LCDR Thomas Polk, at the Key West Naval Station. During August, the new Commander and his officer compliment of XO LCDR Bob Bergs and LTJGs Delvin Smith, James High, Burt Levin, Ernest Sabol, Jr., Martin Ruch, Jr., and Ensign Gordon Townsend conducted training exercises in Key West waters shaking down the crew and checking out the results of the recently completed overhaul in Charleston.

In August 1957, Lieutenant Kent Carroll came on board as XO/Navigator replacing XO Bergs who transferred off. LTJG William Meyer, Jr. also reported aboard. Ruch, Meyer, and High were all promoted to LT while Davis was in command of the SEA POACHER (promoted while deployed with the Sixth Fleet discussed below).

Chief Petty Officer Ken Bonnell in remembering Captain Davis wrote, "Capn' Davis was a skillful skipper who knew how to operate a submarine and how to treat his crew. It was a pleasure to serve with him. Note I said with, not under. He was that kind of a person, and there is a vast difference between 'serving with' and 'serving under.'"

NATO EXERCISES OFF GREAT BRITAIN

On August 29 SEA POACHER departed for the Firth of Clyde in Scotland, to participate in North Atlantic Treaty Organization fall exercises off the coast of Great Britain.

On September 5, the boat made a submerged approach on Task Force 29. During these exercises, SEA POACHER engaged in battle drill torpedo, and on September 7, fired a M23 expendable torpedo. On September 19, she remained submerged for the entire day and snorkeled on two engines for over five hours on September 21.

On September 22 and for several nights following, SEA POACHER dove after making contact with an ECM (Electronic Counter Measures) aircraft.

THE CORINTH CANAL TRANSIT

Following liberty in London for three days, SEA POACHER cruised to Gibraltar and then into the Mediterranean Sea for exercises with the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Ionian Sea.

During this deployment, she became the first submarine to transit the Corinth Canal that separates the Peloponnesus from the principle land mass of Greece. The Isthmus of Corinth divides the Saronic Gulf, an inlet of the Aegean Sea, from the Gulf of Corinth.

The canal is only 80 feet wide and in some places, the sheer bluff walls rise to 250 feet. As Dad tells the story, he radioed the Sixth Fleet that SEA POACHER would return to the Ionian Sea from Piraeus, the port of Athens, via the Corinth Canal, unless otherwise instructed.

While in Piraeus, Davis announced the promotion of Bonnell to CPO. When Bonnell first appeared on deck with his new uniform and billed cap, he was seized by several shipmates who shouted "One, Two, Three" and then tossed Bonnell to a splashing baptism in the Mediterranean Sea.

EXERCISES WITH THE SIXTH FLEET

On October 28, SEA POACHER entered and passed through the Corinth Canal. LT Carroll was at the Conn and Davis was on the Bridge.

The boat conducted tactical exercises with the BERGALL including simulated torpedo firings. The crew had a brief liberty call at Catania and many visited the active volcano on Mount Etna. After additional exercises, SEA POACHER sailed on November 18 to Gibraltar and for return to Key West.

While in port, the Admiral commanding the Sixth Fleet sent a message to SEA POACHER which read, "It was a pleasure to have you in the Sixth Fleet. You have performed your duties with competence and "Can Do" spirit. Good bye and good luck."

KEY WEST AND GITMO OPERATIONS

The boat stayed in home waters during 1958, but remained busy with training and exercises, including battle stations torpedo and the firing of exercise torpedoes. LTJG William Henry joined the sub and LT Smith transferred off the boat.

In April, the SEA POACHER and crew visited Cape Canaveral to build rapport between the Navy and local citizens, and to familiarize visiting boats with the Port. An Operational

Readiness Inspection including firing expendable MK 27-4 torpedoes, radar navigation, and collision station exercises.

On May 5, SEA POACHER deployed to GITMO, and was underway daily every week until return on June 1. The deck log reveals that every day involved submerged or snorkeling operations.

In July, LT Colwell joined the boat. He was promoted to XO following Davis's transfer from command.

In August, SEA POACHER fired a number of practice torpedoes including exercise Mark 14-3A and practice Mark 27-4 torpedoes.

On September 15, SEA POACHER again sailed 484 miles, in only a little over a day, to GITMO for additional operations.

A CHARLESTON SHIPYARD OVERHAUL

In late November, SEA POACHER entered Charleston Naval Shipyard for refitting and overhaul including the installation of new sonar gear.

A LOT OF TORPEDO FIRING EXERCISES

Upon overhaul completion on April 13, 1959, she got underway for Newport, RI for torpedo loading and firing exercises.

After return to Key West, additional torpedo firing exercises were conducted in early May together with battle station and snorkeling drills.

The boat then sailed again in June for GITMO and conducted more torpedo firing exercises.

BEING RELIEVED AS COMMANDING OFFICER

On June 25, 1959, my Dad was relieved as Skipper of SEA POACHER by LCDR Lawrence Stahl. He subsequently reported to the Naval Postgraduate School in California.

He would have the fondest memories of SEA POACHER as it was without question a highlight of his Navy career. Dad spoke of it often.

When we were based in Monterey, the high school summer program included "shop" class. (I am amazed today at how we were then relatively free to use the power tools with minimal supervision.)

Anyway, my twin brother and I made small submarine models in shop class modeled on the SS-406. The SEA POACHER is the boat I recall when I think about the boats that Dad served on and skippered, as we were just 6 years old when we left Key West for the West Coast.

"Like the destroyer, the submarine has created its own type of officer and man with language and traditions apart from the rest of the service, and yet at the heart unchangingly of the Service."

Rudyard Kipling, The Fringes of the Fleet

CHAPTER 42

JACK NIMS 1957 – 1963

**I REMEMBER SEVERAL CHARLESTON SHIPYARD OVERHAULS,
DONATING BLOOD IN WEST PALM BEACH,
SIX DEPLOYMENTS TO GITMO, LIBERTY IN JAMAICA,
A RUN TO THE MED AND MOTOR ROOM FLOODING,
THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS,
AND LEAVING SEA POACHER FOR OTHER DUTIES**

THE CHARLESTON SHIPYARD OVERHAULS

I do not have any long stories to tell, but I do have many memories of my nearly six years on SEA POACHER. In the fall of 1958, we went to Charleston for an overhaul. By this time I had a motorcycle along with several others on board. We managed to get one of the wives to pull a trailer with four bikes on it. During the overhaul we did a lot of things to improve the boat's condition. All the lockers had Formica installed on them. The crew did the job. The Maneuvering cubicle was re-chromed and additional chrome was accomplished by cumshaw methods.

We had a great time in the shipyard and it was quite an experience to see a ship that far torn apart and then reassembled. The physical size of the batteries during the replacement was something to see. All of the younger group (myself included) had to do the fire watches and many of them were in the middle of the night.

One of the tests I specifically remember was the battery test of the main circuit breaker. A backup breaker was placed on the pier and a water rack for load was also on the pier. The batteries were then shorted and when the current got high the water heated up and hissing started before the breaker tripped. I was in the Maneuvering Room operating the controls and it was the longest time you can imagine. I think it was less than a minute to trip, but it seemed like an eternity in Maneuvering.

In 1961, I re-enlisted for six years with EM "B" School as an incentive. I had orders to go and planned to leave in June to attend my sister's wedding in Phoenix. Alas that was cancelled by the Skipper. There was an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) scheduled for that time and he said he wanted me there for it. The ORI went well, I missed the wedding, but I did go to EM "B" School at Great Lakes.

When I left I requested a return to SEA POACHER and that was arranged prior to my departure (always nice if you have friends in DC). Upon completion I returned to Key West as the orders stated. However, the boat was in Charleston for the 1962 overhaul. My orders were modified and I was sent to Charleston. I was glad to get back and see all my friends.

After the yard period, we went to New London for training. We did the escape tank training for free ascent. During our stay there we went to New York City on the train several times.

DONATING BLOOD IN WEST PALM BEACH

In 1963 the Senior Cook John Harvey's mother was living in West Palm Beach. She was ill and required a lot of blood. SEA POACHER made a trip to the city and the crew donated blood. The amount was up around 80 pints, but I cannot remember the exact amount. The boat was opened up for visitation on Saturday and Sunday and the city people were very receptive to us. I even had a ride in a Rolls Royce and ate dinner in a mansion in Palm Beach as a result of a tour I gave to some folks that came through the boat.

SIX DEPLOYMENTS TO GITMO

I made six deployments there. The first was in 1958, before Fidel Castro took over Cuba. On later trips, it was interesting to see the marines patrolling the fence line.

There was not much to do on base, and it was hot and humid. On one of the visits to GITMO we had the unfortunate experience of a sea valve giving way in an Engine Room while submerged. It caused major flooding and a severe up angle of about 50 degrees as I recall.

It happened about 0900 as we had gone out for ops early around 0530 to get there before the other ships and play games with them. We were submerged, and I was in my bunk in the back row of the After Battery. As things started happening I immediately got up and went to the Mess Hall only to see everything flying off shelves and the Engineering Officer racing to the Engine Room in his underwear to assist with the problem. I remember the dinner in one of the large gun tubs was spilling out all over the Mess Hall.

The end result was a red flare was sent up from the ATR to alert the other ships we had a problem and were coming up. As I understand it we did not know the location of the other ships and was a pretty dangerous situation. The stern of SEA POACHER was at 512 feet on the depth gauge in the After Room. After we got to the surface and went into port the work of the engine gang and the electricians started. Outside engineers were called in to see what they could do to get the two generators back in service.

We did not have any air conditioning after the flooding. Thus the batteries were sweating causing grounding problems and we couldn't charge. I spent hours and hours wiping the cells off. We only stayed in GITMO a few days after that and went back to Key West. The end result was to put the generator covers back on and then fill them up like a washing machine. The engines were turned over at slow speed and the salt water was flushed out. It worked.

LIBERTY IN JAMAICA

On several visits we finished operations Friday afternoon and then went to Jamaica for the weekend. The first time was to Montego Bay, where we had to anchor out and boats transported us in for liberty. While there I remember going to one of the large resort hotels high on the hill overlooking the bay. It was in the evening and there were some aviation officers there.

Well, there was a lot of drinking going on and bragging rights had to be defended. Before the night was over one of the SEA POACHER chiefs threw one of the officers into the pool. Fortunately everything turned out OK.

We went to Ocho Rios the next few times and while there visited the Arawak Hotel for entertainment. It was a great time. The Captain had his wife fly to Jamaica, and we had a big party out in some outside remote covered area to celebrate his birthday. The calypso bands were

going at all day and the beer was plentiful. The rain came but it didn't matter as we all had a great time. Ocho Rios had a pier at a Bauxite plant that we used when we visited. The water was probably fifty feet deep and you could see the bottom clearly.

A RUN TO THE MED AND MOTOR ROOM FLOODING

In the spring of 1959 we went on a run to the Med. We had a great schedule setup with a trip to Cannes, France. Unfortunately we ran into a problem as soon as we arrived in Gibraltar, and the Motor Room bilge was flooded due to errors in the valve lineup. This flooded the Main Motors and required repair.

We remained in Gibraltar for six weeks. Along with the Royal Air Force we had a great time. While there an incident between a black and a white crew member took place. It was so serious that the white member had his ear bit off. An awful thing to happen and there was certainly a lot of controversy over it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This incident is clarified in another chapter. One of our quiet SEA POACHER sailors actually bit the ear off of a SKIPJACK sailor.

We did manage to get to Genoa and Livorno, Italy before retuning to Key West. I took a trip from Livorno to Pisa and went up the Leaning Tower. We also went on to Florence and toured the cathedrals.

THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN

We left Key West in August and returned early December. We first went to New London for upgrades on our monitoring equipment. It took about three weeks. We were nearing completion and readying for departure, when Hurricane Donna was due to hit the Key West area.

Against the Captain's wishes we stayed another day in New London but the Hurricane had still not hit so we departed.

After three weeks at sea chasing Russian trawlers we arrived in Portland, England. There were lots of letters waiting from the families and pictures of the devastation caused by Hurricane Donna. Fortunately there was not too much damage in Key West, but the roads and bridges near Marathon were taken out and the water line destroyed.

We stayed in Portsmouth for six days. I went to London on the train for three days and had a good time touring around the city. We left Portsmouth and headed for the North Atlantic passing the white cliffs of Dover which we could see through the periscope.

In the Barents Sea the water temperature was 38 degrees and caused many problems for the electrical department. Since the heaters could not be turned on, the condensation was really bad and caused many grounds. Carl Hale, Gunner Vanderwerker, and myself were removed from the watch list just to keep the electrical system safe and to be able to charge the batteries.

It was a long trip from Portsmouth back to New London. I think it was around 54 days that we were at sea. On Thanksgiving the weather was very rough. We submerged and the boat was still rolling back and forth from the heavy seas above us.

On the return trip we were getting extremely low on fuel. It was even thought we may have to detour to Greenland to get fuel. However, we did make it back but came in on fumes to New London. After three days to remove the equipment we returned to Key West.

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

In October 1962 when the Cuban crisis broke out, we were told on Sunday to bring all our gear on board including blues and whites. We were not told what was going on but only to get on board. On Monday we were loading up and fixing whatever we could. We had just completed six weeks of operations and were scheduled for a three week upkeep. When we were preparing, another boat had a problem with the screw which had been changed earlier by divers. Upon getting underway the screws were found to be on the opposite sides and had to be changed again and this delayed the departure of all the boats.

We were sent to Fort Lauderdale to get us out of Key West. We spent four days there and then we were deployed to Georgetown, SC for a weekend stay. Three submarines were in Georgetown which is a very small town in itself. The clubs were normally closed on the weekend but they were gracious enough to open them up for us. We then went to the shipyard in Charleston for special operations which were cancelled due to another boat clipping our screw. From there it was on to Norfolk for degaussing. We only stayed two nights I think. When we left Norfolk we went straight to GITMO. By this time the Cuban crisis was breaking up, and we remained there for about three weeks anyway.

While in GITMO, Perry Como had a USO show. He visited the boat late one night after the Officer's Club closed and toured through. He brought his troupe to SEA POACHER the next day for another tour. The barge across the pier was there for us to use when we were there and beer was available on the pier.

We returned to Key West in December 1962 and in early 1963 went to New Orleans for five days at Mardi Gras. A good time was had there. In July we also won the coveted submarine Fire Control Award. Something to do with torpedo firing and weapons efficiency. And that was the name of the game. (See Photo Section.)

LEAVING SEA POACHER FOR OTHER DUTIES

In October 1963 I was transferred to shore duty at Great Lakes as an instructor at EM"A" School. I was sad to leave all my friends on SEA POACHER.

My career continued on and as the diesel boats retired, I was selected by the submarine screening board to retain my designation of (SS). I attribute that to my training on SEA POACHER. My career did take me on to other submarines including RAZORBACK (SS-394) in San Diego and VOLADOR (SS-490) in Charleston.

From there I went on to another tour of shore duty at Great Lakes; this time as an EM"B" School instructor. After nearly four years in Illinois, I retired after 19 years 4 months service in June 1976.

I have certainly missed several important things I can't remember them all. THRESHER and SCORPION both come to mind and was a terrible thing to happen.

Maybe someone else has some input on a trip we made to Tampa in late 1958 at the Gasparilla Festival. I wasn't qualified at the time so I missed the liberty there.

SEA POACHER was special for reasons that do not exist in other areas. Key West was isolated and only 4-1/4 square miles with 38,000 people. With limited activities and everyone close, we knew all the wives names, how many kids they had, and what color their car was. The picnics we had on the base were a huge turnout and got the crew and the families together. You couldn't ask for a better situation.

CHAPTER 43

LARRY COLWELL 1958 – 1959

I REMEMBER A LOST CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT AND BLOWING A LOT OF BOOZE OUT OF A TORPEDO TUBE

A LOST CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT

The cast of characters included CO Larry Stahl and XO was either Kent Carroll or Fred Edwards. My memory is suspect.

At the time I was Communications, Electronics, Classified Material Control, and Crypto Officer on SEA POACHER. It was time for the annual report on the classified material and crypto inventory.

I went through all the items in the safe and did a complete inventory. However, I found I was missing one Secret document. After the third try of going through the safe, I reported the missing document to Captain Stahl. He was more than a bit nervous and not very happy about it.

It got even worse when I informed him that the person signed out for the document was HE, the Captain himself.

I went topside. We were on the surface, and took the Conn. It became apparent that all hell was going on below decks.

After I came off the watch, there was an inspection of the officer's quarters and the missing document showed up under the mattress of the XO.

For a time the XO was in the doghouse.

But since the Captain was off the hook, life went on.

BLOWING A LOT OF BOOZE OUT OF A TORPEDO TUBE

There is another fascinating story which I remember, but don't know if it was just one made up by the crew or if it really did happen. This was about the booze in a FTR torpedo tube after a visit to Havana.

The U.S. Customs met us at the Sea Buoy and surprisingly must have suspected something awry in our FTR configuration. .

A practice torpedo firing brought tears to many eyes. This one needs to be researched by men more directly involved than me.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It also brings a tear to my eye. Sad to say, this event is chronicled in the stories of other shipmates in this Book.

CHAPTER 44

GEORGE BRACEY AND ELWOOD FORNI 1958 - 1959

SHIPMATES ABOARD USS THRESHER (SSN-593)

10 APRIL 1963

Upon completion of an overhaul at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, THRESHER, accompanied by the Submarine Rescue Ship SKYLARK (ASR-20) was in an area some 220 miles east of Cape Cod and began deep-diving tests.

As the tests proceeded, garbled communications over the underwater telephone were received by SKYLARK, indicating trouble aboard the Submarine.

A few words were understandable including "minor difficulties, have positive up-angle, attempting to blow." When the communications ceased it was followed by the sound of pressurized air escaping, and SKYLARK observers gradually realized THRESHER had sunk.

After an extensive underwater search THRESHER was located at a depth of 8,400 feet, by the Bathyscaph TRIESTE, Oceanographic Ship MIZAR, and others. It is near Latitude 41-46N and Longitude 65-03E.

A subsequent Court of Inquiry concluded from deep sea photography, recovered artifacts, and an evaluation of her design and operational history, that THRESHER probably sank due to a failure in a weld of a salt water piping system, subsequent loss of power, and inability to blow ballast tanks rapidly enough to prevent sinking. See References for detailed information on this tragedy.

Over the next several years, a massive program was undertaken to correct design and construction problems on the Navy's existing nuclear submarines, and on those under construction and in planning.

Following completion of this "Sub Safe" effort, the Navy has suffered no further losses of the kind that so tragically ended THRESHER'S brief service career.

All 129 men aboard were lost including 16 officers, 96 enlisted, and 17 civilian technicians. Included were former SEA POACHER Shipmates George Bracey and Elwood Forni.

GEORGE BRACEY

George entered the Navy in 1942. He first served on the Aircraft Carrier RANGER, and then volunteered for submarine duty. As a Stewards Mate, he served on PARGO and received his dolphins on BLUEFISH.

His other submarines were CLAMAGORE, THORNBAC, RAZORBACK, SEA POACHER, and AMBERJACK. In July, 1960, he was assigned to THRESHER.

He earned the Submarine Combat Insignia with two gold stars, World War II Victory Medal, American Service Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Theater Service Medal, Philippine Liberation Ribbon, National Defense Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal (three awards), a Commendation

for outstanding performance while on RAZORBACK, and a Commendation from the CO of THRESHER.

George was an ardent church worker and an ordained deacon at the People's Baptist Church of Portsmouth, NH. He was also a 32d Degree Mason of the D.G. Lett Lodge.

ELLWOOD FORNI

Ellwood entered the Navy in 1948. He volunteered for submarine duty, completed sub school, and was assigned to SENNETT where he earned his dolphins. After attending Fleet Sonar School and becoming a Sonarman, he subsequently served on SEACAT, QUILLBACK, GUAVINA, and SEA POACHER as a First Class Petty Officer.

He was then selected for Guided Missile School training, and served on TULLIBEE. In August 1961, he was assigned to THRESHER as a Chief Petty Officer.

He earned the Navy's Good Conduct Medal with four stars, National Defense Service Medal, a Letter of Commendation from the CO of TULLIBEE, a Letter of Commendation from COMSUBLANT for his outstanding assistance and performance of duty during "in-service trials," and a Letter of Commendation from the CO of THRESHER.

REMEMBERING THEM

EDITOR'S NOTE: I contacted nearly a dozen SEA POACHER shipmates who contributed to this Book and who could have served with both George and Ellwood during the 1958-1959 time frame. Most have no memory of either individual.

Perhaps Karl Schipper said it best "One thing is for certain – they both pretty much stayed out of trouble and got along with everyone or stories would have been written."

However, Ron Godwin does remember some specific details which follow.

George Bracey was a Steward for the officers, and he had one of the bridal suite bunks in the FTR. He was a nice guy and a good shipmate as I recall. I was qualifying for most of the time we served together. We were in rough water on a transit to New London (I think) when George's bridal suite bunk came loose. He fell onto a strong back and broke his hip.

He was transferred to a hospital and that was the last I heard of George until the awful news of the THRESHER accident and the posting of the crew list.

Ellwood Forni was a STS1 and my boss when he came aboard. He was old school and could be a hard man to get along with after a night on the beach. One morning on daily Key West operations, the active sonar was down, and he went to work on it.

It was after the Maneuvering Watch was secured, and I was in the rack until we got to the op area and submerged, to protect my stomach from seasickness (I had not yet learned how to beat it).

Any way, I got woke up to go to Sonar to help out. Forni was in a hissy fit, because he couldn't find the light switch to see what he was doing. I pointed the switch out, and left him and Bob Hughes to fix the problem. The way Forni acted it was my fault that every thing wasn't according to Hoyle, including his hangover.

When we were in the shipyard in Charleston, Forni took over the duty section that I was in. MM1 Fredrickson had been our section leader before, and he always came around and woke us up for quarters on weekends. That way we didn't have to leave calls on the barracks watch list.

Forni's first duty was on Saturday, and he did not do that. As a result, I overslept and had to go to XO's Mast (not technically legal but it kept you from Captain's Mast and from going on your record.) LCDR Carroll didn't buy the change in section leader as a good enough excuse, and I wound up with seven days extra duty which involved painting the Control Room waterways.

When we went to the Med, Forni came up to me, and said I was really a pretty good Sonarman. But it still cost me a delay of six months in going to SOS2. Actually it came down to shipyard time versus sea time when you prove what you can do.

Forni left the boat after the Med trip. We crossed paths again in 1960 in New London. He was in the new construction crew on TULLIBEE and called me about getting copies of our Operations Department Instructions.

We shot the bull about new construction and what was new with TULLIBEE. The Ops Boss told him he could come over and copy anything he needed, but he wouldn't send the book over. Forni didn't come over, and we never crossed paths again until I saw the Thresher accident crew list.

Regardless of how much contact you have with shipmates or how many rough spots crop up, they are your shipmates forever, and you feel their loss as if you lost a bosom buddy. Such is the nature of submariners and the deep feeling we have for dolphin wearers and the boats we ride.

DR. JOYCE BROTHERS AFTER THE LOSS OF THRESHER IN 1963

SUBMARINE SERVICE, WHY THEY ARE THE WAY THEY ARE, AND WHY THEY BEHAVE THAT WAY – RISK IS AN INSPIRATION IN THE SUB SERVICE

The tragic loss of the submarine Thresher and 129 men had a special kind of an impact on the nation.....a special kind of sadness, mixed with universal admiration for the men who choose this type of work. One could not mention the Thresher without observing, in the same breath how utterly final and alone the end is when a ship dies at the bottom of the sea....and what a remarkable specimen of man it must be who accepts such a risk.

Most of us might be moved to conclude, too, that a tragedy of this kind would have a damaging effect on the morale of the other men in the submarine service and tend to discourage future enlistment. Actually, there is no evidence that this is so.

What is it then that lures men to careers in which they spend so much of their time in cramped quarters, under great psychological stress, with danger lurking all about them? Togetherness is an overworked term, but in no other branch of our military service is it given such full meaning as in the "silent service."

In an undersea craft, each man is totally dependent upon the skill of every other man in the crew, not only for top performance but for actual survival. Each knows that his very life depends on the others and because this is so, there is a bond among them that both challenges and comforts them.

All of this gives the submariner a special feeling of pride, because he is indeed a member of an elite corps. The risks, then, are an inspiration rather than a deterrent. The challenge of masculinity is another factor which attracts men to serve on submarines. It certainly is a test of a man's prowess and power to know he can qualify for this highly selective service. However, it should be emphasized that this desire to prove masculinity is not pathological, as it might be in certain dare-devil pursuits, such as driving a motorcycle through a flaming hoop.

There is nothing dare devilish about motivations of the man who decides to dedicate his life to the submarine service. He does, indeed, take pride in demonstrating that he is quite a man, but he does not do so to practice a form of foolhardy brinkmanship, to see how close he can get to failure and still snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

On the contrary, the aim in the submarine service is to battle danger, to minimize the risk, to take every measure to make certain that safety, rather than danger, is maintained at all times. Are the men in the submarine service braver than those in other pursuits where the possibility of a sudden tragedy is constant?

The glib answer would be to say they are. It is more accurate, from a psychological point of view, to say they are not necessarily braver, but that they are men who have a little more insight into themselves and their capabilities. They know themselves a little better than the next man. This has to be so with men who have a healthy reason to volunteer for a risk. They are generally a cut healthier emotionally than others of the similar age and background because of their willingness to push themselves a little bit farther and not settle for an easier kind of existence.

We all have tremendous capabilities but are rarely straining at the upper level of what we can do; these men are. This country can be proud and grateful that so many of its sound, young, eager men care enough about their own stature in life and the welfare of their country to pool their skills and match them collectively against the power of the sea.

IOWA AND OTHER STATE SUBMARINE MEMORIALS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rich Ferris recently participated in a ceremony at the Iowa State Capitol to honor Submarine Veterans of WWII and all Veterans Qualified in Submarines. He kindly provided me with an article from the Des Moines Register dated 22 June 2007 entitled "New Monument at Capitol Honors WWII sub crews by Jonathon Roos, Register Staff Writer. See References. A portion of this article follows.

The black granite monument, located south of the Capitol, was erected under the sponsorship of Iowa submarine veterans groups to remind people of the pivotal role played by the U.S. Navy's submarine force in World War II, as well as the large sacrifice in lives and vessels.

The back of the stone bears the message that American submarines suffered the highest loss rate among the nation's armed forces during the war.

Of the 16,000 officers and enlisted men that served during the war, 3,506 (22 percent) were lost. Although only 1.6 percent of the U.S. Navy, the Submarine Force sank 30 percent of the Japanese Imperial Navy and 60 percent of the Japanese Merchant Marine, choking off the Japanese economy. This victory came at a heavy price.

Other words carved into the stone monument pay tribute to all submarine sailors. Art work depicts a World War II submarine and a nuclear submarine. About \$12,000 was raised from private donations to erect the monument.

The impetus for the project came from a nationwide effort to have each state establish a memorial for one of the 52 subs lost in World War II.

SENATE RESOLUTION 318 (IN PART) – 7 JUNE 2000

Whereas this is the 100th year of service to the people of the United States by the United States Navy submarine force, the 'Silent Service';

Whereas this is the 200th year of service to the Nation of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard;

Whereas from the loss of that submarine, there arose the SUBSAFE program which has kept America's submariners safe at sea ever since as the strongest, safest submarine force in history;

Whereas from the loss of the THRESHER, there arose in our Nation's universities the ocean engineering curricula that enables America's preeminence in submarine warfare; and

Whereas the last full measure of devotion' shown by the crew of the THRESHER characterizes the sacrifice of all submariners, past and present, military and civilian, in the service of this Nation: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) remembers with profound sorrow the loss of the THRESHER and her gallant crew of sailors and civilians on April 10, 1963;

(2) expresses its deepest gratitude to all submariners on 'eternal patrol', forever bound together by their dedicated and honorable service to the United States of America;

(3) recognizes with appreciation and respect the commitment and sacrifices made by the Naval Submarine Service for the past 100 years in providing for the common defense of the United States; and

(4) offers its admiration and gratitude for the workers of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard whose 200 years of dedicated service to the United States Navy has contributed directly to the greatness and freedom of the United States.

"Never Give In, Battle Cry:

Take her fast, Take her deep, Take her where the fishes sleep...

Damn the depth, Damn the pressure, Take her down just like the THRESHER... "

From the OLYMPIA (SSN-717) Book of Poems. Author unknown

CHAPTER 45

KARL SCHIPPER 1958 - 1960

**I REMEMBER THE 1958 CREW, BECOMING A QUARTERMASTER,
THE 1959 MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE, MOTOR ROOM FLOODING,
GITMO AND THE BATTLE FOR CUBA, GITMO AND BOOZE, THE
NAVY PROCUREMENT SYSTEM, THE SPRUNG AFTER BATTERY
HATCH, THE SEA POACHER BRIG, LOSING THE COLT 45 SEMI-
AUTOMATIC WEAPON, BLIMP OPERATIONS, CLEAR THE BRIDGE,
CHARLESTON NAVY YARD, TORPEDO TUBE MALFUNCTION,
HURRICANE EVACUATION, THE BLUE ANGELS, EARNING OUR
DOLPHINS, THE SONAR TRACKING PARTY,
THE MARINES AND SIGNALMEN, ALONGSIDE THE TENDER,
OTHER MEMORIES, AND FINAL THOUGHTS**

“I have a tale to tell ye lads – I have a tale or two

I have a tale to tell ye lads, ‘tis true,

Tis true, I swear by my tattoo”

From the movie – 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

THE 1958 CREW

On a warm afternoon in July of 1958, I got off the bus at Key West, fresh out of sub school, and ready to report for duty on board SEA POACHER. I found out that all leaves had been cancelled due to a military action going on in the Red Sea (See Footnote 1 at end of chapter). After processing and taken to the boat, I found lots of controlled confusion and activity. The SEA POACHER and other squadron boats were preparing to go to the Med as support vessels. She was getting ready for a 90 day war patrol. The dock had sailors with guns.

Being new, I was constantly asked who I was and what I was doing aboard. We worked all night loading stores and torpedoes with war heads. It was amazing how all the supplies could be stashed in every nook and cranny. That was my introduction aboard. After a few days, the situation settled down and we never went. We had to unload the majority of torpedoes equipped with war heads.

I was fortunate to be in the service between wars. The “old guys” in the crew were mostly WWII vets with a lot of experience and stories. Several had been survivors of boats that had been either damaged or sunk. I learned many things quickly. During training and sub school, it was evident the chiefs were people to reckon with. On board the boat, they ruled! The captain may be God, but it was the chiefs that made things happen.

One never thought of questioning what they said, especially their stories – no matter how embellished they sounded. They were an expert on every subject known to mankind and could get down right cranky if they had not been l*** for some time.

My schooling aboard ship also included finding out that first class petty officers and chiefs

had a unique medical condition. They did not pass out from excessive drinking, they fainted instead. This made them immune to the consequences suffered by those of us of lower rank who missed muster or were otherwise unfit for duty.

One of the first people I was introduced to was “Bulldog”, the leading seaman. He was a guy who had been around, and knew his stuff. He made sure I was quickly trained in line handling and paint scraping, and all the other tasks that seaman had to do. Nothing like spending summer days in Key West scraping paint between the deck and hull. My fondest memory of the “old salt” Bulldog, was when we were retrieving a torpedo during one of our daily operations. The seas were rough and the torpedo retrievers could not get out. We finally got the torpedo alongside with lines attached. Because of the rough seas, the lines would go slack and then taunt as the height changed between the torpedo and boat. Just as Bulldog walked by, he stepped on one of the lines as it got taut. He was catapulted through the air and landed in the ocean. Our “old salt” leader just got saltier.

We had a chief pharmacist mate aboard. A really nice guy, considering he was a chief. He was an expert at patching up the guys that got wounded on liberty. No matter what was wrong with you, he would go to the medicine locker, reach into a large jar, and hand you a couple of APCs.

When we hit foreign ports, it was not unusual to get a bout of Montezuma’s Revenge from eating fresh vegetables. The chief also had a bottle of some “white stuff. “ He would give you several spoonfuls. Don’t know what it was, but you were instantly cured.

Trouble was you could not go to the bathroom for the next three days.

We had at least 3 musicians on board. One was “Arky” who would play his guitar and sing bluegrass songs. Another taught himself to play the electric guitar and played in a band in town. A third, Slater, played the Sax. In the evenings as the sun would set, he would play the blues.

The food aboard SEA POACHER was exceptionally good. Steak and shrimp every Friday. Anyone could cook for themselves during off hours as long as they cleaned up afterwards. Cooking and eating was an adventure when we operated on the surface in rough seas. One of the cooks, a huge man, started as a fireman and began working in the engine room and then decided to become a cook. He never opened a cook book, but every meal he prepared was the best.

When fresh vegetables and potatoes were brought aboard, the shipment always included a supply of cockroaches that grew to gigantic size. It was not unusual to wake up and have one sitting on the bunk rail. When in port over a weekend, crew members who had visiting family could bring them to the boat. After the crew finished the noon meal, the cook would make them a meal. On one Sunday when guests were aboard having their meal, several of us were sitting on deck. All of a sudden, loud female shrieks and screams could be heard from below decks. One of the resident cockroaches had decided it was an appropriate time to take a stroll across the mess table.

If one wanted to get a heated debate going, the appropriate subject was the proper way to make coffee and clean out the coffee pot. A huge coffee pot was constantly kept going in the mess. Certain crewmembers considered themselves as having eminent domain over that pot. Each had their own way of making coffee and cleaning the pot. If someone else made the coffee or cleaned out the pot and the resulting coffee did not meet the standards as determined by the “coffee experts,” that person was banned from ever touching the pot again.

The last pot of the day was usually prepared about 10 pm. Regardless of who made it, it poured like old thick engine oil when one got their cup of coffee to begin the 4 a.m. watch.

BECOMING A QUARTERMASTER

After an appropriate time in the deck gang, I declared that I wanted to be a Quartermaster. When an opening came, I became part of the gang. The duties on board a sub are broader than those on a surface craft. Since a sub carried a smaller crew, not only did we have to do the navigation, we had to do the visual signal duties. This meant learning how to send and receive Morse code with the light, and know how to send and receive semaphore. The duty station for a Quartermaster was the Conning Tower.

I was always the lowest ranking guy in the gang. This meant spending my time updating the navigation books; keeping the Conning Tower clean; chipping/priming the sail, the periscope housings and bridge; and fetching the glasses and pens the officers would drop into the periscope bilge. At sea, I was always assigned the 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. watch and the 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. watch, so I would be available for “chores” during the day. An additional duty was to keep all the clocks throughout the boat at the correct time.

On an extended cruise, during which we changed time zones, this could be both a popular and unpopular task as far as the crew was concerned. Going east meant setting the clocks ahead 1 hour when we crossed the time zone. This was very popular since it shortened the watch time for a particular group. However, going west, it meant setting the clocks back an hour which lengthened the watch by an hour.

After SEA POACHER surfaced, the Quartermaster would open the hatch on command and be the first on the Bridge, with the officer following. This usually went okay unless it was rough on the surface. Then opening the hatch would result in a wave of water that would come down the hatch and hit one in the face as you entered the Bridge area.

Navigation at sea was done using a sextant and calculating the position based on star sightings. This meant being able to identify the specific stars that would be used. The sightings would be done at dawn and dusk when we were on the surface. The Navigator would take the sightings with the sextant, and the leading Quartermaster would do all the calculations by hand. If one wanted to advance in grade, a Quartermaster had to be able to identify the stars and do the sightings and calculations. Taking the sightings took a lot of practice. I would practice whenever the opportunity arose. The first time I tried to determine our location we were well east of Florida in the Atlantic. I identified the stars I wanted, took the sighting and did the calculations. I had us located squarely in the center of the Gulf of Mexico. The leading Quartermaster was not impressed.

THE 1959 MEDITERRANEAN CRUISE

The SEA POACHER made a cruise to the Med in 1959. The Executive Officer provided a briefing prior to our departure and advised that “shaving was not mandatory during the cruise. However, no unshaven crew members would be allowed to go on liberty.” A brilliant statement if there ever was one. He did become Captain of a sub a few years later.

After the first week at sea, the boat was stopped for swim call for all hands, except Bulldog. He took up station on top of the sail with a rifle to protect us from sharks. The Bow Planes were lowered as swim platforms. Everyone took their bar of soap and washed down. We were allowed to swim for an hour. This worked out well since only the officers, stewards and cooks were allowed showers. The rest of us were allocated two basins of water per day. We were

allowed a one minute shower to rinse off the salt. No sharks were spotted, which I thought was a good thing because I did not know whether Bulldog could even shoot the rifle let alone hit one.

MOTOR ROOM FLOODING

EDITOR'S NOTE: In this chapter, and five others that follow, but not in sequence, there are other stories of this incident. Karl remembers a hearing and nothing of disciplinary actions. Others have recollections of the convening of a Board of Inquiry, Special Court Martials, and Letters of Reprimand. Others do not recall any of the above events having occurred at all.

All agree that IF any Court Martials were held, all persons were acquitted. I was not there, and now 48 years after the incident, it serves no useful purpose to belabor what, if any, disciplinary actions were taken.

It was just an accident.

Accordingly, I have deleted this part of the incident from Karl's chapter and the other five chapters in which our other shipmates have discussed the event. Now back to Karl's writings.

Our first port was Gibraltar. The first night alongside the pier, the Motor Room flooded up to the Maneuvering Room deck. Needless to say, the motors would not run and we had to stay in port a month for repairs.

I had the duty that late afternoon as the Duty Quartermaster. The Duty Officer was making his rounds. It was between 6 and 8 p.m. He had put in a call to me to obtain sunset time so that we would be ready for colors.

I did the calculations and met up with him in the Maneuvering Room, just as he was beginning to go down the ladder into the Motor Room. He took one step and then his foot was wet. You could see the ripples in the water. The Motor Room was completely flooded to within inches of the deck.

I was instructed to start the pumps and then get hold of the electricians, which I did. After the water was pumped out, huge fans were obtained from the yard and installed in the Motor Room to dry it out.

The next morning, we checked to see if the props would turn. One did, but just barely, and the other did not turn at all. We were in the yard about 30 days for repairs.

We were one of only two subs that were to patrol the Med, and now we were out of commission. There is not much to do in Gibraltar after one tours the old fortifications in the mountain and watches the Queen's apes (See Footnote 2) eat the windshield wipers off the cars. Plenty of bars though. The officers and chiefs could dress in civilian clothes and cross the border into Spain.

About two weeks into our stay at Gibraltar, the Sixth Fleet pulled in, which included an aircraft carrier, several cruisers, destroyers and support vessels. Thousands of surface craft sailors hit the beach.

Sometime during the evening, there was a confrontation between a British police officer (Bobbie) and two sailors from one of the surface craft. The officer was seriously injured. The next morning at muster, we learned that all of the surface craft sailors were banned from liberty, but the crew of the SEA POACHER was still welcome in town.

The British had an Air Force base at Gibraltar. We were invited to play a game of cricket and a game of baseball against them, followed by a dinner at the Sergeant's mess. We won both games. The cricket match was won because the British umpires always sided with us.

While in Gibraltar, one member of each gang was invited to go on a one day cruise aboard

a British submarine. What a difference between the two boats! The sub had only a single engine room with exposed engines. Loafs of bread were kept un-wrapped in the overhead in the Forward Torpedo Room. When the noon meal was prepared, all off duty seaman and below were expected to pitch in. They had no mess cooks. The noon meal consisted of lamb, boiled potatoes and cooked carrots.

In the afternoon, the grog was dished out. It was interesting that the measure of rum each crew member received was based on rank. The higher ones rank, the larger the portion of rum. A chief must have made up that rule. Since the American Navy did not allow drinking aboard ship, we were not given any. However, once the rum was distributed, the crew shared theirs with us.

After repairs had been completed we continued the cruise. We had liberty at Naples, Genoa, got to see the glow of Mount Etna at night, went along the coast of Turkey and past the Isle of Crete, with a final stop at Gibraltar before heading back to the States.

GITMO AND THE BATTLE FOR CUBA

One of the fringe benefits of being assigned to Key West was that about every six months we visited GITMO for a month to participate in Anti-Submarine Warfare training with destroyers. Each week we would work with a different ship. We were to fire one practice torpedo at anytime during the week. If we “sunk” them with the shot, the destroyer had to under go more training and extend their stay. It was not a good idea to go on the base after that without a lot of other shipmates.

At this time, the battle for Cuba was on with Castro eventually winning. Liberty was restricted to the base. For entertainment on week-ends, we had beer ball games complete with the cooks preparing excellent steaks. Everyone could drink beer as we played, with the food served as part of the seventh inning stretch. Best part was that we all had enough beer to drink and no one could remember the final score, although it was always debated far into the evening. Transportation to and from the ball games was provided by the Navy via “cattle cars.” These were semis with the trailer set up as a cattle car complete with slats.

One night when we were tied up to the pier, we had to abandon ship and this was not a drill. A battery charge was in process. The air conditioning was working properly for a change in the After Battery where I bunked with 36 others. The hatches were closed and air for the engines was taken in through the snorkel. It was cool enough that everyone used a blanket. Someone evidently kicked up a blanket over one of the air intake ducts for the below deck batteries and the hydrogen level reached a critical stage. Everyone scampered through the deck hatches and mustered on the pier. Immediately, the hydrogen level dropped and we returned to our bunks. On the opposite side of the pier was a destroyer escort. I often wondered what the deck watch told their shipmates the next morning after observing all these crazy sub guys running around in their skivvies in the middle of the night.

GITMO AND BOOZE

During one of the trips to GITMO, we were given the opportunity to steam to Montego Bay, Jamaica for a weekend of liberty. At that time, this was a quiet seaport with only one major hotel. We anchored in the bay and had locals ferry us back and forth.

The return from GITMO usually meant party time. The chiefs ran a slush fund that would loan money to the crew who would pay back to the fund with interest on payday. The fund

would not only support the party, but would also be a source of bail money. While in GITMO, everyone would purchase the allotted amount of duty free booze. It would be stored under the deck in the Forward and After Torpedo Rooms under the watchful eye of the chiefs who made it clear that no “in-transit loss” of the valuable cargo would be tolerated. Once we reached Key West, the “cargo” was into the cars of the chiefs, since they were not subjected to a search at the gate. A few days later, the party would commence off base at a hall complete with a band. Local single women would be invited as guests for those of us who were not married.

THE NAVY PROCUREMENT SYSTEM

One of our Captains had a fetish for conducting every conceivable drill. I believed he stayed awake nights thinking them up. One drill he came up with was to simulate total loss of hydraulic power during a dive. This required manual operation of the bow and stern planes, using pure hand wheel turns to level off the boat. The planes could not be operated fast enough. Even though full speed astern was ordered, we took a glancing blow off the bottom causing damage to the forward sonar dome. We were operating in only two to three hundred feet of water. We returned to port and had to get pulled onto the ways for repairs.

About the same time, we lost our flag and flag pole. Submarine identification was not as sophisticated as it is these days and was based on visual reports from other ships who would radio in sub sightings. It was required that we would display the American Flag at sea off the sail. On one dive, we lost the whole thing and did not have a spare. At muster the following morning after being pulled up on the ways, my first class William Hall gave me an assignment to have a new flag pole made before 3 p.m. that afternoon, our scheduled time for completion of repairs. After he explained the process, I asked “Why did we not just buy one?” I had no schooling at that time in the alternate procurement system. He stated that one would not be available for 3 weeks through the Navy system so I was to do as told.

I was to go to the galley and get 12 paper sandwich bags and fill them with coffee. Then I was to find my way around the base, go to the various shops, deposit a bag of coffee at each shop, explain what I needed, have the parts machined and welded, and return with the flag pole. To my amazement, I returned to the boat one hour ahead of the deadline with a completed flag pole, including lanyards, and with two left over bags of coffee.

THE SPRUNG AFTER BATTERY DECK HATCH

At some point in time, the deck hatch aft of the Sail sprung and would not seal. Salt water would stream in when we dove. Not a good thing, especially in the battery compartment. The fix was to have a mess cook standing by the hatch as we dove. When we got to periscope depth, the water pressure was enough to permit a couple more turns on the hatch wheel, sealing the hatch. The reverse process was used when we began to surface. The hatch was so secure that it could not be opened once we were on the surface.

So when we began to surface, the hatch wheel had to be loosened before we got to periscope depth. This process was used for several months until the hatch was replaced as part of an over haul at the Charleston Navy Yard.

THE SEA POACHER BRIG

One of the crew had an uncanny ability for getting into fights on liberty, all of which he won. Any discipline was usually unmercifully doled out by the COB. However, one time he went too far and wound up having a Captain's Mast and was sentenced to brig time aboard the boat. Strange sentence since everyone knows there was not a brig on the boat. Well, maybe the officers didn't know it. So when he was off duty he had to sit in a corner in the Forward Torpedo Room until his time was up.

LOSING THE COLT 45 SEMI-AUTOMATIC PISTOL

As deck watch in port we were armed with an unloaded Colt 45 kept in a holster and two clips of ammo in a packet on our belt. It was assumed that no one would dare try to attack the boat while the ever vigilant seaman was on watch with his trusty unloaded 45.

One day while in port at the noon watch change, the weapon was dropped during the exchange process and fell into the water. It is not a good thing to lose a Navy weapon, so one of the chiefs got involved. He contacted the base, and got a Navy diver to retrieve the weapon. While awaiting the arrival of the diver the chief went below. The squadron commander came on board for a meeting with the captain in the wardroom. The diver showed up, the chief came topside, not knowing the squadron commander was aboard. The diver quickly retrieved the weapon and handed it to the chief. The chief, proud of his accomplishment, picked up the mike on the bridge MC system which broadcasts to the Control Room, Torpedo Rooms and the Wardroom and said "Control, Bridge, please advise the Captain that the weapon has been retrieved by the Navy diver." I would have given anything to have been in the Wardroom to hear what conversation took place when this broadcast was made.

It then came to pass that preventive action had to be put into place to assure that the weapon would never fall into the water again. I could visualize several of the chiefs, sitting around a table in the Mess Hall, each with a mug of coffee and puffing on their ever present cigars, working out a plan. The result of all this high powered thinking was a lanyard that would be attached to a ring on the pistol grip and go around the neck of the watch stander. Upon changing of the watch, the off-going watch would first remove the lanyard from his neck and the new watch stander would place it around his neck. Then the weapon would be exchanged. The world was again a perfect place.

Every year, all crew members had to be qualified on the firing of the 45. We evidently were behind in getting this done. All of a sudden, one day at sea the boat slowed down and everyone had to go top side and fire their required 21 rounds. The only targets available were the flying fish that would be constantly jumping out of the water. No one ever hit one, but we now had completed our qualification on the Colt 45.

BLIMP OPERATIONS

We were on night operations north of Cuba with a blimp from Boca Raton Navy Air Base. We were at periscope depth with our running lights on, running a variety of speeds and courses. Every so often the Conning Officer would raise the scope for a look around. The folks in the blimp were doing whatever people in blimps did as part of their anti-submarine tactics. I had the

quartermaster watch. I was running the course and speed plot and keeping track of where we were based on the plot and dead reckoning. No GPS or Loran in those days. After a few hours, I alerted the Conning Officer that we were approaching the 12 mile limit of Cuba. He said not to worry since he was sure the folks in the blimp would not let us get into Cuban waters. All of a sudden, sonar reported high speed screws, closing fast. Up scope for a look at the reported bearing. A large vessel, probably a freighter, zero angle on the bow, coming directly at us. Full speed ahead, make your depth 200 feet with a course to take us under the vessel. After a few minutes we came back to periscope depth. Up scope. Another look. The vessel was again bearing down on us at full speed. Another full speed dive to go under the ship. When we reached 200 feet, I recommended to Conn that we turn off our running lights since the surface vessel could see every move we made. Very stealthily! The lights were turned off. We stayed at 200 feet for awhile and then came back to periscope depth. A full 360 degree sweep with the periscope showed the vessel steaming in the opposite direction with no sign of returning.

We went back to operating with the blimp at periscope depth, with running lights on. An urgent radio message was received from Washington that basically asked "Why are you in Cuban waters? Respond in 20 minutes!" I was not asked to participate in developing the response.

CLEAR THE BRIDGE

As I found out, this was not as easy to do as shown in the movies. It took some practice. Once you got the hang of it and could kick out your feet and side down using the rails along side the ladders, you felt like a veteran. That feeling stayed until you get over confident and forget to tuck the binoculars under your shirt when clearing the bridge. The whack in the face as the binoculars catch on a step in the ladder quickly brought back reality. The resultant wound let the whole crew know what happened. Most of them did it at one time. You quickly store this experience in your mind under the category of stupid things you do only once.

CHARLESTON NAVY YARD

We had 9 or 10 crew members with motorcycles. The Captain allowed transport of the bikes aboard the boat to Charleston if they were disassembled and stowed. Out came wrenches and all bikes were stowed under the deck in both Torpedo Rooms. The bikes underwent a miraculous transformation while at the yard. Never saw so much chrome plating on bikes before. It was just a coincidence that the yard had a large chrome plating facility.

In the first week at the yard, seven of the crew had already been jailed for rowdy behavior and had to be bailed out. One crew member hit a plain clothes police officer in the face with a beer mug in a bar and wound up being sentenced to a year in prison. He faced a court marshal after serving prison time.

At muster we were advised that liberty for all enlisted personnel would be cancelled if anyone else wound up in jail. The chiefs, who quickly realized this included them, got involved and things got back under control.

However, one of the chiefs suffered a broken arm while on liberty. He claimed he had not been drinking and was pushed and fell down a flight of stairs. One always had to believe what a chief said. The falling down the stairs part was probably true.

With the ship in dry dock, only two crew members had to be on board at night. One night

an engine was running with the two crew members below decks. A yard bird accidentally shut the one hatch that was open from the outside. It took only a moment for the engine to suck up all the air, and it shut down at 11 inches of Mercury so there was still enough air to breath. However, with the low pressure inside the boat and atmospheric pressure outside, the guys below decks could not open the hatches. Air had to be pumped into the boat to equalize pressure so they could open a hatch and get out.

TORPEDO TUBE MALFUNCTION

I was off watch and sitting in the Forward Torpedo Room. A torpedo's weight equaled the weight of water it displaced so that the boat did not lose depth control when the tube was fired. As the torpedo exits the tube, water comes in. Air is vented to the inside of the boat to prevent water bubbles from rising to the surface and giving away the position of the boat. The vent valve is to close automatically when the tube is filled with water, preventing water from entering the boat. On SEA POACHER the firing mechanism for the port tube was on the starboard side of the tube. The vent tube was on the port side.

The torpedoman fired the torpedo and the vent valve did not close. Our depth was 200 feet. From the time it took the torpedoman to get to the other side of the tube, a matter of seconds, we lost 200 feet of depth and flooded the compartment to the deck plates. The collision alarm sounded and we were locked in the compartment until we opened the bilge valves and the water was pumped out.

HURRICANE EVACUATION

A good sized hurricane was rapidly approaching Key West. As quartermasters, we had to keep track of the storm's progress. I had liberty that evening and was asleep in the barracks. At 1 a.m., the shore patrol roused us up and sent us all to our boats. At 4 am we left the pier, along with all the other subs and the surface craft at the various bases.

We spent 3 days at sea riding out the storm on the surface in 50 foot seas while steaming in our designated box route. When the seas were coming off the beam, the SEA POACHER would lean to a 45 degree angle. While running with or against the sea, the screws would come out of the water and violently shake the boat.

Because we were short on crew members, we stood 4 on and 4 off hour watches. One had to sleep with elbows extended to keep from getting pitched out of the bunk.

The crew mix for this voyage was interesting. We had the on board duty section, so a bunch of the older experienced sailors were there. The rest of us guys, who had not been in Key West very long, were the ones roused out of the barracks. The more seasoned guys who were on liberty had made themselves scarce and were not located during the sweep by the shore patrol.

They got to stay in Key West.

THE BLUE ANGELS

The Captain was a close friend with one of the Blue Angel pilots. They were in Key West for an air show. One morning, as we were steaming out the channel, they approached us from the stern in tight formation about 200 feet above the surface. They flew directly overhead, then separated, and went straight up with after-burners kicked in. What a sight!

EARNING OUR DOLPHINS

Many hours of study and preparation was required to earn the right to wear the dolphins. Part of the process required a review of each compartment. When I went through the Forward Torpedo Room with one of the chiefs, I had to demonstrate how to operate the rescue chamber integral with the deck hatch.

After completing the review, he grunted, which meant I got it right. He then told me that I should not put too much stock into what they told us in sub school about rescue out of a sunken sub. Most of the waters we operate in are at depths well over 400 feet, and no one could rescue us anyway.

When one completed the qualifications to receive the Dolphins, they would be presented at muster when we were in port.

It is a submarine tradition for the recipient to be thrown over the side at the end of the ceremony.

In one instance, a steward was to get his Dolphins but did not know how to swim and was concerned about drowning. So in true submarine fashion, he was outfitted with a life jacket and then thrown over the side.

It was also tradition for the crew members who were single to carry extra sets of Dolphins that were purchased from the base store. These were given out to the ladies in various ports.

THE SONAR TRACKING PARTY

My Battle Station was with the Sonar Tracking Party. Our task was to determine the distance and course of a target submarine using the bearing and estimated speed provided by the sonar operator. All the calculation to do were done by hand using templates. In the “war game” both subs would meet at a designated location on the surface. They would then steam in opposite directions for a given time and submerge. Each sub was given a specific depth range to operate in so they would not collide.

One was designated as the “enemy.” The other sub would have to locate them and simulate firing of a torpedo. In one particular “game” we were the “good guy.” We started out in good shape in locating our target. However as we made our approach, the data no longer made sense, and we could not get a fix on the other sub, although we could pick them up on sonar. Within a few minutes, we received the under water telephone message that they had simulated firing a torpedo and gave us the coordinates. It would have been a hit in the real world. The other sub had gone extremely deep and came under us and was on the other side.

What a wake up call on our part.

THE MARINES AND SIGNALMEN

Enter Second Class Petty Officer Signalman Dale. After his first hitch in the Navy as a surface craft sailor, he re-enlisted, completed sub school and was assigned to the SEA

POACHER. He quickly adapted to life aboard and proved himself to be good sub sailor. His original indiscretion was forgiven.

He was highly skilled in his use of semaphore flags and loved to show off. He would stand on the front deck with a set of flags and a spare tucked in his back pocket. He would begin a signal message with sure rapid precise movements. At a given point in the message, a flag would fly out of his hand and, without a break in rhythm; the one from his back pocket would show up in his hand.

The Marines were guardians of the gates at Navy bases. They were highly successful at this task. No sailor had ever stolen one. Dale, who had to forfeit his liberty card to a chief because of an event that he claims was an act of God and not in his control, decided that he deserved liberty. He borrows a liberty card, gets himself all slicked up, and proceeds to go out the gate, waving the liberty card. The Marine on duty, ever vigilant in his duty to prevent undeserving sailors from disturbing the peaceful citizens of Key West, commands Dale to halt and wants to examine his liberty card. Fast thinking Dale, crumbles up the card, puts it into his mouth and proceeds to chew it up and swallow it. The Marine rushes over, throttling Dale by the neck and tries to pry open his mouth and retrieve the card. Dale is successful in swallowing the card and the evidence eventually finds its way to # 2 sanitary tank on board SEA POACHER. Dale had to attend another counseling session with the same chief who took his liberty card.

ALONGSIDE THE TENDER

The USS Bushnell was our Tender in Key West. On a particular weekend, we were tied alongside undergoing some type of repair. On Monday morning, the Electrician Mates (EMs) went into the After Battery to check battery water levels, a normal maintenance check done at specific intervals. To everyone's surprise, the Battery Compartment was partially flooded! The drain from the head to #2 sanitary tank had rusted through and ruptured. We had been dumping everything from the head directly into the Battery Compartment all weekend long. The EMs were not at all pleased when they had to clean up the mess. Fortunately the water level had not risen high enough to generate chlorine gas which occurs when salt water contacts with batteries.

OTHER MEMORIES

*Dark moonless nights at sea when the sky was blanketed with billions of stars that sparkled like diamonds from horizon to horizon.

* Watching the sun rise out of the ocean and set into the ocean.

* The down pours of rain at Key West during the summer months. At noon, out of a clear blue sky, a squall would develop dropping an unbelievable amount of rain in a few minutes causing flooding on every street in town.

* The appendix of one of the seaman ruptured while on our way to GITMO. He had to be air lifted via a helicopter.

* The leading steward, a first class, had his bunk just below the Torpedo Loading Hatch in the Forward Torpedo Room. While in the bunk, one of the supporting chains broke. He fell out of the bunk and broke his hip.

* Chasing real or imagined contacts that were supposedly Russian submarines.

* The long hours of mess cooking duty.

* The 100 foot tower at the Sub School in New London where we made free ascents.

- * Going to Tampa and West Palm Beach to show off the boat and conduct on board tours. The usual first impression of civilians as they came down the boat was “this place really smells bad.”
- * Fittings that would pop out or seal leaks while submerged allowing jets of water to enter. As one crew member viewed it: We had a ten million dollar home and the roof leaked.
- * Never being able to figure out why, when we were called to battle stations, everyone aft had to go forward and everyone forward had to go aft.
- * Endless hours of drills and war games.
- * The smell of diesel oil that would saturate all clothing that had been on board a few days.
- * Operations with the PBY’s and the mini-depth charges they would drop. When they exploded the sound would drive the sonar operator’s nuts.
- * Listening to the sound of whales on the sonar.
- * Having to change course in the mid-Atlantic to avoid running into a pod of whales.
- * Hearing the clatter along the hull as we passed through a school of shrimp.
- * Last but not least, the Chapel at the New London Submarine Base where each pew is placarded with the name of a World War II submarine that still is on eternal patrol.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Although I did not make the Navy a career, I would not hesitate doing this portion of my life again. It was a great experience. Life is an adventure. Live it. This article is attested to be a true and unbiased recollection of facts on life aboard the SEA POACHER by this Author.

FOOTNOTES:

- 1) Historical Foot Note: In 1956, Egypt’s Nassar nationalized the Suez Canal and blocked Israel’s access. The company that operated the canal and locks was owned by a French and British consortium. France, Britain and Israel decided to resolve this issue with an invasion. Russia agreed to supply Egypt with modern weapons. President Eisenhower, not wanting to go up against the Russians at that time, put pressure on France, Britain and Israel who withdrew. Nassar, whose popularity soared as a result of success against the West, decided to set up a United Arab Republic (UAR), in an attempt to unite the Arab counties. On July 13, 1958, a coup in Iraq resulted in the death of Fiesal II, the pro-western monarch. President Chamoun of Lebanon appealed to Eisenhower for help in a civil war led by pro UAR muslims. On July 15, 1958 the deployment of 7,000 U.S. troops to the Beirut Airport began. Marines were transferred to the Arabian Gulf and an air force wing was sent to Turkey. The SEA POACHER as well as other boats in the Key West squadron were included as part of the overall mobilization.
- 2) The “Queens Apes” are actually a species of tail-less monkeys called Barbary Macaques who come originally from Morocco. They are the only free living monkeys in Europe and are permitted to roam Gibraltar at will. Although they spend most of their time on the Rock, they make forages into the city that often results in monkey mayhem. They have been residents for centuries. Legend has it that Gibraltar will cease to be British on the day that there are no more apes on the Rock. During WWII, the ape population went through a decline. Winston Churchill ordered that additional apes be obtained to bring their numbers back up. Ref: www.the-old-sea-dog-net/uk22.html

CHAPTER 46

FREDERICK EDWARDS 1958 - 1960

I REMEMBER SOME GAYETY AT SUBMARINE SCHOOL, BEING THIRD OFFICER AND SOPA (SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT ARRESTED), FLEETING UP TO XO, AND OTHER INCIDENTS

SOME GAYETY AT SUBMARINE SCHOOL

I remember this from over 50 years ago. There was a lot of singing going on in the New London Officer's Club between beers. It was fun. We were young and some of us will remember it. The melody was from Harry Belafonte's Album "MARKTWAIN" and the song was "Man Piaba." It went something like this.

When I was an Ensign just new to sea, A certain question occurred to me
So I asked de Captain quite seriously, if I should join de Submarine Navy.
He said son..."From the beginning of time, since man was alive, A boat underwater
you should not drive, So in de year of '75, a man named Holland made de very fust dive.
He got him a great big sewer line, and he plugged up de ends with a cork and twine
Then he cut a hole on de waterline, and everything, it was lookin' fine.

CHORUS: Oh, de negative vent and de positive flood, and de main induction shut up tight
De bow plane, manifold, air bank – UNMP! But it never, never come up.

So he put to sea in his brand new boat, but de water come up to around his throat, And
de problem was really getting his goat, cause de damn thing sank but it wouldn't float.
Well it worked very well down under de sea, and de gear was operatin beautifully
But he had to solve one mystery, he went down 4 times and he come up 3.

CHORUS: As per above.

Den Archimedes' principle stirred his blood, so he built him a tank with a vent and flood
On his boat he put it wit a bolt and a stud, he went down deep and didn't stick in de mud.
So he sold de boat to his Uncle Sam, and de program went over with a big grand slam
Dey added de tube wid de interlock cam, dat shot out de weapon with a terrible wham!

CHORUS: As per above.

Den de Navy made another one of its schools, and dey packed it full of instructors and
fools, Wit a diving trainer and a box of tools, to teach de officers de basic rules.

De 20-year chief wit de coffee cup, he talk to de student very abrupt

"If you want to live, you silly young pup, when you go down, you gotta come up."

CHORUS As per above.

Den dey take de student on de underway, dey dive all night and dey charge all day

And at de end de instructor say, "You got a 2.0, it was de best today!"

Dey end up de week wit a great big flail, and de officer students was lookin pale, Coming

by Point Alpha dey was going like hail, but de bridge was down and dey lost de sail.

CHORUS: As per above.

But de school make everything go long fine, dey run de classes come rain or shine

And de guarantee if you don't get out of line, you live to de age of 29!

So if you want to get through, just wait a while, if your exam don't end in de circular file

And you make de Commander Kelly smile, you get through school in very fine style!

CHORUS: As per above.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I asked Fred, as a witty and very talented SEA POACHER sailor, just like the rest of you, if he had written the above words. His comments follow.

Write the words? You jest! No, that song was ringing in the rafters of the Sub Base Officers club back in the early 50s. Maybe earlier! I have no idea of its origin. In those days that club rocked! On a Friday or Saturday night there was beer, singing, piano playing, beer, sea stories of great adventures, high stakes poker games, and more beer. At the time most of the CO's and XO's of the boats on the river and the senior instructors at the school were WWII submarine vets. They had been taught how to drive their boats by men whose names are now in history books and now have buildings named after them. They also knew how to have fun. To we students, they were heroes and they taught us lessons about submarining that didn't make it to the text books or the curriculum or the nuclear Navy. Bottom of Form

BEING THIRD OFFICER AND SOPA (SENIOR OFFICER PRESENT ARRESTED)

I reported to SEA POACHER in 28 October 1958 as the third officer. This was a few days before she went to Charleston for overhaul, but in time to attend Bert Levin's (and Gracye's) bachelor party where many of us got thrown in jail.

I enjoyed the distinction of being SOPA (Senior Officer Present Arrested).

This story really marks the beginning and end of my life of crime. At the time of Bert's transfer, he was living in a snake ranch in Key West with three of four other guys. These guys arranged the party as a send-off for Bert and to celebrate his impending marriage. I don't know how many were invited, but at the time it seemed that every wardroom in Key West was represented. The gayety began about 7 p.m. As you can image there was music and dancing, drinking and a damn good party was soon in progress. A SEA POACHER Steward named Thomas was hired to tend bar, and he was doing an outstanding job.

I came to the party alone. My wife Alice and the kids stayed in Northern Virginia with her family, waiting until the boat got to Charleston where she would join me.

What most of us didn't know was that during the evening the neighbors had called the Key West police and complained of the noise. Twice the police came to the door and asked the hosts to hold down the racket.

That news didn't get around. The cops felt they had to do something, but they didn't want to wake up a judge for a warrant to raid the house.

So they decided to wait until the party broke up, and then scoop up the last partiers as they left and who were probably the drunkest anyway. They had a plan!

About 12:30 or 1 a.m. the party had pretty much run its course. Having no transportation I called the Tender and asked them to send the recreation vehicle to give me a lift back to the boat.

The duty driver arrived a short time later. I asked him to come in for moment while I said goodnight and congratulated the bride and groom to be. Thomas had finished up his bar tending duties, cleaned up, and asked if he could get a ride back to the boat with me.

Thomas, the duty driver, and I hadn't gone ten steps when Sergeant Buster Suresso, one of Key West's finest, was on us like a dog on a pork chop and into the paddy wagon we went. The XO, Kent Carroll, and his wife Betty had just preceded us out the door, but Betty was very pregnant and Buster said later that "He didn't want to get involved with that."

Within half an hour there were a bunch of us locked up and charged with "drunk, disorderly, and disturbing the public peace." Bill Meyer, SEA POACHER'S Engineer, was a welcome cell mate, since he had extra cigarettes.

Bert and Gracye were also scooped up. The police let them go about a block in Bert's car, before they grabbed them for drunken driving, with Gracye at the wheel. Gracye didn't drink and hadn't had a drop all evening. She became my heroine when I heard later she had refused to get into the back of the wagon, and told the young cop that she'd ride up front with him.

Then she insisted that he get out, come around, and open the door for her like a gentleman. I can still hear Bert, when told that Gracye was in the women's section of the jail, yelling "She's no woman - She's my FIANCÉ."

Next morning our duty officer, Bill Henry, came down and bailed us all out. As we trooped out of jail, Thomas was heard to remark "I always follow my officers."

The poor Tender's duty driver was somehow over looked. He languished longer than any of us in the can. When he didn't return to the Tender they thought, at first, that he was over the hill. They had found the station wagon parked but with no driver.

It all had a happy ending. After three or four months in the yard, we from SEA POACHER went to court. The judge dismissed the whole thing. Rumor had it that one of the party goers was the Governor of Florida's son. And politics being what they are, the whole affair was best buried. I'll bet that Gracye remembers. It was sorry to read in the most recent 2007 Newsletter of Bert's passing. I didn't get to know him well since he was leaving as I came onboard, but it was a great party.

FLEETING UP TO XO

I relieved Kent Carroll and fledted up to XO on 23 June 1959. Larry Stahl took over a few days later from Carl Davis as CO. There followed a difficult period. Larry was a bright, capable man, but we just clashed for whatever reason. Six months later I asked to be relieved. Thanks to the Division Commander Kirt Buntting, who recognized the situation, I was transferred in April 1960 as XO of SEA CAT and enjoyed a great tour of duty. Larry got a new Executive Officer, Jerry Davi, and the SEA POACHER history went on.

OTHER INCIDENTS

Did anyone tell you about the time we flooded our Main Motors while in Gibraltar and sat there for six weeks waiting for parts? One of the lessons learned was that when faced with a

flooding casualty your first idea is not always best. The first rule of submarining I learned was “Don’t let the water in where the people are!”

Well, since electric motors are involved think first before pumping it out. Pump fresh water in (and you better have a hell of big fresh water tank), knock down the salinity to zero, and dry the motor. You might, just might, get lucky and not have a grounded motor.

Before leaving Gibraltar, the Wardroom hosted a cocktail party at the Rock Hotel to repay the Brits for their many courtesies during our stay.

Another lesson was about to be learned.

Don’t arrange for an open bar with an open end time. The Brits can be a thirsty lot. When presented with the bill for over 500 pounds I said “This is in dollars, isn’t it?”

He said “No Sir. Those are pounds.”

If Captain Stahl had not stepped forward and paid half the bill, it would have been a liberty free Wardroom for the rest of the cruise.

Our memories and recollections reflect the enthusiasm of our youth - with our beautiful girls and wives, the beer was always cold, and we all were going to live forever.

From Dictionary.com. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004, See References.

SUBMARINE: A VESSEL THAT IS CAPABLE OF OPERATING SUBMERGED.

Also a large sandwich consisting of a long roll split lengthwise and filled with layers of meat, cheese, tomatoes, lettuce, and condiments. Also called sub; also called regionally Cuban sandwich, grinder, hero, hoagie, Italian sandwich, poor boy, torpedo, wedge, zep.

Arabic:	غَوَاصَة	Japanese:	潜水艦
Chinese (Simplified):	潜水艇	Korean:	잠수함
Chinese (Traditional):	潛水艇	Latvian:	zemūdene
Czech:	ponorka	Lithuanian:	povandeninis laivas
Danish:	undervandsbåd	Norwegian:	undervannsbåt, ubåt
Dutch:	onderzeeboot	Polish:	łódź podwodna
Estonian:	allveelaev	Portuguese (Brazil):	submarino
Finnish:	sukellusvene	Portuguese (Portugal):	submarino
French:	sous-marin	Romanian:	submarin
German:	das Unterseeboot	Russian:	подводная лодка
Greek:	υποβρύχιο	Slovak:	ponorka
Hungarian:	tengeralttjáró	Slovenian:	podmornica
Icelandic:	kafbátur	Spanish:	submarino
Indonesian:	kapal selam	Swedish:	ubåt
Italian:	sottomarino	Turkish:	denizaltı (gemisi)

CHAPTER 47

RON GODWIN 1958 - 1961

**I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD AS A POOR SOB,
LEBANON CRISIS, MEDITERRANEAN RUN, SNORKEL HEAD VALVE,
GITMO 1960 AND RUSSIAN SUBMARINE ENCOUNTER,
THE ENCOUNTER FROM UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL,
GITMO 1960 AND RUSSIAN SUBMARINE ENCOUNTER CONTINUED,
NORTHERN RUN 1960, A MONSTER STORM,
AND THE STORM'S AFTERMATH**

REPORTING ABOARD AS A POOR SOB

In May 1958, as a Third Class Sonarman in Sub School, I was informed my boat would be SEA POACHER. All the instructors came up to me and told me how lucky I was to get the best boat in the entire Atlantic Fleet. In June I reported aboard. The boat was tied up to the Quay Wall and RM3 Dave Reid had the topside watch. I showed him my orders, and he just looked at me and said "You poor son of a b****!"

I asked him what that meant since I had been told SEA POACHER was the very best boat in the Atlantic. He said they had just returned from GITMO after very nearly losing the boat. Seems they were at 400 feet doing evasive maneuvers with a destroyer when the main sea water piping to the air conditioning carried away in the After Engine Room. Joe Ozier had shut the watertight door to Maneuvering and Bill Bailey had jumped into the Forward Engine Room and shut that watertight door, so the After Engine Room was isolated.

The Crew initiated emergency surface, fired a red flare, blew everything, and started up. They beat the red flare to the surface and were in the wake of the destroyer. The AER was flooded. That evening in port the crew got plastered. The yeoman on the cattle truck returning the crew to the pier stepped off on arrival. Unfortunately, it was still moving at 25 mph, and he went A** over teakettle and broke his arm. My introduction to SEA POACHER was not very comforting.

LEBANON CRISIS

On 15 July 1958 the U.S. Sixth Fleet put Marines ashore at Beirut, Lebanon on orders from President Eisenhower, and at the request of Lebanese President Camille Chamoun. The Lebanese Government was threatened by civil war.

SEA POACHER was on daily operations in a KWEST OP Area with a destroyer at 1530 when we got the message from Submarine Squadron 12 to surface and proceed to port. RMC Skiles came out of Radio with the message for the CO. He was white as a sheet. He was a WWII vet so he knew what the message really meant.

Basically it said to proceed to port ASAP and load 100 percent spare parts, provisions, and war shot torpedoes. When finished, we were to standby for further orders. The crew was to prepare for a war patrol.

We pulled into port, and the duty section and my section started the loading process, while tomorrow's duty section went home to pack and sleep. They were to report back at 0600 to relieve the two duty sections working all night. So ET3 Davis and I had the job of ordering up to 100 percent of electronic parts.

We dropped into the ET Storeroom, and began filling out requisitions, called DD1150s, for the balance of what we should have and what we actually had on board. With only a short dinner break, we finished about 2030 with a three inch stack of 1150s.

Off to the Tender we went to obtain our parts. Normally you would not be able to get your parts until late in the next day at the earliest, unless the 1150 was marked URGENT and had an Act of Congress behind it. We went to the Tender Storeroom and handed our stack to the Storekeeper. He grabbed a box, told us to have a seat, and off he went for our parts. Obviously this was not a normal time. It took him about an hour and back he came with a full box of our spares. Back to the boat we went to store all these spares and bring our records up to date.

When we reached the submarine pier area again, we could not believe what we were seeing. It was 2230 and bright as daylight. Spotlights were everywhere, and all pier lights were on. There were more people moving around working than you saw during the day.

Every boat had at least one Torpedo Hauler alongside on the pier, with many having two, which were loading both torpedo rooms at the same time.

Seamen were loading stores through the After Battery hatch and spares were being passed down through the Bridge hatch. People were everywhere and all were working.

As soon as the fish were loaded, topside painting started to get a new coat of camouflage paint. Numbers were painted out.

When we were relieved in the morning, we were told to pack, get some sleep, and to stay within range of a telephone at all times. We were to report back at 0800 unless called sooner.

We were on call for the next two weeks standing by for orders that never came. We then off loaded all the war shot torpedoes and went back to normal operations. It was good training, and we had 100 percent of our spare parts on board. But our WWII vets were not all that happy preparing for war patrols again.

MEDITERRANEAN RUN

This was the spring of 1959. Larry Stahl had just come aboard as CO, and this was his first snorkel boat. SEA POACHER now had the reputation as a lax crew probably stemming from the GITMO After Engine Room flooding incident. He came aboard to straighten us up and en route to the Med we dove and snorkeled every four hours day and night.

Our Engineer LT Charles Russell had the habit to really draw out the word RECIRCULATE and when on the Diving Stand his order was always "OPEN ALL BULKHEAD FLAPPERS AND R - E - E - E - E C IRCULATE! Captain Stahl would holler down the Conning Tower hatch "What are you doing Charlie? Calling the hogs?"

The CO always liked looking at the little white ball bobbing up and down which indicated the position of the Snorkel Head Valve. In the Conning Tower he would call out "Look at this Charlie, look at this!" Russell would respond "I've seen it Captain."

The first night in Gibraltar we managed to flood out the Main Motors after performing maintenance on the cooling water system. This cost us liberty in Cannes and Nice, France, as it took five weeks to make repairs.

SNORKEL HEAD VALVE

While in Gibraltar, John Love and I had some work to do on the ECM Antenna. While on the sail we discussed what we should do with the little white ball that the Captain liked so well. After much debate, we wrote "HI" on it. We were in port so long we forgot all about this.

Again at sea, I was in the Crew's Mess when the Operations Officer came up to me and asked if I had done it. I had no idea what he was talking about, and this saved me. He said the Captain had been on the scope and nearly leaped out of his pants when he saw HI staring back at him. The letters must have been very large in the periscope.

GITMO 1960 AND RUSSIAN SUBMARINE ENCOUNTER

According to the Book "U.S. NAVY A COMPLETE HISTORY" (See References) on 6 May 1960, the Submarine SEA POACHER (SS-406) operating in the San Nicholas Channel off of Cuba takes fire from the Cuban Cutter ORIENTE. The USS SEA POACHER had been in GITMO since April and was on the way back to her home port in Key West, Florida. The Submarine was in international waters on a normal surface transit following all International Rules of the Road.

The following description of the encounter from United Press International also mentions 6 May 1960 as Sunday and the DL NORFOLK. Some stories mention a sonar anomaly detected during the event. The stories describe the anomaly as a noise that land or a rock would make in the water. Folks, rocks and land do not make noise on their own, but might return echoes if one were using active sonar. However, submarines use passive sonar only so as not to give away their position. This event also started on Friday evening May 4 and there were three other destroyers also involved.

What really happened during the two days is not mentioned. Read the UPI article, and then I will tell you real story.

THE ENCOUNTER FROM UNITED PRESS INTERNATIONAL

This was published by UPI Washington and appeared in the SEA POACHER Association Newsletter, Volume 3, Issue 2, 2005, from which this article was obtained. The event happened in May 1960.

"The Navy confirmed the US Submarine SEA POACHER was fired upon by a Cuban patrol boat, but it denied Fidel Castro's charge the vessel violated Cuba's territorial water. The incident occurred Sunday night more than five miles off the Cuban coast well into inter-territorial waters, the Navy said. The SEA POACHER, heading through Nicholas Channel towards Key West, first sighted the Cuban ship on a collision course and maneuvered sharply to avoid being hit. From a distance of two miles, the Cuban vessel fired tracer bullets which the SEA POACHER mistook for red flares. The Navy said the US submarine at first thought the Cuban vessel was in distress and slowed down for a while. Castro said the Cuban Coast Guard Cutter chased the American submarine 30 miles firing at it all the way with 20-millimeter machine guns. He also charged the Destroyer NORFOLK (DL1), escorting the SEA POACHER, was within two and one-half miles of the Cuban coast. (The US Navy said it was 11 miles at sea.).

The Navy account also denied Castro's statement the SEA POACHER refused to identify itself. It said the submarine never turned off its navigation lights, as Castro charged, and that the submarine actually was preparing to give aid if needed when the Cuban vessel headed south. Castro, in a two hour and 40 minute telecast today, charged the United States with 11 violations of Cuban territorial waters. He also drew a parallel between the US Spy plane and an American private pilot killed in a Cuban ambush. Earlier, Castro and visiting Indonesian President Sukarno had issued a communiqué condemning any provocation by any power against the rights, sovereignty or territorial integrity of their countries.

GITMO 1960 AND RUSSIAN SUBMARINE ENCOUNTER CONTINUED

Ron Godwin writes: I remember the incident happening this way. We headed home to Key West from our GITMO Operation Area around noon on Friday 4 May 1960. We were due to arrive in Key West on Saturday morning.

We were in the Nicholas Channel on the surface on two engines doing about 12 knots when the event started for me. I was a SOS2 (SS) asleep about 2030 when a messenger woke me up. He said the CO wanted me to go to Sonar to check on a contact.

Once there I called Conn on the MC and asked them what I should be listening for, and how many contacts did we have? The Conn said they had one patrol craft that was firing red flares, and I was to see if I could detect any propulsion problems. I tracked him for several minutes, and then reported to the Bridge that Contact S-1, the patrol craft, was operating normally on two shafts, with two four-bladed screws, and doing about 100 turns.

I continued to track him, and as he was coming up our starboard side about 090 degrees Relative and at about two miles range, I decided to search around. As I was sweeping around from the bearings on the patrol craft counter-clockwise, I picked up another contact at 120 degrees Relative. This Contact S-2 was deep draft, and had one four-bladed screw, and was doing about 100 turns also. I was thinking this was a merchant ship until I called the Radar Operator in the Conning Tower to see what he had. He did not have any other contacts.

I reported the contact to the Bridge, told them I was in ATF (Automatic Track Following), and that the contact had to be within 5,000 yards with all the noise we were making.

Captain Stahl then ordered STC (SS) Dick Hall to Sonar. I had picked up an unidentified submarine operating at periscope depth. Chief Hall classified it as Foreign (USSR) operating on its middle screw. That was why I had originally thought it was a merchant ship. I didn't know they had a third screw on some of their boats. We started a new tape and continued to track the sub. The Skipper ordered a Secretary of the Navy message sent to report an unidentified submarine, which brought the Destroyers SAUFLEY (DD-465) and SARSFIELD (DD-837) from Key West, and NORFOLK (DL-1) and THE SULLIVAN'S (DD-537) from the Norfolk area.

I tracked the sub for about 20 minutes and then he went deep. That removed any doubt in my mind that we had picked up a sub. It had deep draft characteristics, but not the typical suppressed cavitations you normally get from a sub. But you could tell he was going deep instead of fading away like convergence zone contacts. Later, looking at the charts, this was an area of no convergence zones.

After he went deep I lost him. Chief Hall then took over and tracked him for another 20 minutes or so. COMSUBLANT would not let us submerge until we had destroyer help.

We lost contact after about 45 minutes of tracking. The SAUFLEY and SARSFIELD arrived about 0700, and we submerged. We tried to reacquire the sub, but had no luck. The NORFOLK and THE SULLIVAN'S arrived late Saturday and provided more help.

I use the term "help" loosely as on Sunday the NORFOLK drove us down from periscope depth and went right over the top of us. She didn't even know we were in the same ocean with her.

I don't know when the CO decided what he saw were tracer bullets and not red flares. I was never told of the gun fire. Anyway, we never did pick up the sub again. After spending three days looking, we departed for Key West and arrived on Tuesday morning. The crew was not happy with the Sonar gang.

When I called home in Ohio on Tuesday night, my folks told me we had been on TV and that a Cuban ship had fired on us. That was the first time I heard about being shot at.

We were later told that our tapes were inconclusive. I believe this event led to our selection for a Northern Run in September 1960. By the way, we got a SHIPALT (Ship Alteration) for the latest in tape recorder systems about two months after our Cuban encounter.

NORTHERN RUN 1960

In September they tabbed us for a Northern Run. Special equipment was loaded in Key West, and we proceeded to New London for briefings, training, and radio modifications that would send communications directly to the Yeoman's Office. At this time Hurricane Donna was headed for Key West. We got underway for England at 0100 before it hit, as the CO did not want anyone to leave the boat and head to Florida. As it turned out there was only minimal damage from Donna in Key West, so there was no problem with the crew.

En route Portsmouth, we would receive daily messages to go to a certain point, submerge, and listen for two USSR merchant ships. We would stay down for several hours, detect nothing, receive another message, and repeat the sequence. We never heard or saw anything of these two ships.

We arrived in Portsmouth just ahead of a NATO force coming in for a port call. We told all the bar owners in London that we were the advance party for the NATO forces. We were to report the best bars and clubs for liberty. Boy, did we get a lot of free drinks.

After four days in port we had another surprise to get underway at 0100 as we headed for the North Sea and north along the Norway coast. The Northern Run was finally underway.

A few days later it got scary. We were tracking and observing four submarines and one surface ship doing training exercises. They were all criss-crossing in different directions and trying to keep them straight was difficult. Tensions were high.

Then all of a sudden, a 400HZ tone came out of the middle of the submarines. It began to close and draw slightly left. It sounded like a torpedo. We reported it to Conn and the next thing we heard on the 1MC was "RIG FOR DEPTH CHARGE." All I heard was the bang of the watertight doors slamming shut and the boat was very quiet. Everybody's heart was in their throat.

We tracked the tone for 30 seconds and then it shut down. I reported this to Conn. Immediately it started up again and then shut down.

I looked at Chief Hall and we both said "Torpedoes don't do that." We suspected an internal noise problem and informed Conn. It turned out to be a torpedoman doing fire control checks forward. With a 56 degree temperature in the boat there was condensation everywhere. Some test cables had pushed up against the back of the sonar receiver in the FTR. This had fed

the 400HZ tone right into the sonar receiver and compensating switches. We played a tape of an actual Mark 14 torpedo and compared it to the tonal. You could not tell the difference. We tried to duplicate it in Key West during sonar student operations but couldn't. I guess one needs the condensation to create the grounds.

A MONSTER STORM

Departing the area near Iceland, we received a weather message of a storm area ahead of us with winds over 100 mph extending over a 500 mile by 500 mile area. It just said storm but this was certainly a hurricane type of event.

At Greenland it hit us. The waves built up quickly, and we were taking green water on and over the bridge constantly. We were soon in a Sea State 9 with the waves 45 degrees off our starboard bow. We were doing 10 knots and when on a wave crest you could look through #1 periscope and see perhaps 40 miles.

The waves were mountainous, but we were riding well. The Bridge hatch was open. We were snorkeling on the surface, and I had the Radar watch. About 1500 a huge wave hit the Bridge and we rolled to port at an estimated 63 degree angle and hung there with the Bridge hatch lined up over the Lower Conning Tower hatch.

Wave after wave hit us with green water pouring from the Bridge directly into the Control Room with no water accumulating in the Conning Tower. The Quartermaster and I tried to close the Lower Conning Tower hatch but could not budge it with the angle we had. It was probably a good thing we didn't in that we would have flooded the Conning Tower, Radar and other equipments, and probably would have been electrocuted.

Anyway I heard a noise from the Bridge to close the Bridge hatch. I went up the ladder and did not even get wet, as it was like walking under a waterfall. I grabbed the wheel and lanyard, jumped down, and the hatch slammed shut. Then I was doused with sea water. Water was all over the Control Room.

Louie Sardo told the helmsman to turn into the waves which helped us come out of the 63 degree angle. Everyone on the Bridge was okay thanks to their safety lines.

That evening we did it all over again; but this time I was in the After Battery and Crew's Berthing. Following another huge roll, we first heard bodies hitting the deck from falling out of their bunks. Then the deep sink emptied against the port bulkhead in the Crew's Mess.

Both gyros were dumped which was not discovered until the Navigator went up for morning stars. The winds were beginning to shift, and he thought we were getting out of the storm. But it got worse. We ended up diving in this mess with only an 1170 battery specific gravity in an effort to settle the gyros. It was scary.

At 400 feet we were still rolling 30 degrees. At least you could get some sleep and could relax your muscles. On the surface, we had to brace ourselves in the rack and your muscles got so sore it was actually better to just get up. And believe it or not, it was too rough to get sea sick. After eight hours we surfaced back into the storm.

In this mess we had Thanksgiving Day dinner. Sitting down you had to hold your plate and food bowl on every roll. When back at the middle, you had 20 seconds before you rolled over to get in your bites and then hold on. The cooks did one hell of a job.

When the storm first hit we had enough fuel for two engines and would get to New London with 9 days steaming on Friday. We spent two days at 7 knots with the boat pointed into the seas to keep from going backwards. There was talk about pulling into Halifax, Nova Scotia

for fuel, but we decided against it.

Instead, we only used one engine and arrived two days late on Sunday. Upon arrival in New London we took on about 119,000 gallons of fuel, and our capacity did not exceed 120,000 gallons.

THE STORM'S AFTERMATH

SEA POACHER was a mess. Forty feet of the starboard side superstructure on the bow was peeled back like a sardine can. All of the steel support beams in the superstructure were S shaped and looked like they had been run through a hydraulic press. Many plates were gone from the sail. The Radio whip antennas were wrapped around the sail and other masts.

Following Christmas and a six week upkeep in Key West, we went out for sea trials to check that all repairs had been satisfactorily made. Submerging to 30 feet the report came in "FLOODING IN THE ENGINE ROOMS."

We surfaced and checked out all the outboard and inboard valves to the engine induction piping, which looked okay, and we dove. Again at 30 feet "FLOODING IN THE ENGINE ROOMS" and another surface.

We received permission to go home and returned to Key West on the surface. The tender there set up a rig to pressurize the engine air induction piping. It looked like an irrigation hose with water spraying everywhere. We counted 43 holes of which 10 were aft of Able valve.

The Northern Run and long upkeep had taken a major toll on the piping. The Tender replaced most of the induction piping, and the crew got some needed rest and relaxation.

It was a memorable trip.

"Suction on After Trim, Sea venting."

*SEA OWL Auxiliaryman Mike Aarons to a Sub School Trainee
Diving Officer following his command to pump After Trim to sea.*

"The efficiency of the propeller remains constant from the time it is buttoned on to the end of the shaft until the last sad day when the ship is finally cast on the scrap heap."

A 1927 issue of the Royal Australian Navy Journal SPINDRIFT.

*"Think of it this way: Where can you go to sea in the most AWESOME piece of equipment ever built, have great chow, outstanding shipmates, p*** off Ivan, AND GET PAID FOR IT?"*

MM1 (SS) Dristiliaris, Submarine School Instructor

"Here we go again, break out the deck chairs and the beer. I think we are going to be here awhile."

*Comment heard over sound powered phones during Maneuvering Watch on
SEA ROBIN after missing the fourth attempt at mooring at the New London
Submarine Base and again backing into the channel.*

CHAPTER 48

JOHN LOVE 1958 - 1961

I REMEMBER BEING FIRED UPON BY A CUBAN GUNBOAT AS REPORTED BY THE NEW YORK TIMES IN SIX ARTICLES, AND WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

ARTICLE #1 13 MAY 1960

HAVANA May 13, 1960. CASTRO SAYS CUBA FIRED ON U.S. SHIP. HE CHARGES NAVAL VIOLATION OF WATERS – GUATAMALANS ASK INQUIRY ON ‘PLOT’, BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS. Premier Fidel Castro disclosed tonight that Cuban naval craft fired on a United States submarine operating off Cuba’s coast. The disclosure came as he protested American submarines, warships and planes were operating off Cuba’s coast and charged that the light cruiser NORFOLK violated Cuba’s territorial waters by coming inside the three-mile limit.

Appearing before a television audience, Premier Castro read a Cuban naval report citing nine specific instances of United States Navy craft being sighted operating near the Cuban coast between May 6-11. The Cuban report charged the American craft were operating “in blackout in violation of international agreements.”

Anti-Americanism Rising. Oldtimers said the angry wave of anti-Americanism sweeping the Island Republic could lead to a break in United States-Cuban diplomatic relations. (The Navy Department in Washington said it would have no comment during the night on Dr. Castro’s statements.” (Guatemala has asked the Inter-American Peace Committee to look into the Castro charges that Guatemala was plotting an invasion of Cuba).

Dr. Castro referred to a publication on life in Cuba, put out at the United States Naval base in Guantanamo Bay and declared this reflected an attitude of “racial superiority that leaves nothing to be envied by Nazi Germany.”

Dr. Castro spoke in relatively calm tones. It was in contrast to his usual shouting oratory. He charged that placards prepared by the United States embassy to identify American-owned property in the event of trouble suggested the embassy knew of plans for an invasion or attack on Cuba. But he warned that the United States would “not do here what it did in Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Haiti.” He was referring to accusations often made by United States critics of American intervention in these Caribbean countries.

The explanation by the embassy that the placards were standard precautions taken in every country failed to check the mounting anger of Dr. Castro’s followers. The submarine sped north in darkness, Dr. Castro told the television audience. He said the incursions into Cuba’s water’s occurred between May 6 and May 11 when Cuban craft sighted United States units. The American light cruiser NORFOLK, he said, came within two and a half miles of Cayo Blanco about 1 A.M. May 11. Cayo Blanco is a small key off the Varadero Beach resort about seventy-five miles northeast of Havana.

ARTICLE #2 14 MAY 1960

CAPITAL PROTESTS CUBAN SHIP'S FIRE ON U.S.SUBMARINE. STATE DEPARTMENT DEMANDS CASTRO EXPLAIN CHARGE OF NAVAL INTRUSIONS. U.S. STATEMENT ON THE PROTEST TO CUBA IS ON PAGE 2. BY JACK RAYMOND, SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES. WASHINGTON, MAY 14. (Note the second page of the article cites a date of May 15. The United States Government protested to Cuba today over a Cuban patrol boat's firing on a United States submarine on May 6.

Lester D. Mallory, acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, summoned the Cuban Charge d'Affairs, Dr. Enrique Patterson, and asked for an explanation "why an armed vessel of the Cuban Navy fired without provocation on the U.S.S. SEA POACHER while the latter was pursuing a peaceful passage on the high seas."

Meanwhile, Navy officials gave accounts of this incident on May 11 that differed greatly from those given by Premier Fidel Castro during a television speech in Havana last night. U.S. VOICES ASTONISHMENT. The State Department said that it was astonished at Premier Castro's remark that a Cuban patrol had "fired" upon the United States submarine on the high seas and "chased it for thirty miles." A spokesman for Admiral Robert L. Dennison, Commander of the Atlantic Fleet, quoted the Admiral as denying the Cuban charges Saturday with a warning that "if the ships of our fleet performing normal peacetime functions are attacked on the high seas they will exercise the indisputable right of self-preservation and will defend themselves with all means available."

The State Department said the SEA POACHER'S commander reported that a Cuban patrol craft had apparently tried to signal his vessel with flares while the submarine was running on the surface "in a recognized and well-traveled sea," but that "the message was unreadable."

The State Department said it had no reference to this incident "in accordance with its desire not to add to the tensions in the Caribbean area."

WAS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY. "Neither the submarine commander nor this Government could take seriously what appeared to be a question of identification at sea and a failure of communications," the State Department declared. However, since it appeared from Premier Castro's statement that there had been intentional firing on the submarine, the statement said, the United States asked the Cuban Government for an explanation.

The State Department rejected Premier Castro's latest charges that the United States countenanced "plans for aggression" against Cuba. It reminded him that the United States had repeatedly expressed the desire to "achieve a fair understanding" through normal diplomatic negotiations.

At the Pentagon, Navy officials produced reports of ships' logs and navigation charts to support their denial of Premier Castro's charge that Navy ships had violated Cuban territorial waters.

According to these officials, the skipper of the SEA POACHER, Comdr L.E. Stahl, 37 years old, of Key West, Fla., reported at the time that the Cuban patrol ship had fired what he took to be red flares at 9:30 P.M. on May 6.

TRAVELING 'USUAL ROUTE.' Navy officials said the SEA POACHER was traveling "its usual route" on a generally northwest course in Nicholas Channel, from the United States base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to Key West. Suddenly, the Navy said, the Cuban patrol craft ORIENTE, a former United States submarine chaser, began firing what were taken to be

flares. Commander Stahl slowed the submarine to see if the other ship might be in trouble. There upon, the Navy said, the ORIENTE swung in astern of the submarine and fired three more bursts of red flares, according to the original messages.

At this point, according to the submarine's log, the ORIENTE extinguished her running lights, but the SEA POACHER kept hers on. Commander Stahl decided that the other ship was not in trouble and resumed his course. Later, officials said, Commander Stahl concluded that what had thought to be flares were small-caliber bullets.

DID NOT RETURN FIRE. Navy officials placed the meeting at "no closer than five miles" from Cayo Cruz del Padre. The SEA POACHER, they said, remained on the surface throughout her voyage, was not hit by the fire and did not fire back.

According to these officials, Cuba is listed in a United States document of February, 1960, as claiming a three-mile territorial limit at sea for purposes of security, criminal and fishing jurisdictions, and a twelve-mile limit for customs jurisdiction and pollution precautions.

The SEA POACHER got into Key West the next day. Among her reports was unidentified sonar sounding that she had obtained after the incident with the ORIENTE, Navy officials continued.

SOUNDS ARE CHECKED. The Pentagon spokesman said that to check the undersea sounds, which could have been a rock or a fish as well as a submarine, a routine anti-submarine search was initiated with ships and planes. The Navy said that the frigate NORFOLK, a former destroyer leader and about the size of a light cruiser, and the destroyer THE SULLIVANS, joined the search in international waters north of Cuba.

On May 11, according to the Navy report, about 12:45 A.M., the two ships were sailing on an easterly course with the destroyer about two and a half miles farther off the Cuban coast than the NORFOLK. The Navy said that the NORFOLK was twelve and a half miles northwest of Cayo Cruz del Padro when the ORIENTE closed in. "You are sailing in Cuban territorial waters," someone on the Cuban ship shouted, according to the Pentagon report. The skipper of the NORFOLK, Capt. H.A. Murray, merely acknowledged the message and continued on his course, convinced that he was in international waters but unwilling to make an issue of it, the Navy spokesman said. A Navy official ridiculed the Cuban charge that the NORFOLK had been sighted within two and a half miles of Cayo Blanco, a small island and inlet north of Cuba. "If the NORFOLK had been there it would have been impossible for it to get out without going aground on the rocks there," the Navy official said.

The NORFOLK draws about twenty-six feet of water and the charts show a depth of only a few feet of water at Cayo Blanco even as far out as two and a half miles, the Navy officials pointed out.

According to the sea charts of the NORFOLK her nearest approach to any Cuban islet was eight miles. State Department officials noted that Dr. Castro had again expressed a desire for the United States to quit the naval base at Guantanamo Bay. The United States has held the base at Guantanamo under perpetual treaty since 1903. Dr. Castro has often complained about the United States Navy's presence there, but he has made no formal demand for an ouster.

The Navy regards Guantanamo as a vital base, and officials have made clear that they would not regard lightly any Cuban demand for evacuation. According to the treaty, this can be accomplished only by mutual agreement. The treaty also provides for free United States naval access to and from the base.

Premier Castro, in a two hour and forty minute telecast, charged eleven violations of Cuban territorial waters. He drew a parallel between the United States spy plane incident in the

Soviet Union and the Cuban ambush of the American private pilot last Thursday.

ARTICLE #3 14 MAY 1960

U.S. STATEMENT ON CUBA. SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES. WASHINGTON, MAY 14. Following is the text of a statement by the State Department today on the protest made to the Cuban Government against the firing of a Cuban patrol boat on a United States submarine. Dr. Enrique Patterson, Cuban Chare d’Affaires, was called to the Department of State this afternoon and informed of the department’s astonishment at the claim made by Prime Minister Castro that a Cuban patrol boat “fired” upon a United States submarine on the high seas and “chased it for thirty miles.”

The United States Government, in accordance with its desire not to add to the tensions in the Caribbean area, has previously made no reference to an incident in which the commander of the U.S.S SEA POACHER reported that while running on the surface on the high seas, and in a recognized and well-traveled sea lane, a Cuban patrol craft had apparently tried to signal him with red flares but that the message was unreadable. Neither the submarine commander nor this Government could take seriously what appeared to be a question of identification at sea and a failure of communications.

The department vigorously rejected the further repetition of Prime Minister Castro of the charges and implications that the United States countenances plans for aggression against the Government of Cuba, and once again expressed regret that he should seek this course in view of the United States Government’s oft-repeated desire to achieve a fair understanding between our two Governments through normal diplomatic negotiations - a desire also publicly voiced on various occasions by high officials of the Government of Cuba.

The department requested that an explanation be provided as to the reasons why an armed vessel of the Cuban Navy fired without provocation on the U.S.S SEA POACHER while the latter was pursuing a peaceful passage on the high seas.

ARTICLE #4 15 MAY 1960

CUBA: NEW INCIDENT. A new wave of anti-Americanism swept over Cuba last week and relations between Havana and Washington reached their lowest point since Premier Fidel Castro came to power nearly seventeen months ago. There were two incidents, one involving a United States submarine and other naval ships, the other involving a private American airplane.

Under an agreement with Cuba in 1903, the United States has a naval base at Guantanamo Bay on the southeast shore of Cuba. U.S. ships have the right of access to Guantanamo Bay through Cuban territorial waters. Elsewhere the U.S. has no special rights.

Last Friday night Dr. Castro charged that U.S. warships had been operating “in Cuban waters with lights out as in time of war.” He said that nine times in the period between May 6 and last Wednesday, Cuban patrols had sighted U.S. vessels near Cuba’s coast. Cuba fired on a U.S. submarine on May 6, he said, but U.S. warships continued their incursions into Cuba’s waters.

In Washington yesterday, the Navy Department flatly denied Dr. Castro’s charges. The Navy said the U.S. Submarine SEA POACHER was en route from Guantanamo to Key West, Fla., on May 6, that after leaving the base, the SEA POACHER was never within five miles of Cuba’s coast; that nonetheless the Cuban submarine chaser ORIENTE inexplicably fired at the

SEA POACHER. The U.S. formally protested to Cuba yesterday over the incident.

Castro's Aim. Dr. Castro's attack was thought by some persons to foreshadow a campaign to drive the U.S. out of Guantanamo. In his television speech, Dr. Castro angrily charged that the Americans at Guantanamo had adopted an attitude of "racial superiority" toward the Cuban people and he added that "we pray" for the U.S. to quit the base.

His speech came a day after Cuban secret service men had shot down an American pilot, Matthew Edward Duke, 45, who had secretly rented a small plane and flown it to Cuba in violation of U.S. laws. The Cuban Government said Mr. Duke had first flown to Cuba last Sunday and had taken three anti-Castro persons out of the country. When he returned on Thursday to pick up five more of Dr. Castro's opponents, the secret service men were waiting for him. They shot down his plane and Mr. Duke was found dead in the wreckage. His five would-be passengers, who were hiding in the bushes nearby, were arrested.

The Cuban radio and press charged that the U.S. had permitted the flight as part of a "conspiracy" against Cuba. Thursday afternoon Cuban workers throughout the island halted work and staged angry demonstrations against the United States.

The new strain on Cuban-American relations came at a time when Cuba appeared to be drawing closer to Russia. Eight days ago Cuba and the Soviet Union resumed diplomatic relations which had been severed in 1952 when Fulgencio Batista was President and Dictator of Cuba. Actually the resumption of relations was a formality; Moscow recognized Dr. Castro's regime the day it was established – Jan. 1, 1959 – and the two countries signed a trade pact three months ago. But some observers believe that the forthcoming reopening of a Soviet Embassy in Havana will make Cuba the principal center of Communist propaganda activities in Latin America. There were also predictions last week that Cuba might soon establish relations with Communist China.

ARTICLE #5 15 MAY 1960

OUSTER OF ENVOY URGED. SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES. HAVANA MAY 14. A demand that United States Ambassador to Cuba Philip W. Bonsal be declared persona non grata by the Cuban Revolutionary Government was voiced here today by the Hotel and Restaurant Workers Federation.

The federation accused the Ambassador of being connected with counter-revolutionary elements, in particular the White Rose, an anti-Castro organization that is reportedly to have its headquarters in the United States.

The federation's resolution was presented to the Confederation of Cuban Workers, the central organization of labor in Cuba, for approval before presentation to the Cuban Government. The confederation hurriedly called a meeting discuss this demand and to consider "the new threatening attitude of the imperialistic Americans."

In his television speech, Premier Castro said Mr. Bonsal would not have prepared a "notice" to protect American property had he not known of some plan of aggression against Cuba.

The publication of a copy of the notice by Revolucion, a semi-official newspaper, touched off new outbursts of hostility against the United States. Dr. Castro said the United States Embassy's explanation that the form had been prepared to be used only in an emergency was not acceptable to Cuba.

Admiral Issues Warning. A spokesman quoted Admiral Robert L. Dennison,

commander of the Atlantic Fleet, as saying last night: “if the ships of our fleet performing normal peacetime functions are attacked on the high seas they will exercise the indisputable right of self-preservation and will defend themselves with all means available.”

The spokesman say by telephone from NORFOLK, VA, that Admiral Dennison had coupled his warning with denial that United States naval vessels had violated Cuban territorial waters. He quoted the admiral as having declared: “The submarine was making no effort at concealment and was, in fact, attempting to respond, as all good seafarers do, to what was interpreted as a call for help.”

ARTICLE #6 16 MAY 1960

CASTRO’S FISHING TRIP. The latest Cuban-American incident has comic-opera quality about it, and yet Premier Castro’s inflammatory use of it has a significance that cannot be overlooked.

It was not until Castro announced that one his naval vessels had fired on an American submarine off the Cuban coast that the United States Navy even knew for certain that it had been fired on. The submarine, running on the surface with full lights in international waters, had observed some unintelligible “red flares” that Castro now reveals were shots. As to his charge that the American frigate NORFOLK has also invaded Cuban waters, the charts clearly proved that if the ship had been where he said it was, it would have gone aground.

Castro was probably inspired to make public his silly fabrications by thinking he could profit from the United States’ momentarily poor international position resulting from the U-2 affair. The two sets of incidents are totally dissimilar: in the one, the United States admittedly sent a reconnaissance plane across Russian frontiers; in the other, American naval vessels were openly sailing where under international law they have every right to sail. But in his frenzy to whip up anti-American sentiment, Castro has seized on this fragile straw, presumably hoping it will be tossed about by the same winds as those that have swept the U-2 incident around the world to the detriment of the United States.

Perhaps Castro is building up sentiment for a full-scale propaganda attack on the American base at Guantanamo; perhaps he is merely trying to ingratiate himself with the Russians in honor of the forthcoming reopening of their embassy in Havana. Whatever his motive, the United States must continue to be patient in the face of his pinpricks; to assume that the Cubans in the flush of their revolution will make many errors of judgment, navigational and otherwise; to approach Cuba’s problems with a calm and sympathetic attitude – but also to make it clear that attacks on Americans, military or civilian, who are pursuing legitimate and peaceful activity cannot and will not be tolerated.

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

The Russians Are Coming, Tra-la, Tra-la. Captain’s Log: Earth Date 8.05.06.1960. That’s 8am May 6th, 1960 for the folks that never watched “Star Trek” on TV. The undersea ship USS SEA POACHER (SS406) set sail for the tropical paradise, Key West, where there’s a bar on every corner and a girl behind every Hickory tree. Shortly after I reported aboard SEA POACHER, I learned two things the hard way. Hickory trees don’t grow south of Georgia and Electronic Spares on the Tender does not stock Fallopian Tubes for the Radar.

SEA POACHER and her “fearless crew” tore out the channel from GITMO, spun the helm hard to port and whipped around the southeast end of Cuba running “Full on Four.” She cruised all day through the sunny, calm Caribbean, blissfully unaware of the dark and sinister forces in play that were about to ensnare her and her “fearless crew” in an international incident.

I was standing the 2000 to 2400 Radar watch in the Conning Tower and was routinely tracking a contact about fifty degrees off the port bow that was closing on us but did not appear to be trying to intercept us. Suddenly, about 2100, the Bridge called for the Captain to come to the Bridge quickly and ordered Maneuvering to slow to 1/3. The vessel, now almost off our port beam, had fired three red flares and might be in distress. Captain Stahl arrived on the bridge just in time to see two more bursts of red flares. Now Captain Stahl was always formal in his speech, but his next statement to the OOD was the equivalent of “You dumb-a**”, that’s not flares that’s tracers. They’re shooting at us.”

The Captain sounded General Quarters. He called Signalman Dale Liggett to the Bridge with signal light, and Radio Room on the Intercom, and told both to send a message identifying us as a U.S. Navy ship in international waters concluding the message with “CEASE FIRE OR I WILL SINK YOU.” The total shots fired is uncertain but after receiving the message the Cuban vessel turned off it’s running lights and assumed a similar course to us but some distance astern.

Meanwhile, in Sonar the plot thickened. The watch detected a new sound contact on the passive sonar. Sonarman Ron Godwin, who had been asleep in “Hogan’s Alley,” arrived in Sonar and called the Conning Tower and asked if Radar had a second contact about twenty some-odd degrees east of the first vessel. I told him I had only one surface contact, and it was not on the bearing in question. Ron confirmed to the Bridge that there was a submerged contact between us and the Cuban coast. Passive sonar gives direction but not distance to the contact.

Captain Stahl ordered all stop and the main engines shut down, so that our own ships noise would not interfere with Sonar’s ability to evaluate and identify the contact. Sonar determined it was an unidentified submarine. We knew there were no friendly subs in the area so there was only one obvious conclusion - RUSSIAN.

The Captain radioed Key West, informed them of the situation, and asked for assistance. He was informed that the USS NORFOLK (DL-1) and the USS THE SULLIVANS (DD-537), would be dispatched from Key West, but would not be on station until the next day. The sea floor on the south side of Nicholas Channel rises sharply and forms a large shoal area of shallow water that extends as much as three miles from Cuba’s north shore. Captain Stahl knew we had the other sub penned between us and the shallow coastal waters thus limiting its options for escaping the clutches of SEA POACHER and her “fearless crew.” This was the “Cold War” so all we could hope to do was keep the sub penned down until it was forced to surface. Then we could take pictures and point fingers and yell GOTCHA. Sonar was able to track the sub for a while, but as Ron said, it went deep, silent, and went away.

SEA POACHER spent the rest of the night trying to regain contact but could not. Early on the morning of May 7th we were ordered to proceed to Key West and to relinquish the hunt to the ships coming on station. SEA POACHER arrived in Key West late that afternoon.

There was no public announcement of the incident by either the United States or Cuba until a full week later on May 13th when President Fidel Castro, during one of his long speeches, stated that on May 6th, a Cuban patrol boat, the ORIENTE, had fired on an American submarine that had invaded Cuban territorial water. Castro’s account of events differs somewhat from the truth, but then so does the statement released to the public by the U.S. State Department. If Castro had not opened his mouth, the World would never have heard of this incident.

CHAPTER 49

JOHN SAVORY 1958 - 1961

I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD WITH WAR PREPARATIONS IN PROGRESS, DINK LIST AND NON-QUALIFIED PUKES, RECEIVING MY DOLPHINS, THE CRAB LINE, BOOZE PARTIES IN THE TORPEDO ROOMS, RAISIN JACK IN THE ENGINE ROOMS, THE GIBRALTAR NIGHTMARE, AND RIDING THE WAVES

REPORTING ABOARD WITH WAR PREPARATIONS IN PROGRESS

I reported aboard during the summer of 1958. As I crossed the brow the first thing I noticed was the torpedo loading ramp was erected and a group of men were loading MK 14 warshot torpedoes. I was told to go below, stow my gear, get in some dungarees and come back topside to assist in the torpedo load.

So this was my introduction to submarine life. Fresh out of Submarine School, here I was in Key West, Florida going aboard my first submarine and immediately finding out that some serious preparations were taking place to head out on a war patrol during peace time.

Back at the After Battery Hatch, a line of guys were passing stores from the dock to the boat, and down the hatch in great numbers. Food and provisions for at least 60 days were being hustled aboard in preparation to get underway in short order.

What was going on?

Well all hell was breaking loose in the Middle East, specifically in Lebanon, where fighting had erupted in civil war fashion by competing sects and Americans there were under threat (sound familiar?). Our Marines had landed to protect our citizens and Embassy, and it appeared we would be promptly be part of a shooting war.

So, back in Key West the SEA POACHER and other boats were getting underway to support the Marines.

“Wow, what was I getting into?” I thought.

This was the real thing, and maybe we wouldn’t come back. I was given a locker for my gear, no bunk, just a hot bunk assignment in which I would share time with someone else in using the bunk.

I was also handed a qualification card, with what seemed to be a thousand places for enlisted and officer signatures; each one representing my mastery of some part of the SEA POACHER’S mechanical and electrical systems or procedures.

I was immediately tasked to learn how to be a planesman, helmsman, and lookout, so that I could earn my keep by standing watches at sea.

I was also informed that I was a non-qualified puke, who's function in life (when not on watch) was to get that qual card signed off by putting my head down and a** up (with a flashlight in hand) to trace out and sketch all those submarine systems that were listed on the card, and then answer questions thrown at me by a "system expert" shipmate to test my knowledge.

This seemed like an impossible task, especially so because during all of my "spare time" I was also supposed to function as a worker and member of the Seaman Gang in doing such things as chipping paint, cleaning heads, mess cooking, etc.

Finally, I was informed by the COB that I was required to complete a certain number of those qual card signatures every week, which meant I had to hand the card in every week to be checked to see if I was on schedule in completing those signatures.

DINK LIST AND NON-QUALIFIED PUKES

Falling behind in meeting the assigned schedule meant that I would appear on the dreaded delinquent list (dink list), losing my privileges to sleep, watch movies, go ashore for liberty, and any other good things until I caught up.

And of course the wrath of my shipmates would be upon me as a "Dink List Non-Qualified Puke." So this fate was to be avoided at all costs.

So began my life on that first submarine as we got underway to what appeared to be a hot war skirmish. After many days of trans-Atlantic underway time, wondering what the future held, things apparently calmed down in Lebanon, and we were given orders to return to port.

So the crisis was over (at least for SEA POACHER) and we returned. Upon arriving, the labor intensive operation began again, only this time offloading the warshots and replacing them with exercise fish.

Thus began for me one of the truly memorable experiences of my life, which will always be cherished. Namely, my nearly three years aboard SEA POACHER and the beginning of a Navy career that would span some twenty-five years. The tight knit friendships developed on that boat would span a lifetime; some of them continuing to this day via e-mail, phone or in person. I have a deep soft spot in my heart for all the guys I served with on that boat, many of whom are departed on final patrol now.

Thinking back now to those treasured days, a few tales come to mind of experiences we lived out.

RECEIVING MY DOLPHINS

As previously mentioned, my first eight months on board were consumed with crawling around in bilges or in overhead piping looking at and memorizing valves and piping and electrical switches and equipment, in order to get all the required proficiency signatures on my qual card, and ultimately to receive my beloved Dolphins insignia, attesting to the fact that I really was a submariner.

The day came when it would finally be a reality that I had finished, and my achievement would be recognized by having the Captain pin the Dolphin insignia to my uniform at the morning topside quarters formation.

On that day, 3 April 1959, after shaking the CO's hand, I was promptly carried off by my shipmates and tossed unmercifully off the forward deck of the boat into the dockside water.

A terrific experience, except for the glancing blow on the way down that occurred after bouncing off the edge of the exposed ballast tanks.

None the worse for wear, except for some scrapes, I was retrieved from the drink and given a warm welcoming by my shipmates.

I kept my mouth shut about the run in with the tank tops, not wanting to make a big deal about it, and perhaps stop a traditional event. After all, next time it would be my turn to dribble someone off the tank tops! Just kidding. But it sure felt good to no longer be a non-qualified puke.

That evening I went ashore with my buddies to the notorious Duval Street in Key West, where I was promptly set up at the bar of one of the local watering holes and handed a super large glass of beer, the bottom of which contained my Dolphins.

The task at hand was to ingest a shot glass full of whiskey, and chase it down with the beer in one super gulp, at the end of which I would retrieve the Dolphins in my teeth. The ritual is known as "Drinking your Dolphins."

Having successfully performed this task to the cheering enthusiasm of the crowd, I was now fully initiated into the brotherhood of submariners.

The rest of the night was all down hill, full of additional liquid nourishment, until the wee hours of the morning when we all crawled back to the barracks on base and crashed.

THE CRAB LINE

One of the pranks that close SEA POACHER crew members sprang on each other comes to mind in the After Battery crew's berthing area. On the port side passageway, known as Hogan's Alley, from time to time would appear the infamous "Crab Line."

One would encounter a piece of string tied from one bunk and strung across the passageway to another bunk with a sign hanging on it which said "crab line." This would always get a rise out of an unsuspecting crew member as he awoke and found one end of the string tied to his bunk.

Usually the unsuspecting victim would be someone who was very sensitive to personal hygiene issues and realized that the other end of the string was tied to the bunk of a crew member who had indulged in a memorable liberty encounter with one of the local bar ladies and returned to the boat with genital crabs living in certain parts of his body.

The word would spread quickly about who had the crabs because Doc (our Corpsman) would prescribe a treatment to kill the little buggers and obviously would then spread the word to stay clear of this individual for a few days, because the "cure" took several days, and thus the individual was contagious.

The adult crabs could be removed or eradicated fairly promptly, but by then one could be covered in hard to detect eggs which would hatch in the near future; so it took awhile before an infected person could be freed from the curse.

Anyway, the guys used to get a big laugh out of watching the shipmate on the receiving end of the crab line awaken and go bonkers when he saw the crab line.

BOOZE PARTIES IN THE TORPEDO ROOMS

Long deployments at sea, away from booze and women, meant that there was always an appetite for an illicit cocktail of some sort. It was no secret among the SEA POACHER crew that since Mark 14 steam driven torpedoes were propelled by an internal combustion engine that burned alcohol, that it would be a good move to be on the right side of a friendly torpedoman who might on occasion access some of the “fuel” and mix it with another crew member’s grapefruit juice or orange juice (absconded from the crew’s mess) for a little Torpedo Room party.

This of course always took place in a clandestine fashion, since drinking booze aboard the boat was prohibited. The practice eventually over the years was detected force wide by those in authority, and then stopped by fueling torpedoes with isopropyl alcohol, which if consumed could poison or kill the consumer.

Previous to this, torpedoes had been fueled by the very consumable ethyl alcohol, which was essentially 200 proof clear liquor.

RAISIN JACK IN THE ENGINE ROOMS

Once the Torpedo Rooms had exchanged consumable alcohol for non-consumable alcohol, some ingenious Engineman in the Forward Engine Room named Savory thought he had figured out a way to produce a drinkable substitute of his own.

With a good supply of raisins available in the Crew’s Mess, an Engine Room experiment in fermentation was started. Tips on how to ferment and distill came from shipmates such as Bobby Joe Hammac and others who grew up in the South and had first hand experience with White Lightning production.

A concoction of mainly water, sugar, and raisins was sealed up in large jars (previously used for pickles) and tucked away in a hidden corner of the Forward Engine Room lower generator flats, an area well out of sight, and very warm, to assist in the fermentation process.

Monitoring the process would involve observing the size of the raisins in the bottle as they grew in size over a period of weeks. One had to be careful to release pressure buildup in the bottles from time to time so that a bottle wouldn’t explode.

The experiment concluded several weeks later when it was decided to sample the “Raisin Jack” after observing the raisins triple in size and believing that now must be the time. So I, and some others of the Engine Room snipes, filtered out the raisins and filled our coffee cups with the mysterious fluid.

Wow! The stuff had a bite. That was okay, but the taste was horrible. Trying to make a tasty cocktail out of it by mixing it with various fruit juices was unfortunately not very successful. So, after all those underway weeks of waiting and watching I decided to end the experiment and dump the remaining mixtures into the Forward Engine Room bilges to be forever discarded by the Drain Pump when pumping the bilges.

That should have been the end of the story, but it wasn’t. The raisins had expanded to such a size that they plugged up the bilge strainers and made it impossible to pump the bilges properly.

So, before I had to explain to the Engineer or to Chief Gould what we had been doing to fill our bilges with bloated raisins, the dirty job of diving the bilges and cleaning the strainers was performed. And no one except a close group of Engine Room snipes was the wiser.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are other stories in this publication that indicate at least one or two Ensigns on board (not me) were known to access the Engine Rooms with coffee cups in hand.

THE GIBRALTAR NIGHTMARE

One of the most difficult experiences I remember on the boat had to do with a flooding incident. In 1959, SEA POACHER was scheduled to make a deployment to the Mediterranean to operate with the Sixth Fleet.

Most crewmembers (at least the single ones like me) were looking forward to the deployment, especially since we were scheduled to pull into Cannes, France for a port visit on the French Riviera. There we expected to get some time with all those topless French babes sunbathing on the beaches.

We would be deployed with the Sixth Fleet for a couple of months and in addition to France, we were looking for liberty calls in Italy, Greece, and maybe a few other places, operations permitting.

Our transit across the Atlantic was fairly routine and our first port call was at Gibraltar, Gateway to the Med, which we all recognized as the "Rock," the logo for the Prudential Insurance Company.

The British controlled it, and we were to be there for a couple of days to take on fuel and provisions, and then enter the Med for the rendezvous with the Sixth Fleet.

Little did I know that this stop would turn into a catastrophic nightmare for me, and then for the whole crew, on that first day in port. After tying up, most of the crew was chomping at the bit to hit the beach on liberty, put a few cool ones down, and mix it up with the señoritas after many days at sea.

As for me, I had the misfortune to be part of the duty section for that first day in port and drew the first below decks watch.

So as we secured from the Maneuvering Watch and set the regular Inport Watch. I then watched my buddies take off when liberty was called, as I began the routine of touring and inspecting the below decks spaces from bow to stern on a regular interval.

The inport routine went pretty much normal for the first hour or two as I made my rounds looking down into bilges of the engineering spaces to see if any needed to be pumped, and to monitor various tank levels, equipment temperatures, pressures, and other conditions to insure that nothing was abnormal and everything secure.

Sometime later, a few hours after arriving in port, I found myself, along with the Duty Chief and Duty Officer assembled in the Maneuvering Room staring down the deck hatch to the main propulsion motor flats, which housed the SEA POACHER'S twin electric propulsion motors, which of course drove the two shafts that propelled Her.

It was hard to believe what we saw. I don't remember who got there first and discovered what we were looking at, but there it was.

A shining water surface that was about half way up from the bilges below to the walking deck we were standing on. Partially submerged in the water were those precious main motors which were now very wet, and as every one knows electric motors don't run when full of water.

The water was so clear, still and transparent that you could look through it to the spaces below, and be deceived on first glance that it even was there. But there it was, on my watch, and its implications were obvious - we wouldn't be leaving Gibraltar for some time to come.

After starting the immediate damage control efforts, the Captain, Engineer, and Senior Maneuvering Room Electricians were chased down on shore, and called back from liberty to begin the long recovery period and to notify the rest of the submarine world of our predicament. The steps of pumping out the Maneuvering Room bilges and locating the source of the water were commenced.

As it turned out, the Stern Tube Flushing Valves, which allow a controlled stream of lubricating water from the sea to enter the ship through the hull penetrations that the propulsion shafts pass and thus lubricate the bearing surfaces that the shafts rest on as they turn when underway, had been left open. These valves are normally open while underway and closed when propulsion is stopped after arriving in port.

While underway, with the valves open, this stream of water entering the ship ultimately drains into the Maneuvering Room bilges and is monitored by the watch standers in the space and pumped out as necessary when the level builds up.

Somehow, after tying up in Gibraltar and securing from the Maneuvering Watch, the valves were left open instead of being closed, and the resulting trickle of water had continued to stream in unmonitored into the Maneuvering Room bilges for hours until now.

What a mess!

Personally, I was feeling pretty down and maybe liable since this had happened on my watch. With me as the Below Decks Watch, I maybe should have caught the problem in its earlier stages.

However, I was left unscathed, and remember only being dressed down for not performing my Below Decks Watch duties more thoroughly.

The end result was a several week stay in Gibraltar while the massive task of flushing the salt water out of the main motors and drying them with forced air blowers was accomplished.

Being stuck on the "Rock" for all that time was not the most terrific liberty experience, since the place is small, and aside from the bars, there was little else to do, except shop for souvenirs and watch the endless number of monkeys that reside in the upper elevations of the place.

Crossing the border into Spain brought a few memorable experiences, but everyone knew that our delay here would cut our scheduled port visits elsewhere. The worst part of that came true when our visit to see the Cannes beach babes was scrubbed when later on we were briefed about our post-Gibraltar schedule.

Anyway, after weeks of endless electrical ground chasing and continuous air drying, we finally got to a point where the electrical grounds in the main motors reached an acceptable level for us to get underway again, and the agony of the only bad experience for me on SEA POACHER was left behind, as we finally deployed into the Mediterranean.

We did get to spend some time later on in Italy, which was fun, but the loss of the Cannes dream was always mourned.

RIDING THE WAVES

Every year, in the late summer and early fall months, hurricane season in Florida and Key West was a fact of life. For SEA POACHER crew members, we were taught to be always alert

and ready to respond in the event hurricane conditions became dangerous while we were in port and especially away on liberty.

When away from the boat we were tasked to stay informed as to the current hurricane condition which was conspicuously posted on a sign at the main entrance to the base, as well as elsewhere.

Conditions from 1 to 5, as I remember, were posted and associated with actions running from no threat to imminent. As conditions escalated up the scale to 5 it was our responsibility to get back to the boat and make preparations to get underway.

The worse place for a submarine to be in a hurricane is tied to a pier and being susceptible to being slammed around and/or damaged by flying debris. Therefore getting away from dockside was imperative, as the open sea was a safer place to be, even though inhospitable to ships and especially submarines on the surface. And on the surface is where we were tasked to be if this came to pass.

One such experience that I recall was during an underway in a hurricane. This particular one had a path that went across the Keys, north of Key West in a place called Marathon.

We had gotten underway and were riding around on the surface, which was less than pleasurable and had many old salts on SEA POACHER learning the hard way about being sea sick.

I was the Throttleman in the Forward Engine Room during one such watch period. My main goal was to remain standing upright between two roaring Fairbanks Morse Diesels as the boat rolled from one side to the other. This was no easy feat as the boat was taking some pretty large lists one way and then the other.

The seas were very large and SEA POACHER was no match as we were tossed around endlessly.

The only control that the boat had was dependent upon keeping positive forward propulsion way, so that the rudder could have some effect in steering the ship. And, of course, propulsion was dependent upon keeping those Fairbanks Morse rock crushers running. So I performed my Throttleman duties as best as possible to keep things humming while performing a balancing dance on the rolling deck below my feet

After a couple of hours of this routine, and feeling like I was always ready to puke my guts out, something alarming started to happen. SEA POACHER began a long, ever increasing list to port.

The boat listed fifteen degrees, then twenty, twenty five, and kept on slowly going further. At about forty five degrees I found myself standing on the side of #2 Main Engine as I watched lubricating oil leak out of the upper crankshaft cover of #1 Main Engine and dribble down the outside of the Engine.

This nightmare continued as the boat continued its roll.

I thought to myself "My God, we are going to capsize!"

The roll continued until (what I found out later) was about a sixty degree port list, and then it stopped. By that time I was hanging on to a Circulating Water Valve Hand Wheel in the overhead with my feet firmly planted on the side of #2 Main Engine. The walking deck had become vertically inclined and #1 Main Engine was above it, as if in the overhead, now having streams of oil running down it's outside. But the ever increasing list had stopped, and I thought that maybe we weren't going to capsize after all.

However, the SEA POACHER wouldn't come back. It just sat there for what probably was only a minute or two, but it seemed like an eternity. My fears were at a peak, fearing that another broadside hit by a big wave from this attitude would surely flip us over.

But the Lord's hand was upon us and that didn't happen, and ever so slowly SEA POACHER began to right herself. Back she came, thirty degree port list, then twenty and finally upright again and starting to roll to starboard.

And then she returned to the pattern of large rolls not exceeding twenty or thirty degrees one way and then the other. With my heart back in place, and my skivvies turned brown, I concluded my watch trying to clean up spilled oil with the help of my fellow watch stander, the Oiler, as we continued to dance on the rolling deck plates below our feet. Fortunately, the engines had not lost enough lubrication to do any damage and churned on.

Finally, my watch was over. I was relieved and ever so happy to go forward through the After Battery water tight door and on my way to the crew's mess to calm down and reflect over a cup of coffee.

Unfortunately, the story wasn't finished. As I was footsteps away from the Crew's Mess the boat started another long roll to port. It continued, as before, just as I stepped into the Crew's Mess.

This time, however, we reached around a fifty degree port list rather quickly, just as I entered the Mess, and in time to witness a startled Mess Cook at the scullery sink losing his footing and watching the entire contents of the sink - dishes, silverware, cooking utensils and water - leave the sink in one big intact blob.

And in a split second it all crashed into the portside pressure hull immediately above a couple of startled crewmembers who were sitting at the forward most dining table playing cards.

Those guys ended up wearing the water (and fortunately no concussions or lacerations) from the assorted parts that landed in their laps. What a sight to see, as a few guarded laughs broke out after the event!

Eventually Sea Poacher persevered, fighting the seas and ultimately waiting out the hurricane, as it passed, before returning to port. The hurricane had pretty well flattened Marathon, but leaving Key West pretty well intact, as we found upon return.

This harrowing experience was to be repeated several times during my time on the boat, because with our Key West homeport on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico, the area was so hospitable to the annual hurricane season.

I guess there really was enough lead ballast in the Main Ballast Tanks, near the keel, to prevent the boat from capsizing. But my trust in the designers that put it there was certainly tested on that trip!

"Captain, we have flooded the Main Induction!" Reply from the CO in Conn "Don't tell ME your problems!"

SEA ROBIN, after Chief of the Watch lowered the Snorkel Mast before the induction valve was closed

"Put me in coach, I'm still ready to play!"

Maurice Wyman WWII sub vet, referring to the 9/11 attacks

CHAPTER 50

JAMES W. WESTON 1959

**I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER,
A SMOKING NO NO, GETTING QUALIFIED,
A BABY IN THE FLOWER BED, GITMO AND THE CUBAN FIRING,
A TRIP TO THE MEDITERRANEAN,
FLOODING OF THE MAIN MOTORS,
THE EAR BITING INCIDENT, A RUN IN WITH THE BOBBIES,
MESS COOKING AGAIN, OPERATIONS IN THE MED,
ORDERS TO NUCLEAR POWER SCHOOL,
OTHER SUBMARINE ASSIGNMENTS, AND MAKING 23 PATROLS**

REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER

After completing boot camp in San Diego, I was assigned to Electronics Technician "A" School at Treasure Island. I didn't mind the school, and when I didn't have duty on the weekend, I rode the bus into San Francisco, where there were many movie theaters. I spent entire weekends going from one theater to another. I think I saw every John Wayne movie in existence. On duty weekends or duty days, I stood watches where ever I was assigned. Sometimes it was in a barracks, and sometimes it was in or around a base facility. One such facility was sonar school. The building was locked at night, but we patrolled the area outside. Every hour we reported on a special telephone that all was well. It was on the water and the only thing to look at was Alcatraz Island. It was a lonely spooky mid-watch station.

After completing "A" school, I was sent to Submarine School in New London. It was interesting classroom work and also the simulator. I broke my right ear drum in the diving tank (I have never been able to equalize the pressure easily). Sometimes on duty days, I would guard empty buildings. I enjoyed standing watch in the Submarine Museum. I hated it when they assigned me to carry groceries for Navy Wives at the Commissary.

I finally made it to SEA POACHER in April 1959. The boat was at sea when I checked in, so they assigned me to menial tasks around the squadron building. A few other guys had also checked in, so when the boat pulled in, we went down to meet her and handle lines. After the hustle and bustle of docking and tying up, we went aboard and handed our orders to the topside watch.

A SMOKING NO NO

Some one took us below, and we stood in a line in the passageway outside the Yeoman's Office. In those days, almost everyone smoked. I lit up a cigarette to calm my nerves while awaiting my turn to be processed. After taking a few drags on the cigarette, I realized there was no butt kit in sight. I tried to catch the ashes in my hand, but eventually some went on the deck.

Chief Jonas must have heard them hit the deck, and he was on me like a duck on a June bug. He let me know what an evil thing I had done. I asked him where I could find some cleaning equipment, and he pointed to a locker in the passageway. I promptly swept the passageway, while wondering what I had gotten myself into. My ego was badly bruised.

Here I was, a 22 year old graduate of boot camp, a graduate of ET"A" School, a graduate of Submarine School; and this guy treated me like a common SEAMAN (which I was). Someone must have showed me where to eat and where to sleep. I don't remember, but I know that non-quals were not allowed to sleep in the barracks.

GETTING QUALIFIED

I was placed in the seaman gang, and started my qualification as a topside watch (in port) and helmsman/planesman at sea. I was also started on my path to qualifying in submarines. I wasn't a hotshot qualifier, but managed to get it done in about 7 or 8 months. Some people were friendly to me and some were not. I guess they realized that I was only there long enough to qualify in submarines, and then I would be gone to Nuclear Power Training. I did get along well with most of my peers in the seaman gang. They were JJ Lynch, John Snook, Bob Acor, Bob Bradley, Ken McCain, Carol Humphries, Mike Spencer, Andy Childress, and a fellow named Peterson. There may have been a few more, but I don't recall the names.

Our big boss was Harold (Hal) Schwartz TM1 (SS). He was the lead torpedo man and had the Forward Torpedo Room. He always treated me with respect and was my hero. He had ridden the SILVERSIDES in WWII, and had more medals than anyone I have seen before or since. Anyone who belongs to USSVI (Subvets) can read an excellent write up on Hal in the American Submariner Magazine Number 2001-04. The last time I saw Hal, he was working at Electric Boat in Groton. I was on the DACE in overhaul.

A BABY IN THE FLOWER BED

Second in command of the seaman gang was Bernard (Tony) Anthony TM2 (SS). He was in charge of the aft torpedo room. He was a quiet fellow and easy to work for. Tony liked his privacy and rented a small house in Key West. It was actually a former slave quarters (from days gone by) that sat behind a larger house.

A few of us from the seaman gang would go visit him from time to time. One day he came to work with a strange story. He decided to plant a flower bed in front of his place. While digging in the dirt, he discovered a baby's body (skeleton).

As I recall, the police came to investigate, and the local news people ran the story. I don't know what the final outcome of the investigation was.

GITMO AND THE CUBAN FIRING

Life was going pretty well for me on SEA POACHER. Although the seaman gang was a speed bump in my nuclear career, I liked the people and my bosses. We did daily operations, and we made a trip to GITMO for local operations, which included a few days at Montego Bay.

On the way home from GITMO, we were fired on by a Cuban gunboat. That story has been well covered by Ron Godwin, and others, I am sure.

A TRIP TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

My next SEA POACHER adventure was to the Mediterranean. Bill Bailey and the boys had tuned up the diesels and away we went, full on four, with Larry Stahl in Command. When we passed Miami, we were down to one engine, and Bill and the boys were hard at work.

It took a few weeks to make the crossing to Gibraltar, but we seemed to be a happy group. I enjoyed standing lookout watch, and we spent almost the entire crossing on the surface. By now, I had become acquainted with most of the crew, and liked the officers who stood watch on the Bridge. We actually had some philosophical discussions as we watched the flying fish and some whales. I'm sorry to say, I don't remember any of their names except LT Larry Colwell. He was a fine fellow and later was my qualification officer on my final walk through.

FLOODING OF THE MAIN MOTORS

We finally arrived in Gibraltar and the off duty folks hit the beach. About two hours later, we heard on the 1 MC, "Flooding in the Main Motor Room," followed by the alarm. Being still a nonqual, I tried to stay out of the way of those who knew what they were doing.

Somehow the word got up to the local bars, and the crew was recalled to the boat. I didn't have a good grasp of the serious nature of the incident until a few days later. I wasn't personally involved in any of the decision making, finger pointing, or heated arguments. All I knew was that the mood of the boat had changed, and after a week; morale was low. Eventually liberty got back to normal, but there were unhappy folks hitting the beach. I was never a drinking man, so I didn't frequent the bars. I did hear some of the stories that were being told. One of these follows.

THE EAR BITING INCIDENT

I don't remember how long after the flooding that this happened, but the crew was still not in good mood. The SKIPJACK had just made a trans-Atlantic speed run in record time, and her crew was celebrating in one of the local bars. I'm sure they were feeling froggy about their great accomplishment.

Our boys were in the same bar with our morale at an all time low. I have no idea what started the fight, but our *(name and rate deleted by Editor)* bit the ear off a SKIPJACK sailor. Now our guy was a quiet man who would never even raise his voice. So whatever transpired in that bar must have been a serious confrontation. Maybe someone in the bar knew what happened, but I never learned what it was that triggered such a violent response from our shipmate. I don't know if either the SEA POACHER or SKIPJACK Commands took any action.

A RUN IN WITH THE BOBBIES

There were a few other stories that made the rounds, which may or may not be true. One involved the SEA POACHER Crew getting rowdy in the Trafalgar Bar. The English Bobbies were called, and the sailors ran up to the roof. The policemen followed them, and were ultimately thrown off the roof.

At one time I heard that Captain Stahl considered canceling all liberty.

MESS COOKING AGAIN

My life hit another low point while we were in Gibraltar. I was put on mess cooking, for the second time, which hurt my ego once again. I did learn something about hardship though. When I was dumping the garbage cans one night, the Spanish workers in the Gibraltar Shipyard, were catching the leftover spaghetti in tin cans before it could hit the bottom of the dumpster. I suppose I had heard about the poor people in foreign lands, but I got to see it first hand.

We were in the Gibraltar shipyard for about a month while the Navy sent special detergents to clean and flush the main motors. I wasn't aware of what specific operations we were doing; but I remember going to the Bridge on the mid-watch and seeing Mount Stromboli erupting astern of us. And as we passed through the Straits of Messina, I could smell the smoke from Mt. Etna.

OPERATIONS IN THE MED

We also made stops in Genoa and Leghorn. In Genoa, which is a large city built into a hillside, I walked through the streets toward the mountains; and purely by accident, stumbled onto a small stone house with a sign in the front yard. The sign said, "This is the birthplace of Christopher Columbus." A little farther down the street, I came to a cable car that would take me back down to the harbor.

We did fleet exercises as required by the powers that be, and eventually we headed for Key West. On the way home, I was back to standing lookout watches. We encountered a hurricane in the Mid-Atlantic, and due to our inability to safely dive and surface in extremely rough seas, we stayed on the surface all the way home. The lookouts and the OOD had to wear harnesses, and be chained to stanchions in the superstructure.

Because of our low Bridge, and to have a longer range of vision, the lookouts took turns going into the Conning Tower and manning the periscope. Sounds like fun, but nothing can make you sicker than looking through a periscope in a State 5 sea. I filled a few barf buckets. It sure was nice when my turn came to go back to the Bridge and be in the fresh air, even though I spent half the time grabbing a lung full of air before we nosed into the next 50 foot wave. I was thankful we weren't doing it in the North Atlantic in the winter time. We could not make more than a standard bell, because we were being so beat up by the force of the water. I think a lot of people were sea sick, and Dale Fate (the cook) used to stick a strip of bacon fat up his nose and put the other end in his mouth. Then he walked through the boat laughing and sucking his bacon.

ORDERS TO NUCLEAR POWER SCHOOL

In late December 1959, I received my orders to Nuclear Power School in New London. I had completed submarine qualification and was allowed to live in the barracks while in port. I had stored my sea bag in the storage room; but when I went to pack up and leave, it was gone. Bob Bradley and I spent several hours looking for it, but I finally had to leave without it.

I communicated with Bob for several weeks via U.S. Mail. He finally found it and sent it to me on a bus. I checked with Greyhound for months, but it never showed up. Later, I received a letter from Captain Stahl. He had heard that I was doing well, and wanted to encourage me to

keep up the good work. I was very surprised since I never realized he even knew I was on board. I have recently looked for the letter and have been unable to find it. The search goes on.

OTHER SUBMARINE ASSIGNMENTS

After school, I went on to the Nuclear Prototype at West Milton, New York, where I met my future wife (Linda) in Saratoga Springs. Following prototype training, in January 1961, I received orders to the HALIBUT (SSGN-587) in Pearl Harbor. Linda came to Hawaii, and we were married in the Sub Base Chapel.

I made four North Pacific patrols. We were so top heavy with qualified personnel that I became the only fully qualified Reactor Operator to Mess Cook. Once again my ego was crushed. The HALIBUT carried Regulus guided missiles with nuclear warheads. It was the only boat of its kind ever built. It was later converted and used in the espionage work described in the book *"BLIND MANS BLUFF."*

The year TRITON made the round the world cruise submerged in 86 days we were submerged for 85 days. Our GDU had been broken for a while, and on the 85th day we surfaced in the middle of the night to daisy chain the garbage over the side in the high latitudes. Then we went back down for another 20 days to complete the patrol. In April 63 we heard THRESHER went down. We had many somber faces because one of our guys had been transferred to it, but we found out later that he had not rode the boat that day. I learned much later that Forni and Bracey of my SEA POACHER days had gone down with her.

After HALIBUT, I made five patrols on the DANIEL BOONE. I then took two years off and tried the civilian world, but it didn't work. Shortly after SCORPION went down, I reenlisted. While I wanted back into FBMs, I got the DACE, with Don Kamuf from SEA POACHER also on board. Our Skipper was Kinnard R McKee, one of the hot ones in the Navy, and the youngest ever to make Admiral. He was a risk taker but always came out on top. When Rickover "rested his oars," McKee got the job. After two patrols, it was on to the GEORGE C. MARSHALL for another five patrols.

Finally, I got my only shore duty, which was two miserable years on the RADIATION CONTROL BARGE in New London. The only good thing that came out of it is I finally made Chief. Later, I got orders to the WILL ROGERS, and the Captain was the worst I had seen in my entire career. When he got transferred, the Goat Locker sent a sympathy card to his next command. My five patrols were uneventful. On one, I caught pneumonia during the refit period. I coughed so hard I broke a rib. I thought surely they could do one patrol without me, but when they threw off the lines, I was there with pneumonia and a broken rib.

During my last patrol, I submitted my papers to retire and also learned I had made E8. Rear Admiral J. R. Lewis tried to convince me to stay in, but I told him it wasn't fun any more. When they presented Linda with a dozen roses at my retirement, she said "Is that all I get?"

MAKING 23 PATROLS

When you add up my patrols, I had 15 on Boomers, two on DACE, four on HALIBUT, and two on SEA POACHER. The Boomer patrols were easy compared to those on others. The SEA POACHER would have been easier if I had realized she was just a stepping stone to nuclear power. But I was too busy Mess Cooking to figure it out.

CHAPTER 51

BOB (DEX) ARMSTRONG 1959 - 1960

I REMEMBER JOINING THE NAVY, OFF WATCH AT SEA, SLUSH FUNDS, TRYING TO GET SOME SLEEP, THE COMMUNIST THREAT, THE CONTROL ROOM, MOVIES, AND THINGS NUKES WILL NOT REMEMBER

EDITOR'S NOTE: DEX is a prolific writer with over 200 articles or other publications on submarines, and on the Internet. A few of these have been extracted, some verbatim and some partially, from the SEA POACHER ASSOCIATION website and Newsletter.

JOINING THE NAVY

I had joined the Navy voluntarily. No one hypnotized me, tossed me in a gunny sack and hauled me off to Great Lakes. Nope, did it to myself. Listened to a Navy recruiter named Malleck. Old first class gunner's mate who had sailed with Noah. The slick talking, silver-tongued sonuvab**** had pictures of Hong Kong. Tahiti. Beaches in the Med, Hula girls, and. Palm trees. Faraway places with smiling bluejackets and good looking women, all over the walls of his office. It seems odd, looking back. He didn't have any photos of midnight loading parties. Of sailors freezing their doodads off in the North Atlantic. No pictures of barmaids with tattooed t*** and a glass eye. No guys with chipping hammers and paint scrapers. Malleck just had pictures of places we never went and sweet young things we never saw. Hell, I couldn't get in fast enough!

The way he explained it. It would be first Great Lakes, then the beach in Tahiti, where as he put it, "The only way you can keep the wimmin' off ya, is to turn queer." He never once alluded to the possibility that I might see Iceland, Greenland, Newfoundland, and a helluva lot of floating ice. And hula girls only on Maneuvering Room calendars. I joined. I let them pinch me, poke me, stick needles, remove vials of blood, and peek into crevasses, cavities, and orifices I had never seen inside myself. I let them yell at me. Say terrible things about my ancestors, living relatives, religion, hometown, intelligence and personal appearance, state, mother, and way of life. I had gone to New London where medics played games no longer associated with civilized behavior. And I learned more about mechanical care and operation of stuff that I ever had any remote desire to know. I got an academic diploma. My knowledge of things mechanical did not extend beyond ignition keys, can openers and light switches. Somebody on Ron's BBS said, "I didn't think sub school was that hard." I figure anyone who said that could make you an operating grandfather clock if you handed him a jackknife and a telephone pole.

The Navy sent some guy from the FBI to talk to my neighbors, teachers and the minister of a church I hadn't seen the inside of in 15 years. After all this, the United States Navy didn't trust me enough to tell me where we were going half the time. I certainly wasn't going to tell the Russians. First, I didn't have a Dick Tracy pressure hull-penetrating wrist radio. And being from East Tennessee, a not too popular Communist influence hangout, I wouldn't have recognized a Red if he hopped out of the vent lines with a picture of Lenin tattooed on his cheek.

OFF WATCH AT SEA

The late night hours underway submerged became late in life, gentle memories. Night people have always been a different breed of cat. There's something kind of special about people who own the middle of the night - cab drivers; Waffle House waitresses; 'Dirty Apron Bill', the short order cook at the I-95 truck stop; and midnight shift highway patrolmen. Great people, great conversationalists - there are few competing distractions so you tend to pay more attention to what people say during the hours most folks are sleeping. Coffee always tastes better when it has percolated to the point of massive liquid reduction - stuff one step above hot tar. Coffee that can pop rivet your eyelids to your eyebrows - a concoction resembling boiled Egyptian mummy wrappings or Pakistani bunion pads. Late night submarine, bottom of the pot midwatch, wake the dead, put hair on your chest jamoke can dissolve your adenoids. But, you never forget it and you never get any cup of coffee that matches submarine midwatch coffee the rest of your life. When you turn in to an After Battery rack and as you are corking off you can pick up bits and pieces of mess deck conversation as on duty crewmen pass through the crews' mess airlock door. "Yeah...Mary told him to..." Then the door would close. "Back around 1952, my old man..." And then the door would shut again. You never learned what his dad did in 1952. If it was one of those mid-western farm kids, his dad probably bought a damn hay baler or married some big, corn fed gal with a John Deere tractor seat butt. It was great laying there in your hot sack rack picking up bits and pieces of late night "Go nowhere" pass the time, revelations. Every smoke boat sailor had those gentle memories.

Aft of the After Battery berthing compartment was the enlisted head. Here you could pick up entire conversations from guys using the side-by-side, port and starboard sinks...or between some using the urinal and some socially convivial bluejacket with his butt parked on a freckle maker head seat. "Hey Pete - That you?" "Yeah...it's me - That you, Ralph?" "It's me. Hey, when we pull in tomorrow morning, you got the duty?" "Naw Section Three has the duty - I'm in two." "You hittin' the beach?" "Yeah, if the COB opens the Saltwater Savings and Loan."

SLUSH FUNDS

Slush Funds were totally illegal and outlawed by the United States Navy. They operated far beyond anything remotely resembling Federal banking regulation, inspection or protection. It was a cross between an Aboriginal headhunters' credit union and the booty split of the brotherhood of pirates. The Chief of Naval Operations and Secretary of the Navy had no idea of the complexity of E-3 finances and the periodic difficulty of financing a night of inebriated lust. Our slush fund was run out of a beat-up "Have-a-Tampa" cigar box in the COB's bunk locker. Every payday, the animals tossed five bucks in the box. You could borrow \$10.00 for \$11.00 or \$20.00 for \$22.00. Profits went to beer ball games, ship's parties aft of the Conning Tower fairwater, luaus, and flowers for deceased people and one baby crib for a strapped E-3 new dad.

The Saltwater Savings and Loan was a great, faith based financial institution that saved more submarine sailors than Billy Graham. All night long, the lads on duty in the Maneuvering Room and both Engine Rooms sent men forward to get coffee. Another set of sounds that originated from the Crew's Mess were the rattle of silverware being washed and the banging of pots, pans, aluminum trays and crockery. Mess cooking was not a delicate art - the mess cooks

created racket like tossing horseshoes on a tin roof. But the racket was a familiar sound. One of those comforting sounds that a boat sailor accepted as indicating all being right in the underwater environment in which he lived. Every time someone passed through the watertight door from the Forward Engine Room, you would get a momentary ear full of the pounding of a pair of Fairbanks-Morse 38D rock crushers - then it would suddenly stop and you would hear the click of the spring loaded latch.

TRYING TO GET SOME SLEEP

Some nights, cooks and mess cooks would play hell with your sleep when they started rooting around the compartment in search of the location of specific canned goods needed for future meal preparation. "Jeezus, what in the hell's going on?" "Lookin' for some gahdam cans of beans." "You gotta disturb a working sailor's sleep to find a couple of cans of lousy beans?" "There isn't a sailor sleeping back here that would qualify as a working sailor on his best day." "Yeah, nobody listens to a stupid, worthless canned food heater-upper." "Mickey...don't bother to ask what's in the soup the next time yours tastes like somebody p*** in it." Nonsensical, go absolutely nowhere conversation between men who would have shown up for a kidney transplant if either needed one. The gentle, no malice bulls*** that was the common coin of diesel submariners. No narrative of the nocturnal activities of the underwater kingdom would be complete without mentioning the acid-eaten dungaree voltage ferrets - the main power electricians. Those b***** would show up - open a manhole hinged door in the thwartships passageway and drop down into a world where they snaked around taking battery temperatures and topping the cells off with pure distilled water. In short, they feed the electron wizards that pushed us through saltwater below snorkel depth. In my tour in the boats, I never met a bad electrician. They, like enginemen, machinist mates and other auxiliary rates were numbered among God's most generous people. I have no idea what late night sounds a modern day sailor will carry with him into old age, but, I do know, having seen living conditions aboard the most recent classes, there are certain memories we will not share.

THE COMMUNIST THREAT

Every once in a while some Russian trawler would show up during operations. Everyone figured it was looking for us. They could be hauling in fish by the ton and the XO would say, "It's all for cover. The b***** are spooks looking for us. Spyships. Dex, you want to take a look? Check out all that electronic equipment on the bridge." I looked through the scope and all I saw were old porked up, doofus-looking Russian women wearing leather aprons and black head scarves. Hanging over the rust-stained fantail, smoking brown cigarettes and scratching themselves in weird places. If they were spies, they sure had great disguises. Mrs. Portachenko and the Dig and Scratch Sweethearts didn't look like they could find their butts with a roadmap. My failure to recognize the Communist threat was one why I was not selected to be CNO.

THE CONTROL ROOM

The Control Room was the compartment where you could go to get the straight dope. Make that, as much straight dope as the United States Navy thought an E-3 should be trusted with. It was supposed to be where you could go to validate or discredit rumors. Where you could

go look at charts. Listen to officers discuss things like OP Orders, FINEX times and ETAs.

While the Conning Tower was the Sacred Tabernacle of the Skipper (God's direct representative in the North Atlantic), the Control Room was like the central outdoor market in downtown Baghdad. Wise traders came to traffic in lies, cleverly packaged bull****, the latest rumors, gossip, grapevine produce, and high-grade horse****. Truth never made an appearance. Maybe it did, can't say for sure.

There was always some old "I've been everywhere and seen everything" cigar chewing Chief camped out on the Hydraulic Manifold. The place all submarine qualified Chiefs went before they retired or died. One of my biggest fears was that when I got to Hell it would be full of CPOs and Hydraulic Manifolds.

Then somebody came up with something even scarier. Someone said that when I died, the Devil was gonna make me hot rack with Rickover. I've sinned, but nowhere near the point where they make you hot sack with THAT beady-eyed ferret! If I had known that was even a possibility, I would have taken Billy Graham pills and renounced my association with Ray Stone. All Chiefs lie. Lying, beer drinking and blue streak cussing are the only practical factors once you transcend above the rag hat. CPOs owned Control. They ruled it from their padded locker perch by the Hydraulic Manifold. You had to be a major league, pathological liar beyond salvage or redemption to survive there. No matter how wild the lie. No matter how fully horsecrap - loaded the plot vehicle was, it never failed.

Some old barnacle butt, smoke boat Chief would open with, "Hell, that ain't nothin'. Back in '42." The words 'that ain't nothin' have preceded some of the damedest self-manufactured bull ever dumped on mankind. Chiefs in my day, made Bill Clinton's lying amateur stuff. If lying ever becomes an olympic event, the old E-9s will collect gold medals like dogs collect fleas.

The Control Room was where it happened. It was where the Wardroom mingled with the "Great Unwashed" and all the big doins' were hashed out. It was the crossroads. The tracks. The alley housed the riff raff. The hobo community. Bums and assorted trash. We loved it. The jungle below the sea.

Most meaningful memories of submarine duty center around the mess decks or the Control Room. "Blow negative to the mark!" "To the mark, aye!" "Negative blown to the mark!" "Chief, cycle the vents." (Pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop, pop) "Vents cycled and shut!" "Very well, make your depth 200, three down." "Two hundred. Three degrees down bubble!" "Chief, what does it take for a sonuvab**** to get a dry jacket and a hot cup of something resembling coffee?" "Ask politely." "You want polite conversation, ride the Queen Mary."

Sitting here, 40 years later watching the sun go down and inventorying God's lightnin' bugs. It seems like only yesterday!

MOVIES

Smallest theater in the world. Most crowded. Most uncomfortable seating. Screen the size of the cover of LIFE magazine. World's worst audience. Movies on submarines were links to the world of sanity and pretty ladies.

If Edison hadn't invented those reels of celluloid magic, submarine crews would have chosen up sides and killed each other in the middle of the second week out.

We used to draw a bunch of sea prints every time we went out. One big, round the clock 'movie marathon' and you had seen everything, or part of everything, in five days. By the end of the third week, you were turning off the sound and assigning speaking parts to guys watching.

We rarely developed dialog above a second grade level. When you got bored with that, you could always fall back on the last resort. Show the entire film backwards. That is the absolute end of the line on the road to boredom.

When you watched a flick, you were unbelievably lucky if you found a comfortable horizontal surface upon which to park your butt. We had things called sharpshooter buckets. A sharpshooter bucket was a tapered stainless steel can designed to take nylon trash bags. We would weight those babies and shoot them out the garbage ejector. Anyway, you could take this stainless steel sharpshooter bucket, put a heavy duty clipboard on top, fold up a foul weather jacket on the clipboard, and plant your worthless fanny on top of it all. This wasn't the best seat in the house, but it came close.

Somewhere in reel two, the nerve endings in your butt died. Fanny Novocain set in. Then your legs atrophied. When the film ended and you stood up, you found that sometime in the dark, Pinocchio, had swapped legs with you. We had popcorn. You had to fight for your share at first, but after the first three bowls, gentlemanly behavior returned and you could obtain popcorn without fear of limb dismemberment or sight loss.

One gentleman returned from the Motion Picture Exchange with HYGIENE FOR WAVES, an anatomically correct training film. "Never in the field of human endeavor have so many laughed so hard at so little," to paraphrase Winston Churchill.

The smallest theater in North America, but the most fun. Every time someone passing through the crew's mess walked in front of the screen, twenty idiots yelled,

"Down in front!" "Get outta the movie." "Debbie Reynolds looks a helluva lot better than you." It went on and on. Verbal pile on. Many times a lot more interesting than a film you had seen so many times that you had memorized the names of all the electricians and make-up people.

Hollywood never made any Cold War diesel boat films. Like everyone else, they ignored our contribution. They missed a gold mine.

THINGS NUKES WILL NOT REMEMBER

No modern day nuke rider will carry the memory of feet in stinking socks stepping on him on the way to an upper bunk just below an air conditioning condensate drip pan.

He won't have memories of waking up to a close-up view of a bare butt when the Corpsman was conducting a crab check in Hogan's Alley.

He won't remember the aromatic wonder that accompanies the venting of #2 Sanitary Tank Inboard.

He won't remember midwatch cheese sandwiches made from Navy self-healing, scab forming mayonnaise and sliced cheese that could patch a tractor tire.

He, or maybe she in the not so distant future, won't leave the boat service with memories of CPO dried armpit salt stains that would deflect a 20mm round.

Each generation will collect memories to pass down.

These are mine.

The ones I carry in my heart of wonderful times spent among the finest men I would ever know during the time I spent as an oxygen thief on this Planet.

CHAPTER 52

JOHN B. SNOOK 1959 - 1962

I REMEMBER BEING FIRED UPON BY CUBANS BEFORE THE MISSILE CRISIS, OUR VISIT TO SAINT PETERSBURG, AND THE NORTHERN RUN

FIRED UPON BY CUBANS BEFORE THE MISSILE CRISIS

I reported to SEA POACHER on October 9, 1959 as a lowly Seaman Recruit. Just one stripe. It wasn't long before I received my Seaman Apprentice and then Seaman Stripes. I was a QM striker when we made our trip to GITMO.

We had already been there, and after a wonderful few days in Ocho Rios, Jamaica, and were on our trip back to Key West. Rounding the Island of Cuba (Santiago area) and it was during the mid watch when the OOD spotted a large search light off our port bow.

It appeared to be signaling to us. The OOD was trying to understand the Morse Code being sent, but it made no sense. The Captain was called to the Bridge, as was Dale Liggett, a Signalman by Navy trade, who stood watches with the quartermasters on POACHER.

No one on board could discern the letters being signaled by the vessel with the large searchlight. The Captain ordered us to look into the International Codebook and determine what they were trying to signal us about.

After a thorough search, we determined that the letters meant "My shaft is broken I cannot navigate." The Captain immediately asked Signalman Liggett to respond by light and offer them assistance (in plain language).

Maybe it was the wrong response!

Shortly after Liggett's message was sent, a volley of what appeared to be 50mm tracer shots were fired from this strange vessel. Apparently, whatever we sent was not the response they were looking for. The Captain immediately called for Battle Stations. It wasn't long after that, he called to ready a boarding party as he began his pursuit towards the vessel.

A small group of sailors came to the Bridge from the Conning Tower with Thompson Sub-Machine guns and M-1's. One of the younger seaman now on the bridge with an M-1, and obviously very nervous, turned to the Captain and asked, "What do you want me to do?"

All the time he was speaking to the Captain, the muzzle of the M-1 he was carrying (fully loaded I'm certain) was pointed directly under the Captain's chin. The Captain snatched the weapon away from this poor young man and quickly looked around for another volunteer.

He spotted me and thrust the M-1 into my hands and announced that I was now part of the "Boarding Party." We were then shuffled onto the forward deck in preparation for boarding this strange vessel that was still firing upon us.

We could follow the shots fired as we could see the tracers plainly in the pitch black of the night. None of their shots seemed to come very close, but who knew where the next one would land?

We all huddled behind the sonar dome on the forward deck. It then occurred to me that we were now hiding behind some fiberglass material that would shatter and allow a 50 mm projectile to easily pass through.

I guess the dome was really psychological protection for us.

As quickly as the light appeared and the shooting started, it stopped! The vessel just disappeared. It was relatively small and was able to maneuver quite easily.

It simply disappeared!

Once we had secured from the Boarding Party and went below, it became evident that there were still lots of commotion on the POACHER. Apparently, sometime during all that was going on, Sonar had detected a 'Turbine Whine' about 600 feet below us.

We contacted COMSUBLANT to see if there were any of our nuclear submarines operating in this area. The response was an immediate "negative." It became apparent that there was a nuclear submarine somewhere below us and it wasn't one of ours!

We stayed in the area for several hours that morning and were privy to lots of chatter on the radio from Navy pilots that were scrambled out of Boca Chica to investigate the area that we were in to search for anything out of the ordinary.

Well after dawn, we heard chatter on the radio that indicated one of the pilots had spotted a surface ship in the area with a hammer and sickle on one its stacks. It also had several long tubular things on deck.

As things began to settle down we secured from Battle Stations, and reset course for Key West. As the day wore on, you can only imagine the scuttlebutt throughout the boat.

Prior to our actually arriving in Key West, the entire crew was called together in groups and told how important it was not to discuss any of the events of the day. We were advised not to discuss any of what we experienced with anyone outside the SEA POACHER.

Once we finally docked in Key West and were afforded liberty, I can remember stopping at the local watering hole (The Brown Derby, I think). The first thing the bar maid asked us was if any of us on the SEA POACHER got hit when we were fired upon?

So much for security!

OUR VISIT TO SAINT PETERSBURG

During our trip into the harbor, we had a pilot on board and at one time the Captain took the boat back under his command as he felt the pilot was in error.

He promptly ran us aground and quickly had the anchor dropped so that all the records showed that we were at anchor and not aground!

THE NORTHERN RUN

On our Northern Run during one of the days when we were submerged and looking and listening; it appears that we were in between two Russian boats playing war games and one of them fired a dummy torpedo (we weren't sure at the time though).

This was a real "testy" situation!

CHAPTER 53

RALPH FRENCH 1959 - 1960

I REMEMBER REPORTING ON BOARD PREGNANT, SHOTS FIRED BY A CUBAN SHIP, AND NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE

REPORTING ABOARD PREGNANT

Well, it wasn't me. While serving on the TRUTTA (SS-421) on 20 June 1959, the Personnel Man asked me if I would like to make a Mediterranean cruise on SEA POACHER. I informed him that I would love to except I was getting ready to take 30 days leave to take care of my four children while my wife was having our fifth. Two days later, I received orders to report on SEA POACHER, which was in Charleston for overhaul. I reported aboard and talked to Captain Stahl about getting out of the trip. He said if I could find a replacement it would be okay. There were two other first class cooks aboard but neither was qualified in submarines. Well, I made the trip.

The first night in Gibraltar, we flooded our main motors, and we spent a month getting them repaired. Still, it was a fun trip.

Later, in 1960, I transferred to the CHOPPER, and the next year to recruiting duty in Dearborn, Michigan. I enlisted our SEA POACHER sailor, Ron Fraley, there. Then, I worked at the Chrysler Trenton Engine Plant. When Ron Fraley left the Navy, he came to this plant and worked for me. When I became a Foreman, he still worked for me. In 1982, I moved to Las Vegas and worked for Enterprise Rent-a-Car. Ron then went to Enterprise in Michigan. He has been following me everywhere I worked.

SHOTS FIRED BY A CUBAN SHIP

We were passing Cuba in international waters which was of no concern to the crew or mine. We all knew about Castro and his goings on with the Communist Party and who cared. I had the 2000/2400 watch running cold iron. The engines were shut down when all of a sudden the order came down to EMERGENCY START. We started the engines and were waiting for the temperatures and pressures to be at the required readings. The word came from Maneuvering that they wanted the engines NOW. I gave them a READY NOW, and the engines slowed from the sudden load. We were now at full speed. Just like that! What the hell was going on?

I picked up the sound powered telephone to see if there was any information to explain the actions that had just happened. There was some yelling like "Lets get the f*** out of here. Hearing the watertight door open I looked up and saw John, who started to yell "The f***** Cubans are firing at us with machine guns. Then over the 1MC the word was passed to rig ship for "Battle Stations Torpedo." I was relieved at midnight and went forward to find out the scoop of what had happened. Now everyone was awake. Battle Stations were finally secured. The lookouts that were topside were now telling the crew that last night what looked like a gun boat in the dark was shooting at us using tracer ammunition and firing flare signals at us. They were also sending semaphore "Light Signals" for us to identify ourselves. The crew was awake the rest of the night. At dawn the CO went topside to see if there was any damage. There were a few

holes in the sail I was told.

Waiting on the Key West pier were many civilians pacing up and down, and waving at us to moor quickly. They tried to help the line handlers, but it turned into a Charlie Foxtrot (Cluster F*****). After setting the in port watch, the Captain got on the 1MC and made it clear “That no one would talk about the happenings during last night.” That was normal for a sub sailor.

As soon as the gangway was put over, the civilians came rushing aboard with clip boards, and poking their fingers into what I would take for bullet holes. What were we going to tell them? Oh well, with my liberty card in my pocket, my destination was the barracks for a quick shower, a change to civilian clothes, and on into town for a few toddies.

Pulling up to the best bar in town (The Top Hat) I parked my vehicle on the street. A big hand painted sign on the front window stated “Welcome Back SEA POACHER - THE CHICKEN OF THE SEA.” Three hours in port and the word was out on what happened.

Saying nothing, the afternoon was mine. Sloppy Joe’s Bar, where I could meet Ernest Hemingway who visited this place if my timing was right, was my next stop. A few days later a letter from my Sister Helen arrived, saying “You never tell me anything.”

NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE

This was in the Times on 15 May 1960. CAPITAL PROTESTS CUBAN SHIPS’ FIRE ON U.S. SUBMARINE. STATE DEPT DEMANDS CASTRO EXPLAIN CHARGE OF NAVAL INTRUSIONS. By Jack Raymond, Special to the New York Times from Washington.

The United States Government protested to Cuba today over a Cuban Patrol Boat’s firing on a United States submarine. Lestor D. Mallory, acting Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, summoned the Cuban Charge d’Affaires, Dr. Enrique Patterson, and asked for an explanation why an armed vessel of the Cuban Navy fired without provocation on the U.S.S. SEA POACHER while the latter was pursuing a peaceful passage on high seas. Navy officials said the SEA POACHER was traveling “its usual route” on a generally northwest course in Nicholas Channel from the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay Cuba to Key West. Suddenly, the Navy said the Cuban patrol craft ORIENTE, a former U.S. submarine chaser, began firing what were taken to be flares. Commander Stahl slowed the submarine to see if the other ship might be in trouble. There-upon, the Navy said, the ORIENTE swung in astern of the submarine and fired three more bursts of red flares, according to the original messages. At this point, according to the submarine log, the ORIENTE extinguished her running lights, but the POACHER kept hers on. Commander Stahl resumed his course. Later, officials said he concluded that what he had thought to be flares were small-caliber tracer bullets. Nothing was ever said to the crew after this world breaking news. The Cubans thought we were a Russian sub headed for Havana, and when we did not respond to their communications they fired at us as a warning to keep away.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Ralph and Julie were one of the first to submit a chapter for this book. I also received a photo of them for publication in the book, however; it was from a framed photograph and not very clear. I asked him for a better quality photo but never heard a response and now I know why. Early on 5 October, I was still bothered by not having a good photo, but on the internet I was amazed to find the same French photo with much better clarity, downloaded it, and included it in the book. Several hours later, I was deeply saddened to receive an email notifying me that Ralph had “Rested His Oars” from cancer three days earlier.

CHAPTER 54

BOB ACOR 1959 - 1960

I REMEMBER SCRAPING THE MAIN INDUCTION PIPING

At the ripe old age of 18 and in 1960, I think I was the only one in Key West that went into two of the three Main Induction Pipes in the Sail, with a paint scraper in one hand and a flashlight in the other. My job was to check for rust.

As I was crawling along with extended arms and legs about 50 feet into the first pipe, suddenly I realized that if the boat sank, I'd drown. Then, with the infinite wisdom of my 18 years, I remembered that the mooring depth was just below the keel and sinking was not possible. I was pulled out of the first and largest pipe and placed myself into the second largest pipe for the same task. I only weighed 115 pounds, which allowed me to perform this dastardly deed. I only searched for rust in two of the three pipes, as I was not able to fit into the third, or smallest one. It was a one time event for me, but I believe I was the only one able to perform that task. It was definitely an unusual task, indeed.

A SUBMARINE

*Born in the shops of the Devil, Designed in the brains of a fiend;
Filled with acid and crude oil, And christened "A Submarine."
The poets send in their ditties, Of Battleships spick and clean;
But never a word in their columns, Do you see of a submarine.
I'll try and depict our story, In a very laconic way;
Please have patience to listen, Until I have finished my say.
We eat where're we can find it, And sleep hanging up on the hooks;
Conditions under which we're existing, Are never published in books.
Life on these boats is obnoxious, And that is using mild terms;
We are never bothered by sickness, There isn't any room for germs.
We are never troubled with varmints, There are things even a cockroach can't stand. And
any self-respecting rodent, Quick as possible beats it for land.
And that little one dollar per dive, We receive to submerge out of sight;
Is often earned more than double, By charging batteries at night.
And that extra compensation, We receive on boats like these;
We never really get at all, It's spent on soap and dungarees.
Machinists get soaked in fuel oil, Electricians in H₂SO₄;
Gunners mates with 600W, And torpedo slush galore.
When we come into the Navy Yard, We are looked upon with disgrace;
And they make out some new regulations, To fit our particular case.
Now all you Battleship sailors, When you are feelin' disgruntled and mean;
Just pack your bag and hammock, And go to "A Submarine."*

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 55

LAWRENCE E. STAHL 1959 - 1961 BY HIS WIFE MARY STAHL, DAUGHTERS MARY POWERS AND BETSY WILKINSON, AND STEPSONS STEPHEN AND JAMES CRAVEN

WE REMEMBER THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT, THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN, SOME OTHER DETAILS, A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, AND THE 1960 SEA POACHER WATERCOLOR

THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT

As Larry's wife, I am afraid I am not going to be of too much help here. He simply was not one to discuss official matters at home. The first thing I remember about the Cuban "do" was that it meant that SEA POACHER would not be back in Key West for Mother's Day, and there were some disappointed wives.

When they did get back, Larry of course, had to report to scads of people. Then he was sent straight to the hospital as he was totally exhausted. As I remember he had been totally without sleep for three straight days, and had been living on pills and caffeine.

I do remember the following day when I went to the hospital with clean pajamas and other things. The room (and I had been there the previous day) was now completely empty but beautifully made up.

In a small panic I went to the Front Desk. It seems that cockroaches or something like that had swarmed into the room during the middle of the night and he had been moved.

All I remember about the incident is that Larry was always positive that SEA POACHER had been shot at.

THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN

As for the Russian thing, the first the children and I guessed that he was headed for the far north was when he had packed his long underwear and warm socks.

Next I got busy with Hurricane Donna. Larry did call from Portsmouth, England. All was well and he was busy, but had seen some old friends. The next thing I heard was when I received several phone calls from an old friend in SUBLANT Intelligence inviting me to come for Thanksgiving in New London.

It took a while until "the penny dropped." I farmed out the kids and WENT! When I arrived Larry was in Norfolk reporting to SUBLANT. We did have several days there before heading back to Key West.

My oldest son James has been trying for years to get a release of the log for that trip. He really wanted to get it to Larry before he died. As of now, no luck.

Most recently in June 2007 I was able to get in touch with a Royal Navy friend. He was in Portsmouth when SEA POACHER came through there in 1960. He said he had nothing to do with the operation, however, he did know that they were off Murmansk in the Soviet Union at night for a number of hours. He suggested we should read "Blind Man's Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage." (See References under Sherry Sontag.)

I also hope that some of the men remember our sojourn in Gibraltar and on to Italy. I certainly do.

SOME OTHER DETAILS

As Larry Stahl's stepson Stephen Craven, I was only in the 6th and 7th grades when we were in Key West. While I went out on daily operations once or twice, I cannot add a whole lot to what my Mother has contributed. However, I was reunited with SEA POACHER, in a way, in 2006.

"Business Beyond The Reef" is a radio show I launched on Hawaii Public Radio about international business. The host is Alvin Adams, a former U.S. Ambassador to Peru. Once he retired to Honolulu, Al became Peru's Honorary Consul in Hawaii. He invited us to a reception on board a Peruvian Navy training ship that visited Pearl Harbor in the Spring of 2006. Sipping a Pisco Sour, I wandered into a display about the Peruvian Navy and was dumbstruck to see a picture of SEA POACHER, now called LA PEDRERA.

I also remember SEA POACHER'S visit to Ocho Rios. My Mother and I flew to Montego Bay and drove to Ocho Rios, passing by the pier where SEA POACHER was tied up, and where she turned a delicate shade of pink as a result of the bauxite dust in the air. It wasn't all that long after "Operation Petticoat" was popular and invited a lot of comment. I also remember a Ship's party during that visit. As I recall, XO Jerry Davi was pretty good at the Limbo.

A LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

As Larry Stahl's stepson Jim Craven, I sent on 24 April 2007 the following letter to the Secretary of the Navy: "In the fall of 1960 my stepfather, then LCDR L.E. Stahl, took Sea Poacher from Key West deep into Soviet waters, off Murmansk, in the White Sea, to record the sounds of the new class of Russian boomer submarines. He was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal, with an extraordinary vague citation. My Naval Academy classmate John Dalton, when he was SecNav ten or so years ago, told me the reports of that cruise of Sea Poacher were still classified. Now, almost 47 years after the fact, is it still possible the reports have now been unclassified? Or the ship's log perhaps? Please let me know. Many thanks. Very truly yours, Signed James B Craven III, Lieutenant Commander, JAGC, U.S. Naval Reserve (Ret)."

On 16 June 2007 a Captain in the Navy History Office responded to my letter to SECNAV, and essentially said that the decision on whether or not to release the Russian patrol reports to me was up to COMSUBLANT in Norfolk. Accordingly I sent another letter on 18 June 2007 to VADM Donnelly. I also wrote to the National Archives Warehouse in College Park, MD asking for the 1960-1961 deck logs.

While my personal friend and former Secretary of the Navy John Dalton was unable to get the reports, he told me at a U.S. Naval Academy Reunion that he had really tried. I had never heard of the Russian run until one night many years later when my wife Sara, Larry, Mom Mary and I went to see the then new movie *The Hunt for Red October*. We were especially interested in it because the water portions were filmed at Lake James in Burke County, NC where we grew up. We went out to eat somewhere after the movie and Larry, for the very first time, told us the story of the Murmansk trip.

All I remember him saying was that there were interminable stretches on the bottom, VERY silent, just outside the Murmansk Harbor, tape recorders running.....

The only time I recall being on board SEA POACHER was after the Northern Run. It was between Christmas and New Years 1960 in Key West when I was a Midshipman, I think the day before we drove to Miami to see Missouri beat Navy in the Orange Bowl.

In July 2007, I did receive from the National Archives the SEA POACHER Deck Logs for January 1960 and January 1961. There is nothing of interest in either one, and I'm not sure why they sent them. However, they also sent an estimate of \$710 if I wanted the deck logs for the entire years of 1960-1961. No thanks.

I am reading the book *SCORPION DOWN* now (See References), and while there is nothing in it about SEA POACHER, it does explain a lot. There is a great deal in it about other boats' Northern runs during that period. A fascinating and sad book. I knew two of the officers lost; one was a classmate. Nothing yet received from SUBLANT as of this printing in late 2007..

EDITOR'S NOTE: The Citation read by Vice Admiral E. W. Grenfell, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet on 2 June 1961 stated the following: For meritorious achievement during a period in 1960 while serving as Commanding Officer, USS Sea Poacher (SS406). Exercising outstanding leadership, sound judgment and resourcefulness, Lieutenant Commander Stahl prepared for and successfully carried out a difficult, complex, and important independent submarine operation, achieving results of substantial value to the Navy. Through his meticulous and diligent preparations and analysis of information, he contributed in large measure to the success achieved. His marked professional ability and devotion to duty throughout were in keeping with the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

I never made a Northern Run, but let me recall what was happening at this time. My references are Jane's Fighting Ships 1960 – 61 and The Illustrated Directory of Submarines of the World (See References.) The Murmansk area and the Polyarnyy, Severodvinsk, and Severomorsk nearby sites were home to the Soviet Northern Fleet. In 1960 it was reported that 50 submarines were under construction in Soviet dock yards and that they had 450 "effective" submarines. Three nuclear submarines were reported as completed in Jane's. Already operational or being built were the nuclear "November" Class, the ballistic missile "Hotel" Class, and the guided missile "Echo" Class. My guess is that SEA POACHER was right in this middle of this.

In December 1960, as an Ensign, I was finishing up Sub School in New London and already had orders to SEA POACHER. She stopped in New London and I had the opportunity to go on board for 30 minutes or so. I only remember meeting XO Jerry Davi. The boat looked to be in rough shape, and I remember it was very cold inside.

I sincerely hope that Jim Craven is successful in his quest for the patrol logs from COMSUBLANT.

As an aside, in late September 2007 I was in contact with SEA POACHER Fireman Larry Garrett, who later became Secretary of the Navy. I asked him about this classified aspect of the classified Northern Run reports. He said they are still classified.

THE 1960 SEA POACHER WATER COLOR

Through my Mother, Sister and Brothers, I have heard quite a bit about the book you are working on. I am Larry Stahl's youngest daughter Betsy Stahl Wilkinson. I thought I would let you know that I have a watercolor painting of SEA POACHER that was done by a young naval officer in Key West in 1960. His last name was Levey, and according to my Mother, he was not on SEA POACHER. If you are interested, I will try to find out more details about the artist. I have attached an image. If you think you would like to reproduce it in the book, I would be happy to unframe it in order to take a really good image. It currently resides safely in my basement.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The image provided by Betsy in August 2007 shows a young girl and perhaps a kneeling mother in the sky background of the SEA POACHER watercolor. It is as if they are waiting for the boat to return home. I questioned Betsy on this very effective image in the sky. Her response to me was that the images I noticed were reflections of her and daughter Rebecca photographing the watercolor in their backyard. It also accounts for the grass in the lower part of the frame.

No reason for you to remember me, because I was not born until 1962 after my Father's Key West years. Obviously, I do not have any memories to add to your book. However, I am very interested in reading it.

I will work on sending you a good image of the watercolor in the next month or so, but please feel free to remind me if I forget. I have three children who tend to consume most of my daily brain power, so I do get distracted (often!) and forget things!

Regarding your reunion and silent auction, we (the Stahl family) would like to donate the water color itself. I think it would be fabulous if it found a good home with someone who would really appreciate it.

Good luck with the project. I am sorry my Dad is not here to appreciate it as well.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Betsy did unframe and re-photograph the watercolor for this book and a forthcoming SEA POACHER newsletter. And with the typical Stahl determination, on her own located the painter of it, Gerald Levey. I initially suggested a silent auction at the May 2008 Reunion of the watercolor and perhaps the possibility of making reproductions of it also for sale as a SEA POACHER Association fund raiser. Betsy endorsed the idea.

Gerald responded to Betsy that he had indeed painted it for her Dad when he was teaching at the Submarine School in New London. I knew Larry when he was a LT in THREADFIN AND THORNBARK. He did not recall the details of the sale or who actually ordered it. In September 2007 I had a great telephone conversation with Jerry Levey. It seemed like everyone I ever knew in the Navy he also knew and vice versa. If it had not been for the SEA POACHER Association things like this would not happen and I am very grateful. He also said it would be A-Okay to make prints of the watercolor for sale, and he even suggested some very nice procedures to aid in the effort. As a former Skipper of SABLEFISH, he suggested a lottery would be more effective among several other ideas. He and Betsy have been of major help and I greatly appreciate their assistance and generosity.

Just a word or two on Jerry Levey, not only for the lottery winner but for those from the Association that decide to purchase a print of the watercolor. After his retirement from the Navy, he continued to work closely with nuclear attack submarines and their crews to develop search and attack tactics. He received the Navy Distinguished Public Service award for leading the tactical development program for the LOS ANGELES (SSN-688) Class nuclear attack submarines.

He is a frequent exhibitor at the Maritime Gallery at Mystic Seaport where he was awarded the prestigious Rudolph Schaefer prize at the 1985 Mystic International Show and the Mystic Seaport Purchase Award for the 1991 International exhibit. He is listed in the Dictionary of Sea Painters, an authoritative compilation of marine artists of the Fifteenth through the Twentieth centuries. He is also one of 85 featured artists in the 2003 book Bound for Blue Water, by J. Russell Jinishian, which is the definitive guide to contemporary American marine art. Many of Levey's paintings hang in the wardrooms of naval vessels and in the homes and corporate offices of the seagoing community.

His paintings are in the permanent collections of the Mystic Seaport Museum, the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, the Coast Guard Academy and the Submarine Memorial Museum in the New London area. His works are also in the permanent collections of the Mariner's Museum in Newport News, Virginia; the U.S. Naval Academy Museum at Annapolis; in Boston at the Charlestown Navy Yard Museum; and in the Brooklyn Historical Society.

"A good Navy is not a provocation to war. It is the surest guaranty of peace."

President Theodore Roosevelt, 2 December 1902, Message to Congress

"...without a respectable Navy, alas America."

Captain John Paul Jones

"Take her down!"

Commander H.W. Gilmore, wounded on GROWLER'S Bridge, 7 Feb 1943

"In this game of cat-and-mouse, the often narrow margin of victory goes to the proficient and the careful. A mistake – the clang of a dropped wrench, the swish of cavitation made by the propeller's accelerating too fast, the pop of a light bulb can trigger an enemy torpedo. On these battlefields, warriors whisper."

Vice Admiral R.Y. Kaufman, USN (Ret)

"We make war that we may live in peace."

Aristotle

CHAPTER 56

WILLIAM J. (JESS) (STAGGER) LEE 1959 - 1961

I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD, TROUBLE WITH AN AIRLESS SURFACE, PHYSICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS, FALSE TEETH IN THE GARBAGE CAN, THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, AND A FLAT TIRE RESULTING IN MUCHO SHRIMP

REPORTING ABOARD

I was the Junior Yeoman on SEA POACHER and was actually a Personnel guy instead of a Yeoman. The way I became a crew member of the SEA POACHER was a little different from most.

I was aboard the BUSHNELL working in the Personnel Office. Wanting to go into submarines, I had talked to the Squadron Personnel Officer, a Lieutenant White. He told me about the SEA POACHER needing a Yeoman. I went over and found the Executive Officer, LCDR Jerome Anthony Davi, slumped over a desk writing a letter in longhand to the Squadron asking for clerical help.

I introduced myself and told him that LT White had sent me to see him. We talked for a few minutes and he got up, walked me to the Squadron Office and told LT White that he wanted me transferred to the SEA POACHER. I was transferred within two hours.

I never regretted going to submarines. I believe it helped me with my career. I retired as a Master Chief in 1979.

The reason for the SEA POACHER being without a Yeoman was that YN2 (SS) Donald Werner Dunn had reenlisted and went on 30 days reenlistment leave.

On his way back to Key West he was in an automobile accident, which left him hospitalized for several weeks.

The poor XO was going nuts with all the paperwork. I worked 7 days a week, 12 and 14 hours a day, to catch up.

TROUBLE WITH AN AIRLESS SURFACE

It was in 1960, and we were in the Yucatan Strait. We did an airless surface. The Chief of the Watch froze at the Hydraulic Manifold and did not shut the Forward Group. A MM3 on the Air Manifold saved all our butts.

The After Torpedo Room was at 725 feet when we started to climb. An EM1 was standing watch in Maneuvering, and he redlined everything to push us up. We did not have one person voluntarily disqualify.

PHYSICAL AND DENTAL EXAMS

The submarine service had strict requirements for the physical condition of the crew members. One had to report at least annually to the Submarine Squadron Medical Office for a complete physical. Also you had to report to the Dental Office at least annually for a check-up.

As the Ship's Yeoman, I saw the correspondence sent from the Medical Office listing the names of the personnel who had to report. These reporting dates always coincided with our scheduled upkeep.

Warren "Gunner" Vanderwerker failed to report to the Dental Office for a check-up. He missed his appointment several times. He was ordered by the SEA POACHER Engineer to report for the checkup.

"Gunner" took a guard mail envelope, wrapped his false teeth in some toilet tissue and sent them to the Dental Office with a note asking them to please return the dentures once they were inspected as he needed them to eat.

Needless to say, the Squadron Medical Officer met the boat when we returned from daily operations, and "Gunner" was escorted to the Dental Office. From that day on he never missed a dental appointment.

FALSE TEETH IN THE GARBAGE CAN

This story also involves "Gunner" and Arturo Piazza. Arturo was of Italian-Jamaican decent and had been in the Navy since 1942. We all called him Artie. He spoke with a Jamaican accent and was very funny.

Artie had false teeth as well as "Gunner." These two were always up to some clowning around. One day just after the noon meal "Gunner" walked past Artie in the After Battery Mess. Artie was jaw jacking as usual with some of the troops.

"Gunner" like a bolt of lightning reached up, grabbed Artie's teeth from his mouth and threw them in the garbage can. This was done in one quick motion, and "Gunner" hightailed it for the Maneuvering Room.

Poor Artie wanted to give chase, but it was more important to dig his teeth out of the garbage can before it was emptied on the pier.

Of course nothing happened as they were the best of friends. This was just some of our noon time entertainment.

THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

I left SEA POACHER on 15 June 1961. When the Cuban crisis happened I was on shore duty at Key West Test and Evaluation Detachment over at the Naval Annex. I was an E-5 then so I rode around in a pickup as Sergeant of the Guard.

They gave me a .45 and two clips and a Thompson submachine gun but both clips were in a ammo box bolted to the floor and locked. You had to take the key out of the ignition to unlock the ammo box to get the clips. If you were caught with the ammo box unlocked they would write you up.

Needless to say I acquired my own clip for the Thompson.

We had plenty of Cubans come ashore but never had to fire a shot. They were just glad to get away from Cuba and Castro. I sure hated that Kennedy backed down and did not assist the Cubans in the Bay of Pigs.

I have several friends that were Navy Seals, and they were almost captured by the Cubans. They got away by swimming out to sea and were picked up by the submarine that put them ashore.

They were lucky.

A FLAT TIRE RESULTING IN MUCHO SHRIMP

While stationed at the Naval Annex I rode my Vespa scooter to and from work as many did in Key West. One Saturday morning I was headed home to the Pearl Trailer Court on Stock Island, and I came upon a black Cadillac with a flat tire.

There was a very nicely dressed lady of Cuban descent standing there. I stopped to see if I could help.

Of course, there were no cell phones in those days. I was wearing whites as I had just got off duty. The lady did not want me to mess up my clothes, but I insisted.

I changed the tire and she tried to pay me. I refused and told her that if it had been my wife I would have hoped someone would have helped her. The lady asked me my name and I told her.

That night my telephone rang and it was her husband, a Mr. Lopez. He thanked me and asked me if I liked shrimp to which I replied yes.

The following afternoon a pickup pulled up at my trailer with a 20 gallon garbage can full of deheaded large pink shrimp packed in ice. The men that delivered them said that they were from Mr. Lopez.

I shared the shrimp with my friends in the trailer park (most of them sailors with families). After that, my wife and I became friends with the Lopez family.

He just happened to own a fleet of shrimp boats, a shrimp packing plant on Stock Island, and who knows how many apartments.

Mr. Lopez's mother and other relatives still lived in Cuba. He would make the trip down there about every six weeks or so.

One of his shrimp boats was outfitted so that he could launch his speedboat from it. He would go up the river and deliver food and medicines to his family and friends.

This man had a big set of chiones.

“No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail; for being in a ship is being in a jail, with the chance of being drowned. A man in jail has more room, better food and commonly better company.”

Samuel Johnson

“Rogues, would you live forever?”

Frederick the Great

CHAPTER 57

JOHN (JJ) LYNCH 1959-1963

I REMEMBER THE 1959 MED CRUISE AND FLOODING OF THE MAIN MOTORS, LIBERTY IN GENOA-ITALY, A LOT OF ID CARDS, 3,000 POUNDS OF COFFEE FOR THE CHARLESTON SHIPYARD. ROACHES EVERYWHERE IN THE BARRACKS, BEING A HELMSMAN/LINE HANDLER, AND NOAL BAILEY IN 1960 AT A JUNE 2007 SUBMARINE REUNION

1959 MED CRUISE AND FLOODING OF THE MAIN MOTORS

Lots happened just after entering the Med. We tied up at the pier in Gibraltar, set the inport watch, and rigged the ship for our short stay. Oh well, it was not so short. The liberty party went ashore, and the duty section failed to detect that the Motor Room was flooding. Before the evening liberty party returned, we had salt water in the Main Motors.

That led to a motor rewind and six week availability with the British doing the motor work off the ship. The electrical gang did the dismantling and re-construction of the motors. During the re-construction there was a Left Tenant Commander British Navy Ship Superintendent monitoring the work progress.

During one of his visits to the boat EM1 (SS) Gunner Vanderwerker and EM1 (SS) Squeaky Stapelford were in the Main Motors assembling the parts and the Brit had detected a strange odor that he suspected was burning insulation. No, it was not. It was just Gunner passing gas, a residual effect from all the drinking and eating from the night before. The Brit was sniffing all around and was determined to locate the source of the odor. The rest of the time a major attempt to f*** when he came to the Motor Room was a must for every electrician.

LIBERTY IN GENOA-ITALY

We were med moored along side the Cruiser CAMBERRA, and our liberty party never missed a second ashore. During one late evening money was running very short for SM2 (SS) Dale Liggett and myself. Now the submarine force was running very short of Quartermasters and took Signalman on as direct input for duty. One of these guys was Liggett, who was a skilled Signalman.

Putting his skills to work he climbed up the wall under a street light directly astern of the CAMBERRA and started with Semaphore hand signals. The surface Navy is not any different from submarine sailors in that the duty section welcomes eye ball liberty whenever possible.

Soon a light from CAMBERRA'S signal bridge was directed at Dale, and he went crazy with the hand signals. There was a steady stream of light signals back at him and then nothing. Twenty minutes later the light from CAMBERRA'S signal bridge beamed back at him, and again he gave another exchange of hand signals. Dale jumped down from the wall and exclaimed we have money on the way.

The entire exchange of signals was Dale asking the CAMBERRA signalman to go to the topside watch and relay a message to their duty chief (keeper of the slush fund) that we were in dire need of liberty money. Within the hour the next person departing SEA POACHER carried the money for us.

A LOT OF ID CARDS

Liggett was not yet 21 and had been around the world twice before reporting to SEA POACHER. The drinking age in Florida was 21 so all you needed was an ID card stating that. No problem, report to the Yeoman and tell him you lost your ID card. He would type you up a new one. Where the picture was to go was typed (TEMP), and you just had to get a picture and have it laminated.

The trick was to catch the Yeoman up to his navel in work for the XO, and tell him you needed the ID card right now. He would always take care of the crew, get a blank card from the safe, and start typing. Our guy would pull your record and get the info for the card. You would have to help so you gave him the incorrect date of birth. He would then make the proper entry in your record that he had issued the card.

The rest of the story! You just never got it laminated and used it for any check by the bar maids of you age. Returning to the base late one evening after hard liberty, Dale approached the Gate as always and pulled his wallet out and displayed his ID cards (yes I said ID cards) and liberty card.

The Marine sentry noticed he had three cards and wanted to see the two ID cards. Dale being street smart grabbed the UN-laminated card, jammed it into his mouth, and chewed it up. The Marine placed him on report and at Captain's mast later, the story was told by the Marine. The Captain dismissed the case for lack of evidence. The Captain did tell Dale that he was sure the events told to him by the Marine were factual but could not prove it. He was told to not come back to see him before the long green table.

3,000 POUNDS OF COFFEE FOR THE SHIPYARD IN CHARLESTON

I tried to get Lanny Yeske to write this in his Chapter, but he passed it on to me. Well, he was the Commissary Officer, and I was just a Cook. The name of the game in 1961 was Cumshaw. Lanny thought we had stocked up turkeys and hams to get things done there, but it was actually a ton and a half of coffee. I don't know where he got the funds for it, but as I recall we were allowed about \$1.20 per day per guy for food, whereas the surface ship Navy got about \$1.00 per day per person. It was a lot of extra funds.

We did not go to sea all that much the first six months of 1961 and so it was mostly the duty section on board, and I guess the funds accumulated. We chromed almost everything in the boat with that coffee and of course, got special treatment from the yard birds. I remember we also had holiday dinners loaded in the back of pickup trucks that were delivered to a shipyard shop or two. It made us golden. We got what ever we wanted. John Harvey was our Leading Cook, and he really didn't want any part of this. He was also working part-time at the local hospital as a Nursing Assistant, putting in as many hours as he could to send additional money home.

I rewarded our Commissary Officer with a desk nameplate, a brass dolphin plaque, and a set of brass dolphin fireplace andirons. He wasn't sure whether to wave or salute or decline, but he still has all of it.

ROACHES EVERYWHERE IN THE BARRACKS

Yes, we had them on SEA POACHER, but nothing like at the Navy barracks in Charleston in 1962. On SEA POACHER, the darn things would come in the boxes we got from supply. They lived in the corrugation, and the Tender was full of them also.

But it was worse at the barracks. I met my wife while we were in the Yard in Charleston. She was in the Navy on her first enlistment. When we got serious about each other she was telling her Brother about me, who was in the Coast Guard.

Well, he told her to not do anything until he had a chance to meet me. He came to Charleston on leave and went to the Waves Quarters to talk with Sonja.

She called me. I told her I would put him up in the Navy barracks and feed him. So after he arrived about midnight, she called and I went to get him.

On the way to the barracks I asked him if he was hungry, and he said he was. So after getting him settled, I took him to the Mess Hall, which was at the other end of the barracks, and I had the keys.

Upon entering and turning on the lights the place looked like it was moving. All the roaches were running for cover. He commented "This place is so clean I can't believe the roach infestation." Well, it was clean. We got him something to eat and to bed.

He had a lot of fun in Charleston for the few days he was there. He said something about too much to drink and crazy submarine sailors. And I guess I passed inspection with him.

BEING A HELMSMAN/LINE HANDLER

I was just talking with Martin Ruch and remembered this story. SEA POACHER was operating in GITMO with the Fleet Training Group. I was the Maneuvering Watch Helmsman and upon returning to the Ammunition Pier after daily operations, I was given a course change and not a rudder order. I used full rudder to come to the given course and hit it on the money. Well the XO was on the Bridge and went crazy, due to the fact I used full rudder. I told him I came to the ordered course exactly, but that was not what he wanted for a response.

The next day I was on a heavy line topside doing duty. I was not so good at that. I put the line over and hit some Commander on a motor scooter that was delivering the next day's operation orders. Yes, you guessed it. I was back on the helm the following day with instructions never to use more than ten degrees of rudder on a Maneuvering Watch.

NOAL BAILEY IN 1960 AND AT A JUNE 2007 SUBMARINE RUNION

Yes, on Father's Day 2007 I attended a picnic given for First Coast Base Sub Vets. I went to Gainesville Florida, not too far from Jacksonville and picked-up Noal Bailey, SEA POACHER Engineman First Class 1950 – 1960) so he could attend with Sonja and I.

This was the first time I have seen Noal since 1960. NO S***.

This is just to give you some important data at my ripe old age of 19 and knowing everything there was to know. I reported to SEA POACHER and soon departed on the first Med

cruise of my life, and what a memorable one it was. Being told if I was on the DINK List there would be no liberty, I worked hard on my Qual Card. Arriving at our first port of Gibraltar, I was in the liberty section and went ashore with my trusted shipmates.

There were several ships in port with us including the CHOPPER, who we were to relieve in the Med, the Cruiser CAMBERRA and the CANASTAIO (AO 99).

The bar I first went into was the TRACADARO, because many of my shipmates were there. Being so smart, it was not long before I was purchasing Green Water shots for the girls cycling there at \$2.00 a pop. Oh Yeah, and these were the days of 5 cent candy bars.

Oh, well. I was subsequently saved by Noal. That was just before he was called back to the boat because the Motor Room was flooding, and he was the only guy that knew what to do. The Stern Tube Flushing Valve had been left open on rig for surface.

Oh, well! Six weeks in Gibraltar and several times Noal saved us smart E-3's. I would never forget what he did for me and others.

He was happy to be at the 2007 picnic. Noal's eyesight is not good, but he is planning on attending SEA POACHER'S May 2008 Reunion. He had a tear in his eye as we parted. He is so looking forward to this event. Noal asked me if someone could pick him up on the way to the Reunion and dump him off after it was over.

I said NO PROBLEM, SHIPMATE.

We talked about John Savory, Dan Eberhardt, and several other criminals from the SEA POACHER Forward and After Engine Rooms. Noal is an old f***, just like the rest of us, but still slim, trim and racy.

Main Induction Shut and Locked! Duty Cook Reports!

"I wish to have no connection with any ship that does not sail fast, for I intend to go in harm's way."

Captain John Paul Jones

"It is the function of the Navy to carry the war to the enemy, so that it will not be fought on U.S. soil."

Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz

"Any man who may be asked in this century what he did to make his life worthwhile – can respond with a good deal of pride and satisfaction, I served in the United States Navy."

President J.F. Kennedy, August 1, 1963 to U.S Naval Academy graduating class.

"Submariners are a special brotherhood, either all come to the surface or no one does. On a submarine, the phrase all for one and one for all is not just a slogan, but reality."

VADM Rudolf Golosov of the Russian Navy.

CHAPTER 58

DALE LIGGETT 1959 - 1963

**I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD WITH NO MOTORCYCLE,
STARTING QUALIFICATION, THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT,
MOTOR ROOM FLOODING AND MEDITERRANEAN LIBERTY,
FLEET EXERCISES WITH DESTROYERS,
LOCAL OPERATIONS AND OUR ENGINEER, MAN OVERBOARD
AND THIS IS NOT A DRILL, A SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT SEA,
DIFFICULTIES IN NAVIGATION OFF KEY WEST,
SPECIAL OPERATIONS, THE IDENTIFICATION CARD INCIDENT,
DIVING THE PERISCOPE WELLS, CRICKETS YOU KNOW WHERE,
BECOMING A JUNIOR CONTROLLERMAN,
AND I SHOULD WRITE A BOOK**

REPORTING ABOARD WITH NO MOTORCYCLE

I reported on board SEA POACHER on the morning of 3 January 1959 as an SM2. The boat was in overhaul in Charleston. I presented my orders and records to the XO who never said "Welcome Aboard," and only asked me if I owned a motorcycle. I thought this to be a strange question, but replied "No Sir and I have never been on one in my life." I found out later there were a high number of the crew that did, and it seemed this caused the XO some problems with the town authorities and the high ranking officers on the base. I don't think it was a month later until I bought a big Harley from an FN in the Engine Room as his mother told him to get rid of it after he ran into a dog, but was not hurt. Yep, my frequent visits to the XO with my hat in my hand soon followed. I will only mention one such episode later about the motorcycle.

STARTING QUALIFICATION

I can recall the next day when I made my first trip down inside the boat just like it was yesterday. I was starting to work on my qualification card and chose the fresh water system as a place to start. Some systems were torn out to the degree that they couldn't be signed off on, so they had to be put off until later. I can still smell the distinct odor that only a diesel sub has and can only equate it to the smell that a new car seems to have, only different but each has its own.

THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT

After reading some of the submissions for this book, my memory was jogged to recall this long forgotten incident on the Northern side of Cuba on our way back from GITMO. I remember being called to the Bridge to answer and reply to a flashing light message being sent to us.

I do not remember just what was received or what I was told to send. I cannot say for sure if the red seen that night were flares or tracer bullets, but with my experience of two years duty

on small river boats in Viet Nam, and having seen more than my share of tracer bullets, I think it was flares being fired. If there were bullet holes in the super structure, I didn't see them.

I think it was also on this transit back to Key West that we played cat and mouse with a Russian sub also, and at one time it appeared to pass right under us very close.

MOTOR ROOM FLOODING AND MEDITERRANEAN LIBERTY

The first I heard of it was in a bar in Gibraltar when JJ Lynch mentioned about the flooding, but being unqualified I did not realize just how serious this was at the time.

The crew was in a Catch 22 situation as far as being able to go and cross the border into Spain for liberty.

The Navy said "Yes, you can go, but you have to wear the uniform."

The Spaniards said "You can visit, but you cannot be in uniform."

Having met a local guy, he provided me with some civilian clothes, and off we went to Spain to taste some of the great wine, and will only say here to look at the beautiful ladies there.

Well, not being the smartest bear in the woods, I didn't leave well enough alone, and got caught out of uniform later that night, on my way to a private party, by the COB.

The next day I was standing in front of the XO with my hat in my hand once again. He gave me the option of staying on board for the rest of our time in Gibraltar or going up in front of the Captain.

It sure was a long six weeks on board for the rest of our time in Gibraltar. Looking back, it did have a good side as I got a lot of my qualification card done.

Later, the Captain, and a British officer, who was overseeing the work in the Motor Room, were down there one morning inspecting the work. One of my best shipmates, Gunner Vanderwerker, was lying outboard of the port shaft working while they were there. He had spent the previous night ashore drinking the warm beer, and eating pickled eggs and sausages, which were not a good combination the next day, especially when working in tight quarters.

The British officer took a couple of good smells and said "I think your bloody insulation is breaking down Captain."

FLEET EXERCISES WITH DESTROYERS

We finally left Gibraltar, and we were part of a large fleet exercise. The idea was to try to sink the carrier in the task force, or at least the largest target that presented itself. We did have at one time four destroyers in our periscope, but didn't attack as we still had time to look for the carrier. The XO did pass the word on the IMC that we had four destroyers surrounded which we all got a laugh from.

Time was running out for us, and the Captain decided to shoot at what we thought was a lone destroyer. We fired a green flare to simulate a torpedo firing, and out of no where came a couple more destroyers, and they were on us like white on rice.

They dropped their PDCs (Practice Depth Charges) on us, and I know they must have had a couple of them taped together as it knocked the insulation out of the hull, and caused our ears to ring in the Conning Tower. I could only think at the time how horrible it must have been for the subs in WWII, when the real thing was dropped on them.

LOCAL OPERATIONS AND OUR ENGINEER

I have many fond memories of standing watches at night while we were on the surface, and just steaming back and forth from one end of our assigned operating area, with one engine on charge and another on propulsion, waiting for the next day's operation to begin. The muffled sounds of the diesels and at times the sea was like glass. The moon would be shining and one could see the glow of phosphor disturbed by the boat's movement.

It was nights like these that I remember one of my most cherished memories of our Engineer LT Charles Russell. I wonder how many men ever had the opportunity to hear his wonderful rich baritone voice singing Irish songs. It was during these times while night steaming, with little to do, that we were able to hear him sing "Danny Boy" which was most of the crew's favorite, along with many others that he would sing.

One more memory of LT Russell was the way he would pass the word on the 1MC to Recirculate during a dive. The crew used to get a major laugh out of "Now Reeceeeeeee Circulate Reeceeeeeee Circulate. I was QM of the Watch the first time he did this, and Captain Stahl leaning down toward the lower Conning Tower hatch said "What are you doing Charlie, calling the hogs?"

LT Russell was one of the best persons I ever met that ever wore brown shoes.

MAN OVERBOARD AND THIS IS NOT A DRILL

It was usually around noon that there would be a break in whatever operations we were conducting in the Key West operating areas. It was at this time that the mess cooks would dump the garbage over the side. The sharks would gather around the garbage and seemed to play water polo with the empty milk cartons by bumping them with their noses.

These times were also spent conducting man overboard drills, but without the full man overboard party manning their stations. These drills were mostly for the officers to practice ship handling.

It was one of these times that we were conducting an operation that required our position to be known exactly, and this was done by towing a large orange balloon while submerged.

Pat (Bull Dog) Boyd threw the balloon over the side, but due to the boat making way through the water, when it came to the end of the cable, it became taut. The cable struck Pat across the legs and shot him right off the bow and into the water.

The word was passed on the 1MC "Man Overboard and this is not a drill."

One of the guys in the man overboard party was to bring an M1 to the Bridge because of the shark situation. The word was sent down a few times to have him hurry with the rifle, but no one could find the keys to the Small Arms Locker. Yep, sure enough, Pat was the Small Arms Petty Officer, and they were on his belt. I don't think they needed the rifle anyway, as Pat knew about the shark population. I think he hardly got his hip pockets wet before he climbed back aboard the boat.

A SERIOUS ACCIDENT AT SEA

We were in transit back to New London from a Northern Run, snorkeling on the surface, and the upper Conning Tower hatch was shut. SEA POACHER had been in these extremely

rough seas for what seemed forever, and they caused the boat to roll to a degree that it dumped the Main Gyro Compass.

It was this same storm that Ensign Gene Dempsey was hurt quite bad while standing watch on the Bridge. It appeared that a large wave came up from below the sub and up to the Bridge and Dog House area. When the water subsided, and it was night, one of the lookouts could no longer see the OOD. He passed the word down to Control to send up an OOD which caused near panic in the Control Room.

As it turned out, Mr. Dempsey was down inside the Dog House hanging by his chain and safety belt. He was taken below and treated for some rather severe cuts and bruises, but luckily no bones were broken.

LT Russell had told me of another incident involving him. It was on another boat, and he was hurt during an operation off South America. It was so bad that he had to have bones wired together in his head and face. He said that the wires poked out of his head, and he looked like a Martian. The wave that hit him thrust his face into the leading edge of the Bridge.

DIFFICULTIES IN NAVIGATION OFF KEY WEST

Navigation in the Key West operating areas was a real problem, especially in the southern areas. Here, there were no navigational aids in sight, and even radar was of little use due to Sand Key Light and American Shoals Light being low in the water. Thus at an extended distance, radar could not pick them up. Accordingly, the surface ships that we would be working with would take on the duty of sending us our position while submerged every half hour, or when we requested it on the underwater telephone.

We had completed our operations with a surface ship, and they gave us our grid position which I checked with the water depth and laid out our course back to Key West. We sent our ETA (Estimated Time of Arrival) to the Squadron, and everything seemed to be going well until I saw a bridge come into view off the starboard bow. The bridge had a big hump in it.

There was only one bridge with a big hump in the area and that had to be Baya Honda, which is almost thirty miles up the coast from Key West.

The Captain was told of this and a new ETA was sent which put us into port two hours later than what we had sent earlier. The Skipper was so angry about the surface ship giving us the wrong position that when we got into port he headed straight for the Squadron office. I think he just jumped from the boat to the pier and did not wait for the gang plank to be put over.

The speed of the Gulf Stream can sometimes reach four knots in places, so it was really a nightmare trying to keep an accurate position while submerged off the coast of Florida.

SPECIAL OPERATIONS

The submarines in Key West were involved in many types of special operations, and the SEA POACHER was no stranger to any of them. One such operation stands out. It was with the Norwegian Destroyer BERGEN. We were involved with being the target, and evaluating the missile system they had on board. We were equipped with special sound and communications equipment, most of which was placed in the Pump Room and the Conning Tower. We were also supplied with numerous data forms to fill out which I think mostly became the duty of the QM on Watch, or so it seemed at the time.

I recall having to log the time of firing signal, time of splash, time of hit, and other data such as water temperature and depth as just a few of the items. Besides having to take care of these forms, we also had to keep the Ship's Log, answered the phone, kept an ear open for anything else said around us, and carrying out orders that seemed to come from every direction at times.

It also got very hectic in the Conning Tower when we would surface after firing a practice torpedo, especially if the sea had a good chop on it and the fish was hard to find. I think at times I just carried out the orders of the officer that was shouting the loudest, with the other ear reserved for the Captain.

THE IDENTIFICATION CARD INCIDENT

Going back to the shipyard overhaul in Charleston, just before we began our return to Key West, all of the ID cards were collected from the crew that were not yet 21 years old and new ones were issued with a big red MINOR on the back.

Well there was not much to do in Key West except to hit the bars, so many sailors made the mistake of obtaining a false ID card without the MINOR on it. It sure was a mistake if a man got caught with one anyway. My luck at not being caught at anything I was not supposed to do continued to hold up, as in the case of the civilian clothes back in Gibraltar.

Believe it or not, but the night before I turned 21 in Key West, I was stopped by the Marine sentry and asked for my ID card. I was rather intoxicated to say the least. He examined the card and said it looked different from others he had inspected. I took the card in my fingers, spun around, and started to run back out from the Gate.

The two Marines put a tackle on me that would have looked good at an Army - Navy football game, but it sure did not feel good when I hit the street and lost lots of skin. One sentry was in the process of twisting my arm out of joint, and the other choking me and telling me to "Spit it out!"

Yep, I chewed up the false ID card and swallowed it.

One of the civilian guards had seen me take a bottle out of the saddle bag on my Harley and told the Marines about that as well. The shore patrol was called and when the duty chief came up in the wagon to the Gate to pick me up, he said "Where is that Billy Goat at?"

I was taken down to SEA POACHER and turned over to the duty officer that night. The next morning I received permission to go to the sub barracks to get my shaving gear and return to the boat.

This was on a Saturday, and the XO and Yeoman had come in to take care of Ship's business.

The XO read the shore patrol report about my not having an ID card, but the report from the Marines had not yet gotten to him. I presented my real ID card to him, and he let me go ashore.

I think four of us that had Harley's headed to Miami for the weekend, and I didn't know that I was going to set off a major manhunt once the XO got the report from the main gate.

Well, needless to say, I was back to getting into a clean set of whites, and now standing in front of the Captain with my hat in my hand. The two Marines told slightly different versions of what had happened, which sort of helped my cause, because the bottle of Seagram's Seven on the Wardroom table sure did not.

I did get two weeks restriction and a six month suspended bust out of it. I am positive the only reason it was suspended was because of my diving the periscope well (coming up in the next section) by going down head first, and the Captain thought perhaps he owed me one.

I was told later by one of the officers that the Captain said it was the hardest thing he ever did to keep from laughing when the Marine said "He ate the ID card!"

Oh yes, they changed the charge of having a false ID to something else due to lack of evidence. The cooks made out the weekly menu which was submitted to the Commissary Officer, and then to the XO for his approval. On this one there were all sorts of ID card main and side dishes. The menu was sent to the Captain, and he even signed it APPROVED. I can remember there was ID CARD ALA KING, along with many others that were hilarious.

DIVING THE PERISCOPE WELLS

The bottom of the periscope wells had inspection plates which were very heavy and were held in place by numerous large nuts. The periscope well for the Attack Scope was open when the scope was in the raised position, and at times items would get dropped down the scope well.

The eye piece for this scope unfortunately was dropped down the well. This was a major concern as we had no spare and getting one was almost impossible. The Auxiliary Gang also had a large and very heavy tool bench in front of the inspection plate. The bench had to be unbolted and moved in order to even get to the inspection plate, a process that required considerable time, hard work, busted knuckles, and lots of foul language to say the least.

One of the crew said I was so thin that I could tread water in a garden hose, which was almost the truth and was about to become an asset.

I presented my idea to the Captain, and he just shook his head at the plan I proposed, but said "Go ahead and do it!"

My plan was to be lowered down to the bottom of the well head first by a rope, which did have a certain amount of danger involved. However, this way we avoided the bench and the inspection plate ordeal.

I made all the preparations myself, so if anything went wrong only I would be at fault. I asked Dale (Tiny) Fate and Bob Bradley to handle the rope for me, and to lower and raise me back up. I shut the hydraulic stops and put the handle in the lower position to make sure the scope would not creep down on me. I tied the rope personally around my ankles with a Spanish bowline and fair leaded it over pipes in the overhead. They then lowered me down and then back up with the eye piece in hand. This evolution only took a matter of minutes from start to finish and was done several times again in the future.

CRICKETS YOU KNOW WHERE

I recall one of the crew had gotten married in Key West, and we left four days after that wonderful day for GITMO.

It was on the return trip that a different member of the crew had contacted a good case of crotch crickets, which was not a good thing to have in the close quarters of Hogan's Alley.

It just so happened the newly wed slept right across from him which caused him some major concern. Someone tied a string from one bunk to the other so the little devils could just walk from one bunk to the other, instead of having to jump.

The newly wed, doing some fast thinking, made paper rat guards and put them on the string. It must have worked since he never did get the little bugs.

In actuality, I think it might have been more to do with the ointment that the Doc handed out to the infected shipmate.

BECOMING A JUNIOR CONTROLLERMAN

Many times over the past years, I think of each and every one of the SEA POACHER crew that I had the pleasure of serving with. Although each one of them is different, some are very special to me.

Some were members of the electrical gang, not because they were electricians, but mostly because they also had Harley's.

When I was not on watch in the Conning Tower, I spend countless hours in the Maneuvering Room.

I loved to answer the bells and move the sticks. I got so proficient at it that later I was qualified as a Junior Controllerman, which came in handy at a later date on our way back from a GITMO deployment.

If anyone has ever seen it done or caused the boat to reach FLANK speed is something. It requires a lot of action at the cubicles. I think I was able to do this twice, and can only equate it to maybe being as good as the sex act. Well, it is fun anyway, especially listening to the Main Motors wind up like they did.

We were on our way back from GITMO and one of the cooks came down with a medical problem that required he could not be a food handler for a while. One of the Junior Controllermen went to the Galley for cooking, and I was sent from Conn to Maneuvering to stand watch.

Funny how it went from being fun to be back there, but when it became a job, all the fun was taken out of it.

I SHOULD WRITE A BOOK

I have been told by many people over the years that I should write a book, not just about submarines, but the well rounded career that I had the pleasure of experiencing while in the Navy. There were just so many good times, and also some bad times, which I just didn't think a book would be possible due to some of my experiences being unprintable.

I hope this submission brings back memories to some of the SEA POACHER crew that may have forgotten my entries of events. I hope also that when the time comes when I am sitting in a nursing home, some place spitting up my oatmeal, I will have plenty of memories of my time on SEA POACHER and never have to worry about any of them being reruns.

Well, it has been almost fifty years since I first walked down inside SEA POACHER, but to me it was only yesterday.

I don't have as much hair now, and gravity has taken hold in some places, but I still ride my motorcycle, and get the most out of each and every day.

But I no longer drink, so maybe I learned something over the years.

CHAPTER 59

EDWARD LIEFFRING 1960

I REMEMBER THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT AND THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT AND THE MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE

I believe the following article appeared in the Minneapolis Newspaper.

If I remember correctly, I told Bill Brinkman that as soon as we got back to Key West, we were put in the Marine Railway. The next morning all kinds of people were coming to see the bullet holes.

What holes?

From the Minneapolis Star Tribune, May 1960, specific date unknown, by Richard Valeriani. SEA POACHER FIRED ON NEAR CUBA. CASTRO GIVES CUBA JITTERS. Havana (AP) - Prime Minister Fidel Castro gave Cuba a new case of invasion jitters Saturday with his dramatic announcement that one of his coast guard cutters had used gunfire to drive off a U.S. submarine operating without lights near the Cuban coast.

Castro's Friday the 13th television speech to the nation spelled bad luck for the slim hope of relaxing tension between Washington and Havana.

As usual, he ran on past midnight. He restrained himself from shouting, but he reeled off half a dozen naval, air, and diplomatic incidents and blamed them all on the United States.

The 2 ½ -hour speech seemed to give the green light to an anti-American campaign raging in Cuba all week.

The Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union, whose leaders are among the most extreme and most powerful in Cuba, demanded Saturday the expulsion of U.S. Ambassador Phillip W. Bonsal. He was accused of ties to counterrevolutionary groups. It was the strongest direct attack on him recently.

Castro put his stamp of approval on charges that the United States is plotting an armed attack on Cuba. Ignoring previous assurances by U.S. officials, he called on Washington to submit a nonaggression statement.

Citing a navy report, Castro said the coast guard cutter Oriente had spotted a U.S. submarine five miles off the coast of Matanzas on May 6, chased it about three miles and taken several shots at the undersea craft until it gave an identifying signal CrC1.

He added that two U.S. warplanes and a destroyer marked USN42 were spotted off the coast on May 7; the destroyer the Sullivans, another submarine and three U.S. planes were sighted May 8; and the destroyer Norfolk crosses Cuba's three-mile limit near Cayo Blanco 75 miles northeast of Havana May 11.

"In no case did they have permission to navigate in our waters, and, moreover, they did it with lights out, violating all internationally approved rules and regulation," Castro said.

U.S. Navy officers in Washington said the May 6 submarine was probably the Sea Poacher. They said the skipper noted something that looked like red flares but at the time had no

idea his ship was being fired on. Officers displayed logs to report their claim that the sub was not inside Cuban territorial waters and was running on the surface with proper lights.

U.S. sources in Havana gave their version of the Norfolk incident. The light cruiser – not a destroyer – was heading through normal sea lanes towards the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo, on the eastern tip of Cuba, when it picked up a small craft on radar, they said. The small vessel approached. The Norfolk challenged by searchlight, and identities were exchanged by blinker.

The sources insisted the Norfolk was sailing under normal lights and proceeded to Guantanamo without further incident after reporting the sighting through channels to the U.S. Embassy.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ed provided two other articles on the incident, however, these are nearly identical to those provided earlier in the John Love Chapter, and need not be repeated here.

"From now on, if German or Italian vessels of war enter the waters, the protection of which is necessary for American defense, they do so at their own peril. The orders which I have given as Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army and Navy are to carry out that policy at once."

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, radio address

*11 September 1941. A new policy following
the attempted torpedoing of the Destroyer GREER
at a favorite U-Boat hunting ground known as
"Torpedo Junction" 175 miles southwest of Iceland.
Up until this time all vessels attacked had been
merchant marine ships*

"Without courage, you might as well not be in it. You've got to have courage--moral courage, physical courage--and honor. Honor means telling the truth even when it might not be to your advantage"

*Captain Charles W. Bush, Jr., 1985, when asked to
give advice to chiefs and junior officers in the submarine service*

"A million dollar house, and the roof leaks..."

*Submarine sailor experiencing (aggravating but not unusual)
hull leaks on a dive*

"Take her down!"

*Howard Gilmore, CO GROWLER 7 February 1943, badly
wounded, ordering her down without him to save the boat*

CHAPTER 60

IVAN JOSLIN 1960 - 1963

**I REMEMBER WHAT NO WHITE GLOVES?
A MOTORCYCLE RESTORATION,
A NEAR FATAL FISHING EPISODE,
A VERY EMBARRASSING PHOTOGRAPH,
A CHARLESTON NAVY HOSPITAL BIRTH STORY,
IT WAS NEARLY THE END OF MY NAVY CAREER,
LEARNING TO OPERATE THE OFFICER'S HEAD IN THE FTR,
VISIBLE PROOF OF CREAKING AND GROANING,
CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS TORPEDO LOAD OUT,
AND SEAL OPERATIONS**

WHAT NO WHITE GLOVES?

Shortly after reporting aboard SEA POACHER after she returned from a Northern Run before Christmas 1960, I became aware that CDR Stahl was awaiting orders to be relieved as CO. I also was well aware that because I received my Ensign's commission through the Reserve Officer Candidate (ROC) program and not the Naval Academy, that I really had to prove myself to gain his full acceptance into the Wardroom. I immediately decided to attempt to gain his trust by being the most squared away officer on board, i.e. always wearing spit-shined shoes, spotlessly cleaned and pressed khakis, new and shiny collar devices, and attempt at all times to be extra sharp in my "military bearing," particularly when he was anywhere around. I taught my wife to shine my shoes, and I found a laundry on Duval Street that would starch my pants and shirt with a sharp crease.

When CDR Stahl's orders came through the following summer, and the Change of Command (COC) ceremony with LCDR Kojm was being planned, I was called by the XO LCDR Jerry Davi into his stateroom one morning after quarters. Anytime he closed his door curtain in a huff, you knew the conversation was serious! Stroking his black goatee, he said "Ivan, the Captain says he wants you to be the MC (Master of Ceremonies) and OOD during his Change of Command ceremony, and I'm really p***** off, because that's usually the responsibility of the Executive Officer! He says you have the most impressive military bearing of any officer onboard." He wasn't kidding that he was ticked off, and I couldn't come up with anything to say that seemed fitting nor appropriate. In fact, I was not only speechless, but the whole scene in the privacy of the XO's stateroom was very uncomfortable. I could see that he was upset, and I was relieved when he finally swung his curtain open for me to leave. He did not speak to me for days!

LT Dick Coupe had come aboard as Third Officer, and was tasked with planning the COC program, and I was directed to work closely with him. We received very specific orders from the Skipper and XO, and briefing them on our planning became a daily occurrence. Dick was a "sweater," and needed confirmation on the minutest of details, and finally the "Order of

Service” was blessed by all concerned. I remember that getting the invitations list together, mailing them out, and keeping track of guests and dignitaries who were coming was a daunting task. We had to look up the lineal number and date of rank of every officer who was coming so the seating would be proper in regards to their seniority. They also wanted the podium, ceremony participants, Ship’s company, plus all dignitaries to be on SEA POACHER’S deck, with families and friends out on the pier.

Dress whites was the prescribed uniform, and though I had them, I’d never worn them! I tried them on well ahead, and then had them laundered and starched. On the morning of the ceremony, I arrived on board at the crack of dawn, my cap, white shoes, and uniform in tow. I got all dressed up in the FTR (my stateroom was too small), and as the time for the ceremony approached, I went topside to welcome guests and make sure everything was in order.

Five minutes before the ceremony was to start, and with all the dignitaries and guests in place except CDR Stahl, LCDR Kojm, and the DIVCOM (who was waiting on the pier to be officially “gonged” aboard), the XO asked me where my white gloves were? My heart sank, as not only had I not thought of them, I didn’t have any!

Not wanting to admit it, and in a total state of panic, I excused myself from the podium, and made my way below decks via the Conning Tower hatch. I grabbed a pair of my white socks, and pulling the material down between my fingers, clumsily covered my bare hands with them and made my way back topside to the podium. I immediately called all hands to attention, and directed the Boatswain’s Mate to gong the three remaining participants aboard, rendering to Stahl and Kojm a snappy salute with a mitten of a sock on my hand!

The DIVCOM was the last to come aboard, and I noticed he was carrying his gloves in his left hand, so that he could return the salute with his right. As he came across the brow, I quickly slipped the socks off my hands, and when I honored his salute, I did so with a naked right hand, and a pair of socks dangling from my left, but carefully hidden from view behind the podium.

As I called on the Chaplain for the opening prayer, I tossed my socks into the bottom of the podium on top of the sound amplifier. I never heard a word of the Chaplain’s prayer, as I was too busy thanking the good Lord for getting me through the most embarrassing episode of my submarine career!

MOTORCYCLE RESTORATION

Somewhere in 1960 or so, I bought a used 1947 Harley Davidson Twin motorcycle from SEA POACHER Electrician Warren (Gunner) Vanderwerker. He and Artie Piazza were running a race car at the Key West Speedway and needed money for used tires.

Some months before, they had completely disassembled this huge motorcycle in a garage they had rented. Then they had gotten into car racing and pad-locked the garage. It got flooded and left behind sand over 2 feet deep in the garage. Vanderwerker knew of my interest in motorcycles and told me he had one in his garage, so after working hours Ross Wesner and I accompanied Gunner to the garage. I will never forget the sight that greeted us when he finally muscled the garage door open. The sand filled the garage floor as if it was a kid's sandbox! The only thing we could see of the motorcycle was the top of the leather seat, and the upper front portion of the frame holding the handlebars. We haggled a bit and Gunner finally took my offer of \$50, after guaranteeing me that ALL of the parts were buried in the sand.

So Ross and I built two wooden frames about 2 foot square, one with 'hardware cloth'

(rabbit pen wire) nailed to the frame, and the other with screen wire. For 5 to 6 hours each evening for the next 4 to 5 days, Ross and I shoveled the sand out of the garage, one shovel at a time, into the larger screened frame, and then into the screen wire frame, retrieving parts as they became visible. Of course, the larger parts (gas tank, wheels, engine parts, chain, etc.) we found with the shovel, but sifting every shovel full of sand became a necessity to find every small part including nuts, bolts, carburetor fittings, spark plugs, small engine pieces, etc. Other than being gritty, the pieces were in remarkable condition. We kept everything together until we had swept out the garage floor, and we ended up with the frame with seat and handlebars, the tires and rims, and the chain, plus three bushel baskets full of miscellaneous parts.

We indeed had found all the parts, and Ross worked with me on my back patio walkway helping to put the larger pieces back together. I spent many nights' wire brushing, priming and painting component parts, and installed most of them by myself, calling on Ross when I needed extra hands, and he was always ready to help. I spent about \$350 with a local machine shop for rebuilding the engine and transmission, and another \$200 on stripping and painting, and the bike turned out beautifully and looked and ran like new!

I finished it up on a Sunday morning at 5 a.m. and decided to take it on its "maiden voyage" before dressing for church. The wife and kids were still asleep. I pushed it out into the street and down the road a bit before cranking it up, and then made my way out to the Boca Chica Highway near the Air Station. There wasn't another car or human in sight! I ran it through the gears quickly and was amazed at its power and its smoothness. In short order I was at the speed limit, and decided to see if I could get it to 100 miles per hour (the speedometer registered 105). I did, but it was all I could do to hold on, and I only stayed there a few seconds, fearing I was going to get blown completely off the bike. I slowed to a crawl and quietly retreated home.

The next evening, my brother Arnold called from Colorado and said he was getting married and wanted me to be his best man at the wedding. A week later I sold the Harley for the price of a round trip airplane ticket to Denver plus a rental car while there. Today that 1947 Harley Davidson Twin is worth about \$30,000!

A NEAR FATAL FISHING EPISODE

Captain Stahl was a Naval Academy graduate and seemed to prefer Annapolis graduates as officers under him, even though we all graduated from the same Officer Submarine School Program. He was a no nonsense CO, and a very capable one at that. He went through some very tough and extraordinary events during his tour as CO as detailed in other chapters.

In contrast, Captain Kojm's reputation as an easy going, likeable, but very firm and fair Naval Officer preceded his arrival on SEA POACHER. He was a Journalism Major from an Ivy League University, and most of the Wardroom were not Naval Academy graduates. So there seemed to be more hope in the Wardroom for those of us without a Naval Academy ring. He also made the much respected Vernon Barnett the new COB. Maybe things were going to relax a bit!

Shortly after he assumed command, we were out overnight in the local Key West operating areas awaiting the arrival of the ASW School destroyer for training their students in the tracking of a real submarine target. When on station, we received word the destroyer's departure had been delayed due to an equipment failure, and SEA POACHER was directed to "conduct independent steaming" until further notice. The Captain ordered me as the Diving Officer to have the boat rigged for dive, and then make a trim dive which we did. Shortly thereafter, the Conning Officer (XO Jerry Davi) spotted a huge bed of floating kelp on the

surface, and knowing that these beds made for tremendous fishing grounds, called the Skipper in his stateroom, and suggested SEA POACHER surface for a fish and/or swim call.

“Prepare to Surface, Aye Aye Sir!” was my quick response to Conn as the XO got on the 1MC to announce “FISH CALL” to the crew. We “Blew Bow Buoyancy” then “Blew Negative,” and then put the auxiliary pumps on the Main Ballast Tanks. The lookouts and I “Cracked the Hatch,” and then set our watch on the Bridge. In short order we were riding high enough to secure the pumps and open the three deck hatches topside. The weather was a perfect Key West day, the sea was glassy calm, and on our starboard side was a kelp bed half the size of a football field! Known as the “Perfect Spot” to find big bull-nosed dolphins along with other local surface dwelling fish, it did not take the fishermen onboard very long to get really excited!

Our First Class Cook John Harvey, who was preparing lunch, had a supply of bait tucked away in the freezer. He broke out shrimp, squid, cut-up fish chunks, and cut-up blue crabs for the crew. It was amazing to me, no matter how long we had been at sea, he always had a good supply of these baits “at the ready.”

Captain Kojm decided he would let six crew members with their rod and reels out on deck at any given time, and he manned the starboard side lookout with a loaded M-16 rifle in case a shark appeared. (Although frowned upon today by the “tree-huggers” and PETA, shooting at sharks from the Bridge of SEA POACHER was great sport and routine fun back then!) Within very short order, Artie Piazza had a good sized dolphin hooked, and within minutes, there were three lines tight with fighting fish. All three had used the cut-up blue crab for bait, so it quickly became the bait of choice.

After getting relieved on the Bridge, and grabbing a quick lunch in the Wardroom, I grabbed my rod and reel from its secret hiding place behind a Mark 14 torpedo in the after-upper skid of the FTR (near my stateroom in officer’s country), and headed to the Control Room to await my turn to go topside to fish. I’d quickly changed into some shorts, T-shirt and flip-flops, and was leaning on my elbows on the DRT table in Control, when I realized I had no leader, weight, nor hook on my monofilament line. Some of the other fishermen, now topside, had left a good supply of tackle on the chart table for anyone’s use, so I quickly rolled off a five foot length of heavy duty stainless steel leader wire from the small coil, and cut it off with needle-nosed pliers. Moving away from the chart table, I proceeded to tie this piece of S/S leader to the swivel I’d tied to the end of my line.

Suddenly there was a bright flash of light as if a photographer’s bulb had gone off, and the entire corner of the Control Room near the Forward Battery hatch went dark. At the same time, the auxiliaryman on watch saw a fireball about as big as a basketball go rolling across the deck. In an instant, the sonarman on watch stuck his head through the hatch and shouted into the Control Room, “Lost all power to my sonars, Sir!”

Of course there were all sorts of scrambling going on, as brains and emotions tried to comprehend what was going on, and what had happened. The Conn was notified. Everyone in Control was staring at each other, but there was no panic.

I quickly looked at my feet where the fireball had originated, and found I was holding about 12 inches of S/S fishing wire. The bottom four foot length was completely gone.

The investigation as to what happened took just a matter of seconds.

Just as you raised your first foot to enter the Forward Battery hatch from Control, there was on your left the high voltage power supply cabinet for the main sonar gear. The top of this cabinet was just the right height for your left hand as you ducked to go through the hatch, and nearly everyone used it for support when going either way through that hatch. It was about a foot

square, and had a flat top, and it was a favorite spot for the below decks watch to park his clipboard to record Forward Battery specific gravity readings. Inside this cabinet which was bolted to the deck, down just below deck level, was a vacuum tube about a foot high and as big around as an oatmeal box that gave off a weird bright blue light. When the Control Room was completely darkened, the light from this one tube illuminated the surrounding area well enough that you could read the charts on the DRT! The four sides of this power supply had vent slits for the cooling air to escape, and there was an electric fan motor in the bottom that ran constantly to dissipate the heat. On all four sides, there was a red Bakelite WARNING tag saying the tube inside this cabinet had 3,000 volts and could electrocute you instantly if you even got close! On top of this giant vacuum tube was a metal cap connected to the power line than ran into Sonar, much like an ignition wire from an auto's coil to the spark plug.

While tying my five foot length of S/S leader to my monofilament fishing line, the bottom end of that leader had curled upward and found its way through a vent slot near the deck and contacted the metal cap on top of that tube. The ensuing electrical short melted about four feet of that cable, formed the giant fireball, blew out the tube's filament, and knocked the sonar gear off the line!

I never felt a thing, and only after going topside to fish did I give the incident a second thought. That night however, around the table for dinner in the Wardroom, the seriousness of my stupidity, and the obvious close call with instant electrocution that I had escaped, was the topic of conversation with a lot of laughter. Neither the Skipper nor XO chewed me out, as both seemed utterly relieved not to have to fill out a DEATH REPORT!

Two years later when I transferred off SEA POACHER, some of the crew were still telling this "fish" story.

A VERY EMBARRASSING PHOTOGRAPH

Jack Merrill loves to tell this story on me, and it may even be one of his chapters in this book. Even though it was thoroughly embarrassing at the time, the story needs to be told.

Just before leaving for the overhaul period at Charleston, we had to off-load all our MK 14 and MK 38 torpedoes from both the Forward and After Torpedo Rooms. We had a full allowance on board, and had developed skilled teams in both Rooms for the loading and unloading events.

Usually the Tender's Torpedo Shop wanted to piece-meal the unloading evolution so they didn't have to handle so many weapons at once. They would stretch the evolution over a period of several days, offloading just a few torpedoes a day. With the required time and effort it took to set up all the gear topside as well as in the Rooms, and as SEA POACHER'S "Gun Boss," I visited the Tender's Weapons Officer personally beforehand to see if he would schedule our unloading for "around the clock." He agreed.

To make these long hours of hard work palatable to the crew members involved, I gathered them all together topside, gave them a safety pep talk about the inherent dangers of handling those heavy torpedoes on the skids, and promised them a good home-cooked meal and fun-filled evening at my home after we were all done, IF there were no incidents or injuries throughout this risky and often dangerous evolution. I also extended the offer to the Tender's Weapons Officer and his "cherry picker operator" who was a critical player on our team, as he handled the torpedoes and heavy equipment on the pier.

We started Aft getting our gear set up at 0500, with the cherry picker arriving at 0530. Our

rated Torpedomen were in charge, but the unloading crew were assigned by the XO and COB, and came from several departments onboard. The guys actually considered the assignment fun (I think), but it was hard and physical work requiring absolute focus and attention at all times to every detail. When you're part of the gang that is moving a 2,000 pound torpedo up a sharp angled greased skid with manila line rigged block and tackle, there is no time for lolly-gagging or losing concentration on the job at hand!

We finished up around midnight with nothing but a few rope burns and skinned shins, conditions perfectly normal and acceptable for submarine sailors. We all knew each other better, and though dog tired physically, there was a strong sense of accomplishment when we wrapped up all the gear and dogged down the two Torpedo Room hatches.

The following Saturday night, we all gathered around the tables in the Joslin house for the promised home cooked meat loaf dinner with all the trimmings. Though some were chagrined at my "No Alcohol" stand (no beer), they respected the rules of our home, and by the time dinner was over, even the usual drinkers realized a good time could be had even while staying sober!

I had loaded some 35 mm slides into my carousel to show as entertainment after dinner of shot's I'd taken since reporting aboard SEA POACHER, and of the South American cruise I'd made on the Destroyer HARTLEY a few months before reporting to Officer Submarine School. I interspersed a few family shots of my wife and baby daughter as well. I'd hung a white sheet on the living room wall as a screen, and after dinner began showing my slides to the 20 or so shipmates gathered for the evening.

About halfway through the slide show, suddenly a full side view shot of a NAKED and VERY PREGNANT wife appeared on the screen. My wife, who was washing dishes in the kitchen, heard the loud hoots and laughter that quickly ensued, and came running into the room at about the same time I got control enough to click to the next slide. The guys would not let me go on with the show insisting I back up one slide while Barbara was in the room.

My guys talked about that photo as long as I was aboard, and for years afterwards. My wife Barbara (now deceased) never forgave me insisting I'd done it on purpose. Did I? Until now I have never admitted that the placement of that slide was intentional. I really never thought that one simple attempt to get a laugh from my troops would have such a profound and lingering effect. Neither my guys nor Barbara ever forgot it!

A CHARLESTON NAVY HOSPITAL BIRTH STORY

Following the torpedo offload, more preparations were needed for our forthcoming overhaul which was primarily designed to get new high-capacity batteries and a new fiberglass North Atlantic sail. Many of our crew were sent to sea going billets on sister submarines so that only a minimal crew would experience the "career dead time" of a shipyard overhaul. As I remember, Captain Kojm and XO Dick Stafford could pretty much hand select those officers and petty officers they wanted to go to the yard. Their selections covered all the bases, and I can tell you for sure the camaraderie of the Wardroom got really close especially during our time in the dry dock on blocks. I have written up several incidents from this shipyard experience that even today are very vivid recollections!

In late 1960, shortly after reporting aboard, I became aware that SEA POACHER had this overhaul scheduled. Following the relief of Captain Stahl by Len Kojm, and the relief of XO Jerry Davi by Dick Stafford, the Wardroom and Department Head Chiefs began having planning meetings for the jobs and upgrades we wanted to get done in the Yard. As our meetings

progressed, I learned primarily from the Chiefs the importance of developing skills in “cumshaw.” I learned that fifths of Jack Daniels worked best, but 10 pound tins of Navy coffee ran a close second. The former was illegal (but possible when purchases and exchanged with the “yard birds” off base), but the coffee could be used legally (but quietly) so long as the Yard Supervisors didn’t know about it. But that’s a story for another time!

In January 1961, already blessed with a beautiful seven month daughter born while at Sub School, we found out my wife was pregnant with our second child. Adding nine months clearly indicated we would be in the Yard for the birth. As the baby began to develop, from the differences in her first pregnancy, Barbara became sure this one was a boy. After taking SEA POACHER to Charleston, several car loads of us went back to Key West to drive our families back to Charleston. We had moved from our small two bedroom house on Reynolds Street to a larger rental house near Boca Chica in April, and chose to pay double rent during the Yard period so as not to lose this house. We found a comfortable rental home on North Remount Road in North Charleston.

On the trip with my family and a few belongings and in our new 1960 Impala convertible (not a very functional family car since number two kid was in the hopper), that developing baby kicked Barbara so hard and so frequently that by the time we reached Charleston, she was in tears and her stomach was black and blue. She absolutely KNEW it had to be a boy!

Early on the morning of 16 September 1961, I received a call from a neighbor who’d taken my wife to the Navy Hospital at 0430. Her water had broken during the night and contractions were steady. Just as with our first child, I had the duty and wasn’t there! I had the OOD duty every third night, and was a dog-tired LT from being up all night with the first full charge of our newly installed batteries. LTJG Lanny Yeske was the first qualified watch officer to report aboard that morning around 0800, and he relieved me immediately so I could get over to the Hospital to join my wife.

By the time I arrived at 0830 she was in hard labor. Back then, husbands were not considered to be part of the “birthing experience,” and neither I nor Barbara had heard of “La Maze.” I immediately sank into a big over-stuffed sofa in the second story waiting room of that old Navy Hospital in Charleston. All I could hear as I dozed on and off were the moans of women on the other side of the swinging doors, all suffering varying degrees of pain brought on by the methodical contractions of child birth. I couldn’t differentiate the cries of my wife from those of the others in labor, but the cacophonies of pain soon became a lullaby for sleep for one tired, diesel smelling LT.

As I drifted away from the real world, I reflected on the only words the Duty Obstetrician had said to me when I first came into the waiting room just minutes before, “Lieutenant, we’re running a string of girls. Since yesterday, we’ve delivered 11 in a row.” “Lord,” I silently prayed, “You’ve already blessed us with Beverly, don’t you think we can bust this string with a boy?” In retrospect, it was a foolish prayer, as for nine months in the womb, God knew that baby’s sex! No prayer of mine, at a time like that, was going to change anything in His plan for building the Ivan Joslin family.

“Lieutenant...Lieutenant...Lieu...” I’m not sure how many times the Doctor called me before I was conscious enough to realize he was standing over my slumped body on the sofa. “Your wife has just delivered our 12th little girl, and they would both like to see you. Come with me.” A bit shaky on my feet, as if trying to get my sea legs after an extended stay in port, I followed that white-masked figure through the swinging doors and down the long hospital corridor. The smells of alcohol and other unidentified birthing smells jolted me into alertness,

and I was glad at that point to just be a visitor. I remember thinking that God surely knew what he was doing when he gave the responsibilities of child birth to women!

“Here you go Lieutenant,” the Doctor gestured with his scalpel towards a mostly closed door, “they’re anxious to see you.”

I wasn’t timid as I excitedly pushed open the heavy wooden door with a red “No Smoking” tag hanging under the small curtained window. My heart was pounding! I was excited. As I glimpsed at the female figure on the bed, I stopped dead in my tracks, and was too shocked to move and too dumbfounded to speak! Our eyes met, there was a bit of a stare exchanged, and then I could only turn my head away and mutter an unintelligent “Excuse me!” She never said a word, and when I last saw her, she was aghast and chin touching her chest as if about to scream.

I chuckled to myself as I turned away and shattered the quiet hallways with “Hey Doc, guess what? That’s not my wife!”

The loud pause that followed encompassed guffaws from the Doctor and me which reverberated into echoes down the corridor. I remember seeing several faces of white-capped nurses peeking into the corridor from patient’s rooms, wondering what could possibly be so funny within the doors of the delivery room, that a Doctor and prospective father would be so hilariously boisterous about.

Controlling myself like a kid running into the bathroom to vomit, I ran down the hall, through the swinging doors, and back into the waiting room where I jokingly told the surprised but recognized strangers what happened. The Doctor came in several minutes later and when he apologized to me out loud, we all laughed again – except the Doctor!

Fifteen minutes later and after another delivery (the 13th consecutive girl), the Doctor swung open the door and almost laughingly shouted “LT Joslin, I’ve got the right one this time! Congratulations on breaking the streak. Your son is a 7 pound beauty!”

My second trip down that corridor was as filled with anticipation as my first trip had been. This time the room door was wide open, and as I turned from the hall and entered, I saw my first son, still wrinkled and bloody, lying on a pad nestled in the bosom of his mother.

I approached the bedside in awe, and I remember fighting back a tear as I leaned over the bed, kissed my wife, and touched my son Brian’s hand for the first time!

POST-SCRIPT: At the time of this writing for the SEA POACHER Book, Brian is 46 and with his wife Jan, has our 14 year old granddaughter Megan. He’s a mechanic and manages a tire store in North Charleston, where he was born. The shipyard has been closed for years, and the Hospital long since demolished.

IT WAS NEARLY THE END OF MY NAVY CAREER

Just before departing Key West for the above Yard period, I was up for promotion to LT. and Captain Kojm appointed me in writing as SEA POACHER’S Communications Officer. As such it was my responsibility to maintain the boat’s classified documents in a safe located in the Crypto Room in the bowels of the Control Room aft. I remember vividly hearing all the “horror stories” while undergoing officer’s training about the careers of good naval officers that were completely ruined by mishandling Secret and Top Secret publications. Little did I know that while in the Charleston Shipyard, I was to experience first hand the traumatic experience of losing a pub!

XO Dick Stafford’s last words to me, when LT Dick Coupe and I reported to him that our “relief” ceremony had been completed, were “If you so much as THINK you’re missing a pub,

I'll hang you from the snorkel mast while underway!" Whether true or not, it was enough to put the fear of God in me!

In the early days of the job, I was afraid I would forget the combination I had set in the safe. As a backup, I wrote it down on a slip of paper which I kept in the screwdriver drawer of my tool box at home. I don't remember exactly what the system was, but I believe I sealed the safe combination numbers inside an envelope, which was kept in the CO's stateroom safe in case I died or otherwise became lost or incapacitated.

Before leaving Key West, I made my first trip to the RPIO (Registered Publications Issuing Office) with the black leather briefcase I had taken over from Dick Coupe. There were all sorts of buzzers and locks on the RPIO gates and doors as one entered, and the whole building looked like a prison with circular barbed wire all around the top of the high chain link fence, and heavy bars on every door and window. Even inside, one felt like you were entering prison, and I never ever got comfortable making my regular visits to the local RPIO. The good thing about this first visit however, was that I was able to turn in lots of papers and pubs which we would not need in the shipyard, as the information they contained was primarily used in setting up the rotors in the CRYPTO equipment, and in the Conning Tower during classified operations.

There was a very formal checkout procedure set up for the Communications Officer if the CO, XO, quartermasters, or others needed a publication to use operationally or in studying for qualification. It was similar to a library book checkout system of today. However, it was so rigidly controlled that often the "Communicator" of every boat was thought to be "a horse's a**." If a Registered Publications Custodian wanted to be loose and not so hard-nosed with his fellow shipmates, there was ALWAYS a senior officer there to tell him how quickly your entire career could go down the drain!

Not being able to account for a publication you'd signed your life away for became utter despair, and I was so paranoid about losing a numbered Top Secret document, that I'd often go to the safe and check EVERY pub against the inventory list EVERY DAY, even though most times I went weeks without needing one.

After arrival in Charleston, and getting our office spaces assigned for use while SEA POACHER was in dry dock, as Communications Officer I was given a corner desk with a large four drawer lockable filing cabinet and a huge combination lock safe for all our classified documents. Others had a key for the filing cabinet, but no one else had access to the big safe. It was totally under my control for the approximately 60 classified documents that I maintained. About half of them were Secret or Top Secret, and most of the others were either Confidential or labeled OEO (Officer Eyes Only). I remember the trepidation of setting the combination in that huge safe, and carefully placing all the numbered documents inside. I had a huge "T" shaped sign with a green colored "CLOSED" on one side and red colored "OPEN" on the other to hang in the handle of both the safe and the filing cabinet, so that everyone in the space knew their status at all times.

It was a cardinal sin to leave the space containing those safes unoccupied, for as the stories went, an enemy spy would sneak in and steal a document in the seconds you were away! A Communicator's worst fear was to be called on the phone at home after working hours by the "roving patrol watch" and be told that in making his rounds he had found a safe open. Procedure required the watch stander to stay right there until you arrived and conducted a complete inventory to be sure it was all there. If anything was determined missing, the poor watch stander instantly became a suspect! Twice in my career upon receiving such a call, I told the watch stander to lock the safe and spin the dial, so that if something turned up missing, he would not

“go down the tubes” with me. It’s certainly not fair (to my way of thinking) that a shipmate doing his job should become a suspect for doing his job!

As our Yard period came to an end, and it came time to get our sub’s full allowance of pubs, I made my monthly trek to RPIO building, and went through the very formal procedure of being issued those we needed to go back to sea in a fully operational status. I carefully inventoried them there, signed my name as the new custodian, then inventoried them again as I placed them in the big safe in the office. Several weeks later, I moved everything from the office safe to the safe aboard SEA POACHER, inventorying every number again at both ends. I carefully taped the several page inventory listing to the inside door of the boat’s safe, and spun the dial in confidence, glad the move was completed and successful.

Our sea trials were over, and we had reported by message to SUBLANT and SUBRON 12 that we were “Ready for sea, and all operational assignments.” Captain Kojm called me into his stateroom and directed me to provide the Conn with the classified document that showed all the “Ship’s Call Signs.” I went to the safe, pulled out the pub, and QM1 Carroll Lawson signed for it. There were several pubs that we kept in the Wardroom while at sea, and I pulled those out as well. Later that evening, I went to the safe to inventory its contents.

HORROR OF HORRORS...I was MISSING a pub!

Calming myself with the silent assurance I’d just missed it, I inventoried again. Same result! I remembered this SINGLE PAGE, numbered and Top Secret, sheet from the many checks I had made, and I knew I had moved it from the office to SEA POACHER. How could I have lost it? How could it just disappear? Maybe it had fallen behind the safe, or worse still, be under the deck plates! I can’t begin to tell you the debilitating panic that quickly set in as I contemplated my future! My whole career was in jeopardy.

I searched every conceivable place that sheet could be, going through every possible scenario where it might have been mishandled or blown away. I knew I had moved it to the boat, and I’d seen it on my first inventory...or did I? Maybe I’d actually missed it and just thought it was there. Of one thing I was absolutely sure...it wasn’t there now, and I was physically sick!

I rehearsed out loud what I would tell the XO and Skipper. It wasn’t pretty and it wasn’t fun!

“Hey XO, I need a little help down in the Crypto Room doing an inventory. Can you give me a hand?” Together we made our way to that tiny space in the back of the Control Room, and since there was room for only body down the ladder, I went down to open the safe while Dick Stafford lay on the deck with his head down through the hatch. I told him my sad story, and he was livid in rage! He calmed down a bit as we went down the inventory sheet, but the veins were popping from his neck when we completed the check list and didn’t find the missing pub.

I asked him to “sleep on it” for one night before we told Captain Kojm, and he agreed. I don’t know how much sleep he got that night, but I didn’t get much at all! Early the next morning, I decided to do a quick page check on the pubs on each side of the missing sheet from the inventory listing. Many of the pubs had hard plastic covers, and as it turned out, the pubs on either side of the one missing were both plastic covered and much thicker.

When I turned the first pub over, there perfectly centered on the back clear plastic cover was the missing sheet! It was as tightly stuck there as if it had been glued in place. It was so full of static electricity that I could hardly get my fingernail underneath it to pull it away. I remember holding it up and kissing it!

The XO agreed to never tell Captain Kojm about this incident, and I waited until the morning of his Change of Command with CDR Dick Fox before I told him. All he could do then

was laugh! Wheew! (See Photo Section).

EDITOR'S NOTE: I was there, but never heard this full story. I might have been in my bunk, but I remember Ivan and the XO talking about a lost document. Ivan's face was as white as a ghost. Ivan was my mentor on SEA POACHER, and I felt very bad for him. I actually relieved Ivan as Communications Officer and Classified Material Control Officer shortly thereafter, and it was a daunting job. I was scared to death of losing a publication or one page. I never knew the publication had been found. In fact, I thought Ivan's career had been ruined, and he had left the Navy. After reconnecting with SEA POACHER in 2005, I was dumbfounded to hear that Ivan was a retired Navy Captain instead of going out as a Lieutenant. Now after nearly 50 years I understand.

LEARNING TO OPERATE THE OFFICER'S HEAD IN THE FTR

Anyone, submarine sailor or not, who has ever used a submarine head (restroom for the uninitiated) knows the complications and lengthy procedures involved with flushing the toilet bowl. It's probably the first mechanical procedure any prospective submariner learns. It comes right after one learns to go down a ladder or go through a hatch. It is indeed a basis for life on a submarine.

Having spent considerable sea time (both surface and submerged operations) aboard SPIKEFISH as a qualified destroyer OOD, I learned quickly from the FTR guys how to operate the head. It's a procedure they want you to learn quickly, as no one enjoys flushing another man's p***. I think I got it down about the third-go-around, and I remember how proud I was not to have to call the TM on watch for assistance. See Photo Section.

There were levers to pull, sea and stop valves to open and then close...and that was before you even used the head! Then you opened the flapper and dumped your load, closed the flapper, opened the sea discharge valve, opened the air valve to "Blow Sanitary" to sea. If on the surface, you vented the rich smell outboard, but if submerged it vented inboard. The smells would be "ripe" especially while snorkeling.

Thinking when I came aboard SEA POACHER that my earlier knowledge of using the head on SPIKEFISH set me in good stead, I used it for the first time without reading the "Head Operating Instructions." To this day I don't know what was different, but I ended up blowing s*** all over the bulkheads and piping inside that small cubby hole, and spent the next half hour cleaning it up with a rag and Ajax water. It took longer than that to clean my face, hair, arms, and uniform. It was not until the TMs had a field day for a CO's inspection that all the evidence of my "accident" got removed.

Did I mention that on long at sea periods, this same FTR head was the storage locker for potatoes? It just made it that much more difficult to operate the flappers and valves!

*EDITOR'S NOTE: We all have stories on this contraption. One of the dangers was to have a small air leak into the tank which left a pressure in. After one was done with his duty in the head and leaned over to open the flapper valve, the bowl contents would then erupt upwards like Mount Etna. It was on BAYA when we were all seated for the noon meal, and the Captain was in the head and we were waiting for him. I remember a shrill voice coming from the FTR that said "G** D*** It. Where is the F***** Engineer?" The Captain appeared and looked into the Wardroom. There were brown spots all over his upper body and clothes. I was the Engineer.*

VISIBLE PROOF OF CREAKING AND GROANING

One of the vivid memories that still remains with me to this day is that of the eerie sounds of the SEA POACHER'S pressure hull as its steel compressed during a dive to more than 100 feet. The sailors in both the FTR and ATR, as well as those in other spaces, had unique methods and markings on the bulkheads of their respective living and working spaces by which they could tell quite accurately our depth. I was always impressed, as both a Diving and Conning Officer, how much the crew knew about what SEA POACHER was doing just by the feel and surrounding sounds on their particular watch and work stations.

Not long after TM Bob Bradley became Leading Petty Officer in the ATR, I was assigned his space as the officer to check the room for dive. The officers rotated through all the various compartments in this assignment so as to not become lax or overly confident in this vital aspect of assuring the boat ready to dive for the day. The XO and COB made these assignments on a rotating basis, and often an officer's assignment was tied to which space he was then concentrating on in his own process of "Qualifying in Submarines" and the privilege of earning his coveted dolphin's breast insignia. Bob would allow another of his men to rig the ATR for dive, but he would double check it, and then I would double check him and report to the Conning Officer that the space was "Rigged for dive."

On this particular morning the Skipper had called all the officers and COB together in the Wardroom to inform us that during this morning's dive, the boat would do its "Test Depth Dive." He charged everyone to be especially diligent in rigging and checking ALL the compartments for dive. The word about this dive to 412 feet spread quickly through the boat, and as usual there was always a bit of apprehension about taking her down to the deepest depth the designers said it should go. Even a few feet beyond that depth caused the risks to rise exponentially, and any depth excursion beyond that limit required a written report to the Bureau of Ships.

When I went back to the ATR to do my "Rig for dive" check off sheet, Bob and his guys had broken out a long shoring timber (4 inches by 4 inches) and had wedged it securely across the passageway at about belt high from one side of the hull to the other. Each end of the timber was "notched" to keep it tightly in place on the huge I-beam girders that gave internal support to the pressure hull.

I personally checked with both the XO and CO after reporting "ATR Rigged for dive" to the Conn, to be sure they knew of what we were doing as an experiment in the space. Upon hearing the diving alarm, I headed aft to observe the physical results of all the creaking and groaning of the hull as our depth increased.

Even at periscope depth of 63 feet, the rigidness of that huge timber could be seen, though it remained straight. As always, the Conning Officer made a very careful 360 degree periscope safety search on both low and high power of the horizon before lowering the scope and going to a 100 foot depth. As we proceeded down in 50 foot increments, and the hull began to compress from the increased outside water pressure, the noises and groans from the hull really became prominent, and to me quite scary. Unless you've heard them, it's hard to describe the eeriness of hearing steel shrink from compression! Even standing on the walkway between the banks of torpedo tubes, one can hear the popping sounds coming from piping and heavy steel beams and welds as they compress.

At 200 feet the heavy shoring timber had bowed in the center about three inches. As we dove in stages to 400 feet, the compression sounds continued though more labored and heavy and the arch in that timber slowly increased to about eight inches. At that depth, even the DC

lighting began to flicker and dim, adding an even more eerie feel. On any deep dive test, everyone is not only conscious of the possibility of dangers from ruptures, as even the slightest leak at that depth can quickly develop into a major calamity, but everyone becomes vigilant in watching and listening for anything that could lead to a problem.

Easing down to 412 feet was done in small increments and control of the boat at that depth is remarkably stable. You do it with a “Zero Bubble” and usually only the Bow Planes are used. When at test depth, an announcement was made from the Conn over the 1MC, and a careful check of all piping system and hull penetration areas was conducted by a leading petty officer in each compartment, with a status report made to the Control Room and Diving Officer.

I recall there was always a sense of relief when the boat left test depth and headed upwards, yet there was a strong sense of achievement each time when we realized the “Old Girl was still up to the task.”

I watched in amazement over the next few minutes as that shoring timber straightened out as we went back to periscope depth, and I’ve carried this memory with me after all these years. The older WWII submarines were remarkably resilient, and we could hear them flexing as the pressure increased and decreased. The newer HY-80 steel hulls which I encountered on the “Boomer” I rode after SEA POACHER must have been significantly stronger and more rigid, as I don’t remember such noises on dives that went significantly deeper.

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS TORPEDO LOADOUT

On 22 October 1962, we had off-loaded all our exercise torpedoes before leaving Key West and arrived in Fort Lauderdale/Port Everglades with all skids and tubes empty. All sorts of war operations were in progress. Including the offloading of tanks.

We received by rail war-shot torpedoes from Yorktown Naval Weapons Station, which we loaded after midnight and the early morning hours by cherry-picker, so the locals wouldn't realize what we were doing. The Army trucks and tanks were at the same time being loaded onto flat-bed tractor-trailers, but it was SECRET as to their destination.

Our following operations were also SECRET.

Fort Lauderdale was selected since it was the only Florida East Coast city with a railroad spur running all the way to the end of the pier. There were other vessels tied up to that pier when we arrived, and we couldn't tie up for several hours until the local harbor control ran them off. The locals (including the newspaper) were quite suspicious about a submarine suddenly tying up, and the “cover” story was that we had come in for a courtesy “port call” and liberty for our sailors.

Captain Kojm threatened the entire crew with “death” if we even hinted about our real reason for being there! We allowed general visiting through the Conning Tower Hatch, let them go forward to see officer’s quarters and the Wardroom, then aft to see the Crews Mess, berthing compartment and engine rooms, and then back to the mess decks to exit.

Both torpedo room doors were dogged shut, and the peep-holes were covered so no one could see the activity going on there. During the evenings, we would rig the loading skids, both forward and aft, grease them good, and load about 4 war shot torpedoes (Mk 16s and 37s) into each torpedo room each night. Then our torpedo crews spent the next 18 hours checking out and preparing the war shots.

It was a sobering time for all the Weapons Department as it was our first experience with handling and preparing war shots. I remember well walking around with an exploder pin in my

pocket during the entire Cuban Crisis, while the other pins were in my stateroom safe.

I must have checked and counted those things 10 times a day during the crisis!

SEAL OPERATIONS

I vividly remember another 1962 Cuban Crisis "hairy experience" during a late evening practice of our clandestine launching of our black rubber raft from the forward deck with six of us in the raft. I was the OinC (Officer in Charge) of the raft, and we had darkened our faces with lamp-black, wore black gloves and black stocking caps, and had manned our raft on deck, waiting for the ship to submerge from underneath us.

We heard the diving alarm, watched the look outs and OOD leave the bridge, and heard the CT Hatch slam shut. The wait until we heard the loud hissing noises of the vents opening beneath us always seemed like an eternity, and feeling the sub dive from beneath us and leave us free-floating like a cork, was something I never got used to.

As soon as we were floating free, we would paddle like crazy to move away from the boat so as not to be rammed by the submerging sail. We used to see if we could drag our hands down the side of the Sail as it went by!

The drill was for us to follow the Sail as best we could row, and try to be close enough to signal with a red flashlight to the periscope when it was first raised after obtaining periscope depth. We all shared a mortal fear that the scope would come up through the bottom of the raft, or worse still, the snorkel pipe would be raised underneath us and capsize our raft!

As long as the raft was on deck and the OOD was on the bridge, I could communicate by hand signals. But once the OOD cleared the bridge, we had no way to communicate until we found the periscope, and I was able to signal through it with my flashlight that we were OK and ready to be towed closer in to shore by lassoing the snorkel pipe. This period of no communication was scary and quite disconcerting to us in the raft, and lessening this amount of time became the thrust of every practice run!

On one occasion, just as the OOD cleared the bridge commencing the dive, we in the raft spotted a destroyer on the horizon heading towards us at flank speed with a zero angle on the bow. We screamed and pounded on the Sail with our paddles as it went by hoping it would be heard in the Conn, but we knew it was a hopeless effort! We did what we were trained to do, all the while watching that destroyer barreling down on us. I began rehearsing in my mind what I'd tell the destroyer skipper or boarding party!

All six of us in that raft had one eye watching out for the periscope, and the other eye watching that destroyer getting bigger and bigger. Dick Stafford (XO) had the Conn, and after finally stabilizing at periscope depth, he raised the scope looking directly aft for my flashlight signal. I quickly unscrewed the red lens from my flashlight, and shined my white light into the scope's optics, giving him a circular signal with my light. The fact that my light was white, he took as a signal something was wrong, and he immediately emergency surfaced!

By this time we could see about 20 lookouts with binoculars on the bridge of that destroyer, and the hard rudder turn that she made at flank speed was a sight to behold!! When the wave from her turn hit our raft, it nearly capsized us, and as I recall it gave the sub quite a ride as well. I remember the two skippers having quite a conversation via bull-horns from Bridge to Bridge, and I also remember that our procedure was changed that night. From now on the Conning Officer would make two full 360 degree sweeps with the scope before looking for the flashlight signal!

I know we had two raft crews, and several times launched both boats on the same dive. LTJG John Tulodeski was the OinC of Raft #2, and his crew was formed after my crew had developed most of the tactics.

Then Captain Kojm found out that our upcoming ORI graded exercise (drawn up by Captain Tex Proctor, our Squadron Commander), was going to require two rafts to make a midnight clandestine landing on a small island between Key West and Cuba.

Jack Merrill swears that he was not assigned to my raft as leading petty officer. He thinks Joe Joseph was.

After we returned to Key West in mid-December 1962, we conducted rubber raft operations for about the next 4 to 5 months. We were at sea on 12 February 1963 when our son Michael was born. In those days we didn't know the gender of our children in advance, and I knew it was time for our kid to be born. Captain Kojm asked me if I wanted to stay in from operations, but I was gung-ho and told him I wanted to go to sea! The squadron knew that my wife was due any day, and when Michael was born, they sent me a telegram through radio "wife delivered baby with periscope. Mother and baby fine."

Of course she was out of the hospital and on the pier with our new son when we pulled back into port.

Oooooohhhhh..... they were the good ole days! In all the rest of my 38 year Navy career, I never had as much fun as I did on SEA POACHER! What memories!

THIS SINGLE ACT OF KINDNESS DEBUNKS THE THEORY THAT NAVY CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS LACK COMPASSION. IT IS YET ANOTHER UNSELFISH ACT OF HEROISM PERFORMED BY A MAN WEARING THE GOLD FOULED ANCHORS.

U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Saves the Life of USMC Officer Riding Horseback

A Marine Corps Colonel narrowly escaped serious injury recently when he decided to try horseback riding, even though he had no lessons or prior experience. He mounted the horse, unassisted, and the horse immediately sprang into action. As it galloped along at a steady and rhythmic pace, the Colonel began to slip from the saddle. In terror, he grabbed for the horse's mane, but could not get a firm grip. He tried to throw his arms around the horse's neck, but he began to slide down the side of the horse anyway!

The horse galloped along, seemingly impervious to its slipping rider. Finally, losing his frail grip, the Colonel attempted to leap away from the horse and throw himself to safety. Unfortunately, his foot became entangled in the stirrup, and he was now at the mercy of the horse's pounding hooves as his head struck against the ground over and over and over.

As his head was being battered against the ground, and he was mere moments away from unconsciousness, to his great fortune a U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer shopping at Wal-Mart saw him and quickly unplugged the horse.

Courtesy Ivan Joslin, July 2007

CHAPTER 61

BOB HENRY 1960 - 1961

I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD, DIVE PLANESMAN AND LOOKOUT WATCH, SEAMAN GANG, GITMO AND UNDER CUBAN ATTACK, PROMOTION INITIATION, GOOSING THE CAPTAIN, JOHN SAVORY'S HORSE, NORTHERN RUN PREPARATIONS, LIBERTY IN PORTSMOUTH, THE NORTHERN RUN ITSELF, AND FINAL THOUGHTS

REPORTING ABOARD

What are you doing here without sub school? That's what they were asking me when I reported to SEA POACHER early in 1960 at Key West, direct from Electrician's Mate "A" school in Great Lakes, Illinois. Heck, I didn't know! That's what my orders said when I graduated I was off to probably one of the greatest adventures of my life.

It's a boat. It's a Navy ship, but it's a boat. Get that straight now! Yes, I did not have a clue on what was going on. I didn't even know where to get into the darn thing. How in the heck do I get my sea bag down that tube looking thing with a ladder in it? You had to be kidding. Well, fortunately there were shipmates to guide me throughout my awkward days and there were many, but I took only a short time to learn that I was not alone and all were there to help.

DIVE PLANESMAN AND LOOKOUT WATCH

Well, they finally thought I could stand my first planesman/lookout watch while underway-oh boy! I relieved the bow planesman while submerged and then the klaxon alarm, bell or whatever, went off to surface. My heart was in my mouth. Wow, me doing this on a submarine? We surfaced with a moderate up angle on both the bow and stern planes. Then, we hauled ourselves up to the Conning Tower and through the hatch to the bridge, getting a salt water shower in the process, and finally to the lookout watch positions on the port or starboard sides of the sail. The Diving Officer was now the Officer of the Deck on the actual bridge.

It was so great, and I was so proud of myself for getting everything done correctly or did I? I got a chill and had a feeling that I forgotten something just before I noticed the bow planes were still in the dive position, and should have been rigged in for surface running and that was my job to do it.

Well, there went my pride, and I had to inform the Officer of the Deck. He made me feel a little better when he called down to have the controls checked because he was pretty sure he saw me pull the handle to rig them in. So they ran them in and out a couple of times and they seemed to be working okay NOW! That was all that was ever said.

A few months later and quite a few dives without incident, I was assigned the Stern Planesman job during Battle Stations which was an honor for me.

It said you were the best.

SEAMAN GANG

This was usually the first assignment for the new guys other than petty officers [E-4 up] and most of us were E-3 and below. Our boss was the old man of the sea, Chief Torpedoman Floto. That guy had barnacles on his butt and other places, but we actually thought he liked us young guys. We chipped, sanded, ground, and even painted the boat. At the end of the day, we looked like a submarine ourselves, but we did have fun doing it. Some of the gang then were Poole, Sokoloski, Schnars, Snook and yours truly.

One of our other duties was to stand topside watch in port. Your job was to check all who came on board; and we carried a 45 caliber pistol. It looked like a small cannon to me; and while I had fired one prior to joining the Navy, I preferred a rifle. Usually someone would come up and BS with you for a while if things were slow during the evening. If the duty section boys would fire up some late night snacks they would bring some up and have them with you.

Standing the topside watch in Montego Bay, Jamaica, I was really bored when a couple of the seaman gang along with Engineman Third Class John Savory came up to look at some large fish swimming along the tank tops. Well, they fashioned a large flat aluminum hook down in the engine room and tied a 3/8 inch line to it. For bait, which was probably the next day's dinner, they attached a large uncooked roast [didn't tell the cook]. Over the side it went and before you could say Tarpon, one of them struck taking our roast, destroying the hook and almost pulling three of the seaman gang in with it.

Wow, that made for some sportsman type action during my watch and it was not recorded in the topside watch log.

The cook never found that roast either!

GITMO AND UNDER CUBAN ATTACK

After a nice week of R&R in Jamaica, we headed back to Cuba to continue testing sonar operators on surface ships, mainly destroyers. One of them happened to be from Germany and they were very good at locating us. When the testing was over, Captain Stahl decided to give our German guests a treat, so we surfaced along side of them and took photos of each other.

When our operations were done in Cuba, we were heading home and about 2100 things began to happen. The port lookout spotted the lights of an approaching ship. We assumed it is the BARRACUDA, which was taking our place. Then it looked like flares were being fired by them. Captain Stahl asked by signal light if we could be of any assistance. They replied that one of their propeller shafts had broken and might need a tow.

The Captain did not want to get any closer than 1000 yards until we fully established who they were. By silhouette, we now saw it was a Cuban gun boat, one that we had sold them years ago and their top speed was 14 knots. They were keeping up with us so the Skipper decided to get the heck out of there at full speed. I was the starboard lookout during this entire episode, and after being relieved at 2345 hours I went below to the After Torpedo Room where my rack was sandwiched between two Mark 16 torpedoes.

Shortly thereafter they turned on the 1 MC so we all could hear what was going on. Sonar had picked up a submerged contact below us at about 300 feet. We were on the surface and changed direction and speed, but it continued to stay with us. We went to flank speed of about 20

knots. The contact then accelerated to over 30 knots and was diving past 1000 feet. At that point they turned off the 1 MC as maybe we were getting too much information.

I went back on watch at 0745 with the stern planes, and we were now at a snorkel depth of 56 feet, doing a search pattern with the Destroyer NORFOLK and several other smaller destroyers that had joined us during the night. Shortly thereafter, the NORFOLK called us and said they had an unidentified submarine snorkeling and they were proceeding to ram her. Our navigator plotted where the unidentified submarine was in relation to their bearing and range, and discovered it was actually us.

Captain Stahl called the NORFOLK but could not convince them who we were. We went to an immediate emergency crash dive that meant "full dive on both planes, flood all tanks, full speed ahead, lower all scopes and masts" and PRAY because the NORFOLK was coming to sink us. We could hear on the UQC (our underwater telephone and also called a GERTRUDE) "Fever Route.....Fever Route..... Identify Yourself."

No big deal, just another work day on the boats. Ok, I'll finish it. Captain Stahl finally was in direct contact with the skipper of the NORFOLK. They actually knew each other from Annapolis or somewhere. Their Skipper asked Captain Stahl. "What kind of car do you drive to work?" and I will NEVER forget what he said "A 1956 Plymouth Station Wagon with a lot of body rot." They missed hitting us by 2 feet, according to the Diving Officer, which at that time was assisted by the Skipper. And they did not come back and drop depth charges.

Later in Key West, we were questioned about the incident by some top brass; that scared me more than the entire event. Here a Naval Board of Inquiry invited key SEA POACHER personnel involved in the incident. This included the Diving Officer, Captain and XO, and the lookout watches.

Since I was the starboard lookout I had to testify to all these high level officers; all with scrambled eggs on their hats mostly Captains and Admirals. We were told not to discuss any of it with other crew members.

However the end result in the official Navy report released to the press was that the flares were actually shots fired by the Cuban gun boat because they claimed we were in their waters. This was not true.

The Crew's theory was that while we expected to pass by the BARRACUDA when en route to Key West, the unknown underwater contact was a Russian nuclear sub expecting to meet up with the Cuban gun boat (probably to swap movies). When everything got mixed up, the gun boat panicked and started shooting. Then the Russian sub played with us a little until our destroyers showed up in force. The Officer's theory was that there were no U.S. nuclear subs in the area at the time. There were no other comments from them other than they liked our theory and to stick with it!

I have included herein three articles that appeared in California newspapers on or about 17 May 1960. The main article is from the San Francisco Chronicle and reads as follows: CUBA FIRED ON U.S. SUB OUTSIDE 3-MILE Limit. Washington, May 14. (UPI). The Navy said today the U.S. submarine Sea Poacher was fired upon by a Cuban patrol boat May 6 while well beyond the three mile limit of Cuba's territorial waters. The State Department filed a formal protest with Cuba.

Denying charges by the Cuban Premier Fidel Castro that the American vessel violated Cuban waters, the Navy said the episode occurred in international waters more than five miles from the coast.

It said none of the tracer bullets shot from the Cuban vessel's 20 millimeter machine gun

hit the submarine, which neither dived nor fired back.

Atlantic Fleet Commander Adm. Robert Dennison said if ships of his fleet are attacked on the high seas they will "defend themselves with all means available."

Dennison issued a statement from his Norfolk, VA headquarters here following the Navy's confirmation in Washington that the U.S. submarine Sea Poacher was fired upon by a Cuban patrol boat.

Dennison said the sub was fired upon "while on peaceful pursuit in international waters."

Navy spokesmen disputed numerous points of the charges Castro made in a two hour 40 minute speech last night, during which he accused the United States of 11 violations of Cuban territorial waters.

The Navy denied Castro's report that a Cuban Coast Guard cutter, chased an American submarine 30 miles last week, firing at it all the way with 20 mm machine guns.

And the Navy said the "C4T1" marking described by Castro would not have been an American sub, which would be marked only with three numerals, such as the Sea Poacher's 406.

Castro, in describing the incident, said the cutter Oriente sighted a blacked out submarine five miles off Matanzas Province coast. He said the sub did not identify itself and the cutter chased it 30 miles to the north, firing warning shots all the way.

Castro included this among the alleged violations of Cuban territorial waters even though he said the sighting was five miles offshore.

Cuba is listed in an official United Nations document dated February 1960, as claiming a territorial sea limit of three miles for security, criminal and fishing jurisdiction. Cuba claims 12 miles only for customs jurisdiction and pollution precautions.

Another article was embedded in the above article. It said: LET HIT BACK, SAYS SENATOR. Portsmouth, N.H., May 14-(UPI)-Sen. Styles Bridges, Republican of New Hampshire, said today, "Any time an American warship is fired upon, it should return the fire." Bridges, here for a launching of a new Polaris submarine, the Abraham Lincoln, said: "We've had enough foolishness from Premier Fidel Castro. If he starts now with deeds rather than words, it is time for us to reconstitute our thinking and take action."

The second article appeared in the Oakland Tribune and was titled: SUB ATTACK DRAWS STIFF U.S. PROTEST. Washington, May 14 (AP). The United States protested to Cuba today against what is termed an unprovoked attack on a U.S. submarine while on the high seas.

This government demanded an explanation of the incident, while at the same time vigorously disputing accusations by Cuban Premier Fidel Castro that the United States has aggressive designs against Cuba.

The U.S. view was expressed to Cuba by Lester D. Mallory, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs. He called in the highest ranking Cuban diplomat in Washington and delivered the dressing-down in person.

A State Department announcement said Mallory had demanded an explanation of "why an armed vessel of the Cuban Navy fired, without provocation, on the USS Sea Poacher while the latter was pursuing a peaceful passage on the high seas."

CHARGES REFUTED. The Navy early had displayed ship logs and navigation charts to refute Castro's charges that U.S. warships violated Cuban waters. The navigation track of the Sea Poacher at the time of the disputed incident indicated she was more than five miles from the nearest rock or point of land ever claimed by Cuba.

Tonight, in Norfolk, Va., Adm. Robert Dennison, Commander of the Atlantic Fleet, flatly

denied that ships under his command violated Cuban territorial waters and added that if attacked on the high seas they "will defend themselves with all means possible."

The incident occurred May 6, and until Castro made his charges about it last night, the U.S. Navy had apparently been unaware that its sub had been fired upon. Both the Navy and State Department disputed Castro's contention that the craft had been chased from the area by the Cuban firing.

CASTRO HARANGUE. The bearded Castro in his latest harangue denounced the United States again instead of showing what U.S. officials feel is the temperance required in order to ease tensions between Cuba and the United States.

The department expressed regret that Castro should continue to follow such a course.

As an example of the distortion U.S. authority's say Castro is using to hit at Uncle Sam, they said the Castro claim that the U.S. Destroyer Norfolk cruised within 2 1/2 miles of a Cuban Island is clearly impossible. They said the Norfolk is too big a ship to escape going aground at the location Castro mentioned.

Cuba has not had an ambassador here since last December. So Mallory called in the highest ranking embassy official, Charge d'Affaires Enrique Patterson, and gave him a 10 minute dressing down.

2 1/2 HOUR SPEECH. Castro's 2 1/2 hour speech seemed to give the green light to an anti-American campaign raging in Cuba all week.

As usual Castro ran on past midnight. He restrained himself from shouting, but he reeled off a half a dozen naval, air, and diplomatic incidents and blamed them all on the United States.

Castro opened his speech with an anti-American tirade and demanded an explanation from Washington of the case of the U.S. pilot shot down by Cuban troops Thursday. Cuba has charged he was trying to smuggle Batista followers out of the country.

A final article from the Livermore, California Herald Newspaper on 17 May 1960 said: **ROBERT HENRY ON SUB CUBANS SHOT AT.** Electrician's Mate Robert Henry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Henry of 2427 Third St., was aboard the United States Submarine Sea Poacher shot at off Cuba two weeks ago.

Henry, a newly qualified submariner, telephoned his mother last Monday. He could not tell details because of security regulations, but he assured her that while the sub had run into some trouble he was all right.

She didn't discover what it was until she read of the Cuban incident last week end.

The 1959 graduate of Livermore High School has been in the Navy since last June, and completed boot training in San Diego and electrician's school at Great Lakes, Ill.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This incident also made TIME Magazine and appeared in their 23 May 1960 issue where Castro's newspaper headlines were "Yankee warships off the Cuban coast!" Castro himself reported that the U.S. Frigate NORFOLK had violated his waters and that one of their patrol boats had fired on a U.S. submarine. The Navy answered that the NORFOLK would have run aground had it been where the Cubans said it was. And the SEA POACHER reported that it could have been shot at on May 6 more than five miles offshore Cuba, but the shots were so wild the crew thought the tracer bullets were signal flares. Even so, the U.S. made a formal protest to Havana.

PROMOTION INITIATION

When you got promoted or got qualified, officers were awarded their new rank, enlisted

their new rate, and both received dolphins at quarters topside. The rules were simple; you were thrown over the side! But prior to that, you were allowed to remove your valuables and have someone hold them for you.

Well, our XO LT Jerry Davi had just made Lieutenant Commander and it was his turn. Yes, even the Executive Officer was going over!

There were four big boys who gladly volunteered to help him over the tank tops to the water at the base in Key West. He gave his stuff to Captain Stahl to hold, including his brand new hat, and not his old steaming salty one which he expected would go in the water as well, and over he went. Then the Skipper handed Davi's brand new hat to the four big boys and it went over too!

Oh boy, two Lieutenant Commanders on board now!

GOOSING THE CAPTAIN

Some people other than submariners may not understand this next part. You have to realize the tight quarters on board, and how much we depended on and trusted each other with our lives. So sometimes we would goose each other; and if you showed that you didn't like it you would be even a larger target. So it just kind of happened to all of us at one time or another.

We were sitting in the Crew's Mess in port when some of our officers returned from a meeting and were coming down the After Battery Hatch. One of the enlisted boys goosed the first one, a Lieutenant, and that started a chain reaction. That Lieutenant goosed the next officer down the Hatch. Then the XO got it, and [believe or not] the XO Jerry Davi got even with the Skipper for the new hat in the drink and goosed Captain Stahl, who of course did not know who had done it.

When the Captain got all the way down and started forward towards the Control Room, he looked over at us (and we were all quietly laughing and doing our best to contain ourselves) and said, "enjoy your lunch."

Ask a diesel boat swabby if you don't understand how we were brothers - officers and enlisted!

JOHN SAVORY'S HORSE

A couple of us went over on liberty one evening in Key West to slam a couple of beers and have some civilian chow, even though the 406's food was the absolute best. We were going to get back to the barracks early, because we had operations in the morning with Sonar School, and we would again be a target.

On the way back walking to the base, we spotted what appeared to be a white horse across the street moving along oddly. There also appeared to be a person carrying it. Well he was barely carrying it and trying to walk on the sidewalk as much as possible. We guessed that guy must have been really slamming some beers!

When we crossed over to that side of the street, we could see our Forward Engine Room Throttle-Jockey John Savory EN3 (SS) hardly able to walk, and carrying this horse which was very large and made out of plywood. He could not see where he was going let alone know where he was going. When we offered to help him he mumbled something, so we helped him back with his fine steed which he had borrowed from one of the local taverns. As I recall, it looked just like a sign for "White Horse Scotch."

When we got close to the base entrance gate we figured the Marine guards, bless them, would not allow us to bring John's horse through the gate, even though our barracks was right there to the left of the gate.

So being the ingenious SEA POACHER crew we were, we decided to climb the 8 foot chain link fence which had barbed wire on top. It was no big deal for us and by this time we were carrying John more than the horse. So one of us went over and then got the horse safely over, and then we started with John. He got to the top okay with some pulling and pushing by us, but when we started to help him down, he decided to play like Superman. That is he jumped and caught his toes on the barbed wire and went swinging to the chain link wire with his face. And then he landed on the ground head first. Luckily he was on the inside of the fence.

We checked the fence and ground for damage, and then carried him to the barracks. We also took his horse.

The next morning, even with our great first aid treatment, John looked like he caught his face in a meat grinder. It was swollen, bloody, black and blue, and with a hint of purple. What a guy!

He healed up in a couple of weeks but did not miss any watch as I remember. John was a great guy who helped me learn to qualify in the engine rooms and a lot of other areas of SEA POACHER. I plan to invite him to ride my real horse some day, and will have a first aid kit standing by along with a 36 pack of brew.

We have renewed our friendship by email recently and remain good old friends. He told me he did not remember the "Horse," but did recall some trauma to his face and head one time long ago in the good old days of our diesel boat.

NORTHERN RUN PREPARATIONS

It's hard to imagine a diesel boat crew that can be quiet but we trained and developed what was called "ultra silent running" and probably because of it were picked to go on "The North Atlantic Run." It was officially an "Oceanographic Trip" to the North Atlantic. Guess we were going to keep an eye on all those little oceanographics running around up there!

So we headed to New London to pick up some special gear and additional crew to operate it. Also we would be checked out for deep diving pressure and escape testing. Strange, because we were all on the boat for at least 6 months by then?

When we got to New London, we tied outboard to the pier with two other subs; a Guppy like us and then next to the pier was the USS NAUTILUS (SS-571), the nuclear showboat of the Navy. Their crew was not happy we had to cross her deck to the pier for supplies and other things, and they let us know it. Our Guppy crew was cool about it.

The next day we all had to move around putting us on the inside, so they could install special gear for our trip. Now these puke's had to cross our deck to get ashore. (See photo section.)

Boy were those NAUTILUS guys annoyed that we could bump them, but as soon as our gear was installed we went up the river to the Sub Base. Some of us like myself had to do the pressure tests (no sub schooling) and then we all had to do a free ascent (escape) from the "Tank." For me it was another adventure and both tests were passed. Some of the boys had problems with one or the other, but all were going on the trip regardless!

I was talking to the topside watch when I got ordered to run over to the next pier to assist the sub coming in with their lines. In my haste to get over there quickly, because she was almost

at the pier, I ran past an Ensign Officer and saluted while running.

I figured he saw the sub arriving and would not give me problems about not saluting; but no, he was going to straighten me out good! He chewed me out while I was handling lines. And he was mad. because I didn't stop what I was doing and wanted to report me to my duty officer.

So when the sub was secured and some of their crew were on the pier (smiling at my problem), the Ensign and I proceeded to SEA POACHER and our Lieutenant Duty Officer came topside to the pier.

When he heard the story, he asked me to go back over to SEA POACHER while he talked to the Ensign. It was not a pretty sight because the Lieutenant really reamed him a new one with all the class of an old salty qualified sub sailor. I don't remember which of the officers it was, but I wouldn't have expected any less from any of them. You just didn't mess with our crew, especially if they're doing their job!

John Snook invited me to his home near there before we had to depart. His family and friends treated me like a long lost relative, and I had a great time. We went to my first burlesque show in Boston also. Thanks John and family for all your hospitality.

We departed New London with a special #1 periscope, additional radio and electronic gear, and food stuffed in every spot you could find, plus some more. We had to change course to Portsmouth, England, due to the special scope leaking more than we could repair and to get a little R&R as well.

The Seaman gang made the local newspaper in Portsmouth. On the Front Page was the gang with Chief Floto supervising Poole, Schnars, Sokoloski, Snook and myself, and looking like we were working topside. We had a great time visiting Portsmouth and London; however those guys there drink their beer warm. The girls were very friendly because they hadn't seen an American around there for awhile. And; of course, we were a handsome bunch of boys! All of the folks there were very nice to us.

We left our pier and tied up to a tender for repair to our periscope. Then we rigged for sea which included welding all hatches shut (except the Bridge hatch) and both emergency buoys. Then we painted over all identification on the sail and the rest of the superstructure. This was a little different from usual, but who was I to ask why!

LIBERTY IN PORTSMOUTH

EDITOR'S NOTE: Bob Henry provided the following article printed on the front page of the Portsmouth England News on 27 September 1960 with a photograph which is contained in that section herein. Observe that a 48 star flag is flying, and Alaska became the 49th State on 3 January 1959 and Hawaii entered the Union on 21 August 1959. I was going to make a point to single out the Quartermasters and Navigator by name for this, but decided I should leave that up to you readers to give them a hard time. See photo section.

BRR.. BRR..IT WAS A MAN FROM FLORIDA. The telephone rang in a little private hotel in Culver Road, Sandown, yesterday, and the proprietor, Mr. A. Duval, lifted the receiver.

"Say - do you know a Mrs. Josephine Lund in Palm Beach, Florida?" asked the voice, with a deep American drawl.

"Yes," replied the surprised Mr. Duval, "She is my wife's aunt."

That was Mr. and Mrs. Duval's introduction to Chief Cook John Harvey of the United States submarine, Sea Poacher, now berthed at Haslar Creek, Gosport.

John's mother, back home in Florida, is a friend of Mrs. Lund, and when the latter heard

that her friend's son was coming to England in Sea Poacher, she asked him to "look in on my niece in Sandown."

So it was that John, given a day's leave from his boat yesterday did just that. He "looked in" on the Duvals and took them greetings from Mrs. Lund, who last visited her niece at Sandown five years ago. Mrs. Lund's brother, Mr. Thomas Bolan, only recently left Sandown to return to New York in the liner Queen Elizabeth.

John Harvey is one of a crew of 80 serving in the U.S.S. Sea Poacher, which is spending a week at Fort Blockhouse, the "home" of the Royal Navy's submarine service.

One of the America's many "Guppy" type boats; she arrived on Sunday after a 15-day crossing of the Atlantic in which she encountered heavy seas.

When our Naval Correspondent visited her yesterday he found many of the crew at work with anti-corrosion paint, while others were below decks "clearing up."

U.S.S. Sea Poacher, which belongs to the American's Submarine Squadron 12, is commanded by Lieut. Cmdr. L.E. Stahl, U.S.N., whose home is in Key West, Florida, home of the submarine.

THE NORTHERN RUN ITSELF

Well, we finally were on our way one evening after dark. Once we cleared the harbor and coast, the OOD ordered the running lights turned off. I remember that Liggett was the QM on watch and he double checked the order. I was one of the lookouts. Around 2130, we spotted a ship coming towards us so we submerged. The ship never knew we were there. Then we came up to periscope depth, which was going to be our operating depth at night for nearly 3 months, and we would be submerged during the day. Guess they didn't want anyone to see us for some reason!

My first watch was on the stern planes. It was going well until we started having problems holding the boat at a 56 feet snorkeling depth. The heavy ground swells were causing the snorkel intake valve to close causing a vacuum in the boat. When that happens you kind of start to taste your backside because the diesel engine takes the air for them selves and away from us (it's not fun) until the engines automatically shut off at a six inch vacuum.

The Skipper got upset, came into the Control Room, and said to get the Battle Planesmen on the job. The Diving Officer said they just happened to be on the planes right now! The CO said to replace them, which they did, giving us a little break until the Skipper cooled down. It was just hard to hold her level, but we got better

The food was always good, but there came a time when the bread started to look like Swiss cheese. It had mold on it and we would pick it off so it looked like Swiss cheese! Well, once the local bread supply was gone a plan developed to have one cook stand duty at night baking bread and what a great job the cooks did. Fresh bread in the mornings and thank God for mold. The cooks were definitely heroes!

Have you ever seen pictures of the North Atlantic where the waves are large, and the color of everything is a cold gray. Yes, that's what it was like! And it's also a cold SOB! Get a small drop of water down the neck of your foul weather gear and it feels like ice going down. That was for the diving officers and lookout watches the few times we did surface.

And that would only have been at night and off station where we would be watching "Oceanographics" coming and going. And you had better watch what you ate before going to the bridge in rough seas because you would be chumming if you ate to much greasy food!

The Skipper said we were using too much water, and we had to stop taking showers. Not too hard for diesel boat guys, but we did like to scrape it off once in awhile and diesel fuel would stick to you. If you took a guy after a couple of weeks of no showers (just sponge baths), and stripped him down, the parts he didn't wash would be a different color like sort of a diesel tan!

About the sponge bath. Take a stainless 3 gallon size bucket and fill it with warm water. Give yourself a sponge and then soak your feet in it one at a time. When done and have clean clothes on, wash your dirty clothes in the bucket. Efficient use of water and how it was done.

After some time, the enginemen figured out that one of the lines in the superstructure was leaking and causing the loss of water, not the crew. So we left our station and off the coast of Nova Scotia a skinny volunteer went up there in rough seas and repaired the pipe. When he came back he was black and blue with cuts and bruises. He was ordered to his bunk for a few days where we waited on this hero hand and foot. The water problem was solved.

The boat was designed to withstand about 45 to 50 degree rolls and not turn completely over. I was really happy to know this when twice we rolled over 60 degrees. The first time was to starboard when I was in the crews mess. I was showered with food cans and silverware, along with my shipmates. The second time was to port a day or two later at night. I was in my bunk in the After Torpedo Room squeezed between a couple of Mark 16 torpedoes and woke up flying to the port side of the compartment. There were a few cuts and bruises, but no fatalities. Soiled underwear maybe!

There was time to get your qualification done on this trip, if you had your normal work done and you weren't on watch. The qualified crew helped all of us non-qualified pukers. So then came the day when we had our final test with the Chief of the Boat and the XO Jerry Davi, and we passed. Later that day we were awarded our Dolphins in the Control Room and that is probably the proudest moment for a submariner! We would be thrown over the side later in Key West to complete the award!

We had finally taken enough pictures taken with our fancy #1 periscope and had enough "Oceanographic" information from our special radio and electronic gear, which we could not see as it would be covered if we had to go into those areas, to complete our mission and head back to New London. Our training paid off as we didn't get caught up North or sunk, thank the Lord!

Prior to the crew getting its first liberty at New London in almost five months, the Skipper warned us to be on our best behavior or else. We were all a bunch of young bucks that had been caged up for too long, so he knew we were a powder keg on the loose. But no one wanted to screw up his liberty at Key West, so there was no trouble and everyone held the line!

The trip home was a happy one with fresh supplies and the boat sort of back to normal until we rounded Cape Hatteras, where we hit some real huge ground swells. We rode them out on the surface and since we rode rougher than a destroyer, it was fun.

I remember going up to the Wardroom to take battery readings. As I approached the hatch to the battery well, I wound up four feet in the air because the deck dropped down so fast due to the swells. After gathered myself, I made a command decision to abort reading the batteries until further instructions. It turned out a large part of our superstructure was torn away on the starboard side aft of the bow planes.

We had a nice welcome home with a lot of families there that also made us single guys feel great too. The anchor pool had a healthy cash amount paid out and included a week's free leave. Some of us single guys volunteered to take the duty for the married guys (for obvious reasons) but most of us got invited to their homes later for dinner and drinks; nothing like home cooking.

Marshall Poole and Ron Schnars and their wives invited me to their homes on many

occasions. It was really appreciated by a homesick Californian. Other than a few car wrecks and a few guys in jail, it was a quiet homecoming. As I recall, the officers went to bat for all of the enlisted in trouble.

I also remember the Christmas 1960 Menu on board. It was just slightly different from others you have seen in this book, and certainly XO Jerry Davi had a hand in it. Besides the turkey and all of that, there was Fresh Shrimp Cocktails and Grilled Rib Steaks. I am not saying anything relative to the Chilled Egg Nog that flowed freely in earlier accounts.

After two years on board, I got orders to the West Coast. The day I finished up on SEA POACHER, and as I was walking back to the barracks to get my gear, I felt sad to have missed saying goodbye to the Skipper. I had said all my other goodbyes, but had missed him.

Then up comes that old piece of crap of a car that the Skipper drove. He jumped out and came over to shake my hand and thank me for my work on board.

That was the last time I saw him. I heard he settled down in Northern California later in the 70's near where I live, however, I have never ran into him. Maybe he finally got a new car?

FINAL THOUGHTS

So this is the memory of a now 65 year old "young" man from California, who was 19 to 21 years old when serving on SEA POACHER. I was so lucky to have served on such a great diesel submarine with an outstanding bunch of men that will always be in my memories and prayers. Thanks for teaching me to be a better person than I was when I went on board.

I try not to dwell in the past too much but I consider myself "Rich" because of the great shipmates I have located recently. I could write stories about each and every one of you. Here's one involving John Savory....walking through the Engine Room in 1961 looking for a smoke and see you on the throttles and asking you [yelling in your ear] for a cigarette....you answer back [yelling in my ear] you're out too, but I can look in the butt kit....I strike gold and find a butt almost $\frac{3}{4}$ inch long....so we share it with the cool evening air blowing down the Engine Room hatch into our hair as we head back to Key West after ops all day....looking forward to an ice cold beer waiting for us in town with our names on them....we enjoy the moment without talking because those Fairbanks/Morse engines are all ahead full and are screaming....I can almost feel, hear and smell it all JUST PRICELESS! WOW!

"All warfare is based on deception. Hence, when able to attack, we must seem unable; when seeing our forces, we must seem inactive; when we are near, we must make the enemy believe we are far away; when far away, we must make him believe we are near. Hold out baits to entice the enemy. Feign disorder, and crush him."

Sun Tzu, The Art of War

"My rule is: If you meet the weakest vessel, attack; if it is a vessel equal to yours, attack; and if it is stronger than yours, also attack."

Admiral Stephan O. Makarov, 1849-1904)

"It was absolutely involuntary. They sank my boat."

John F. Kennedy, when asked how he became a war hero

CHAPTER 62

JEROME A. DAVI 1960 - 1961

BY

HIS WIFE DORI DAVI

**HE WOULD REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER,
OUR DOG DAUGHTERS, THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT,
OTHER NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON SEA POACHER,
EDITOR OF THE SEA POOCH NEWSLETTER,
AND DUTY AFTER SEA POACHER**

REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER

How lucky we were to be in such a beautiful city – Key West. Jerry was very happy to join SEA POACHER as Executive Officer in April 1960, after leaving ARCHERFISH in overhaul in Philadelphia.

His famous quote was “ARCHERFISH was overgoing underhaul.”

As I remember Jerry was greeted graciously by Captain Larry and Mary Stahl, as well as by a great Wardroom and Crew. We still had our home on South Street and settled in quickly. Lots of happy times.

OUR DOG DAUGHTERS

One of the first tasks Jerry had on SEA POACHER was to prepare a new roster of officers and family members for distribution to the Submarine Squadron and the Commodore. We had no children at the time, but we did have two adorable dachshund dogs.

So Jerry listed them both by name – Poochie age 5 and Bimbo age 3, thinking that the Captain would catch the joke when he approved the roster. Ha Ha!

However being Commanding Officer was a time consuming job, and the roster went to the printer just as Jerry had prepared it.

At the next Squadron social gathering the Commodore asked Jerry the ethnic basis for the very different names of our daughters. Much laughter ensued and soon Jerry Davi's remarkable sense of humor was evident.

THE CUBAN FIRING INCIDENT

Life continued on SEA POACHER as with all submarines in Key West., which was basically short cruises, home in port every night, and weather that was idyllic.

Then upon returning to Key West from GITMO, SEA POACHER encountered the unknown with sonar contacts and nerves tense over an unidentified submarine. It was later found to be from a foreign country, and not exactly one of our allies. Jerry remembered this to be a very exciting time.

After the proper protocol was followed and the Squadron on shore notified (as well as everyone else), many ships, planes, and helicopters descended from Key West to the area. After many hours of searching it became clear that the other submarine did not want to be discovered.

Soon a Cuban gunboat appeared and approached in a menacing way toward SEA POACHER. Some noises of a sort, sounding like metal, hit the boat.

Jerry remembered all of this and told me that he asked the Captain “How it might feel to fire the first shot in World War III.”

Meanwhile the rumors were flying like crazy. We were first told that SEA POACHER would not be returning as scheduled. Our fears were relieved when the boat returned to Key West the following day.

Some days later there were crowds of people looking at the badges of battle on the SEA POACHER’S Conning Tower and superstructure.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Numerous newspaper articles on this incident have been provided in earlier chapters. Dori provided an article that I initially thought was included before. However, after careful review, this article (apparently from the Key West Citizen on 15 May 1960) sheds additional information. Accordingly, its text follows.

U.S. FIRES PROTEST AT CUBA FOR ITS ATTACK ON OUR SUB. Washington – (UPI). The United States formally protested to Cuba Saturday against a Cuban patrol boat firing “without provocation” on a U.S. submarine more than five miles off Cuba May 6.

The State Department called in Cuban Charge de Affaires Enrique Patterson to demand an explanation from the Cuban government. The Department acted after the Navy said the Submarine Sea Poacher had been fired upon by a Cuban patrol boat well beyond the three-mile limit of Cuba’s territorial waters.

It said none of the tracer bullets shot from the Cuban vessel’s 20-millimeter machine gun hit the submarine which neither dived nor fired back.

In Norfolk, Va., Atlantic Fleet Commander Adm. Robert Dennison said Saturday if the ships of his fleet are attacked on the high seas they will “defend themselves with all means available.” Dennison issued the statement following the Navy’s confirmation in that the U.S. Submarine Sea Poacher was fired upon by a Cuban patrol boat. Dennison said the sub was fired upon “while on peaceful pursuit in international waters.”

Navy spokesmen disputed numerous points of the charges Castro made in a two-hour, 40 minute television speech Friday night.

The Navy denied Castro’s report that a Cuban coast guard cutter chased an American submarine 30 miles last week, firing at it all the way with 20-mm machine guns.

And the Navy said the “C4T1” marking described by Castro would not have been on an American sub, which would be marked only with three numerals, such as the SEA POACHER’S 406.

Castro in describing the incident said the cutter Oriente sighted a blacked out submarine five miles off Matanzas province coast. He said the sub did not identify itself and the cutter chased it 30 miles to the north, firing warning shots on the way.

Castro included this among the alleged violations of Cuban territorial waters even though he said the sighting was five miles offshore.

Cuba is listed in an official U.S. document dated February 1960, as claiming a territorial sea limit of three miles for security, criminal and fishing jurisdiction. Cuba claims 12 miles only for custom jurisdiction and pollution precautions.

Castro's charges also included a claim that the U.S. Destroyer NORFOLK was within two and a half miles of a point of land on the Cuban coast. The Navy said the NORFOLK'S actual closest distance to shore was 11 miles.

In this episode, the Navy said, a Cuban patrol boat hailed the NORFOLK just before 1 a.m. Wednesday and a man shouted in English that the destroyer was "in Cuban waters." The NORFOLK'S skipper said "thank you," photographed the Cuban vessel and proceeded on course to the north east.

The Navy said later study of charts established that if the NORFOLK, an extra-large destroyer displacing 7,300 tons, had been where Castro said it was, it would have been in only 11 or 12 feet of water and "might have run aground or hit a rock."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Imbedded in this article is another one entitled "FIRE BACK" – BRIDGES. Portsmouth, N.H. (UPI). Sen. Styles Bridges (R., N.H.) said Saturday that "any time an American warship is fired on, it should return the fire. We've had enough foolishness from Castro. If he starts now with deeds rather than words, it is time for us to reconstitute our thinking and take action."

OTHER NEWSPAPER ARTICLES ON SEA POACHER

The Key West Citizen on 8 July 1960 reported under the title of CONCH CHOWDER A FAREWELL FETE. Therein it was noted that the ship's crew of SEA POACHER held a farewell party at the Casa Munras Patio on July 1. They will be leaving Key West August 4 for a four month training cruise to the New London area.

The photo (not clear enough for publication herein) shows left to right: R.W. Hall, SOC; Lt. J. A Davi, Executive Officer; Lt. Cmdr. L. E. Stahl, the Skipper; and R. S. Hall, Chief of the Boat. Citizen Staff Photo by Don Pinder.

Another article, apparently in December and upon completion of the "training cruise" is entitled HAIRBREADTH TOPIC. The photo (again not clear enough for publication) shows the bearded officer, right as Lt. Cmdr. Jerome Davi of USS Sea Poacher. Discussing the coal black whiskers are, left, Lt. Ed Raymer of the USS Bushnell and Ens. Jim Lynch, AUW, center.

EDITOR OF THE SEA POACH NEWSLETTER

I am certain Jerry was the Editor of this Newsletter, which appears elsewhere in this book. He was also a cartoonist.

However nearly all were done in pencil and are not clear enough for publication. Most all relate to SEA POACHER and have not been published. I wonder who recognizes himself.

One shows an officer looking at a bunch of sailors at attention. One is dressed like Roy Rogers. The caption reads "I don't care where you are from, you're still out of uniform. Was anyone nicknamed Tex or Cowboy in 1960 and 1961?"

Another shows a First Class in bed with the title "Breakfast in Bed for the Med Hero." Then eggs, bacon, and toast and shown flying toward him and the caption reads "And how do you want your coffee dear?"

There is also one of an overweight sailor with a Medical Doctor looking at him. The caption reads “No, not overweight, let’s put it this way, you’re a SLOB!”

Then there is Skipper talking to an Exec on the Bridge where there is a sailor on the after deck with a blanket and fire. The caption reads “Jerry, I don’t care if he is tops with smoke signals, Tell ***** he’s got to learn to send light!”

Another it titled “Maneuvering Frolics.” Here seven electricians with wrenches are trying to fix a piece a gear. The caption reads “OK Doug, besides the armature and Despang, what else is cr***** out?”

Similarly one is titled “Galley Frolics.” A pot of something is heating on the stove, and the cook has a note in his right hand that says “GUN HAND.” A string is attached to his left hand and salt is pouring onto a spoon sitting like a teeter-totter on the deck. The cook’s foot then hits the end of the spoon and the salt lands in the pot. The caption says “One thing about Tillis, he sure has this cooking staffed.”

A final large cartoon shows a drawing of the SEA POACHER with a LCDR and his hands over his ears. He says “But all I wanted to do was rescu...” Behind him is a bearded Fidel Castro on a gunboat flying a Cuban flag and firing at SEA POACHER with a pistol. Castro says “RESCUE? YANQUI Imperialist! No Americano’s weel rescue a Cuban Battle Sheep! Viva 26 de Julio!” At the bottom it says “from your old amigo’s on El 399 boat!”

DUTY AFTER SEA POACHER

Jerry was subsequently assigned to MARLIN as Commanding Officer and then Skipped TUSK in New London.

His final assignment was Director of Submarine Prospective Commanding Officer Training School at Mare Island where he retired at age 40 with 20 years of naval service.

He then attended law school and became Assistant District Attorney for Contra Costa County in California.

Thanks much for including me and my two cents worth of memories into this Book. These are just a few of my recollections of these exciting days in Key West.

We enjoyed all of our time there.

*“They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters.
They see the works of the Lord, and His wonders of the deep.”*

Psalms 107: 23-24, King James Version

*“No one has done more to prevent conflict – no one has made a greater sacrifice for the cause
of Peace – than you, America’s proud missile submarine family. You stand tall among the
heroes of the Cold War.”*

General Colin Powell

CHAPTER 63

DON KAMUF 1960 - 1961

I REMEMBER NAVAL BASE KEY WEST – 1960, THE STILLS, LIFE IN THE ENGINE ROOM, SHOTS FIRED!, NEW YORK TIMES DATED MAY 15, 1960, A NORTHERN RUN – GETTING READY, AND HEADING NORTH

EDITOR'S NOTE: Don was a prolific writer that included a submarine book. These articles were obtained from the SEA POACHER website – See References.

NAVAL BASE KEY WEST - 1960

December and remembering the cold North climate the adrenalin was flowing in my veins being in my new paradise called a submarine. Crossing the gangway on this Sunday morning the topside watch checked my orders and sent me below through the Forward Torpedo loading hatch.

Again the smells, it never changed. I could close my eyes and still think the boat was under by Frye Boots. Looking aft and up at the Bridal sweet exposed two pair of feet. Sleeping in on a Sunday morning. Things never change. The duty officer in the Wardroom smiled as I reported in. "Enginemen Second Donald John Kamuf class reporting as ordered," in a proper military manner. We walked to the FER where he said why don't you change into your dungarees. Putting on these bell bottoms made me look like an idiot.

After changing we went to the Crew's Mess where the mess cook served two cups of coffee to us. A soup spoon could stand in my cup that is how thick it was. After offering me a cigarette we chatted about by background, family, friends, experience etc. This LT. seemed like a nice officer to be concerned about my family and me.

THE STILLS

We discussed the boat and my knowledge of the engine rooms. "What problems if any do you have aft" I asked? He thought for a moment and stated "The distilling plants lack the capabilities of producing the required daily amount of fresh water from the rated 2000 gallons per day to about 200 gallons per day".

His question to me was, "Do you know any thing about the distilling plants"? My comment was "Sir I was born in those Badgers and can make more water than a heavy rainfall in Pittsburgh."

His eyes lit up at my comment. "Are you qualified in the Engine Rooms, and can you see if that the problem can be taken care of now?"

"Sure no problem" was my reply. A piece of cake.

Looking at the plants I could tell that little or no maintenance was accomplished on them. The covers were loose, the gages had expired calibration stickers, the blower belts were worn, fiberglass insulation was exposed around the covers, and on and on and on. The below decks

watch helped me find the duty enginemen, a third class.

I woke him up and half asleep he yells "What the f*** do you want?" "Who the f*** are you?" I told him and his comment was get out of my face and rolled over facing outboard. I grabbed him and yanked him out of his dirty bunk, dressed in dirty skives, he smelled awful. My orders to him were to take a shower and meet me in the FER in 10 minutes.

Entering the Engine Room I parked my a** on the locker bench next to #2 main engine, so I could see him entering the compartment. When he entered our eyes made instant contact, he saw a grin on my face, which quickly put oil on the troubled waters between us, and we became life long friends.

Talking to John Savory about these plants, I knew what was required and what should be accomplished immediately. It was a good cleaning.

To start from square one was to determine any other problems and maintenance that would also be required. Using the sound powered phone I cranked the Maneuvering Room looking for the duty electrical cat to inform him that the load on the Ship's battery would increase. He answered the phone "WHAT?" "This is MUFF in the Forward Engine Room" and stated my intentions. "Wait a minute, what the hell is a MUFF?" Slowly explaining the situation and being on the battery for ships electrical power, permission was granted to run the distilling plants which would not disrupt electrical operations aboard.

So about 2 p.m. John and I started the process of cleaning the plants. This was a slow process and required many steps for this cleaning. The procedure involved a corrosive chemical to be dissolved in a large barrel, hoses and a few items that we had to improve on.

John was amazed that I knew this form of maintenance since he had not seen it accomplished aboard. In the heat of the Engine Room we worked as a team, sweating and cursing. At about midnight we were making good fresh water in accordance with the required specs, as indicated by the battery water tester a Kline Schmidt. And as far as I could figure we were near maximum capacity of good battery and drinking water.

We were tired now, so I left a note for the duty officer of what we did. I climbed into my tree for a few hours of down time.

At quarters the next morning I was introduced to the crew as EN2 Kamuf. Hey may be I'll lose my nickname. The Engineer and the Chief Engineman talked to me about what transpired and about the day before. A slow explanation was detailed with only nods from their heads.

A few weeks later the CO presented me with a nice commendation on this subject. Not bad for only being aboard a few weeks. Now I was called "Muff the Rain Maker." The crew was happy since most of the time they were on water hours which limited the amount to be used for showering, cleaning and cooking, and now a good shower once or twice a week at sea would be fantastic.

At about 0900 the maneuvering watch was stationed for a two-week deployment to Jamaica and Bermuda. The Chief Engineman said that while I rigged the engine room for dive he and the Engineer would watch to see how well this was accomplished by me. No sweat. I got the dive bill from the bill holder and with a grease pencil rigged the room in a heartbeat checking off each item. Since propulsion underway was with the AER it was fairly quiet in the Forward one. After seeing me in action and my rapid response to the diving alarm, they were satisfied they had a good man they could trust. Looking at each other they said in unison "He is qualified in all respects."

I felt great that my responsibility was bestowed so quickly, so for the next few hours I got to drink my coffee, smoke my Pall Mall cigarettes, and eat sticky buns obtained by my oiler.

The distilling plants were now running at 80% capacity. I was informed a new record was set for their performance on SEA POACHER. This allowed the crew to take showers, plenty of water for the engines, the battery and cooking.

After a few days at sea the crew was saying "Muff the Rainmaker now has made our lives a little bit more comfortable under way." Wow, plus now that I had qualified two forward throttle men Ron (Magoo) Paterson and John Savory, who were off port and starboard watch standing of 6 hours on and 6 hours off.

LIFE IN THE ENGINE ROOM

We are heading home on the surface on two main engines running in the Forward Engine Room. I had the first watch and not feeling well, the affects of an mm and whiskey liberty. Sitting back on the supply locker benches I watched the engine gages while the oiler checked for leaks down below. The 1st class in charge wanted to do some minor work and asked if the engine load could be shifted aft on number 3 and 4 main engines. The chief agreed and called Maneuvering for the engine change. The oiler shut down the engines. Everything he did was correct since I reviewed his qualifications prior to getting under way and made some minor mental changes as to how things are done in a safe and proper manner. In warm sea water, the heat from the shut down engines and the ambient temperature of about 90 degrees made life terrible. Sitting between those two "pressure cookers" with a wet towel around my neck and a jug of cool aid did little to help. Sleeping was impossible due to the humidity.

It was so hot and humid in the Engine Rooms under way that our uniforms were skivvies and open toed leather sandals with a wet towel around our necks.

Leaving the Engine Room after a four hour watch we sometimes got relief by getting permission to go on the Bridge and feel the cool breeze under our arm pits. In the noisy Engine Room conversations with hand signs or hand movement was a normal practice, since the noise prevented normal conversation. For example if you wanted to describe sex you make a circle with the thumb and pointer finger with one hand, with the other hand put the pointer finger through the hole and move it back and forth. Another example, if the bilges need to be pumped, your hands were made into fists and moved up and down quickly and then were pointed downward.

So all the basic requirements for the watch stander could be done with your hand signals.

Sitting between the two engines as they ran at standard speed was boring. The oiler did everything in the Engine Room. Watching, listening and smelling were my job. Any change discovered by my senses would spring me into action, trying to determine what was that strange noise, what was the smell, why was that pressure gage reading low and on and on.

Towards the end of the watch about 15 minutes before the hour my hearing was tuned to the sound and rush of air coming through the forward hatch indicating it was being opened. This meant that your relief and others were coming to relieve the watch stations aft. And were on time. I was relieved by using sign language and went forward to the Crew's Mess deaf, for a while. If a movie was showing, I would read the actors lips. All engine men could do this stunt.

As the days wore on the seas were calm which made it comfortable for the crew to eat and sleep.

If it was rough, the Bridge watch, when relieved, would bring their wet rain gear, binoculars, gloves, boots, etc. to the Engine Rooms for them to dry out.

The nice and tidy Engine Room would look like a laundry.

SHOTS FIRED!

We would be passing Cuba in international waters, which was no concern of the crew or mine. We all knew about Castro and his goings on with the Communist Party, who cared. I had the 2000/2400 watch running cold iron, the engines shut down when all of a sudden the engine order telegraph came to life with a command "EMERGENCY START".

We are almost home and now this. Nothing in the plan of the day mentioned this condition. My self and the oiler started the engines and now waiting for the engine temperatures and pressures to be at the required readings. The engine order telegraph rang constantly indicating that the Maneuvering Room wanted the engines "NOW" so they could put them in the propulsion line up. I gave them the ready bell, the engines slowed from the sudden load put on by the generators then returned to the 720 RPM and now we were answering a full bell. Just like that.

What the hell was going on?

I picked up the sound powered phone to see if there was any information to explain the actions that just happened. There was some yelling like lets get the f*** out of here. Hearing the watertight door open I looked up and saw John, he started to yell in my ear, the F***** Cubans are firing at was with machine guns. Then over the 1 MC the word was passed to rig ship for "Battle Stations Torpedo".

At mid night I was relieved and went forward to find out the scoop of what happened. Now everyone was awake, Battle Stations were finally secured.

The lookouts that were topside were now telling the crew that last night what looked like a gun boat in the dark was shooting at us using tracer ammunition and firing flare signals at us. They were also sending semaphore to us. "Light Signals" for us to identify our selves.

The crew was awake the rest of the night and at dawn the CO went topside to see if there was any damage to us. There were a few holes in the sail I was told.

A NORTHERN RUN - GETTING READY

One morning at quarters the XO addressed the crew stating "We are going to make a Northern Run." "To where?" But not saying another word, the CO went below.

We knew we were going north when boxes of foul weather gear were trucked to the pier. Helping to load this stuff aboard we found one box labeled "Foul Weather Gloves". Opening the box another engine man and myself threw a couple of packages down the AER hatch hoping that one size fits all.

We loaded many cases of dry stores, for example canned flour, coffee, sugar, which we stowed outboard the engines on the narrow catwalk and the lower flats or just about any place you could find so they would not be in the way or shift during dives or heavy weather.

So moving right along, all fuel oil tanks, including lube oil, hydraulic oil and external hydraulic oil was topped off. Spare parts, piston rings, bales of rags, compressor parts, and gasket material were loaded. The spare parts lockers were stuffed with cartons of cigarettes, gum, after-shave lotion, playing cards and on and on.

We also took aboard bricks used to form building construction walls. These were used when operating the trash disposal unit for weights in the garbage bags so they would sink alter being ejected from the boat. When each compartment report rigged for sea an officer would

inspect and insure every thing was stowed properly so that in case of steep angles or rolls the stuff would not come loose and injure someone.

One other thing that had to be done was installing the doubler hatches. Let me explain. The normal entrance to the hull interior is through one hatch, which is dogged down when rigging for dive. When submerged this one hatch keeps the ocean out. If the mission involves a possible dangerous situation such as a depth charge attack, under ice navigation or an unfriendly submarine, there has to be a backup to this passage.

The doubler hatch is a large metal plate that is bolted on a flange at the bottom of the hatchway and will act as a back up for the upper hatch. To install it requires some strong men to lift into position and when held in place it is bolted by about 20 large bolts and nuts. The problem with this installed the opening through this hatch is small and limits the size of things brought aboard. So only when every thing is aboard they are installed

Each department was busy. The torpedo men loaded weapons forward and aft plus a few extra 5-gallon cans of "Gilley". Gilley is a 190 proof alcohol made from grain that can be consumed to obtain a buzz just like knocking down a few at the local bar.

Some times at sea this can be useful in many ways. The electricians loaded their gear plus some Gilley for cleaning switchboards. For the amount they took aboard they are going to clean a lot of switchboards. The cooks had to plan the menus carefully in accordance to how the freeze box and dry storeroom were packed.

We were ready for sea.

Department Heads granted this last Sunday morning liberty. Any crew member that was married and had the duty, a single puke would standby for him so that the last day in port he could enjoy family life and be getting a little leg.

One married guy could not get a standby, so when his wife came aboard for a few hugs and kisses we cleared out the ATR for them. When inside, the watertight door was dogged shut so they could enjoy themselves with out any body bothering them. The watch in the Maneuvering Room insured this.

In the Control Room an officer calculated the trim. This involved compensating for the weight of all the items brought aboard and removing water from the trim tanks as required to obtain a "0" trim and angle. This was done by consulting charts and tables. An ideal trim would be with the trim tanks half full. In this case they were less than half full due to the amount of items brought aboard but still in the safety boundaries. This indicated that the boat was slightly heavy.

Remember that a submarine should have positive buoyancy to surface and remain there. It is a condition that with all the ballast tanks full and a normal trim the boat will slowly raise by it self to the surface with no help from the propulsion plant.

Monday morning we were told underway time would be at noon. Sitting topside enjoying the last of sunlight for many days.

Three Yeomen, one First Class and two Second Class in dress blues, carrying there sea bags came aboard, saluted and went down below.

I looked at my buddy with a question mark look. He smiled and said they were "Spooks." Greek to me.

The word was passed to "Station the Maneuvering Watch." Moving to the AER hatch I climbed halfway up the ladder and watched the goings on.

After all mooring lines were singled up, a strange thing happened. Our mooring lines were left on the pier. Another question for this dumb engine man.

Underway on four main engines, we rigged for dive and after awhile made a trim dive, a routine procedure to check the compensation and many other things. The trim was good after a little flooding and pumping of the trim tanks. We then surfaced and started to head north, the normal at sea routine had started.

HEADING NORTH

As air entering the diesel intakes grew colder, our Engine Room attire changed from the no socks, no shirts, opened toed sandals and Key West neckties look. Now it was socks, boots, long sleeve shirts and sometimes a wool knit cap.

When Magoo did this he pulled the cap down so far that his ears stuck out. It was a big joke for him to walk through the boat like this asking directions for T**sburg and then saying "I mean Pittsburgh". The most often question asked of him when he was doing this act was "How did that f***** get through Sub School?"

The further north we went the cold condition inside the pressure hull started to affect us warm weather sailors, especially the Bridge watch standers.

The small electric space heaters did nothing for our cold bunks in the berthing areas. The Engine Room living conditions were now cold, windy and damp. The foul weather gear was some help but was bulky and just not adaptable to our close quarters.

A young kid like me that should be dancing, doing the Lindy, Fox Trot or the Twist, kissing girls, or playing touchy feely, was sitting in this sewer pipe reading a skinner book for comfort.

The movies were now reruns. The amount of movies brought aboard was limited due to the size of the reels in their boxes and where to stow them. The playing cards were damp and hard to deal and shuffle. Screws were now used for the cribbage board pegs that are lost. Acey-Dicey was still played nightly but the dice cup is in rags. All the reading material was history and we were only halfway through our voyage - to where?

Most of the crew did not know and could care less. My days were spent in the Engine Rooms, Crew's Mess and sometimes in the ATR. Boring just Boring.

The weather was now the pits. We would stay on the surface most of the time and every once in awhile dive to a few hundred feet so the crew could get some good sleeping and eating conditions.

"Dive Dive Dive" the alarm sounded and in a few minutes we were at periscope depth. In the Engine Rooms you could tell how deep you were by looking at the sea pressure gages and converting that number to feet. We went a little deeper to about 150 feet and started to operate at very slow speed. This continued hour after hour.

I guess we were listening to some one topside, a surface craft or tracking a bad guy submerged. The air was starting to get rank. My headache was getting worse and to keep my cigarette burning was getting harder.

After a few more hours of this my headache was spreading to my shoulders, my neck ached and my "ZIPPO" would not work. This really sucked.

All of a sudden the word was passed "Prepare to Snorkel on Number One Main Engine". That was me. Jumping up the oiler and I lined up Number 1 Engine and the room to be ready for the command to snorkel.

The word was Passed "Commence Snorkeling". I pushed the air start throttle to the start position and the engine roared to life as the exhaust mast was blown dry of sea water. I had a

good engine start.

After a few minutes the oiler rang the engine order telegraph to say "ready". The rush of fresh air coming into the engine room made us very dizzy.

The first thing after every thing was running hot straight and normal was to light our cigarettes.

We snorkeled for about four days in rough weather which made living conditions terrible. When the Head Valve closed, a device (valve) used to prevent sea water from coming down the induction mast; the engine will use the air inside the boat to keep operating for a short period of time.

This condition caused an increasing vacuum in the pressure hull. Four days of this is hard to describe.

My big problem was that my ears could not equalize quickly enough with the changing atmospheric pressure so that my ears developed a sharp pain enough to make my eyes water.

On the surface with four engines on the line we are heading home. With the weather turning milder the crew took turns going topside standing aft enjoying the breeze and clean air. The sound of the diesel exhaust through the mufflers located in the superstructure was music to our ears. Myself and the Chief Engineman watched the light blue diesel exhaust as it drifted aft indicating that the engines were running at their peak efficiency. A credit to the Engine Room personal whose care and maintenance procedures during the trip were up to the highest standards of the Submarine Force.

The time of entry to Key West was in the plan of the day. It also strongly worded that this operation would not be discussed in any form or manner. If questioned, a reserve salute would be given and that should take care of everything.

With two main engines on the line every once in awhile you could smell aromas from the shore. To tell you what it was like and the feelings I had are impossible.

The next morning a tug came alongside with the Squadron Commander bringing fresh milk and other goodies. Slowly we entered the base harbor and on one pier there was a group of people waving at us.

The tug pushed us along side to moor but our mooring lines that were left behind couldn't be found. So here we are looking at the wives and some guys in suits and ties. The wives and girl friends were yelling, blowing kisses, and making hand gestures that made everyone laugh. So close and no way to get across to the pier.

So there we sat waiting. Finally a forklift with our mooring lines showed up. In a few minutes we were doubled up and the gangway was put across.

The in port watch was set and the first to leave were the three yeomen "Spooks" and the married pukes who did not have the duty.

In five minutes the pier was empty.

A married engineman asked me to take his duty which I did.

So now sitting topside eating some fresh fruit hand delivered by the Squadron personal, my thoughts were varied on how my life is going to be in the next few years.

Then the paymaster came aboard with our pay chits in hand. My hands were now full of \$2 bills.

On my next liberty I'd be on Duval Street clutching them in a fist held high looking for some entertainment.

Just can't lose with a fist full of \$2 dollar bills.

CHAPTER 64

MARSHALL POOLE 1960 – 1961

BY

HIS WIFE BARBARA POOLE

HE WOULD REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER, THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN, AND WE WERE ALL PREGNANT

REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER

I was sweet sixteen when I married Marshall. We had been high school sweethearts. He enlisted in the Navy right out of high school and went rapidly through Boot Camp and Electrician's A School in Great Lakes.

While home at Christmas, he told me he was going to Submarine School in New London. I knew what a submarine was, but that was about it. So I had no misgivings.

He told me he would graduate from Sub School near the end of April and would get leave before reporting to his first submarine.

We were married on May 1, 1960. We had 18 days together before he reported to SEA POACHER. I finished out the school year in Alma, Georgia.

I couldn't get to Key West soon enough to suit me! I had hardly been out of Alma except to visit relatives in Florida with my parents. This was my first big venture out into the world all alone. My parents put me on a Greyhound bus. I wanted to go, but I don't know who cried more, me or my Mama. The local folks at the bus station had told me I wouldn't have to change buses to get to Key West, but they were wrong.

When everyone got off in Jacksonville, Florida, except me, I got up the courage to ask the driver what was happening. He kindly showed me where to get on the bus to Key West, and I was really on my way!

The rest of the trip was uneventful until the driver announced we were in Key West, I looked out the window, and I didn't see Marshall anywhere. I was scared out of my mind.

Again, I got brave enough to ask the driver if there were any more stops in Key West. He assured me there was another, and my stomach settled down into the right place. Shortly thereafter we were on our way again. At last we reached the bus station on Duval Street and there he was! My sailor and the beginning of my new life. What I didn't know was that in the short span of a month my Sweetie had turned into a Submarine Sailor!

Some of you probably did the same thing we did. We would make the early movie on the sub base (10 cents per person) and then make it a double feature by catching the later movie at the Sea Plane base. We lived near the base in the Green Trellis Motel, and I remember hearing the guys from the Diver's school coming by every morning running and counting cadence.

Key West was an exotic place for a 16 year old girl, who before that had hardly ever left South Georgia, let alone be exposed to sub sailors who came over to visit.

THE 1960 NORTHERN RUN

Shortly before the boat (I had learned by now to call it a boat and not a ship) left for New London to make the Northern Run, Jim and Diana Brixey, who were good friends, were going to Tennessee for Diana to spend the patrol there. So, I hitched a ride with them back to Georgia to stay with my folks during the patrol.

I must have cried all the way to Miami. Jim later said he felt like the meanest man in the world taking me away from Marshall.

After returning from the Northern Run, Marshall told me a couple of things about it.

He bought some new dungarees before the boat left. Evidently the store didn't have the right length. He needed them badly, and so he got some that were about 6 inches too long. He tried sewing up one pair himself, but that took too much time, so he used a stapler and stapled up hems in the rest, so that he would not trip on them.

The other thing he told me about was how every week he would rotate the ends of the blanket on his rack to give the foot smell a chance to air out, since showers and laundry were both in short supply. The other end would air out somewhat, and then he could stand it for another week, before turning it again.

WE WERE ALL PREGNANT

There were several other couples on the boat that experienced the same thing we did, Leo and Gert Brothers, and Luke and Norma Hale. When they left, we three wives were all pregnant, but not really showing.

Boy - did all the guys get a shock after returning from patrol and finding all of us about 7 months along and big as barrels! We all had our first-borns within about a span of 6 weeks or so in February 1961.

I used to go down to the SEA POACHER sometimes on a duty night and take our son Marshall III. As soon as I got aboard, a sailor would take him, and I wouldn't see him again until I was ready to leave. He made the rounds of SEA POACHER from the Engine Rooms to the Torpedo Rooms.

When Marshall had to leave SEA POACHER in June 1961 to go to Nuclear Power School in Vallejo, we were both saddened to leave the area and all our good friends on SEA POACHER. He always said he was one of the lucky ones to have served on a diesel boat and at a time when guys were real submarine sailors.

I still have his white hat and his pea coat from that era. They still smell faintly like a diesel submarine. Marshall served in the submarine service for 22 years and then as a civil service employee until his retirement in 2002.

Sadly our son Marshall III passed away from brain cancer on March 29, 2004. Marshall passed away from complications of Progressive Supranuclear Palsy on September 21, 2006.

We have two other children, Michael and Deborah; three grandsons, Michael II, Marshall IV and Mathew; and two granddaughters Austin and Mary.

CHAPTER 65

BILL (JIGGER) BRINKMAN 1960 - 1962

**I REMEMBER HOW TO REALLY SALUTE A COMMODORE,
DIFFERENT WORLDS, BOTTOM GUN NICKNAMES,
KEY WEST WITH ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND PRESIDENT TRUMAN,
ABANDON SHIP 1962, SHARKS, JOINING THE PHYSICAL FITNESS
CRAZE, ESCAPE TANK TRAINING,
FIRE IN THE FORWARD BATTERY,
THE 5000TH DIVE CLUB, CHRISTMAS IN JULY,
CUBANS AND THE MISSILE CRISIS, THINGS GET BUSY,
GITMO LIBERTY, AND THE RETURN HOME**

HOW TO REALLY SALUTE A COMMODORE

I arrived in Key West in October 1960 to be assigned to SEA POACHER as an EM3 (SS). But, she was doing a Northern run and I'd have to wait until my birthday, December 3, to report on-board, so, I was assigned temporary duty at Submarine Squadron 12 to do outside duties in my dungarees. One morning the Squadron Commodore, who was leaving the Headquarters building, crossed my path and stopped.

For some reason, I'd been told there's no need to salute a submarine officer, at least we kept it to a minimum on the subs, so the Commodore and I kept looking at each other. I didn't know what he wanted, but probably was waiting for my salute. Finally, after many seconds, he started to raise his arm, at which time I finally figured that he wanted me to salute first. So, I gave him a salute and he returned it.

Then he left for three weeks in Guantanamo Bay. My chief told me that I was in a heap of "dodo," and that the Commodore was mad at me. Before the Commodore returned, I drew Dress White duty in the Squadron Communications office on the Tender BUSHNELL. We had an officer, chief, and me, and I often drew all the fun jobs such as sitting in the back seat of the Admiral's car as the driver took it to get serviced. That was really fun as everyone on the base would salute the passing car. Imagine their surprise at having a Third Class Petty officer return their salute.

Another funny job was having to stay on the Squadron's red hot line telephone as repairmen were trying to fix faults somewhere between Brunswick, Maine and Key West. Initially, we had one of us from each East Coast port on the phones listening to the repairmen and trying to help out when needed. But, the repairs took hours and only two of us (a BUSHNELL CPO and me for Squadron 12) were still on the lines when the repairmen asked me to dial a certain number. I did, and got the "Duty Admiral" for the Main Naval Base in Norfolk. He sounded very agitated, and I could swear that I could hear aircraft carriers backing out of the piers and planes taking off, because we had called the Norfolk base hot-line. The Admiral really didn't like my reason for calling and saying "Submarine Squadron 12 - Key West - Petty Officer Brinkman - Testing!" But I told the Admiral that the repairman had told me to do it. The

Admiral said, "Don't call this number again!"

Next the repairman told the BUSHNELL Chief to call "Any Number!" Do I really need to tell you what "Any Number" he called? Believe you me, when an Admiral gets irate it's not a pretty sight, and I believe that the Chief is still smarting from this verbal lashing.

Another interesting job was when I had to burn the previous day's classified communications in the smoke stack of the BUSHNELL. I remember that a BUSHNELL officer had to do the same, and we both had to step away while the other was burning his papers.

However, my day of reckoning was coming as the Commodore returned from Cuba and was in his BUSHNELL office. Sure enough, the Squadron Communications Officer gave me a message to deliver to the Commodore directly, so, I knocked hard on his door, and entered when he said to. Immediately, I saluted in the most official way I'd been taught in basic training. Then, I made several really sharp 90 degree military style turns. And I saluted on each and every turn.

Needless to say, the Commodore was impressed. He said "How long have you been in the Navy?" I said "Two Years," He then asked how long I had been in Squadron 12 and I said "About Two Weeks." He looked a little perplexed as he said there was another sailor running around the Squadron that "looked a lot like me." Needless to say, he always got a salute out of me with no hesitation from then on.

DIFFERENT WORLDS

In 2007 I ran across Buster McCollum, a naval reservist from Houston who was married while on the SEA POACHER. I finally found out that as an Electrician Mate in Maneuvering and single, and with Buster a married Quartermaster in the Conning Tower, that we lived in completely different worlds. I basically "knew" other EMs, After Engine Room ENs, and After Torpedo Room TMs. But I really did not know that many of his friends, and of course, it was vice-versa for Buster.

Likewise, officers and enlisted also lived in different worlds. It was such a small boat; however we all had our spaces. Nothing wrong with that, and we would have died for each other. It was just a few different worlds.

BOTTOM GUN NICKNAMES

We submariners have had a long tradition of assigning new nicknames to each other. In fact, maybe submariners have been doing it long before our "Top Gun" brethren. New names were assigned in some mysterious ways after arriving on a new boat. Rarely, did anyone get to keep the nickname assigned on the last boat.

One of the best things we now have for the SEA POACHER Association are the Crew Muster Lists. When trying to remember a shipmate's name, I sometimes realize that either:

A. I never did know his last name.

B. Because of nick names, I never knew his real first name, and

C. Sometimes, both A and B apply.

In the case of C, it's useful to check a shipmates rating, i.e., was he a TM, EM, or YN? We did assign nick names based on physical characteristics, and usually they were the reverse of the physical characteristic. For example, Terry Kleinweber, EM 61-66, was a big fellow, so naturally he was assigned the name "Tiny." So, you can pretty much bet that "Shorty" was extremely tall!

Some nicknames were assigned because of their rates. For example, “Gunner” Vanderwerker, EM 57-63, had originally been a Gunner’s Mate.

In my case, I was assigned the name “Jigger” and now, I’ll explain how I got that. Shortly after arriving on SEA POACHER in December 1960, I was part of a three man Electrician’s Mate group that had to remove a heavy electric motor which was bolted to the overhead in the Pump Room, that is, it was hanging from the ceiling.

Well, a “Jigger” is called a block and tackle in the civilian world and we rigged it so that the block and tackle was attached in two places; one to the overhead above the motor, and the other to a vertical angle beam at floor level.

Ideally (in hindsight) the second attachment hook should have been attached to a fixed position on the floor, and not just around the bottom of the vertical angle beam. I drew the short straw and my assignment was to “secure” the second attachment which was the block and hook on the vertical angle beam at floor level, take up slack, and be ready to lower the motor by letting out the free end of the rope. Gunner and the third EM’s assignment were to remove the bolts holding the heavy motor to the overhead.

Unfortunately, as the bolts were being loosened and the heavy motor began to come down, the load was transferred to the floor level hook which began climbing up the vertical angle beam. As this started happening, I put my right foot on top of the moving block to keep it from moving.

But the laws of Physics were against me as slowly the increasing motor weight kept making my end of the block move up. (My right foot ended up two feet higher than my left foot).

About this time, Gunner said “Pull on the rope!” and I replied “I can’t, my foot is caught in the Jigger!” Naturally, I had earned my new name!

Now, my nick name on my first submarine SEA OWL was “Wild Bill.” (I have no idea how I got that. Probably it’s just the reverse of my observed personality and actions.)

A HARROWING DIVE

We had a harrowing dive in 1961. An order to trim the boat, after being in port a week, was to pump 10,000 pounds of ballast to our forward Bow Buoyancy Tank. The original calculations said it should have been 1,000 pounds. So, as we made the initial dive, the bow went down 45 degrees (normal is 15 degrees). Many bad things happened at 45 degrees: all four engines dumped their engine oil, the batteries spilled their battery acid, a 150 pound mixer sheared its bolts and nearly killed the cook, all liquids and many of us started sliding forward towards the bow, which further aggravated our trim. But the worst problem was that our AC Motor Generator sets tripped off. Thus, the speed orders to go to “All Back emergency” were never received in Maneuvering. At 45 degrees, the submarine was unstable. That is, there was no guarantee that the bow would rise if you blew Bow Buoyancy tank with our compressed air supply. Our Diving Officer had “mentally checked out” with all the reports coming in with no good news and only more problems.

In the midst of this chaos, the Executive Officer, worried about the 45 degree instability problem, ordered our air manifold operator, Leonard ‘Roach’ Rozzell from Patterson, New Jersey, “not to blow the tanks.” Roach replied, “Don’t blow, aye, sir” as he was opening all the air valves to every tank on the boat. We rapidly went up to 45 degrees, popped out on the surface and were dead in the water. It took four hours to put oil back in the four diesel engines, battery

water in the batteries, calm down the cook, etc. In the meanwhile, the Captain called Roach into his cabin and asked him why he disobeyed the Exec's order not to blow the tanks. "Well, Captain, I figured out that I could either be a dead good sailor on the ocean bottom, or a live court-martialed sailor on the surface!" The Captain told Roach, "Good work, and by the way, they'll be no court-martial."

This story shows that on submarines, one man at the right spot doing the right thing can save all 80 of his shipmates. The Captain instituted new procedures after this near miss. At 15 degrees down angle, all watch keepers were to don the sound powered headset telephones to receive commands. At 30 degrees, we electrician mates were to automatically go to "All Back Emergency" to pull the sub back to the surface backwards. Once while doing these practice maneuvers, myself, as Senior Controllerman and "Ski" Sokolowski, from Sandusky, Ohio, as Junior Controllerman, stood by like Olympians waiting for the "All Back Full" order. When it came we moved the "sticks" and controlled the batteries rheostats in record time. We were able to bring the boat out of the water backwards. When the screws broke the surface, they no longer had the water resistance to control their RPMs and so all that 3,000 horsepower successfully did was dislodge dirt, shoot cork lining around, and break light bulbs. We immediately got the "All Stop" order, and there were no more drills for the day!

KEY WEST WITH ERNEST HEMINGWAY AND PRESIDENT TRUMAN

Key West was a very interesting place in the early 60's. I shared an apartment with another shipmate. Our landlord was Bruce Sales, a WWI veteran who went to war with his friend, Ernest Hemingway. Bruce showed me the scars on his legs caused by being gassed with mustard gas in the trenches. Also, Bruce had books from the 1700's which used human skin as covers (both black and white). I guess back then there was a shortage of Naugas (to make naugahyde covers).

So, Bruce told me stories about his friend Ernest who wrote many of his stories in Key West. The island is about 2 miles long and 1.5 miles wide. In 1960, there were over 200 bars on this tiny island. President Truman liked to go there to escape Washington. His home (the "Little White House") was the Admiral's Building when I was stationed there.

Right after Puerto Rican nationalists attempted to kill President Truman in 1950, Truman was on the submarine base in a car headed for the "Little White House." A sub sailor in dungarees wanted to dump garbage in the dumpster across the road from his boat. A security guard said it would be all right as long as he wasn't spotted by Truman wearing his dungarees. (All the other sailors were in dress whites). So, just as the cars came around the corner, a guard told this poor sailor to jump into the dumpster. When Truman's car came in sight, a Secret Service agent spotted movement in the dumpster and they opened fire on it! After many rounds, and President Truman was safely clear, the Secret Service surrounded the dumpster and told the poor hapless sailor inside to come out with his hands up. The mound of garbage moved (our sailor had burrowed under it) and a head poked up with one scared sailor really shaking in his boots!

Shipmate Engineman Frank "Murf" Murphy was in many movies including "*Operation Petticoat*" with Cary Grant and Tony Curtis. He also was the bartender in the Officer's Club at Key West. He told me that once President Truman came into the "O" Club and ordered everyone to leave. At the last moment, he grabbed a young Ensign and told him to sit and drink with him. Murf said that President Truman then proceeded to get drunk with the Ensign.

I also ran across Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox star, in Key West.

In the summer of 1961, President Kennedy came to Key West to have a conference with British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan. We were in the submarine barracks when the Public Address announcement was made: "All of you who want to see the President, get shaved and dressed in your dress whites, and be ready to stand at attention for 6 hours in the hot sun. The rest of you, get off the base immediately." We took the "get off the base" option, as we only had to throw on our grubby civilian clothes.

I went to Marathon with a buddy on my motorcycle. On the way back to Key West, we were told to get off the road by the Secret Service. While standing there, 20 black convertibles went by about 15 feet from us. President Kennedy and Prime Minister MacMillan were in an open convertible going by at about 20 miles per hour. Of course, two years later, this exposed position was a reason he was killed.

ABANDON SHIP 1962

Once we practiced "Abandon Ship" in the Caribbean. We all mustered on the fantail with our life jackets, battle lamps, flashlights, medicines, food, water, etc. The idea was to inflate our one rubber life raft, put the food, medicines, and lamps into it while the 80 of us floated around it lashed together with a rope.

So, the Engineering Officer LT Gerald Sullivan went through the drill. He said, "Men, the nearest land is 55 miles North by Northwest," and we turned and looked in that direction (and only saw 20 miles of ocean.) Then he fired a flare into the wind. It went up, turned around and came back to us! Just before it hit, someone yelled "Dismissed." We left our ranks and scattered!

But, the whole time this drill was going on and SEA POACHER was stopped, a huge 15 foot shark was going around and around us. As we listened to LT Sullivan and watched the dorsal fin go by, my thought process told me to stay inside the sub, go to the bottom, and wait for the sub rescue ship and its diving bell!

SHARKS

Occasionally, we would be at sea and at our appointed position with nothing to do. For example, the Navy Anti-Sub Neptunes would fly back to their base for lunch, before returning for another exercise with us. So, the SEA POACHER Captain would call away the "fishing parties." About 15 of us would take fishing rods and bait and attempt to catch fresh fish for our cooks to prepare.

I was one of the special five man party which had a unique method of fishing. Myself, the Gunnery Officer, a torpedoman, and two others would get a piece of meat, tie a 50 foot line around it and lower it below the Bridge. Within minutes, our sub was surrounded by 15 or so sharks. We then would shoot one of the sharks with our Thompson sub-machine gun. Its blood would drive the rest of them crazy, and they would begin attacking each other. Meanwhile, all normal fish would of course be long gone. Our other fishing buddies didn't appreciate our method of fishing!

A shipmate caught a ten foot shark and had it on the trunk of his car with its belly up in the parking lot of our barracks at Key West. Ten of us went out to see it. As we were standing close to its open jaws and looking at its numerous sharp teeth, the jaws suddenly closed! Within a split second each of us scurried up our own palm trees to the top. It turns out that yes the shark

was dead, but the shark owner had punched its stomach causing the jaws to close! It's a primeval reaction in your thought process. On the one hand, you know the shark is dead and can't hurt you. On the other hand, its jaws are moving and so should you!

JOINING THE PHYSICAL FITNESS CRAZE

President John F. Kennedy read about President Theodore Roosevelt's daily routine which involved much physical exercise. Teddy would do more by breakfast than most of us do all day. So President Kennedy decided that there were a lot of over weight people in the U.S. Armed Forces, and that it didn't look military to have over weight service men. So, eventually in 1961, the Navy came up with physical requirements as to weight and conditioning which filtered down to the crew of the SEA POACHER.

I remember that within one hour, each sailor had to do so many push ups, sit ups, chin ups, etc. and then run 1.5 miles in under 13 minutes. Having been a cross country runner in high school and a swimmer in one semester at Roanoke College, I figured "no sweat" to meeting these Navy's requirements.

I also remember that our PT exercises were not taken very seriously. Once we lined up in front of the Admiral's Building (President Truman's Little White House) and did our version of "Jumping Jacks." Instead of actually jumping and throwing our arms up, we discovered a way of rotating our arms and legs, which because of the speed, looked like Jumping Jacks. It had the advantage of not actually exerting one's self!

Then the PT Officer would have us "run." After getting around the Admiral's Building and out of his sight, we would then walk to the Patio and drink beer for the rest of our PT.

I figured that smoking a pack and a half of those nasty Pall Mall cigarettes per day, along with not getting much walking on SEA POACHER, led to several things. First, at crunch time, I used up 47 minutes to barely get in the non-running events. Then, in an exhausted state, I hit the 1.5 mile run and again, barely finished within the one hour time. I don't know what happened next, but I we were either absent or at sea for future PT tests, as we never did them again.

ESCAPE TANK TRAINING

After the Retrofit of 1961-1962 in the Navy yard in Charleston, SEA POACHER was sent to New London. I remember an Admiral visited and was duly impressed by our appearance. The engines and interior of the engine rooms were painted a bright white. Then all the metal parts had been chromed.

I remember that Captain Kojm passed out \$25,000 in ship's funds to all of us in the form of coffee or Spam. Besides getting work done by "official channels" all of us were able to have ship's parts chromed and extra work done "un-officially" on the QT by distributing the coffee and spam to the Yard Birds. The Admiral told the nuclear boat skippers to go see SEA POACHER as we looked sharper then some of the latest nuclear boats.

Since most of us hadn't done the escape tank in many years, I remember the entire crew had to do the infamous "Blow and Go" from the 50 foot level. The night before the escape tank training, I ran across my old Sea Owl buddy, Danny Hicks. Danny and his son and daughter were at our 2006 reunion in Virginia Beach. Anyway, after over two years since I saw Danny, we had a lot of stories to tell and beers to consume.

The next morning I was hung over, but thought that I'd recover in time for the ascent

from 50 feet. The instructor advised any shipmate with false teeth to leave them behind as they would most likely blow them out, and the frogmen would have to retrieve them from the bottom of the tank, at about 125 feet. Gunner Vanderwerker had false teeth, and I laughed at him about leaving his teeth behind.

I was doing fine until they pressurized the escape tank. When my turn came, I ducked under the door, placed my feet on the step, hands on the rung above the door, head tilted back and commenced "Blowing." Everything seemed fine, but I didn't appear to be ascending at all. With my head back, I couldn't see the two frogmen hitting my hands trying to make me let go of the rung! Eventually, I ran out of air, and either let go prior to passing out, and/or the frogmen succeeded in freeing me. I was dragged by the frogmen to the diving bell, and up we came. Needless to say, Gunner had the last laugh! I now figure that the pressure in the escape tank must have driven the alcohol back into my bloodstream which would explain most of my physical and mental reactions to the whole affair.

A footnote on "Blow and go." I had six other tries from the 50 foot level, and only made two successful ascents on my own. Another time, I needed a punch in the chest to continue blowing and the other two ascents were via the diving bell.

Actually, I believe I qualified in operating the bell! I always figured that with only 2 out of 7 tries success ratio, that if it ever came time for a real escape, I'd wait for the rescue ship and its diving bell. I like the Navy's present escape system which is a combination of the Momsen Lung and Blow and Go.

FIRE IN THE FORWARD BATTERY

I was given the assignment to remove the "depth charge clips" from the Emergency Lighting System. These were metal clips which kept the round cylindrical fuses from being thrown out of their fuse holders and were still in place in 1961. The only circuit protection for the Emergency Lighting was these fuses as they were directly connected to the entire Forward Battery. The fuses were located above the hatch leading into the Control Room.

I easily removed the first depth charge clip and its fuse, which killed the circuit. After removing the second fuse, the second depth charge clip somehow managed to short out the Forward Battery by connecting across the two fuse holders.

And now, the fun began! Arcing and fire started as I was looking at the connection box. The electrical part of my being said "that this can't be happening"... no fuses, how is it happening? The other part of me knew that "Yes, it's a fire".

In the meanwhile, I remember another electrician in the Control room opening every breaker on the control panel, but I told him it wouldn't do any good as there wasn't another breaker in the circuit. Two things were now going to happen. First, either the fire would die out, or second, the cables would burn out due to the large currents now flowing and the fire would stop. (The second actually happened.)

I also remember the chiefs leaving the "Goat locker" and officers running around trying to help. I remember that many people yelled "Fire," but no one picked up the nearby fire extinguisher.

Later that day, I had to see the dentist on the BUSHNELL. He was mad at me because I was late for my appointment. I told him that we had a fire on the SEA POACHER, and that's why I was late. He said, "Yes, but the fire was three hours ago." Then I said, "Yes, but I'm the one that started it!"

Recently, I called my COB, Vernon "Barney" Barnett and he remembered the "Fire" well. Barney defended me by telling the officers that "It was an act of God." The problem would probably have happened to any EM that drew the assignment, and it was not my fault at all.

THE 5000TH DIVE CLUB

This was reported in the Key West Citizen in late June 1962. Quote:

U.S.S. SEA POACHER (SS-406) made her 5000th dive today. As the submarine slipped beneath the waters of the Gulf Stream, off the coast of Key West, Florida, she became a member of the 5000th dive club. This elite club, to which only a score of submarines claim membership, is composed of submarines who have logged 5000 dives.

The diving team was composed of seven veteran SEA POACHER submariners. Herbert Cloud, ENC (SS), USN, who will retire next month after 21 years of naval service, 20 of which were spent in submarines gave the order to, "Dive the boat." The remainder of the diving team was composed of K. Deramus, TM1 (SS), USN - Diving Officer; W. Vanderwerker, EM1 (SS), USN - Hydraulic Manifold Operator; J. Nims, EM2 (SS), USN - Bow Planesman; R. Bradley, TM3 (SS), USN - Stern Planesman; D. Liggett, SM2 (SS), USN - Air Manifold Operator; and J.E. Harvey, CS1 (SS), USN - Trim Manifold Operator. The total time in service added up to nearly 100 years for the diving team.

SEA POACHER'S Commanding Officer, LCDR L.R. Kojm, USN, acted as King Neptune's Royal Representative at the traditional cake cutting ceremony which accompanies such occasion. The huge cake, festooned with the symbolic "Dolphins" of the Submarine Service was cut by the Captain on the second blast of the Diving Klaxon and all hands were proclaimed members of the "5000 Dive Club."

CHRISTMAS IN JULY

This was reported in the Key West Citizen Newspaper in early July 1962, with a front page photo and story on page 8. Quote:

SEA POACHER FINALLY CELEBRATES CHRISTMAS. Key West, Fla. - Topside it was a balmy sunny day in Key West harbor as the submarine SEA POACHER lay under the tropical sun, but below decks there was a Christmas tree, the sound of "Jingle Bells," and a traditional turkey dinner.

It was Christmas in July for the sub crew and with a good reason. Last December 25, the SEA POACHER was in the throes of final overhaul at the Charleston Naval Shipyard. Holiday leave was out of the question, so the SEA POACHER'S Skipper Lt. Comdr. L. R. Kojm, promised, "We'll have our Christmas on the 4th of July at home."

During the spring months, signs appeared on the bulkheads: "Only 40 more shopping days 'til Christmas."

Came the first week of July and with it, open gangway liberty July 2nd and Christmas on July 4th. The turkey was done to a turn and as the Skipper cut the holiday cake, all hands wished each other, "A Very Merry Christmas."

EDITOR'S NOTE: The photograph on Page 1 was entitled "Yes Virginia, That's a Christmas Tree" showing 11 crew members around a Christmas tree and Holiday Cake.

CUBANS AND THE MISSILE CRISIS

I reported aboard SEA POACHER in Key West on Dec 3, 1960, my birthday, as a 3rd Class Electrician's Mate. Just before I reported onboard, she had participated with other U.S. Navy ships in exercises off Cuba. While on the surface, SEA POACHER was approached by a high speed Cuban gunboat. The gunboat started signaling her with "flashes." The Bridge officer and the two lookouts couldn't decipher the "message" from the gunboat, so he called the Quartermaster to the bridge.

Once the Quartermaster came up, he looked at the rapidly closing gunboat's "flashes." At the same time, shells started passing by the SEA POACHER'S Bridge! So, the message was "Get away from Cuba!" At the same time, a U.S. Navy cruiser with 8-inch guns came in sight, and the Cuban gunboat turned and left immediately.

In August 1962, in heavy seas in the Florida Straits, we rescued two Cuban men and one woman whose small boat had engine trouble. Their engine had failed, and the boat was sinking with we reached them. We tied their boat alongside, but it sank within minutes. The Cubans told us that the Russians were constructing missile launchers in Cuba.

We passed the info on to the Pentagon. Senator Kenneth Keating of New York stated these facts, but the Kennedy Administration denied them. The Kennedy Administration finally acted to remove the missiles by announcing they had suddenly spotted them in October 1962. So, with the SEA POACHER'S years of negative feelings and dealings toward Cuba and Castro, the stage was now set for the Cuban Missile Crisis.

THINGS GET BUSY

We were in port the morning of October 22, 1962 when the whole squadron got the word to go to sea. It was quite a sight to see all 13 submarines of Submarine Squadron 12, in addition to the destroyers and other ships at Key West, all at sea at the same time.

We were in our Key West homeport that Monday morning getting ready to do three weeks of repairs and up-keep. I was part of the duty section (1/4 of the crew) standing watch over the weekend. The idea was that 1/4 of us could, in an emergency, take the ship to sea. Anyway, we were told at 3 a.m. that we should forget the up-keep because we were in a National Emergency, and that the rest of the crew was being re-called. "As soon as your replacement gets on board, go to the barracks, pack your cold-weather gear and get back to the boat," we were told. Since it was 80 degrees in Key West, packing cold weather gear told us the North Atlantic would probably be where we were headed.

When my relief got to the ship, I hot-footed it to the barracks, packed more gear and went to the Movie Exchange. Normally, as Movie Petty Officer, I had to manually inspect each movie reel for defects and sign that you did inspect them. Also each sub could only have two movies per night. As everyone was frantically running around the base and crew members were rapidly coming in from home, I went to the movie checkout building with my sea bag, and told them to give me 25, and signed for them without inspection.

Later that day (as the other ships realized that they only had 2 movies for an indefinite time at sea), my Captain congratulated me for a smooth heads up move. Movies and coffee were the actual bargaining items between boats for getting other items off line. We were in a great position for the next two months!

The Executive Officer also told all of us due to be discharged between October 1962 and

June 1963 to forget it - Congress had extended our enlistment one year! We were amazed that Congress could act that quickly, but it's really just a formality for them to do so.

We talked to the Captain and asked him what our orders were, but because he couldn't open them until we were at sea, even he didn't know.

After going to sea, we had 13 subs steaming together through the Florida Straits and eventually North. I remember an ESSO tanker coming across the horizon, change course, and wonder what we were doing (we rarely had more than two subs together).

At about 7 p.m. we rigged up a TV and heard President Kennedy tell the world about the blockade. Of course, the destroyers, cruisers, and carriers went directly towards Cuba. We had a different mission. The U.S. Navy had us peel off one at a time and disperse into different ports in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina.

During this time, the Russians were sending more transports with missiles on them to Cuba, and being watched by naval air units. So we knew that our mission probably was to sink those ships if the Russians didn't turn around.

We were one of the first subs to disperse, and it was Fort Lauderdale. We tied up to a pier at the end of a railroad line. The Army's 2nd Armored Division from Fort Hood was off-loading all sorts of invasion craft. We had over 100,000 Army troops ready for the invasion, as well as 40,000 Marines. Our Navy had completely blockaded the seas. We had the Russians and Cubans right where we wanted them. It was up to President Kennedy to decide whether or not to use us to eliminate that "nest of vipers."

The last Army tank off-loaded from the train could not get its main diesels to run. A poor Army Lieutenant was supervising one skilled tank mechanic and two tool passing helpers. Of the four, only the mechanic knew what he was doing. Of course, 80 submarine sailors couldn't help but point out to our Army brethren how pathetic they were!

Eventually, the Lieutenant had enough, and made a call over his jeep's radio. Soon, a Sergeant Snorkel look alike showed up. He was pot-bellied, and wore no specialist markings. His pants were WWI style cavalry, that is, with wings at the mid leg position. His hash marks indicated 20 plus years in the Army.

It turned out his specialty was "Motivation via four letter words." He started barking out orders, and the tool helpers rapidly assisted the mechanic. Soon the main engine was running, and then the tank's turret rotated and pointed their main cannon at our sub! Point well taken, we stopped harassing the tank crew!

There were a few moments to relax. Right after arriving at Fort Lauderdale, 3/4 of the crew were granted liberty and took off. I had to stay several hours waiting for one of the main motor's auxiliary fan motors to cool down. Then, I had to repair the motor and replace its brushes.

When cleaned up, I went topside to catch up with the rest of the crew. Our Captain was also just leaving and asked where everyone went. I told him the "Peppermint Lounge," and he said let's go as we shared a cab.

Senator Claude Pepper, a Congressman in 1962, was there, and bought the entire SEA POACHER crew a round of beers. The Peppermint Lounge had Go-Go girls in cages, and lots of twist music from the band.

Our Captain observed the method of proper "Twisting" and went to the far reaches of the dance floor. Several of us spotted him and joined together in shouting and clapping "Go Captain Go!" The lounge was full of college students, and they were amazed to see that the submarine crew, officers and enlisted, were so close. But that's how it is with shared danger.

After a few days, SEA POACHER left Florida, and then sailed 60 miles up a river to Georgetown, South Carolina, again for dispersal reasons. The good citizens of Georgetown opened up their Moose Club for our recreational use. They even had a few slot machines and, of course, beer. So, we were happy sailors.

During this time, we were glad to see our UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson pointedly ask the Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko at the UN to confess to having missiles in Cuba.

On our crew of 80, we only had one officer express glee at the thought of an all out war with the Russians. The other 79 of us knew that it wouldn't be just a matter of painting Russian flags on our conning tower, but instead mean countless civilian deaths. On the other hand, I was secure in the fact that we had been training for this, and that we were a well-oiled machine. We would do our duty and protect the United States.

President Kennedy came to Key West during the crisis, and we were ashamed to hear that the Mayor greeted him with a bent key to the city to "Symbolize how Key West's economy was hurt by the crisis."

During the crisis, the military took over Key West. The Marines had Harrier jets, barbed wire was placed on the beaches, the Casa Marina Hotel was now a military headquarters, and the Boca Chica Naval Air Station was packed with Navy and Air Force planes, and other equipment.

After Georgetown, it was on to Norfolk, Virginia, where we removed all dummy torpedoes, and replaced them with "war shots," and loaded up with fuel, supplies, etc.

I had to get battery water from the sub tender USS GILMORE (AS-16). All military protocol was on hold that day. I interrupted officers pouring over a map of Cuba and announced I was from the SEA POACHER and needed 400 gallons of battery water. They said "Get that man his battery water." We ended up running a 3/8 inch garden hose from the sub tender to us over 1,000 feet away. It took 10 hours to get the water through that tiny hose.

While all this was going on, the Executive Officer said we could make one call home, but couldn't tell where we were or where we were going. My parents were concerned as the world situation looked bad. I believe the civilians were in worse shape than we were, as they had more information than we did. My parents stoically said to go get them and do my duty. My mother, Margaret thought I was in Key West and hot. I was in an outdoor phone booth freezing in Charleston. I hoped my chattering teeth didn't give away our position! At 2 a.m., the Exec had a hurried-up meeting with us on the fantail. (We had been working all-night long re-loading torpedoes, supplies, etc., for an immediate departure).

The Exec said that if you didn't have one, that you might want to make out a will! Since I only owned a beat-up 56 Chevy, I didn't think a will was necessary. However, to a man, we had the feeling that if the officers thought that a possible outcome was the need for a will, then maybe we would want to discuss the plans and options! Needless to say, telling a 21-year-old sailor that he needed a will was a real sobering experience.

After loading up with 24 war shot torpedoes, we were ready to sail. We started out when the Pentagon lowered the DEFCON rating one notch. However, we eventually made our way to Cuban waters and Guantanamo Bay.

GITMO

We entered the Bay at night and I was on the bow. Suddenly, without warning, all the U.S. Navy cruisers and destroyers, and the Marines ashore with their artillery and tanks, started firing star shells into the night sky. It was the most spectacular fireworks show I've ever seen.

My first thought was that World War III has started and, since our biggest gun was a Thompson sub-machine gun, our submarine was in the wrong place at the wrong time! It turned out that this fireworks was a nightly show of force to Fidel Castro and his troops surrounding the base.

The message transmitted was "Look at all the stuff we can throw at you, and do you really want to cross the barbed wire and our fence?"

The Navy had evacuated all dependants from the base. Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine did visit our sub while we were there. Also, Perry Como and his troop were putting on USO shows for us and also for his Christmas Special. Besides Perry, he had dancers, and Senor Wencis (hand puppet guy – Oh that's All Right).

We really had no place to go, and we hung a sheet off a barge next to SEA POACHER and showed my 25 movies. We put 10 cent beer in a garbage can filled with ice on the pier and watched the movies. Perry Como was a down to earth kind of guy. The Navy and Marine officers planned on having him at one of the Officer's Clubs every night after his shows for the week he'd be there. Instead, at the first Officer's Club, one of our Ensigns asked him for a ride back to SEA POACHER. When Perry and his brother arrived, we greeted them. We showed Perry where the steaks were located, how to fire up the grill, and generally how to make himself at home.

Guess what? Every night after his show, Perry would come to watch movies, drink a few 10 cent beers, and make his own steak sandwich! Also, he told the Show Girls to "Visit the Submarine."

The Admiral quickly sent us away to Ocho Rios, Jamaica for a weekend. We were originally due back to GITMO, but Ed Sullivan and his crew were coming in for another Christmas Special (and they knew we would "Steal Ed"), so the Admiral sent us back to Key West around the west coast of Cuba.

We were awarded the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for our participation in the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962. And we were the only submarine in the Navy that received this medal.

THE RETURN HOME

Our adventures were not over. All the way back we were on the surface. Suddenly, we dove, stayed down a few hours, and then surfaced to continue to Key West.

Three months later, "Roach" Russell visited me in Roanoke, Virginia and told me why we dove. It turned out that a Russian ship reported a U.S. submarine diving near her, and they accused us of tapping their screw sounds for later target identification. Russia complained to the UN as the Crisis was not over, and this incident made the New York Times.

We arrived back in Key West on Sunday December 16. Monday, I went back to the SEA POACHER to work, and was told "Why are you here? You're supposed to be at Discharge Headquarters."

The Crisis was over, Congress had rescinded the one year extension, and now the Navy was going to discharge me two weeks early, so that I could get home by Christmas. I was discharged two days later, and arrived home in Roanoke on December 20.

CHAPTER 66

JERRY HOUCHENS 1960 - 1962

I REMEMBER THE KEY WEST CONCH TRAIN

THE KEY WEST CONCH TRAIN

I must have been pretty ornery during my stay on SEA POACHER, because most all of my remembrances, while great, would be cut up in censorship.

However, here is one that will clear for publishing.

I believe it was 1960, and we had just returned from GITMO. SEA POACHER was moored at dock in Key West. It was one of those just right days that we had so many of there.

The Conch Train had just started running, but it only had an engine and a couple of passenger cars behind it. It did have a bullhorn which described all the points of interest.

Several of SEA POACHER'S finest (myself included) were lounging on the deck eating watermelon and Nutty Buddy's, which as I recall were submarine staples.

The Train Engineer had both passenger cars full, and apparently was determined to make our submarine base interesting.

Upon our return from GITMO, we had scraped loose paint from the side of the bow and painted the spots with red lead, which was a regular thing to do any time we had a week to kill in port.

As the Train approached our pier, the Engineer picked up his bullhorn and proudly announced that the ship on his right was the SEA POACHER, and you may have heard about her. This submarine has just returned from Cuba and reports have it that Castro does not want to meet up with these fellows again. You can see that the ship has sustained damage to the bow, but my guess is it won't take long before they go back out.

He then stopped the train at our bow, turned the bullhorn towards us and shouted "Well done sailors, lets give these men a hand."

As his passengers waved and some saluted, we figured a response was necessary so we waved our Nutty Buddy's and held our watermelon high.

We all looked at each other and said it doesn't get any better than this, does it?

"This nation will remain the land of the free only so long as it is the home of the brave."

Elmer Davis

"Praise the Lord and pass the ammunition."

*Navy Chaplain LT Forgy during Pearl Harbor attack
7 December 1941*

CHAPTER 67

RICHARD (GENE) DEMPSEY 1960 - 1962

**I REMEMBER TRYING TO REPORT ABOARD SEA POACHER,
OUR SOVIET SUBMARINE CONTACT FROM THE BUSHNELL,
FINALLY REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER,
PREPARING FOR THE NORTH ATLANTIC RUN OF 1960,
NEARLY A MAJOR COLLISION AT SEA,
SOME TIME IN ENGLAND, LOANING MONEY ON SEA POACHER,
THE NORTHERN RUN ITSELF,
LIFTING THE CAPTAIN BY HIS BELT ON THE PERISCOPE,
MY ALMOST BUYING THE FARM, AND FINAL THOUGHTS**

TRYING TO REPORT ABOARD SEA POACHER

After completing Officer Candidate School and being commissioned an Ensign in January 1960, I was directed to attend Electronics Maintenance Officer School at New London and then to proceed to SEA POACHER in Key West..

I arrived in Key West in April 1960, and looked forward to reporting to my first submarine as a new Ensign. I found that Sea Poacher was deployed to GITMO, but was scheduled to return to Key West sometime soon.

So, I was temporarily attached to Submarine Squadron 12 with duties as SLJO (S***** Little Jobs Officer.)

This was a let down for a know-it-all, hot to trot, Mustang Ensign. Ha!

OUR SOVIET SUBMARINE CONTACT FROM THE BUSHNELL

One day upon arriving on the Tender BUSHNELL, where COMSUBRON 12 was located, I found everyone in the Operations Center in a state of excitement. SEA POACHER was en route to Key West, returning from GITMO, when she detected the sounds of a submerged contact that they evaluated as a Soviet Submarine.

They reported having difficulty holding contact, because the batteries were low on charge and the boat could only submerge for short periods to utilize the sonar effectively. (SEA POACHER was to have the batteries replaced upon arrival in Key West and had been running on the battery prior to gaining the contact, so the batteries would be discharged for the renewal.)

Of course, this was quite an event. Everyone expected there was Soviet submarine activity in and around Cuba but no contacts, visual or otherwise, had been established until this incident.

Meanwhile, SEA POACHER continued to intermittently hold contact with the suspected submarine throughout the evening and night. While conducting this event, during a period when the ship was on the surface, the Bridge watch sighted a surface vessel with unusual lights.

SEA POACHER reported this sighting to the Squadron and stated they were investigating, as it appeared the vessel was signaling they were in distress. She attempted to close the suspected troubled vessel. As they neared, they observed lights that were assumed to be red flares. This reinforced the belief that the vessel was in distress.

SEA POACHER continued to close and tried to establish radio contact. They were unable to do either. The vessel headed towards Cuba and SEA POACHER aborted its efforts to render assistance, reported that they had photos of the happenings, and was headed back to Port.

Of course, everyone from OPNAV (Chief of Naval Operations) down the chain of command was anxious to get a look at the photos. Unfortunately, the film in the periscope camera was defective and, when developed, showed nothing.

However it was determined, from debriefings of the CO, LCDR Larry Stahl, and others that the suspected red flares were tracers and SEA POACHER had been fired upon. Fortunately no hits were scored.

Following this incident, all squadron insignias, until then, painted on the submarine sail, and offered a large target, were removed from all U.S. submarines.

FINALLY REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER

When I finally got there during this period of stress for the crew and wardroom, i.e. debriefings of the officers and lookouts and everyone who had any knowledge of the incident, there was also the preparation of the boat to enter the yard for battery renewal. I assumed the duties of Electronics Maintenance, Sonar, and Supply Officer.

I also began the task of submarine officer qualification. I expected this to be an easy one, since I was an enlisted qualified submariner, however, I was mistaken. CO Larry Stahl, XO Jerry Davi and Engineer LT Hal Ellis, were very helpful but demanding taskmasters.

This battery renewal period was a critical time. None of the Wardroom, except the CO, was aware of our forthcoming deployment to the North Atlantic/Barents Sea.

PREPARING FOR THE NORTH ATLANTIC RUN OF 1960

Following the battery renewal/repair availability, SEA POACHER commenced an intense period of at sea exercises to prepare the crew and officers for the upcoming deployment to the North. High points during this preparation time for me, as Supply Officer, were to find certain items the CO demanded for the menu, i.e., certain brands of chutney, steak sauces, and cheeses. We departed from Key West in late October 1960. We stopped in New London for the installation of special sonar and other sensitive equipment. As Sonar and Electronic Maintenance Officer I was immersed in this special equipment installation.

Following the installations and special intelligence briefings, we departed New London en route to Portsmouth, England. During this transit, we were diverted to intercept a Soviet ELINT (Electronics Intelligence) Trawler. The Trawler, named FEDOROV, was operating in the North Atlantic. It was believed they were there to retrieve a returning space capsule from one of the initial Soviet space shots.

We were informed that we should remain undetected, make best speed to intercept the trawler, and observe their operations. The North Atlantic at that time of year was not a friendly place. We faced low visibility of 200 to 300 yards at times, multitudes of fishing vessels, rough seas, rain squalls, etc.

NEARLY A MAJOR COLLISION AT SEA

During this search for the ELINT trawler an incident occurred when I had the 2000-2400 OOD watch on the Bridge. It was a dark, cloudy, and misty night. The seas were about 8 to 10 feet. The wind was moderate. We were making full on four engines (about 18 knots) heading for the latest expected position of the trawler. Suddenly, I sighted a group of lights dead ahead that looked like a large cruise ship.

It appeared to me a collision was imminent. I sounded the collision alarm and immediately ordered a course change to head for what I thought was the stern of the large ship and ordered "All Back Emergency."

I called over the 1MC (General Announcing Circuit) "CAPTAIN TO THE BRIDGE." Larry Stahl immediately appeared. I pointed out what I thought was the large ship.

About that time, the clouds parted, and the CO thanked me for calling him to the Bridge to observe the moon. Another one of many happenings in the development of an Ensign into a mariner! After spending several days running all over the ocean trying to locate the trawler, which we were never successful in doing, we proceeded to England.

SOME TIME IN ENGLAND

Following the exciting transit to Portsmouth, SEA POACHER took on stores and conducted minor repairs to make the boat as ready as possible for our deployment into the Barents Sea on our intelligence collecting mission. While in Portsmouth, we also took onboard two British officers who were specialists in collecting Soviet communications intelligence.

As Supply Officer, I had the responsibility of topping off stores, i.e., delicacies' such as, 800 pounds of pop corn, 1000 pounds cocoa, 5 cases Lee & Perrin Worcestershire sauce, 600 pounds of prime English beef (so tough it was ground-up for hamburger), 200 pounds of raisins (special order from the snipes), etc. I was not sure why the snipes wanted the raisins until checking the battery ventilation line-ups during on-station operations. Not certain why I had a cup in hand. The elixir was quite invigorating!

LOANING MONEY ON SEA POACHER

While in Portsmouth I did something that took many years of careful, faithful, and loving devotion to overcome! Ha! Having recently been commissioned and previously been an RD1 (Radarman) my pay had almost doubled. We had some money in the bank (what a change from enlisted days.)

LTJG Dick Elliott, a good guy in the Wardroom, saw a MG Midget in a dealer's showroom in Portsmouth. The Submarine Tender FULTON, home ported in New London, just happened to be in Portsmouth and had agreed to transport the MG to New London for LTJG Elliott. Dick did not have the money to buy the car. Being the great shipmate and magnanimous, irresponsible young sailor that I was, I wrote a check for the car for Dick. I then wrote a note to my wife and told her not to overdraw the account.

However, I failed to tell her the amount of the check or what it was for. We were gone for two months without communications with the world. When I called her from New London upon

returning from the deployment, her first words were, “WHAT DID YOU SPEND \$1350 FOR?” (That was a lot of money in 1960, especially for an Ensign.) She really was glad to get it back!

THE NORTHERN RUN ITSELF

Many things happened during our time on station: some funny, some serious, and some down right scary. I am sure others have narrated events such as the raisins in the bilge strainers in the motor room.

The Electrician, name withheld, who put his hand inside the port cubical causing a short and loss of power to the port shaft while the ship was at “SILENT RUNNING” recording a group of Soviet ships that were close aboard.

The time we were at 150 feet depth making a sonar recording of a contact when it appeared that we may have been detected by a KRONSTADT Patrol Craft, and the CO ordered a depth change to go below the layer as I remember it being at a 275 foot depth.

A machinist, I don't remember his name (we called him the Jabbering Jamaican) was in the lower flats of the FER checking something on the stills. He had his head between two pipes. When we went deep, they compressed, and he could not get his head out until we returned to a more shallow depth. Funny, unless your head was stuck.

One of the prime objectives of our mission was to map the location of shore based radar sites on the coast of the USSR using our ECM (Electronics Counter Measures) equipment. About mid-way through our tour on-station the bearings of the sites began to be erratic.

The lead Electronic Technician, ET2 John Love, and myself determined that the DF antenna was loose on the shaft. To repair the antenna it would necessitate surfacing the boat, going topside on top of the sail, pulling the cover on the antenna and visually aligning the antenna as accurately as possible, refastening the antenna to the shaft, and resealing the cover.

Captain Stahl told Love and me that he intended to take the boat to a position off the Norwegian coast and surface long enough for the two of us to make the repair, but if the Soviets made any overt moves toward us, he would have to submerge.

John Love and I made ready to go, SEA POACHER surfaced, we went topside into a heavy freezing snow storm, and made the repair successfully. John performed in an outstanding manner, demonstrating an excellent understanding of the system. I almost froze my a** as I put on a suit of Arctic gear to go topside that was too short-waisted. When I bent over to assist John, the suit gaped open in back and the freezing snow went down my backside.

While I was topside I was so scared that I did not notice the cold. But when we were back inside SEA POACHER, I could not sit for a long time and my butt was sore for several days.

The repair lasted for the remainder of the patrol, and I was told that we gained useful information on the Soviet early warning radar sites.

LIFTING THE CAPTAIN BY HIS BELT ON THE PERISCOPE

Several other events took place, but I will only mention them in passing. There was the time that we were making an approach on a surface ship of interest. We were at periscope depth, The CO was using No.1 scope. The XO was using No.2 scope. I was the strip plotter in the after part of the Conning Tower. The CO was standing between No.1 and No. 2 facing forward. The XO raised No. 2 and the hydraulic stop caught the CO's belt and hoisted him into the overhead.

Fortunately the XO saw what was happening, and stopped the scope before it fully raised. Unthinking the XO said “What are you doing up there, Captain?”
I will leave to your imagination what the CO said.

AND MY ALMOST BUYING THE FARM

Now for the truly scary happening of that deployment. We were on our way back to New London on the surface in the GI/UK (Greenland Iceland United Kingdom) Straits. The seas were rough with high winds. I had the OOD mid-watch (2400-0400). I dressed in the dark in the FTR in heavy Arctic foul weather gear and a pooppy suit, went to the Bridge, and relieved the watch.

At that time the seas were building, and the wind was increasing. I fastened the safety line the off going OOD had been using to my safety harness and relieved the watch.

By about 0130 the seas were so large they were breaking over the Bridge, we were now taking water through the snorkel, and the upper hatch was shut.

SEA POACHER was making only turns to maintain steerage. We were taking rolls in excess of 40 degrees. The CO agreed to send one lookout below and keep one on the Bridge with me. The lookout remaining on the bridge was TM1 Schnars. Visibility was near zero with rain and green water breaking over the Bridge continually. It was not possible to open the hatch to move the watch to the Conning Tower. At about 0230 I looked up and saw the curl of a wave breaking above the boat (it looked like the curl of the wave on Hawaii Five-0). I called for Schnars to grab hold, and I tried to hold-on to the TBT (Target Bearing Transmitter).

The wave broke over us with such force that I was unable to hold on. I was washed overboard. Schnars was washed into the shears. My safety line was one normally used when working topside. It was much longer than should have been used as a safety line on the Bridge.

I found myself in the water alongside the pressure hull. My pooppy suit had a tear on the left shoulder and immediately filled with water. I tried to lift myself back on the ship and remember thinking “DEMPSEY YOU HAVE BOUGHT THE FARM.”

I passed out. I next found myself back on the boat in the shears. I heard Schnars on the 1MC calling for another OOD saying that I was gone and washed away.

I grabbed him by the shoulder and said, “No I’m Not.” He almost jumped over board.

I guess Schnars and I had the best of it as below decks was a mess. The boat inclinometer was jammed at 67degrees with two battery cells in the forward battery shaken loose.

Chlorine gas was being emitted from the Forward Battery and loose gear was scattered throughout SEA POACHER. Topside, part of the plating on the sail was torn off and the after deck was washed away. After this episode I was never comfortable topside in rough seas.

FINAL THOUGHTS

I won’t go into the things that happened during CO Len Kojm’s tour. Lanny, you were there. The confrontation with the CIA. The Cuban refugee boat. The recovery of the floating body. Tex Procter and his erratic demands as DIVCOM and on and on...

EDITOR’S NOTE: Well, I remember some of those but not the Cuban refugee boat or the recovery of the floating body.

CHAPTER 68

BOB SUMNER 1960 - 1963

**I REMEMBER MY ARRIVAL IN KEY WEST,
BEING A BOILER TENDER RATING, NORTHERN RUN,
NEW YORK'S FINEST, CROSSING THE ATLANTIC,
FUEL OIL KING AND SPOOKS, RAISIN BREW
AND FRESH WATER IN THE FORWARD ENGINE ROOM,
PEANUT BUTTER AND HAND CLEANER SNACKS,
LEMON PIES AT CHRISTMAS, KEY WEST EPISODES,
JAMAICA AND CUBA, AND THE CHARLESTON SHIPYARD**

MY ARRIVAL IN KEY WEST

When I reported aboard SEA POACHER in early 1960, I arrived in Key West by Greyhound bus and had to change from civvies to blues in the bus station to report on board. When I bent over to tie my shoes, I split the complete rear of the 13 button blues I had on. I had to walk to the base and through the main gate (with Marine guards) and down to the pier to where SEA POACHER was tied up.

Upon arrival, I was directed to the After Battery hatch, to go down to the Mess Hall, and some one would direct me to the CO. When I went down the hatch, needless to say, the first view of this new shipmate by the crew in the Mess Hall (watching a movie) was a rear end with his pants split out and his skivvies showing (good thing I had skivvies on). Some of you might remember this. Of course everyone in the Mess Hall gave me a ration of s***.

I was then taken forward to report to the CO, and of course he had already been told about my split pants, before I got to his stateroom. He then took my orders, opened them, looked at me in amazement and asked, "What in the hell are we going to do with a Boiler Tender with split pants on a diesel boat?"

I was assigned to the Forward Engine Room under the guidance of Bobby Hammac where I stayed my entire tour.

BEING A BOILER TENDER RATING

I guess I need to explain about the Boiler Tender rating I had. When I entered the Navy, I was first assigned to the Destroyer Escort BRIDGET (DE-1024), where I detailed to the fire room (boiler room) which it was called in those days.

I was an FN and my job was to man the boilers that made steam for the ship's propulsion turbines. This was a hot and dirty job, and I did not like it at all.

One day while out at sea off San Diego, the Captain asked if anyone wanted to ride a submarine for a few days to see if that was something we might want to do.

I volunteered right away. Two of us then transferred to the ASPRO (SS-309) and stayed aboard for three days. This, I decided, was what I wanted to do in the Navy.

Back aboard the BRIDGET, I put in for sub school right away and was accepted four weeks later. While waiting for the acceptance, I took the rating test to advance to Boiler Tender Third Class. I was subsequently transferred to sub school, and received the BT Third Class rating while there. When I reported aboard SEA POACHER there were no BT ratings in submarines. The only time submarines had boilers (or steam for propulsion prior to nuclear power) was in the last 1800s when designers and inventors were trying to develop the first submarine.

While I was on the SEA POACHER there were only two sailors with the BT rating in the entire submarine force. One was on the West Coast and yours truly was on the East Coast.

You might say this makes me unique; others say strange.

NORTHERN RUN

Shortly after reporting on board we were getting ready to go north, and we had to remove all loose hardware from the superstructure including the mooring lines we carried for securing to the pier. These lines were left in Key West as we proceeded to New London.

There we spent several weeks preparing to go to England and then north. The periscopes were changed along with other items. At this time we had no idea what the changes were for or why. Several of the guys had their wives come up and rented apartments. This was a plus since we could go over to their house and change into civvies to go into town.

One time the phone on the pier rang, and I answered it. It was a nice sounding lady looking for some one. I told her I didn't know him, and he was not on the boat. We struck up a conversation, and to make a long story short, she invited me and a friend over to her house, where she and her sister would fix us dinner.

Not to pass up a chance to score I got someone (name left out to protect the innocent) from the boat to go with me, and we went over the next day.

I rang the door bell, and they let us in. I'm going to tell you these were the two largest women I had ever seen; they both must have weighted 350 lbs each. We talked for a while and asked if they had any beer. They did not, and so we said we would go get some. We left and never went back. From that time on I never answered the phone on the pier.

NEW YORK'S FINEST

While in New London a couple of us went to New York City for the weekend. I believe we stayed in the Hotel New Yorker and went out drinking Saturday night. At that time the bars stayed open all night. At 4 a.m. on Sunday, I staggered out of the little bar and was leaning on a parking meter when I felt a hot breath on my neck. I looked around and a horse was staring me in the face. At first I thought it was one of the ladies from New London mentioned above, and what a scare!

Sitting on this horse was one of New York's finest, He asked me what I was doing, and I told him I was getting some fresh air.

I turned around and went back into the bar never to see the horse or rider again.

That was enough, and we went back to New London.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC

Upon leaving New London, we were crossing the Atlantic and were directed to find a Russian trawler in the North Atlantic. The trawler was reported to be recovering a Russian satellite that was returning to Earth.

We sailed around the ocean for days, but never did find the trawler. So we proceeded on to England. In those days everything was hush hush, so the crew had no idea what we were doing.

Upon arrival at England we pulled into Portsmouth and tied up next to a U.S. destroyer. We took on stores, special equipment for spooks, three spooks, and more food.

Our cook determined that the beef was from Australia, tougher than nails, and refused it. We then had to unload all the Australian meat and reload some better local beef. Thanks be to the cook.

While in port we tried to exchange movies with a destroyer, but they didn't want the ones we had. One night they were watching a movie on their fantail, so someone decided to pressurize our sanitary tank and vent it outboard. After that, they decided to trade movies.

We were in England for about a week and then left for the North Atlantic. Some time after leaving one of our shipmates (not to be named) came down with some little English critters (crabs) and decided to share them with his crew mates by rigging a crab line from his bunk to others bunks in Hogan's Alley. What a nice guy!

FUEL OIL KING AND SPOOKS

While at sea in the North Atlantic, I and several others received our Dolphins. I was then given the job of Fuel Oil King which required me to check the fuel tanks daily for the amount of fuel we had.

To do this I had to go into several compartments to open petcocks to determine the fuel level. One of the compartments was the Wardroom, which on this trip also had bunks for the spooks. The first time I went in there to check the tanks two of the spooks were in bed. I woke them and asked them to get up so that I could check the tanks.

I was told in no uncertain words to get the hell out of there and leave them alone. I told them that I had to check the tanks and had to do it now. They again told me to go away. I then proceeded to inform the Captain of my problem.

He then went to the Wardroom and woke up both spooks and informed them that they were to do what I had asked when I asked.

I had no problem with them the rest of the trip.

RAISIN BREW AND FRESH WATER IN THE FORWARD ENGINE ROOM

While we had been out to sea for a while some of the guys decided to make some booze out of raisins and other stuff. The mash was stored in glass containers in the Forward Engine Room. After some time I looked at the jars and determined (not knowing what it should look like) that it was bad and had my oiler dump it in the bilge.

Not long after that an officer came back and said that the bilge pump was not working, and we should we check the pump and suction screen. Low and behold the suction screen was plugged with raisins, and he wanted to know what they were doing in the bilge.

Of course we had no idea. Later the guys making the booze were ready to kill me.

The FER was also where the Fresh Water Stills were located. Because SEA POACHER was a diesel-electric submarine we had two batteries with 126 cells in each battery. These were wet-cell batteries, just like your car battery, except that each cell weighted about one ton. Thus each cell required a lot of fresh water.

Since fresh water was always scarce, there was not a whole lot to wash with. Because the engine room crews made the fresh water, we would always have a couple of buckets full of fresh water in the bilges to wash up with whenever we wanted.

This was unbeknown to the rest of the crew.

PEANUT BUTTER AND HAND CLEANER SNACKS

During watch I would have my oiler go into the Galley and make some crackers with peanut butter on top to eat while on watch. Arturo Piazza would always come through the Engine Room, grab some of the crackers, and eat them as he went forward.

After several times of doing this I told the oiler to get more crackers, but this time don't put any peanut butter on them.

When he got back I took the crackers and got some of the hand cleaner (that looked a little like peanut butter) and put it on them.

Shortly thereafter here comes Arturo, and he grabs a hand full of crackers and headed forward. He came back madder then hell and wanted to know what we had put on the crackers. We told him and he went to the head, never to take our crackers again.

LEMON PIES AT CHRISTMAS

While returning to New London from the North Atlantic, we were at sea during Christmas. Our cook (John Harvey) decided to make lemon meringue pies for dinner. The sea was so rough that the boat rolled to starboard, and all the meringue slid off the pies up against the bulkhead. He then went and scooped up the meringue and plopped it back on the pies.

After that the Captain decided to dive so that we could have a calmer dinner.

Returning to Key West, it took some time in the harbor before we could tie up to the pier, because nobody could find our mooring lines (left behind when we left).

Finally, they were found and we were able to tie up. Awaiting us on the pier was a small Christmas tree because we had missed Christmas.

Liberty was granted for all but the single guys.

KEY WEST EPISODES

Key West was a very interesting place. After I had been on the boat for a time, four of us (Bob Chestnut, Bob Bradley, Charlie Auclair and I) decided to rent a trailer in a park on Stock Island.

We would stay there when in port rather than the base barracks. Since we had 4 duty sections and were all in different duty sections, this worked out well because the trailer only had three beds, even though we never spent much time in bed.

Most of the time we spent at a little known place called the Two Friends Bar or better known as Dos Amigos that was owned by two “ladies.” It was where Bradley played, “Georgia on my Mind” on the jukebox all the time, while we played shuffle board and drank.

If the truth be known we should have owned the place, as much money as we spent there. I remember on one occasion we stayed out all night and wound up at a little bar near our trailer on Stock Island about 5 a.m.

Some one said we needed to go back to the boat, because we were going to sea that morning. I decided that I didn’t want to go back and told one of the guys that the only way I was going back was to hit me here (pointing to my chin).

The next thing I remember was being in my bunk on board the boat at sea with a huge hang over and hungry. I went to the Galley and made a sandwich. When I bit down, my jaw felt like it was coming apart (which of course it was - cracked).

I had to go to the Tender to have it wired shut. When back in port, I ate mush for a month to let my cracked jaw heal. I never did find out who it was that hit me. As I recall I was restricted to the boat for a good while after that.

Another time, Chestnut, Hammac, Auclair and I stayed in port when the boat went out for daily ASW training. I was to meet SEA POACHER at the pier to help tie up at 4 p.m. I borrowed Chestnut’s Chevy, and I had no sooner pulled away from the curb and a cop stopped me.

He walked up to the window and opened the driver’s door. I almost fell out on the street. He said, “Sailor, you’re drunk,” and off to the Key West jail I went. They put me in a cell near the front desk, and I kept telling them that, “You God Damn Cubans can’t keep me here,” because I was a U.S. sailor.

With that they put me in a cell in the back area so that they couldn’t hear me. Soon one of our officers (I believe it was LTJG Gene Dempsey) came and bailed me out.

I spent the next month again restricted to the boat and had to borrow money from Charlie Auclair to pay my fine. I did pay him back, I think.

There seems to be a pattern here.

One time Charlie and I took a day of R&R and stayed in Key West, on the condition that we catch the motor launch early in the morning to take a bunch of midshipmen from Annapolis to the boat.

We arrived at the pier about 5 a.m. (after drinking all night), and the Midshipmen were sitting on the pier waiting for the launch. We figured we were in good shape since the launch hadn’t left yet, so we proceeded to lie down on the pier. We fell asleep (passed out) and woke up two hours later, with no Midshipmen and no launch. So, you would have thought they would have woke us up, but then they were midshipmen! So what do we do now?

We went to the Operations Building and reported that we missed the boat. They were not happy and contacted SEA POACHER. They took away our liberty passes, and we were again on restriction.

I don’t know if it was this or another time, but a couple of us snuck out of the base in Chestnut’s car trunk and returned to the base the same way. Do you follow the pattern yet?

JAMAICA AND CUBA

We went to Jamaica and tied up to the Bauxite Pier in Ocho Rios for liberty. One night a bunch of guys decided to go up the conveyor that was used to load the ore ships and were diving off the conveyor end into the water.

One time I went into town and at a restaurant I ordered a hamburger, which is just what I got, a ham burger. From there we went to GITMO where we saw the Perry Como show. Others have written about that.

However one way we could stay in port for a day was to go and get our eyes checked at the Navy Hospital. I think every one did get a pair of glasses even though we didn't need them. I know I didn't, but I got a pair anyway.

THE CHARLESTON SHIPYARD

In Key West I bought a 1938 Buick with suicide doors, and drove it to Charleston when we went in the shipyard. The trunk was rusted out. I had a new one built and the entire car painted.

This was my only car, and it was great for hauling shipmates into town for R&R. It was so big (like a tank) that if you got into a wreck no one would get hurt. I remember hitting a metal pole in the base parking lot. The car was not even dented, but the pole was bent over.

In the yard, we removed the engines and rebuilt them in a building on the base which took a long time. At the same time the low sail was removed and a new high Atlantic sail installed.

I had to stand fire watch in the bottom of the dry dock below the boat. One night while the welders were working, I knew enough not to look at the arc, so I had my back to the welders and was looking at the side of the dry dock. Later that night, I woke up in the barracks with my eyes hurting and felt like they were filled with gravel. Someone took me to the hospital on base, and it was determined that I had flash burns (from the welding) on both eyes.

I was laid up for several days until my eyes healed. No one told me that the welding flash off the dry dock walls could burn your eyes as bad as looking at the flash directly. When you have a poor head your whole body suffers.

After completion of the overhaul we went to Norfolk to have the boat degaussed. This was a different experience since we had to remove all clocks and electronic equipment from the boat. The dock workers then wrapped large electrical cables around the boat and put electrical current through the cable for several hours. What this did was to demagnetize us so that we would not attract magnetic mines. This process took all day and everyone had to stay off SEA POACHER for the entire time.

During my qualification on board, I received help from a lot of fellow sailors, and I would like to thank them all. One shipmate in particular was Bobbie Joe Hammac. Because of his patience, understanding, dedication, and guidance, I was able to get qualified. Without his constant help I might never have made it.

Thank you Bobbie Joe. I will never forget you.

EDITOR'S NOTE: In August 2007 Bob's wife Donna had a stroke that affected her eyesight mainly. It was announced to the SEA POACHER Association via email from Jack Merrill. I sent a get well card. So did others apparently.

On 1 September 2007 I received a heartfelt telephone call from Bob. He said he had received so many cards and get well wishes, and that 80 percent were from SEA POACHER. We both almost broke up on the phone. Actually we did. Bob also said, "SEA POACHER is the best support organization I have ever been associated with."

CHAPTER 69

DANIEL MCLAREN 1960 - 1962

I REMEMBER HOW TO HANDLE AN ANGRY TIGER, NOTHING IS EVER SIMPLE, XO (JERRY DAVI) CARTOONS, AND SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

HOW TO HANDLE AN ANGRY TIGER

Prior to leaving New London for Portsmouth, England in 1960, Ensign Gene Dempsey gave Bill Higley and me the responsibility of doing a “hands on” inventory of the ET Spare Parts Store Room. We were to make listings of all parts needed so Mr. Dempsey could make a supply request at Portsmouth bringing every part to 110 percent of the required electronics spares.

If Bill and I could accomplish this seemingly impossible task, we were promised “basket leave” in England. Of course this meant we had to cram every possible off-watch moment into the task. We would work together until one of us had to leave and go on watch.

One day I was on duty and making a “coffee run” for my sonar watch section. I had just left Bill, who was still doing inventory, when I noticed the Electronics Store Room Hatch just starting to slowly open. So I pressed down on it with my foot, and picking on my friend (submarine sense of humor).

This went on several times, as I never learned to quit while ahead.

All of a sudden an enraged voiced yelled “Who the f*** is f***** with this f***** Hatch? It was not Bill’s voice! What to do? I had a “Tiger by the Tail,” so I jumped back on the hatch with both feet to hold it down. The Tiger was now really angry.

It was the fastest I had ever moved. In one leap I was in the Galley drawing coffee, when the hatch in the passageway, outside of the Radio Room, flew open with a very angry and red faced Lieutenant asking if I had seen anyone f***** with the Hatch.

Of course I answered “No, Sir!”

I believe, if possible, smoke would come out of his ears as he went forward.

John Harvey asked me, “Mac, what’s wrong? You’re as white as a sheet.”

To my knowledge, Bill and John were the only ones who knew of this incident, when my “submarine sense of humor” really back fired. Of course they discreetly had their (very private) joke with me at every opportunity. Real friends!

NOTHING IS EVER SIMPLE

I was awaiting the return of Dan and SEA POACHER from the 1960 Northern Run, and I wanted to look right for the occasion. After they arrived, and we greeted and spoke with the other couples, we anxiously jumped in our vehicle and headed out. As we were leaving the main gate, it seems like I dropped a bomb. I told Dan that I had heard there was a problem on the boat, and asked him to tell me about it if he could. He swiftly made me turn around, and we returned to SEA POACHER.

“This has to be reported,” he mumbled, while pulling on my arm and taking me to the Executive Officer’s Quarters. Jerry Davi asked me where, when, and what I had heard, and from whom. We felt we were both going to be locked up as the perspiration poured off Dan’s brow. The XO seemed to have all the information and told us to go home. “Phew,” that was close.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The above is from Dan’s wife Marlene. I asked her by email what the problem was. She responded that it was a classified phone call. Something about a fire aboard which was declassified 12 years later. She said it really is not so important now. There are a few other details that Dan and I have omitted. Maybe some of it will be discussed at the May 2008 SEA POACHER Reunion.

XO (JERRY DAVI) CARTOONS

On our 1960 Northern Run, mysterious cartoons would often appear and be posted in the Crew’s Mess. I believe I have most of them.

EDITOR’S NOTE Dan sent me 20 cartoons in August 2007 that Jerry Davi had drawn of Northern Run incidents. For most of them, it is difficult to ascertain the relevance and meaning of the cartoons, although a couple are included in the photographic section where the meaning is clear. The rest, courtesy of Dan, will be given to the SEA POACHER Association for the archives, for publishing in Newsletters, and for the website. Some are described in the Jerry Davi Chapter. The others are briefly described below with Dan filling in details in late September 2007.

One shows a sailor (probably Piazza) jumping up and down in the FER, saying to an officer: “I don’t know Mr. Jordan, MON, that cat Kamuf was just standing there looking then...Kamuf is hanging from a chain yelling HELP. It was probably an engine overhaul.

Another shows a sailor drifting off away from the SEA POACHER Bridge. The caption reads: The last thing he said was that he didn’t care, he had his liberty card!

A topside cartoon shows a sailor being reeled over the side. It is titled Navigation: Fathometer or no Fathometer, Sardo’s determined to prove we’re here!

Then there is a Wardroom scene with gambling going on. It is a closed curtain conference with the skipper thinking SEA POACHER. But five other officers are individually thinking about women, beer, booze, steak and eggs, and finally the XO with a book titled: 1001 WAYS YO TURN THE TROOPS TO by Davi.

Another shows a sailor standing before the inclinometer and depth gauges in Control reading a book titled: How to Snort in 10 Easy Lessons by GIL. (Gilcrest qualifying to snorkel.)

Then there is a Conning Tower scene with a sailor dangling from the handles on #1 Periscope. The title is Fink Brown Rides Again, This Time on No.1. The caption reads: Lower One! (This happened to LT Brown.)

Two sailors are looking at each other. Both have spears, arrows, and tomahawks embedded in them. One is carrying the book: 1001 WAYS TO TURN THE TROOPS TO by Davi. The caption reads: I personally don’t feel the Wardroom movies are so realistic!

Back in the Engine Room, the two distilling units are rigged with amplifiers and two sailors are playing a guitar and drums. Another sailor says to the XO, who is holding several report chits, “I know it’s not very military Jerry, but they make water!”

Another is back in the Wardroom where a swing has been installed in a passageway. The seat is labeled BRUST. An officer is saying to the XO: "But Jerry, I had to do something, he was ruining the curtains!" (Toney Brust was teased by the enginemen of being a "Curtain Hanger."

"Fink" BROWN RIDES AGAIN. Another scene in the Conning Tower where a very confused officer's head is spinning with thoughts of: Dollies, B+B, Shlitz, Six 60 degrees, JBR, HQZ, ABR, STALOS, and Area X Va. He is holding a bearing rate calculator and a book called TACTICS MADE EASY.

ANYONE YOU KNOW? It shows five sailors carrying booze and referred to as "WET" PIRATE FANS. Two very parched sailors are crawling after them and are referred to as "DRY" YANKEE FANS.

There is a Control Room scene of a First Class PO carrying a large wrench, head plunger, and oar. Another sailor is behind him bouncing up and down. There is a can of grease between the two. The two sailors have a line connecting them that states: ZERK FITTING FOR JAW. The caption reads: MORE GREASE SHERMAN?

Next there is one titled: SONAR ROOM (SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED). One sailor is sitting at a sonar and there is the word TILT. A second sailor is offering a ladle with something hot in it to a third sailor who has a puzzled look about him. Behind the second sailor is a can labeled OPIUM. The caption reads: WHO? NEST?

Back in Control a sailor is half embedded in the Garbage Disposal Unit. A PO is behind him and is apparently "Peter" Prentice. He says to the GDU sailor: How's the G-Man Mr. Elliot?

The last one is extremely busy in the Forward Torpedo Room. Two sailors (Schnarf and The Beak, who is Joe Beakler) are talking to a third. One says: "But Mr. Elliot, we did have 3 MK 37s when we left Key West." Strewn around the room are a tennis racket, golf clubs, foul weather gear and a sailor named Vaura, city dump, sailor Krutd, and mess decks forward including potatoes, coffee, eggs, and chow.(Forward storage for the Northern Run.)

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Not all of these relate to SEA POACHER, but may be of interest. I reported aboard PICUDA in August 1958 and was thrown overboard three times the first day. I qualified in record time when ST1 Billy Wolf influenced me to strike for SO rather than ET. My liberty card confused most as it said, "SOSSN(SS_)," to which I replied that just means, "I need help too!"

The next year I was on SPIKEFISH. I was transferred to make a "showboat" (with white cleats) prior to the publicity of its 10,000 dive. Skipper Findley announced on the 1MC, "Prepare for theatrical surface" and all hands buttoned down and helped. Later, I was assigned to TUSK under CO Jerry Davi. I wound up on the Boomers EDISON and GRANT. In 1974 my leg froze up in Holy Loch, and I was placed in limbo. I then retired as a Senior Chief in 1978.

"Conn, Sonar - I don't know what it is, but I would stay away from it!"

Author Unknown

Said one Officer to an Interviewer's question, "I have no idea." The other Officer looked at him and said, "I agree."

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 70

ROY (LUKE) RILEY 1961 - 1962

I REMEMBER THE DEPENDENT'S CRUISE LOST ANCHOR SAGA, SHOOTING A TORPEDO – HOT STRAIGHT AND ABNORMAL, SOUTH CAROLINA PINE CONES COME TO KEY WEST FOR CHRISTMAS, EVENTS DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS, AND THE MEN WHO WORE THE “PIN”

THE DEPENDENT'S CRUISE LOST ANCHOR SAGA

It happened on 16 June 1961. Upon return to the Key West inner harbor after a great day at sea with the moms, kids and guests, the final demonstration of our sea fairing skills was to anchor, before finally mooring at the pier for which others have made comment.

The anchoring was the beginning of a new episode of “Mc Hale’s Navy.”

The anchoring went as planned. However, when weighing anchor to get underway, the forward windlass/capstan failed and attempts to fix it were unsuccessful. So, using “sailor ingenuity,” mooring lines were rigged from the anchor chain to the after capstan and we commenced hauling in the anchor. The chain was laid along the deck and all was going fine until the anchor chain parted about the time the anchor was to break from the bottom. The chain was retrieved and we returned to the pier, somewhat without rational explanation, less the anchor that was still on the bottom of the harbor!

What followed is the rest of the story! For the next 2 or 3 days, Navy divers searched the area of the harbor for the anchor, but no luck in spite of their valiant efforts. Turning to the reliable Navy supply system an anchor for our class submarine was located in Oakland, California.

The Air Force was called upon to freight it to Key West. Two weeks had passed since losing the anchor, and while at sea we received a message that the new anchor had arrived and was on the pier awaiting our arrival.

Finally, an end to this saga. As we turned into the inner harbor the new anchor on the pier came into sight. The closer we approached, the bigger the anchor grew. It was the size to fit an Iowa class battleship and would have sunk the SEA POACHER.

A mighty good joke and a good laugh, although an expensive one at that! The ever efficient supply system finally delivered the correct anchor a couple weeks later.

SHOOTING A TORPEDO – HOT, STRAIGHT, AND ABNORMAL

In the summer of 1962, SEA POACHER operated for about two months with the Norwegian Destroyer, KNM BERGEN (DD-308), in the local Key West operating areas doing sonar testing. During operations, the BERGEN secured one hour for lunch as a normal routine. Captain Kojm pursued the idea with the their Skipper, who was also a submariner, to let SEA POACHER make practice torpedo approaches during lunch with the BERGEN running as target.

This also included firing and recovering an exercise MK-14 torpedo. The Skipper agreed and we on SEA POACHER took daily turns as Approach Officers. This provided an excellent training experience for the torpedo men, fire control party and diving team.

On this one particular day, it was LTJG Riley's turn to be the Approach Officer. We had gotten into a good firing position at a range of about 1,000 yards with a torpedo run of 200 yards and with a 90 degree track angle on the bow. It was perfect!

At the firing point there was a casualty to the Fire Control System where the gyro angle order had to be manually set in the torpedo from the Jeep in the Forward Torpedo Room. As a result the gyro angle was set at L15 degrees vice L10 degrees when the tube was fired.

This was probably the saving grace for what was yet to come!

Keep in mind that a MK 14 torpedo runs at 45 knots and weighs about 2,000 pounds. Sonar reported the torpedo running hot, straight and normal on course, and then there was a loud bang. The Captain took the periscope for a look and over the UQC from the BERGEN we heard, "Torpedo is erratic, it is in the air and crossing my bow. Request you go deep, I am evading!"

The torpedo crossed his bow just forward of the gun mount and when it landed on the water it circled erratically. The head blew. We surfaced and recovered it. The 5 degree gyro error was the difference between a good scare and a major disaster, because the Bridge of the BERGEN would have been wiped out!

Someone up there was looking out for us this day. During the days that followed, approach operations with the destroyer during their lunch breaks continued, however, no exercise torpedoes were fired! The Captain of the BERGEN was just a bit anxious!

It was determined upon inspection of the torpedo that the pendulum, which keeps the torpedo on running depth, stuck on launch. The torpedo then went to a depth where the head crushed jarring the pendulum loose. Sensing the torpedo was off depth, and at 45 knots, it shot past the set running depth and into the air!

SOUTH CAROLINA PINE CONES COME TO KEY WEST FOR CHRISTMAS

During the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, SEA POACHER was deployed from Key West to Charleston where we loaded torpedoes and supplies and ultimately took patrol station off the Carolinas. As the crisis was ending, we were directed to a standby port which was Georgetown, South Carolina.

We arrived in Georgetown on a Saturday morning, after navigating an unmarked channel through the swamps with a local pilot taking bearings on pine trees, and moored at an old out-of-the-way wharf sometimes used by small lumber carriers. The narrow dirt road to the wharf led to town about 1 to 2 miles away. The town rolled up the sidewalks at 6 p.m. on Saturday night and nothing was open. Normally, only the church was open on Sunday. There supposedly was a house of ill repute about 10 miles outside Georgetown, but it was off limits.

The Moose Club opened their doors (normally closed on Saturday) to the crew to watch TV and relax. Most watched football on TV at the only mom and pop motel in town on Sunday. The Captain had gone to the Catholic church on Sunday and took up with the folks there.

Monday morning arrived and everyone was more than anxious to get underway and back to Key West for the coming holidays. At 0800 the Maneuvering Watch was stationed and the engines were warmed up. All lines had been singled up, and we were waiting for the Captain.

Down the narrow dirt road, with dust flying, comes a dirty old station wagon that pulls up to the wharf. And out hops two nuns and the Captain. The cargo space is full of bags!

The Captain calls for a working party and the COB gets some line handlers together. They start loading bags of South Carolina pine cones into the Forward Torpedo Room bilge (note we have a full war load of torpedoes). The Captain announces that these are a Christmas present to the wives and girlfriends back home from the folks in Georgetown. The nuns bid us farewell, and we head home for Christmas! Only Captain Kojm could pull this off!

EVENTS DURING THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

We left Key West early Monday morning on a surface transit with SEA POACHER as OTC (Officer in Tactical Command) in company with MARLIN, MACKEREL, BARRACUDA, THREADFIN, and SEA CAT.

THREADFIN was late in getting underway, because they had to change her screws. Over the weekend, the divers had replaced her screws. However, they had put the starboard screw on the port shaft and the port screw on the starboard shaft!

The result was that on a forward bell the submarine backed down and on a backing bell it went forward! I remember SEA POACHER copied the radio traffic for both MARLIN AND MACKEREL as they had no crypto equipment. We also made daily highline message transfers to them. It was a slow go as I think they could only make a top speed of 12-15 knots.

I am almost certain that MARLIN, MACKEREL, and BARRICUDA pulled into Port Everglades, while we proceeded on to Charleston. I do not know of any facility at Port Everglades for war shot torpedoes or a marine railway. And I have been there many times and operated out of there for a month on two different occasions on ALBACORE.

To the best of my memory, upon arrival at Charleston, we went up the Cooper River to the Naval Weapons Annex where there was a marine railway and loaded torpedoes and then came back down the River. We were tied up at the pier across from the Tender and loaded stores that night. SEA CAT was tied up outboard of SEA POACHER.

She was commanded by LCDR "Crash" Crowder. Because of the current in the Cooper River, when SEA CAT got underway, she was set down on SEA POACHER and nicked our port screw and it had to be replaced.

SEA CAT was the boat that the Division Commander Tex Proctor tied up at the outer quay wall at his change of command ceremony. Just two days before his change of command, SEA CAT got tangled up in a tug tow line off Key West and bent over her periscope. Thus, the name "Crash Crowder!"

They also backed into the sea wall in Key West.

Anyway, after changing the screw, we got underway for the TOP SECRET mission off the coast of the Carolinas and then on to Georgetown.

I never remember being in Norfolk on SEA POACHER! I really think the Georgetown to Key West pine cone run is the most accurate in my memory. I guess there might have been a brief stop (a couple of hours) in Charleston en route to Key West to off load, "sensitive material," but I do not recall that and I was Communications Officer during the entire period.

I am also pretty sure the boat went back to Key West from Georgetown the last of October. We then went to sea for several days and practiced launching and retrieving underwater swimmers in preparation for whatever. I was subsequently transferred from SEA POACHER to the NATHAN HALE in November and did not make the run to Cuba for the blockade.

Seems to me the Norfolk degaussing event occurred after the Charleston overhaul in late 1961 or early 1962, when we left the yard and went to New London before returning to Key West.

Hope this doesn't confuse the issue!

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are so many varied stories of the schedule and events that occurred in late 1962, I thought it appropriate to add Luke's version to the mystery. God is probably the only one who can sort it out.

THE MEN WHO WORE THE "PIN"

EDITOR'S NOTE: I do not know where Luke found this as I had missed it. It was written by our own Bob "Dex" Armstrong.

They returned. Thousands of them. No, they numbered in the hundreds of thousands... Faces weather beaten, tanned...Smiling as they stepped down from trains all over America. Smiling that smile, universally recognized as that "Damn! It's great to be home!" smile.

They were home again...Those that were left. The survivors of a generation who left their homes and families to undertake the obligation of freedom-loving men to go into combat and ultimately defeat some of the most vile proponents of evil.

They wore the story of their deeds and where they had been in rows of multi-colored, mute reminders above their pockets. What they had seen, what they had done and the personal losses they had suffered, would forever be in their minds when they looked up at their national colors floating gently in the breeze.

They are rapidly passing into the cold pages of history. The awesome respect in which they were held a half-century ago, has given way to the gentle view point of the Monday Morning Quarterbacking of those who have grown up in a world of safety and extravagance, of promiscuity, and excess made possible because of their self-sacrifice.

Soon it will be impossible to find a combat pilot who stared at oncoming aircraft through a rotating propeller blade... A sailor who passed 40 mm shells to a loader in a battleship gun tub... A soldier who carried rifle ammo in eight round clips and ate crap that resembled dog food out of an olive drab can, in a Dutch ditch. In the rain...Men who fought wars that lasted years, rather than days and ended with a clear-cut result.

For those of us who rode boats that went below the surface...These were men who rode our boats when the close aboard sound of fifty pounds of TNT detonating would be clearly heard through several inches of steel.

That "steel" was U.S. built pressure hull, and audible public prayer could be heard in every compartment. And when it was over, hardened men could hug each other, secure in the knowledge that no one would feel that they might be gender-confused.

These same men knew the sound of torpedo hits and the telltale sound of the result of such hits as the bulkheads of an enemy target collapsed, while the enemy vessel made its way to the bottom. Pressure-folding steel is a sound most of us will never hear, thanks to what these men did.

They had executed their war way beyond the established battle lines...Deep within the home waters of the Jap Empire. At a time when the Jap emperor and his militaristic toadies were

assuring their easily duped people that they were secure, the people of Japan witnessed their merchant ships burning all along their coastal horizons. Ships, whose burning hulks were disappearing nightly, compliments of our Undersea Warriors.

So they returned. What was left of them. They crossed the brow of boats that wore freshly painted enemy flags... Flags that chronicled their kills... A silent statement of their contribution to our victorious effort in the Pacific. It may have been a Silent Service,

But little Jap flags painted on the sides of conning towers made it clear that the presence of our submarine force had been felt.

And above the jumper pockets of the men crossing to the pier, could be found the sterling silver representation of a submarine. The pin itself and each star worn below it represented a war patrol which resulted in excess of ten thousand tons of enemy shipping sent to the bottom. The man or men who wrote the requirements for the awarding of that insignia wrote those requirements in such rigid and specific terms that the pin has never been watered down and reduced to the "Crackerjack" prize that so many other military badges have become.

Today, the U.S. Submarine Combat Patrol Pin remains a symbol of men who have gone to sea and have drawn blood in defense of their country and way of life at the risk of their personal safety, If not the sacrifice of their futures.

Someday, the powers that decide such things will come to their senses and will stop naming our submarines after geographical locations and hack politicians and start naming our undersea warships after the heroes who wore "The Pin."

Why they feel compelled to look elsewhere when we have such towering heroes of our own makes no sense to this old E-3. They named a whole class of tin cans after Admiral Arliegh Burke, proving that they can do it right... At times.

But, the men who parked torpedoes in the sides of so many enemy ships, held no inflated sense of their own importance. When you try to thank the old meat-eaters, they always reply with, "Hell, I was young, scared, and just doing my job."

Volunteering for submarine duty in wartime has never been routinely expected of U.S. sailors. Volunteering has never been an exercise in goat-roping the timid and reluctant. The Draft Board never forced any citizen to fill the ranks of the Submarine Service.

Any man, who found wartime employment inside a pressure hull, was there because he put himself there. "Just doing my job." Right!

Who in their right mind would choose a line of work that included sitting, sweat-soaked in darkness, 400 feet below fresh air and sunshine listening to canisters of high explosive detonate and shatter gauge faces and incandescent bulbs?

No, can't buy, "Just doing my job."

To buy that, would mean that our Submarine Force was comprised of the world's largest collection of complete raving lunatics. The last idiot who called a World War II submariner a complete lunatic is still trying to get used to his new glass eye, figuring out how to talk with his new teeth, and walk upright. They are ours. They handed us an unblemished record of service "faithfully performed." A gallant record of deeds performed by incredibly brave and dedicated men. Their ranks thin daily. We do not have a lot of time left to buy them a beer!

Listen to their amazing stories and thank them for what they gave us and left in the pages of the history of the United States Navy.

CHAPTER 71

JACK ENSMINGER 1961

I REMEMBER BEING ON SEA POACHER ONLY 20 DAYS, CLEANING THE BILGES TO PREVENT FIRES, AND AN UNHAPPY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

BEING ON SEA POACHER FOR ONLY 20 DAYS

In November 1960 I was assigned to the BUSHNELL Torpedo Shop for shop experience. My next boat, BARRACUDA, was in upkeep, to be followed by holiday routine, so there wasn't much going on. While there the SKATE came alongside for shock tests. I knew their COB, TMCS Joe Nichols, from New London. His next duty was pre-commissioning COB of the EDISON (SSBN-610). I told him I sure wished I could get assigned to the lead end of one of the Navy's new programs like that. He wrote down my name, rate, horsepower, and I promptly forgot all about it.

In late December I had to check into the Key West Navy Hospital, for nearly two months, for an open reduction on my left ankle. On 23 February 1961, I was finally sent to Submarine Squadron 12 to await the return of BARRACUDA, which was on operations in the GITMO area.

Come 7 March former BARRACUDA Shipmate, QM1 Max Hemsley, showed up at the Squadron and asked what I was doing there. When I told him waiting on BARRACUDA, he asked if I was interested in a new home on SEA POACHER. I said why not, since it was going to be awhile until BARRACUDA returned.

Max said that TM1 Dobson was about to be transferred and, if interested, I could replace him. I asked him what kind of boat SEA POACHER was, and he said "A damn good one." I told the Yeoman, "If Max says it is a good boat that's good enough for me," and he typed up my orders.

So on 8 March I reported aboard. LCDR Stahl was CO and LCDR Davi was XO. I think the Gun Boss was LT Sullivan. My CPO was W.V. Floto, who would later that year join me in the pre-commissioning crew of the EDISON, and become COB of the Gold Crew at Commissioning. I turned my orders and file over to PN3 Lee. Chief Floto took me to the After Torpedo Room and introduced me to TM1 Dobson and TM3 Bradley. Shortly after that, maybe two days, TM1 Dobson departed the boat. It was Bradley and me in the After Torpedo Room.

As I recall, the boat was in upkeep, having just returned from a Northern Run. I seem to recall the Engine Room engine exhaust lines were in pretty bad shape, and the diving depth of the boat was restricted to something like 150 feet. Not certain of the depth, but it was considerably less than test depth.

CLEANING THE BILGES TO PREVENT FIRES

Chief Floto informed me we had a dirty job to do in the After Room. COMSUBLANT had just come out with a directive that all pitch in the bilge had to be stripped out to bare metal.

The pitch had been declared a fire hazard. Bradley and I tackled that, and it was a dirty job. And if you were ever in the After Torpedo Room bilge, you know there wasn't much room to move around. The forward end wasn't too bad, but as you moved aft it became much tighter. There was a compartment all the way aft in the bilge area where the stern plane ram went through before it exited the pressure hull. There was just barely room to slip between the ram and the bottom of the bilge.

I had been in one a number of times on DOGFISH. Probably very few guys ever knew it even existed, and Bradley wished it didn't. He didn't like it there, but this was his first opportunity to get acquainted with it. He was glad when that part was done. I have often wondered if he ever forgave me for giving him that part of the bilge, for his very own, to clear the pitch from.

This job took, as I recall, the better part of two weeks. It was all handwork with a paint scraper. Once scrapped out, we had to wire brush it good and clean. Again, as I recall, the bilge was left unpainted so any rust accumulating could be readily detected.

Some of the shipmates I remember, besides Max Hemsley, were QM1 Hall, RMC Hall, and SOC Hall. Also EM1 Carl Hale, EM2 Bill Brinkman, and CSSN J.J. Lynch. I remember Lynch because of his rosy cheeks. He was SO tender!

I also remember an EN2 by the name of Piazza. One weekend I had the duty, and so did Piazza. However, he put in a chit for special liberty, because his mother in Miami was dying. I later learned this was not the first time this situation had presented itself. There were no battery charges scheduled, and he was given the weekend off.

AN UPHAPPY EXECUTIVE OFFICER

On about 25 March 1961, PN3 Lee called me in the After Torpedo Room. He said my orders were in and asked if I wanted them. I asked him, "Where am I going?" He said to Missile Launcher School in Dam Neck, Virginia, wherever that was, and then to EDISON (Blue Crew) for pre-commissioning detail.

Suddenly, I remembered my conversation with COB Nichols and told Lee, "Yes," to his question. This, of course, did not make XO Davi very happy, because I had not submitted a chit for this duty, and I also had to have a security clearance and background check initiated before I could begin school at Dam Neck. It was an awful lot of paperwork for both Lee and the XO. What was really interesting is how much "pull," at least in the early years of the Polaris boats, a COB had.

On 27 March 1961 I picked up my orders from Lee, knocked on Captain Stahl's stateroom door and bid my farewell. He wished me luck with my new duty. He said he wasn't upset with my short tour in SEA POACHER. XO Davi was still an unhappy camper. Looking back, I can't say I blame him, but so goes the Navy.

For the short time I was on SEA POACHER, I enjoyed my tour. As I look at the 1961 sailing list I see names I later became shipmates with. I do not remember if they were on SEA POACHER when I was there or not.

EN3 Harry Sherman and CS1 John Harvey were both shipmates and good friends on the pre-commissioning crew of JOHN C. CALHOUN (SSBN-630), the second FBM I commissioned.

CHAPTER 72

DAVID ELMORE 1961

I REMEMBER BEING ON SEA POACHER FOR ONLY ONE MONTH AND AN UNCONTROLLED DIVE

BEING ON SEA POACHER FOR ONLY ONE MONTH

I was really stationed aboard the PICUDA. I had gone up to the Miami area on liberty one weekend, when PICUDA was scheduled to go to GITMO on Monday morning.

I got back to the barracks on Sunday evening and discovered they had been ordered to sail early.

The Executive Officer had notified SUBRON 12 that I was on authorized liberty and asked that I be assigned to one of the other subs until they returned.

That is what they did on Monday morning. Ergo, SEA POACHER.

AN UNCONTROLLED DIVE

The only event I remember occurred while doing daily operations off Key West.

I was on duty in the Conning Tower when we commenced a routine dive. After a few moments it became very apparent, to everyone in the Conning Tower and Control Room, that something was not right.

We were headed down like a runaway freight train with no brakes.

I listened and watched through the hatch to the increasingly aggressive methods by the Control Room crew to get SEA POACHER under control. I was logging commands and watching the depth gauge to detect any results.

As I recall, blowing Safety, Negative and Bow Buoyancy, full rise on the dive planes and backing down hard were not having enough effect as we passed rapidly through test depth.

I remember logging 675 plus feet before we finished leveling off and started the long ascent to the surface.

If not mistaken, the guy on the Air Manifold blew the main ballast tanks to stop the descent to Davy Jones' Locker. There were some sizable holes reported in the induction pipes outside the pressure hull.

Maybe they were caused by the dive, but they surely helped aggravate the problem by adding so much weight.

We returned to port on the surface, and I transferred back to duty aboard PICUDA before repairs were made.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This event is the collapse of the Main Induction piping with the Division Commander on board, and it is also detailed in my chapter and others.

CHAPTER 73

PAUL ALLERS 1961 - 1962

I REMEMBER THE 1961 OVERHAUL IN CHARLESTON, CHROMING EVERYTHING, THE SEA POACHER NEWSLETTERS OF 1962, AND LIBERTY CALL IN NASSAU

THE 1961 OVERHAUL IN CHARLESTON

I have a lot of great memories for, what seems like, the short time I spent on her. I think that the boat you first serve on and go through all of your qualifications on, will always be special. A lot of the best times I had in my life were those in the Navy, and I am still sailing part time on the Great Lakes.

It's even more so when you do it with most of your time being spent in the Charleston Navy Shipyard (with the ship going through a major overhaul). Charleston is a good port-of-call. We did have a good time on liberty which we got quite often. Charleston is a great city of history, and I was glad to return there for our SEA POACHER Reunion in 2004.

Shipyard duty can be hard work, just as is going through the qualifications, and learning the boat from bow to stern. You do give up a lot of liberty time when you are off duty to work on your qualifications. Being that the ship is torn apart in the yard, you can really see how the different systems work.

CHROMING EVERYTHING

The night duty crew did a good job getting everything off the boat that could be carried to the Chrome Shop. That could also be said for any of the crew member's cars, which looked pretty good when they were heading back to Key West!

Anyway, the bells, handles, railings, valves, and many other things all looked good when they were chromed. And all it took was a little time and some "cumshaw" for the guys at the shop!

THE SEA POACH NEWSLETTER OF 13 FEBRUARY 1962

I don't know who put it together, but it was published every so often. Sometimes it had news items like:

A record firing for military qualification with service pistol or revolver will be conducted at 10 a.m., 21 February 1962 at the Key West Police Gun Club. For further information, see Mr. Dempsey.

Anyone desiring to take a GSD test for high school or first year college see Mr. Riley. Now is the time to plan for the future.

Then there was the Riddle for Today. If a horse's hoof covers 5'4" What does his tail cover?

Or stuff like why did the milk go sour? Rumor has it the Commissary Officer thought the Forward Room bilges were cooler than his chill box! How about that?

What is the significance of the graph recently seen in the XO's Stateroom? The first point recorded on this graph was 300 and the second was 306. You figure it out.

Chestnut, won't you please tell Piazza how you fixed the stills in 10 minutes, after he worked on them for two days: Piazza says he won't retire until he finds out!

Yesterday the CO couldn't understand all the cheers when we went to, "FULL ON FOUR," and then all the moans when we slowed to, "ONE-THIRD ON ONE." Any explanation?

We understand Vanderwerker is inspecting belly buttons these days. Seems Jigger Brinkman doesn't have one. Better check both of those guys out Doc.

Schnars is looking for a tire patch. Why don't you put in a grief card and mail it to Charleston. It worked when we left the yard.

Tiles McSorley, the young Philadelphian, is sawing up chairs in the Sonar Shack.

It's not that we don't have faith in the Navigator, but 3 days south of New London and snow! Let's count those lines on the Loran fellas!

With a few more days growth Brust will look like one of the apostles – that's good!

We're looking for lay leaders.

The Wardroom recreation fund is going to buy the Engineer a comb - How's that!

The CO likes to hear a cheery good morning, but don't wake him up at 4 a.m. to tell him.

What's this about a young Electrician named Massey standing movie watches in the Forward Battery - Back on the Sticks!

Another bachelor down the drain! Miss Shirley Harrison of Charleston and young John Snook are going to take the big step down the main aisle.

Answer to the Riddle. You all wrong: It covers 17.5 inches!

ANOTHER SEA POOCH OF 14 FEBRUARY 1962

Again from Pressure in the Boat. Flash – SEA POACHER yesterday became the first Guppy Submarine to successfully launch a Polaris Missile- actually it was a MK 14 torpedo shot from tubes aft – got a low flying sea gull too!

We understand the CO is going to visit the ear doctor- seems a young LTJG who runs around in a space suit is paying the bill too- Snorkeling can get to be expensive!

Who's room looked the worst yesterday? From our vantage point, the two staterooms on the starboard side of the Forward Battery took top honors- rigged for heavy weather!

From the crew to the Navigator - let's save this full on four business for motion in the horizontal plane.

Amposta, the "Limbo King" gets the water award this trip. There's your man, Mr. Engineer.

Hats off to Artie Piazza- All hands can now say, "I was there," when the Jamaican said, "This is Piazza – submerge the ship."

Who changed the tape deck? We were sort of getting to like "White Christmas."

To the Bachelors- Don't despair- A few weekend liberties in Fort Lauderdale and Miami will dispel any doubts about the good life. To the engaged it's not too late.

ANOTHER NEWLETTER 4 APRIL 1962

The Pressure in the Boat Section this time included to the bachelors. You got to be ingenious in your requests to stay in fellas- that 4 letter word, “wife,” doesn’t work in your case. And Blackie Blackman and Joe Joseph, two of our new 2nd Class PO’s to be, can be found sewing on their new chevrons in the ATR.

Or Lee, the peaches were O.K., so were the coins, the Birthday Ball should be good, your anchors pools were fine (except I never won) - tell me- are you the guy who put the nickel coin locks on the head in the FTR?

Then again: Took a walk thru the boat last night, stopped in at little Las Vegas (ATR). Gunner, Bradley, and the boys had a red hot “Fish” game going. Do you use chips in “Fish?”

Or: welcome aboard to LT Dick Coupe, our new Engineering Officer. Mr. Coupe’s previous duty station was San Francisco Naval Shipyard where he was Submarine Representative Officer for SUBPAC. Say “Hello” and tell him who you are.

Yes - In case you guys are curious about any future operations of SEA POACHER don’t bother with SUBRON 12 OPS. Call someone in the wives club! Better and later dope!

Besides: We’ve got Piorkowski, Sokolowski, and we had Romanowski, and now Chitkowski! You guys should play football for Notre Dame.

Then: The civilian you see in the Control Room these days is Mr. Mike Pacifica, an Engineer from the GPL Division of General Precision, Inc. Mike is no new comer to submarines. During 43 and 44 he served in USS Razorback out in SUBPAC. He’s itching to get back and throw the sticks too!

Finally, glad to see Chief Clifton made it out of the FB during the fire drill. Heck of a way to wake up Chief. This is what happens when these young JG’s smoke in bed!

LIBERTY CALL IN NASSAU

I came across the following article that appeared on Page 8 in the American Submariner No. 1, which was sent in by Shipmate John R. Saeli, Commander of the Long Island Base. The title was: LIBERTY CALL Nassau, Bahamas after a “Mini-Bex” Operation in the summer of 1966 – USS SEA POACHER SS406, Subron 12, Key West, Florida. While I was not there, here it is. I have deleted the identity of the missing shipmate.:

The USS SEA POACHER (SS-406) having just completed a successful “Mini-Bex” operation off the east coast of the United States paid a visit to Nassau, Bahamas for a “liberty call.” We on SEA POACHER had just won our 3rd straight Battle “E” and couldn’t wait to pull into port so we could paint on our 2nd hashmark (E//).

As soon as we pulled into Nassau, we immediately went on 3 section liberty, and some of us had three days of libs to look forward to. We were to head back to Key West on 1400 hours on Sunday afternoon. Well the crew had one hell of a good time, because Nassau had not seen an American submarine in a long time. Some of us partied too hardy, and the Corpsman ran out of his supply of APCs before he knew it.

Buck, our 2nd class cook, and resident Don Juan, had a little too much spirits one afternoon and fell off a curb and immediately was run over by a horse-drawn cart. As we ran

over to help him up, we almost died laughing. Because physically, Buck was all right, but his white jumper had two wide stripes across his back where the cart had run him over! We soon discovered that the passenger in the cart was none other than our Skipper, who immediately ordered us all back to the boat.

We managed to get Buck back to the boat and due to his physical condition we had to lower him down the After Battery hatch. After explaining to the Duty Officer that we were just helping out a sick shipmate, here comes Buck, up from the After Torpedo Room hatch, all dolled up in a fresh set of whites ready to hit the beach again.

After some prodding, the Duty Officer (being an NQP Ensign) let us go back over, but not before reminding us that we were due back no later than 1200 hours, because we were getting underway at 1400 hours the following day.

Now Nassau, as I mentioned before was a fine liberty port, and since we were the first submarine to visit in quite some time, the local establishments made sure that we were well taken care of. We were toasted in every bar we went into, and the American tourists were lining up to buy us drinks, and listen to sea stories.

Submarine sailors always attracted the ladies and it was not a rare sight to see our shipmates escorting not one, but perhaps two or three ladies down the narrow streets of Nassau.

Some of us headed back to SEA POACHER that evening, but some also elected to stay over (yours truly included) and grab breakfast on the beach before heading back. Those of us who stayed over that evening did manage to get back by 1200 hours, but each one of us had to face the omnipresent stare of the COB as we crossed over the brow.

At 1200 hours we held muster topside, and then stationed the Maneuvering Watch. I was an EN3 (SS) at the time, and was a "Throttleman" in the After Engine Room. We lit off all four engines, but the order to the line handlers to "single-up" never came.

In fact, shortly thereafter, we shut down our engines and the Maneuvering Watch was told to stand-by. The crew was allowed topside and a search party was formed. One of our shipmates had not reported aboard, as a matter of fact, it was (identity deleted and a single, fun loving guy) who was missing. It was now 1500 hours and still no missing shipmate.

As 1600 hours came by, our Skipper was visibly disturbed, however at 1630 hours, two police cars, an Embassy car, 2 motorcycles and a cab turned onto the pier and stopped at SEA POACHER'S brow. Out of the cab comes the last of our search party and our missing shipmate, who by the way is dressed only in his skivvies, and had to be helped across the brow. The crew, meanwhile, is still topside and taking this all in when suddenly, a gorgeous blonde, also dressed in only her skivvies, exits the cab carrying our guys whites yelling "B*****, don't go, you forgot these."

The crew of SEA POACHER immediately broke out into a huge cheer and even our Skipper was seen to crack to smile! We immediately stationed the Maneuvering Watch once again, and soon there after Sea Poacher headed out to sea, all ahead full on four engines, rigged for dive, and making "turns" for 20 knots, ready to once again be sent into "Harms Way" if needed. It has been said that never has such a happy crew been seen leaving a liberty port.

SEA POACHER went back to Key West, did some daily ops, went to Mardi Gras in New Orleans in 1967, and then did a GITMO Tour and then in 1968 went on a Northern Patrol in the North Atlantic, all the while remembering that particular liberty call in Nassau.

In July of 1974, Sea Poacher was sold to Peru, rechristened as La Pedrera, and to the best of my knowledge is still in service as a training boat by the Peruvian Navy.

I wonder what other humorous stories SEA POACHER has stowed away.

CHAPTER 74

TOM DEULEY 1961 - 1963

**I REMEMBER MY ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER,
WAITING IN KEY WEST, MY MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT ,
SEA SICK AND THE MANEUVERING BELL LOG,
PAINTING THE BOAT'S PLAQUES,
BEING KISSED BY JAKE, OPERATION PETTICOAT,
AN EMERGENCY SURFACE AND THE MENU CHANGE,
ANTICS DURING OPEN HOUSES WITH VISITORS,
AND SOME FINAL MEMORIES**

MY ASSIGNMENT TO SEA POACHER

I found out that I had been assigned to a Key West boat within a day or so of the announcement by President Kennedy of the Cuban Missile Crisis. I had asked for Key West, and now I had it; but now I wondered whether or not I had made the best choice.

What was done was done, and I was on my way to SEA POACHER and Key West. In between I had a couple of weeks leave so I enjoyed it at my south Georgia home, and then moved on to my new "home." I don't recall any of the details of checking in at the base. But I do remember that my boat wasn't in Key West, nor were there any other ships there except those that couldn't move. Everything else had all been sent "somewhere."

Later, I and other waiting sailors, learned that SEA POACHER had been holed up in Georgetown, South Carolina waiting for orders and to be told when it would come back.

WAITING IN KEY WEST

Those days of waiting, of course, were not very exciting, but boy was that a clean barracks. There were very few people there, but lots and lots of cleaning to do everyday. Frankly, that was all there was to do. Plenty of time was spent honing the fine points of buffing, scrubbing, scouring, and polishing under the able eye of Pappy Adams, our barracks MAA.

We had more than a fair amount of time off, because there were no ships or crews around, which gave us an opportunity to get to know Key West and the base. But the cards were stacked against our little friendly group. The three of us were under age for drinking and were too low on the pay grade to have any real money. And we had to wear our uniforms at all times. And last, but not least, the way that our mothers named us didn't help the matter.

When it was each on his own it was not so bad, but then when you have three sailors claiming to be Tom Dooley (Deuley), John Smith and Davy (David) Jones, all in the same bunch, its hard to be accepted as serious, ID cards or not, or of not being suspected of something at least a little odd. Jones, was on the TIRANTE, but Smitty and I were on the POACHER.

After getting used to the unusual looks that we got when we introduced ourselves, it got to

be a game and we had as much fun with it as we could. All in all we never got into any real trouble and were quite happy when the boats did return.

After a week on the boat the novelty wore off. But yet today, the name Tom Dooley (Deuley) opens the eyes and brings a smile from the older folks I meet. However, it also tells their age. Young folks sometimes have no idea.

MY MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

My most embarrassing moment, in my entire life, so far, occurred on SEA POACHER. I don't really remember all of the exact circumstances, and I could make up a bunch, but I will keep it short. Anyway here is how I remember it. And this might be the only thing I can offer to the collection that will have others say, "Oh yeah, that guy!"

I was simply relieving the watch at about 7:45 in the evening, brought up a cup of coffee in one of those white milk glass cups, and I remember setting it on the hand rail around the sail as I got ready to take the watch. I recall too that it was cool and damp. I don't remember who I was relieving, but I remember that I had formed a habit of slinging the guard belt and holster for the .45 caliber pistol around my skinny little self, and then I would catch the other end buckle in my other hand and sort of automatically snap the brass ends together. It seemed cool at the time, and I knew other young cool sailors did it too.

Well, on this occasion my hands were too wet, and I slung it too hard. I just plain missed with the other hand, or whatever, and I dropped the whole belt, clip, holster and PISTOL to the deck on the edge of the clam shell. The whole thing hit the clam shell and slid down to the side to hit the tank top, hesitated and then slowly, like forever at first, slid down the side to the tank top, and I watched the whiteness of it slip into the briny deep.

As my eyes bugged out, and I swallowed my tongue, I saw visions of Leavenworth. And that wasn't the bad part. I next went to the Mess Hall (After Battery) hatch and yelled down into the blackness and the middle of the movie "Hey down below?" Someone answered "Yeah?"

And I responded as I cringed like never before, or since, "Could you send up another .45 and guard belt?" I don't remember all that was said, and I may not be allowed to repeat here what was said, or what I would guess was said, but I do remember hearing "W-H-A-T?"

Shortly thereafter, a Committee brought me up a new belt and pistol. With that and making the appropriate entry in the log, I completed my watch, but was worried very deeply through out the four hours. The next morning, I was still around and watched as divers retrieved the missing piece. I was always very thankful that I never got razzed or even reminded of the incident. Much to my surprise I was not even made to clean it. So much for "The Great Embarrassment." It is yet to be topped.

SEA SICK AND THE MANEUVERING BELL LOG

As a junior unqualified electrician one of the jobs one might have is keeping the Bell Log back in the Maneuvering Room. I only had that task one time. It was during some special training that was leading up to an Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). I normally stood watches forward, and generally the Maneuvering Room electricians kept their own logs.

The weather was particularly rough, and I still had not quite found my sea legs. I was feeling a little bit queasy and pale for most of the watch, and was trying my best to keep it out of my mind. But just as things got very busy and "bells" were ringing all over the place, it hit me. I

quickly put the log down and made it to the After Torpedo Room Head as fast as I could go.

When I returned, some minutes later, “Gunner” Vanderwerker asked me why I had not said something before I left. I told him that if I had opened my mouth to say anything, I wouldn’t have had to leave. “Oh,” he said. “Maybe its better you did leave,” and he gave me a little laugh.

The seas eventually calmed down, and so did my stomach. We went on with our duties, as pale as I was, getting ready for what was to come.

PAINTING THE BOAT’S PLAQUES

I was the skinny kid that had a camera pass and took a good number of pictures of the boat and crew. You may remember that I was painting the boat’s plaques in color during that time. I ended up with a plaque but never painted it for myself.

I later on went NESEP and into the Weapons Program but then had to go 1630 due to a medical problem, but I did retire. My secondary business was a graphic artist and photographer.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Most submarine plaques were made of brass and were fastened to a nice piece of wood. SEA POACHER’S in the 1962 time frame, for whatever reason, were made of aluminum or something silvery and light like that. They had to be painted because they did not look good in the raw. But painted they were fantastic. Mine was beautifully done I presume by Tom. Years later, I had forgotten what it was made of and presumed brass. I made a small scrape on the side and saw the silver metal I recalled COB Barnett being upset with these cheap type of plaques as well and complaining that it took our guys a long time to paint them.

BEING KISSED BY JAKE

Bruce “Jake” Jacobson checked aboard the same time I did, and we became pretty good friends. On one particular night and very late, Jake came to my rack and started telling me of his nights adventures. Just the fact that he had woke me up told me he had had a drink or two, or more. He related the story in a whisper, and when it came to its fumbled end it got quiet. After a moment Jake said, “What da ya think?” He then leaned over me and kissed me on the forehead and said, “Goodnight.” Then he went off to his rack to sleep it off. We remained good friends through our stay, but got separated when I went off to Nuke school. I never saw him again.

OPERATION PETTICOAT

This was a 1959 fun movie with Cary Grant and Tony Curtis, and a ton of other actors. SEA POACHER also had an advisor and HAM actor in the filming. None other than our own Frank Murphy. There is a scene where a sailor falls overboard, and that is allegedly our Frank. Jack Merrill remembers the movie well, and says it was definitely Frank on the tank tops chipping paint before he fell in. Later in my career on the boats, WWII or Nuke, and I think probably many others in the fleet had the same experience, the movie “*Operation Petticoat*” was taken on every patrol and was shown at least once per year on every boat in the fleet, at least for some time in history. It was always enjoyed as the lighter side of our lives, whether or not it could have ever actually happened.

AN EMERGENCY SURFACE AND THE MENU CHANGE

I had to do with not getting a green board on a dive and doing an emergency surface. The up shot was the cook on duty, and not Parks, came into Control and kind of loudly asked, "Who changed the angle like that?" or something to that effect. Then the diving officer, again I don't remember who, replied, "I did!" The cook came back with, "Well you changed the menu too."

ANTICS DURING OPEN HOUSES WITH VISITORS

I am writing this from China in mid-September 2007. Yep, my company does move me around a bit. It comes from knowing too much. Too bad they don't pay the same way.

This is a story on Gunner Vanderwerker, but in my later years I began to suspect it was an old submarine tale that had been around for some years or decades.

During one of our "Open Houses" for the public, we had set up the usual two brows, one forward and one aft. The visitors were asked to come on the boat at the after brow and go down the ATR hatch. Then they would move forward as someone in each compartment explained what that part of the ship had to do with the over all operation.

As I heard it, a rather large lady, with some family along, came down the ladder with difficulty and required some hands on guidance to make sure she got her foot on the steps and didn't slip, fall, and hurt her self. As she came down that last few steps, with much more confidence now, she surely noted the friendly welcoming grin on Gunner's face, (as only Gunner could do), and upon reaching the deck she allegedly stated in a rather loud and strong voice, "Well sailor, I hope you got your eyes full." To which, allegedly, Gunner replied in a moderate, and calm tone, "I'm sorry lady, I didn't even notice you **** *." .

SOME FINAL MEMORIES

There are so many more small and memorable incidents and events that it would take two books to capture them all.

The corpsman at the time constantly checking the mayonnaise and throwing it away.

Somebody dropping into the reefer during a movie to announce he had landed in Jello.

The lobster traps and fresh lobster for those that cared to partake.

John Parks and the Canadian sailors.

The wives meeting the boat in the night when we came in for emergency repairs.

A radioman that could shift from typing, with two hands, to typing with one hand, while he took a sip of coffee, and also answered questions or told the runner who to take a message.

An XO who always insisted on an exact number of grains of sugar in his coffee.

Going up the Control Room hatch with six cups of coffee and not spilling a drop.

The barge and 11 cent beer and 11 cent cigarettes in GITMO.

The Shore Patrol returning a shipmate in New Orleans for him to only walk around the sail slowly and go back ashore.

Yes, and with a little thought, it could go on and on.

CHAPTER 75

CARROLL LAWSON 1961 - 1963

I REMEMBER THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS AND POTENTIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE RUSSIANS

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

After stopping in Port Everglades, Charleston, Georgetown, and finally Norfolk, we had just set the Maneuvering Watch to get underway for Cuba, when an Army bus pulled up and we took on at least a dozen Army Green Beret and Seal Team guys.

Our mission was classified and after Florida we were on radio silence.

For three days we rendezvoused daily with a P2V aircraft which gave us orders and a newspaper for the Captain. The paper carried a story of the Russian Premier at the UN banging his shoe on his desk and then backing down.

We then met up with a U.S. destroyer and off loaded our Army Green Beret and Seal Team guys.

At the onset of this crisis Cuba had missiles coming from the USSR, and we headed down the east side of Cuba to watch for USSR merchant ships carrying missiles.

Our orders were straightforward. We were not to board or even stop their ships; just report their position and watch them.

POTENTIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE RUSSIANS

One morning submerged we picked up one of their vessels on sonar and did a routine surface.

A minute or two later, the call came over the IMC, "Lawson and Liggett to the Bridge." We were receiving a flashing light message from the Russian which repeatedly was "QUE," which is the International Distress Signal for, "Do you require assistance?"

Captain Kojm told us to send, "No assistance is required." He asked us if we had any idea on why the Russian was asking this.

Just then the Starboard Lookout began touching my shoulder. When I looked at him he pointed aft to our Flag Staff.

Our U.S. Flag was flying upside down.

To the shock of everyone, the snap had broken, and we were showing the International Distress Signal. Liggett and I went onto the main deck and quickly repaired the connections, and went back to the Bridge.

Hey, we did not know the connection was going to part.

Captain Kojm was livid.

He said something like, "My orders were not to stop or even communicate with them. I'll probably be relieved over this."

Of course that never happened, and he continued his illustrious career for many years.

CHAPTER 76

JACK MERRILL 1961 - 1963

**I REMEMBER A STEEP DIVE, TRIP TO JAMAICA,
OVERHAUL IN CHARLESTON,
NEW LONDON ESCAPE TRAINING, CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS,
MIAMI HERALD VIEW OF THE MISSILE CRISIS,
SEAL OPERATIONS, PERRY COMO,
SENATOR MARGARET CHASE SMITH, THANKSGIVING 1962,
PIAZZA RETIREMENT, NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS,
WEST PALM BEACH FOR JOHN HARVEY'S MOM,
MORE ON HARVEY'S MOM FROM WEST PALM OR KEY WEST, AND
CHANGES OF COMMAND/BIG EVENTS**

A STEEP DIVE

My adventure on SEA POACHER began in March 1961. After a one-year tour of duty on the USS BUSHNELL (AS-15), and just about the time I realized what good duty the BUSHNELL was, they discovered that I had gone to Sub School and sent me to SEA POACHER.

I was a 3rd class Torpedoman at the time. I had done my mess cooking on the Tender so didn't have the good fortune to have to do it on the boat. I was assigned to the Forward Torpedo Room under Ken Deramus. This was a good starting point. Ken was a dedicated and inspirational leader.

Also in the FTR at the time were Bill Cook, Ron Schnars, Eric Hanson and Morgan Minchey.

I hadn't been aboard very long when, on ordinary operations for Sonar School, we undertook a dive that turned out to be a little steep, and a little deep. I was polishing brass work over the water tight door into the Forward Battery when the dive began.

As we went down the angle got a little bigger and before long I was hanging onto the combing of the hatch to keep from falling. Then we heard a thump and we started up again. I guess the angle was between 30 and 40 degrees. So far that was the steepest angle I had experienced.

In fact, it was the steepest I ever experienced in the ten years I spent on submarines, until my near death experience on the USS CHOPPER (SS-342) in February 1969 when we went to 1000 feet at an angle of 80+ and came up at an angle of 87.

As a result of our little dive on SEA POACHER I think we cleaned off the sonar array on the bottom of the bow.

The result on CHOPPER was that she never dove again and was decommissioned shortly after, and drove me out of the Navy!

TRIP TO JAMAICA

Most of the operations in the early 60s in Key West were for Sonar School and doing some ops out of GITMO.

We did take a trip to Ocho Rios, Jamaica, which was a great time for all. It was just after the first James Bond movie came out and we tied up at Dr. No's Headquarters, which at the end of the movie is blown up. It is a loading depot for bauxite which is brought down from the top of a mountain. I remember we had difficulty in keeping our whites clean as the earth was very red.

At one point I was assigned to Shore Patrol, which was a first for me. We had hired a van to transport our troops to the various hotels. At that time there were only a few hotels and they were many miles apart. As I rode around with the van I noticed that the driver would stop and visit family often.

I suspected that he was sampling the local coconut rum because, as the night wore on, he seemed to have more difficulty in his navigation. The roads on the island were very winding and steep with 90 degree curves and sheer drops offs to the ocean of anywhere from 50 to 100 feet.

I was riding shotgun in the van on the last run of the night. We picked up the Skipper, the XO, and I think the COB, from the farthest hotel and on the way back I happened to glance over at the driver as we approached one of the 90 degree turns. His chin was on his chest! He was sound asleep!

I reached over and jerked the steering wheel hard to port and got us around the turn with all the passengers on the right side of the van ending up on the floor. They too had all been sound asleep. Of course, when I jerked the wheel, the driver woke up and continued driving as though nothing had happened.

If the Skipper had realized what happened, I probably would have been up for a medal, however, my passengers were not really aware of their surroundings at that time.

I had met this local gal at the Little Brown Jug and couldn't wait to get back there and have a drink myself. I remember Ocho Rios also for the clarity of the water. It was the first time that I had seen the Stern Planes under water and not only that, you could see clearly to the bottom. It was truly beautiful.

Also mixed in there somewhere was a trip to Tampa and Busch Gardens where we toured the brewery and sampled green beer. At that time all that was there were the gardens and a parrot show. Now it is one of the leading attractions in Florida, but there is no longer a brewery there.

OVERHAUL IN CHARLESTON

In 1961 we went to the Naval Shipyard in Charleston for an extensive overhaul. This was when we had the North Atlantic sail installed. By that time, I had been assigned to the After Torpedo Room with Bill Bradley, Carol Dodson and Lester Hopson. It was my first overhaul, and I didn't know what to expect.

We off-loaded every bit of our gear to a room on the dock called the cage. Every piece of equipment was overhauled; we replaced the tile on the deck and completely repainted the room.

For lunch, the shipyard had little shacks placed throughout the yard that sold pulled pork; I grew to like it very much. Very tasty. The crew lived in a barracks. There was a large model of a submarine outside. I wonder whatever happened to that.

There was a continual card game in progress. The games that we played were hearts, spades, pinochle, cribbage and acey-deucey. Sometimes someone would break out the domino tiles.

The routine was mostly fire watch, fire watch, fire watch, etc. Plus all of our work in the Torpedo Rooms.

NEW LONDON ESCAPE TRAINING

After the yard period, which ended in early 1962, we went to New London, where it was cold and snowing. Quite a contrast to Charleston and Key West. I seem to remember having escape training, but I'm not sure. I went through the tank on two occasions.

Captain Kojm bought the crew a case of Maine lobsters. As I remember I was the only Maine guy aboard and had to hold lessons for the crew and some officers on the proper way to eat the critters. I also have a picture of the topside watch, who has yet to be identified, building a small snowman on the forward deck.

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

The normal operations out of Key West at that time were daily. We went out at 8 a.m. and were generally in by 4 p.m. On Friday we went out at 8 and were back by 2 so that everyone could get a good start on liberty.

Some of us went to West Palm and it was on the return early on a Monday morning that we knew something serious had happened. Where generally, at that hour, not many people are up and about, the Key West streets were full of sailors carrying bags.

When we got to the barracks, we were told to hurry up and grab some gear, we were getting under way ASAP and that President Kennedy had declared a Crisis in Cuba. The Russians had been building up a nuclear arsenal, and we were about to blockade the island.

We had no idea where we were heading to so we didn't know what to bring for uniforms. We ended up ultimately in Charleston, where we worked for three days and nights, pretty much straight, off-loading all of our weapons and on-loading fully ready war shots. We knew this was serious business, because where it was generally difficult to get anything out of the Tender this time it was "whatever you needed, and how can we help?"

We would have got into the fray a lot earlier had it not been for the misfortune of another boat clipping our screw which required our having to completely replace the propeller.

We did receive an Armed Force Expeditionary Medal, however.

MIAMI HERALD VIEW OF THE MISSILE CRISIS

This was reported in the Miami Herald of October 28, 1962. The headline read: MISSILE PADS SPROUT ON KEY WEST SHORES. KEY WEST, Fla. (AP) Anti-aircraft missiles have sprouted along a Key West beach, climaxing a week-long influx of military elements at this island city 90 miles from Cuba. Army details hastily arranged mobile radar equipment and cushioned rocket launchers.

A heavily traveled boulevard adjacent to the missile site allowed the public a clear view of the proceedings. A baseball park was leased to the Army this week by the Key West City Commission to be used as a motor pool parking area.

Units set up at the missile site arrived this week by truck convoy from a Florida rail line where a troop train had unloaded them. A 185-room hotel and a servant dormitory were rented to the Army for troop billeting.

Hotel owner Sam Hyman declined to say how long the hotel, which he said could accommodate 1,000 men, would be under lease. Members of missile batteries set up quarters at the big hotel on arrival late in the week.

HEAVY SHIP TRAFFIC. Military vessels, including destroyers, tankers, and buoy tenders, move in and out of the Key West Naval Station. Some of the vessels disappear into the Florida Straits. Commercial and fishing vessels amble along the straits and waters off the Florida Keys. Formations of jets land at Boca Chica Naval Air Station on nearby Stock Island. The number of supersonic Navy F3H Demon jet fighters has increased during the past few days. The planes, presumably armed with 20-mm guns and infrared guidance rockets, patrol the area. Their top speed is about 1,400 miles per hour. Large transport planes have been arriving and departing from Boca Chica, bringing more men for the swiftly expanding Key West garrison.

Virtually all ships previously stationed at the naval station have gone, apparently on patrol. Some wives, whose husbands are on submarine patrol, left by automobile for other ports on the Atlantic Seaboard, where they said their husbands vessels were scheduled to dock on a temporary basis while in from patrol.

Guard mounts are assembled at points being used for military purposes through out Key West. Army trucks ferry the guard details to and from their posts on a 24-hour basis.

The military buildup is not limited to Key West, but is in evidence throughout South Florida. Gov. Francis Bryand has said Florida National Guard and Air National Guard units will remain on alert through the Cuban crisis. MacDill Air Force Base at Tampa operated in a tight security atmosphere throughout the week. Several hundred Air Force enlisted men and officers arrived at MacDill in a single day. Planes patrol overhead.

Patrick Air Force Base near Cape Canaveral had its F106 and F104 fighter interceptors bolstered by more jets. A portion of this interceptor force is aloft at all times, on airborne alert. Homestead AFB, a Strategic Air Command post south of Miami, buzzed with activity. Florida civil defense authorities alerted all components and said the alert would remain until the crisis is over.

The Federal Aviation Agency banned civilian airplanes from a large area of South Florida, south of Daytona Beach. A Fourth of July atmosphere spread among Key West's 50,000 residents as the buildup progressed and American flags rippled from homes and stores. People in the streets waved at military trucks carrying troops. Some people have left the city; most of them military wives and dependents whose husbands are at sea.

An air of suspense was the first reaction following announcing the Cuban arms blockade. This was turned to calm in view of the buildup, the Chamber of Commerce says.

Clusters of sailors usually seen in downtown streets vanished as leaves were canceled and ships sailed. A number of motel managers said arrival of weekend tourists was at its usual pace. One reported a slight increase, apparently composed of curious onlookers.

ANOTHER VIEW OF THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

Not certain which newspaper published this, but most likely the Orlando Sentinel. The title read: 1962 'MIAMI SEETHING WITH MILITARY ACTS – KEY WEST ALSO BUSY AS AIR POWER IS BEEFED UP. KEY WEST, Fla. (AP). Military activity in Florida built to a

crisis pitch Monday as President Kennedy announced the institution of a naval blockade of Cuba, just 90 miles away. Fighter planes rushed to Patrick Air Force Base but the feeling there was the planes were not to protect Cape Canaveral but to be ready for deployment in the Caribbean if necessary.

Nearly every Navy vessel steamed out of harbors at Jacksonville and Key West, apparently for the blockade. Key West bustled as the Defense Department beefed up air power in that area. Telephone calls to Key West were being delayed due to heavy traffic, the telephone company reported.

The Air Force built to a force of 36 F106 and F104 fighter interceptor jet planes at Patrick and erected a tent city beside the runways for personnel. The planes, equipped with Sidewinder air-to-air and other unidentifiable rockets, were parked on alert status, with cockpits open, ladders up the side and an auxiliary power unlit under each for fast start.

Throughout the day, the jets took off and landed as a number of practice takeoff missions were conducted. A spokesman at Patrick said the planes were on a routine training mission. A statement issued later by the Air Force said the unit was moved into Patrick to increase the air defense posture of the Southern states.

A reporter who flew over the Key West base said only one destroyer could be seen. Ships normally based at Key West include five destroyers and three destroyer escorts of Destroyer Division 601 and 13 submarines of Submarine Squadron 12.

At the Key West Airport, a Control Tower was built by construction crews ordered to work round-the-clock to complete it. Leaves were canceled at the Boca Chica Naval Air Station where a battalion of Marines arrived over the weekend. MacDill Air Force Base was reported on the alert. Readiness drills were stage at Jacksonville's Mayport Naval Station Saturday. The Key West Airport Control Tower began functioning before the roof was completed.

SEAL OPERATIONS

One of the things that we did, during that period, was an assault on a sand bar. It was some kind of competition. We sent two eight-man rubber rafts, in the middle of the night, to find this spit of land no bigger than your back yard.

We paddled the rafts off the boat as she submerged from under us. We then attached ourselves to a line from one of the periscopes and she towed us as close to the island as she could, and then we paddled the rest of the way. It was pitch black. There was no light.

The bats would come swooping down on us to check us out. Every time you put your paddle into the water it disturbed the phosphorus and it glowed. Really eerie! I was in the raft with John Tulodeski in charge. I was starboard lead paddler and as we went along I felt that we were drifting to the right. He kept checking his compass and he said no we were okay.

As it turned out, if we had gone another 10 feet to the right we could have gone all the way to Cuba, except that our raft had sprung a leak and we were waist deep in water by the time we touched ground. See the photographic section for the Assault on a Sand Bar.

PERRY COMO

Life in GITMO during the Cuban Crisis was a little different as all the dependents and been evacuated, but then they would open the gates for the Cubans who worked on the base. A little weird, I thought.

We were tied up to a pier which had a barge on the other side. We had a little bar setup. And there were bunks and we showed movies. Really quite nice. One of the officers struck up a friendship with someone in Perry Como's USO troop, and after each show Mr. Como, and a bunch of the troop would spend the night partying with us.

I remember though, at some point, I had the mid-watch and was trying to get some rest in the After Torpedo Room. I slept on the after slider on the starboard side and I was awakened by someone having a conversation. It was Perry and a young lady. I think he was trying to qualify her on the operation of the torpedo tube.

Before I realized just who it was I yelled at them to keep the noise down. When I saw who it was, I pulled the blanket up over my head and hid.

SENATOR MARGARET CHASE SMITH

During our stay in GITMO, I got invited to a brunch with the Senior Senator of Maine, Margaret Chase Smith. She also was Chairman of the Armed Services Committee. She was touring the GITMO facility and invited all of her Maine constituents to have brunch with her. Although I had never met her, I had heard of her all my life as she was a friend of my Grandparents. Her husband was responsible for getting my Dad back from Japan when my Mom got very sick.

There were probably 10 of us Maine boys there. We formed a receiving line. She went down and talked with each of us. When she got to me she said, "How is your grandmother, Laura, doing?" I was floored; I had no idea that she would remember my family after 20 years. I said something intelligent like, "Fine Maam."

As it turned out and because we didn't know we would end up in Cuba, I had not brought a tropical white long shirt, and I had on a jumper and tie. So they seated me next to Senator Smith during brunch. Better photo opportunity, I guess.

Before I left the ship, I asked Captain Kojm, if I got the opportunity, should I invite her down to the boat for a visit. He said of course. He loved publicity of any type.

As the Senator and I were talking, I asked her if she would like to tour the boat. There was a three striper standing behind her, and I guess he was in charge of her itinerary because as soon as she said yes, he turned bright red and spun around three times.

Now, of course the SEA POACHER crew was more than a little irate with me too, because they had to turn-to and hold field day. I was standing by the brow when Senator Smith's car arrived. I escorted her aboard and introduced her to the CO and XO.

As she was shaking hands with Captain Kojm he made an embarrassing error. He said, you know, or course, Mrs. Smith that this is a Portsmouth boat. She stuck her face in his chest and said, "Excuse me, Captain! This is a Kittery boat!" The Skipper, red faced, said, "Oh, yes Maam of course."

Although it is called Portsmouth Naval Shipyard it is actually located in Kittery, Maine, and we are very proud of that.

I kind of got left in the dust after that, as she went down the Forward Room hatch and all the way through the boat.

I talked with COB Vernon Barnett years later, and he related a conversation he had with her in the After Torpedo Room. She said to Barney that there was a pay raise pending in Congress and how did he feel about that. He said, "Well, I don't think you should vote for it."

Surprised, she said, "Why is that?" Barney said "If you vote it in, you'll just find some way to take it way from us." I don't know how she took that but the pay raise was enacted.

THANKSGIVING 1962

OUR MENU AND PRAYER. Freemen everywhere share with us in our thanks to God for is countless blessings on this Thanksgiving Day, 1962. When our forefathers sat down to the very first feast of Thanksgiving for their many blessings, their feelings must have been much the same as ours today. There must have been a feeling that their venture, as ours, could not have been successful without the help and goodwill of all. We, in the proudest Navy in all the world, must earnestly determine, and mutually pledge ourselves to each other, to protect, defend and perpetuate our homeland and all of its freedoms. For ours is precious; ours is America!

Turkey Rice Soup		
Shrimp Cocktail	Crackers	
Roast Tom Turkey	Virginia Baked Ham	
Snowflaked Potatoes	Candied Sweet Potatoes	
Buttered Whole-Kernel Corn	Buttered Green Peas	
Buttered Turnips		
Oyster Dressing	Giblet Gravy	
Cranberry Sauce	Applesauce	Hard Sauce
Pumpkin Pie	Mincemeat Pie	Fruit Cake
Assorted Fresh Fruits	Candy	Nuts
Assorted Salad Bar		
Hot Rolls	Bread	Butter
Coffee	Milk	Ice Cream
R.G. Pearce, LTJG, USN		L.R. Kojm, LCDR, USN
Commissary Officer		Commanding Officer

PIAZZA RETIREMENT

The following article was written by Robert Reno, Key West Citizen Bureau Chief in 1962 and was titled SUBMARINER LEAVES WITH RARE HONORS.

KEY WEST-Submariner Arturo Piazza retired from the Navy Friday with honors rare for an enlisted man. A veteran of service aboard six different submarines, he is well known throughout the Navy's submarine force.

One of the mementos presented him in retirement ceremonies Friday was a copy of "PT-109," autographed by the President of the United States.

Piazza once served with an engine repair group in the South Pacific during World War II. He worked on PT boats, among them the celebrated PT-109 which was at the time commanded by LT John Kennedy, now Piazza's Commander-in-Chief.

During his 20 years of Navy service, Piazza has brushed with history more than once. Prior to coming to Key West he served aboard the nuclear submarine USS GEORGE

WASHINGTON when it fired the first Polaris missile from beneath the waves. For this he got the Navy Unit Citation from the Secretary of the Navy.

The commander of each of Piazza's six submarines has seen fit to give special commendation for his outstanding performance and devotion to duty. He had seen service aboard the subs RATON, TILEFISH, THREADFIN, CROAKER, GEORGE WASHINGTON, and now in Key West on the SEA POACHER.

Piazza now plans a quiet retired life in his native Kingston, Jamaica. "This old Jamaican has made his last dive in this man's Navy," he says.

The entire crew of the SEA POACHER fell in for formal inspection by Piazza Friday at his retirement ceremonies. Skipper LCDR L.R. Kojm presented him with an engraved ship's plaque and his final commendation for outstanding service.

Piazza will join his wife Eda Lyn and two children, Betty Ann 13 and Arturo Junior 10, in Kingston. Says he, "I want to sit on the hill at Kingston and watch my ships and shipmates of the submarines of the U.S. Navy steam into the bay."

NEW ORLEANS MARDI GRAS

Sometime after returning from the Cuban affair we took a trip to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans. As it happened I had the flu and decided that I wasn't going on liberty. As with the other boats there with us, the THREADFIN, TIRANTE, and GRENADIER, we had open house. I took to bed in the hanging rack in the ATR to stay out of the way and recuperate.

Well, the After Room watch, somehow, obtained some medicinal spirits. The stuff we called Gilley which was made of grapefruit juice and denatured alcohol. He kept passing me up a glass, and it was enough so I finally passed out. When I woke the next day I felt GREAT except for those blisters in my mouth.

Gunner Vanderwerker and someone else, whom I can't remember, and I decided to go over and find the ugliest girls we could.

Going on liberty with Gunner was a treat. He was the kind of guy that kept the party going. What great fun.

I think we managed to obtain our goal with a couple of "school teachers" from Minnesota. We brought them down to the boat and were in the After Battery, when one of them said that she felt kind of sick.

I suggested we go back to Maneuvering where the air conditioning actually worked and see if that might help. No sooner had we stepped over the hatch then they both lost their cookies.

For some time after that I would get calls from the electricians to come look at an orange peel or a whole cherry that they fished out of the bilges.

I have an article from the BUSHNELL Turtle that talks about our visit to Mardi Gras and that during a recent deployment in GITMO, SEA POACHER was recognized by Perry Como as having the best spirit and morale of ships present and was a frequent visitor on board. A sweet sounding ship!

WEST PALM BEACH FOR JOHN HARVEY'S MOM

In April of 1963 we made a mercy run to West Palm Beach where the mother of our Senior Cook, John Harvey lived. She was having an operation and blood was desperately needed. Again, SEA POACHER responded.

West Palm was one of my favorite places for liberty. Here is the article published in The Miami Herald on Saturday 5 April 1963:

70 pints of Blood for Shipmate's Mother - Sub Scores Sweep on Mercy Mission
By Jerry Parker, Herald Staff Writer, Riviera Beach

The USS SEA POACHER'S mission of mercy was fulfilled Friday, The Navy submarine docked at 8:45 a.m. and 70 of its 90 men, crewmen and officers, proceeded to the Palm Beach County Blood Bank, Inc. They left there 70 pints of blood, credited in the name of Mrs. Violet M. Harvey, 425 27th St., the mother of a shipmate.

Commissaryman First Class John E. Harvey got the news that his mother was gravely ill and need of multiple blood transfusions two weeks ago, as the SEA POACHER cruised the Florida Straits. The crew's reaction was immediate. Everyone wanted to help, related the information officer, LTJG John Tulodeski, including the Sub's Skipper L.R. Kojm. We went through the proper channels to get permission to come to West Palm Beach. "This was a special trip, we took time out from our operations to come and donate the blood," said Tulodeski.

It's a first for the SEA POACHER, and quite possibly a first for the Navy. The sailors' generosity will greatly ease the financial burden on Mrs. Harvey and her family. A spokesman for Good Samaritan Hospital, where she has been a patient, said blood costs \$25 a pint unless it is replaced in the patient's behalf. Even with the donations, the cost will be considerable. There's still a \$10 a pint service charge, the hospital official said.

Mrs. Harvey's 38-year-old son is a career Navy man. He's been in the service for 16 years. His shipmate's gesture couldn't help but reaffirm his faith in the organization. "We like to think the Navy is a family affair," said Tulodeski.

MORE ON HARVEY'S MOM FROM WEST PALM BEACH OR KEY WEST

Not sure which newspaper published it but it was titled: THE NAVY IS A FAMILY AFFAIR. Blood is thicker than water and good shipmates thicker than water. Mrs. Violet F. Harvey of West Palm Beach, Fla., found this out when 92 crew members of her son's ship, the Submarine SEA POACHER (SS406), commanded by LCDR L. R. Kojm, USN, gave blood to the local blood bank to replace the quantities she required for recovery from a serious illness.

J. E. Harvey, Commissaryman First Class, and one of Mrs. Harvey's three children, found out the meaning of good shipmates when the SEA POACHER made a port visit to West Palm Beach on Friday, April 5. The submarine was operating locally in the Florida Straits when knowledge of Mrs. Harvey's need was received.

It's a first for the SEA POACHER and quite possibly for the Navy. The sailor's generosity will greatly ease the financial burden on Mrs. Harvey and her family.

A spokesman for Good Samaritan Hospital, where she has been a patient, said blood costs \$25 a pint unless it is replaced in the patient's behalf. Even with the donations, the cost will be considerable. There is still a \$10 a pint service charge.

Mrs. Harvey's 38-year-old son is a career Navy man. He's been in the service for 16 years. His shipmate's gesture couldn't help but reaffirm his faith in the organization. To J. E. Harvey, a Navy motto stands true: "The Navy Is A Family Affair."

CHANGES OF COMMAND/BIG EVENTS

It was reported in the Key West Citizen as LCDR FOX TAKES HELM OF USS SEA POACHER. At ceremonies conducted on board the USS SEA POACHER (SS406) on April 27, 1963 Lieutenant Commander R.T. Fox relieved Lieutenant Commander L.R. Kojm as Commanding Officer, who will report to the Staff of Commander Submarine Force, Atlantic Fleet as Assistant Operations Officer and Public Information Officer.

Another one a bit earlier, and also reported in the Key West Citizen was the shift of command for Submarine Division 122 with SEA POACHER selected as the platform for the ceremony.

There Commander Michael Elliot relieved Commander Tex Proctor in what was termed “an impressive ceremony.” In fact the Skippers of all submarines in the division were onboard and served as back drop for the ceremony.

I also remember when Vice Admiral E.W. Grenfell, Commander Submarine Force Atlantic, presented Skipper LCDR L.E. Stahl with the Secretary of the Navy Commendation Medal aboard SEA POACHER on 2 June 1961.

This was another “impressive ceremony” as reported again by the Key West Citizen. Upon completion, the Admiral made a walk through and inspection of our boat. I remember he spent several minutes talking with Artie Piazza.

EDITOR’S NOTE: See Lawrence Stahl Chapter for wording on this very vague citation, which clearly was for the 1960 Northern Run off Murmansk, Russia. Those of you who were on board will fully understand its meaning. This Medal not only reflects upon Captain Stahl but the entire SEA POACHER crew.

SECRETS OF THE SILENT SERVICE

Where are you going? Out! When will you be back? Later!

Author Unknown

“Freedom has its life in the hearts, the actions, the spirit of men and so it must be daily earned and refreshed – else like a flower cut from its life - giving roots, it will wither and die.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

“In the "haze gray and underway Navy" departures and arrivals are done with great fanfare and make the six o'clock news. We who have driven the black boats into secret places have never known that level of scrutiny - nor did we want it. A few last minute hugs and tears, the holding of confused kids. Then single up, cast off, slide away from a pier or tender and rig ship for dive. That was our fanfare.”

Unknown Crewmember, BLENNY

CHAPTER 77

LANNY YESKE 1961-1963

**I REMEMBER THE DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SEA POACHER,
TWO ENSIGNS ALREADY ON BOARD,
WHERE DO I LIVE AND SLEEP, MOVING UP MAYBE,
CAPTAIN STAHL AND THE ADMIRAL ENCOUNTER,
LIFE IN KEY WEST, NO DOLPHINS FOR POACHER ENSIGNS,
FISHING AND UNBELIEVABLE SEAFOOD,
FORT JEFFERSON PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE,
ANOTHER EMBARRASSMENT WITH THE ADMIRAL,
GOING FOR THE SQUADRON E,
DIVING FULL ON FOUR – STERN PLANES LOCKED ON FULL DIVE,
COLLAPSE OF THE MAIN INDUCTION PIPING,
TONGUE OF THE OCEAN MONSTER, DEPENDENTS CRUISE,
SUBMARINE ESCAPE TANK TRAINING,
THE 5000TH SEA POACHER DIVE,
THE FORWARD BATTERY CLASSIFIED INFORMATION SAFE,
TORPEDO FIRING AND DIVING PROCEDURES,
CUBAN CRISIS CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS,
CAPTAIN KOJM AND PERRY COMO'S VISIT,
STAR WARS OFF CUBA, PORK ADOBO,
NAVY SOS, MARILYN MONROE'S,
PREPARE TO REPEL BOARDERS AND NAVY SWORDS,
ROACHES AND BOAT FUMIGATION,
EQUALIZER OR PARALYZER BATTERY CHARGES,
THE MYSTERIOUS NAVY BUS ON THE PIER,
MY LAST MEETING WITH CAPTAIN AND MARY STAHL,
THE LIBERTY CARD MYSTERY AND CAN YOU PASS THIS TEST?**

THE DIFFICULTY GETTING TO SEA POACHER

It was not easy. Graduating from the University of Nebraska in June 1960 as an Ensign, I went to New London for Officer's Training. We were the first group to go to submarine training since WWII without having to first spend a year aboard a surface ship. Of course the reason was the huge buildup in nuclear submarines, the Soviet threat, and the lack of enough officers.

I hated Submarine School. As a Nebraska degreed high school Mathematics and English teacher, I did not understand electricity, acoustics, hydraulics, engines, motors, or tactics. The Naval Academy guys did, and the course was tough. We started with 120 and finished with 94. I ranked 93 with a 2.51 grade point average. Had it been 2.49 I would have bilged out.

Boat assignments were based upon your class standing and mine stunk. To compound things further, my Fiancée Jacque was already a reporter on the Miami Herald. We planned to get married in December. She said, "Why don't you get a boat in Key West as I can have my job transferred there?"

It sounded good, and even greater from a financial aspect, but my class standing was so low the chances were slim and none for a boat still available with my second to last choice.

The day arrived close to graduation to select your submarine. Of course, boats in Hawaii and San Diego were the first to go. New London was popular, and then there was this mish-mash between Norfolk, Charleston, and Key West, with the latter generally preferred.

TWO ENSIGNS ALREADY ON BOARD

Luke Riley had already selected SEA POACHER, and Gene Dempsey was already on board. Could SEA POACHER survive a third Ensign? We were down to the 75th pick and there was only one Key West boat left. Guess what? It looked like Norfolk or Charleston for me when some of my buddies, knowing the situation with my Fiancé's potential job in Key West, started talking to the picks ahead of me. They told them how rotten Key West was, and that no one should be assigned there. It was a miracle that it worked, and I will forever be grateful for those guys. Jacque and I were married in late December, and I reported aboard in January 1961. However, you all had to suffer with a third Ensign.

WHERE DO I LIVE AND SLEEP

This is almost too hard to tell and talk about. There were only eight officer bunks in the Forward Battery. One was a four man stateroom, and the XO had a stateroom which held two more. And then there was the CO's stateroom which no one dared enter.

You After Battery Rats do not know how well you had it back aft. So I was the 9th officer on board and there was no room in the Forward Battery Inn. The choices were the Bridle Suite in the FTR (with God only knowing what extracurricular activities occurred there) or some makeshift hanging down contraption in the Wardroom. I choose the latter.

It was near the passageway and was elevated such that an eagle would not try to claim it as an aerie. Of course, being in the Wardroom, you could not go to sleep until all the officers and stewards had evacuated the area. And then once you flew to your nest, it would not be long before the stewards were rousting you up as to set the Wardroom for breakfast.

It was the shortest amount of sleep that I ever had to suffer through in my life. And that went on for months. And that was only half of it. I had no place to store my gear, and I had as much as the other officers. Everything was full. There was sympathy, but nothing that mattered. I think my gear went into the Officer's Shower, because no one ever used it anyway.

MOVING UP MAYBE

Not sure this was even an improvement. Some officer left and a vacancy occurred in the four man stateroom. I took it without hesitation. Anything was better than the Wardroom.

Well I think that was true, but not that much of an improvement.

We did have a sink that mostly provided water, so that was nice. I could now move my hanging clothes from the shower to a 12 inch wide locker for the four of us.

Everything else went into some potholes in the bulkhead or under your bunk. That was it. And I was not storing Coke cans or fire crackers like Ensign Pulver.

CAPTAIN LAWRENCE STAHL AND THE ADMIRAL ENCOUNTER

I guess this needs to be told. My first duty assignment in January from Captain Stahl was to place a retirement ad in the Key West Citizen Newspaper of a CPO who had just retired from SS-406. Okay, 45 years later I checked the list of chiefs on board in 1960 versus those still on board in 1961, and it had to be either William Gould or William Graef. To be honest it could also have been either Blankenhagen, Dechard, Favors, Jonas, McCorkle, or Taylor. In any case, the story is the same. Captain Stahl told me this was a very important event and said to get it published with a photo in the paper. Aye Aye, Sir. I went to their office and spoke with the Editor who said no problem; the Navy was very important to the area. I provided her with the article and photo, and she said it would run in next Sunday's edition.

Come Monday, I had not seen it in the Sunday paper and during lunch in the Wardroom, Captain Stahl asked me about it. Seems like he had not seen it either and said, "What is the problem Ensign Yeske?" I didn't know, but knew I had better find out.

I bicycled over to the office and confronted the Editor. She was more than hostile and to tell the truth a b****. She said they had a large Navy community here, and they didn't have the room or the time to do this for everyone. She said she trashed the article and photo. I guess I became a bit more indignant than I should have, and in more words than this told her that she had reneged on her promise and "That it was a hell of a way to run a Newspaper." She turned white as I slammed the door to her office nearly tearing it off its hinges.

It was maybe only an hour or so later, and we were seated in the Wardroom ready for lunch. I had not yet told the Captain what had happened. Then the topside watch called down over the 1MC, "Now will the Captain and Ensign Yeske report to the Admiral's Office on the double?" We were out of there at the speed of light. The Captain, as we were running, said, "What the hell is this?" I said I had no idea.

We made the two block trip as 440 yard Olympians. The Admiral's Secretary first stopped us, but then told us to go in. Captain Stahl told me to wait and went in by himself. I envisioned death in the waiting area as I started to realize the B**** Editor of the Key West Citizen had probably called the Commander Naval Forces Key West on my outburst in her office an hour earlier.

It was five minutes later when Captain Stahl emerged. He said, "Let's go." I asked if I needed to talk to the Admiral. He said, "No!" We were driven to the pier in the Admiral's car and then walked to SEA POACHER. But we didn't stop. He took me all the way to the end of the pier. There was no one within even shouting distance.

He just looked at me. I feared the worst. My first job as an Ensign, and I had totally screwed it up. Captain Stahl had a sort of a wry twisted smile and said, "The Admiral admires your enthusiasm, but your tact is not worth a damn."

That was it and not another word was ever again said on the incident.

That is until nearly 47 years later when Jacque Yeske Knight added this on 17 October 2007. She said it was a little weird but true, and also sad. Anyway, at a Garden Club function in Arlington, Virginia a week earlier, Jacque was with a couple of gals at Seven Corners. One was a Navy wife from California whose pilot husband had been stationed in Key West and is now with the Joint Chiefs. The other was Scottish, the wife of a military contractor of some sort. Anyway,

they start talking about Key West, as the contractor had lived there as a boy in the 60's. When I said I'd worked there as Bureau Chief for the Miami Herald, the Scottish gal, Diane Brooks, wondered when and said her husband's mother had worked for the Key West Citizen and later married a guy I remember well, an Italian, Louie Signorelli, who owned a restaurant there. It turned out the mother was Frances Brooks, the Key West Citizen Newspaper Local Editor I tangled with and had to go see the admiral about regards enthusiasm and tact.

Anyway, Diane said Lou and Frances had a very successful restaurant for awhile, then sold out and moved to North Carolina, where he made some bad investments, and died leaving Frances with few resources. Her children are with her. But, her daughter-in-law says she is in very ill health. She sometimes and doesn't remember her own kids, let alone the young Ensign who made her so angry she went right to her Editor who went right to the admiral who went right to Captain Stahl, and got to you!

"So, 47 years later, Lanny, you may have gotten the last word after all," said Jacque.

But, I didn't want it this way.

NO DOLPHINS FOR POACHER ENSIGNS

I had not been aboard very long when the Captain informed us that no Ensign would get his Dolphins on SEA POACHER, as long as he was in Command. I guess he was from the "Old School," before Ensigns could even be assigned to the boats.

Knowing I was probably going to have to wait at least a year to earn them, it was very disappointing. However, it did not come into play. Captain Stahl, who I learned a lot from, completed his two years as Skipper six months after I reported on board, and I received and drank for my Dolphins from Captain Kojm.

I don't remember being thrown in the water by the crew, but it could have happened.

LIFE IN KEY WEST

At the time it seemed we would never make it, but looking back it was grand. Wifey and I had just reported aboard from a wedding in North Platte, Nebraska, honeymooned in New Orleans, ran out of money in Tampa, but made Key West. We rented a place coincidentally next door to Gene and Shirley Dempsey on Laird Street. We owned only what my 1960 Renault Dauphine could carry from Nebraska. Our itty-bitty duplex apartment was tiny, awfully furnished, but it was home.

Perhaps our first or second weekend in the area, we managed to get down to the Key West Southernmost Point in the U.S. It must have been on a Sunday.

There were all sorts of arts and crafts things, and there were these guys selling oil paintings. One named Pogasi had these stormy sea scenes with waves breaking all over, and nothing else. The wifey wanted it. It was \$20, and she talked him down to \$15. It should have been a Picasso the way I objected, but she held her own and bought it with her own funds.

When the boys were growing up, and I was at sea and they did not know where I was, she would vector them to that painting and say "Daddy, On Patrol." Later in life in the 1970s she did buy a real Picasso for \$4,000, just before his death. Again, I objected. Again it was with her own money.

What the hell did I know? That one she has greatly appreciated. However, today that first Key West seascape and the \$15 purchase graces my office in Virginia. It has not appreciated all that much, but is priceless to me.

Other things I remember about Key West were Ensign Gene Dempsey to the rescue. One Sunday afternoon the wifey decided we should have broiled kidneys for dinner. I was not excited, but thought better than to open my mouth. She had them in the oven on broil for a good 20 minutes. I could smell an odor I did not like, but continued to read the newspaper. When she went to check on them, there was first a loud scream, followed by a terrible odor, a fire erupting from the oven, and then a great deal of smoke filled the kitchen. I guess she knew it was an electrical fire and proceeded to throw into the oven all the salt and sugar we had.

Gene and Shirley lived in the apartment just across the walkway from us. He heard the scream and saw the smoke billowing from our windows. He had the presence of mind to run over and turn off the stove. I remained stunned on the sofa just trying to breathe through all of it. It took a couple of hours for the stuff to cool down, and then I transferred the miserable things to the trash can. I then ordered the mildly sautéed wife to never ever cook those things under pain of death.

On another Sunday evening, we were playing cards at the Dempsey's. I think we were going to sea the next morning. Anyway, our phone rang which was easily heard from their apartment. Shirley went with her. The next thing we heard was screaming, and two women jumping up and down on our front porch. A coral snake just happened to be lying there as well. I have no idea where Gene got the shovel, but he was over there and whacked it into total submission. I didn't like those creatures very much and kept my distance.

What else? Yes, we only had one car, and both of us were working. If our schedules didn't mesh, I would often ride a bicycle onto the base and motor up to SEA POACHER. Luke Riley was in the same situation. On at least one occasion, his bicycle broke down, and can you imagine two Ensigns on one bicycle driving up to SEA POACHER?

It was also Navy tradition for all officers to make a call on the Captain and his wife at their home shortly after reporting aboard. This was a coat and tie affair and arranged well in advance. Protocol required you stay only 20 minutes, and certainly not a second over 30 minutes. One drink only, and you were required to leave two calling cards in a silver tray. Protocol also had the Captain and his wife calling on you at your home shortly thereafter. We made our call on Captain Larry and Mary Stahl, which they graciously returned.

But I never thought about calling on XO Jerry and Dori Davi. It was a couple of months after reporting aboard SEA POACHER, when the XO called me aside, and was not happy about our not calling. I had so many screw ups as an Ensign it was a miracle I made LTJG. I pled my case as an ignorant South Dakota farm boy and stupid NROTC puke, which Jerry warmly accepted. We promptly exchanged calls. He was a great XO with a super wife.

FISHING AND UNBELIEVABLE SEAFOOD

I will be stretching memory a bit here. Being from the upper Midwest I knew nothing of seafood until SEA POACHER. I do not remember where it was, but we would sometimes go out to sea and rest on top of some wreck or structure, and the Cobia would attack our fishing lines. And Cobia was probably the best fish I have ever eaten.

Maybe we had it aboard, or maybe there was so much left over, we were allowed to take it home. I don't remember. But it was so good. I had a charcoal grill made for it.

And just as good was Langouste in Key West. Wife and I after Laird Street were assigned to housing in Sigsbee Park. We were very lucky and got a two bedroom home on the water. I do not think the water view was all that great as it looked inland, but the langouste lobsters were all over our back yard water. I think langouste meant no big claws, but the rest of it was sumptuous. I could go out there every evening and in five foot of water pick up dinner for the evening. What a great place to live!

FORT JEFFERSON PHOTOGRAPHIC RECONNAISSANCE

Not only was I the junior Ensign on SEA POACHER, with a last name beginning with "Y", but I was the junior Ensign in all of Key West. As I result I was truly the SLJO (Sh**** Little Jobs Officer). And I got most of them. Besides the bigger ones of Supply and Commissary, there were Public Affairs (already blew that), Movie (not to pick them out, but to show in the Wardroom), Library (all 10 volumes), and Photography.

I thought the Photography was going to be easy, until I learned it was part of boat training, and we were required to periodically conducted periscope photographic reconnaissance operations. I couldn't even yet spell it before we were tasked by the Squadron to do a recon of Fort Jefferson in Dry Tortugas, an old 1846 Fort 70 miles west of Key West. So here was another golden chance to get reamed a new one by CO Stahl and XO Davi.

I was told I had a QM Assistant, but I do not remember for sure who it was. I know it was not Chief Sardo and was probably either Lawson or Snook; however, it could easily have been Hall, Hemsley, Malone, Farmer, Elmore, or Allers. We had a couple of weeks to get ready.

After editing this thing, it had to have been Lawson, who virtually saved my life and career. If I am in error, please forgive me.

Well, I made quick friends with this QM who before long broke out a case containing a camera that attached to the scope, which one I had no idea, but as an Ensign I now had a 50-50 shot. Once he familiarized me with the damn thing, which took either 4 by 4 inch or 6 by 6 inch photos, he told me it was time to check the inventory.

Well, the "Photo Lab" was located next to the Crypto Machine in the far end of the Dry Provisions Storeroom in the bilge level below the Radio Room. Give me a break!

I spent more time in there than I did on the Bridge. There had to have been a small sink and a cabinet down there. Inside we found film and stuff, along with several bottles of chemicals.

I asked the QM, "What are these for?"

He responded "Well after you have taken the photos YOU have to immediately develop the negatives, make positives, and then construct a large photo mosaic of the entire Fort! And if it doesn't come out we have to do the damn thing over again!"

Like everything else there were written instructions on the process. Anyway, we loaded up with plenty of supplies.

But then we had to figure out things like at three knots, how frequently did we snap the camera to make sure we had at least 50 percent overlap on the photos. If you took the photos too fast, you would run out of film. Too slow, and there would be gaps in the Fort.

And then, if there were currents, it would make all your calculations totally worthless. Plus you better not dip the scope at all or you would lose photos as well. Nothing was easy. I should have stayed a South Dakota farm boy.

The fateful day arrived, and we steamed to Dry Tortugas. Approaching the Fort at periscope depth we saw a huge structure. We swung into action on a very calm day. To ensure a

constant depth and course, the Battle Stations Planesmen and Helmsman were on the controls, and the Engineer was the Diving Officer. I was almost numb.

I guess it went all right. Once completed the QM, and I hit the "Photo Lab." Under a "Red" light developed the negatives and made the black and white positives. And they actually came out. We had a good 50 percent overlap with no holes. Once dry, we cut and pasted them into a mosaic that had to be at least three foot long.

We got "attaboys" instead of an a** chewing.

Lawson or who ever you were, there is a special place in heaven for you.

ANOTHER EMBARRASSMENT WITH THE ADMIRAL

I hate to tell this story. It was the 1961 Navy Birthday Ball at the Casa Marina Hotel. All the officers were outfitted with tuxedo style dress whites, and the wives/girl friends had on formal gowns. It was a gala affair. After the dinner there was the cake cutting ceremony. Rear Admiral Gage, Commander Key West Naval Forces, was of course the Senior Officer. It was tradition that the Senior Officer gave the first piece of cake to the most Junior Officer on the Island. Guess who that was! There was no rank among Ensigns, but if your name started with a "Y" you were the junior officer. So that was the good part of this story. I have a great photo of the Admiral giving me the piece of cake. It should have stopped there.

The party was really going on strong, and now it was time for the LIMBO dance contest which of course I entered. Hell, I was down to about the last four finalists, and the bar got lower and lower each time. Well, I had had my share of the lime and the coconut, and was ready for one more try at a SEA POACHER victory. XO Jerry Davi was still in the running as well. The bar was really low. Of course I attacked it with gusto and with a drink in hand. Suffice it to say, Ensign Yeske and drink went down on the floor, and the glass shattered into several pieces with probably a couple hundred pairs of eyes looking at me. I remember Captain Stahl came out and picked up some of the glass. XO Jerry Davi was out there as well. I hoped these embarrassments did not come in threes. I think Jerry Davi actually wound up winning the contest.

GOING FOR THE SQUADRON E

I probably have more bad stories than anyone else. It was under Captain Stahl, and I was still an Ensign. Had he remained aboard, I would probably still be an Ensign.

Anyway, I guess it was late 1961, and we had a good year. We were in direct competition for the E Award, and I think the boat we were up against was the CHOPPER. It was a close tie.

It all boiled down to a sonar contact taping. Not sure if both boats were out at the same time or it was done individually. Whoever got the best score on the taping would get the E.

Well, we did work at it in preparation. Then we went out and did our best. It was a really good effort, but CHOPPER must have done better, and we missed the E.

Captain Stahl was gracious and never said a word; although I am sure he really wanted it. We wanted it as well. I always felt bad over this, and wondered what more we could have done.

DIVING FULL ON FOUR – STERN PLANES LOCKED ON FULL DIVE

It was Captain Kojm's favorite drill. We had completed our shipyard overhaul in Charleston in 1961 and were on sea trials. This was truly an ugly drill. Full on four on the

surface, the order was “Dive Dive.” One had to be fast on the bridge, because we now had the high North Atlantic sail. You had to get the lookouts down, your self, and dog the hatch before water entered. Then in the Control Room, the Diving Officer was told by the Stern Planesman that his planes were locked on full dive.

The only way out of this thing is to Back Emergency to get the ever increasing angle off the boat, and then jockey the boat back and forth with small ahead and stern bells at about 200 feet or so. All of the officers had to go through it, and three of us had already done it satisfactorily.

However, our next officer, to remain unnamed, instead of Backing Emergency only slowed to 2/3 ahead. We were approaching test depth at an angle of 45 to 50 degrees down before the Main Ballast Tank blows took effect, and then the up bubble began.

Coffee cups, fire extinguishers, and anything loose on the way down, were now coming at us from the other direction. We took at least a 60 to 65 degree up angle at the surface, and then we sank to nearly 300 feet again, before again coming to the surface.

We finally settled out on the surface. It was the last time we ever did that drill.

COLLAPSE OF THE MAIN INDUCTION PIPING

This was the cause of another major steep dive. I believe in 1961. I remember the Division Commander Tex Proctor was on board to get his sea time to qualify for his extra submarine hazardous duty pay. I was just an observer in the Control Room. As we passed 50 feet, when there was a loud noise. No one knew what it was, but our attention was on the rapid descent of the boat. We were blowing everything we had at 300 feet, and Tex was actually circling the Control Room table uttering expletives that shall remain deleted. The descent was stopped at test depth, and we surfaced. Come to find out the Main Induction piping, (what is it 12 to 16 inches in diameter you snipes?) had given way and had totally flooded. We had taken on several thousand pounds of expected water and were lucky to have survived.

THE TONGUE OF THE OCEAN MONSTER IN THE BAHAMAS

It was after the shipyard in 1961, and we were doing sound trials with other ships and aircraft in TOTO (Tongue of the Ocean) in the Bahamas. We were again on the surface, and I was OOD. One of the aircraft reported a huge object in the water a few miles ahead of us. I called Captain Kojm to the Bridge, and he took the Conn. The aircraft kept reporting this huge object on the surface, but the radar and sonar showed nothing. The Captain slowed as we approached within a couple hundred of yards, but we could see nothing.

Finally the aircraft excitedly radioed, “FEVER ROUTE, you’re going to hit it!” And we did. There was no shock, but we did see a large grayish-black object briefly come on deck and exit on the starboard bow. By the time we were able to circle around and come back, it was gone. The aircraft reported it must have sunk. Do you suppose it was a lost whale? Who knows?

DEPENDENTS CRUISE

It happened on 16 June 1961. Probably XO Jerry Davi convinced Captain Stahl it was something we should do. The XO was very much a people person. It was a great summer day, and there must have been 50 dependents including wives/girlfriends and older kids aboard.

The weather was calm, but the speed we were going on the surface, to impress our loved ones, made for a little bit of rolling and pitching, and of course, ooohs and aahs.

As I recall we made at least five dives with families at different stations to experience Control Room, Engine Room, Conning Tower, Maneuvering, and Torpedo Room operations. On the very first dive, which I expected would be moderate, the Captain ordered a down angle of something like 25 degrees. Needless to say there was a lot of screaming and yelling coming from the ladies and the kids. But they loved it and wanted more. That is all I remember.

SUBMARINE ESCAPE TANK TRAINING

I hated this more than anything else in submarines, and we had to requalify every two years. More than likely if SEA POACHER had a problem, it would be too deep for a rescue and we would be crushed for this type of thing to work anyway. As I recall the average depth of the oceans is 12,000 feet, and this training was only good for 400 feet. And you only had a few minutes to execute it even at that depth. I really disliked this. Well think about it. With a 400 foot or so test depth, we would rarely dive in anything less than 1000 feet, and at that depth we were not going to be doing any escape. Maybe just having some sort of escape mechanism was supposed to be a morale booster. Not for me.

I even went through this thing six times. First, as a midshipman in Pearl Harbor on the TUNNY, and then at least three more times in New London and twice more in Pearl.

There was something called a "Momsen Lung," but it was out of date when I started this nonsense. It was initially the "Steinke Hood." And then we went to "Blow and Go," and I am not sure we used any hood at all on that one.

I try to erase this ordeal from my memory. Of course in the back of your mind is that if you don't do this satisfactorily, you are out of the submarine force.

That's it. Finished. Over.

So, on the ground, they start you with a lecture somewhere on how to do it. Refresher training, my a**. Yeah, we get the entire nine yards. You are going to be escaping from a sunken submarine in God only knows the water depth. You are going to put on a hood or blow and go yourself to death to the surface. You have to blow your guts out all the way to the surface, because if you stop your lungs are going to explode from the expanding air. Don't even think about holding your breathe or you die. The air will magically appear in your lungs as you ascend.

Will someone give me a f***** break

So in New London, colder than hell in January and in our swimming suits, we SEA POACHER guys go to this 112 foot circular tower rising above the base. I have no recollection of the diameter of the d*** thing, but it had to be 20 feet give or take 5 feet or so.

Now you made an ascent to the surface from either 100 feet or 50 feet as I recall. I never made one from more than 50 feet which was the norm. So, I guess we climbed up about ½ way to the top of the tower into the interlock chamber.

I cannot tell you how hard it is to write about this even today. The whole tower was of course filled with water, and there are all of these UDT scuba divers everywhere. And we have about 8 of us in this interlock chamber!

Are these tight quarters or what? Sardines have more room. And we all have inflated life jackets on. So they start flooding this little container with the 8 of us in it.

Now once the water gets above the top lip of the side hatch door the flooding stops. We are all on our tippie toes now to keep our nose above the water with the top of our heads touching the overhead.

This is like all the drowning movies you have ever seen in your life.

Now it gets worse and the real fun starts. The side hatch door cannot be opened until we pressurize this sardine can. Okay we are going to go from 1 atmosphere to about 2.5 atmospheres in a few seconds. We are told to not worry if our ear drums break as they will eventually heal. We need to equalize with the pressure by holding your nose and blowing out your ears, and not all of us can do this.

Some ears bleed, but let that be damned.

We are submariners.

So now the pressure is finally equalized, and the rotten diver opens the side hatch exposing the God-awful escape tower. So now they start throwing you out.

You do not have a whole lot of time to screw around with this. Of course, on the 50 foot ascent to the top there are tons of these sadistic UDT divers every few feet that should you decide to not, "Blow and Go," will grab you by the b**** and jerk you back abruptly. That is even worse than making the ascent.

As always your turn finally comes, and the only thing you focus on is "Blow and Go," all the way to the surface. And you know the sonofab**** worked. It was a wonderful 30 second or so trip to the surface, and you steered your way with your arms pointing all the way up.

Just had to remember to "Blow and Go." But would I ever do it again?

Oh, I suppose so even nearing age 70.

THE 5000TH SEA POACHER DIVE

It happened on 21 June 1962 again in the Key West Operating Areas. I don't recall it being any sort of special ceremony. Looking at when her 3000th dive took place in Bill Buckley's Chapter, we were again averaging just short of 300 dives per year.

In Bill Brinkman's Chapter, he remembers this vividly with a special diving team, cake, and good publicity. My memory appears to be shot.

THE FORWARD BATTERY CLASSIFIED MATERIAL SAFE

Do you remember this engineering marvel? Who ever designed it had to be drunk?

Once I graduated from Supply and Commissary Officer on SEA POACHER, I was promoted to Assistant Operations, Communications, Electronics, Sonar, and Classified Material Control Officer. And all the classified material was stowed in this about 2 foot wide and 5 foot high safe with combination lock, located in the passageway of the Forward Battery.

If the door was open, it totally blocked the passageway.

Do you remember when you were passing a shipmate in the Forward Battery, you both had to turn sideways and pass chest to chest because it was so tight?

Did you ever find yourself totally blocked from passing through the Forward Battery, because the ever industrious and dutiful Classified Material Control Officer Ensign Yeske had the door open, and was probably sitting on his butt on the floor doing something with the publications? And for your protection.

When the traffic got too backlogged and the moaning/sighing was getting too loud, this Good Officer would get up, stuff the publications back in the safe, close the door, squeeze against the bulkhead, and let you all go by.

What engineering genius was responsible for that design?

TORPEDO FIRING AND DIVING PROCEDURES

I was trying to remember some of my periscope approaches on SEA POACHER, but the memory was fuzzy. Both the BUSHNELL and Charleston submarine base had trainers for practicing approaches.

I sunk the Soviet Battleship NOVORUSSISK twice and the Cruiser SVERDLOV at least three times. Junior officers were not given many opportunities on SEA POACHER, although in April 1962 we were operating with the Norwegian Destroyer KMS BERGEN (DD-304), and I had two approaches simulating Mark 14-3A torpedoes.

I got her once but missed the second time.

The only time I had a real Mark 14 exercise torpedo was for my underway submarine dolphin qualification on the CHOPPER (SS-342). The target was the USS HUSE (DE-145) and the weapon passed directly underneath her..

If you want to read up on firing procedures, the Historic Naval Ships Association has on its website the entire Submarine Torpedo Fire Control Manual of 1952 for Fleet and Guppy submarines. Everything you could ever possibly want to know is there on the Internet at <http://www.hnsa.org/doc/attack/index.htm> Similarly, if you are a bit rusty on diving and surfacing procedures you can find everything at <http://fleetsubmarine.com/diving.html>, and these two web sites will definitely bring back memories of our main mission.

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS

I was Officer of the Deck during the Cuban Blockade one November 1962 afternoon on patrol, going 1/3 speed on one engine surfaced, and Cuba was only a few miles distant. One of the lookouts reported a high speed 40 foot or so Chris Craft type of pleasure boat near shore and moving very fast. We were on parallel courses at the time and maybe 5 miles apart.

I reported the contact to Captain Kojm who immediately came to the Bridge. He told me to go to full speed on four engines and close the contact. We were moving at 16 knots or so and the contact was still drawing ahead so the Captain ordered "All Ahead Flank." We soon attained a steady bearing rate, and the distance between us was closing. The contact did not slow and the Captain ordered us to Battle Stations which according to Ivan Joslin we did, as I don't recall that or some of the other details

Anyway, Ivan was on the periscope, and XO Dick Coupe was plotting the contact, and we slowly closed the range. Finally, when close aboard the Chris Craft stopped and nestled up alongside our starboard bow.

Captain Kojm alone went out on the bow, and one guy came onboard. They talked for at least 10 minutes. There was no one else in our crew or from the Chris Craft on deck. I'm not sure if there even was anyone else aboard the pleasure boat.

I watched them intently and saw nothing in the way of an ID or paper exchange. As I recall, they shook hands, the Chris Craft took off, and the Captain came up to the bridge. I was Communications Officer at the time, and he told me to get a relief and come to his stateroom.

He was as serious as I had ever seen him. A few minutes later we were in the Crypto Room in the Dry Storage area beneath the Radio Room. It was always an ordeal to crawl over all the stores and get back there, and this was a similar and cramped occasion.

He asked me to set up the Crypto Machine, which I did, and then refresh him on the use of it, and how to format and send a message. After a couple of minutes of instruction he said he had it and for me to go back on watch, which I did.

The incident was never discussed again with me or anyone else on SEA POACHER that I know of. I still have no idea what it was all about.

CAPTAIN KOJM AND PERRY COMO'S VISIT

After a few weeks on the blockade, we were given permission to pull into GITMO for a few days of rest and relaxation. There was not a whole lot to do in GITMO except mosey up to the Officer's Club Bar.

However, we got lucky. The USO had scheduled a weekend event that included Perry Como, Senor Wences, the June Taylor Dancers, and his entire troupe of entertainers. Most everyone in the crew went and joined several thousand others for a fantastic show.

Captain Kojm had been a Public Affairs Officer for Commander Submarine Force Atlantic and was extremely personable and outgoing. We were about to depart the stands, when he announced he was going backstage, and for us to get back to the boat, make sure it was all cleaned up, and get some food ready. He said he would be bringing Perry Como back for a visit to SEA POACHER. Needless to say, we laughed at him and the rare possibility of this happening, but we dutifully went back, and did as he said. It was midnight and nothing had happened, and so we all snuggled up into our little bunks.

I was sound asleep some time later when the curtain on my bunk was violently thrown open, and Perry Como was looking at me and said, "Get up we're having a party." We did and there he was, but I do not remember there being any June Taylor Dancers.

I do remember feeding him horse**** sandwiches, and listening to some of his stories. He stayed at least a couple of hours, and it truly was an evening to remember.

STAR WARS OFF CUBA

We had finished the Cuban Blockade operation and were returning home to Key West in December 1962. I had the mid-watch as Officer of the Deck. I saw this thing dart across the sky about 0130 that looked like a MIG or some other high speed aircraft, and immediately called on the 1MC, "Captain to the Bridge."

Captain Kojm was there in his shorts within 15 seconds, and I told him what I had seen. He, I, and both lookouts continued to look for a few minutes but saw nothing more of note.

He told me to remain alert.

About an hour later, more assured of myself and with more MIGs in the sky, it was another, "Captain to the Bridge" on the 1 MC. Again, he was there in a New York minute, and we all looked again for these MIGs which had now disappeared.

He finally said, "Lanny, I think those are stars and meteors up there and not MIGs." I had to agree. He was not the least bit upset, and this was one really good understanding CO.

Returning to Key West, Bob Pearson and I were sporting the ugliest mustaches ever to adorn a face. Our wives were on the pier, and it was all they could do not to gag on the spot.

My wife Jacque, of Miami Herald fame and in charge of Key West reporting, actually flew to GITMO, and was probably closer to the Russians than we had been. She flew over the first Russian freighter removing the IL-28 missiles from Cuba, and it was her photographs that Walter Cronkite showed on the CBS Evening News broadcasting the event. Jacque was also quick to point out that the three fellows in the all-male reporter pool barfed all over the plane, and she did not feel queasy at all. She says she loved telling that story over the years, as well as one about me getting seasick and being green on the *BAHAMA STAR* when the cruise ship crossed the Gulf Stream en route Nassau. She even said I must have been used to submerging in rough seas. There is hardly any little truth to her last remarks, and she even calls herself “terrible.” Heavy Sigh! I asked her if she could contribute any of the Cuban photographs for this book, but they have all gone to CBS and none remain with her.

One last note on the *BAHAMA STAR* from her. The three-day cruise from Miami to Nassau cost \$55 for two in 1962. Things have certainly changed in the world of cruising.

PORK ADOBO

SEA POACHER had great cooks and food, and one fine and upstanding Commissary Officer, albeit not always tactful and sometimes MIG shy. That also extended to our Philippine stewards in the Wardroom, who lived on this recipe, and would sometimes make it for us.

- 2 pounds lean pork, cut into strips
- 2 cloves minced garlic
- 1 large chopped onion
- ½ cup vinegar
- 2 tablespoons oil

Heat oil, and add the garlic and onion. Sauté for 1 minute. Toss in the pork and cook for 30 minutes. Serve with rice. A variation of this would add some bay leaves, pepper, and soy sauce at the start.

NAVY SOS

Fed to the U.S. Navy since the days of John Paul Jones and SEA POACHER was no exception. You can also find this on Navy-Marine Corps Recipe Service 1062, Card J-31, although I have added the celery and butter to enhance the taste.

I had this so many times in the Navy that I actually acquired a taste for it. The same applies to the Navy submarine canned bacon, but I have no recipe for it. And I only had it on SEA POACHER and no other boat..

- 1 pound ground beef
- 4 cups chopped celery
- 1 small onion
- 2 cups canned tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- 2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

Brown the beef in its own fat. Add vegetables, salt, and pepper. Cover and cook until tender. Blend butter and flour with it, and stir until thickened. Serve on toast.

MARILYN MONROE'S

Another culinary delight from your 1961 Commissary Officer. Actually I can't take any credit for this, as it was Executive Officer Jerry Davi's idea. He was another outgoing people-person on SEA POACHER, and an honor to have served under him as an Ensign. Captain Stahl could also have led the charge on this lunch, as I do not recall for certain.

And even more of an honor, several years later to have Jerry Davi as my primary instructor at Prospective Submarine Commanding Officer School in Mare Island, California.

Anyway, periodically SEA POACHER would be in port for a few weeks, and we would enjoy a normal 9 to 5 work day, five days a week. And we would dread coming back to the boat on Monday, following a normal weekend at home with our families.

Jerry Davi had thought it out, and to partially offset this, prescribed the same lunch every Monday that I was aboard. And I could make no changes to it. It consisted first of a wonderful shrimp cocktail, followed by superbly grilled steaks covered with grilled mushrooms and onions, and French fries. Alas, there was no red wine to accompany it.

The finale was Marilyn Monroe's, which went like this per serving:

2 large scoops vanilla ice cream
Chocolate sauce
Some whipped cream
A few nuts
1 maraschino cherry for each scoop

Take the above and prepare in an artistic manner to match its name, with everything in the proper order, and serve to the entire crew.

PREPARE TO REPEL BOARDERS AND NAVY SWORDS

As a submarine officer you either bought one or borrowed one in 1960. And they were expensive - \$65 and at least another \$35 for the ornate black leather belt and gold sword knot.

The length of the sword was determined by your height, and these were special orders. Your name was of course engraved on the blade.

The tradition went back to the days of John Paul Jones when they were actually used as weapons. As time went on the Secretary of the Navy on 15 October 1942 finally scrapped the idea and swords were abolished as part of the Navy officer's uniform.

Just my luck, but in 1954, for whatever reason, they were re-established as a ceremonial sword and were again part of the uniform. They were only worn on ceremonial occasions or some big inspection, and only when wearing those high collared dress white uniforms.

It went something like this. You had to wear a white tee shirt and white skivvies, white socks, white starched trousers, white belt, and white shoes. Anything colored would show through your dress whites.

Now once you had all of that on, you put on this BLACK leather belt with a gold hook on the right side and two leather straps with hooks hanging down. When everything else is white why was the belt BLACK?

Now you needed to be either a Naval Academy puke or a degreed engineer to take it further. You then put on your high collared tunic jacket, which had a button flapped hole on the right hand side at your waist, and this is going to cover up the BLACK belt underneath. If using the sword, you opened up this hole and shoved the gold hook through the opening in the jacket. Now get your jacket all buttoned up, and near the top of the thing that holds the sword (scabbard?) is a gold ring. You place the hook through that buttoned hole into this ring and the whole thing is suspended.

Now these two leather straps hanging down from the belt are attached to the previous ring and another ring lower down. God help you if you have not done it correctly, or it all has to come off. If you are right handed, this is really awkward. If you take your right arm and try to pull the sword out of the scabbard, you are reaching for heaven to get it out of there.

It would be better to be left handed, but the Navy made no provision for left handers here, as the opening on the jacket is only on the right hand side. Is this a great Navy or what?

I probably used that sucker maybe 10 times in 20 years, and it is still mounted on the wall over my desk.

Well, in actuality, I did use it once after retiring from the Navy, and really hate to relate the story, but here it goes. In Mississippi, around 2000, I was having a problem with armadillos digging up my lawn. I tried everything to get rid of them and finally decided on a large spring-loaded trap which I baited with grapes.

One night at 4 a.m. I heard the trap slam shut and an awful noise. I went out and found a really angry hissing possum in the trap. Now this was a residential area, and what was I to do with this animal? I couldn't shoot it or the police would be there in a hurry after hearing the gun shot. You couldn't cart it away in your car as it would leave a terrible mess. You couldn't even get it out of the trap without risking a bite from something perhaps carrying rabies or leprosy.

I considered the options quickly and carefully, and then the SEA POACHER sword came into play. There I was John Paul Jones, Errol Flynn or Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., with sword in hand and making gallant thrusts into the beast that finally gave in. Not a pretty sight, but easy to upend the trap and dump the critter out, and shovel it to the vacant lot across the street.

The sword was finally worth the \$100 I paid for it in 1960. In today's market, the cost will vary from \$400 to \$1,000 depending on the quality.

ROACHES AND BOAT FUMIGATION

I went through this twice on SEA POACHER.

And where do those creatures come from?

I was Commissary Officer and one of the cooks, probably John Harvey, complained about the roaches, and I took it to Captain Stahl.

It was going to be fumigation time.

I don't remember exactly how it all went. However, a good inspection and rigging was made below decks to make certain that flooding, with no one inside the boat, was not going to occur.

Then I think we had to open all cabinet and other doors, especially in the Galley, Crew's Mess, and Wardroom areas. And then all hatches were closed except the Forward Torpedo Room.

And I guess these roach poison bombs were placed in each compartment, and some lucky soul, perhaps the COB or an officer, but not me, had the honor of starting in the After Torpedo Room and activate the first bomb, and proceed forward activating bombs in each compartment as he went forward. Good thing he never tripped. Once the last one was lit off in the Forward Torpedo Room, he had the good sense to get out of there and dog the hatch.

Then we waited for hours. I guess that would just be the Duty Section and the rest of the crew was on liberty. I am really fuzzy on this procedure, and I hope I can convince someone else to come up with the method.

Now someone has to go back down there. Maybe we first opened all the hatches and let it air out a bit. Or maybe someone donned an Oxygen Breathing Apparatus (OBA) and went down and started some blowers to get the fumes out. Or maybe there were no more fumes.

But there were roaches.

And they were dead and usually lying all over.

Being somewhat hazy on this procedure, I emailed several SEA POACHER shipmates for their take on it. All but one said they had never been through it, and some even denied there were roaches.

Only Bill Buckley provided information which pretty much concurred with my recollection. He said the roaches came on board via cardboard boxes containing stores. And they used gas bottles for fumigation. After the boat had been sealed for hours, it was the enginemen that donned OBAs and went below to ventilate the boat. While all of this was going on the crew was at the club.

EQUALIZER OR PARALYZER BATTERY CHARGES

I hated them. And I can't remember how often we did them?

Not even sure why we did them? I was never an electrician. We probably did them monthly or so. It also had something to do with keeping the batteries in good condition.

But they were long in duration. We would start after the evening meal in port, and as I recall you had to get the specific gravity to a certain level before you could quit.

I seem to recall there usually taking 10 to 12 hours to complete. Of course the Duty Officer had to remain awake.

I guess there was always something to do. However, more often that not, when you were still paralyzed in the operation and just short of being in a coma, some After Battery rat would come up to the Wardroom and ask for a qualification check on whatever.

I was an easy mark at that time and not full of questions. They all passed.

THE MYSTERIOUS NAVY BUS ON THE PIER

Here was another time when I was had by our wonderful crew.

As Duty Officer in port, the Duty Chief and I were required to inspect the boat every two hours. So, we would make arrangements for wake up calls during the night and alternate on the inspections. Normally these would always be set for 2200, 0000, 0200, 0400, and 0600. Somehow our wonderful crew understood this.

I did not learn of this until the 2006 Reunion. I cannot remember where we were, but I think it was West Palm Beach. My understanding is that our crew was actually bringing some fair ladies aboard ship late in the evening into the After Battery. When it was time to wake up the Duty Officer for his inspection of the boat, it was as quiet as a church at 0200, because everyone back there had now retreated to the confines of this bus that was parked on the pier.

Once the inspection was over, it was back to the boat.

Now what else do you suppose I missed?

MY LAST MEETING WITH CAPTAIN AND MARY STAHL

They were transferred to SAC (Strategic Air Command) in Omaha. I would guess he was doing something in submarine missile targeting, but that is only a guess.

My wife Jacque was from Western Nebraska and we drove through that area often to visit her parents.

Captain Stahl had probably been more patient with me than anyone else. He never raised his voice. He often looked at me with a wry smile. Never was he critical of me at all. I think he was probably still confused as to why they were letting Ensigns on submarines.

Ensigns did not bring a whole lot to the Wardroom table.

So on one of our trips to North Platte, Nebraska, Jacque said why don't we visit the Stahl's in Omaha. I had no problem with that. Was it Bellevue where the SAC base was? I do not recall. Anyway, we arrived I think at Offutt Air Force Base, probably in 1963 or 1964.

We checked into what looked like a very nice motel in the area, and made a call on Larry and Mary. They were as gracious as they always were, and we spent an hour or so telling stories. However, back at the Bellevue Motel, it was a different story. Our room was totally overrun by cockroaches. Not one, not dozens, but hundreds were all over the place.

We could not believe our eyes. A quick, and not so tactful meeting at the front desk, resulted in a new room assignment, before my tactless attitude would have killed him.

THE LIBERTY CARD MYSTERY

I can't believe this one. It surfaced on 1 May 2007 when gopher – ferret Bob Sumner sends me his Liberty Card dated and signed by yours truly on 18 December 1962. Now we had just returned from the Cuban Missile Crisis a day earlier.

I do not recall having being Duty Officer the next day, but the signature sure does look like mine. JJ Lynch has noted in his chapter some shenanigans regard ID cards, and I can only wonder if I had been used.

On the card, contained in the photo section, I have good old Bob with no time limits and civilian clothes authorized. Would I have done that? Was I that good to the crew?

Maybe it was because I was going to be detached next month for duty on the Boomer JOHN ADAMS? Still that signature does look like mine. And to tell you the truth, I almost today, 45 years later, remember making that "L" looking a little bit screwy. Hell, we were almost to a man screwy in those days.

But were those good days? Absolutely Yes!

CAN YOU PASS THIS TEST?

You Pigboat Sailors.
You Refugees from a Sewer Pipe.
You Bubbleheads.
You Dinks.

Let's see if you can recall what these 60 words or terms mean. Only a few are included in the contributions contained in this book. 45 would be a passing grade. Anything less is failing. Anyone getting a perfect score gets a free drink at the next Reunion. Courtesy of Ensign Yeske.

Anchor Pool	Hogan's Alley
Ancient Order of the Deep	Hydraulic Accumulator
A** Chewing	Lee Helmsman
B**** to the Wall	Limber Holes
Bilge Rats	Lucky Bag
B**** Box	Maru
Black Shoes	Monkey Fist
Brag Rags	Monkey S***
Breadburners	MOT
Bridle Suite	Night Orders
BT Trace	Pigmy P*****
Bug Juice	Pollywogs
Bulkhead Flappers	Poppet Valves
Christmas Tree	Pull the Plug
Clinometer	Quack
Compensation	Ride the Vents
Cosmoline	Rock Crushers
Cubicle	Sea Return
Distance to Track	Sea Story
Down the Throat	Shellback
Fairy Tale	Side Lobe
F*** Sack	Spread
Field Strip	Stadimeter
Five by Five	Standard Rudder
Flangeheads	Stationary Dive
Foo Foo	TBT
Fox Schedule	The Pickle
Front Porch	Twidgets
Gradient	UCMJ Article 15
Green Board	XJA

CHAPTER 78

LEONARD R. KOJM 1961 – 1963

BY

**HIS WIFE MARY ANNE KOJM AND
HIS SON LEONARD R. KOJM, JR.**

SEA POACHER DAYS WERE THE BEST OF HIS CAREER

Len has since past and is now standing the watch in Heaven. He was a man of exceptional quality and had touched most of our lives one way or another. Being on the SEA POACHER and being in charge meant a lot to Len. He would consistently say that those were the best days of his career. The opportunity to train, guide and lead some of the best sailors was an honor that he was grateful for.

Although he is not here to articulate the fond memories he had of the SEA POACHER, here are a few that we recall. He described it as an exciting time during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Never really knowing what was going to happen next. He was pleased that Mike Elliott was the DIVCOM, as Mike and Caroline were dear friends.

A story he told often was when they headed out to sea and received the patrol orders. He called all the men together to make the announcement and in his most serious tone would say: “Do not pass Go, Do not collect \$200.”

He was also fond of the picture they made once at Christmas time. The eight Wardroom officers were the reindeer and had heavy turtleneck sweaters, black patches on their eye, and antlers, while pulling the 406 sleigh with him as Santa Claus.

Not at all glamorous, but very humorous.

While the men were away, we never knew where they really were or when they would return. However, during one port visit to West Palm Beach, Len returned crowned as the “King of the Twist.” We don’t even want to ask! Another memory and very touching is when Chief Barnett and others from the SEA POACHER came to visit us at Lake Shores in Virginia Beach, and presented him with a delightful painting of SEA POACHER. The unfortunate part was that it was much bigger than a door, but Len always had a place for it in our constant moves/travels.

He loved his job here as Navy Liaison to the U.S. Senate where he was in the throws of politics and had the opportunity to escort various Senators on their trips to visit Navy commands. We can just image the sea stories he told them! In the last years of his life he would like to go to his basement office, and recall his Navy days while looking through the boxes (and boxes) of his collectables.

As you are all aware; he was a talker and story teller. He had a charming reputation at parties for his stories. The worst thing in his last years is that a stroke took away his ability to communicate which left him frustrated and unable to talk. He always had a sense of humor and is probably still today telling his stories in Sailors Heaven.

Ironically, his room number in the nursing home was 406!

His family deeply thanks his shipmates for their attendance and prayers

CHAPTER 79

GERALD (JOE) JOSEPH 1961 - 1965

I REMEMBER SEA POACHER SAILORS MEETING MARILYN MONROE, AND SEAL TEAM OPERATIONS AND UNWANTED SHARKS

SEA POACHER SAILORS MEETING MARILYN MONROE

As I remember it we were in the Elbow Room upstairs in the bar in Fort Lauderdale. Jigger (Bill Brinkman) being one of us spied Marilyn Monroe. He directly approached her with his zest for wanting to converse with her. It appeared that she was duly impressed with sailors; so she and Jigger struck up a conversation. We had all ingested a few pops so we were probably having a better time than were supposed to. In any event, Jigger in his inebriated state, wanted to get her autograph. Marilyn asked him what she could use for the autograph being all she had to write with was a tube of lipstick. Jigger immediately shed his white jumper, pulled up his tee shirt and touted, write it right here on my chest. Marilyn did just that. We all joshed him about it and figured it would be a week before he took a shower so that it would not be washed off.

EDITOR'S NOTE: After receiving this input, I accidentally forwarded this to Bill Brinkman. His responded that it was okay to print it, because he had already told his two sons and wife about the incident. He also said "Now if only I had been sober enough to remember it."

SEAL TEAM OPERATIONS AND UNWANTED SHARKS

I remember another story where we were trying to hone our skills in putting rubber rafts ashore on an island somewhere off Key West. This was all in preparation to put recon personnel ashore. We tried using two hammers, clanking them together under the water while out in the raft, so the sonarmen could locate us. We also used a pinger out of an exercise Mark 37 torpedo. SEA POACHER would submerge out from under us. We would hook a line over the scope, and they would tow us as near to the shore as they dared go. And then we would turn loose and paddle ashore.

On the return we would paddle out and hook onto the scope, and SEA POACHER would tow us out to sea far enough to be out of shore-based radar range. At night they would put a red flashlight in the scope so we could see it. I remember that so vividly.

I had brought a package along that contained a beef roast with hook and line, so I could fish for sharks. The noise makers of various kinds appeared to have attracted them, and I noticed that the first time out. You cannot even imagine the hue and cry that went up when I broke out my fishing equipment. I can't remember who the boat officer was, but it could have been Ivan Joslin or Ross Wesner. Jack Merrill was there as well, and he about s***. Between them and their ideas about my IQ, I was persuaded to forego the fishing.

James L. Smith was in another boat during one of those exercises with Gene Dempsey as the boat officer. Their boat sank in the surf getting ashore. It seemed like we all came back in

one boat but maybe they used their boat to return. In any case I remember their boat was leaking to begin with, but being as overzealous that we all were, Smitty was not going to be left behind.

RULES FOR ATTACKING SOVIET SUBMARINES

*FROM FOREIGN RELATIONS OF THE UNITED STATES,
1961 – 1963, VOLUME X, CUBA, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON*

www.fas.org/irp/ops/policy/docs/frusX/76_90.html

Memorandum From the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Lemnitzer) to the Commander in Chief, Atlantic (Dennison) SM-363-61, Washington, April 1, 1961.

//Source: Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Countries Series, Cuba, Subjects, Taylor Report. Top Secret; Limited Distribution. The source text is marked "Draft" and is Enclosure A to JCS 2304/26, April 1.

SUBJECT "Bumpy Road"

REFERENCE Your memo Special C0029/61, dated 28 March 1961, Subject: "CIA Operation Crosspatch"/1//1/Document 73.

1. The Joint Chiefs of Staff have reviewed the contents of the reference memorandum and have concluded the following:

- a. The assignment of an additional destroyer as escort for the convoy is approved.*
- b. The disposition and employment of LANTCOM forces in the general area is considered normal and will insure the readiness of your command in case of an emergency.*
- c. The Joint Chiefs of Staff letter of instruction for the subject operation is now before the Secretary of Defense for approval. That letter, which is also addressed to you, provides for informing CINCONAD of his requirements.*
- d. Your rules of engagement are approved. It was also noted that no mention was made of Soviet submarines. Your current instructions in regards to Soviet submarines will apply for attack. In the event the convoy is shadowed or closed by a surfaced submarine, it will be treated under the rules for engagement as a surface ship. If the convoy is shadowed or closed by a submerged submarine;*

(1) Request submarine identify itself.

(2) If identity refused, repeat request stating its actions considered hostile and attack will be made if identity not given.

(3) If identity still refused, assume submarine is attacking force and attack with all authorized means available until submarine retires, surfaces and identifies itself (thereby coming under rules of engagement for surface ships), or the submarine is destroyed.

2. It will be noted that the nickname "Bumpy Road" has now been applied to the CIA Paramilitary Plan. This nickname is assigned with the concurrence of CIA.

CHAPTER 80

JEROME (JERRY) YOUNG 1962

I REMEMBER DEEP SUBMERGENCE AND SEVEN STICHES, ITTY BITTY RUBBER BOAT RIDES, OUR HAM RADIO K4YRE, FOND MEMORIES OF SHIPMATES, AND EARLY RETIREMENT

DEEP SUBMERGENCE AND SEVEN STICHES

I was on board for the unplanned deep submergence out in the trough. Still have the scar from the seven stitches that I got in the elbow from that. Incidents like that in one's life will put you in touch with your own mortality, and cause deep reflection on the quality of your life.

So what is this all about.

The unplanned deep submergence.

We were practicing getting our times down for diving the boat, from diving alarm to sail under water. When we made a practice crash dive, we lost all AC power. (one of the main buss bars had burned up as I recall).

I was headed aft to do a little work on qualifications. As I entered the FER we dove. I stood still where I wouldn't get in the way of the enginemen shutting down and closing valves, etc. As we dove the lights went out and then we kept getting steeper and steeper dive angles. I reached up in the overhead and grabbed hold of some pipes and held on.

As the angles were at their worst I could hear the tool chest normally at the aft wall sliding down the deck. I swung up out of the way of the chest and put a foot on each engine and held on.

We went very deep before we started going up, breaking some of the depth gauges among other things. The angles were very excessive and far past what would normally have been the usual. Upon taking the extreme up angles the chest that had slid all the way to the forward bulkhead, started sliding back towards the aft bulkhead. When it went over the floor hatch to the bilges, the hatch door came open.

When we quit porpoising and settled in, with the lights still out in the engine room, I turned loose of the pipes and went down through the hatch bouncing off the ladder attachments and split my right elbow open on the attachments.

Hence the seven stitches. Other crew members were injured far worse than I.

This was submitted to the *Submarine Research Periodical* by myself and apparently other crew members, but there were not enough details, as to exact date and time, and it was mentioned but not included in the final book. They wrote to me and said they would pursue this further and include findings in one of their next books.

ITTY BITTY RUBBER BOAT RIDES

On the other hand, the rubber boat rides were a blast. Several called them IBRBRs. (Itty Bitty Rubber Boat Rides.) I have no idea why that sticks in my mind after all these years.

They were supposed to be in preparation for a photo recon mission to Cuba. I do not know how many boats made trips due to the missile crisis and blockade later on. The rides were a lot of fun to be towed by the submerged SEA POACHER.

OUR HAM RADIO K4YRE

Do you remember Ed Roy, our Hospital Corpsman that had the Ham Radio. He worked at it with Radioman Bill Perrin. The radio station when up was "K4YRE Mobile Maritime." We were one of only two or three ships in the Navy with a Ham Radio on board. There were other maritime ships with Ham, but generally they were freighters or tankers.

We were the only submarine with Ham Radio. I always thought that it was interesting that he ran the station with all of us watching and helping when he needed to set it up. He let a lot of the crew call to talk home. Ed would call a Ham in their home area, get him to patch in to the local phone line, call the number, and then whoever would get a free call home.

FOND MEMORIES OF SHIPMATES

I remember fondly several people from my short six month stay on SEA POACHER. I recall several of the names on the roster. I noticed some time back, for instance, that John Harvey who was a 1st Class Cook when I was aboard, had died, as did Captain Kojm.

I got a lot of advice and guidance from John that helped a lot, both in the Navy, and in life. I was very proud to escort his daughter to her high school graduation at his request.

I spent the three months that were supposed to be as a Mess Cook actually cooking. John Harvey said he would give me a try, since the COB said I would have to do Mess Cooking before going into the torpedo gang, but he would count the time cooking if John said it was okay. The first meal I cooked, the Captain came back to the Galley and told John it was one of the best meals he had in a long time. John turned to me and said, "You're hired." I enjoyed doing it and the boat was short a cook at the time. It worked out for everyone.

I had only been out of school a year. I had left high school with an appointment to the Naval Academy, and had asked for a deferment to go to submarine school and time to qualify.

By the time I got to Key West I realized that the Navy wasn't what I needed to do in life and resigned my appointment. Captain Kojm called me in and talked a long time on why I shouldn't resign. When that didn't work, the Captain of the Key West naval base sent for me, and gave me a lecture I didn't soon forget.

But alas I could not be persuaded. I always felt that was the reason I was transferred out and sent to New London for duty on the COBBLER (SS-344).

I have no regrets, but always wished I had availed my self of the education I would have gotten in the Navy. It was tough getting an education on my own, but managed to do very well and led a blessed life. I retired at age 45 in 1988. I really have enjoyed being retired, the ability to travel at will, and see a lot of things that otherwise might have passed me by.

I live near Asheville, NC, and maybe a reunion might be held there in the future. I hope to be at Jacksonville in May 2008. In the meantime, keep a zero bubble and pressure in the boat.

AND MY EARLY RETIREMENT

As far as my early retirement: I was hired on the old Seaboard Airline Railroad upon leaving the Navy as an engineer. I worked my way up to Manager of Transportation.

I worked for the General Manager representing him whenever and wherever I happened to go. The only other boss was the Vice President of Operations, who never interfered with what we did. Both were real gentlemen and conducted themselves accordingly on and off the job.

I started an air conditioning business with a friend of many years and took the money made there and invested in land and timber while still working for the Railroad. With three sons I had to do something to feed and educate them. Eventually the investments all came together. In 1988 my back was hurting constantly, so I went to a neurosurgeon, and he discovered I had three discs that had collapsed against my spinal cord and the main muscle of my back had torn in two. With no way at the time to neither fix the separation nor the discs, I retired from the Railroad instead of taking the chance of shearing the spinal cord and being in a wheelchair the rest of my life. Some 14 years later, there was an experimental operation offered by my neurosurgeon.

With his talents and the Lords blessings, I was repaired to the extent where I only hurt at a tolerable level and can still move and flex instead of the alternative of repair with steel rods stabilizing my back, that would have not allowed bending or turning. Between my pension and investments, I discovered happily that I was comfortable financially and can do about anything within reason for the rest of my life. I have been blessed. My children are successful and happy; I also am happy, enjoy traveling at will with my wife, and playing with grandchildren. I have been a Mason for the last 39 years, worked in my church, participated with the Shrine for years until my back gave out, and still enjoy volunteer work.

I have been a Special Deputy with four different Sheriffs offices in three different states. I am still a member of the Mounted Posse in Leon County (Tallahassee) Florida and an Auxiliary Deputy in Madison County in North Carolina, and also donate time and equipment for rescues with the Ebbs Chapel Fire Department near where I live at Wolf Laurel. I have a UTV (Arctic Cat Prowler 650XT) that is outfitted completely for law.

These small counties can not afford this kind of equipment and have always been appreciated by the Sheriffs I have worked under. I even spent three years volunteering work within the Criminal Investigations Bureau working as an investigator, while giving about 4-5 days a week with the Mounted Posse. It has been so wonderful to be able to do things that would otherwise have been impossible, had I been attached to a rigid work schedule like before.

Keep them all hot straight and normal.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A new Veterans Memorial Park opened in Perry, Florida on 4 July 2007, where Jerry was born, and where he still has ties. Jerry said they mentioned every kind of military service except submarines. He went about purchasing a marble bench dedicated to the Memory of Submariners, and had it installed as you enter the Park, which is 10 blocks North of the Court House on US 221. Jerry feels "Everyone should know about the submariners and the battles they fought, won, and lost their lives trying to win; all of which helped preserve our freedom at extreme sacrifice at times." See Photo Section.

CHAPTER 81

DEWEY REED 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER LIFE AS I KNEW IT AND IT WAS OVER

LIFE AS I KNEW IT AND IT WAS OVER

At about 0530 on a date I can't remember in October 1962, the telephone rang. Finally answering it, I was told by the COB to report to SEA POACHER with every thing I had clean or dirty. It seemed like we were leaving for someplace unknown.

I soon discovered that all of the submarines in Key West were getting underway. This, in itself, didn't make me nervous until I noticed that the Submarine Tender BUSHNELL was also going. That ship had not sailed for years. I was sure that it didn't float but was resting on its own coffee grounds.

As we got underway, I had thoughts of the rumors about some sort of problem in Cuba. However, we turned north and sailed up the east coast until we reached Charleston. There we saw more Marines than I ever wanted to see. And they were all boarding transport vessels. I couldn't help thinking, "This looks like an invasion force." We tied up next to another submarine and across the pier from the local submarine tender. Within a few days, we had loaded 128 days of stores and exchanged the practice torpedoes for war shots.

We then went to the "Enlisted Men's Club" one night, and heard President Kennedy's address to the nation. This confirmed the Cuban rumors!

However, these events didn't bother me until the next day when we loaded complete foul weather gear for each crew member. Not something often needed in Cuba.

The worst came while I was standing on the pier watching the new torpedoes being loaded. The large double doors on the side of the tender opened and a big burly chief walked out. He asked me "Who was in charge of electronic spares?"

I told him, "I was." I then asked him, "Why?" He responded with, "What parts do you need?" I told him that, "I would go below and get my unfilled requisitions."

Some parts such as tubes for the radar had been on order for nearly a year without a hint of when they would come in.

He responded, "Forget the requisitions. Just let me know what you remember."

I gave him a short list from memory and off he went. Within minutes, he appeared at the door and handed me the radar tubes and other items I gave him.

He said, "Good luck!" and left.

I said to myself, "Self, you just received all of the shortages you have been waiting for months without a single piece of paperwork and Life as you know it, is over!"

When the sub next to us left, it hit the starboard screw on SEA POACHER. After examination, it was determined that it needed to be replaced.

We didn't leave until the next day. As we left Charleston, we turned north rather than south to Cuba. This made the foul weather gear understandable even though we did not know where we were going. We sailed for about a day when the crisis was declared "Over."

We turned around and headed back to Key West and from there to Cuba.

CHAPTER 82

SHAUN HICKS 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER DIVING AND THE LANYARD HUNG UP IN THE CONNING TOWER HATCH

DIVING AND THE LANYARD HUNG UP IN THE CONNING TOWER HATCH

I remember being the Helmsman during diving.

Somehow the lanyard got hung up on the Conning Tower Hatch.

The Conning Officer just stood there.

So the Quartermaster looked at me and told me to sound Emergency Surface. I did it immediately. The Control Room responded quickly and any flooding was averted.

Nothing was said by anyone about the incident and our quick action.

THE OLD SALT

*One day when all the Navy to a goodly crowd was host
when it's gates were opened widely at each Navy Yard and Post.*

*When crowds of friends-civilians came from places far and near
to view the mighty warships that were tied to every pier.*

*There passed before the sentry and sergeant of the guard
an old and gray-haired fellow who came hobbling in the yard.*

*Whose gait was slow-unsteady whose frame was bent and frail
whose eyes were red and weary whose face was wrinkled and pale.*

*His withered hand held tightly a small and wilted bouquet
of flowers that he's gathered on that Decoration Day.*

*Who, once inside the gateway forsook the milling throng
He had no time for cruisers or the battleships so strong.*

*Instead he sought a vessel that had laid for many years;
neglected and forgotten 'mid deserted, crumbling piers.*

*He trudged for what seemed ages 'til he finally found the slip
and his eager gaze had centered on a very ancient ship.*

*The sides of which were rusty and whose decks were rotted through
her periscope bent and twisted and her rail was broken too.*

*His eyes grew dim and misty as he gazed upon the boat
He cried, "Old pal I've found you" then a lump came in his throat.*

*He moved close to the sub 'til he touched its barren side
its presence seemed to stir him and unto the boat he cried.*

*"We've had our times old fellow" in our younger days we both
have weathered storms together and sailed pleasant seas, my oath.*

*We've served our nation nobly with ne'er a thought of self
but now we're both forgotten and we've landed on the shelf.*

*We're like the fabled bridegroom who's tiring of his bride
found greater use in others then cast his bride aside.*

*But still we share between us the memories of the past
and these will serve to cheer us for the short time that we last.*

*To me you were a mother and a friend and home in one,
when tired I've often slumbered on you just like a son.*

*That's why I've paid this visit on this Decoration Day
and why I've brought this token and he held out the bouquet.*

*Before I take my parting I will rest my body sore
in the old and tender embrace that I knew in days of yore.*

*Then without further prattle he climbed over the sub's side
he laid down to slumber but ere the morning came, he died.*

*They found his body later and tho the old man's race was done
the old sub still guarded her beloved sailor son.*

*Dan Mack, 1920s, when Memorial Day
was called Decoration Day*

CHAPTER 83

DAVID (BUSTER) MCCOLLUM 1962 - 1963

**I REMEMBER WHERE WE WENT, DEGAUSSING,
GITMO AND JAMAICA, MEDALS, CHRISTMAS 1962,
NEW ORLEANS, BEING HIT BY OUR OWN TORPEDO,
HIT WITH BRITISH ASW WEAPONS, FLOODING DRILLS,
MODERN WARFARE, AND THE GREEN WEENIE**

WHERE WE WENT

I arrived in Key West on March 21, 1962. SEA POACHER had just finished her upgrade and sea trials in Charleston, and I waited for her return on April 1, 1962. I got checked out in the Top Side Gang, Look Out, Bow and Stern Planes and of course Mess Cooking. That takes us up to June, where I believe we mostly operated locally and might have made one trip to West Palm Beach for a weekend to donate blood to John Harvey's mother who was having surgery.

By now, I was a Quartermaster "Striker" with Lawson and Liggett and working on my SS qualification and studying for PO3. I believe we made one more trip to Fort Lauderdale and maybe one to Jamaica before August. Now here comes a date that I can't forget. I got married on August 7, 1962 in Key West (Yes - to a woman) so I am sure about the events after August because my wife stayed in Key West with Liz Haire, Brenda Walker and Joey Amposta's wife all through the Crisis. Lawson came by my apartment at 4:30 a.m. the morning of October 22, 1962, and I rode with him to the base. We got underway and headed north to Charleston for torpedoes and stores, but we were first diverted to Ft. Lauderdale/Port Everglades.

I remember upon entering the Port, we had to take quite an evasive maneuver to avoid a large sail boat that cut across our bow. And of course, sail boats have the right of way over power boats. While we were allowed to call home, we could not tell our families where we were. We were there several days before heading to Charleston, South Carolina, for secret operations. I am not certain what we loaded, but we were there for a few days. Finally, Captain Kojm assembled us to get underway about 2300 after he returned from a meeting that obviously lasted late into the night. There were three submarines tied up to the same pier in Charleston harbor, as the base was over run with ships and activity. The sub tied up to us, and outboard had to move so we could get under way. A small harbor tug came to assist. As it turned out, the River was swollen from recent rains and had a swifter current than usual. The boat that was maneuvering to let us slide out got away from the tug, and drifted into our starboard screw and as they say, we were now "dead in the water." A diver was dispatched to inspect the damage and it wasn't good.

Our "Top Secret" Mission was scrubbed, and we had to wait several days for a new screw. After the repairs were finished, we were dispatched to a small paper mill town about 50 miles north of Charleston, because there was no place to tie up at Charleston. I don't remember the name of the town right off with out looking at a map, but I do remember that they had a channel dredged out so barges could come to the paper mill. The channel was only about 3 or 4 feet deeper than necessary for us to negotiate it and not much wider. I believe we had to come in and

leave during high tide also. After we successfully drank up all of the beer in the little town, we eventually were ordered to Norfolk.

DEGAUSSING

The main reason we went to Norfolk, as it turned out, was to wrap the entire boat in a copper cable and run an electrical current through it. It was kind of like a giant electric magnet in order to remove the magnetic field that had built up in our boat. This took about 2 to 3 days to complete. After the cables were removed, we spent most of one day running back and forth between a series of metal detectors to measure the magnetic field still remaining in our hull. This procedure is called "DEGAUSSING."

I remember Norfolk well because my mother-in-law of barely two months was living there, and she picked me up at the base. I spent one night with her and got a real home cooked meal. From her place, I called my wife and she was mad as hell that they were in Key West with missile batteries and troops everywhere, and I was kicking back at her mother's house. War is tough.

Then we were on our way to GITMO, probably around the third week in November 1962. I remember that we were in pretty rough weather leaving Norfolk, and Captain Kojm approved a dive so we could eat Thanksgiving dinner in calm seas. He also came around during our meal and gave everyone a cigar. This pleased Chief of the Boat Vernon Barnett, because shortly after we surfaced almost everyone was feeling woozy from the rough seas, and COB Barnett collected all the cigars for himself.

GITMO AND JAMAICA

We were in GITMO until the middle of December, running the blockade, drinking beer, and entertaining Perry Como. While operating in GITMO, we did make a weekend trip to Ocho Rios. Captain Kojm let us vote as to whether we wanted to return to GITMO or go to Ocho Rios for the week end.

We arrived at Ocho Rios in the early evening and tied up to the Bauxite Company Pier. I believe bauxite is a red ore that aluminum is milled from. I remember there was a red dust covering most of the buildings in the area. While in Ocho Rios we purchased extra liquor for our Christmas party and hid it in an empty torpedo tube. We hung a "TUBE LOADED" sign on it to fool the Custom Inspectors.

On our return trip home we did rescue a small boat with about 7 or 8 Cubans on board. I remember that on at least three occasions we rescued some poor souls trying to make it to Florida. Our gallant efforts during this ordeal, and thanks to Captain Kojm, resulted in us earning the Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal.

MEDALS

For those of us who did not make a career of the military you might not have known you are eligible for this medal. I went on line and down loaded the forms and mailed them. Some time later my Congressman invited me to his office and presented me with this medal and the National Defense Service Medal. I know you might say who cares, but if you are a civil servant

or apply for a civil service job these medals gives you extra consideration for selection or promotion.

CHRISTMAS 1962

After we returned from Cuba, and seeing how we had plenty of booze from our Ocho Rios run, we were all set for a huge Christmas party. We had a kid on board (Moose) that was a really good drummer. His dad had played drums with Gene Krupa or so the story went. Some how he (I believe with Captain Kojm's help) convinced the Navy to ship his personal drum set from his home (in Maryland I believe) to Key West. If you remember, he played a great drum solo at the Christmas party.

Also at the party were three shipmates dressed like "Mr. Peanut." Lenny Rozell, Murphy and I can't remember the third one, were giant Planter's Peanuts. Their huge bellies were the bottom half of the peanut and they had a top half that covered their upper bodies. It wasn't a black tie affair, but we all dressed up nice and the tickets were \$10 per couple, I believe.

NEW ORLEANS

In January 1963 we were operating in the Gulf of Mexico in an area called the "DEEP HOLE." Here the water was extremely deep and any chance for a rescue, if needed, was virtually impossible because of the extreme depth. We were all relieved when this exercise concluded and equally excited about going to New Orleans for MARDI GRAS.

It only took us a couple days to steam across the Gulf of Mexico and upon reaching the mouth of the Mississippi River we stationed the "Special Sea and Anchor Detail" or better known as the "Maneuvering Watch."

As I was the Junior Quartermaster (third class but submarine qualified), I was also the Battle Stations Helmsman, the High Line Transfer Helmsman as well as the Maneuvering Watch Helmsman. Normally not a bad jig to have, except that the trip up the Mississippi was almost nine hours. We picked up a River Pilot at Pilot Town who steered us about half way, and he was relieved by another Pilot who took us the rest of the way.

Reaching New Orleans, we tied up at the Jax Brewery Dock. I remember that another submarine, as well as the Aircraft Carrier LEXINGTON, were also tied up there. The Brewery had opened their hospitality house to us, and the beer was free. I think they later regretted this decision, not knowing how much beer we would consume. The first day in port I had duty and couldn't leave the boat. But I didn't mind because my arms were so tired from steering nine hours up the River that I couldn't lift a beer anyway.

The second day in port I took three days leave and decided to take a bus to Houston to see my folks. I had not been home in over a year, and thought 400 miles might be as close as I get for a while, so off I went. I do however, remember seeing our COB Barnett on the 10 p.m. news coming out of "Pat O'Brien's" with a HURRICANE in each hand, making us all proud to be sailors.

We had a Second Class Yeoman on board named Martinez who was from Bay Town, Texas, and he took leave as well to go home. We shared a cab to the Greyhound Station where we intended to board a bus home. We learned that we had just missed it, and the next one wouldn't leave for eight hours. Martinez bought a ticket and resigned to wait for the next bus, but I said, "No way." I would "Hitch-Hike" home and be there before the next bus left New Orleans.

I caught a city bus to the foot of the Huey P. Long Bridge and stuck out my thumb. I immediately got a ride. However, the problem was my ride was only going a couple of miles on the other side of the bridge. It was now almost dark, cold and starting to sleet. I probably had no less than six rides within the next hour and was still only 10 miles out of New Orleans. My luck, however, changed when I got a ride with a pipeline welder that had been working overseas for a year and had just returned home. He had just bought a new Chevrolet Impala and was headed for Lafayette, Louisiana. It was nice and warm inside that Chevy, and we were probably running 90 miles per hour. At this rate we would be in Lafayette in no time and be half way home. The major problem now was that this guy knew every out of the way saloon, gambling joint, and gin house in Louisiana. We made them all.

The next thing I remembered was my welder friend shaking me and saying that we were in Lafayette and pointed me toward the bus station. I staggered into it half asleep and still drunk. I sat down on the first bench that I reached. I was content to stay right there for the next three days except that before I could fall back to sleep, Martinez spied me coming in the door and ran to the ticket counter, bought me a ticket and drug me onto the bus which was about to leave.

The next thing I remember was waking up in Houston. It was morning, the sun was up, and I was hung over to say the least. I finally did make it to my folks house and did enjoy a couple of days before I boarded another bus (sober this time) for my return trip to New Orleans.

BEING HIT BY OUR OWN TORPEDO

My March 1963 photos show SEA POACHER out of the water on the Marine Railway at Key West. We had been operating locally with others like us playing submarine hunting submarine. We shot several torpedoes over a two week period, actually retrieved some of them ourselves, and lowered them into the Forward Torpedo Room. I was on the Bridge and remember watching our seaman gang rig up the King Post and open the hatch that allowed access to the Room. Bradley was the leading seaman and the operation went off real smooth. Most of the torpedoes were retrieved by a converted PT boat outfitted to wrench the exercise shot torpedoes on board and take them back to the base for reuse. The exercise shots had international orange noses and were rigged to float to the surface, once they had run their course. We would try to get a visual on them and direct the torpedo retriever boat to it for recovery.

On one occasion we shot a fish at the target, and it was for a while "Running Hot Straight and Normal." But not for long. It appeared that the torpedo was set to seek the target with the greatest noise level. We must have been making more noise than the target boat, because after a short while, sonar reported the torpedo reversing course. We were now the target.

It struck one of our starboard fuel ballast tanks and put a huge dent in it. After we returned to port, we had a diver examine the damage, and we actually continued operations for a while, before we went into the Key West Marine Railway and had it repaired.

BEING HIT WITH BRITISH ASW WEAPONS

We operated for about a week with a British frigate that was testing a new antisubmarine weapon. I remember that they would fire the salvo, and there were detonations like practice depth charges. The system was very accurate, and the war heads (filled with tar) punched several holes in our new fiberglass superstructure. In port, one of the British sailors stole Vesper's VESPA Motor Scooter and rode it off the end of the pier.

FLOODING DRILLS

Captain Fox was really fond of drills while underway. We had Fire in the Engine Room, Flooding in the Pump Room, Nuclear Radiation, Collision, Man Overboard, and you name it - we had it. I also remember when a 4 inch sea valve failed at 200 feet. Lenny Rozell was the Auxilaryman on watch. I heard him on the 1 MC shouting, "Flooding in the Pump Room – Flooding in the Pump Room and this ain't no F***** drill."

MODERN WARFARE

In May 1963 we were operating locally with a squadron of ASW aircraft out of Jacksonville. On the first day, we were unable to establish radio contact with the flight group for what ever reason. LT Joslin was the OOD, I was Duty Quartermaster and Bill Perrin was Radioman on watch. The aircraft were circling us just a few feet higher than our periscope. Mr. Joslin was not happy that we were unable to communicate with them, and Bill Perrin was squirming to find the correct radio frequency. Finally we took a cardboard box and wrote 123.7 on it with a grease pencil and after a few low passes the flight leader came up on our frequency.

Modern Warfare!

THE GREEN WEENIE

I remember that we had an onboard publication called the "Green Weenie." Who ever named it or published it I don't know, but it was understood that whatever happened on SEA POACHER stayed on SEA POACHER. We were way ahead of Las Vegas on that idea.

"There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting, and enslaving than life at sea."

Joseph Conrad

"Sighted sub, sank same."

*Message sent by an enlisted pilot, AMM 1/C
Donald Francis Mason on 28 January 1942*

"A ship in port is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."

Grace Murray Hopper

"We are outnumbered; there is only one thing to do. We must attack!"

*Admiral Andrew Cunningham, before attacking
the Italian Fleet at Taranto, November 1940*

"Any commander who fails to exceed his authority is not of much use to his subordinates."

Admiral Arleigh Burke

CHAPTER 84

JOE MURDOCH 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER A SUBMARINE SALES PITCH, YOUNG MEN GOING DOWN UNDER THE SEA, AND SEAL OPERATIONS WITH A HUGE SHARK

SUBMARINE SALES PITCH

In early 1962, I was finishing Electronics Technician School. I had been in the surface fleet for almost four years, but the job promotion opportunities were slim. Now with new electronics training that would change!

Then I met Larry Reiche, a submariner, who was doing the same thing. He was happy go lucky and easy to talk to. He said I was the kind of man needed in submarines. His sales pitch included only volunteers, good crews, good food, promotions, and that they were the best sailors.

He did leave a few details out. Such as hot bunking in the After Battery; personal lockers that held only your toothbrush, one change of clothes and your cigarettes; very little fresh water; ears popping when the snorkel dipped under water; the occasional rolling; that everything had a distinct diesel smell; and the frequent salt water baths given the electronics equipment installed around and under the Conning Tower hatches. He also mentioned the \$75 hazardous duty paid, but everyone considered it inconvenience pay.

That evening I told my wife that our \$98 monthly pay would be significantly increased. She immediately said "We're earning \$101 per month, and this was a great idea!"

So upon completion of electronics training it was off to Submarine Basic Training in New London. In September 1962 I reported aboard my first submarine, the SEA POACHER. It was exciting, demanding, and fun.

YOUNG MEN GOING DOWN UNDER THE SEA

On 10 April 1963 I was a new ET Third Class having my final submarine qualification walk through with the Chief Engineer. This was to earn my coveted Dolphins. A symbol that you were now a submariner.

It was late in the evening when the duty messenger found us in the Goat Locker. The message was that THRESHER was lost that day off Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The next morning my Dolphins were pinned on, and I was thrown overboard. It delighted those watching this event, but me even more; I was now a qualified submariner with salty Dolphins.

The THRESHER sinking captured the national news with story after story. When reading the list of those aboard, I was shocked and saddened to see the name of Electronics Technician Third Class Larry Reiche.

As the years passed this event drew away. Four or five years passed, and I was again at the submarine base in New London. Everyone returns to it so it seems.

I was walking near Dealey Center on a cold snowy blustery day. My hands were thrust deep inside my pea coat, collar up, and white hat screwed down to keep the wind from removing it. No one was going to notice hands in the pockets!

I rounded the corner and bumped into a sailor also trying to get out of the weather. Wow! It was Larry Reiche staring at me.

Amazed I said "You're still alive!" I wanted to shake his hand or just touch him to confirm what my eyes were telling me. His salty reply involving discussing my ability to walk and chew gum at the same time immediately took care of that.

We ducked into the Gedunk and had a cup of coffee. We departed later with vows to get together soon. And over the years we did cross paths a few times as we both continued in our submarine careers.

What had happened regards THRESHER? The sailing list did show a Larry Reiche, but he had a different middle initial.

My wife and I attended a SEA POACHER reunion in Charleston South Carolina in the spring of 2004. Entering one of the meeting rooms I was delighted to see Larry Reiche again, after all the years. He served aboard SEA POACHER after I had been transferred.

Indeed young men do go down under the sea.

SEAL OPERATIONS WITH A HUGE SHARK

The SEA POACHER was developing a SEAL type capability. The training included the launching of rubber rafts, paddling ashore, and doing whatever once we were there.

I immediately volunteered and was accepted. The crew practiced surfacing, inflating, and launching the rubber rafts in the dark. We rushed on deck, sat on the rubber raft gunnels, and then the boat submerged from under us. As she went down, we paddled vigorously to the stern to catch a towing line that we utilized to have our modern version of a Nantucket Sleigh Ride.

Whalers used to harpoon a whale from a small wooden boat and then hold the line from the harpoon to the boat until the whale died. It was just like that.

We could not tie the line to the rubber raft, so we all held the line as the submerged SEA POACHER would now tow us in to our drop off point or from our pick up point. This saved many paddle strokes.

It was also exciting, and we enjoyed the ride. However, we would be cast off in this small raft, and when the submarine disappeared that small rubber raft shrank even more. We rowed our boat ashore then back to sea.

On one particular run it had become bright and sunny with a slight chop on surface, and we were looking for the SEA POACHER. As we paddled, occasionally we would switch sides, but usually we were straddling the raft with one foot in or near the water.

Suddenly the shipmate paddling in the starboard bow hollered, "Shark!" Everyone immediately put their feet inside the raft, and then peered into the water. There was a large shark that appeared to be as long as the raft and very near the surface.

The guy who first saw the shark got on his knees, and raised his paddle over his head. It appeared he intended to hit the shark. He never had a chance as we jerked him over backwards.

Better to have an angry sailor than an angry shark. After a few minutes the shark swam away, and we continued paddling, but with no feet in the water anymore. We completed our mission. As the story was retold over the next few days the shark's length and teeth rapidly increased.

CHAPTER 85

JON NAGLE 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER MARDI GRAS 1963, LIFE AS AN OILER IN ENGINES FORWARD, DIVE DIVE, SURFACE SURFACE SURFACE, THE DRESS BLUES, AND TAKING A BATH ON SEA POACHER

MARDI GRAS 1963

Mardi Gras of 1963 was GREAT LIBERTY. We tied up outboard of the JAX Brewery and had to walk through the Brewery to get to the street. Rumor has it the entire "A" gang never made it to the street the whole time we were there. And that was five whole days.

One night on Canal Street I ran into my boss Engineman 1st Class (unnamed to protect the guilty). Now he was a lot older than me. I was 19 and he was ancient, probably 35. We exchanged pleasantries, and he introduced me to his "date." She looked 50 with gray hair. We then parted company.

The next day he had the duty but never showed. The following day, he also never showed. Finally, the night before we were to pull out, who comes dropping (literally) down the After Battery hatch like Santa Claus than old Guilty. He was drunk as a skunk and wore a sh** eating grin plus a gray wig.

It seems that his "girlfriend" was not of the female persuasion. He said that once he discovered the truth, he had so much money sunk into "it" that he just couldn't throw it all away.

I learned right then that I was fortunate to spend my time at the New Orleans Library.

LIFE AS AN OILER IN ENGINES FORWARD

A flashlight shining in my eyes and a rough shake awakes the young oiler from engines forward. I have found a good bunk for the last 7 hours sleep and now it's time to go to work. First things first. Breakfast, or lunch or mid-rats – food – is the first order of the day. "First call to breakfast (lunch or whatever) for the relieving section only," is announced and the relieving watch (and all the chiefs that are awake) eat good chow.

As soon as I'm full, I go to the Engine Room to relieve the watch, being 15 minutes early as protocol requires. Heat! Heat! And more heat!

It's about 100 degrees in the Engine Room and everything metal, which is about everything, is too hot to touch. Both #1 and #2 engines are running flat out as we are on the surface.

Imagine two locomotives sitting four feet from each other. The noise of those old 38D 81/8's stomping up and down at 720 rpm is deafening. You can not hear even a shout so all "conversation" is by hand signals.

Yet, even though you can't hear a scream, you can pick up a slight variance in noise to know immediately something has changed and might be wrong.

DIVE DIVE

The Throttleman stops the engines, and I leap up and close the manual engine induction valve (submarines have sunk because this valve was not closed). Now my job changes. After securing the engines, I race forward to Control Room to man the Trim Manifold.

I have to wear a shirt. Not a requirement in the Engine Room, but a definite requirement in the cool, pristine, quiet of the Control Room. But mine is a better lot than the Throttleman who must stay in the Engine Room while the temperature rises to about 130 degrees, as there is now no air to cool the room. My boss is now the Diving Officer instead of the Throttleman. “Pump from Forward Trim to sea,” comes the command. I open valves and start pumps and water flows from the Forward Trim tank to sea, leveling the boat at neutral buoyancy. This pumping and flooding continues all while submerged to maintain trim as we change depth..

SURFACE SURFACE SURFACE

I race back to the Engine Room to open the manual induction valve and watch the Throttleman start the two behemoths. The air rushes into the room to feed the engines and the temperature drops to below 100 – especially when you stand right under the air intake to the room, my favorite spot. Here comes my relief. He wants to be an Airedale. How dumb? How far does he think that will take him? (He ended up SECNAV) Now to go eat – again, and then start looking for an empty rack in either the After Battery or the Forward Torpedo Room. I know the After Room is already taken. I have found an excellent rack in the Crow’s Nest right under the Torpedo Loading Hatch. Now we dive again and it’s nice an quiet, cool and sleepy.

THE DRESS BLUES

Every sailor desires a set of dress blue gabardines. The wool, Government Issue, was uncomfortable and an eyesore. Here’s how I got mine.

My throttleman (we’ll call him Sam to protect the guilty) had gone on liberty in West Palm or Fort Lauderdale, or some place and returned stone-broke. The problem was Sam’s lovely wife and children were waiting on the pier in Key West expecting money.

Old Sam was desperate to find something he could give his wife that would prove he loved her, but wouldn’t cost a dime. I had a half-gallon of Jack Daniel’s green (the cheap stuff) and a pistol but let me digress.

Johnny Lazo lived in Tampa. One weekend we decided to visit his folks. I had a car and his folks had food so it was a no brainer on my part. In addition to food, Johnny had a lot of guns, which we used for target practice. I really liked a 9mm Berretta, so he sold it to me, along with a box of ammunition, for ten bucks.

To make a long story short, Old Sam swapped his almost brand new set of gabardines for the hooch and gun. I wore those blues for nine more years and, in fact, can still get into them.

TAKING A BATH ON SEA POACHER

Get the rag barrel we had in Engines Forward and stand in it. Wash the grease and grime off yourself with fuel oil Wash the fuel oil off with salt water When dry, scrape off salt.

EDITOR' NOTE: Good ole Jon, in late September 2007, sensing my intense involvement in finishing up this book injected the following: "By the way Doctor, have you picked a title for the book yet? How about RUN SILENT-RUN NO MORE THAN 412 FEET DEEP, or TORPEDO ALLEYWAY, or ODORS DOWN BELOW. Does this help?"

OFFICER FITNESS REPORTS

The British write these a bit differently from us. Here are some actual excerpts:

- His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity.*
- I would not breed from this Officer.*
- This Officer is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't-be.*
- He has carried out each and every one of his duties to his entire satisfaction.*
- He would be out of his depth in a car park puddle.*
- Technically sound, but socially impossible.*
- This Officer reminds me very much of a gyroscope – always spinning around at a frantic pace, but not really going anywhere.*
- When he joined my ship, this Officer was something of a granny; since then he has aged considerably.*
- Since my last report he has reached rock bottom, and has started to dig.*
- This Officer should go far - and the sooner he starts, the better.*
- In my opinion this pilot should not be authorized to fly below 250 feet.*
- The only ship I would recommend this man for is citizenship.*
- Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.*
- This man is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.*
- Only occasionally wets himself under pressure.*

Courtesy CDR Milo Fuller, USN (Retired), see Jackspeak in References

CHAPTER 86

HENRY LAWRENCE GARRETT III 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER ORDERS FROM LTJG YESKE, AN EXPLOSION IN THE MANEUVERING ROOM, A DANGEROUS DIVING OFFICER DRILL, AND A LOT OF FINE GUYS ON SEA POACHER

EDITOR'S NOTE: On 15 September 2007, Jack Merrill phoned and suggested I call Larry Garrett, a former Secretary of the Navy, and ask him if he would provide a foreword to the book or perhaps a chapter.

I was incredulous and said why would he do that as he had not been on SEA POACHER. Jack informed me otherwise.

So, I called and we had a great 30 minute conversation.

The first thing he said was that he remembered me very clearly from an incident in the Forward Engine Room. While I hate to tell it, it is included herein. He also remembered a lot of details with other shipmates, some of which are not included to protect the guilty.

Clearly, Larry moved up rapidly from a SEA POACHER MMFN/MM3 to become our 20th Secretary of the Navy, under President George H.W. Bush, from 15 May 1989 to 26 June 1992. An incredible accomplishment. Some of his stories follow.

ORDERS FROM LTJG YESKE

I was in the Forward Engine Room as we entered port, probably in GITMO. There had been a leak in a fuel oil purifier. Because it was so hot in the Engine Room Larry Weinfurter said I could clean it up later.

After we moored, LTJG Yeske became the Duty Officer and was making an inspection of the boat. He noticed the mess relative to the fuel oil purifier, and I told him Larry had said it would be okay to clean it up later when things had cooled down.

He told me to do it right now, and I did so with a sponge and bucket. It was really hot.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am not sure he ever forgave me. Nothing was said on the phone. Had I known he would have become SECNAV I would probably have given him a couple hours of slack. I do not recall this incident at all. However, let me add this. The Duty Chief clearly would have made his inspection of the boat two hours later and said nothing to me. I then made my inspection two hours later. I did not find anything amiss in the FER to place a future Secretary of the Navy on report for clean up duty.

AN EXPLOSION IN THE MANEUVERING ROOM

Not sure whether this was offshore GITMO or Key West, but I was in the AER, and leaning on the watertight door going into Maneuvering to get cooler air, when there was a huge explosion in Maneuvering. Something to do with the rheostats.

In any case, I could see the ATR watertight door closing just before Maneuvering was filled with black smoke. I then shut the AER watertight door.

A short time later Captain Len Kojm and XO Dick Stafford showed up in the AER. Gunner Vanderwerker, an Electrician was also there looking through the peep hole, but all you could see was soot.

Of course, we had lost power.

Gunner said he was going in, but Captain Kojm said, "No."

Gunner replied that those were his people in his space, and he was going in.

He donned an OBA (Oxygen Breathing Apparatus) and did go in.

Captain Kojm ordered an "Emergency Surface," and we took a huge up angle.

No one was seriously hurt in Maneuvering.

The damage was promptly corrected.

A DANGEROUS DIVING OFFICER DRILL

Not certain where this was either, probably offshore Key West. We had an IC Electrician Jim McClanahan who had recently made Ensign, and we were practicing diving officer drills with various casualties.

Alois Ertl, an Engineman in the AER, had apparently been told by the CO or XO to close one of the Main Ballast Tank vents aft before the dive, making it almost impossible to submerge.

So we dove, with Jim as the Diving Officer.

In an effort to get it down, Jim told the Trim and Drain Manifold Operator, which was yours truly, to pump from After Trim to Forward Trim to get the bow down, as SEA POACHER'S a** was high up.

Jim finally noticed on the Christmas Tree that a Main Ballast Tank vent aft was still shut and ordered it opened.

Now we were really heavy forward from the compensation, and the bow went down like a rock.

Captain Kojm said, "What the **** is going on?" He took the Conn, and ordered, "Left Full Rudder, All Back Emergency, and Blow Everything."

We made it to the surface and all was well.

A LOT OF FINE GUYS ON SEA POACHER

I remember most all of you.

Luke Riley and his pipe, Bob and Kathy Pearce who I remained close with until his passing a few years ago, COB Vernon Barnett, and many others.

It was a grand time aboard a great boat.

CHAPTER 87

LARRY WEINFURTER 1962-1965

I REMEMBER TIME LINES FOR REPAIRS, ADVANCEMENT EXAMS WITH FRANK MURPHY, AND A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME AND FAMILY

TIME LINES FOR REPAIRS

In March 1964, I was moved from SEA POACHER Engine Rooms to Auxiliaries. A major problem developed with the drain pump when we were at deep submergence. At about 2 a.m., I was awakened and told about the malfunction.

So I rushed back to Maneuvering to find the place full of people, including the CO, XO, Engineer, Chief Electrician, and Maneuvering Room watch standers.

As soon as I arrived the questions started, "What's wrong? Can you fix it? How long will it take?" In the mean time, MM2 (SS) Murphy also came back to see what the problem was. Since I was the new Auxiliary kid on the block, the CO asked Murphy, "How long to fix it?" To which Murphy replied, "Three days, Captain."

With that statement the Maneuvering Room cleared out. So I asked Murphy, what was wrong? He said he didn't have a clue, but we should be able to fix it in three days. Apparently some bearing had gone out, plus some part that had to be made on the lathe.

Between the Electricians and Auxiliary gang, a job that normally would take two days, we got it back in commission in twenty four hours.

A well-done entry was put into our service records dated 29 April 1964 which read as follows:

"Commanding Officer, USS SEA POACHER (SS-406) Takes Great Pleasure in commending Laurence R. Weinfurter, MM1 (SS), USN for his outstanding efforts in contributing to the expeditious repair of a critical piece of the ships equipment on 5 March 1964. This repair, which would normally take approximately three days with outside assistance, was completed in less than 24 hours without any outside assistance, providing again the effects of a 'Can-Do' spirit. Your performance of duty is in the highest traditions of the Naval Service. Signed R.T. Fox, LCDR, USN, Commanding Officer."

ADVANCEMENT EXAMS WITH FRANK MURPHY

I think this happened in 1964. One day before his up coming advancement exam, Frank Murphy EN2 (SS), came up to me and asked if I would assist him. At the time I was an MM1 (SS) and in charge of Auxiliaries.

I had noticed that our ENC (SS) was doing a lot of reading of the Engineman Course study guide for advancement, but I didn't know the Captain had said he could have someone help him read and understand the questions. (On previous exams that used IBM punch cards, Frank would go to it and in about half the time allotted he would hand in his card and say, "I

flunked another one.” I told him that I was a Machinist Mate and not an Engineman. He said that it didn’t matter to him. So I said okay to help him out.

On the week of the exam SEA POACHER was underway. Therefore the exam was administered at sea, and one of the junior officers was in charge of it. Murphy and I sat together at one of the back tables.

After watching us for a while, the officer told me that I was not to answer the questions for Murphy, but only to help him read and understand the questions. So Frank would then read the question and point to one of the multiple choice answers.

If he pointed to the wrong answer I would tell him that he apparently didn’t understand the question and should read it again.

This paid off. Murphy passed the exam and was able to retire as an E-6.

AND A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ME AND FAMILY

Born in 1939 in Marshfield Wisconsin, I was the third of eleven children of Rudy and Dorothy Weinfurter. I joined the Navy in 1957, went to Great Lakes Boot Camp, and attended Machinist Mate A School.

Following Submarine School, I reported to TANG (SS-563) in Yokosuka, then to recommission LIZARDFISH (SS-373) for transfer to the Italian Navy, and back to TANG for a WESTPAC trip. I was discharged as a MM2 (SS) in 1962, and met and married Arlene.

In 1963, I reenlisted for three years and was assigned to SEA POACHER, where I was promoted to MM1 I was later assigned to the NATO International Motor Pool in Italy and made Chief. While on Navy Recruiting duty in Madison, Wisconsin, I made Senior Chief and was assigned to FLASHER (SSN-613) in Pearl Harbor and reported aboard in the Philippines. There I was promoted to Master Chief and served as COB. Following Navy retirement in 1977, I returned to Wisconsin I worked in building construction and eventually spent 20 years with Consolidated Paper in Wisconsin Rapid, where I retired in 1999. I also took on a part time job as The Wastewater Operator for the Blenker-Sherry Sanitary District, where I still work, when I’m not busy doing nothing.

Arlene and I have five children: Donna, Gregory, Shaun, Deanna, and Jeffery.

"The reason that the American Navy does so well in wartime, is that war is chaos, and the Americans practice chaos on a daily basis."

Admiral Karl Doenitz, of the German Kriegsmarine

"There were gentlemen and there were seamen in the Navy of Charles the Second. But the seamen were not gentlemen, and the gentlemen were not seamen."

Thomas Macauley

"We trained very hard, but it seemed that every time we were beginning to form into teams we would be reorganized. I was to learn in this life that we tend to meet any situation by reorganizing. And a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency, and demoralization."

Petronious Arbiter, Circa 60 A.D.

CHAPTER 88

JAMES HALBERT 1962 - 1963

I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD, THE TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS, TAKING MY FAMILY ABOARD SEA POACHER, SCIENTIFIC CALCULATIONS IN THE TORPEDO ROOMS, DONATING BLOOD FOR JOHN HARVEY'S MOM, AND OTHER SEA POACHER TRAVELS AND ASSIGNMENTS

REPORTING ABOARD

I arrived onboard SEA POACHER in October 1962. Shortly thereafter, we started exercises for the Cuban Missile Crisis, and then we went to Cuba. When over, we resumed normal trips to sea and at times trained Fleet Sonar School students.

THE TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS

In early 1963, the boat went on a two week cruise into the Gulf. At the end, we went up the Mississippi to my home town of New Orleans. I was asked by several of the crew how cold it got at that time of year. I told them the temperature gets between 35 to 40 degrees, and occasionally below freezing. I recommended that they bring their pea coats and thermal underwear. That year the temperature got down to the lower 30s and the humidity was 90 percent. The wind was blowing in off the Gulf and salt marshes at about 50 miles an hour. This combination made it feel well below 20 degrees all the time.

I had been on board four months when I was advanced to E-3. I asked the COB for leave while in New Orleans. He told me that non-quals were not allowed leave, except in emergencies, but that if I was ahead in my quals that he would let me have special liberty.

During the two week period before we got to New Orleans I spent 90 percent of my off watch time, both day and night, tracing ship systems and getting signatures on my qual card. When I turned in my card on the way up the River, I was 4 1/2 weeks ahead!

My liberty was granted and the COB told me I could leave after we secured from the Maneuvering Watch. But I could not leave until the Captain did. When the CO went ashore, I was right behind him and I went home with my dad.

TAKING MY FAMILY ABOARD SEA POACHER

Several days later I came back with my family in tow, as they wanted to see my boat. I told my mom not to wear skirts or dresses to tour. We all know how helpful sailors are to female guests, such as assisting them up and down the vertical ladders

When my family and I arrived at the pier there was a line of people 1 1/2 miles long, 4 to 5 abreast, waiting to get on board one of the four submarines at the pier. Mom said she wasn't going to wait all day so I escorted them to the gangway of the first sub.

I told the security guard the SEA POACHER was my boat (we were tied up as the second boat out from the pier) and that I was bringing my family to see her. He removed the chain and allowed us to go onboard.

A woman in line complained that it wasn't fair. The security guard said that my family were personal guests of the crew, and he couldn't stop us. There were 10 of us.

SCIENTIFIC CALCULATIONS IN THE TORPEDO ROOMS

En route New Orleans, some of the torpedomen devised a formula to determine how many women toured the boat. It was based upon very scientific measurements during the six days in port. Several of the women who came aboard were very attractive.

Entering the ATR, the duty shipmate would call the FTR watch, and describe this particular lady. An attempt was made to get a phone number, and many of the crew got dates off this list.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Much of this section has been deleted. Use your imagination.

DONATING BLOOD FOR JOHN HARVEY'S MOM

Some time later our Leading Cook's (John Harvey) Mother became seriously ill. She needed a lot of blood. The whole SEA POACHER crew volunteered to donate. The Squadron Commander granted us a port call at West Palm Beach for four days.

When we arrived, we were greeted by a full brass band and a Red Cross blood mobile. The entire crew lined up to give blood. As I recall only 2 or 3 people were not allowed to give, because they had colds. The entire time we were in West Palm Beach, any sub sailor in town could not buy drinks or food in town, and we had plenty of it. The CO received the Key to the city for our humanitarian effort.

OTHER SEA POACHER TRAVELS AND ASSIGNMENTS

We went on a four month cruise to the Med in January 1964, and then to Charleston for an overhaul. As the Repair Parts Petty Officer, I was on the COSAL Team to inventory all onboard ships repair parts and update this list with adequate parts.

In September 1964 I re-enlisted and was transferred to GUDGEON in Pearl Harbor. On Friday the 13th in April 1965 I was scalded by hot water estimated to be 285 degrees F, while we were troubleshooting #2 Main Engine for an exhaust gas leak.

I spent 13 days in the burn isolation ward at Tripler, 13 days in a rehab ward, and then months on light duty. Then I was transferred to Sub School for the Auxiliary Package Course and new construction. I served on several FBMs and had good tours including one at Basic Enlisted Sub School. I had met and married a Navy brat. We had two wonderful girls. She became ill, and after fighting cancer for 3 years, passed on.

In late 1981, I applied for and received humanitarian shore duty. BUPERS gave me orders to transfer to SUBSUPFAC for 15 months until eligible for retirement. As the 3M Coordinator. I retired in 1983 as an MMC (SS).

CHAPTER 89

DAN DYBALA 1963

I REMEMBER SCRAPING RUST, THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION, SEA POACHER BROTHERHOOD, AND SEA POACHER VERSUS TINOSA WITH TORPEDOES

SCRAPING RUST

During my short time aboard SEA POACHER (I was nuclear designated) and was an ICFN. I also mess cooked and worked in the seaman gang, but was able to use my electrician skills on occasion when the batteries needed cleaning and watering.

Boy, was I proud!

The Captain at that time was Fox and I think the Exec was Divelbiss. The COB was Barnett and I remember him always having a short cigar in his mouth and the smoke always was in his eyes, making him blink excessively.

I remember one morning while I was down inside the sail with an air powered wire brush, just giving that rust hell in there. When I stopped the air tool, I heard someone banging on the outside of the sail.

When I asked what they wanted, they said to come out and attend morning quarters on the pier. I had forgotten the time and just wanted to rid that boat of all the rust I could find.

THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

We were snorkeling off Key West, and I was a mess cook at the time. I was scrubbing the floor near the After Battery hatch and since we had an antenna up on the Snorkel Mast, I was listening to the radio near there in the Crew's Mess.

The announcement came on the radio that Kennedy and Connelly had been shot in Dallas. I immediately jumped up and went forward to the Control Room and announced to the Diving Officer and everyone else there, what I had heard.

They all looked at me like, "What a sick sense of humor he has," or that's what I perceived all of them to be thinking.

A while later, Captain Fox made an announcement on the 1MC confirming what had happened in Dallas and called for a moment of silence.

We all remember where we were on that day.

SEA POACHER BROTHERHOOD

I also remember a lot of brotherhood amongst all the crew members and remembered it in my dealings with my coworkers for the rest of my life.

It was never quite the same as it was on SEA POACHER

SEA POACHER VERSUS TINOSA WITH TORPEDOES.

After I left SEA POACHER, I went to Nuclear Power School for a year. In 1965 I was assigned to TINOSA (SSN-606) out of New London.

Sometime later, we were engaged in ASW operations near the Florida Keys that included several diesel boats, one of them being the SEA POACHER.

On one exercise, we put a torpedo in the clam shell of SEA POACHER.

I was not as excited about that as were my other crew members.

We were given it back the next day, however.

I was standing Lower Level Engine Room watch and heard the turbines answer a flank bell. Almost immediately, the turbines went to all stop!

Not 3 seconds later.....Boom!

We got hit by a dummy torpedo in the after part of the Engine Room near a running auxiliary sea water pump. It shook TINOSA like you wouldn't believe.

We learned later on that it was SEA POACHER that put it to us.

I am sure revenge was very sweet for SEA POACHER'S crew that day.

I had to smile just as bit too.

"As often happens, the best weapons are developed too late to see action in the war which sires them. This, the age of atomic energy, is also the age of the true submarine - the submarine that can submerge and stay under water for months at a time without the necessity of surfacing at frequent intervals to recharge batteries and renew air supply; the submarine that can move as fast under water as present day warships can steam on the surface. The atomic bomb has not made the submarine obsolete. Far from it! For the submerged submarine has been proven (by our test at Bikini) to be the type of craft most impervious to the devastating blasts of the atomic bomb. It may well be the major sea weapon of tomorrow."

RADM C.W. Styer, Berkeley, WV, 14 Nov 1946

"There is nothing more enticing, disenchanting, and enslaving than life at sea."

Joseph Conrad

"Sighted sub, sank same."

Message sent by enlisted pilot, AMM 1/C

Donald Francis Mason on 28 January 1942

"A ship in port is safe, but that's not what ships are built for."

Grace Murray Hopper

"We need an America with the wisdom of experience. But we must not let America grow old in spirit."

Hubert H. Humphrey

CHAPTER 90

CLYDE (DICK) RIGGAR 1963 - 1964

**I REMEMBER WANTING TO SEE THE WORLD,
REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER SORT OF,
WORKING IN THE SUBMARINE BARRACKS,
FINALLY GETTING ABOARD SEA POACHER SORT OF,
TRANSFERRED TO THE TIRANTE SORT OF,
VERY LITTLE SEA TIME, AND WHAT I MISSED**

WANTING TO SEE THE WORLD

In July 1962, I walked away from home in Savannah, Georgia at the tender age of 17 to join the Navy and see the world. I intended at the time for it to be a career.

The Navy was good for me. I went to the west coast for boot camp and then to a great 32 week "A" School for Sonar. During that time I decided I wanted to be in submarines.

After "A" school and having passed the physicals and such, I was transferred to Sub School at New London. While there I also attended the "Advanced Submarine Electronics Course" which was a hoot.

Basically they taught us what the "off/on" switches did on most of the electronic gear we might find on a boat.

REPORTING ABOARD SEA POACHER SORT OF

Finally I was given orders to report to a boat, the SEA POACHER in Key West. Man, this was going to be heaven. I recall that President Kennedy was assassinated while I was en route.

On 5 December 1963 I reported to this fantastic looking boat, but was disappointed to be told she was full of sailors, and that I would stow my gear and work in the submarine barracks.

WORKING IN THE SUBMARINE BARRACKS

Working in the barracks meant swabbing and waxing those glossy tile floors, cleaning heads, walking around the base picking up cigarette butts, and any other tasks the MAA could think of to keep you out of his hair.

I could run that buffer up and down the hall with one hand at flank speed and never touch the edge of the wall.

So in my quest to see the world I was now buffing floors and picking up cigarette butts and not riding a boat.

On 5 January 1964, 30 days after reporting to SEA POACHER sort of, I was summoned by the barracks MAA and instructed to report to the Yeoman's Office onboard SEA POACHER.

Man was I happy.

FINALLY GETTING ABOARD SEA POACHER SORT OF

I was finally going to the boat. When I got to his office, which seemed like it was maybe three foot square, he handed me some papers and told me I had been transferred.

Transferred!

Holy crap, how could that happen?

He told me it was no big deal, "You're just being transferred across the pier. You don't even need your gear."

TRANSFERRED TO THE TIRANTE SORT OF

So, I go about 20 feet across the pier to my new boat, the TIRANTE. I report to the Yeoman, who tells me DEJA VU (all over again as Yogi would say), the boat is full, and I will be living and working in the barracks.

So I asked, "Why I was transferred?"

He said, "Because SEA POACHER is leaving for the Mediterranean tomorrow."

There was no room in the Inn for me.

You talk of unbelievable disappointment!

So much for seeing the world.

VERY LITTLE SEA TIME

Periodically while in Key West, I did finally get to ride TIRANTE on daily ops around the Keys with targets, err...I mean surface craft, trying to find us and dropping PDCs.

Around March 1964 TIRANTE left Key West for a yard overhaul in Portsmouth. The furthest I ever got off the coast was about 200 miles out as we were passing the North Carolina Outer Banks.

And now the finale.

One day while on ops in Key West the Skipper, LCDR Ed Clausner, came on deck and started throwing heaving lines with some of us who were trying to see who could throw them the furthest. As he was leaving, he called my name and told me to report to his Stateroom.

I couldn't figure what I had done wrong and was a very nervous young sailor.

He asked if I would like to become an officer and go to "The" Academy.

I said, "Yes."

He set up some testing and such for me when we got to Portsmouth. I completed all of that, and he said I was all set to go the Naval Academy Prep School, but first had to go over to the Portsmouth Dispensary and get a physical.

While there they found a problem with an x-ray and sent me to the Portsmouth Naval Hospital. They kept me for about 3 months doing more tests and x-rays, and finally told me that with the bone disease I had that I should be dead before I was 21.

So, I was later discharged from the Navy.

I did get my Crow while in the Hospital, but they wouldn't let me sew it on. It was then taken away, since I was "TDY" from the boat.

I only got to stay in submarines for five months and did not qualify in that short time.

I know some submarine organizations do not offer membership to guys who didn't get to drink for their Dolphins, but I sure do like being included in the SEA POACHER Association. It was a very important period of my life.

EDITOR'S NOTE: If my math holds up, Clyde is about 62 years old. It would appear that the Portsmouth doctors erred a bit in their diagnosis regards his bone disease.

SEEING THE WORLD

But hey, I did get to go to Tijuana one night while in "A" school in San Diego. And I never knew for certain that SEA POACHER did leave that day, until I was contacted regards this Book in July 2007.

WHAT I MISSED

EDITOR'S NOTE: In response to your July 2007 email, I contacted several of your shipmates regards that Med Trip.

SEA POACHER did leave for the Med as scheduled. Your Shipmates Larry Weinfurter and Joe Joseph say it was a great trip. Larry had just gotten married in October 1963, and had left her bare foot and pregnant. Joe also was married about that time.

LCDR Richard Fox was Skipper at the time.

The longest time they spent at sea was between Key West and Rota, Spain. They had liberty in Gibraltar; two weeks in Barcelona, Spain; a week in Nice, France; and time in San Remo, Italy.

This was followed by more liberty in Naples, Italy; Palermo, Sicily; Izmir, Turkey; and then back to Naples. There were some other stops as well, but they do not recall where they were exactly.

Rick Socha also commented.

Yes, SEA POACHER did make that cruise in 1964. He was not yet aboard, but did catch the lines upon her return to Key West.

There were many stories on that trip.

One was "SINKING THE ENTERPRISE, and another about one of our shipmates firing a .25 caliber Berretta inside the police station in Palermo, Sicily.

While Rick wasn't actually there either, he heard the stories many times. They are included in his chapter as well as a few others submitted.

*"Tenacity Dick, stay with the b***** till he's on the bottom.*

Mush Morton to Dick O'Kane, WAHOO 1943

CHAPTER 91

RICHARD (DICK) T. FOX 1963 - 1964

I REMEMBER A SHOT IN THE DARK, THE ESCAPE BUOY THAT ALMOST GOT AWAY, AND GOING FOR THE BIG ONE – ENTERPRISE (CVN-65)

A SHOT IN THE DARK

In the early 1960s when the Nuclear Power Submarine Program was in full expansion, it had an insatiable appetite for I.C. Electricians, Electronics Technicians, Machinist Mates, Electricians and other technical personnel who were Qualified in Submarines.

Demand was such that volunteers for the program did not fill the need, so Uncle Hyman Rickover passed the problem to one of his senior henchman, a.k.a. “Buck the Body Snatcher.” He ensured that Buck received full authority from CNO and BUPERS to get the job done. He rounded up a few strong-arm Chiefs already in the program to form a Press Gang.

Buck and his crew would travel, unannounced, to the various submarine bases, looking for any Petty Officers in these ratings. Once found, Buck and the Chiefs would give the victim an offer they could not refuse. This was to volunteer into the Nuclear Program or leave the Submarine Service.

These tactics caused no end of hate and discontent among the persons so Shanghaied, and also brought forth howls of rage from the COs, XO's, and COBs who had to operate the boats without the services of these good men.

Boats attempted any type of ruse to throw the Press Gang off scent. The ones at risk could wear different types of rating badges, work in the bilges of the Engine Rooms, be seen chipping paint on deck, or even sleep in the Brig of the Tender when the Gang was in town, but to no avail. These ratings were decimated in the Smoke Boats.

In early 1964, when SEA POACHER left for a Med Cruise, I recall we were very thin in some areas. Some disciplines had only PO3s, newly rated at that. Most were young, and perhaps not yet qualified in submarines, but I do not remember that for certain.

I complained bitterly to Squadron Personnel about deploying with such a lack of talent on board, but was told that I should be glad that Buck had not taken these men as well, and Bon Voyage. I was concerned because a good deal of our twenty year old equipment on board dated from WWII and demanded TLC from time to time. These PO3s would have to carry the load.

So off we went, with on-board gear working, most of the time, provided no one stepped on various pieces of the inner workings and hidden mechanisms of equipment laid out on deck for repair. The PO3s put in about 20 hour days, but that was OK, they were learning. And without these men, we would have had problems, BIG TIME.

Now when preparing for and commencing a Med Cruise, it was common practice for the Submarine Division Commander, Submarine Squadron Commander, COMSUBLANT, CTF69, COMSIXTHFLT, and anybody else one rank higher than the CO of a ship en route, to make it perfectly clear, in a language that could not be misunderstood, that if a CO desired to remain in the Navy and not spend the rest of his life selling shoes, working in a sanitary disposal company,

or as a sous-chef in a drive thru food establishment, the CO had better be certain none of his troops created a disturbance in a liberty port in the Med.

Their warnings would have given pause to Alfred E. Newman of Mad Comics (What? Me Worry?)

During the first part of the cruise, SEA POACHER visited Palermo, Sicily, for R&R. Ah-Palermo; beautiful, sunny, thoroughly Italian, and of course ancestral home of the Mafioso, whose forebears, descendants, and their sisters and their brothers and their cousins and their aunts, etc. were all alive and well, living under the benign (sometimes) reign of the local Family Dons. This would be a great place for a diesel boat liberty, and we were truly looking forward to a good time to be had by all.

It was typical that while in a liberty port, we would supply two petty officers designated as Shore Patrol, whose main job would be to help the local *Carabinieri* guide any of the men who might have lost their way while visiting museums, art shows, and so forth. It was required that the Patrol consist only of rated men, and since the PO3s were the most junior rated men aboard, certainly each would be so assigned, at least once.

To throw in a bit of philosophy, there are some things in this world that a wise person should not do. Included might be to purposely knock down a hornet's nest, walk barefoot on a freshly tarred road in mid-summer, drink spirits distilled in an old automobile radiator, and, above all, not to drink alcohol while on Shore Patrol duty. Unfortunately, one of our PO3s did not qualify as one of the Magi, at least on this occasion.

I think it was on the second or third day of our stay, at about 0400 one morning, while resting comfortably in my Stateroom on board, the XO awakened me with words to the effect, "Captain, we have a problem." Now no one had ever before, or has since, accused me of being able to see into the future, but I really knew that while in port, calls in the night such as this indicated we REALLY had a problem. At sea, we could deal with situations as a whole crew, but in port, it was a different story.

It seemed as if our young PO3, while on Shore Patrol, had bought some bottles of those strange types of booze Med sailors all remember. It was usually sold in small bottles, and some of it was blue, some was greenish-yellow color, and some even had sticks or twigs floating around inside. All of them were just awful. They were so bad, that in comparison, they made Gilly taste like Canadian Club. One bottle would stun a full grown bull. Two would put him down for the count. I do not know how many the PO3 consumed, but enough to make him lose all reason. Further, he bought, off the street, a local Saturday Night Special, that is a Beretta, with a loaded clip.

But these indiscretions were minor compared to what followed. Later that night, the Shore Patrol went to the local Police Station for some reason. While inside the Station, the PO3 decided to show off to his companion, and they went into some dark corner of the building. The PO3 produced the Beretta to show it off. Being thoroughly drunk, he mishandled the weapon, which he had loaded, and fired off a round inside the Police Station.

Predictably, the Uniformed Officers inside the Police Station became upset and were thoroughly incensed at having to dodge a bullet bouncing around their feet. Maybe they had memories of a Don sending a couple of his soldiers to shoot up the Police Station, because someone had given the Don's favorite nephew a parking ticket or something. The locals were not happy. They disarmed the PO3 and flung him into a cell, awaiting the morning.

After the XO had briefed me, I asked if he had the Beretta, because I felt like doing a little shooting myself. I knew instantly of the mountains of paperwork to follow, not to mention a great shuffling of my feet in front of my mentors who had spoken about such events before.

I did not sleep any the rest of the night, because I was trying to dream up some cruel and unusual punishments to fit the crime. All I could think of were those which had been outlawed before the Inquisition. *Mea Culpa*. I thought some Un-Christian thoughts about the PO3 that night.

So early the next day I put on my best uniform, gathered up a couple of cartons of cigarettes, and paid a visit on the *Commandante* of the local Police at the Station. He was a middle-aged man, steely-eyed, with a trim moustache and beginning to go gray, with some lines in his face. Perhaps these came from dealing with the local citizens for many years.

Sensing he was not in the mood for small talk, I began to give it my best shot. I told the *Commandante* I was mystified as to how such a thing could have occurred. I emphasized this young PO3 was a paragon of virtue and had served as a role model for all the other members of the crew. He was from New York, and regardless of his surname, I was certain he was of Italian descent, maybe even with Sicilian Ancestors. He had suffered a woeful childhood, with his Sainted Mother being widowed at an early age. She had worked day and night to care for her foundling son. She had scrubbed floors, carried out garbage, and gone to Mass every day, carrying the future PO3 with her. When he was about 9 years old, he started a paper route through snowy and hot days, and he would be sure the local Priest got his paper first. He joined the Navy to earn money and even now sent nearly all of his pay home to his Sainted Mother. He only kept enough so he could add to the collection when he went to Mass every day himself while in port. I could only speculate that some demons were trying to wrest him from the Way. If only we could take him back on board, I was confident that we could exorcise such demons from him and get him back to his former noble self.

During my spiel to the *Commandante*, his steady gaze never left my face, nor did he blink once. After some time, he made a very short remark in Italian. Now I did not speak La Bella Lingua, but I gathered it was a somewhat earthy reply, dealing with horses eating oats and natural functions thereafter.

After an uncomfortably long pause, the *Commandante* told me we could keep our PO3. I thanked him profusely, said goodbye, and left the cigarettes in his office. The High Sheriff had spoken, and it was time to get out of Dodge.

When we got back to the boat, the PO3 was handed over to the COB for disposition. I do not know if the exorcism was started at once, but it could have. Certainly the COB did not use an Aspergill - more likely he gave the PO3 and associated evil spirits a talking to. I did not delve into the particulars. This was an early version of the "Don't Ask - Don't Tell" theory at work.

Results of a subsequent blood-letting at the Green Pool Table Cover in the Wardroom are not pleasant to remember or are worthy of description. I do know a couple of days visiting Chez Cooler in the bilge area of a Destroyer Tender completed the exorcism. The demons could not stand that place and left. We did not want to leave the Paygrade E-3 (formerly E-4 (PO3)) there longer, and in any event, his old friends, the equipment on board needed his company.

One of our last port stops in the Med was Naples. When we got in, the COB asked me if the Chiefs could take the E-3 ashore, since he had not been on dry ground for some time. They would keep him safe and secure. Most Skippers do not turn down sincere requests from the COB, so I said sure - just do not let him drink anything with trash in it.

Later on, some time after I left SEA POACHER for other duty, I heard the E-3 was again a PO-3 and had reenlisted for another tour. The demons never came back.

Father Flanagan would have been happy. I was, too.

THE ESCAPE BUOY THAT ALMOST GOT AWAY

In the late spring of 1964 SEA POACHER entered the base at Rota, Spain, following a Med Cruise. There we met our relief and turned over various pieces of equipment and documents such as OpOrders, Contingency Plans, SIXTHFLT Instructions, and the vital book of MedNotes, which was an unofficial listing of various eating places, watering holes and other such items of interest in various ports. The book was tattered, stained and full of interesting details. It was important enough that it usually was turned over by hand from COB to COB. Interesting reading and anyone was free to add his opinions.

Before entering Rota, we had gone through some rough weather and had some damage to the superstructure on the port side. The loose metal rattled and banged while on the surface and submerged. It was also torn around the fairing for the After Escape Marker Buoy. Some of the fairing itself was missing. The brief stop at Rota gave a chance to have a go at repairing this.

Call us old fashioned, but we did not have any zest for unqualified cutters and burners from the base to do any major work on the boat before we made the Atlantic crossing. So when we got in port, there was a meeting of all the heavies on board (XO, COB, ENGINEER, Stewards, and Mess Cooks) aft to survey the situation.

When I got back they were all engaged in deep thought, reminding me of Auguste Rodin's bronze sculpture of THE THINKER (if you do not know old Augie, look him up on the Internet.) Of course, each and all had his own solution to the problem at hand. I gave considerable thought myself to the situation before saying anything. I thought back through the years of schooling and theoretical study of various types of metals, forces of statics and dynamics, vector resolutions, etc. to conjure up explicit instructions on how to correct the damage. Then I recalled my past experiences of giving detailed explanations of casualties to my past COs, and their time-honored submarine reply to those who had a problem.

I simply said "FIX IT" to the Super Snipe and left the boat for the Officer's Club to have a few cold ones. While being refreshed, I gave more thought to the Marker Buoy. The device was essentially two large hollow steel balls, each about three feet in diameter attached to a flat piece which formed part of the superstructure. The arrangement had a reel containing 1,200 feet of 3/8 inch very high strength steel cable, the bitter end of which was attached to the After Torpedo Room Hatch. The whole works was held down tight on the outside hull by a screw arrangement which could be operated from inside the After Room to let the buoy go, if necessary.

Presumably, if the boat sank to the bottom the buoy could be released and it would then go to the surface, where it would be found by a rescue vessel which would use a diving bell to grab onto the cable and wind itself down to SEA POACHER, get the crew off, and all would live happily ever after. To aid whoever first sighted the buoy as it floated to the surface, there was a bright brass plate attached to the balls inscribed with the information:

UNITED STATES SUBMARINE SEA POACHER SUNK HERE
NOTIFY U.S. NAVAL AUTHORITIES
DO NOT MOOR TO THIS BUOY!

Now during the previous observations and discussions on the boat regarding the damage it had been pointed out to me the buoy was not completely snugged down to the top of the pressure hull, and the screw mechanism may have been damaged. That fact triggered a call to mind of Murphy's First Law, so well known by all submariners since John Holland built the TURTLE. The Law, in its basic form, states "If anything can go wrong, it will." I topped off refueling and went back to the boat.

At the boat, I was informed the ragged pieces of superstructure had been done away with well enough to get back home without problems but that it had not been possible to tighten the Marker Buoy down. Back at the Officer's Club, I had already decided on a course of action for this undesirable case. I directed the bitter end of the cable to be unshackled from the bail on the After Room Hatch, and tied down back on the buoy itself. Thus, if the buoy worked itself loose on the way back home, when it fell off the boat, at least it would not be unwinding 1,200 feet of steel wire trailing astern.

Had that occurred, Murphy's Second Law would come into play. It states "A wire trailing astern will surely wrap itself around the screws" and we would be in fact hogtied for days or weeks in the Atlantic until some kind souls on a salvage vessel, with underwater cutting torches, would come and cut us loose. This would have spoiled our whole day (days, weeks).

Now I was sure some staffers in our upper echelons of command would have had near strokes if they knew we had disabled a part of the safety systems on board, so I saved them their angst by simply not telling them. Besides, it did not take a Prince Henry the Navigator to look at the chart and see that the water between Rota and Key West had no spots at all where it was not several times deeper than 200 fathoms. So, in effect, when we got our sight of land of Rota and before we could see Key West, the Marker Buoy would remain as useless as a two-bit piece in New York City. So, take in the lines and off to Cayo Hueso.

It took about two days to discover that Murphy had stowed away before we left Rota. Fortunately, it was daylight when the lookouts reported the Marker Buoy had come loose and was floating astern.

We turned around and went alongside the wayward device. Reprise Auguste. There was no way to take the buoy back on board, and there still was this brass warning plate clearly in view, just waiting for a wandering fisherman to discover and sell the story that we had sunk to the Weekly World News or the National Inquirer. I was quite sure it would be difficult to convince my bosses of the humor of such a thing when we got back. As I recall, they did not smile much anyway. Therefore, I reached deeply into my memories of famous and inspiring speeches, and gave my orders to Dallas, the XO, and said "SINK IT."

Dallas's order to call away the Boarding Party caused great glee and jubilation below decks for members of the Party. They raced topside with the Thompson .45 caliber submachine guns and loads of ammunition. They lined up and let go at the buoy as if they were the principals at the Saint Valentine's Day Massacre in Chicago some years ago. Guns roared, smoke poured out, and they left more brass on deck than a classic western movie in the Forward Torpedo Room. When the ammo was used up and the haze cleared, lo and behold the buoy was still there.

Those hollow steel balls had been too tough for the .45s. There was a lot of paint gone, and some good sized dents here and there, but no holes. And the warning plate was still there.

As a last resort, we found some good old boys in the crew from Tennessee and Kentucky and brought them up with M-1 Garand .30 calibers. These men fired a few rounds with direct hits. Finally, there were some holes in the buoy. Then came a scene where the good guys won.

They used up about a case of ammo, and finally the buoy went down after a gallant fight in about two miles of water. Mr. Murphy had to swim for it.

We got home without further incident, except having a gap in the superstructure aft where the buoy used to be. Sort of reminded me of an NHL player when he smiles.

I do not recall getting any heat from the staffers about losing the buoy.

We were home, and that is what counted.

GOING FOR THE BIG ONE – ENTERPRISE (CVN-65)

In the Mediterranean, the intensity of the Sun's heating effect on the water naturally varies from season to season. This heating causes changes in the temperature of the water at given depths to vary as well. This results in a temperature gradient, or absence thereof, in the summers and winters. Suffice to say in early 1964, when SEA POACHER was there, sonar conditions for surface ships were exceptionally good. Destroyers could find us at amazing distances.

It was typical that after a combined stay in port, the submarine would leave very early in the morning on the day of departure, go out to sea some seven or eight miles, dive and lurk around to attack the surface ships as they came out later in the morning.

The problem for us was the destroyers could turn on their very powerful SQS active sonars and locate us out there submerged, even while the cans were still at anchor before getting underway. Thus we could not attack them with any element of surprise and often ended up as the losers of the game. This annoyed us to no end. We felt it a personal affront to lose to one of those guys. We also knew if it was for real, we would be history.

Two or three of these disasters were more than enough. So "No More Mr. Nice Guy." Something had to be done to show those surface skimmers they were playing with the big boys. After much thought and discussion, it became obvious we had to revert to tried and true diesel submarine tactics.

From times of yore, submariners had been alleged to be treacherous, cheaters, tellers of outlandish lies, sneaky, violators of the Geneva Convention, and those who would invariably color outside the lines. Therefore, submarines and their crews were to be depth charged, bombed, or more recently, nuked, on sight or detection. Once we admitted these allegations had merit, we were able to fall into character and come up with a plan.

Previously, a fleet exercise had been planned where SEA POACHER would conduct an attack on the pride of the fleet, which was the USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65). This was a new nuclear powered aircraft carrier and really big. It could race across the ocean at very high speeds, carried a flock of airplanes of all types, and was always guarded by an armada of destroyers stationed all around. And with the ideal sonar conditions on hand, the Big One felt little danger from us. The exercise was due to commence at 0800, so there was no need for them to lose a nights sleep getting ready for a simple ASW exercise.

That is where they made their first mistake. Diesel submariners always practiced staying up all night long in liberty ports to help local police ensure the peace and tranquility of the local populace. Submariners were also anxious to pump up the local economy by helping bars, bistros, etc. keep their inventory from becoming overstocked. We were used to night work.

Their second mistake was to play by the rules and not have escorts commence a search for us until exercise start time. We ourselves started very early the night before. First, we had on board a number of movies of submarine victories in WWII starring Clark Gable, Ronald Reagan, and John Wayne. Duke really impressed us.

We psyched ourselves up like a Kamikaze pilot having a shot of saki before a one way ride. And then we were off and running. Early in the evening we located the Carrier and its escorts by blatant use of radar, which use the skimmers did not detect or chose to ignore. They just sailed along on a straight course getting in their 40 winks while we, the cheaters, found ourselves a good position in front of the group and pulled the plug.

As I recall, it was just first light when we were able to make out ENTERPRISE, and of course there were many destroyers between us and the target. Instead of trying to go under the screen in good sonar conditions, where we might be detected and held down, we decided, with the enthusiastic support of all hands, to do a real JOHN WAYNER and race through the screen at periscope depth, and then get shots off at ENTERPRISE before they were awake and could react.

TORA! TORA! TORA! And off we went at full speed and with liberal use of the periscope. I had to keep it up more than I really wanted to, because we came so close to one destroyer I could see their crew members running about as if going to Battle Stations. If the can, in a fit of pique, turned to ram us, I might have to adjust a few things.

But too late for Big Boy. We had an acceptable fire control solution for the Big E, and both the Forward and After Torpedo Rooms were directed to simulate firing six Mark 14s Forward and four Mark 14s Aft. Each Mark 14 would carry 600 pounds of HBX, and a few of those fellows would spoil one's whole day. Both rooms were ordered to commence firing green smokes and flares, and to continue to do so until told to stop. The greens were to signal to all the world we had sent the fish on the way.

Indeed the opposition saw the clouds of green. We heard later, through the grapevine, that just about all of the personnel on the bridge of the ENTERPRISE, including the Head Dude, went ballistic when they recognized they had been ambushed. It is my understanding the Lord of the Manor on that Bird Farm was using foul and obscene language regarding the maternal lineage and presumed strange sexual preferences of submariners in general. Apparently there was also some shouting that included "They can't do this! They can't do this! The exercise has not yet started! They cannot do this!"

Well, we had done it, and taught them a lesson. If you are going to fool around with a diesel submarine, you had better keep your hand on your wallet and your pistol cocked.

Of course, soon after sending the green flares, hordes of destroyers arrived on the scene and commenced sending their "BRAVO BRAVO BRAVO" over the UQC Underwater Telephone. This was their signal of dropping large amounts of ordnance at our suspected position. And we had not even yet had our breakfast saki. Details of the episode spread quickly though the SIXTHFLT. I, personally, did not seek out the company of the Commanding Officer of the ENTERPRISE to relive the occasion, as I saw no real profit in this.

Many years later, when he was a Three Star Admiral and in charge of a large organization (of which I was a part) in Washington, I had occasion to be called to his office for a one on one discussion. It was to elaborate on a very testy situation in which I had been involved. (Nothing to do with 1964.) I was completely innocent, and convinced him of this, but he was quite put out, to say the least, with some others. He even remarked loudly, and at length, of his displeasure and how he would deal with the error.

During the discussion, which was mostly one way, it became apparent the Admiral did not know we had become acquainted on a previous occasion. I thought it wise to not bring up old sea stories at this time. So I did not.

I got away again.

CHAPTER 92

RICHARD HOLTZ 1963 - 1965

**I REMEMBER A WILD BOAR HUNT IN IZMIR-TURKEY,
SKIING IN THE FRENCH ALPS,
FRIED EGG SANDWICHES (SORT OF) IN BARCELONA-SPAIN,
THE POPE AND OTHER ANTICS IN ROME,
THE ENTERPRISE AND MOUNT ETNA,
AND LEAVING SEA POACHER FOR PICKERAL**

A WILD BOAR HUNT IN IZMIR-TURKEY

When the SEA POACHER pulled into Izmir on the 1964 Med cruise, we had some airmen from the airbase take us on a wild boar hunt in the mountains. We met our village guide and started our trek thru the mountains. We came to a ridge and they dispersed us on the other side of the gully. They told us if we heard the boars or pigs coming and didn't see them to jump in the nearest tree. Well, I heard one, but didn't see him, and I jumped in the tree. Out of the brush came the biggest boar you would ever want to see. He went over the hill and one of the airmen shot him. I know the tusks were large because they said he would have ripped us apart. We got I think three sows and the one boar. We brought one of the sows back to the boat, the cook butchered him and we had wild pig for chow that night. Very tender if I remember right.

SKIING IN THE FRENCH ALPS

I have been trying to remember names and not doing a very good job at it. Anyway, on the same 1964 Med run SEA POACHER pulled into Nice, France. We had a wonderful time. Myself and another shipmate, a sonar man, went to Cannes for a day trip. I have some wonderful pictures of us drinking champagne with these two young ladies, and I think we had a good time.

While in Nice, a three day trip to the French Alps came up, and six of us decided to go. The place was called LaColmaine and was a ski resort. We had a wonderful trip thru the mountains on a train, through the valleys, and what not. We arrived at the resort and settled in for the night at a little bar. The next morning we donned our skis and headed out. None of us thought we were any good so we decided to go on the beginners slope. While we were falling down and running into each other, I remember all these little kids laughing and having a wonderful time watching us.

As we were all going down the slope we were starting running into trees, each other, and other skiers. If memory serves me right, we had one shipmate go to the hospital, another with other injuries, and myself with a sprained ankle. We did not do any more of that for the rest of the trip.

The next day I met two young ladies and they drove me around the Alps in their car. The following day we stayed in the bar and talked to this good looking little bar tending French gal.

She could not speak any English nor we French. I wish I had a tape recording of that conversation between three sailors and a French gal. It would make for wonderful listening.

FRIED EGG SANDWICHES (SORT OF) IN BARCELONA-SPAIN

Here is another one. I don't know if this is the way it happened, or how I perceived it to happen. In any case, we were in Barcelona moored to the quay wall. One night there were heavy seas, and we met some sailors off the Aircraft Carrier SHANGRI LA. Of course we were all feeling a little under the weather and somebody invited them down to the boat to wait for the weather to clear. Someone decided that he should make fried egg sandwiches. They looked pretty good on the grill, but when we started to eat them we all got sick. Whoever fried the eggs used the washing detergent as oil to fry the eggs.

Needless to say we didn't make a very good impression on the fly boys.

THE POPE AND OTHER ANTICS IN ROME

When we pulled into Naples a group of us took a three day trip to Rome. I still remember the sites we visited and all the tours that we took. We were at the Vatican two times, and on one of these visits, we were at a Mass with the Pope. I did take movie pictures of these visits, but they didn't turn out; it was too dark and they did not allow lights.

The one thing that stands out on this trip is that while we riding on the bus touring Rome, we all had bottles of wine that we were drinking. Anyway, we were seeing all of these beautiful women walking and somebody started yelling ****. The tour guide on the bus could not say the word ****. It sounded like s***. So we all started yelling S*** when ever we saw a girl walking down the street. It made for some hilarious moments.

THE ENTERPRISE AND MOUNT ETNA

As I sit here writing these thoughts, I all of sudden realize that I can't remember a lot of the things that I would like to. Being young I only had one thing on my mind when we hit port. So I don't remember the good times on SEA POACHER, or all the drills and operations. I do remember anchoring out in Souda Bay, Crete and seeing the Aircraft Carrier ENTERPRISE for the first time. What a monster she was.

I also remember seeing Mount Etna spilling lava and glowing in the night transit.

LEAVING SEA POACHER FOR PICKERAL

When I left SEA POACHER, I was transferred to the Naval Communications Station at Cheltenham MD. I spent two years there and was transferred to PICKERAL (SS-524) in Pearl Harbor. There I made a West Pac run in 1968 and brought her around to Charleston in 1969. I also made a UNITAS run. Then, in 1970 I left the Navy, and returned to Litchfield, Minnesota. I often wonder what would have happened had I taken more time to look at where I wanted to be.

I have had a great life. My present job, which I have had for 18 years, is with Sparboe Farms, Inc., where I am the Company Purchasing Supervisor. We have approximately 15 million layer hens and are the fifth largest shell egg producer in the United States.

My plan is to retire in 2008, and then travel and see all of the shipmates that the internet can help me find.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Richard would not have cooked those eggs in Barcelona? Naah!

CHAPTER 93

ARNE WEINFURTER 1963 - 1966

I REMEMBER DRY DOCK FLOODING AND REALLY DIRTY DIVING

DRY DOCK FLOODING

While the SEA POACHER was in periodic dry dock maintenance, I was assigned to routine below decks watch. I was informed to keep close vigilance for flooding in any and all compartments. I must have had a puzzled look on my face as I was thinking, "How could there be any flooding while we we're sitting in dry dock?"

I didn't make the inspection rounds as I normally did when we were out of dry dock. Maybe, I thought, I should at least make one round before being relieved of my watch.

When I got to the Maneuvering Room, I opened the hatch going below to the electric motor space. I looked down and all I could see was black oil! I immediately started to pump it out. All of a sudden, I received a call from the topside watch to shut down the pump. The hose going to the oil/sludge tank truck, which was along side the dry dock, fell off and was spewing oil all over the dock. I replaced the hose and started the pumping operation again.

A short time later I got another call from the topside watch to shut the pump off again. I knew I had placed that hose securely back into the tank of the truck, so what could be the problem now?

The topside watch kindly informed me the tank truck was full and over flowing. I had to find another tank truck to replace the full one, and I was pressed for time before I was to be relieved of my watch.

I found a replacement truck and finished pumping out the flooded area. I then had to clean up the mess on the side of the boat, dry dock, and the pier.

I later found out that a shipmate, who was qualifying, was down in the Motor Room and had stood on the valve that equalized the two oil tanks. This accidentally opened it which caused the flooding.

I narrowly escaped getting my rear end ripped out for the lack of attention of my watch.

REALLY DIRTY DIVING

My duty aboard SEA POACHER was in the Auxiliary gang. I was a Machinist Mate and served with my older brother Larry Weinfurter. I had gone through Under Water Swimmers' School in Key West to become SEA POACHER'S diver.

The diving I was about to do had nothing to do with underwater swimming, but with my duty as a Machinist Mate in the Auxiliary. gang.

The Sanitary Tank in the After Battery Compartment could only be pumped down about three feet. We normally pumped our Sanitary Tanks to a waiting truck when we were in port; much like pumping out a septic tank at one's home. But when we could only pump it down three feet, we knew there was a problem somewhere!

The Engineering Officer determined that a pipe in the Sanitary Tank was broken or had a hole in it. My job was to go into the Sanitary Tank and fix the problem.

The access hole was opened and the stench unbelievable. I determined the best way for me to get the job done was to strip off all my clothes, put on the air-supplied, full faced mask and ease myself into the Tank.

With the full faced mask, I at least didn't have to smell the stench. I found that the Engineering Officer was right when I discovered a hole in the pipe. That pipe must have been an original from the time SEA POACHER was built.

I managed to remove the bad pipe after quite a struggle with a pipe wrench. The pipe was replaced, and it was finally time for me to get out of that mess.

As I was emerging, I was hosed off by one of my shipmates, or should I say "sh**mates."

After the operation was completed, the Officer in Charge allowed me a couple of days off.

I believe I got the time off, not because of my good work, but because I may have had an odor about me!

"Some ships are designed to sink – others require our assistance."

Author unknown

"Too many sailors drive the boat up the mountain."

Japanese Proverb

"Our ships have been salvaged and are returning at high speed toward the Japanese Fleet."

Admiral William Halsey (1882-1959), in response to Japanese claims that most of the American Third Fleet ships had been sunk or were retiring

"I don't know why we have to be down here on this hold down exercise at the 60th hour. Hell, I went through this on THRESHER (SS-200) during WWII with a Nip Sea Going Tug hooked onto our screw guards, trying to lift our butts out of the water. They didn't get us then, and these Tin Cans (ours) ain't going to get us now."

"Hambone" Hamilton, SD1 (SS), who made 13 War Patrols on REMORA, during a 1957 exercise off Kobe, Japan.

"There are only two kinds of ships in the Navy - submarines and targets."

Author Unknown

CHAPTER 94

FREDERICK (RICK) SOCHA 1964 - 1966

**I REMEMBER VOLUNTEERING FOR SUBMARINE SERVICE,
THE MASTER AT ARMS ON SEA POACHER,
SHOTS FROM THE DOC, SCRAPING FUEL OIL TANKS,
TOP SECRET SOVIET SUBMARINE CONTACT AND RECORDING,
HURRICANE ANTICS, ENC HENRY GUTHRIE
AND INSIDE HAVANA HARBOR,
45 CALIBER HANDGUN TRAINING,
A BOARDING PARTY TO FIGHT COMMUNIST INSURGENTS,
LIBERTY IN ITALY, LIBERTY IN FRANCE,
THE STANDARD RESPONSE TO THE TOPSIDE WATCH,
MURPHY AND THE ADMIRAL,
SINKING THE ENTERPRISE (CVN-65) TWICE,
AND SHOTS FIRED IN PALERMO POLICE STATION**

VOLUNTEERING FOR THE SUBMARINE SERVICE

Before I enlisted, the Recruiter loaded me up with a ton of brochures and material on career choices in the Navy. The one thing that intrigued me was service aboard a submarine. I thought, "Hell, submarine service was the elite branch of any military service, what chance would I have to get aboard a sub?"

While in boot camp in Great Lakes, the opportunity was there to volunteer for submarine duty. This was around the time when the THRESHER went down with all hands. Other recruits thought I was nuts to even think about volunteering for it. Nothing could deter me for trying to get on subs. This was my goal; one I wanted with every molecule of my body!

After, what seemed like a never ending battery of written and psychological tests my ARI-GCT combination qualified me for submarine sonar school. I was on my way!

THE MASTER AT ARMS ON SEA POACHER

With Fleet Sonar School and Submarine School completed, I received orders to report to SEA POACHER in Key West. "Oh crap, here I was going back to the armpit of the world. I had enough of that place while I was in Sonar School!" Reporting on board at the same time was MM3 Arne Weinfurter. We had to camp out in the barracks waiting for the boat to return from the Mediterranean in 1964. When SEA POACHER finally came in, Weinfurter and I were among the men to catch the lines as the boat docked.

Chief of the Boat Barnett gave us our first duty assignments. He sent Arne to the Auxiliary gang. He told me I was going to be the M.A. "Wow, my first duty was to be Master at Arms? Why did he say M.A. instead of M.A.A.? Maybe he was from the old school and shortened it to M.A. like COB instead of COTB for Chief of the Boat." Then he completed the assignment for

me with a silly smirk and that old cigar at the corner of his mouth: "Mess Attendant."

In the background was 1st Class Commissaryman Edwards laughing his a** off. Being a Mess Cook was actually pretty good duty after all. It was a time to get to know the crew and whom to avoid!

SHOTS FROM THE DOC

When we were in the shipyard in Charleston, there came a time when we had to get shots, and not from a bottle. Doc Irion had a pretty shaky hand from a rather rough night on the beach. We were all thinking, "Oh s***, we're going to feel this one." But when ole Doc gave the shot, his hand was as steady as a rock. I wondered if he was just pulling a fast one over on us. That was probably one of most painless inoculations I ever had. Yep, Doc Irion was definitely a pro!

SCRAPING FUEL OIL TANKS

In the shipyard, qualifying was a difficult thing to accomplish with everything being torn apart. But, we certainly learned the "ins" and "outs" of a submarine, and I do mean "ins."

One of my jobs was scraping the inside of the Normal Fuel Oil Tanks. I guess it was because I was a skinny 135 pounds. The only way I could turn around in the tank was to exit the tank and reenter backwards.

I laugh at those who wouldn't go on submarines because of claustrophobia; they ain't seen nothing like this!

TOP SECRET SOVIET SUBMARINE CONTACT AND RECORDING

We were running submerged somewhere in the area between the Grand Bahama Bank and Cuba in 1965. I was on watch at the Sonar listening for contacts. I heard a faint noise off our starboard bow and paid little attention to it, as there was a lot of biological noise throughout the area, as in anywhere from shrimp noise to whales. As I continued my watch, the noise became more prevalent, and I determined that it was not biological, but that of a ship.

I reported the contact to the Conning Tower, via the 27 MC, a squawk box between the Conn and Sonar Shack. The Officer of the Deck notified the Captain, and he ordered the ship to periscope depth to take a look-see of the area. When nothing could be spotted on the surface, the Skipper ordered the boat back to a depth of two hundred feet. He ordered me to keep a close vigilance on the contact and report the contact's bearing rate and screw count to determine its course and speed.

After listening for an unspecified amount of time, the bearing rate and screw count was reported to the Conn. We discovered that we had made contact with a Soviet submarine and decided to track it as far as possible. The Captain ordered a sound recording of the contact with the reel-to-reel recorder we had in the Sonar Shack.

I have made several recordings in the past to record sea life sounds for training purposes. I took out a brand new tape and loaded it on the recorder.

The recording would be sent to Naval Intelligence to set up a sound signature of the Soviet sub, and to determine what class of submarine was patrolling in the Florida Straits. I began the recording by announcing: "THIS RECORDING IS TOP SECRET" which I repeated two more times. After all the recording was done, I was not allowed to play back the recording, because I

only had a SECRET clearance!

When we arrived back in Key West, Naval Intelligence was waiting on the pier for our arrival. The Captain handed over the package containing the tape and nothing more was heard about it. At least I never heard anything more about it.

HURRICANE ANTICS

During one of many hurricanes or gales, we usually had to ride it out on the surface. And there was one I'll never forget. J.D. Hall was the port lookout, and I was starboard lookout. Ensign Miller was OOD. The wind was coming in on the port beam and the waves were so high that I could touch the water from the North Atlantic sail as it heaved us to the starboard side.

Speaking about heaving, poor JD got seasick and barfed into the wind. Well, the wind blew it back into his face and also got Ensign Miller. I saw it coming and ducked down in my lookout hole. Hell, the next wave washed it all off anyway, as we were wearing foul weather gear.

In another hurricane that I forget its name, Mike Kassinger, Joe Storz, several other shipmates, and myself were stranded in Fort Lauderdale as we had a long weekend at Kassinger's folk's house. We were at a hurricane party at Crazy Greg's on Lauderdale Beach. The windows were blown in, sand was blowing everywhere, and Storz decided to go body surfing in the ocean! He said he was from California and missed surfing. We were all drunk enough to let him go. We could hear him yipping and hollering over the sound of the surf and wind. That's when we gave him the nickname "Surfin Joe."

Another "wet time" was when we were having night rubber boat beach landings on Dry Tortugas with some jarheads. Captain Wilson had set a partial maneuvering watch, and I had the forward deck sound-powered phones. After dispatching and retrieving the assault party, we were soaking wet and cold.

The Skipper ordered the Corpsman to administer GI Gin as we stood shaking in the Forward Torpedo Room. Just my luck, the Corpsman ran out of the GI Gin when it came to me.

Torpedoman Russell Bauer told the Officer in Charge that he might have some hooch stashed away in the room somewhere. The Officer, I believe it was Lieutenant McNerney, said "I didn't hear that, nor do I see anything!" He turned his head and Bauer brought out a bottle of Crown Royal, which the Corpsman allowed me to administer myself.

I must say it was a good portion of the potion, and I smiled at the others who just had the GI Gin! As I look back, this was the elite of the armed forces. And I still find myself crushing milk and juice cartons like we did on board!

ENC HENRY GUTHRIE AND INSIDE HAVANA HARBOR

We were on a mission into the bay at Havana, Cuba, operating from GITMO. Our job was to gather photo intelligence on what Soviet ships were unloading to the Cubans. We were somehow detected, and we scooted out of there as fast as we could to get back into international waters. We dove down to test depth to get below a thermal layer to avoid detection from enemy sonar. At that time, we were able to get into international waters with about 1500 feet to the bottom.

We were running ultra-silent, which meant no unnecessary moving around, no fans running, and the screws turning slow enough to avoid cavitation. I was on watch in the Sonar Shack. It was very hot with all the sonar running and no fans. We had the hatch open to the

Control Room to vent off some of the heat that the sonar was generating. We were also in our skivvies, trying to make ourselves more comfortable.

In Control, Chief Guthrie was on watch at the Hydraulic Manifold. I tucked my head out of the Sonar Shack, and asked him what would happen if we were hit by a depth charge in that depth of water? He said very calmly, "Grab your ankles with both hands, stick your head between you knees and kiss your a** goodbye!" After he said that, we all laughed and the tension was relieved.

After SEA POACHER reached international waters off Havana Bay, we came up to periscope depth and raised an antenna to notify GITMO that we were being chased by Cuban patrol boats. Navy airmen responded within, what it seemed minutes after our radio call, with F4 Phantom fighters and buzzed the patrol boats. No shots were fired, but their presence was all that was needed to send the patrol boats back to port.

45 CALIBER HANDGUN TRAINING

Before anyone could stand a topside watch, he had to be qualified on the operation and firing of the service issued .45 caliber handguns. Chief Guthrie took several of us to a firing range on Stock Island to get that qualification. We first learned the care and breakdown of the .45, then commenced to fire it. We each had one clip to shoot for evaluation of our shooting. I couldn't hit the broad-side of a barn, let alone a target! Chief Guthrie told me to keep both my eyes on the target, slowly lower the weapon until the barrel was even with the target, and then squeeze the trigger. After the recoil, lower the weapon and shoot again; repeating until the clip was empty. I was amazed how accurate my shots were. I wasn't a sharp-shooter, but I was hitting the target!

A BOARDING PARTY TO FIGHT COMMUNIST INSURGENTS

It was during our 1966 Med Cruise. One evening, our Executive Officer LCDR Fred Brown, announced on the IMC that a small merchant ship was seized by Communist insurgents between Corsica and Sardinia. He noted that the insurgents had murdered everyone on board the vessel except the Captain. We were the closest ship operating under NATO command in the area, and we were to take control of that ship. Mr. Brown then announced the names of the boarding party. I heard my name called off to my astonishment.

What could I do at 135 pounds to fight off these modern day pirates? He assembled us in the Forward Torpedo Room and issued small arms to us and gave us our assignments upon boarding the seized ship. This all happened during the middle of the night. We would approach the ship running on battery power with no running lights on the surface. That way, we could sneak up on them under the cover of darkness. We would come along side and board when the search/flood light was illuminated from the top of our sail.

I received a .45 caliber handgun and holster, and my assignment was to find my way to the Bridge of the ship and take control of the helm with LTJG Jerry Hucks at my side as the Officer of the Deck. Mr. Brown told us not to load our weapons. I protested that it would be very difficult to load our weapons if we were to be suddenly under fire from the insurgents! He relented and said we could load our magazines only after we were topside and ready to board, but not to rack a round into the chamber until needed, so that everyone would remain safe. Our boarding party was all well armed. Some with .45 caliber pistols, some with M1 carbines, and

others with .45 caliber Thompson sub-machine guns. We also had a sniper armed with an M1 carbine on top of the sail. We were told that after we seized control of the vessel, we were to sail it to the nearest friendly port, where either the French or Italian Navy were to take over.

My heart was pounding against my chest so hard that I thought I would burst a blood vessel. I could feel the SEA POACHER slowing, so I knew we were getting close to the pirated merchant vessel. At that time, Mr. Brown told us to stand down. This was just an operational drill and to return the weapons for storage. I felt like returning my weapon to Mr. Brown where the sun doesn't shine! I couldn't sleep for two days afterward because of the adrenaline rush! All in all, it was a great relief to find out it was just a drill.

LIBERTY IN ITALY

While on the SEA POACHER Med Cruise in early 1966, our first Italian port of call was Civitavecchia. Our Executive Officer LCDR Fred Brown had announced that we were the first American ship to visit this pro-Communist city in the past two and one half years. Being that we were to be in a potentially anti-American port, it was ordered that we would have two topside watches instead of the usual one. One was stationed forward of the sail; the other aft of it.

We were allowed our customary liberty call. Myself, and a few others went ashore in search of a local spot of interest (i.e., bars, ladies, etc.). We could not find the interesting spots, I guess because of the extreme conservatism of the area. However, we did find what I would call a small sidewalk cafe, with a short stand-up bar inside the door.

My shipmates and I were half-way enjoying Biera Peroni and some vino (they also served coffee and espresso), when the door opened and two citizens dressed in suits entered. Since we were in our uniforms they knew we were Americans. They looked at us and pretended to strafe us with imaginary sub-machine guns, yelling, "Viet Nam, Pow- Pow- Pow."

When we saw that, we knew we were not welcomed, left the drinks on the bar and got out of there! We then went to the train station and boarded a train for Rome, which was only about thirty kilometers to the south. Yeoman Frank Lukens, FTM Fred Williams and I toured some of Rome, because we had limited time before we had to get back aboard the boat. We were getting very hungry, and we ended in some sort of supper club. I couldn't read the Italian menu so I asked the best way I could if I could get a roast beef dinner. The waiter seemed to understand and brought us our drinks. When the dinners arrived, my "roast beef" turned out to be "aged" beef, red in the middle and crusty on the edge and cold. We were hungry enough to eat the dinner despite it being disgusting.

We still had some time before we had to catch a train back to Civitavecchia, so we took in a movie, "The Collector" starring Samantha Eggar. It was quite amusing to watch an English speaking film dubbed in Italian. We couldn't understand the dialogue, but we still enjoyed it.

LIBERTY IN FRANCE

During the trip to the Med in 1966, SEA POACHER made a stop at the French naval base in Toulon. A group of us on liberty did not want to stay in Toulon, as we thought it would be like any other Navy or military town.

We wanted to go to Marseilles because we had heard it was a "HOT" city to visit. Our mode of travel was to be by train. We were warned by the locals that the trains were not very dependable. The mechanical part was all right, but the people running the trains were very

temperamental and would go on strike at a moment's notice, shutting down the whole rail movement. The four or five of us decided we would take the chance and purchased round trip tickets. Besides, going by rail was the fastest and cheapest way to go.

We got to Marseilles with no problem and headed to a club that was recommended to us by a French sailor in Toulon. I could see why he recommended that particular club. It had quite a number of prostitutes doing business, and those women were beautiful. We found a table, ordered drinks and were besieged by these hookers. One of them grabbed me and said we were going to dance! I knew I couldn't dance a step until I had a few beers under my belt. (If you had heard the expression, "This beer taste like skunk p***!" this beer actually smelled like it!).

Anyway, after a few mixed drinks, I was ready to dance. Someone in our group had the bright idea to tell the girls that I was a virgin. Every one of my shipmates jumped on the band wagon and convinced the ladies that I was, indeed, a virgin. One particular cutie coaxed me into going with her to her room. I must admit, it didn't take much coaxing. I think I would have married that one! The normal fee for a date with one of the hookers was 40 new Francs, about \$8. Since this girl thought I was a virgin, it didn't cost me a thing!

When it was time to head back to Toulon, low and behold, the trains were on strike! How in blazes were we to get back before curfew? The only means of transportation at that time was by taxi cab. All of us crammed into the cab for the long and uncomfortable ride back, but we made it on time.

The next outing, I decided to stay in Toulon. A few of us went to a local bar in town and sat with a group of French sailors. One of the French sailors grabbed my SEA POACHER cigarette lighter and indicated that he was going to keep it as a souvenir. Well, I wasn't about to let that happen, because I had grown rather fond of that old lighter. I even had my name engraved on it. I could not speak but a couple words of French, and he couldn't speak English. I had almost started a French/American war before I got my lighter back.

While we were in Toulon, some of the SEA POACHER sailors and some of the French submarine sailors swapped places for a ride on the other's boats. One of the French submarines was named MINERVA.

The MINERVA had a rather unique hull design. It was built with three spheres connected to one another. The sphere design allowed a greater amount of pressure over our hull design. When they dove, they would take a thirty five degree down angle compared to our small down angles. When that ship dove, it dove fast and very deep.

That, of course, scared the c*** out of the American bubbleheads.

The French sailors would also like to feed us an over-abundance of wine, knowing we were not allowed alcohol on our boat. They had to pour some of our guys back on to SEA POACHER when we returned to port.

Sadly, I read in the newspaper in the late 1960's that the MINERVA sank with all hands lost. I wonder if I had met any of those who were on that last dive.

THE STANDARD RESPONSE TO THE TOPSIDE WATCH

While standing a topside watch during a chilly night, most of us would want a cup of coffee to warm us up and keep us alert. Many times, I would open the After Battery hatch and yell down to ask someone to get me a cup of coffee. One would first yell, "Hey Below" and invariably someone would yell back "B*** Who?"

MURPHY AND THE ADMIRAL

Frank Murphy, EN1, was a great story teller, or BSer, whichever title was more appropriate. Murf was a lifer submariner, having served during WWII, and also on board the BALAO (SS-285) during the filming of "Operation Petticoat."

Whenever Murf would start on a story, his shipmates would either turn tail and get away from him, or they would be polite and listen to his yarn. I myself, found most of his stories quite interesting or at least, amusing.

When the SEA POACHER was in home port in Key West, we received word that COMSUBLANT was going to pay Submarine Squadron 12 a visit and, of course, there would be an inspection. The name of the Admiral escapes me, but I can remember ole Murf spouting off on how he knew the Admiral from, "way back when." Like when the Admiral was a junior officer and had asked Murf from time to time for advice about different things.

When we heard all of this, we just shook our heads and said, "Sure, sure Murf."

The time arrived when the Admiral came aboard SEA POACHER. The crew was dressed in our brightest whites, spit-shined shoes, and in formation aft of the Sail. Our Captain, James Wilson, escorted the Admiral through the ranks of the crew when all of a sudden the Admiral spotted Murf and yelled out, "Murphy!" The Admiral smiled broadly, vigorously shook Murphy's hand, patted him on the back, and then asked Captain Wilson for permission (like he needed to ask permission) to take Murf out of the ranks.

Our Captain replied, "Of course, Sir."

The Admiral then said to Murf, "Come on, Murphy, we're going to the Officer's Club to reminisce old times." The atmosphere aft of the sail was utter disbelief and with more than half of standing there with our jaws totally dropped open. There went Murf with the Admiral across the gangplank headed for the Officer's Club. What a sight to behold as Murf looked back at us. It was with a big grin seeming to say, "I told ya!"

SINKING THE USS ENTERPRISE (CVN-65) TWICE

EDITOR'S NOTE: Rick mentioned that the next two stories on the sinking of the ENTERPRISE and shots fired in Palermo are hearsay. He is not certain of their authenticity as he was actually not on board at the time; however the stories were told to him several times. Be that as it may, Rick's recollection agrees with stories from other shipmates who were on board.

During the 1964 Med cruise, SEA POACHER and another Key West submarine were operating with a NATO combined task force consisting of the United States' first nuclear powered aircraft carrier, the ENTERPRISE and various other destroyer type surface craft.

The CO of the task force was a (O-7) Admiral and the CO of the ENTERPRISE was a four striper (O-6) Captain. The Commanding Officers of the submarines were Lieutenant Commanders (O-4), or as I call them: two-and a half stripers.

The assignment for SEA POACHER was to penetrate the screen of destroyers and other surface craft that were protecting the Carrier, and get close enough to simulate a torpedo attack on the ENTERPRISE by using a flare that was ejected from the After Torpedo Room.

The exercise began when SEA POACHER was far beyond the horizon.

We submerged, and began the stalking of the task force. We were running Ultra-Quiet while at Battle Stations Torpedo, and must have been very quiet. We could hear the pinging of

the sonar of the destroyers above us as we penetrated their screen. We were somewhere between the screen and the ENTERPRISE when our Captain ordered a flare to be ejected from our signal ejector.

Once ejected, the Skipper transmitted on the underwater telephone "Bravo Sierra, Bravo Sierra, Bravo Sierra" to announce the simulated torpedo launch on the Carrier. The four-striper Captain replied on his underwater telephone, "No hit, No hit." Of course our two-and-a-half striper Captain responded, "Aye, Aye Sir."

SEA POACHER surfaced and the Admiral radioed us to again sail beyond the horizon, and prepare for another "Attack" on the Carrier. The Admiral was really steamed that we could penetrate his elite protective screen and dared that we could not repeat it.

Submarine sailors loved to be dared, especially by an Admiral! He wanted us to wait until after sundown to start the exercise, where presumably, the seas would be calmer and the destroyers would be able to detect us with ease.

So SEA POACHER submerged after waiting until dark, and began the "Attack." Again, we were able to penetrate the screen with stealth. This time, our Skipper maneuvered us in very close to the ENTERPRISE. He ordered another flare to be ejected, waited a few moments, raised the periscope, and announced from the underwater telephone "Bravo Sierra, Bravo Sierra, Bravo Sierra."

All the while he was watching through the periscope ENTERPRISE crew members trying to sweep the flare off the flight deck. Our CO then asked through the underwater telephone, "Was that a hit, Captain?" No reply was heard, but I bet the Skippers of the ships that formed the protective screen heard plenty from the Admiral!

SHOTS FIRED IN PALERMO POLICE STATION

When in the course of the Med cruise in 1964, SEA POACHER called upon the Port of Palermo, Sicily to promote goodwill and to give the crew liberty ashore.

There was a shipmate I'll just call "Mike." Mostly because that was not his first name, and will remain anonymous, and who just happened to get selected for Shore Patrol. None of us liked to be on Shore Patrol, because it interfered with our "fun times" on the beach. Shore Patrol meant you had to wear an "SP" patch on your arm, and only a night stick/baton on your belt.

Well, it seemed Mike didn't feel much protection with just an arm patch and baton, what with surface craft sailors in the same port. So Mike purchased a .25 caliber Beretta with ammo. He kept the weapon under his waist to conceal it in case an officer would happen upon him.

Everything was going along pretty good until Mike decided he wanted to partake in a little of the libations, as some of his shipmates were doing.

But the only problem was Mike partook of too much libation and became inebriated.

He found himself inside the Palermo Police Station as part of his Shore Patrol duty and with other Shore Patrolmen. I don't know what went through his soused head, but he decided to show off his newly purchased firearm by firing off a couple of rounds into the ceiling of the Police Station. Whatever happened to his firearm is not known, but Mike was hurried away to the boat. The Captain decided to cut SEA POACHER'S stay and left early from Palermo.

Again this is hearsay and not a first hand account of the story.

CHAPTER 95

RONALD FRALEY, SR. 1964 - 1967

I HAVE SOME SECRET MEMORIES OF SEA POACHER AND MY BUDDY RALPH FRENCH

SECRET MEMORIES OF SEA POACHER

I prefer not to reveal my story on the loss of the New Orleans anchor. It would probably screw up a very comical situation that took place years ago. Plus, some of those shipmates might not believe my side of the story! Who knows, maybe I will get more laughs out of their version.

I had many great times on SEA POACHER.

MY BUDDY RALPH FRENCH

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ralph French wrote Chapter 53 for this book. He "Rested His Oars" on 2 October 2007 after a six month bout with cancer. Ron sent this on 9 October 2007.

Julie: My heart is heavy with this sad news about your dear Ralph. I have been out of town and just got home and read your e-mail. Ralph was my Navy recruiter on Military Street in Dearborn, Michigan, and the person who drove me back home because my father had to go to work on the afternoon shift in 1963. Ralph just happened to live in Rockwood, Michigan just a few miles from my parent's home in Flat Rock and did not hesitate to offer.

When I left the Navy in 1967 and hired in at the Chrysler Trenton Engine Plant, Ralph had already hired on there.

What a coincidence, huh?

Eventually, Ralph was my Boss too on the 383 V-8 cylinder Head line [Dept. 70 R]. He had excellent skills with people. The best Boss I ever had while working on the production side of making engines.

All this time, the one thing missing was what I found out when I looked at some pictures on the SEA POACHER website in the year 2004. I could not believe my eyes. There was a picture of you and Ralph standing side by side in the After Battery of the ship.

I had to email Ralph and tell him what I saw and ask him why he didn't tell me about serving on board SEAPOACHER prior to myself?

He insisted that he did tell me, but I did not remember.

That would have meant a lot to me to have known that my Buddy and old Boss served aboard the same boat as I did, and we could have shared many great sea stories.

I am presently retired from Chrysler, and I work at Enterprise Rent-a-Car at Detroit Metro Airport. Ralph also worked at Enterprise [unbeknownst to me] after his retirement from Chrysler.

For those others reading this letter, I must inform them that Ralph always called and had lunch with me on his visits to Michigan from Vegas the last few years.

In the year 2006, I was in Vegas and while I was there I visited you and Ralph. I must say Ralph sure picked a beautiful and gracious mate to spend his years with the perfect host!

Looks like it was meant to be for Ralph and I to share many of the same experiences as we made out way down the path of life.

Truly, a great remembrance for me to know Ralph E. French. A Sailor, Foreman, a fabulous Father, my Buddy and your beloved Husband.

He will surely be missed by all. My sincerest condolences,

Ron Fraley, Sr.

TM3 (SS), USS SEA POACHER (SS-406)

UNDERWATER TELEPHONE (GERTRUDE UQC) RANGE CHECKS

This was SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) on submerged submarines. How close were we to a contact? Your Book Editor did it many times, but had forgotten how. So, he checked with some knowledgeable sonarmen, quartermasters, and signalmen in August 2007.

If they did not respond, he threatened to ask some enginemen or electricians on how it was done. If they didn't know, they would at least make up a good story.

Ron Godwin and Dale Liggett came back and confirmed most of my lost thoughts on the procedure. EM Bob Henry and EN John Saeli even knew our Voice Call Sign. Operating with another sub or surface craft and with SEA POACHER submerged, we did the following range check using the UQC. It was not exact, but a good approximation.

It went something like this. If operating with the PICUDA, it would be ESKIMO HOBOT THIS IS FEVER ROUTE – STANDBY FOR A RANGE CHECK. We counted down quickly 5-4-3-2-1 and gave a very sharp Mark, and the QM started his stop watch on that MARK.

At the same time, the PICUDA was listening to our countdown, and said MARK at the time she heard our MARK, and started her stop watch. As soon as we received her MARK, we stopped our watch, and then multiplied the number of seconds by 800 yards.

Suppose PICUDA was 8,000 yards away, we would receive its MARK 10 seconds later. I guess sound travels at 1,600 yards per second. So it would take 5 seconds for our MARK to reach her, and then she would send her MARK, which would take another 5 seconds to get to us. So 10 seconds at 800 yards per second for a one way distance yielded 8,000 yards.

So we would send back ESKIMO HOBOT THIS IS FEVER ROUTE, Range 80 yards. It was in 100 yard increments and there many have been some coding

And more from John.

Did you know the call sign for AMERICA was HOTEL YANKEE and for GROWLER was STUDEBAKER?

Amazing stuff, huh?

CHAPTER 96

MERLYN DORRHEIM 1964 – 1967

I REMEMBER SOME REALLY GOOD MEMORIES AND TOSSING THE CAPTAIN INTO THE DRINK

SOME REALLY GOOD MEMORIES

I have a lot of memories while I was attached to SEA POACHER, but I tend to remember only the good and humorous ones.

I enjoyed serving with all the men and it was a good experience for a small town North Dakota boy.

I have one story that always comes to mind.

TOSSING THE CAPTAIN INTO THE DRINK

While operating out of GITMO and coming into port one evening, we were in good form as it had been a good day.

After the evening meal and cleaning up as best we could, being the barge didn't have a whole lot to offer other than some bunks and a bar, most had went to the bar to partake of some spirits in one form or another.

Some others in the crew just sat on the dock next to the SEA POACHER as it was a beautiful evening and enjoyed their favorite cocktail there. Some played cribbage and chess to pass the time.

As the hours passed, so had a lot more of the spirits and some playful types began launching others off the dock into the water below.

Well, the Skipper was also sitting on the dock and unwinding after a long successful day. Now, this skipper smoked long green cigars and was cheerfully puffing away when he was selected to also go for a swim.

Yes, off the end of the pier he was tossed cigar and all. Some laughed and some were in shocked at this event.

All feared the wrath of the Skipper when he was hauled back onto the dock.

But here is why he was respected.

He changed clothes, rejoined the crew on the dock, and laughed with the rest of us!

The skipper you ask?

LCDR James E. Wilson.

I'm glad I had the privilege to meet him, and serve with him and all the men during my time on the SEA POACHER.

CHAPTER 97

JOHN R. SAELI 1965 - 1967

I REMEMBER A MEDITERRANEAN RUN, A DEEP DIVE, THE CIRCUMCISION INCIDENT, THE PHANTOM S***, AND OVER A HUNDRED ANECDOTES**

MEDITERRANEAN RUN

In 1966, after coming back from our Med run, we were awarded our 2nd straight E (in fact we also won it in 1967 for 3 in a row).

We had participated in Mini-Bex operations off the Atlantic Coast, where we played the role of an "enemy sub" and were hunted by ASW ships for weeks and never got caught. During this time, we "sunk" the submarine ENTEMEDOR out of Charleston, and the nuclear submarine SHARK out of Norfolk.

After these exercises we hit Nassau, Bahamas for liberty. This was way before Paradise Island was even thought of, and we had Nassau and all those cruise ships to ourselves. There were no other American vessels in port, so we had a ball when we hit the beach. I remember hitting a few bars and all the tourists were mostly Americans. They bought us round after round of whatever we were drinking!

After a couple of great days on liberty, SEA POACHER had orders to head home for Key West. A few of us, I won't mention any names, were late for "morning quarters" and the COB was p*****. But we were escorted to the pier by all the lovely young ladies that we had managed to get acquainted with. So he kind of laid off of us in their presence.

Anyway, about 1000 hours we stationed the Maneuvering Watch, lit off all four engines and prepared to get underway. Thirty minutes later, we were still tied up to the pier when we were told to shut down the engines. However we still had to stand at our stations.

Word came down that one shipmate (identity hidden by the Editor) was not on board, in fact, no one knew where he was. Search parties were sent out along with the local police and at 1300 hours we were still along side the pier, still saying so long to our new found lady friends. Suddenly, a siren was heard, and a taxicab drove onto the pier, escorted by the local police and an Embassy car. Out of the cab, comes our guy, in his skivvies, heading for the brow. Then, a knockout blonde, in her skivvies, gets out of the cab and runs for him, carrying his dress whites. Well, by that time, the entire crew, which had been lounging around topside, saw all of this unfold and gave our guy a tremendous cheer! Those of us, who were late for quarters, never had a word said to us. But we all knew that it was our guy who cleared the way for us.

SEA POACHER, in 1966, had a great Med Run, we had a great crew, and we won our first E during those exercises. SEA POACHER "took out" the Carriers ENTERPRISE and AMERICA, and also the Flagship Cruiser BAINBRIDGE. Right after our torpedo run on the ENTERPRISE, we informed her on the Gertrude that she was "dead." Her Skipper did not believe that we were so close and refused to admit that she had been "sunk."

Our Skipper, I think at the time it was LCDR Wilson, had the signal gun loaded and we fired a couple of flares onto her flight deck. They believed us then.

Also, at the beginning of that Med Run, in early 1966 we had left Rota, Spain, and we were headed for Barcelona, along with PICUDA (SS-382) when we were both ordered to search for a B-52 which had just went down off the coast of Spain with nuclear weapons onboard. SEA POACHER and PICUDA were both ordered to go "active" in order to find the weapons, and we succeeded in doing just that. The weapons were brought up by the USS PETREL.

There is a movie on this "Men of Honor" or something like that, which stars Robert DeNiro and Cuba Gooding. There in is a scene about a Navy Diver locating the weapon and bringing it up. What they DID NOT MENTION was that SEA POACHER and PICUDA actually were the ones who located it.

A DEEP DIVE

This story takes place in August 1967. SEA POACHER, attached to Subron 12 in Key West, and proudly wearing the E/// on her sail (that she had won for 4 straight years) had just finished a 3 to 4 month overhaul at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Part of the overhaul consisted of the cutting of huge holes in the pressure hull above the Forward Engine Room and the After Engine Room so that the four generators, which were coupled to each one of our four Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines, could be removed and taken to the Electrical Shop on the base where they would be re-built. Consequently, these generators were re-built, replaced, and the huge gaping holes in the pressure hull were welded back in place. After all the yard work was completed, the barnacles were scraped off the hull, and the boat was repainted. We then set out for sea trials accompanied by two submarines and an SRV (Submarine Rescue Vessel). I was an EN3 (SS), and a qualified throttleman in the After Engine Room. However, I was excellent on the Trim and Drain manifold, and that was my diving station when we went for the tests.

When we reached the operating area, the Skipper sounded the diving alarm, and we pulled the plug – and sank like a rock. We were so heavy forward that our bow went down at almost a 45 degree angle. I can still remember the diving officer yelling "Pump Forward Trim to Sea, Pump Everything to Sea, and Full Rise on the Bow and Stern Planes." I took a quick glance at the depth gauge, and we were already at 250 feet and still sinking like a rock.

I remember hearing on the "Gertrude" (our underwater telephone) the message "Feveroute – Feveroute – I See Your Screws," as we slid deeper even more. Then I heard our Skipper Commander Headland from the Conn ordering us to, "Blow Safety, Blow the Forward Group, Blow the After Group, Blow Everything – All Back Full." The depth gauge showed us to be a little over 400 feet deep, and then we started back up. The Engineering Officer, Mr. Heinz, worked with me one on one as we pumped every thing to sea. As we reached the surface I for one said a few "Hail Mary's," because I knew we had to do this all over again.

After we all calmed down, the Skipper called all the officers and chiefs, except the officer on the Bridge, to the Wardroom to find out exactly what had just happened. As it turned out, the computer at the Philadelphia Navy Yard had screwed up our compensation putting too much water forward. This consequently screwed up our trim which caused us to sink like we did. Captain Headland had Mr. Heinz redo the compensation figures, which were then checked by the CO, XO, and COB. Mr. Heinz himself took over the Trim and Drain manifold and moved the proper amount of water into Bow Buoyancy, After Trim, Forward Trim, and the Auxiliary Tanks until he was satisfied that the numbers all checked out.

We were still "Rigged for Dive," and the Captain ordered us to, "Take Her Down." As we dove and heard the vents cycling, we had a "Green Board," and blew Negative to the Mark. I

heard the diving officer say, "Make your depth 58 feet." I knew we were all right.

On this dive, we approached our test depth of 412 feet in increments, and once there, stayed quite a while, because all the welded pressure hull patches had to be tested for leaks.

We returned to the yard, where I knew some shore duty sailor was going to get his a** chewed out for those bad compensation figures. A couple of days later we got underway for New London, where we were "Degaussed," and then set sail for Key West. En route we did some operations with ASW forces in the Atlantic and arrived home in the middle of October 1967.

In the Summer of 1968, we set sail for a Northern Run. Eighteen months later, the Navy, after spending millions of dollars on that overhaul redoing our engines and motors, upgrading our electronics and batteries, and upgrading our fire control systems so that SEA POACHER was now capable of firing fish with nuclear warheads, decided to decommission us in November 1969. She was later sold to Peru in 1974 where she served for another 22 years.

What a testimony to the men and women of the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. They built the SEA POACHER in just three months during World War II and it lasted for 52 years. Hopefully we never have to ask this question, but could we do that again if we had to?

THE CIRCUMCISION INCIDENT

When SEA POACHER was in the yard in Philly in 1967, one of our TM3 (SS) shipmates decided to undergo a circumcision at the Naval Hospital. Now that procedure hurts a lot more when you are in your twenties than it does if you had it done when a newborn, and you never felt a thing as a baby, or at least never remembered it.

Anyway, our anonymous shipmate comes back to the barracks after his snip-snip procedure, armed with a few spray bottles of Dermatol, which was used back then as a topical anesthetic to relieve the pain. He went to bed that night with the Dermatol on the night stand next to his rack. He was still feeling doopey and went right to sleep.

During the night, someone replaced his Dermatol with a can of Right Guard. Same size and same pull off top. Now the Right Guard has among its ingredients - Alcohol.

Well our guy woke up from the pain with a woody and needed to spray it real quick or the stitches would break. He reached for the can of Dermatol, sprayed his Johnson, and soon let out a scream, which not only woke up everyone in the barracks, but was also heard down in the bars on Centre Street in Philly.

I reminded him of this a few years ago at a USSVI Convention in New York, but he swears he does not remember it. But I do. His brain probably blocked it out from all pain that he was in. Ah - the things that we remember. I'm still laughing as I write this - 40 years later. And I was not the guy that switched the spray cans. I just remember waking up that night to his screaming and see him jumping around the barracks crying and holding his bandaged Johnson. I was laughing so hard, I wet my skivvies!

THE PHANTOM S*****

Did you ever hear about the Phantom S***** of the submarine barracks in Key West? There was a guy, who would always leave a dump in the shower in the barracks. At that time, the only guys that were allowed to have bunks in the barracks were those of us who were qualified. The NQPs had to sleep on the boat, but were allowed to change into civvies at the barracks, and were given lockers but no bunks.

Anyway, this guy was always leaving a "package" in the shower in the early hours, like around 0200-0300, about the time that one would be coming back from a night of hitting the bars. This went on for quite a long time, and we all thought it was one of the NQPs. We had the watch keep a close eye on them when they came in from the beach, to change back into dungarees, so they could get back on the boat.

But it was not one of them, because we finally caught the Phantom S***** in the act. It turned out to be one of SEA POACHER'S qualified Second Class Enginemen. Soon after that, this guy, who had been trying for years to get transferred to a West Coast boat, got a boat out of Pearl Harbor leaving for a West Pac tour.

You figure it out? Here the Navy rewards him with a West Pac boat after being nailed as the Phantom S*****. I knew him well and used to stand engine room watches with him. He was a good guy, with a black 1966 Pontiac GTO, 4 speed and tri-power. It was one hell of a fast car.

After 40 years, I just received a phone call from this shipmate of mine, swearing that he was not the culprit. So, here we are, after all these years, and the identity of the Phantom S***** is still unknown?

OVER A HUNDRED ANECDOTES

Do you remember the Forward and After Deck Watch while in port in Key West?

Do you remember the BUSHNELL on fire at the outer pier?

Do you remember LCDR Wilson as our skipper and being relieved by LCDR Headland, who later became Commander?

Do you remember Mr. Dietrich, Mr. Hinds, Mr. Miller, and Ensign Bartz?

Do you remember Chiefs: Bridewell, Taylor, Guthrie, and Roth?

I Do!

Do you remember pulling into Rota, Spain at the beginning of our Med Run in early 66 and being told we were restricted to the base for liberty, yet we all ended up in the towns of Jereth and Cadiz anyway?

Do you remember tailing some Soviet Surface ships into a cove that had been harassing the ENTERPRISE when she was launching aircraft? We snuck in, sat on the bottom, while they anchored and in the morning we surfaced, blowing our ships whistle, telling them "Good Morning", and by the way, "We gotcha?"

I Do!

Do you remember that we were on Port and Starboard Liberty the entire Med Run; however we had overnight passes, while the Surface Pukes had to be back by 2400 hours?

Do you remember the day before we were to leave Naples for the last time? At Quarters, we were told that the Liberty section had to be back at 2400 because the entire Fleet was getting underway the following morning?

I Do!

Do you remember Mike Kassinger and I, having met some fine young Italian ladies, had lost track of the time, awoke to the sun coming up and ran down the streets of Naples as fast as we could, to just jump onboard as she was preparing to get underway. Boy, was Bridewell our COB, p*****. After the Maneuvering Watch was cancelled, and the Sea detail set, Mike and I heard

our names broadcast over the 1MC to report to the Forward Torpedo Room, then we proceeded to hear a lot more names being mentioned to also report there. Mike and I were not the only ones missing roll call the evening before. We were just the last to report on board. As it turned out, a lot of the Liberty Section was still missing at 2400, and a search party from the Duty Section was sent out to find them, which they did in a local bar. Rumor had it that another search party was also sent out, not only to find the missing guys from the Liberty section, but also to bring back the previous search party! The Skipper was upset, he told us all that we were facing Captain's Mast and that he was not kidding! He did however; give us the option of voluntarily restricting ourselves at our next port of call which was to be Toulon, France. We all accepted the restriction, and had to stay onboard while we were there. This brings back some memories even if I was restricted to the boat

I Do!

Do you remember flying holiday colors while we were there? At the time, I was 23 years old, single, a NQP and watching that flag fly from our stern, made us very proud to be an American sailor and very proud to be a crew member of SEA POACHER

Do you remember the "Beaver Watch" that we had set up at the bottom of the hatches in the FTR and ATR to assist the young ladies that would be coming down the ladder and later back up? Yep, those French women were certainly choosy what they wore in those days - no jeans or shorts for them!

Do you remember our Torpedomen? Dorheim, Pruitt, Fraley, Jimmy D. Martin, Barker, Clyde Baylor, and I bet that everyone remembers Russell Bauer.

I Do!

Do you remember our Chief Torpedoman Taylor?

I recall that during that Med Run, probably while we were still in Toulon, we let a couple of our guys; led by Chief Taylor, ride a French submarine for the day, and a couple of their guys rode with us also. The French allowed their crews to drink while underway, and our guys took a liking to the cognac that the French were serving. Apparently Chief Taylor had a little more than he should have, because at the end of the day he had to be lowered down SEA POACHER'S Forward Torpedo Room hatch with a rope.

Ironically, a few years later, I believe it was in 1968 or 69, I read that the same French Submarine, the EURYDICE, had gone down in the Med with all hands aboard!

I Do!

Do you remember that Ensign B****, (or should I say Ensign Barf, a name that he was given by the crew when we rode out those Hurricanes in the summer of 66) slept in the FTR on our Med Run because there was no room for him in officers country.

Do you remember those very expensive tall leather boots that he had, that were used by certain torpedomen on watch to collect the water that would be dripping from the Escape Trunk every time that we were submerged?

Do you remember him getting p***** when he was awakened to go on watch and slipped his feet into those boots which were very full of sea water?

I Do!

Do you remember our cooks? Lamont Clark, Smitty, Buck Helms and Tommy Nemes who was

just learning? How about every Friday, when we were in port in Key West, there were cases of lobsters dropped off on the pier that we would have for our noon meal, or when we were underway. We always had lobster tails for the Friday noon meal! I especially remember Buck and very fondly, because I messed cooked a good portion of the Med run, and we became good friends.

I Do!

Do you remember his nickname? It was Buck the F***, and he lived up to it every time he went on the Beach. I remember one afternoon, while on liberty in Palma de Majorca, he was a bit inebriated, and he fell off the curb onto the cobblestone road and was run over by a horse cart, which was ironically carrying our Skipper. I ran to his aid, helped pick him up, saw that he was okay and almost died laughing because on the back of his whites was the tracks of the wheels that ran him over. The Skipper ordered us back to the boat immediately, and Buck had to be lowered down the After Battery Hatch. Buck, being Buck, changed into a clean set of whites and was back on the beach before the Duty Officer even knew that he had come aboard.

Do you remember when we were in Livorno, Italy and one of our Stewards got into a fight with some big Army dude and bit his ear off?

I Do!

Do you remember the crew taking up a collection and presenting Captain Headland with his new hat, scrambled eggs and all, when he made Commander? I wonder what happened to him. He was a great Skipper. I know that LCDR Bill Dietrich, another great Officer, went on to be Skipper of a couple of SSNs and retired from the Navy as a four-striper Captain.

Do you remember our radiomen, Scotty and Taylor, and our yeoman, Frank Lukens?

Do you remember that Lukens, along with Stanley Sobotka, vowed not to screw around in the Med, because they promised their wives they wouldn't and stuck to it?

I Do!

Do you remember when SEA POACHER and PICUDA returned from the Med and tied up at the same pier in Key West? The Navy Band was playing on the pier along with all the wives and kids from both boats. SEA POACHER set its brow and all the married johns ran to their families. Yet the PICUDA'S crew had to stay onboard. They were not allowed over because the whole boat was in Quarantine. It seems that when we made our last port of call in Palma, PICUDA went to Malta, where they met up with a bunch of Canadian Wrens, who gave them a dose of you know what!

I Do!

Do you remember an Ensign flunking his Officers Qualifications and the Skipper getting rid of him immediately?

Do you remember hearing that the entire crew of the SEA CAT (SS 399) non-volunteered because their Skipper was a horror?

Do you remember our Electricians? Chief Roth, Russell Burrows, Saunders, Bill Sargent, Santino, Hollingsworth, Scorer, Tiny, and Roy Yancey was a striker.

Do you remember the only FTG that we had on board who would eat 8 to 10 eggs every morning? I wonder what his cholesterol is like today.

Do you remember that 3rd Class Quartermaster who got caught forging signatures on his

Qualification Card, and they let him stay aboard?

Do you remember in Freeport, Bahamas, when there were not enough ladies to go around and the crew drew straws to determine the “Lucky Winners?” Thank God, I was one of the losers!

Do you remember when we were leaving Miami after a 3 day weekend, and there were so many people waiting to go on a tour of the boat, that the Skipper got permission to delay our getting underway for a few hours so we could accommodate everyone, and then bought us a few rounds of drinks while we waited?

I Do!

Do you remember the “A” gang? Tom Sireci, Arne Weinfurter, Romano, Ty Meritt, and Carney. How about the Enginemen? Sobotka, Urban, Benson, McCain, Jimmy-Joe, Kassinger, Parker and myself, all in the AER. How about the FER? Cuzz, Carson, Morgan, Dunkin, Al Lang, Whitmire, and Burkett

Do you remember the Mini-Bex operations up and down the Atlantic Coast in early 1967 where we took out the SHARK and the ENTEMEDOR? I think we won our 3rd straight “E” on that one.

Do you remember that after winning that third “E” we were given a run to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans as a reward?

Do you remember the entire crew volunteering to help us rebuild the #4 engine, so we could go?

I Do!

Do you remember that eight hour Maneuvering Watch up the Mississippi River on our way to New Orleans, and the farmhands picking cotton on the shore and not caring one bit that our sub was there?

Do you remember Rich McCain getting sucker punched outside a bar in New Orleans and Yours Truly knocking out that guy who did it with one well placed right cross, and the girls coming to our side when the Shore Patrol wanted to bring us in?

Do you remember diving in New Orleans Harbor with the local TV camera crew on board?

I Do!

Do you remember McCain and his GTO, and Santini with his brand new red Vette? How about that yellow Porsche that was owned by that Ensign on the PICUDA?

Do you remember that he lost his life in the North Atlantic when he was washed overboard by a wave, when he was securing some stuff that was loose in the line locker? I don’t remember his name, and I wonder if he was ever entered in the list of the USSVI Memorial?

I Do!

Do you remember when SEA POACHER went to the yards in Philly?

Do you remember the huge holes that were cut in the pressure hull above each Engine Room, so the generators could be lifted out by the Yardbirds and re-built?

Do you remember the countless hours of welding, x-raying and re-welding those patches back on?

Do you remember Sobotka building his go-cart in the Enginemen’s cage in Philly and would race it around the yard, only to have an accident with it and have to tear it apart before anyone would find him with it?

Do you remember the Battleship NEW JERSEY getting put back into service so she could go to

Vietnam and our beloved Buck putting in his transfer papers to her?

Do you remember the earthquake in Oakland during the World Series a while back? Someone told me that he heard that Buck (Brian K. Helms) was one of those killed in their cars when the overpass collapsed. God, I hope not! He was a great guy!

I Do!

Do you remember playing softball in Key West and we played the TIRANTE, in their fancy black uniforms for the Championship?

Do you remember that we were losing by two runs in the very late innings, when I hit a bases-loaded double down the right field line, which cleared the bases, Only to have the umpire call me out for stepping out of the batter's box. A bogus call. We needed to go to the video tape, but our Skipper, Officer and Gentleman that he was, told us all to behave, and that we had to abide by the umps call. We lost that game, by the margin of those runs not being scored, but we did get even with the TIRANTE. Later on in the year, because we were the E boat of our Squadron, they used SEA POACHER for the Admirals Change of Command Ceremony.

Did you know that only hours before, in the evening, we had taken on fuel oil and "lost" quite a few gallons in the drink?

Did you know that the Duty Officer, Sobotka and myself ran to the nearby firehouse, got some lengths of 2 ½ inch hose, hooked up to a hydrant, and in the cover of night, moved that fuel oil slick well down the pier, away from SEA POACHER? In the morning, when the sun came up, that slick had settled around the Penguin, the ASR for the squadron, and guess who - the TIRANTE! Both of those ships swore that they were not responsible, I felt a little bad for those snipes on the PENQUIN, but the TIRANTE got what she deserved.

I Do!

Do you remember when the shore patrol in Key West ordered all submarine sailors back to their boats immediately?

Do you remember taking on torpedoes and stores and getting underway immediately for the Med Only to turn around two days later, because the Three Day War was over?

Do you remember Corpsman, "Doc" Hardin getting p***** off when no one would take the "Freebies" that he would be handing out every time we pulled into a foreign port? Or when they airlifted him off the boat via helicopter when we were in the Caribbean, because his wife was in an auto accident and died leaving him with three little kids.

I Do!

Funny thing, I mostly remember the good things, the fun things, the things that made us stick together as a great crew. The fact that we won that "E" three years in a row was no accident, we were a great crew!

SEA POACHER had her share of "hard-a****", but I don't remember them. I don't remember too much of the hard times, or the "equalizers" that we had to stand, or cleaning the bilge or the lube oil purifier.

My wife always says to me "How can you remember those few years that you spent on that Submarine better than our 38 years of marriage and our 5 kids." My answer to her has always been, "Honey, you will never know the camaraderie that we shared" Right?

I Do!

CHAPTER 98

DAVID ROBERT (RINGO) RINGLAND 1965 - 1967

**I REMEMBER REPORTING ABOARD,
OUR TRIP TO THE MEDITERRANEAN,
SEARCHING FOR NUCLEAR WARHEADS,
CAUGHT IN A HUGE STORM, SINKING THE CARRIER AMERICA,
A SHIPMATE ALMOST AWOL, TORPEDOS OR PORPOISES,
GOD WITH US ON A DEEP DIVE,
MARDI GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS AND THE LOST ANCHOR,
THE RACE WITH DOC AT GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND,
ANOTHER RACE WITH THE POLICE, WHY WE WERE OUT THERE,
TRAINING AND THE WAR OFFSHORE MIAMI,
AND THE FIRE ON THE TENDER**

REPORTING ABOARD

When I think about it, I think that there must be hundreds of stories about reporting aboard a submarine for duty, whether it was for a sailor's first assignment or for any later assignment. I remember being an eighteen year old naval reservist back in 1964 when I left home for the first time and traveled real distance away from my home in Rhode Island.

My first trip was by bus to eight weeks of submarine school, and that wasn't far away at all. For me it was just a short trip across the state line to Groton.

However, after that it was a long trip north by train in January 1965 which was when I went to the Great Lakes for Interior Communications "A" school. After eighteen weeks, I traveled back to home in Rhode Island. Of course by that time in my life, I had become a real traveler, and thought I had seen it all.

After being at home for a few months, I decided it was time to go on active duty to get that two year part of my reserve obligation behind me. It wasn't very long until I had my orders and reported to the naval base in Newport. At that time the war was hot, and almost everyone was going to Vietnam.

The day I received my orders to SEA POACHER in Key West, seventy four of the seventy seven sailors shipped out that day went to Vietnam. Besides myself, one went to the Navy Band in Washington and one went to a submarine in Pearl Harbor.

It was cold in November 1965 when I headed south, but when I got off the plane in Miami it was hot, and got even hotter by the time I got to Key West. I thought I was in a different world. I had never been anyplace that was warm in winter, and I had never even seen a palm tree.

It sure was different from Rhode Island in winter. A cab dropped me at the main gate and from there I walked to the boat in dress blues with my sea bag on my shoulder.

Like any green recruit I was nervous as I requested permission to come aboard. I was taken back aft to the After Battery hatch and told to go below. I wasn't sure what to expect. I went

down the ladder with my sea bag over my head. When I reached the bottom I dropped it on the deck beside me and turned around.

Sitting at the table in front of me was one of the dirtiest, meanest looking sailors I had ever seen. I knew there were several other people in the After Battery Mess Hall, but he was all I saw. It was very quiet, and everyone was looking me over. I was too scared to say anything.

After what seemed like forever, this nasty looking sailor said in a gruff voice that suited him, "What's your name sailor?" I told him my name and he growled back at me, "F*** - you using my last name." I wasn't sure what to say, but I knew that I had to stand my ground or die.

I quickly looked at the name on the front of his shirt. I then looked him straight in the eye, and using the same language, said the same thing back to him.

He didn't say any thing else after that, but I could tell from the slight grin on his face that I had gained his respect by standing my ground.

In the future, he became a big help when it came time for me to earn my dolphins. Underneath all that appeared to be on the outside was a great guy. Thus began my two year career aboard SEA POACHER.

The guy's name who greeted me I will never forget. It was Russell Bauer TM2. I hope he is well.

OUR TRIP TO THE MEDITERRANEAN

Not long after I reported aboard SEA POACHER in November 1965 we started to prepare for a trip to the Mediterranean. I was new on board and was working hard to be accepted, while at the same time working on earning my dolphins. It was a busy time for me as we got ready to go. There was so much to learn and so much to do, and of course so much that I didn't understand.

I remember standing fire watch while welders welded what they called a Med-brow back aft. I didn't know that in many cases you backed into a pier instead of tying along side one over there, until someone explained it to me.

I also remember standing the topside watch the day a welder came aboard with a work order to weld six inch steel straps across our emergency buoys. It wasn't until much later that I learned why they put padlocks on our signal ejectors and welded those six inch steel straps over our emergency buoys. Until that point I was not aware that I was expendable.

The trip across the Atlantic started out uneventful. We traveled in a wolf pack of four boats. I worked on qualifying, stood my watches, and helped to retrieve a practice torpedo or two.

The water got very cold and not exactly calm like it was in Key West. Each time we found our practice torpedo, the torpedomen would say they couldn't wait until we lost it or it went to the bottom. Until then they would continue to make it ready again for firing. I don't recall that we ever did lose it. I think we brought it back home with us.

As the days went by the ocean got rougher. Unlike some of the boats, we had a North Atlantic sail but even though we were up that high above deck it got so rough that our Captain ordered us to stay below in the Conn and use the scopes for lookout stations. I had never seen rough water like that before.

One of the boats traveling with us lost two men overboard. I don't know for sure which boat it was, but I do know that it was one of the boats traveling with us that had a step sail. We set up a search pattern and looked for them for a long time, but we never did find them.

At that point in my life I started growing up real fast. The Atlantic had been so rough on the way over that the ocean waves had also ripped off our Med-brow that had been welded on in Key West. So we had to have another one welded on after we tied alongside the sub-tender in the Mediterranean.

Little did I know that crossing the Atlantic Ocean would not be the roughest water I would see during our trip!

THE SEARCH FOR NUCLEAR WARHEADS

We again made ready to go to sea. I was excited when told that our first port of call would be Barcelona, Spain, and it was to be my first time in a foreign country. However, as always, everything in life is subject to change.

Something more important came up, and we never made it there. Instead, as we headed toward Barcelona we were diverted to an unknown position in the Mediterranean. As we approached our coordinates, we went to Battle Stations. We were told at that point that one of our military aircraft had gone down in a storm and that it had several nuclear warheads on board. We were ordered to stay on location and to keep everyone away from the area we were in (and where the plane had gone down) until a Navy salvage vessel could get there to bring it up.

This was during the Cold War and the tension was high. We stayed on site for almost a week playing cat and mouse with Russian submarines and surface vessels, until our salvage people and surface ships arrived. They then removed the warhead from the Mediterranean. .

At that point we were released to continue on to our next port of call. We never did get to Barcelona, but the submarine service had just become very exciting to me.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the famous H-Bomb Palomares, Spain incident. On 17 January 1966 one of our B-52 bombers of the Strategic Air Command collided with a KC-135 tanker during mid-air refueling at 31,000 feet off the coast of Spain. The KC-135 was completely destroyed when its fuel load ignited killing all four crew. The B-52 broke apart, killing all but four of the crew.

Of the four hydrogen bombs that it carried, three were found on land, now contaminated with radiation, within 24 hours near the small fishing village of Palomares. The fourth had dropped into the Mediterranean. Not only were we searching for it, but so were the Russians.

We employed 34 ships, 2200 sailors, 130 Frogmen, and 4 mini-sub's in the search. We finally located and recovered it eighty days later at a depth of 2162 feet, next to a 5000 foot abyss. See References for detailed information on this incident.

CAUGHT IN A HUGE STORM

As the weeks passed I found myself in places I had only read about in history books. I spent as much time as I could, to see all that I could, and had a great time doing it. When we were at sea it was business as usual. We were there to provide a U.S. presence and to work with the Mediterranean fleet. We did just that.

At one point while operating we hit a storm. It was like nothing I had ever experienced in my life. No one had ever told me that the Mediterranean could be rougher than the Atlantic. The storm lasted for several days. All we could make were sandwiches. You couldn't cook; you couldn't even set a table. Everything ended up on the deck. We were a snorkel boat, but even

with the snorkel mast up and running on the surface, we were constantly shutting down the engines on high vacuum. Eventually the storm passed and things got back to normal.

SINKING THE AIRCRAFT CARRIER AMERICA

During war games with the Aircraft Carrier AMERICA and the rest of the Mediterranean Fleet, our Commanding Officer got very upset at one point. Our job was to penetrate their screen and to get to the Carrier at which point we were to simulate sinking it.

We did as we were assigned to do, and radioed the AMERICA we had done so. However, the AMERICA'S Commanding Officer claimed that we were mistaken, and that it was not his ship that we had sunk. We knew what we had done and that he was just trying to save face by denying it. But at the time we couldn't do anything about it.

For the days that followed, the games continued. We continued to elude everyone and to work ourselves in to a position very close to the AMERICA. The shot was ours to take, but this time our Commanding Officer ordered that we first fire a flare up onto the AMERICA'S flight deck prior to sending our radio message. We did that and then sent the message: GOTCHA!

A SHIPMATE ALMOST AWOL

We had some good liberty in the Mediterranean. A couple of our guys even went skiing in the Alps. We also had a First Class Petty Officer, whose name I will not divulge, who went on liberty in Italy somewhere. I remember standing lookout on the Bridge. The Fleet had left, and we were waiting him. The Captain was so good to the crew, and he did all he could to take care of us. We were very late getting underway, and he had sent a message (excuse) to the Fleet Commander that we had a mechanical problem, and would be departing as soon as repaired.

The Captain did not want anyone to miss movement. Thus the stall and the excuse. Eventually our Commanding Officer could wait no longer, and ordered that we cast off the remaining lines and head to sea. We had just backed down and turned around and were headed out, when a taxi cab came driving down the pier with its horn blasting.

I saw our First Class Petty Officer jump out and run to the end of the pier. He stopped and was waving his arms and yelling. The next thing he did surprised everyone. He threw his white hat into the water and then followed it. As he swam toward the boat, the Commanding Officer ordered all back full and then all stop; and we waited for him to make the swim.

Once he was aboard, we quickly went to full speed ahead to catch up with the rest of the Fleet. I don't know if our shipmate ever got busted for that ordeal or not. I do believe that he did get restricted to the boat for the duration of the trip.

My Mediterranean education eventually ended, and we headed back to the States.

Sometimes along the way we held small arms practice on the forward deck. Once we reached warmer waters and had some time to kill, we even had several swim calls. During swim call, the lookouts were armed and watching for sharks.

TORPEDOES OR PORPOISES

The last notable thing that happened to me on that trip was early one morning. We weren't far from Key West; just a few days out. I had the 4 to 8 shift, and the sky was just beginning to lighten. I was the starboard lookout, and there wasn't a ship in sight anywhere.

It was warm, the sea calm, and we were talking about what we were going to do when we got home. All of a sudden I saw two streams of bubbles coming straight toward the starboard side of our boat. The first thing that came to my mind was that these were torpedoes.

Keep in mind now that we were just coming back from a high stress Mediterranean tour of duty. And this is during the cold war, and the Vietnam War is going strong.

In my mind I am thinking that someone was about to sink us just a few days from home. It wasn't uncommon to find Russian submarines off the U.S. coast. So I did what any lookout would have done, and I screamed, "Two torpedoes starboard side!" The Officer of the Deck took one look to starboard and hit the Collision Alarm.

After that, all we could do was watch. As the bubble stream got closer, I was expecting to see and hear two explosions just forward of the sail in the area of the Forward Battery.

However, much to our surprise, instead of explosions we watched as two of the biggest porpoises that I had ever seen, jumped out of the water in unison, cleared the forward deck with ease and re-entered the water without as much as a splash.

Although I think anyone would have done what I did, it was a long time before anyone let me forget it.

With my Mediterranean education complete, I returned to Key West with a much greater appreciation for the country that I served and loved.

GOD WITH US ON A DEEP DIVE

I was known as Ringo on SEA POACHER from November 1965 to November 1967, and was a Third Class Interior Communications Electrician (IC3) when I was discharged. SEA POACHER was the best ride of my life.

In the Fall of 1967 we made an unexpected deep dive. It was one of the many memorable experiences on board, and this one that will live with me for all eternity. We were getting ready to go to sea for an extended tour of duty. Because of that everyone wanted to spend as much time with friends and family as they could.

I was single, like several others on board, and a long way from home. So when a long weekend came up just before our shake down cruise, I volunteered to work the weekend. I figured that way the married men could spend some quality time with their families prior to our leaving. We hadn't spent much time in port since I had come aboard, but I understood that that was normal for a submarine that had an "E" for excellence on the Sail and intended to keep it. I was one of several that agreed to work the three day weekend and work we did.

We weren't going any where so the most junior people and other volunteers were those that stayed aboard. All weekend long we loaded frozen foods, dry goods, fresh water, diesel fuel, and torpedoes. By the time the weekend was over, and it was time to go to sea for our shakedown cruise, I was exhausted.

As we headed out to sea, traveling on the surface, I took my duty station in the Control Room. It wasn't very long before we crossed over the Continental Shelf and into deep water. After a while the Engineering Officer came into the Control Room. He looked at the Engineer's Log Book, threw it back on the gyro table, and told the Diving Officer that it was time to make a trim dive and to take her down to 50 feet.

Everyone on board assumed that this would be a typical trim dive, but it turned out to be anything but that.

At this point everything started to happen fast. Nothing had been entered into the

Engineer's Log relative to what had been brought aboard over the weekend, and we were heavy. Very heavy! When we went down - we went down fast! Immediately, actions were taken to slow our descent.

Looking back, I don't remember the order in which everything took place. I was too busy doing my job like everyone else to keep track. I remember orders being given; all ahead full, full rise on both planes, blow safety, pump auxiliaries to sea, rig for deep, and still we continued to go down. The information flow over my headset was fast and furious. At first the drain pump was lined up to pump tanks, but soon it was needed to pump bilges.

We were deep, and much deeper than we were ever intended to go. Eventually, we even secured the deep depth gauge. By now our descent was much slower, but it was still in the down direction. We were bleeding air into our ballast tanks, pumping all tanks to sea, and pumping the Maneuvering Room bilges only. The shafts were leaking so bad back in Maneuvering that the drain pump could barely keep up with the water level, and we could not afford to lose power.

We were in big trouble and everyone knew it. We had done or were doing everything that we could. But we needed time for things that we had done to work, and time was running out.

As I stood there in the Control Room I watched the Captain pick up the IMC, and I listened as he advised the crew of our condition. I don't remember a lot of what he said. I was in the Control Room and was very much aware of our condition.

However, I do remember what he said when he finished describing our situation. I will never forget his words, "I recommend that each of you make peace with your own God." Those words have stayed with me all my life. I remember the silence on the phones at that point. I guess everyone was praying including me. I remember thinking to myself at least I'll get a multi-million dollar grave, and I will die with some of the best people I know. That thought sounds foolish today, but I was young and foolish back then.

It wasn't long after the Captain spoke to us that our descent stopped. It was like we had fallen onto a pillow. The explanation later was that we had settled into a very cold layer of ocean water, and it was holding us up. As I think about it today I prefer to think that it was God's hand holding us up. I don't remember how long it was that we sat in that situation. It seemed like forever, but I thank the Lord that it was long enough for what we had done to work.

After a long while, we lifted off our pillow of cold water and began our slow ascent toward the surface. When we reached the surface, we were ordered back to port. We were put into a floating dry dock and our boat was given a thorough going over before we went back to sea. That experience is something that I have never forgotten.

MARDI GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS AND THE LOST ANCHOR

Let's talk about our trip to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans in February 1966. This was a trip that we were not even supposed to take. We hadn't been in our home port of Key West very much, but we sure had been at sea an awful lot. To be honest I was happy to be staying in port for a while.

Our boat needed a lot of work to get ready for our next operation, and we were to be in port for two or three weeks. I had a number of things to fix, but the enginemen had a major task before going back to sea. They had to do a complete overhaul of one of our diesel engines. They also had to overhaul one of our stills. The still bottom needed to be replaced. So, as a crew, we had a lot of work to do, and the plan was to stay in port and do it.

However like everything in life, plans are also subject to change.

I don't remember which boat was supposed to go to New Orleans for Mardi Gras that year. However, I do remember that they had a frozen air manifold and that they were not going to be able to make the trip. I'm sure they were very disappointed, because that was a trip that all the boats wanted to make.

A week in New Orleans during Mardi Gras was a dream come true for a sub sailor. When the Captain came aboard and told us that we could make the trip every one was thrilled. The only hitch was that we would have to do all our maintenance work, on the way to New Orleans and on the way back to Key West. We wouldn't have much time when we got back to Key West before we would be going to sea again, and we had to be ready. The crew agreed and we accepted the invitation to go to New Orleans.

All the supplies that we needed were brought aboard prior to sailing except the still bottom. Getting that was a real problem, and we didn't want to wait for the part. The auxiliary men pulled the old still bottom and said that they could fix it. A trip to the Tender for a lot of brazing rods was the answer and with what we needed, we headed out to sea. Every one worked hard during our trip; there was a lot to do.

It seemed like it took no time at all to reach the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was early in the morning when we got there, and we had to wait for the pilot boat to arrive. I was in the Control Room standing my watch when the pilot came aboard.

It was a long trip to New Orleans and a lot of the guys went topside to have a look around during the trip up the River, as did I. It was a nice day and it was funny to look over the dike and down at the cattle, which were below us, and the height of the water held back by the dike.

Our crew had been instructed by the river pilot to get the anchor ready for the trip and had done so. I was by this time a bit bored sitting in the Control Room, until I heard a lot of noise up forward. It sounded like we had dropped anchor, but from the chatter on the phones it sounded like something was very wrong.

Something was wrong, very wrong. I don't know why or how it happened, but the anchor had let go and no one seemed to be able to stop it. We laid out the entire chain, and when it reached the end, the anchor grabbed the bottom pulling the nose down and to port. We all held on while the stern swung around to starboard driving the starboard screw into the dike bending the prop and the shaft. At this point the last link shear pin broke, and we left the anchor and the anchor chain on the bottom of the Mississippi River.

After checking for damage and making sure that the crew was all right, we continued on our way to New Orleans. Once we were secured at the dock the investigation started. However, I don't think it was ever determined as to why it actually happened. As for me the fun was just starting. It was Mardi Gras time in New Orleans.

During the time we were there, hundreds of people toured the boat while we were tied to the dock. We even took a trip down the River one day with a group of local dignitaries and their families. We actually did a dive in ninety feet of water to give them a thrill. It was a thrill for me that day just trying to keep the children in the Control Room from touching things that they shouldn't. It was very crowded in Control, and at one point I even had to push a woman out of my way, when the auxiliary gyro started to tumble. I had to get to it to stop it. I heard about that one from the Captain when the woman complained that I touched her where I shouldn't have. I explained what had happened to the Captain when he confronted me, and he understood.

I remember having the duty in New Orleans one day when a man, with his family, came aboard to tour the boat after we had stopped doing tours for the day. After he talked to the duty officer, I was called topside and asked to give them a tour.

The people were very nice, and I spent a lot of time with them. I didn't mind as I had nothing better to do anyway. When the tour was completed, and I showed them off the boat they asked me if I would like to come to their home to dinner the next night. I agreed. I had seen Mardi Gras and had enough of that.

The man picked me up at the boat the next night and took me to his home. It was that evening that I found out that he was an Admiral in the Naval Reserve. I have to say that I really enjoyed the evening. It was a nice change, and when he dropped me off back at the boat, I never thought our paths would cross again.

It wasn't long before the party was over, and it was time to head back to Key West, but we had a problem. Regulations would not allow us to go to sea without an anchor. The Captain made arrangements with the Commander of the New Orleans Naval Reserve organization for us to acquire an anchor from their Naval Reserve submarine.

We needed an anchor, and they didn't, because their boat couldn't move. On the way down the Mississippi River we picked up our new anchor and headed to sea.

The trip home was slow. The vibration in the starboard shaft was bad, so we had to keep the RPMs down. The trip home was the same as the trip up to New Orleans. It was full of a lot of hard work, but we didn't mind as we had had a good time. We had an engine to finish overhauling and a still to put back in operation. As usual the crew worked together, and by the time we had arrived in Key West both stills were back in operation. And so was our diesel engine. We were put right into a floating dry dock where the old prop was pulled and a new shaft was installed along with a new prop. With everything fixed, and with an old, but perfectly good anchor we were ready to go to sea again.

Oh, remember the Admiral, our paths did cross again later that year when he came looking for me, on board SEA POACHER at the shipyard in Philadelphia. He was doing his reserve time as the base commanding officer, and wanted to get together with me for lunch the next day. What a pair! The Admiral and an IC3. I must say it was a fantastic lunch in downtown Philadelphia at the famous Bookbinders Restaurant, and he paid for it.

Although, the Admiral never knew it, the experience that I had with this man helped change my thinking about military people.

There have not been many people in my life that I respected. I had found myself respecting just the uniform and not the man. With this man, however I found that I could respect both the uniform and the man.

Do you suppose that the anchor SEA POACHER left at the bottom of the Mississippi River is still there?

THE RACE WITH DOC AT GRAND BAHAMA ISLAND

While the time I spent on board SEA POACHER was full of good memories, there were some sad things as well. You're like a family, and when one member has pain everyone feels the pain. The Doc was a good man, and he looked out for the crew. He monitored the air quality when we were down for long periods of time during war games. He timed us when we were in the water in the middle of the Atlantic attempting to retrieve a torpedo in January. He even gave you a shot if you needed one.

He was just one of those 1st class people that everyone liked.

Being an E-boat we were always at sea operating with someone. We never spent enough time in port. I didn't mind. I wasn't married, and didn't have a wife and children at home to worry about. However, I did feel bad for the men that did. It had to be tough to be away so much.

I remember at one point we were operating off the Bahamas, but to be honest with you I don't remember what or who we were operating with. And it isn't important. What is important is that we received a communication from Key West that stated the Doc's wife had been in a serious automobile accident, and we needed to get him home immediately. With that in mind we headed for the Airport on the Island of Grand Bahama.

We ran all ahead full all night, and when we arrived at the harbor it was a bright sunny day. We were still pushing hard as we entered the harbor, and we were trying to make a plane that we were told would wait for the Doc. Of course everyone knows how a submarine plows through water.

About the time we passed the first "No Wake Zone" marker, we started hearing horns from some of the boats in the harbor, but we didn't slow down. The noise got louder and louder as we proceeded. We were getting a lot of people very upset.

The noise in the harbor continued to get worse and worse, but we continued on with one thing in mind, and that was to get Doc to the Airport. When we passed the Harbor Masters Station I heard them order us to slow down over their speaker system, but we still continued on.

After a while a very fast and very beautiful all wood dual inboard speed boat came up along side of us to talk to the Captain. The conversation didn't take long. The situation was explained, and the Captain of the speed boat agreed to take Doc to an awaiting car that was to take him to the airport. We never slowed down. The Doc was called up from below. The speedboat Captain came up on our bow wake and put his nose almost against our boat. The Doc threw his bag into the boat for another man to catch, and then with some help from a third man on the bow, jumped onto the boat. The two went back aft and sat down.

With the transfer complete, the speedboat Captain backed off a bit and hit the gas. In a flash, he was moving so fast that his boat left almost no wake at all. At this point our Captain commanded "All Stop".

The plane waited and Doc made it home. I never did see him again. His wife died as a result of the accident. I heard that he filed for a hardship discharge in order to stay home and take care of his children.

We spent the next several days after that on Grand Bahamas Island sitting in port behind a big cruise ship. I expected us to go straight back to sea, but I understand it was one of those regulation issues. You know how it goes; you can't go to sea without a Doc on board. I have to say I didn't mind the stay. I even had some fun swimming in the hotel pool.

ANOTHER RACE WITH THE POLICE

Roger Santino and I worked together most of the time during the two years that I served on board SEA POACHER. When I first came aboard I was an ICFN, and he was an IC3. By the time I was discharged I was an IC3 and Roger was an IC2. We worked well together, and I like to think that we did a good job. There weren't too many times that we went off base together. Roger was a little older than I was, had been on board longer, and spent most of his time socially with other people. We became friendlier after I had been on board for a while, had earned my dolphins, and had gotten older.

Roger was from the Miami area and went home a lot on weekends. I do remember one time; however that he and I went together. I had the weekend off, and he was going home to work on his Corvette. That was the time of my life in that the Mustang Mark I and the Corvette were in direct competition.

It had to be 1966. We worked on his Corvette in the driveway at his Parent's home changing oil, plugs, etc. When done, we cleaned it and later took it for a test drive. It was one fast car. Fire engine red and it did fly. I had never been in a car that was that fast in my life. When it was accelerating you were forced back into your seat so hard that you couldn't even touch the dashboard. Roger took it out on the Sunshine State Parkway for a cruise.

Of course a white, brand new Mustang Mark I came alongside after a while and challenged us to a race. That was all it took, Roger accepted the challenge, and we left that Mark I in the dust.

We had had a good day, and it was later that night that we made the 154 mile trip back home to Key West. It was late at night, there was no traffic on Route 1. We were cruising along at over 90 mph when we passed the 45 mph sign as we came into Marathon. We never bothered to slow down. There weren't any cars in sight, and we were making good time.

Before we left Marathon, we passed a police car that was parked on a side street. It turned on its lights and started to come after us, but Roger didn't want a ticket. So it was peddle to the floor, and the lights disappeared into the darkness.

We laughed about the idea that the police officer thought that he could catch us, slowed back down to 90, and continued on our way to Key West. It wasn't too long after that until we saw a lot of flashing lights blocking the end of the bridge in front of us. We looked at each other, and knew we were in trouble. I guess you don't outrun a radio.

When we stopped the car, the police officers ordered us to get out and of course we obeyed. Roger was taken away in handcuffs, and it was decided that I would drive his Corvette back to the base.

Just to be sure that I kept it under the speed limit a police car was assigned to follow me all the way to the main gate.

Roger will have to fill in what happened to him after that. I know it wasn't much fun for him. By the time he got out of jail, he was AWOL and had to deal with that. I think the Captain understood though. It seems to me that Roger was confined to the boat for some period of time, and it just so happened that we were going to sea for that same period of time. I will never forget that trip Roger. All is well that ends well. I hope all is well with you.

WHY WE WERE OUT THERE

Protecting our country is the biggest part of our job in the submarine service. However, our job doesn't stop there. Here I am talking in the present tense again. You would think that I was still in the Navy.

I guess you never really get out of it; you just go home and take it all with you. Although protecting was foremost, we had many other duties. Training ourselves to be the best that we could be was a big part of our lives, and training others to do the same was a big part of that. Anti-submarine warfare training was an important part of what we did back at that point in time.

There weren't many of the old non-nuclear boats left, and we were considered to be expendable if in the process of war we could eliminate a nuclear boat at the expense of our own.

We worked with surface ships as well as other submarines to improve each others skills. There was nothing as quiet as an old battery powered submarine.

We also did some equipment testing, and even spent some time placing hydrophones on the bottom of the ocean floor at one point. I wonder if they are still in use today.

TRAINING AND THE WAR OFF SHORE MIAMI

The training did not stop there; we even cross trained with other people in the military like Navy Seals and the Green Berets. One of those training missions turned out to be very interesting. The young officers that we worked with came aboard in Key West and stayed in the Forward Torpedo Room. Their training mission was to make a landing in the Miami area undetected. Our job was to get them there. It all started out very peaceful and according to plan.

Our plan was to simply run submerged, north up the coast, during the day and to disembark our cargo after dark as close to shore as possible without being detected. It all sounded like a good plan to me, but that was just at the start of the day.

Before we made it to Miami, I heard some very loud explosions. I was standing my watch in the Control Room when the Radiomen brought the first message to the Officer in Charge. The message simply read, "Surface and identify yourself." That message went forward to the CO. The CO sent a message back, and we continued on our way.

For a little while everything was quiet. Then another radio message, another response, and more quiet. The next thing that we heard was several more explosions. They were very loud this time like they were right on top of us. The next message that we received read something like, "Surface immediately or we will blow you out of the water!"

By this point the Captain had arrived in Control, and when he read the message he ordered "Emergency surface." Once on the surface we came to all stop and sat there in the sun. The lookouts and other officers on the Bridge watched as the huge aircraft that had been communicating with us circled our boat.

After a while they flew off only to come back again waving there wings as they passed over us. The next radio message that we received from our U.S. Coastal Patrol Plane was an apology, followed by an explanation that they had not been informed of the fact that we were in the area.

Of course, we also learned from them that the water where we were was almost perfectly clear for several hundred feet down, and we were very easy to spot. At that point they released us and went on their way.

We then submerged and continued with our operation. I was never quite sure if we weren't all just part of a bigger game that day. I think we were.

THE FIRE ON THE TENDER

Key West to a young man from New England was like a tropical paradise. But when we were in port we were usually very busy, and didn't have time to really enjoy it. When we were in port there was always a lot of work to do to get ready to go back to sea.

During one such time we were tied up inside the Basin just across the pier from the Tender instead of at our normal pier location. The reason for the change in location was to make it easier for Tender personnel and for us to get things done. The work week was a normal one.

However, what happened one night in June or July 1967 was anything but normal. I was standing the 2000-2400 watch topside when the commotion started.

At first we didn't even know what was going on; just a lot of people running around on board the Tender and some alarms going off. As time went by we found out that the Tender (I think it was the BUSHNELL) had a fire in one of the boiler room bilges, and that they were working to contain it.

I wasn't worried. The Tender was a big ship and made of steel. How much was there to burn?

By 2200 however, a total recall was sounded. The entire base fire department and the Tender crew had been fighting the fire for hours, and it was only getting worse. There was a lot of thick black smoke coming out of the stacks at this point and additional personnel were required to help fight the fire which was continuing to spread.

The word also went out to boat and building for everyone to send all the fire fighting equipment they had available to the Tender for their use. Our Duty Officer sent topside all the fire extinguishers that we could spare and some Oxygen Breathing Apparatus (OBA) equipment.

He then came topside to keep an eye on things while we ran it across the pier to the Tender's gangway, where it was being stockpiled and distributed to the guys as they came to support this all hands firefighting effort.

As time passed and the fire continued to spread it threatened the Tender's magazines. Additional manpower was called in, not to fight the fire, but to empty the magazines.

What do you do with all the shells for the Tender's deck guns, and all the torpedoes that she had on board to supply the boats? The only thing was to toss them into the ocean as quickly as possible. The shells were passed hand to hand in a steady stream on over the side into the water. The torpedoes were more difficult to move. However it didn't take to long to get a rhythm going and one after another into the ocean they went.

Everyone worked very hard throughout the night to bring the fire under control and to protect the ship. The heat was very intense. I don't know how anyone could stay aboard to fight the fire; I could feel the heat standing topside on SEA POACHER on the other side of the pier. At one point the flames were coming out of the stacks over fifty feet in the air. It looked like a roman candle with smoke traveling for miles. By morning the fire was out, and the firefighting boats were simply cooling the hot steel.

The fire had been a bad one. It was so bad that it had melted six inch steel plates and damaged the Ship's boilers beyond repair.

The Tender was so badly damaged that it could not go to sea under its own power. It had to be towed by three seagoing tugs to the Charleston Naval Shipyard for repair. The fire of course made local and national news.

From that point on I had very different thoughts about fires on board a large steel ship. I realized then that they do burn.

Even today when I go aboard a cruise ship, I give it serious consideration when on aboard.

"To the Soviets, American submariners were more than an enemy; they were ever present pests. To other Americans, they were simply the anonymous men of the Silent Service"

Sherry Sontag, Blind Man's Bluff

CHAPTER 99

TY MERRITT 1965 – 1968

I REMEMBER SEA POACHER AS MY FINEST SUBMARINE, A MED TRIP WITH TOM SIRICI, AN ENCOUNTER WITH SOPHIA LOREN, INJURIES IN ROTA – SPAIN, AND THEN THE GOOD PART

SEA POACHER AS MY FINEST SUBMARINE

Well, I am going to tell my SEA POACHER story the way I remember it. I can't guarantee that everything is exactly the way I say but it will be the way I remember it. SEA POACHER was the finest submarine I served on.

I came on board before the Med trip in 1965. I had already qualified on the CHOPPER in Key West. I had just come off a Med run and wanted to make another, so I transferred to 406.

When I got to SEA POACHER, I was assigned to the Auxiliary Gang where I met Tom Sirici, an Engineman working the A Gang. Tom was from the old school. He fixed everything with bolts, nuts, chewing gum, and bailing wire, but somehow it always worked when he got through with it.

When I met Tom he had gone through quite a few boats and wives. He was a 2nd Class Petty Officer with 20 years of service and a strong will to do things the right way.

A MED TRIP WITH TOM SIRICI

Tom took me into the A Gang, and we got ready for the upcoming Med trip. We became good friends. Tom was a first born Italian from a family near New London, and his father spoke only Italian.

Although Tom spoke Italian he had been around us southern guys long enough that some of it had slipped away and that is what this story is about.

Tom told me not to worry about a thing. He said that when we get to Naples for me to stick with him, and he would show me the ropes, the real Italian way.

When we arrived, being in the A Gang, we had duties to take on water, fuel and supplies so we didn't get liberty until the next morning when set out to see the town. Tom practiced his Italian on the taxi drivers, and we proceeded on to a small bar to wet our whistle.

AN ENCOUNTER WITH SOPHIA LOREN

As we entered the little bar we spotted a beautiful girl, who just happened to be Sophia Loren. Tom said all the Italian girls looked like Sophia Loren.

I asked for a beer and Tom said, "Let me handle this." Tom approached the bar and rattled off in a very strong Italian accent (words unknown to me) and the girl did not look up.

Tom repeated himself to the beautiful lady and I said, "Why don't you tell her we want a local beer?"

After the third time of repeating himself in Italian, Sophia looked up and said, "Why don't you just speak English and we will both understand each other?"

From then on I was able to order the beer as well as my Italian friend.

INJURIES IN ROTA – SPAIN

If you remember the first port we hit was Rota, Spain. There we had to take on supplies from the Tender. We always needed Freon to keep the AC running.

I was up in the FTR working with Arne Weinfurter and Dick Carney taking the supplies on board when some yelled, "Lookout!"

I looked up when everything came falling down thru the FTR hatch. A large funnel caught me right on the bridge of my nose. I didn't think it hurt me too bad until I turned around and looked at everyone. They all looked stunned and no one spoke a word for a minute.

Then a mess cook brought me a clean towel with ice, and I covered my face. I realized I was hurt when they all rushed me off to the Tender to get medical help.

AND THE GOOD PART

Since it was a holiday, the 4th of July I think, and everyone was off to beer ball games. The Tender Duty Corpsman was a Seaman just out of A school and had just arrived aboard that morning (brand new).

After telling him what happened I uncovered the wound, and I thought he was going to faint. The poor guy had no key to the drug locker, and therefore could not get any Novocain.

I told him, "If you hurry you can stitch this thing up as I am still numb!"

Nervously he proceeded to stitch me up and come to find out that he did a very good job. Because later when I was in Naples, I went to see a doctor that said, "Who stitched this up? This is one of the finest jobs I have ever seen"

I guess he was right because over 40 years later there is only a very little scar, and I still breathe thru the same nose.

By the time we arrived in Naples, I had two big black eyes and looked like a raccoon. Tom Sirici and I were assigned shore patrol together.

I got stares everywhere I went.

We overheard remarks like, "Look at that guy, he must have been in one hell of a fight!" And Tom would say, "Yeah, you don't want to mess with him, he is one mean mother!"

We played it out and never had any problems with our shore patrol duty.

Lot's of memories of the SEA POACHER and the crew.

Tom is now on Eternal Patrol, but I will always remember my good Italian friend

CHAPTER 100

CARL B. HEADLAND 1966 - 1968

**I REMEMBER WE WERE AWARDED THE DIVISION E,
OUR GENERAL OPERATIONS,
SERVING AS A SONAR TEST PLATFORM,
RIDING OUT A HURRICANE, GETTING A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE,
SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISES, MARDI GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS,
LOST EN ROUTE TO NEW ORLEANS,
A TRIM DIVE FIFTY MILES FROM NEW ORLEANS
AND LOST ANCHOR, DIVING IN THE BIG EASY,
A FIVE MONTH OVERHAUL IN PHILADELPHIA,
CAUGHT IN A HURRICANE,
OPERATIONS OFFSHORE FLORIDA AND ELSEWHERE,
A SQUARE DANCE ON SEA POACHER,
NSIA SONAR RECONNAISSANCE EXERCISES,
A NORTHERN EUROPEAN CRUISE,
THE WORST NORTH ATLANTIC STORM I HAD EVER SEEN,
A MAJOR DINNER ON SEA POACHER, STAVANGER-NORWAY,
BACK TO WORK AND HAMBURG-GERMANY,
THE LOSS OF SCORPION, AND FINAL THOUGHTS**

EDITOR'S NOTE: Another amazing story that I have to tell. LCDR Harry Huggins sent me on 1 September 2007 several photos for the book including one taken in 1968 of the Change of Command Ceremony where he relieved Commander Carl Headland in the SEA POACHER Control Room in Hamburg, Germany, while tied up next to the Aircraft Carrier ESSEX.

So I was scanning the photo into my computer for publication when I realized I had nothing on Carl Headland. I did a white pages search on the Internet and lo and behold, there was one listed in Charlottesville, Virginia, only 70 miles from where I presently live. I could not resist and made a phone call. A guy answered and he said he was Carl Headland. I asked him if he had ever been in the Navy as a Commander or Captain, and he said YES! We spoke on the phone for over an hour and told sea story after sea story to each other. They will follow herein. Carl did not have any information on the SEA POACHER after the Change of Command, and was not even a member of our Association. I am hoping he will join and be at the May 2008 Reunion. Thanks Captain Harry for putting us in touch.

WE WERE AWARDED THE DIVISION E

There are many great memories from 40 years ago. I'll try to keep them chronological. In August 1966 after some routine local operations, SEA POACHER was awarded the Division "E", based of course on the previous year. She proudly carried that on her high sail for a year

when we again got the award, this time for our efforts. The “E” and its hash mark looked real good in pictures on the front page of the Miami Herald; Navy Times; New Orleans Times-Picayune; Nassau, Bahamas; and the Cherbourg, France Newspapers.

EDITOR’S NOTE: The “E” was also written up in the BUSHNELL Turtle Newsletter of August 1967 where it was stated:

“The USS SEA POACHER (SS-4060 was recently awarded the 1967 Battle Efficiency “E” for Submarine Division One-Twenty-Two. This is the second consecutive “E” award and SEA POACHER will proudly display a hash mark below her previous “E”.

SEA POACHER officers and crew were jubilant upon receipt of this coveted award, especially while midway through an overhaul in Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Since SEA POACHER was high and dry in a marine railway, the crew was gathered in a work area for the official announcement by the CO, LCDR Carl B. Headland.

The XO, LCDR Paul Happersett, led the crew in three cheers for the “hash mark;” cheers which might have been heard in Key West. Other appropriate celebrations were held.

The “E” symbolizes Excellency in a ship’s readiness to accomplish wartime assignments as an effective fighting unit of the U.S. Navy. Performance in weapons, material, communications, inspections, competitive exercises and crew morale all play a part in determining the receipt of the “E” award.

In his announcement to the crew, the CO congratulated each officer and man for his performance during the year and announced that each would receive an official notation in his service record for this achievement.

OUR GENERAL OPERATIONS

During these two years we made 362 dives. We rode out two hurricanes and some nasty North Atlantic storms. Our Cold War contribution was to provide service to every kind of ASW group in the Straits of Florida, Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, Bay of Biscay, North Sea, and Atlantic Ocean.

We also showed the flag at home and abroad in that Cold War contest to win hearts and minds. We navigated the Mississippi, Delaware, Elbe, and Thames rivers and a Norwegian Fiord. We even made a couple of dives in the fresh water of the Mississippi River.

On one multi sub exercise we got the best of a nuclear sub, giving the crew some bragging rights in Key West. Our Northern European cruise, both demanding and with some fine liberty, completed those two years for me. Only one officer and ten men shared the entire two years with me. We were gone from our home port for eight and a half months during my final year. Now let’s get specific.

SERVING AS A SONAR TEST PLATFORM

In addition to routine ASW services, we often served as a test platform for sonar projects ultimately scheduled for use on SSBNs (Fleet Ballistic Missile Nuclear Submarines). The letters from the Navy laboratories would attribute project success to “the excellent cooperation and assistance rendered by the officers and men of the SEA POACHER.”

Once they offered a new sound system for the Wardroom in gratitude. I asked that the money be used for an upcoming dry-docking so that our crew would not have to scrape the

bottom. Remember the grassy hull?

RIDING OUT A HURRICANE

In October 1966, three subs in Key West got underway to ride out a hurricane in the Florida Straits. Families were sent to the Fleet Sonar School which was a brick building. We basically snorkeled on the surface for three days. On day two I sent a bible message to the Division Commander on TIRANTE: "Jesus Christ - the same yesterday, today and tomorrow."

GETTING A NUCLEAR SUBMARINE

In November, we participated in an exercise in the Bermuda Triangle with five other diesels to simulate transiting Soviet subs. We were opposed by constant P-3 air coverage and one nuclear sub.

The planes find us, and the nuke comes in for the kill. It was tough going. We snorkeled when we could, but their radar kept shutting us down. We were well down on the battery and getting ready to try to snorkel again when our outstanding Sonarman First Class said he could hear the nuke. Those turbines. What to do? Play along with the exercise?

The Sonarman sort of yelled at the Conn saying if we snorkeled, we were dead! That was the push I needed. We got a bearing drift and a range estimate and simulated torpedo firing. Then I got on the UW (Underwater) telephone and announced to the nuke that he was dead.

To his credit, he did not argue, sent a message and retired from the exercise. We snorkeled. What was the reaction? I don't remember, but I hope we provided a service in showing a vulnerability that could be improved with sound suppression and tactics. I heard that our guys bragged on the waterfront about getting a nuke.

SPECIAL FORCES EXERCISES

In January 67, we took some Army Reserve Special Forces on board for a few days with their rubber boats and other gear. We surfaced at night somewhere off Fort Lauderdale, and we watched them launch their boats, wondering if and hoping that they could paddle fast enough and long enough to get safely ashore.

Little did we know then that today they would be converting nukes to perform that same mission. In their post exercise letter those Special Forces guys (who must have made it ashore) said SEA POACHER must be the "cleanest submarine, have the best trained crew, and have the highest esprit in the Navy." They liked us.

MARDI GRAS IN NEW ORLEANS

In February 67 we were sent to New Orleans with other Navy ships to help celebrate Mardi Gras. Tough duty!

Well, some of it was. I heard scuttlebutt in Key West that the year before, the sub had trouble finding the main channel and also had bounced off of the bottom during their dive. We hoped to avoid those problems.

Our main scheduled event was to take on VIPs and dive at New Orleans at 2 p.m. on 6 Feb 67 where all the tourists could watch. Before going the 100 miles up River, we were to

embark submarine reserves at the mouth of the River, and work for a couple of days with reserve surface and air ASW units in the Gulf. These were fairly intense operations day and night.

LOST EN ROUTE TO NEW ORLEANS

We did have trouble finding the main channel with weak loran signals and poor radar results. Finally, when in shouting distance of the first of the hundreds of oil rigs, and while the Navigator finalized our position, I used a bull horn to ask our audience of hard hats on the rig, "Which way to New Orleans?"

They all pointed, like a chorus line, to the north east. This local knowledge confirmed our own position report and enabled us to get to the channel as darkness fell. We went up channel to the pilot station and embarked our reserves. Then back out into the Gulf to begin night exercises with the ASW units.

A TRIM DIVE FIFTY MILES FROM NEW ORLEANS AND LOST ANCHOR

We finally started up River after debarking the reserves and embarking our pilot. I planned to make a trim dive at the 50 mile mark to avoid any problems at the City.

As we all know, subs must have neutral buoyancy when submerged. But from a sea water trim to a fresh water trim? And how fresh is the water with all that mud?

Half way to New Orleans we were alone in the river on a beautiful clear day. We made our trim dive, a new experience for the river pilot. While the Engineer worked on the trim, I invited the pilot to have a look through the periscope into the big brown eyes of a Holstein cow. We got our trim and proceeded to New Orleans.

And then we lost our anchor. In a narrower part of the River, there was a sudden lurch that shook the entire boat. I thought we had hit a tree or a submerged object. The boat swung its stern toward the right bank. Then we resumed normal headway, and I called for reports. No damage and we went on our way.

Now being in restricted waters, the anchor had been made ready to let go. It took a while but the First Lieutenant reported that the anchor was gone. Guess what, the chain had walked out until the anchor caught something firm on the bottom. Then, fortunately in my opinion, a chain link parted. If it had not parted, our momentum could have swung our screws into danger.

So we proceeded on to New Orleans, sans anchor, keeping in mind not to have any trouble requiring an anchor. We sent some messages and made some phone calls. Besides us there for Mardi Gras, there was also the Aircraft Carrier WASP and the Destroyer BACHE

It was arranged for us get the anchor from the reserve submarine at the City for the trip home. We did this by going aside them on the way out. It was nicely done by both crews.

DIVING IN THE BIG EASY

We docked in the City, picked up the Mayor and his friends, a TV cameraman, and some Boy Scouts. We then proceeded up stream. The river here is about a mile across, flows at 5-6 knots, and is about 200 feet deep.

Keep in mind the Missouri, the Ohio and maybe 50 more rivers are included here. We saw debris in the river, including whole tree trunks with roots that could endanger our periscope or screws. Anyway we dove (in the vicinity of the Toulouse-Bienville Street Wharves) heading

upstream just below the Big Bridge (now called the Crescent City Connection), holding position against the current. All went well with lots of periscope tourists.

After about 20 minutes, the Engineer whispered up to me that the boat was still heavy and the pumps weren't keeping up. I announced on the 1MC that our dive was concluded, and we would now surface.

I was followed up onto the Bridge by the TV guy who took some great pictures of me against the City skyline which I later saw on the local news. We tied up, granted liberty, and commenced general visiting. We had had a busy week and needed to relax.

The Mayor made me an honorary citizen of New Orleans, and I know that all hands enjoyed the city. RADM Charbonnet, the local Commandant, said in his farewell message that, "All hands who rode SEA POACHER during her dive in the Mississippi River on 6 February had enthusiastic and complimentary remarks for your warm hospitality".

The reserve units said that "The spirit and cooperation shown by the officers and men of USS SEA POACHER was outstanding." The Admiral added that "It is rare that submarine services to this District have been so tightly scheduled or so fully utilized".

There were more "atta boys" as well. They liked us in New Orleans.

A FIVE MONTH OVERHAUL IN PHILADELPHIA

The next three months we had local operations and some time with our families before going to Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for a five month overhaul. In April SEA POACHER was the backdrop for the Change of Command for Commander Key West Forces and a great picture remains of us all in our whites. A feature article and several photos of SEA POACHER appeared in the Miami Herald on 5 April 1967

Overhauls are overhauls. They take a long time and the Navy makes no provisions for men with families back in Key West. The single guys might like the big city, but married guys miss their families. There were mad dashes by car on long weekends.

I hope that conditions are better today.

CAUGHT IN A HURRICANE

In the fall of 1967, late September or early October, we were finally ready for Sea Trials at Philadelphia. We were all anxious to get home. A hurricane was coming up the east coast. I said we would leave after the hurricane went past Long Island.

We started down the Delaware River, about a six hour run. We rendezvoused with our standby boat, a sub out of New London. With our shipyard friends aboard, we went to periscope depth and completed those tests. Next it was to 100 feet.

While doing those tests, we began to get calls from our escort sub that seas were picking up. Then they confirmed that the hurricane had turned around, that we should abort trials and they wanted to return to port. We surfaced and agreed, and headed for the Delaware. The pilot would not come out because of the rough seas so we went into Cape May to get him, and twisting "on a dime" (thanks to the Maneuvering Room guys) we got out safely and had the fastest trip ever up the River with following seas and wind.

Sadly we lost some sea days, and then after sea trials were done, we had to go to New London to complete some engine work.

OPERATIONS OFFSHORE FLORIDA AND ELSEWHERE

From November 1967 until March 1968 SEA POACHER conducted various operations out of Key West, GITMO, and the Bahamas, with a lot of time at sea. While we did the following operations, I can't promise the accuracy of order.

In mid November we went to Miami, probably on a weekend, to embark members of the Navy League at their National Convention. The Miami Herald photographed us entering harbor and put it on the front page, big time.

Later we wrote them asking for a copy and so you have a splendid picture of Sea Poacher against the Miami skyline.

In December we embarked the Prospective Commanding Officers Class from New London, and operated with TIRANTE spending some time in the Bahamas. At some point we had an ORI (Operational Readiness Inspection), which among other things, required us to do a photo recon. Remember? We went to Dry Tortugas and did a submerged photo recon of the famous Civil War Fort Jefferson in very tight navigational quarters. We plotted a fix every 30 seconds, Division Commander observing, and the quartermasters working very hard.

A SQUARE DANCE ON SEA POACHER

At some point, probably January and February, we went to GITMO to provide services to a variety of ASW ships and planes. It was daily operations with nights and weekends ashore.

On one Saturday afternoon, a square dance group of folks on GITMO duty with families arrived dockside. They said we have danced on an aircraft carrier and destroyers, but never on a submarine. I had visions of them tripping on the deck, falling over and hitting their heads on tank tops! But to break the boredom I approved it. It went well, and they thanked us.

Much to my surprise and with mixed feelings, soon after we made the front page of Navy Times; SEA POACHER with square dancers in costume dancing aft of the sail!

Big time! My bosses and others liked it.

NSIA SONAR RECONNAISSANCE EXERCISES

My records also show working with other ships, I believe a small carrier task group off Key West in a "Sonar Reconnaissance Exercise" as a demonstration for members of the NSIA (National Security Industrial Agency).

We dove and they chased. A message from Commander Key West Forces stated "All who witnessed the exercise were loud in their praises and in total agreement that the planning, coordination and execution were the finest ever put on for NSIA."

Later that month we tangled with an air group from NAS Gross Ile.

A NORTHERN EUROPEAN CRUISE

My final event with SEA POACHER was the two month Northern European cruise. We were to operate with a NATO carrier group in the North Sea in May 1968. My memory is that NATO wanted a nuclear submarine, and that the SCORPION had planned the run on their way back from the Med. This precedes the tragedy which I will address later.

We had just completed several months of operations and hoped to spend some time with our families. My memory is arriving in Key West with sudden orders to go and take the place of a nuke!

Talk about mixed emotions. My memory is that SCORPION needed to get to Norfolk for some repairs. As we all know SCORPION was lost at sea with all hands off the Azores due to a hot running torpedo.

This is covered in many documents, especially Sherry Sontag's "Blind Man's Bluff". But now for my final cruise.

THE WORST NORTH ATLANTIC STORM I HAD EVER SEEN

We must have left Key West by mid April 1968 with things going normally until we encountered some of the worst north Atlantic storms I had seen. We kept storm routing to the south, but I knew we had to be in the Bay of Biscay to operate with U.S. ships on a certain date.

We ran at full speed for longer than the Engineer's wanted. To their credit and the engine's credit, we made our rendezvous in time to dive and trim as the destroyers approached.

LIBERTY IN CHERBOURG-FRANCE

Our next stop was Cherbourg. Again from my memory, we were told that SEA POACHER would be the first U.S. Navy ship to visit France since General DeGaulle had told the U.S. forces to leave some years earlier.

Don't have any trouble, I was told.

Now the crew was probably not that happy about their premature departure from our Key West home port. But the French put on a welcome for us. The Naval Attaché in Paris sent a smooth, French speaking, U.S. Navy officer to guide us through the events of the week.

We dealt with the Mayor and the Naval Commandant of Normandy. Lots of official and unofficial parties. I couldn't have been prouder of SEA POACHER'S officers and enlisted men.

Yes we had one little problem, and I paid the police chief \$30 to spring one of our people. But that was all suppressed. And the message from our Embassy to SUBLANT and others was very complementary. We were in the newspaper and though I can't find a copy, I'm sure that SEA POACHER was on the front page of the Cherbourg Times.

A MAJOR DINNER ON SEA POACHER

A small sea story about the crew. After much entertaining ashore I decided to return the favor by having the Mayor and Admiral, their wives, the attractive daughter, and the smooth talking U.S. Navy officer for dinner in the Wardroom. I told the stewards that this would be the most important event of their naval careers and that they were to put into use everything they ever learned in Navy Steward School.

I remember the potatoes carved and dipped to look like roses. I asked the lead cook to please find the best steaks he could and to cook them lightly. They all did a great job. The dinner was a huge success. It was mentioned in the message from U.S. Ambassador Sergeant Shriver's Embassy in Paris. We left Cherbourg thinking "Mission Accomplished."

STAVANGER-NORWAY

Our next stop was Stavanger, Norway, another oil town, serving the North Sea oil fields. This city was beautiful, at the head of a long and spectacular fiord.

We would wait here until summoned by the NATO task group to join them. The Norwegians were also friendly in spite of the fact that the Mayor was reportedly anti-NATO. I had to call on him, and we talked about my Norwegian ancestors.

We saw some sites of Norwegian resistance during WWII.

BACK TO WORK AND HAMBURG-GERMANY

Well, enough liberty, time to go to work. We were to go out and evade our opponents, acting as much like a nuke as possible. It was like every other ASW exercise except for the water temperature. We were finally called to surface and told to start the run to Hamburg, Germany. The entire task force was going there. I think we were the last to arrive.

I know that we arrived at the mouth of the Elbe River at night fall and spent most of the night going up the river. My memory is that this was the best marked and lighted waterway that I had seen. That helped even though by now we could navigate rivers by day or night.

Hamburg was my final port of call on SEA POACHER. My relief LCDR Harry Huggins would be there to take over. The NATO aspect of the exercise caused the Germans to celebrate the arrival of all the ships.

The Mayor hosted a grand luncheon. Three German former U-boat skippers visited SEA POACHER for old time's sake. They loved the tour of the boat. One of them hosted several of us sub types over the next three days. Another friendly port.

THE LOSS OF SCORPION AND FINAL THOUGHTS

At some point here, I don't remember exactly when, the message arrived with the startling and tragic news that the SCORPION was lost. As I have said much has been written and here is not the place to discuss that. I have just heard that after our change of command, LCDR Huggins and SEA POACHER was involved in some search or other efforts off the Azores. But that is his story to tell.

Serving on Sea Poacher with the many fine officers and men was certainly the high point of my time in the Navy. I am grateful to them for their dedicated duty that contributed to our many successful Cold War operations.

Whenever we got a well done, and I have a file of them, the officers and men of SEA POACHER deserve the credit.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I was just about caught up with all the inputs for this book on 13 September 2007 when Federal Express showed up at my front door with a big package. It was more than big and bordering on GIGANTIC.

It was from our Commanding Officer Carl. I opened it up and found dozens of original photos, dozens of original citations and all sorts of things from his two years on SEA POACHER. He had kept them all.

I immediately called Carl and was greeted by his wife Pat. He was either at a Rotarian or Beacon Club meeting in Charlottesville probably relating submarine stories, so I took the opportunity to speak with Pat.

I told her how overwhelmed I was as the photos and things, would make copies, and would return them. Some for the book, some for the website, and some for the archives. But this would take some time to sort it all out.

I also mentioned to her, that after seeing the photos of Carl, I would swear I knew him somewhere before. After a few trial and errors, we hit on Submarine School in New London in 1960. Carl was an Instructor there, and I was a South Dakota farm boy - Navy Ensign trying to make the grade, but the issue was severely in doubt.

I learned later that Carl is from Little Falls, Minnesota. Anyway, no doubt about it, Carl was one of my instructors at Sub School 47 years ago.

Now is this a small world or what?

Now what about stuff that Carl sent me? I cannot include it all. Carl sent most of the highlights in the above pages. But a few are not there, and I will try and fill the gap. All the rest will be in the archives, website, or a newsletter. Carl's wife Pat, just happens to be a reference librarian so she filled in some of the facts as well.

Carl did not mention losing the anchor in the River, and later added it. He also said that he heard later from a very high level Navy officer that "You might check to see if your anchor didn't end up on one of the Mardi Gras floats or hooked around a lamp post on Bourbon Street.

I think it also fitting to include part of Carl's Change of Command "long speech," his words not mine, given in Hamburg on 3 June 1968.

"In the past year we have been eight and one half months away from our home port of Key West. We have met every commitment assigned, and on time. We have survived the long dark difficult days of overhaul and the endless, silent, and deep running hours of evading the opposition.

And when the air becomes foul, and the lights began to dim, and the cigarettes go out, and the nerves become frayed, then we realize our mutual reliance upon the human as well as the ship. None of these accomplishments could have been done without dedicated men, with high motives and clear consciences, aspiring toward a common goal of maintaining and operating this ship. The work is hard, the goals are clear, and the camaraderie is natural and refreshing. Our failures have only urged us on to greater endeavor.

For all of this the rewards are quite simple: A well done now and then, a good reputation among submarines, last year the E award for battle efficiency, this year perhaps another. But the ultimate reward for any of us is pride, self satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment.

It's the people then that make a good submarine like SEA POACHER. I have merely been, as Commanding Officer, a catalyst, a coordinator, a Captain for those of you now, and since gone, who have given your hard work, your loyalty, and total support to the command. For this I am deeply grateful...

The other night...I was told a joke about the gender of ships. In Germany ships are neuter, neither he nor she. We consider a ship feminine...

My wife is convinced that SEA POACHER is a she, in fact for two years, my mistress. Nothing but a mistress, she says, could keep me away from home so long, nor dominate my thinking or talking so much.

It's been a swinging affair with our iron mistress."

CHAPTER 101

WILLIAM DUKACZ 1967-1968

I REMEMBER THE MISALIGNED FALCON AND THE DEAD CAT BOUNCE

THE MISALIGNED FALCON

It happened during April 1968 at the Key West naval base. The SEA POACHER XO LCDR George Blessing passed the word that the Commander of Submarine Squadron Twelve Key West, and his staff, were to make a “walk through” (inspection) on our boat.

When the engine gang heard this there was a lot a swearing. We had just pulled the upper crank and pistons from Main Engine #3.

As you can guess the After Engine Room was one big oil spill, not to mention ten large and heavy pistons on the deck and a crank shaft swinging on chains overhead.

The group was comprised of the After Engine Room Gang EN1 Jerry Ping, MM2 Bryan Parker, EN3 Ken Banks and I, along with some help from the Forward Engine Room Gang EN1 Jim Morgan, EN2 Jim McAdams, EN3 Jim Malcuit and FN John Porter.

How the hell was the commander to walk through this grease pit in dress whites? As you can guess, there was a lot more swearing.

Swearing was part of the team problem/solution process.

Some ideas were kicked around. Then Jerry came up with a brilliant solution. We’ll clear the deck by hauling the pistons to the warehouse on the upper base! You could see the light bulbs were going on all over.

It had to be done quickly, the inspection was tomorrow. We didn’t have a truck available to haul the pistons. Jerry Ping said “We’ll use my car.” We all said okay, let’s go

Next thing you know, all of us were waiting for Jerry to bring his car down to the pier. I figured he had a big Buick wagon or something like that.

Here he comes down the pier in an old rusted Ford Falcon. A Falcon? The trunk on it was no bigger than a suitcase! This was not good.

We all proceeded to haul the ten pistons (weight 120 pounds with connecting rod) up the Engine Room hatch onto the deck and then over to Jerry’s Falcon on the pier. We got five pistons into the trunk.

What a sight! The rear bumper was three inches from the ground.

The Falcon looked like a surface ship torpedoed in the stern. It had a serious list.

Jerry and Bryan jumped into the Falcon. Jerry hit the gas. A blue cloud of oil spewed out the tail pipe. The car hesitated and then emerged from the cloud. It headed up the pier.

It was on its way to the upper base when it hit a speed bump. The rear of the vehicle lifted over the bump and then slammed down onto the ground. Sparks flew. The noise was horrendous. One hub cap shot out and was rolling around on the road.

We could see the Falcon made the rest of the trip to the warehouse in a blue haze. The rest of us still topside just looked at each other. Then there was a roar of laughter.

COMSUBRON 12 did show up the next day. But he never did a “walk through.”

THE DEAD CAT BOUNCE

This event occurred somewhere around the second week of May 1968. Earlier in the day we made port in Stavanger, Norway. It was somewhere around midnight, when it was dark and misty and about 50 degrees. The pier had minimal lighting.

Much of the crew had been ashore on liberty for several hours. It was quiet with the exception of the muffled purr of Engine #3 just finishing a topping off charge.

I had the topside watch and LT Carlton Griggs was the Duty Officer. We were shooting the bull when we heard some loud nasty swearing. It was the, "Maneuvering Room Bookends," Gerald "Frenchy" Theriault, EM1 and Leland "Holly" Hollingsworth, EM1, coming down the pier.

They were both drunk, Frenchy was not just drunk - he was "snot flying drunk" and in a really foul mood. Frenchy was walking very erratic, but his swearing was perfect. He was severely insulting the family lineage of some imaginary people.

Frenchy stumbled half way across the gangplank. When he yelled, "You M***** F*****" and threw a punch that caught air. He spun around, and his butt bounced off the gangplank.

He did a complete turn in mid-air and slid down the tank tops, into the water and under the wooden pier. It was quite a move!

Carlton and I watched. It can only be described as amazing. It was the best imitation of the "dead cat bounce" I had ever seen. Frenchy was now swimming away from the boat and further under the pier.

I don't know if you would call it swimming or just flailing around. None the less, it wasn't easy to do in dress blues and bombed out of your mind.

We both scrambled for a life ring or something, but instead found a ten foot gaff pole under the deck.

Carlton and I jumped down onto the tank tops with the pole. With my left hand, I grabbed his pants belt from the back and with my right grabbed onto the deck fender brace for support. Carlton leaned as far forward as he could with pole extended out and under the pier.

Under the pier, Frenchy was still flailing and swearing. He was moving further under the pier. We could hardly see him!

Carlton made several attempts to hook him, but Frenchy was trying to get away from the hook. Maybe he thought it was a hungry shark looking for a quick meal.

By this time, Holly was topside looking down at Frenchy calmly giving him some motivational instruction. He said, "Quit lollygagging around and get your a** up here. Where did learn to swim you sorry sack of s***?"

Let's go below and get some coffee."

Finally, the end of the gaff pole caught Frenchy by his jumper collar. Carlton reeled him in. We wrestled him onto the tank tops and pulled him onto the deck. We then stuffed him down the hatch.

We took offence to his disparaging remarks. But none the less, we felt it was our duty to save his sorry a**.

The next day Frenchy was told of his midnight swim.

But he didn't believe a word.

CHAPTER 102

WILLIAM HUBERT JACKSON 1967 – 1969

**I REMEMBER NOT HAVING A MEMORY,
MY BACKGROUND AND GETTING TO SEA POACHER,
BECOMING AN ELECTRICIAN'S MATE,
REPORTING BACK TO SEA POACHER AND SEVERAL CRUISES,
THINKING WE HAD LOST A SHIPMATE,
FINDING A CANNON BALL AND LOSING MY WEDDING RING,
THE TOPSIDE WATCH SHOOTING HIMSELF IN THE FOOT,
A MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT
OTHER SEA POACHER INCIDENTS,
AND THE DECOMMISSIONING OF OUR BOAT**

NOT HAVING A MEMORY

Now, I apologize for not sending anything earlier for the book, but I just can't remember in such great detail as some of the stories I have read that the guys have sent in to you. After 40 years, my memory of any details is pretty well gone. How they can quote names, dates and even in some cases times is truly amazing. They must have kept diaries. I didn't; however the time I spent on SEA POACHER was truly one of the highlights of my life.

In any case, I am going to put some things down, and however you want to edit it and use it is totally up to you. I admire and appreciate very much all of the long hours and hard work you are putting into this book. You are doing something that should have been done years ago. All former Sea Poacher sailors owe you a great deal of gratitude. I thank you from the bottom of my heart!

MY BACKGROUND AND GETTING TO SEA POACHER

I was born and raised in Texas the son of a share cropper. I farmed with my dad and brother until I was 21 years old, got married in 1965, and nine months later joined the Navy because I was being drafted into the Army.

We then went to boot camp in San Diego where I volunteered for submarines. It then attended Submarine School in New London, and reported aboard SEA POACHER in January 1967. She was tied up alongside the Tender BUSHNELL.

BECOMING AN ELECTRICIAN'S MATE

As a Fireman, I stood topside watches, manned both the Bow and Stern planes, and was a Mess Cook in the Galley. We were in GITMO and the Chief Electricians Mate Bob Roth came up and asked me if I wanted to be an EM. I said what is that? He told me they were giving the

test for Third Class Electricians Mate on the base that day and if I wanted to stay in and take it I could.

Well, I said YES, took the test, passed it, and got my first crow. Boy was I proud! I qualified in submarines after about a year and then was asked if I wanted to go to Electricians Mate "A" School. It was another resounding YES!

So we went to the Great Lakes Naval Training Center, and the wife and I lived in a little town called Waukegan just north of the base. I had it made as I was the only one in my class that had already made rate and was also qualified in submarines.

REPORTING BACK TO SEA POACHER AND SEVERAL CRUISES

Yes, I came back to the POACHER, which I think had made a Med run while I was in school. I was sorry I had missed France and Germany. However, we did go to GITMO four times and Jamaica twice. We also went to Nassau and then in 1968, it was a run to Portugal, Spain, England, Scotland and Norway. We even went above the Arctic Circle and the crew was inducted into the Order of the Blue Noses.

Oh, and I almost forgot that in February 1967, we came up the Mississippi River to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. My wife flew over, and we had a great time. That's when I got my card for diving in the Mississippi which they called the Catfish Dive.

THINKING WE HAD LOST A SHIPMATE

One of the things that I remember was on one of our trips to GITMO; we went over to either Port Antonio or Ocho Rios, Jamaica. We were tied up in the harbor and several of us were jumping off the boat and swimming. The water was so clear it was unbelievable.

Well, one our guys named Henry Jarvis dove off the side and didn't come up. We kept looking for him and finally notified the Duty Officer. Another 10 or 15 minutes elapsed and Jarvis finally surfaced. He had dove down and went inside one of the main ballast tanks. He waited for a while, finally came out, and thought it was real funny. I do remember that the Duty Officer didn't see the humor. I don't remember if he got into trouble or not, but I don't think he tried that again. Henry was, I think, from Florida and a great swimmer.

FINDING A CANNON BALL AND LOSING MY WEDDING RING

He is also the one that I went diving with off Paradise Island in Nassau. Well, Henry found an old cannon ball and got it back up onto the coral reef. I was not as good a swimmer as he and while trying to get out of the surf on the reef, I lost my wedding band.

Did I mention that we were swimming in a restricted area and it was very much against Bahamian law to remove any artifacts? I wonder what Jarvis ever did with that old cannon ball after he got all the coral off it? Large paper weight I guess.

And I think my wife still thinks I pawned the ring.

THE TOPSIDE WATCH SHOOTING HIMSELF IN THE FOOT

Then there was the incident of the topside watch playing with his side piece, a .45 caliber pistol, while we were tied up in Key West. He stuck a clip into it and wound up shooting himself in the foot. I can't remember his name.

OTHER SEA POACHER INCIDENTS

Did anyone ever mention about on our 1968 trip to England that we had to make an emergency dive in the English Channel to avoid a freighter that kept changing his course to a head on collision with us every time we changed our heading to avoid him?

And on one trip in the Caribbean, I think in 1967, we were operating with a Mobile Noise Barge (MONOB1) which was being used for sound testing. They had hydrophones strung down to the ocean floor. SEA POACHER, along with other submarines, were making passes by the hydrophones.

Later, for some reason we surfaced, and they asked if anyone wanted to go swimming. We hadn't been in the water long when I looked up on the Bridge and someone had an M-1 rifle. After I got out of the water, I asked about the rifle, and was advised it was for sharks.

The Bridge then called down for the Galley to bring up some raw meat. It and a cardboard box were thrown into the water, and we had small arms practice. That was great fun. It was the first time I ever got to fire a Thompson submachine gun.

A few sharks got into the act also.

Then something was said about another submarine being in the area and it wasn't one of ours. Rumor was it was Russian. Who knows?

We went back to operations and don't recall hearing any more about this unwanted visitor spying on us.

A MOST EMBARRASSING MOMENT

We were in Fort Lauderdale. One of several trips the SEA POACHER made there while I was aboard. I had the duty. We were tied up along side a pier and my job was to help conduct tours of the boat.

We were all dressed up in our whites, and I had been stationed topside at the Forward Torpedo Room hatch. A lady came aboard with several small children. It was too dangerous for the children to climb down the ladder alone because of them being very young.

So, I went down the ladder to the bottom of the Forward Escape Trunk hatch where I stopped and placed a foot on each side of the hatch. I then looked up top side and waited as another crew member passed the children down to me one at a time. Then I would bend over in the Escape Chamber and pass the child down to another SEA POACHER crew member standing on the deck of the Forward Torpedo Room.

I did this a couple of times and then stood back up to receive the next child. Well, little did I realize that this was all of the lady's children, and she was now coming down the ladder.

Let's just say she was a lady of large proportions and was wearing a dress. As I stood back up, I came up under her dress and the top of my head struck her in the buttocks.

I don't know who was more surprised. I know it was probably only seconds, but it seemed like an eternity. She was trying to go back up, and I was trying to get my feet off the sides of the Escape hatch on to the lower ladder and go down.

After I got unwrapped from the petty coats, I shot down the ladder and did not stop until I got to the After Torpedo Room. I came back up topside after a bit and made it back to my station at the FTR hatch. I just didn't want to face that lady again.

But now that I think of it, it's not her face that I probably would have recognized.

THE DECOMMISSIONING OF OUR BOAT

In 1969, we went into the Shipyard in Philly and SEA POACHER was decommissioned. I hated to see that. I loved that old boat. It really had a way of getting under your skin. It became a lot more to you than just a big black hunk of steel, and the guys were more like family and still are to me today. Even after all these years.

I got out of the Navy in December of 1969 as an E-5. I have wished many times I had stayed in. I know deep down in my heart that I would have if I had not been married and had a little girl born on 15 April 1969, the first of three daughters.

I just got to thinking about my kids growing up and me not being there to enjoy them with my wife. I guess that is the main reason I got out.

Lanny, if you can use any of this fine; if not, I understand. I just don't remember a lot of the details, but I do remember my love for that old boat, and how proud I am to have had the chance to serve on her and to be called a SUBMARINER.

One last parting comment or maybe it is a question that a lot of my shipmates might ask. Why is it that those three short years I spent on board the SEA POACHER mean so much more to me than the last 35 years I have worked as an Engineer for a major phone company?

If at any time I am asked what the proudest moment of my life is, I will not hesitate to say it was my time serving my nation aboard the United States Submarine USS SEA POACHER (SS-406).

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

Thomas Paine

"In this country it's a good thing to kill and admiral now and then to encourage the others.?"

Voltaire

"The nation that forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten."

Calvin Coolidge

CHAPTER 103

HARRY HUGGINS 1968 - 1969

**I REMEMBER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER'S,
TAKING COMMAND OF SEA POACHER IN GERMANY,
LOOKING FOR THE SCORPION,
KEY WEST AND GITMO OPERATIONS,
NAVAL EXERCISES OFF IBERIA AND A RUSSIAN CRUISER,
A REVIEW BY QUEEN ELIZABETH,
REACHING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE AND BECOMING BLUE NOSES,
AND DECOMMISSIONING AND TRANSFER TO THE RESERVE FLEET**

CHIEF PETTY OFFICERS

I got this from another old diesel boat skipper and don't know for sure who wrote it. But I cannot disagree with any thing that is said. One thing we weren't aware of at the time, but became evident as life wore on, was that we learned true leadership from the finest examples any lad was ever given - boat qualified CPOs on SEA POACHER.

They were crusty b***** who had done it all and had been forged into men who had been time tested over more years than a lot of us had time on the Planet. The ones I remember wore hydraulic oil stained hats with scratched and dinged-up insignia, faded shirts, some with a Bull Durham tag dangling out of their right-hand pocket or a pipe and tobacco reloads in a worn leather pouch in their hip pockets, and a Zippo that had been everywhere.

Some of them came with tattoos on their forearms that would force them to keep their cuffs buttoned at a Methodist picnic.

Most of them were as tough as a boarding house steak. A quality required to survive the life they lived. They were and always will be a breed apart from all other residents of Mother Earth.

They took eighteen year-old idiots and hammered the stupid b***** into submarine sailors. You knew instinctively it had to be hell on earth to have been born a Chief's kid. God should have given all sons born to Chiefs a return option.

A Chief didn't have to command respect. He got it because there was nothing else you could give them. They were God's designated hitters on Earth.

We had Chiefs with fully loaded Submarine Combat Patrol Pins in my day - hard-core b*****, who found nothing out of place with the use of the word 'Japs' to refer to the little sons of Nippon they had littered the floor of the Pacific with, as payback for a little December 7th tea party they gave us in 1941.

In those days, 'insensitivity' was not a word in a boat sailor's lexicon. They remembered lost mates and still cursed the cause of their loss. And they were expert at choosing adjectives and nouns, none of which their mothers would have endorsed.

At the rare times you saw Chief topside in dress canvas, you saw rows of hard-earned worn and faded ribbons over his pocket.

"Hey Chief, what's that one and that one?"

"Oh Hell kid, I can't remember. There was a war on. They gave them to us to keep track of the campaigns. We didn't get a lot of news out where we were. To be honest, we just took their word for it. Hell son, you couldn't pronounce most of the names of the places we went. They're all depth charge survival geedunk. Listen kid, ribbons don't make you a submariner. We knew who the heroes were and in the final analysis that's all that matters."

Many nights we sat in the After Battery mess deck wrapping ourselves around cups of coffee and listening to their stories. They were light-hearted stories about warm beer shared with their running mates in corrugated metal sheds at resupply depots, where the only furniture was a few packing crates and a couple of Coleman lamps.

Standing in line at a Honolulu cathouse or spending three hours soaking in a tub in Freemantle, smoking cigars and getting loaded. It was our history. And we dreamed of being just like them because they were our heroes.

When they accepted you as their shipmate, it was the highest honor you would ever receive in your life. At least it was clearly that for me.

They were not men given to the prerogatives of their position. You would find them with their sleeves rolled up, shoulder-to-shoulder with you in a stores loading party.

"Hey Chief, no need for you to be out here tossing' crates in the rain, we can get all this crap aboard."

"Son, the term 'All Hands' means ALL HANDS."

"Yeah Chief, but you're no damn kid anymore, you old coot."

"Horsefly, when I'm eighty-five parked by the stove up in an old b***** home, I'll still be able to kick your worthless b**** from here to fifty feet past the screw guards along with six of your closest friends." And he probably wasn't bulls*****.

They trained us. Not only us, but hundreds more just like us. If it wasn't for Chief Petty Officers, there wouldn't be any Submarine Force.

There wasn't any fairy godmother who lived in a hollow tree in the enchanted forest who could wave her magic wand and create a Chief Petty Officer. They were born as hot sacking seamen and matured like good whiskey in steel hulls over many years. Nothing a nineteen year-old jaybird could cook up was original to these old saltwater owls. They had seen E-3 jerks come and go for so many years; they could read you like a book. "Son, I know what you are thinking. Just one word of advice. DON'T. It won't be worth it." "Aye, Chief."

Chiefs aren't the kind of guys you thank. Monkeys at the zoo don't spend a lot of time thanking the guy who makes them do tricks for peanuts. Appreciation of what they did and who they were comes with long distance retrospect. No young lad takes time to recognize the worth of his leadership. That comes later when you have experienced poor leadership or let's say, when you have the maturity to recognize what leaders should be, you find that submarine Chiefs are the standard by which you measure all others.

They had no Naval Academy rings to get scratched up. They butchered the King's English. They had become educated at the other end of an anchor chain from Copenhagen to Singapore. They had given their entire lives to the United States Navy. In the progression of the nobility of employment, submarine CPO heads the list.

So, when we ultimately get our final duty station assignments and we get to wherever the big CNO in the sky assigns us. If we are lucky, Marines will be guarding the streets. I don't know about that Marine propaganda bull****, but there will be an old Chief in an oil-stained hat and a cigar stub clenched in his teeth, standing at the brow to assign us our bunks and tell us where to

stow our gear. And we will all be young again and the damn coffee will float a rock.

Life fixes it so that by the time a stupid kid grows old enough and smart enough to recognize who he should have thanked along the way, he no longer can. If I could, I would thank my old Chiefs.

If you only knew what you succeeded in pounding in this thick skull, you would be amazed.

So thanks you old case hardened unsalvageable sonofab****.

Save me a rack in the Alley.

TAKING COMMAND OF SEA POACHER IN GERMANY

After completion of the Prospective Commanding Officers course all graduates went to COMSUBLANT headquarters and met the Force Commander. We also had an opportunity to visit with his staff members.

While most of the newly selected CO's spent their time visiting with old acquaintances, I went and introduced myself to the Operations Officer and members of his staff.

I made known that I had waited for years for command, and that I would appreciate an operating schedule that included as many deployments as possible.

In other words I did not desire an excess of in home port time! I volunteered for any and all foreign port visits and operations that might come up!

I flew to Hamburg, Germany, to take command. Hamburg was the home port of the German submarine force in WWII. The change of command ceremony was held in the Control Room while moored next to the other U.S. ship in port, an aircraft carrier. At the request of the Embassy, we were to have daily visiting hours from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

A crowd estimated at 3,000 Germans formed an orderly line waiting for a tour of SEA POACHER. It became apparent that we were the first submarine to visit Hamburg since the end of WWII and there was great interest. Thus, the visiting hours were changed from 8 to 6 to meet the crowds.

Almost every bar and tavern in Hamburg seemed to be owned or operated by German submarine veterans, and it was quite often our crew in uniform found it difficult to pay for their food and drink.

We got underway for home after our stay and headed down the English Channel when a heavy fog set in, and the radar decided to go out of commission. I shifted to battery power for a quiet run, posted extra lookouts, and listened carefully to fog horns of the heavy traffic as we headed south. As we cleared the Channel the weather cleared.

Of course we needed a trim dive. I explained my intent after the trim dive to have a daily dive and that we would routinely rig for deep submergence. And further that we routinely go to test depth without having to wait at 200 feet.

Evidently this cause some concern with torpedo room rumors that the hull was not able to handle test depth. We quickly got that out of the way with a few dives.

LOOKING FOR THE SCORPION

The matter of submarine safety was abruptly brought to mind as we headed across the Atlantic bound for Key West. We received an order from COMSUBLANT notifying us that

SCORPION was not in communications with the Force Commander and directed SEA POACHER to change course and proceed across the Atlantic following SCORPION'S intended track. We were to remain on the surface with extra lookouts posted and search for any signs of the missing submarine.

SCORPION was later found in 11,000 feet of water and what happened remains unclear to this day.

KEY WEST AND GITMO OPERATIONS

Upon arrival in Key West and the transfer of a number of crew members, the word got out along the water front that our schedule for deployment had arrived and would include a number of interesting operations and foreign port visits.

The COB was active in "recruiting" those interested in some serious steaming!

After time to catch up on maintenance we were ordered to GITMO primarily to work with surface ships in their refresher training. In GITMO our schedule was hectic at times.

While on a classified operation we bumped the bottom with minor damage to a transducer cover. After finishing our refresher training work with the surface Navy, we steamed back to Key West with the Force Commander and a group of communications technicians aboard. When we arrived we had a few more transfers and loaded up for our deployment.

NATO EXERCISES OFF IBERIA AND A RUSSIAN CRUISER

We had a smooth transit of the Atlantic and our first port was Lisbon, Portugal, where we met with the planners of a NATO exercise that included naval units from Portugal and Spain. Leaving there we commenced the exercise.

Since we were playing the role of a hostile submarine, our ability to change station was limited. Towards the end of the exercise an uninvited guest joined the group of surface units, a Russian cruiser. (To put the times in perspective, major events in 1968 included the Soviet forces invading Czechoslovakia ending the Prague spring liberation, there were student riots in Paris and across European cities, and the Communists launched the Tet offensive in Vietnam.)

We had a message ordering us to surface and proceed to our next port. The Russian decided to play some games by running overhead banging away with a transducer. I waited till he passed down our port side and came to scope depth, having alerted the crew that we would surface full on four engines and immediately go to flank speed.

As the cruiser passed we surfaced in his wake at about 200 yards range. There was a large group of sailors gathered atop the after gun mount. As we roared past I waved at the group but got no response except from one lone sailor at the very rear of the group. He carefully looked to his rear and to his right and left to see if he was being observed by the crew or officers, and then gave a great wave with both arms. So much for the Russians.

A REVIEW BY QUEEN ELIZABETH

We headed then to visit Portsmouth, England for participation in the 20th NATO Naval Review. There were 60 units of the naval forces anchored for the review. Queen Elizabeth of England personally reviewed the ships and received all the commanding officers in a reception aboard the Britannia.

The COs of the units were invited to supper in Nelson's flagship. It was quite a good time provided by our British hosts and for the crew as well.

Next we had a visit to the naval base at Faslane, Scotland. Once again our hosts rolled out a carpet of warm welcome. Leaving there we joined a task group for a very interesting operation.

During the period of 1 April to 30 June 1969 SEA POACHER was an integral part of Task Group (87.0/83.1) and was a major factor in the development of a successful anti-SSN tactical doctrine. During the latter part of this period, this doctrine was proven in actual operations resulting in a first time sustained tracking maneuver against a live, unscheduled nuclear submarine. The Task Group was recipient of a Meritorious Unit Commendation.

REACHING THE ARCTIC CIRCLE AND BECOMING BLUE NOSES

At the end of this operation we surfaced about 100 miles from the Arctic Circle. We sent a UNORDIR (Unless Otherwise Directed) message to Admiral Smith, the Task Force Commander, that we were heading north at full speed to cross the Circle and initiate the crew into the Royal Order Of The Blue Noses. He responded with an invitation to all units to proceed independently and follow us to the Circle. We then proceeded to Bergen, Norway, for a restful port visit prior to heading for home.

DECOMMISSIONING AND TRANSFER TO THE RESERVE FLEET

Back in Key West we operated locally and in the Caribbean until 20 October 1969 when we set sail for Philadelphia. The powers to be did add one more GITMO run from the original decommissioning date. And yes I did crank it up to 125 % heading up the river, because I was wanting to get the unpleasant duty of putting the good ship SEA POACHER out of commission over as soon as I could. As I recall the time in Philly after arrival was not memorable! And Philly is not a place I would want to ever visit again!

On 15 November 1969 SEA POACHER was decommissioned and assigned to the Reserve Fleet. On 30 June 1971 she reassumed the designation as a fleet submarine. On 15 August 1973 her name was struck from the Navy List and in July 1974 the SEA POACHER was sold to Peru.

THE GUPPIES

Long before the advent of the hippie and the yuppie, there was a class of warship that was fondly called the Guppy,

Now the Guppy was a submarine, in case you didn't know, long and black and sleek she was, and always on the go.

In World War Two, the submarines were our first line of attack, many of them went out to sea and some did not come back,

Now the submariners knew this but still they went to war, so defend their nation's freedom was what they were fighting for.

*After World War Two had ended, when the Japs and Germans quit, someone thought the old subs should be streamlined just a bit,
So they re-designed the old boats and titled them Tang Class with snorkels, better batt'ries and a hull to make'em fast.*

*They went to sea both north and south from the East to setting sun, they never knew when night was o'er and daytime had begun.
Theirs was a life of silence and the darkness of the deep, sometimes their only pleasure were a few hours of blessed sleep.*

*They ploughed the seas from Pole to Pole in defense of freedom's goals, from Pearl Harbor, and Yokosuka to the far off Iceland shoals,
To spy on Soviet submarines and other ships of war, was the job of these brave lads who roamed the ocean floor.*

*They ran patrols from Greenland to the shores of Timbuktu, the GIUK GAP and MED RUN were just nothing for a crew
Of Guppy sailors who thought the NORTHERN RUN okay, then take shore leave in Norfolk for another night of play.*

*How many Guppies were there? Far more than I could name. And each has earned an honored place in the Guppy Hall of Fame.
They fought the War with Soviets in secrecy and guile, until the foe gave up the fight, which made it all worth while.*

*Now they're gone, as all ships go when their tour of duty's o'er, brave Guppies, stalwart warriors, they roam the seas no more,
They've gone to graves far out at sea and this should be their lot, gone from the sight of those they served but not to be forgot.*

*Bob Harrison, 4 September 2000
Greenfield, Indiana*

CHAPTER 104

JOHN (HAP) HALLAM 1968 - 1969

I REMEMBER TRYING TO FIND OUR NURSE, LOVE IN LISBON PORTUGAL, THE 125 PERCENT RUN FOR DECOMMISSIONING, THE FINAL GITMO RUN, AND DECOMMISSIONING

TRYING TO FIND OUR NURSE

I was an EM2, just back from a tour in Viet Nam repairing PBRs, when I reported aboard in December 1968. On SEA POACHER'S last North Atlantic run we were in Gosport, England for the Queen's review and a whole bunch of liberty. But at underway time there was no Corpsman on board.

Doc Smock had not made it back from his tour of the British pubs. I told the COB, ENCS Carter, that I knew where he probably was.

So against the XO's wishes, I trudged off into the morning fog across the Bay to find our Nurse.

Of course I did find him, got him back, and as Doc stepped on the deck, he looked up at the Bridge and said "Single Up."

The Crew all just cracked up.

The CO was not too amused.

LOVE IN LISBON PORTUGAL

This story is about Sonarman 2nd Class David Calhoun. Our second liberty port was Lisbon, and Calhoun meets this lovely young lady who falls totally in love with him.

In fact, she meets the boat and David in all the rest of our ports.

Leaving Norway, David shows us a gift she had given him (a lighter) with the following inscription: David DONOT forget I love you.

The do not was not separated so from that day on Calhoun's name was DAVY DONUT.

How I wish to see these guy's again, I'm sure the story's would flow followed by tears of joy and plenty of laughs.

THE 125 PERCENT RUN FOR DECOMMISSIONING

When we went to Philadelphia for decommissioning and were headed up the River to the shipyard, I guess the CO wanted to see how fast SEA POACHER would go on its last voyage.

As I remember I was on the starboard shaft, and we put 125 percent power on the engines. I don't recall how many knots we got her to, but it was huge.

Of course, going out of commission had to be delayed, because SEA POACHER had to make an extra and final GITMO run for a boat that was "broke."

THE FINAL GITMO RUN

GITMO runs were usually all the same except this time we were providing services to tin cans, and we accidentally hit the side of an island when we were submerged. The CO did not believe Sonar or the Quartermasters when we bounced off it putting a big dent in the side of one of the tanks. As I remember, we had been at 100 feet going all ahead full. We were coming to periscope depth and slowed to 1/3.

Of course you can imagine all the inspections and investigations that went on after that? My CO on CUTLASS, Dan McGlasson, actually wrote his thesis at Prospective Commanding Officer's School on this incident.

I rode five more boats before being sent to surface craft and SEA POACHER has a very special place in my heart. I have kept in touch with more shipmates from her than any of the other boats.

DECOMMISSIONING

From what I recall there wasn't any fanfare. We were just transferred from one boat to another as they were readied for mothballs, disposition, or whatever.

I was there for about 6 months. but can't remember all the boat's we put out. SEA DEVIL and BLENNY, I think were two of them.

After that I went to "B" school, finally made First Class, and went back to Viet Nam. There I served as an advisor on a VN Swift Boat, got my Small Boat Command Pin, and returned safely to Key West and the CUTLASS.

"Permission to lower the scope!"

*BARBEL 1972, Midshipman manning the scope leaving
Pearl Harbor yells out the above, ducks, and the periscope
hits a log. From Pete Patterson.*

*"I don't know why they call it 'eternal patrol,' rather than 'eternal rest camp?' I was never
afraid in rest camp."*

QUEENFISH. From Howard Evans.

"Don't give up the ship!"

Capt James Lawrence, June 1, 1813

"This is a hard and dirty war, but when it's over, nothing will ever be too difficult again."

TRITON in WWII, From Lloyd McKenzie

CHAPTER 105

DEWEY AKINS 1969

**I REMEMBER CHIEF GUS HAHN FIRST ON SEA CAT,
MY WORST ORDEAL IN SUBMARINES,
TRANSFER TO SEA LION AND SEA POACHER,
CROSSING THE ATLANTIC SEA SICK,
THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF BEING A LOOKOUT,
WATCHES AGAIN WITH CHIEF HAHN,
GARBAGE AND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE,
HEADING SOUTH TO KEY WEST AND SUN BATHING,
EXECUTIVE OFFICER JOE JOCKEL,
SEA POACHER DECOMMISSIONING,
KEY WEST WANTED THE SUBMARINE BASE,
AND THE SEA POACHER AND KEY WEST FINALE**

CHIEF GUS HAHN FIRST ON SEA CAT

In the Old South there's the "Character," that is, a person that exudes a strong personality, and in the modern sense there's probably no place in life where you find "Characters" like in the U.S. Navy. They're the most interesting people in the world, being the strangest, oddest, most peculiar, and most intelligent in an individual sense.

This is exemplified more by submarines, the iron man's world, and with a hot-running boatswain's mate, engineman, or torpedo man is probably a man you are never going to forget, and certainly among men who are never going to be cubed into a corporate box.

Chief George (Gus) Hahn was the COB on SEA CAT the day I signed aboard on 7 November 1967. He was fair, blue-eyed, of athletic German build, never tired of spouting the greatness of Nordic philosophies, and felt that these seeds had grown well enough in his childhood home of Savannah, Georgia.

Yeah, he was one of those Southern Characters. Actually there were three Hahn boys that damn-near ran Key West in those days, Frederick (Fritz) an Annapolis graduate and CO of GRENADIER, Chief John, and Gus, my Buddy, or would be. For you know what my old San Diego boot camp commander said, "If there's anything lower than a Seaman recruit, it's whale s***!" And I might have risen in specific gravity an inch or two as a battery well striker, but not much.

I would no more have addressed Chief Hahn as an equal in those days than I would have addressed God. It was always, "Yes, Chief Hahn," or "No, Chief Hahn," as if it was our first day at sea. We had been in dry dock for repairs, were now on sea trails, and I had been assigned to the Head to check for leaks.

Ah, the Head! Little did I know, the stainless tank which had 23-years of unspeakably miserable stain, my official home for the next three months as S*** House Mouse. We were at 400 feet and had held it for an hour. UNDERSTAND SEA CAT never had air-conditioning, and

with things just dripping wet, Chief Hahn came barreling through the Head. The man never walked, NEVER, but rather ran, and he said, "They didn't tell you it was going to be like this, did they Akins?" I said, "No Chief, they didn't."

I can't tell you when it first occurred to me that Chief Hahn was to head my Qualifications Board. Of course as COB, I should have known it, however I didn't know much of anything in those days, and I can assure you, the realization scared me to death.

And I might add the fear wasn't totally unfounded. I have been through a number of things including a Master's oral exam, but I haven't been through anything quite as harrowing as that submarine qualification.

In addition, as an EM3 I had to be certified in my rating, Hahn's Department, and I still have the 3 page NAVPERS 760 list, with a date and cursive, No, floral "H" beside each requirement, and so I had many contacts.

And Hahn didn't make it easy. He was a military animal.

Chief Hahn didn't talk and he didn't scream. He just grunted loudly. For some reason he had sworn off chicken, and every time he'd go through the Galley and someone would say "Chief, we're having chicken" he'd say, "You know a chicken is the only animal that will eat it's own s***."

And when one of the cockier, least-liked first classes, a braggart about his sexual abilities, said he thought he could take Hahn for \$200, the Chief said, "Put the money on the table!" There was no fight!

And he had these philosophical tidbits that he dispensed. He was smart as hell and would say, "That if a man thought he deserved a medal, he probably didn't."

A thousand such things, much of which can't be repeated here, because to say that he was a social reactionary would be an understatement.

He was a German and thought things such as women's rights, hippies, and college radicals were part of the moral breakdown. And he had just the right words to express his thoughts, and the seeds that he was seeing for the new Navy were beyond his understanding or Civilization's. "It won't work," he said, "Not in the long run, against nature!"

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have purposely avoided most stories about other submarines in this book. However, SEA POACHER and SEA CAT worked together many times during their 25 year careers, and perhaps more so than with any other boats. They were known as BUDS in 1969. Also, because Chief Hahn and Dewey would soon be together again on SEA POACHER, it seems appropriate to include their full story.

MY WORST ORDEAL IN SUBMARINES

Things progressed, and I did well. The worst thing that I ever did on submarines, however, happened on SEA CAT. In perhaps nine months I had advanced to Junior Controllerman, and I was in the Maneuvering Room with Freddie Hissa.

I was a lightweight, in my entire time in the Navy, didn't weigh more than 135 pounds, and that was soaking wet after a promotion baptizing. Some of the Senior Controllermen could take those console sticks and throw them back and forth with apparent ease.

Hey, they were tough, making and breaking contact through those electrical locks, and I'd have to put the entire weight of my body into the pull and push to get it where I wanted.

But still, that's not what did it. Hissa and I heard some sort of odd sparking in the cubical. I left the console to look through the grids on the port side, always afraid of course that we'd get a bell. I squatted down for a better look and against the outside wall we had these open, electrical knife breakers with a wooden handle, for emergency use. Well I heard something, and thinking it was a telegraph bell jerked up and when I did one of those wooden handles went down the back of my dungarees which were two sizes too big. Worse than that, it went straight down the crack of my a**.

Now, I wasn't used to having anything go down the crack of my a** and it scared me enough that when I jumped upward, I tripped the breaker and we lost power to the back half of the boat. With bells and red lights blinking, there were also announcements booming about emergency conditions.

Later on, green with embarrassment, I was summoned to the Control Room where Chief Hahn was standing in front of an equally green Christmas Tree and he said, "Dewey, Captain Wilson was ready to chew a**, but your reputation pulled you through. But in the future I'd suggest you keep you're a** out of the circuit breakers!"

He didn't need to tell me.

I thought next time I'd simply rather be electrocuted than to trip a knife breaker and stand to tell about it.

Of course I qualified. Chief Hahn being the only man to walk me through, and no officer was involved which was to my regret.

I would rather have had Admiral Rickover and his weasel eyes. And it could not have been any worse.

But you know that feeling, actually we are the only men who do, when they pinned on my Dolphins, and threw me in the water, you talking about being newly-baptized. I felt the tradition, the religion, and it's something that you never really get over, though other stages of life intervene.

My new happiness at that time, though, was short-lived for I found out that SEA CAT was being decommissioned, and with it my connection with Chief Hahn.

You know, there's something so sad about the decommissioning of a sub, especially one with a war record. I mean, they have a life, it's like 25 years of the men's spirits have blended with the metal, all those struggles, it's always a war, men fighting for something, and the righteous.

It takes a breed!

TRANSFER TO SEA LION AND SEA POACHER

I was transferred to SEA LION in December of 1968 and was only there a few weeks. It was just long enough to mail out the neat SS-315 Christmas cards, one of which is still in my Navy notebook.

And then I saw Chief Hahn on the dock one day who smoked or rather chewed on cigars. He said and grunted to me, "Dewey, you want to go to Europe?"

I was rather taken by surprise but if he had said, "Do you want to go on a diesel beneath the North Pole?" I would have said what I did say "Sure Chief!" He said, "I'll arrange it, as SEA POACHER is taking a North Atlantic trip."

A few days later the LION Yeoman handed me the papers and said, "How'd you get it?" I knew not to answer. In Key West the Hahn's had more roots than a banyan tree. So I packed my sea bag and headed over to the POACHER.

Oh if we only traveled so lightly today. I've got a 3,000 square foot house full of junk, and don't have as much today as I had then.

CROSSING THE ATLANTIC SEA SICK

Crossing the Atlantic was glorious and miserable, and we'll take the bad first. Ah what a miserable trait for a sailor and potential lifer, but I get miserably seasick, as did many of the sailors that I sailed with.

I suppose that comes from being born into several generations of Midwestern farmers. No sea in sight, but during the summer of 2007 to celebrate my 60th birthday, my wife and I took a 12 night *LEGEND OF THE SEA* cruise to the Mediterranean, Italy, Greece, and Egypt, and you guessed it.

I missed my first night's meal, as I was in our cabin sick. My wife carried on and God knows only with whom.

Back on SEA POACHER, in our crossing to Lisbon, Portugal we hit several storms, and I know I'm preaching to the choir, but without a keel she was simply on bow and stern pivots, swinging side to side, and inside, I died.

But this is the thing I'm very proud of: I never missed a watch. I never knew anyone to miss a watch because of seasickness. When it came your time you crawled out of that bunk and walked to your duty station, maybe with a mess can and dry heaves, but you stood your duty.

I am determined to not turn into one of those old salty curmudgeons. For one thing I don't have the years of sea for glorifying the past and belittling the present, but with high school students today who want to go to the nurse if they get hot I have little sympathy!

Boys! On a fall day, I do wonder if they have the struggle and fight if times would really get tough. Akins, you ill-tempered and crusty old man, you may be there! And back to at least some misery, neither of my first two war subs ever had enough water or air-conditioning.

SEA POACHER was a Guppy 1A, which meant snorkel, bow stream-lining, and North Atlantic sail, but not some of the more costly complications like four batteries. I have heard sailors say that their true Guppy's would freeze you out, and occasionally offer, God-forbid, showers

But I never saw it.

Of course you understand I was on SEA POACHER at the end of her life with the U.S. Navy, and we didn't push the stills or the compressors all that much. But still things were a little bit rank.

Hell who am I fooling; the smell was strong enough to penetrate iron in the hull. When Jan and I visited the COBIA in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, she had been decommissioned for 30 years!

Jan crawled down the hatch and said, "Oh that smell," and I said, "Yes, home!" And it all was pretty penetrating and those two months in Europe without washing clothes!

You know the old diesel line, whores saying, "Anybody, anything but submariners!" That's why when my wife said, "Did you mess around much in Europe?" I said, "No," and she thought I had high morals!

Of course, Chief Hahn as usual, had an answer to all of this. “A submariner,” he said, “was supposed to smell bad,” and to back up his statement he had a tragic story. He had been assigned to a Nuke in the late 50’s, which he hated.

YES, DIESEL BOATS FOREVER.

But he simply followed his diesel oaths and in a couple of weeks he was called to the COB’s office, and a number of the men were complaining, and discretely the COB asked him to take a bath.

“If you’ve got diesel in your blood...!”

THE RELIGIOUS ASPECT OF BEING A LOOKOUT

On the glorious side, when I crawled aboard SEA POACHER they had more EMs than they needed, Hahn didn’t care, and crossing the Atlantic I filled in available slots until a permanent one opened up. Being the new man on board that meant a fairly low-level job.

I’m speaking relatively and no job on a submarine is low-level I had done Mess Cooking and S*** House Mouse. Now it was not Controllerman, but Helm and Lookout.

Oh, Lookout, the deepest religious experience of my adult life was there nightly. The 0-4 midwatch. Every night. It equaled tent revivals at Marston, Missouri when I was a kid and to the adult mind was greater. The stars were just like looking up through clouds of sugar, with them descending right down around the boat to the ocean. You were strangely within the clouds with them consuming everything. From the ocean depths to the reaches of infinity, there is nothing like being the dark focal point to a universal hurricane of sugared, sifting stars.

It was mind-blowing, and I can assure you, nothing the hippies were experiencing in Haight-Ashbury could compare. I’d watch for the twinkling lights of ships coming through that every night, that and a moon bright enough that it often looked like a creamy sun shining across the dark miles of sparkling ocean.

It was like the old Silent Service movies, almost a dream, and then I’d come down to a hot soup-down and then crawl into an empty bunk and sleep like a baby.

WATCHES AGAIN WITH CHIEF HAHN

Eventually I moved to the IC Switchboard in Control Room, and for the first time would have four hours of watch with Chief Hahn. Ah, always fun! It’s hard to describe how the guy handled his job at the Diving Manifold.

He was spastic, hyperactive, robotic in movement, and if you’ve seen one of those trained apes in a scientific rocket movie, you’ve got it down. I don’t mean to say he wasn’t good. He was the greatest, and I don’t think he ever made a mistake. If he’d get an order from the Bridge, he’d fly into an eye-blurring movement.

And strangely, he talked the same way, “Bridge! Hahn! Negative blown, bubble down!” But it was that talk.

He was very knowledgeable with history and literature. Almost my first exposure to Thoreau, Huxley, Conrad, and many others were from Hahn.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Dewey has been and continues to be an English teacher at Decatur, Illinois High School.

And those damn stories.

“Yeah, a man needs to know when it’s over,” he said. “I wanted a date real bad, but just as we drove out of the driveway I cut an unexpected f***.” I said. “It’s over” and drove around the driveway and back to her door.” You’d have to hear the dryness to appreciate the humor, and yeah every pun is intended.

But, I wondered, if the guy was done passing gas yet? Not that I gave a damn, on a four hour watch on a submarine, you’ve got to have more wind than a mere snorkel. Humor is necessary for survival.

“But why don’t you censor these stories,” my wife has said lately, “Why certainly,” I said, “they are!” Believe me Sailors, you know.

I have skipped the “F” word completely, but still I have wondered forever. “Is the measure of the best sex, when a man’s toes curl up?”

I think not! Hahn jokes aside, there are other indicators...!

GARBAGE AND THE ARCTIC CIRCLE

There’s no need to write a travelogue of Europe as you are far more expert than me. But let me say we hit Lisbon, Portugal; Rota Spain; Portsmouth, England; Holy Loch, Scotland; and Bergen, Norway. And for a farm boy who graduated from high school thinking the natural travel allowance was eight miles to buy groceries on Saturday night, it was a marvelous experience

The only great trouble I ran into, again, was leaving Bergen, Norway. We were to operate for a week or so in the Arctic Circle and then leave for Key West. The weather became so rough for the entire week that we couldn’t open the Conning Tower hatch long enough to dump garbage, and everyone except the Chiefs were seasick.

I didn’t understand it. Did they have an antidote or not? In any case, we piled garbage in the heads and filled the showers. (See Photo Section.) And somehow suffered a second mystery, even with the arched walls frosty that stuff clabbered and soured.

We had the most awful mess there ever was, all dripping with cold water, and milk running toward the bilge.

I simply lay in my bunk and froze. I also hallucinated and dreamed of being back in Key West, taking a towel and lying out on the beach. Of course at watch time, I rose like a Phoenix, as did all the other men.

Every man knew that if he were not on watch another man would have to take his place. And as everyone knows, the Submarine Service has the greatest men in the world, which may be the same thing as saying, the most responsible men in the world.

HEADING SOUTH TO KEY WEST AND SUN BATHING

But I will never forget the celebration in my mind, when we started steaming south toward Key West at 10 knots! Each hour meant being closer to the tropical zodiac, and those starry skies of warmer climates!

I knew things were getting better when Captain Huggins allowed much sunbathing while SEA POACHER steamed, and it was like a metamorphosis, coming from the Arctic interiors of that boat to the hot topside deck just ten days later.

I have several great pictures taken looking down from POACHER'S sail of sailors about half dressed soaking up the sun. Also pictures of swim call, other trips no doubt, but I always thought the romance of swimming in the middle of the ocean belonged in a fictional story.

With the Bow Planes down, lookouts with M-1's, we had the clearest water to the horizon. Ah that feeling of running topside and jumping in, like boys in 'O Cousin Tom Eakins' "Swimming Hole." The only thing was, after swimming you couldn't rinse off as there were no showers. After the seawater crusted after a few days, you became a salty sailor for sure.

EXECUTIVE OFFICER JOE JOCKEL

I had finally grown attached to the crew of SEA POACHER, but with the Gold it wasn't especially the Captain, but the XO Joseph A. Jockel that I remember so well. Unlike so many of those officers, Annapolis Arrow shirt men with the 12 ounce gold ring, Mr. Jockel was more down to earth, and MAN could he give orders.

I had, of course, always had excellent evaluations, but it was from him that I received several of my finest, "Petty officer Akins is far and away the finest third class submarine electrician encountered by this ship's officers in many years. His uniform appearance is always immaculate and his military demeanor flawless."

Thank you, Sir.

SEA POACHER DECOMMISSIONING

Yeah, I was finally at home again, and so I guess it was an equal shock with SEA CAT to learn that SEA POACHER was being decommissioned. I never quite understood it.

You know enlisted men, "Ours is not to reason why!" But word was that the United States was limited by SALT agreement with the Russians as to the number of submarines we could have, but the Russians were not.

To fulfill that agreement, every time a nuclear was commissioned, a diesel had to be decommissioned. But there were other, bigger things in the air. The diesels were old and the diesel days were past.

KEY WEST WANTED THE SUBMARINE BASE

How shall I put it nicely? I guess just to say Key West wanted the base. Key West wanted, wants, what all towns want, high-end markets, rich hotels, chic stores, condominiums, and an endless supply of moneyed tourists tromping through town frequenting leather shops, art galleries, and gourmet restaurants.

But still there is a sadness at the death of a submarine, and a sadness at the death of a Navy base, and I never felt that so strongly as in 2003. We were on our first cruise, my daughter had decided to get married on *MAJESTY OF THE SEAS* out of Miami, and we had a one day stop in Key West.

It was my first visit there in 33 years! I was very excited and of course wanted to hit Sloppy Joe's, Hemingway's house, ride the Conch Train, but most of all see what was left of the submarine base.

I headed down Duval Street, made a right on Southard, and saw the old gates and guard shack, exactly as they were in 1970.

But as soon as I walked through the gates full horror hit. The old dignity of the Navy Barracks and Administrative buildings, white in the 1960's sunlight of my mind, had been replaced by ugly condos, cloned, stacked, cubicled, exactly the same as anywhere in the world, into a street of homogenized shacks, exactly as Key West wanted, with the richest taxes, flowing evermore.

THE SEA POACHER AND KEY WEST FINALE

Later that day when I rode the Conch Train the understanding was complete. The driver said, "We don't go into the old submarine base anymore, and there aren't many Conchs left in Key West anymore. They can't afford the taxes and a trailer will cost you \$200,000."

Ah, the Conch Train rolling through the Navy base, something I'd seen a thousand times while standing topside, or shooting the breeze with my friends as a young man. But here I was an old one, a little confused about civilization's propaganda, and its real priorities.

This loss of the submarine base was my 2003 death. But I also want to talk about my 1969 one, the decommissioning of SEA POACHER, and you understand, don't you, as I finally did, that this conversion thing had started back then.

Key West had decided to clear the rabble in the late 1960's and that included dogs, sailors, and Conchs, although they wisely decided to keep their Fighting Cocks. It is against the law to kill a chicken in Key West. Apparently a great tourist attraction, the chickens had withstood the test when the White Hats failed.

But I said goodbye to my Submarine and all the friends I had visited Europe with, including Chief Hahn.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dewey said he hadn't expected to write a story for this book, but if I included it I had better increase his order to two books. As of September 2007, he hears from Chief Hahn often, and sometimes he calls twice a week to promote his new occupation as the official Hilliary-hater. Limbaugh and O'Reilly can't hold a stick as the man has an acid tongue.

Also, as an English teacher and Clinton supporter he sees Dewey as the liberal he hates, but somehow loves. You explain it, but he's on my case on a regular basis and especially when I say things like, "Your protégé Chief, Your Buddy!"

*He comes back with things like, "I should have stomped you're a** when I had the chance!" Regardless, two books, Lanny, as he's not getting mine, and he's too damn tight to buy his own. I'm sure he's still got his Seaman's pay in the bank. Old Gus is worth the outlay, however, Chiefs come at a price!*

I'd spent twelve months on SEA CAT and ten months on SEA POACHER. Yes, the 406 was being transferred to Philadelphia with a skeleton crew, and her life was extended a few years, but we felt she was on her way out. Yeah, there's something about the death of an old submarine, especially a war one, that stays with a man exactly like the crews ride to eternity with their boats.

DIESEL MEN REST YOUR OARS!

CHAPTER 106

RESERVE FLEET 1969 – 1974

BY LANNY YESKE 1961 - 1963

In July 1969, SEA POACHER concluded her U.S. service with a three and one-half month deployment to the eastern and northern Atlantic areas to participate in antisubmarine training exercises with units of the Spanish and Portuguese navies. Upon returning to Key West, she operated locally in the Caribbean until 20 October when she set sail for Philadelphia and inactivation. SEA POACHER was reclassified as an auxiliary submarine on 1 November, decommissioned on 15 November 1969, and was assigned to the Atlantic Reserve Fleet at Philadelphia. This facility is located just south of I-95, south of the Philadelphia Sports Complexes, and just northeast of Philadelphia International Airport.

The reserve fleet is also known as the mothball fleet. These are naval vessels that are ready for service, but are not needed at the time. These ships or boats can be either partially or fully decommissioned. Apparently the SEA POACHER was a partial decommission.

These ships are usually held in reserve until such time as they might again be needed. The sites where these vessels are moored are generally near shipyards or naval bases where a potential reactivation process is nearby and could be rapid. Some preservation or sealing in plastic may be done. These ships will also have a very small crew to insure that the vessel remains in reasonable condition, and to pump bilges to prevent flooding. Spare and repair parts are also saved for possible future use, since it might be very difficult to obtain spare parts in the future. Other vessels in its class could however be cannibalized if needed. SEA POACHER was in the reserve fleet for several years and was fortunate to not be scrapped or used as a target. It was also apparently never considered as a museum ship for any U.S. port such as Key West.

Strangely, and perhaps because it was being considered for purchase by the Government of Peru, SEA POACHER on 30 June 1971 reassumed the designation as a Fleet Submarine. On 15 August 1973, her name was struck from the Navy List, and she was sold to Peru on 1 July 1974 under terms of the Security Assistance Program.

And in April 2007, I heard from ETC Mel Myers who was on a special crew of five diesel boat sailors who were consultants to the Peruvian Navy in 1975. From what I learned the Peruvians put up \$10M to buy and overhaul SEA POACHER and ATULE at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Some interesting experiences with the Peruvians and the Navy Yard were told to me.

First, the Peruvians were a good group; however, their problem was that they didn't understand "CUMSHAW." They said, "But the book says we must submit a work request." As a result, they spent \$7M on SEA POACHER and didn't have enough left for ATULE.

Another problem was that Kollmorgen would only lease periscopes to the U.S. Navy, and not sell them outright in 1975. So, they would not sell or lease Peru a periscope. What is a submarine without a periscope? It took an act of Congress, literally, to order Kollmorgen to sell them a type 8B periscope for the SEA POACHER. They eventually did, but it was a far cry from the quality scopes we had on our subs.

However, the story does not end here. Over thirty years from a launching date in 1944, SEA POACHER will serve again for another 22 years, in not only one but perhaps several other wars in South America. That story follows in the next chapter of this book.

CHAPTER 107

JUAN DEL CAMPO RODRIGUEZ

THE SEA POACHER AS LA PEDRERA 1974 - 1996

In 1965, the Peruvian Naval High Command issued a paper to be used as a guidance base to increase the Navy's dissuasive capabilities. The document recommended buying several ships, including submarines. It stated that such units should be small but very fast.

Within the next several months shipyards from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and Norway offered several models.

A Naval Committee was appointed in 1967 and finally decided to buy the new German made 209 Class submarines. An agreement was signed in 1970 with Germany's HDW shipyards for the construction of the first two units.

In addition to this, the Committee suggested buying four American made ex-BALAO Class submarines that were reconverted into the Guppy 1A Class. The Naval High Command identified the units, which were part of the U.S. Reserve Fleet, as the SEA POACHER, ATULE, BECUNA, and BLENNY. A different class, the TENCH, was also considered, but at that moment negotiations were not successful.

However in 1973 a new scenario emerged. By this time SEA POACHER was finally struck from the United States Navy list, and the Commander in Chief of the Peruvian Navy, Vice Admiral Luis Vargas Caballero, was leading the program to enhance the fleet.

The growing possibility of an armed conflict with Chile made it necessary to reinforce the strength of the Peruvian Armed Forces. As a close friend of the United States, Admiral Vargas Caballero requested the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations transfer the submarines to Peru.

Since Washington was also interested in promoting its relations with the only branch of the Peruvian military that wasn't buying equipment from the Soviet Union, a positive response was expected (See Footnote 1 at the end of this Chapter).

On April 2, 1974, a spokesman from the State Department informed Peru that the United States Government had approved the sale of two submarines. A month later a Commission composed of eight Peruvian naval officers was sent to the United States to inspect the available units.

After a careful inspection, the Commission selected SEA POACHER and ATULE, which were stationed in Philadelphia. A third submarine, the BLENNY, was also selected but for the purpose of providing spare parts. On May 28 the contract for the transactions was officially signed (Footnote 2).

This was the first time that the Peruvian Navy was going to purchase submarines previously commissioned and used by a foreign Navy. However, it was not the first time that Peru bought American made submarines. In 1924 the Peruvian Government signed a contract with Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut, for the construction of two R Class submarines and 24 Bliss-Leavitt torpedoes. (See Footnote 3).

In 1926 two more R submarines were ordered. The April 21, 1928 Edition of the New London Day, published an article about one of the new Peruvian acquisitions in which it stated:

“The R-3, at the time is skidded down the ways, was the finest and most modern submarine in the world.”

The R submarines forged the spirit and tradition of the modern Peruvian submariners. Between 1950 and 1955 Peru signed two more contracts with Electric Boat, now a division of General Dynamics Corporation, for the construction of four submarines of the MACKEREL Class (See Footnote 4). At that time those were the first ships built by the United States for a foreign country since the end of the Second World War.

The submarines bought in 1974 were renamed after two naval battles fought by Peru during the 19th and 20th centuries. By Law Number 328 of June 18, 1974, the Peruvian Government named the SEA POACHER Pabellón de Pica, but weeks later it changed its name to La Pedrera, which was a victorious battle fought on July 11-12, 1912, between the Peruvian gunboat America and other naval units, against a Colombian squadron on the Caqueta River in the Amazon region.

The ATULE was christened as Pacocha, in remembrance of the May 27, 1877, naval incident in which the Peruvian ironclad Huáscar fought simultaneously against a frigate and a corvette from the Royal Navy. During this incident a motorized Whitehead torpedo was fired in combat for the first time in naval history.

On July 1, 1974, the two submarines plus the BLENNY were officially transferred to Peru, during a ceremony attended by American and Peruvian naval officers. On this occasion, the Peruvian flag was raised on the Sea Poacher for the first time. The price paid for the submarines was reasonable, but to modernize them was very expensive.

Under such circumstances it was agreed that partial reactivation works on the systems and equipments would be done at the Groton Shipyard, while the full modernization process should continue in Peru at the SIMAC Shipyard (See Footnote 5). It was also decided that the SEA POACHER would sail to Peru on the surface, while the ATULE would be towed by a transport.

The boats remained in Philadelphia for several months and many tests were performed at sea with the support of Submarine Squadron 12 and a training team from the American Navy.

By Law 729 of October 10, 1975, La Pedrera was officially incorporated into the Peruvian Submarine Squadron, with the number S-49 assigned to its hull. By the end of November 1975, the submarine was ready to depart to Peru and on December 2, it finally sailed south leaving behind more than three decades of valuable service to the United States of America.

The SEA POACHER left a first class Navy to join, as La Pedrera, the ranks of a much smaller and, for many, unknown naval force. Peruvians, however, were no amateurs in the use of submarines and had one of the most professional navies on the American continent.

In fact, Peruvians were pioneers in submarine warfare. In 1864, the same year that the CSS Hunley attacked the USS Housatonic during the American Civil War, a Peruvian citizen, Mr. Federico Blume, developed the design of the first submarine for the Peruvian Navy.

Sixteen years later, during the war with Chile, once again Blume presented an improved version of his 1864 submarine, a 48 feet long cylindrical one quarter inch iron boiler bound together by iron strips and rivets, operated manually by eleven men. On July 1880 the Bull, as it was named, made its first official submergence.

Among the passengers was the Peruvian Minister of War. It remained under water for 30 minutes, reaching a depth of 72 feet and a speed of four knots without suffering damage. The

submarine was commissioned to be used as a reliable weapon against Chilean warships (See Footnote 6.)

During the 20th Century Peru became the first country in the Americas, after the United States, to incorporate submarines to its Fleet. On April 1910, the Peruvian Government ordered from the Schneider Shipyards, located at Chalon Sur Saone, France, the construction of two submarines designed by the famous French naval architect Miximé Laubeuf, which were commissioned as Ferre and Palacios.

An interesting anecdote about the use of submarines by the Peruvian Navy occurred during the 1932-1933 conflict with Colombia. By the end of April 1933, expecting a full scale war, the Peruvian Navy sent the R-2 and R-3 submarines, along with the Cruiser Coronel Bolognesi to the Colombian Pacific coast, while the R-1 and the R-4, in convoy with cruiser Almirante Grau and destroyers Almirante Villar and Almirante Guise, crossed the Panama Canal into the Atlantic Ocean with orders to intercept Colombian ships in Caribbean waters. However, when the Colombian river fleet made its way to the harbor town of Leticia, the Peruvian Atlantic Fleet received further instructions to sail to Brazil, navigate through the Amazon River, reach the Putumayo River and attack the Colombian Fleet in the area.

By the time the submarines and the destroyers reached the Amazon port of Belem do Para, a provisional peace agreement was signed in May 1933, which provided for the League of Nations to assume control of the disputed territory while bilateral negotiations started.

Commander Luis Bardales Vásquez de Velasco became the first Captain of La Pedrera, while its first Executive Officer was LCDR Juan Francisco Garfías Reátegui. As previously mentioned, the ship left Philadelphia on December 2, 1975, with five officers, and thirty five NCO's and sailors. The submarine crossed the Panama Canal and arrived at Callao on December 16, after a thirteen day voyage.

La Pedrera and Pacocha joined Islay, Arica, Dos de Mayo, Abtao, Angamos and Iquique, increasing the Peruvian Submarine Squadron to eight units. During the following years four new 209 Class submarines were incorporated, making Peru the largest submarine force in South America.

A few weeks after its arrival, La Pedrera was sent to the Servicio Industrial de la Marina Shipyard to continue its modernization process, which included electronics, weapon systems and distinctive devices to adapt the submarine to Peruvian standards. Now with a crew of 82 officers and enlisted, La Pedrera started its mission.

One of her first duties was to accompany the School Ship Independencia on the 1976 annual summer cruise with cadets of the Peruvian Naval Academy to the Southern Peruvian coast.

On January 1981, Ecuadorian soldiers invaded Peruvian territory in the Amazon Basin and occupied three military bases, one of which was known as "Falso Paquisha." The Peruvian Government ordered the Armed Forces to evict the invaders.

La Pedrera, along with several other ships, was sent to the North to target Ecuadorian vessels and strategic installations on the enemy coast in case the conflict turned into a full scale war. Fortunately, it remained focalized at the Condor Mountains, and in just four days the Army expelled the Ecuadorians from Peruvian territory.

In 1991, a Navy Technical Commission decided that La Pedrera should be assigned to the Reserve Fleet. In 1992 the submarine was decommissioned, but remained as a cadet training unit until 1996, when it was sold to a private smelting company, which cut it into pieces to be used as

scrap iron. Some of the equipment of the submarine was salvaged by its officers and placed in the Snorkel Pub, located in The Submarinist's Club on the Callao Naval Base.

The last Captain of La Pedrera was Commander Jose Carcelen Navares. During its almost twenty years in service as a Peruvian submarine, La Pedrera proved an excellent unit, which accomplished with efficiency all the tasks placed upon her, including training, patrolling and war maneuvers. She became one of the units with the most sailed miles, and with a record similar to that of the new last generation German submarines.

Today the relations between the naval forces of Peru and the U.S. have strengthened. Each year Peruvian submarines are sent to the U.S. and placed under its submarine command to participate in long range exercises with surface, air, and other submarine units.

At the same time, the presence of Peruvian submarines in such exercises contributes to the training of U.S. nuclear submarine personnel in possible combat against diesel submarines.

SEA POACHER/La Pedrera is a symbol for the navies of both the U.S. and Peru. Like no other submarine in the world, it served continuously for over half a century to two different countries, and become part of the naval traditions of their respective submarine forces.

The crews, American and Peruvian, it must be said, developed a strong, emotional link with the submarine that still lives in the hearts of the brave men who manned it on both sides of the American continent.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Juan del Campo Rodríguez is a career diplomat and military historian, who has served in the Peruvian Embassy and Consulates in the Philippines, Israel, the United States and Panama. He has a law degree from the Catholic University of Lima, a degree in International Relations by the Diplomatic Academy of Peru, a Master in Foreign Relations by the University of Louisville, and a Diploma in Defense Planning and Resource Management from the Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies of the National Defense University at Washington, D.C. He has published three books and several articles and essays. His books include:

“An Illustrated History of the Peruvian Navy: From the wooden ships to the pre-dreadnoughts,” English. Fondo Editorial de la Direccion de intereses Maritimos, Marine de Guerra del Peru, Lima, 2001, 150 pp.

“Batallas Legendarias del Peru y del Mundo: Episodios epcos y anecdotas militares.” (Legendary battles from Peru and the World, epic episodes and military anecdotes), Spanish. Fondo editorial de la Academia Diplomatica del Peru, Lima, 2002, 446 pp. Hardcover ISBN 9972-810-09-7/9972810097.

“Por la Republica y por la Reina. Una revision historica del conflicto de 1864-1871 entre Espana y la alianza peruano-chilena. (For the Republic and the Queen: An historic revision of the 1864-1871 conflict between Spain and the Peruvian-Chilean Alliance.) Fondo Editorial de la Association de funcionarios Diplomaticos del Peru, Lima, 2003, 260 pp., ISBN 9972-9747-0-7.

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FOOTNOTES

(1) Not even during the period of the leftist Military Government that ruled Peru between 1968 and 1980 did the Peruvian Navy buy vessels or war material from the Soviet Union. The current main units from the Peruvian Navy, which consists in one cruiser, six corvettes, eight frigates, six submarines, and one destroyer, were built in the Netherlands, Italy, Peru, Germany and the United Kingdom, respectively.

(2) Two years later, on September 7, 1976, the TENCH was also sold to the Peruvian Navy. The submarine never was commissioned. Along with the BLENNY, it was used only to provide spare parts for La Pedrera and Pacocha.

(3) The first R class submarine was launched on August 1918 at the Fore River Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, MA, and commissioned on 16 December 1918.

4) The USS MACKEREL (SS-204) was the lead ship of her class, and the first ship of the U.S. Navy named for the Mackerel, a common food and sport fish. After their modifications, the MACKEREL Class submarines sold to Peru became Sierra class units, as named by the Peruvian Navy. These should not be mistaken with the Sierra I and II class nuclear submarines, as named by NATO, constructed by the Soviet Union during the mid-1980's.

(5) SIMAC, or Servicio Industrial de la Marina Callao, is one of the most important shipyards in South America, capable of competing with the most prestigious shipyards of the World. It has built several kinds of vessels, including grain, cargo, fishing, petroleum carriers and tankers, as well as combat units such as frigates. It also performs extensive naval modernizations.

(6) This way the Peruvian Navy officially commissioned a submarine 20 years before the U.S. Navy commissioned its first unit, the USS HOLLAND, or SS-1 on April 11, 1900.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The entire SEA POACHER Association is most grateful to you and all the other Peruvian contacts mentioned herein. This publication would have been incomplete without your contributions spanning the last 22 years of our boat. Muchas Gracias Amigos and Compadres el Submarino. Me submarino es su submarino.

CHAPTER 108

KEN LEBLANC HUMANITARIAN RELIEF FUND

Thanks to the generosity of its members, there are substantial resources in the SEA POACHER Association General, Ken LeBlanc Humanitarian, and Memorial Funds.

These need to be mentioned. We will do the Memorial Fund in the next chapter.

The Humanitarian Relief fund was initially conceived as a Hurricane Relief Fund. It came into play in 2005 with the disasters caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. As a result several dozen SEA POACHER shipmates donated thousands of dollars to assist the shipmates affected by these storms.

Treasurer Ken LeBlanc was in charge. He first conducted a search for shipmates that were living on the affected Gulf Coast and contacted them to determine their well-being and the extent of their loss. From the information he gathered, the Association narrowed the list to five shipmates who needed assistance. Ken lived in the affected zone in Ponchatoula, Louisiana, but did not include himself in the list. In addition to the contributions, funds were taken from the General Fund to aid in the total package. Four shipmates received SEA POACHER checks that were hand-delivered by Ken. A fifth, who had relocated to Nebraska, had a check sent via the Postal Service.

There are stories on what happened with these deliveries. The check to Marty and Enola Stokes brought them to tears. Ken said "It choked me up too." It could also be said for John and Caroline Majzun. As well as the other three.

Ken said it well "Believe me; we have done a mighty good thing. You had to see the appreciation on their faces. Well done SEA POACHER."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Ken LeBlanc passed away in May 2007 and the Fund was renamed in his honor. He was proud of it and knew the Fund had been renamed for him.

I was also a survivor of Hurricane Katrina, and suffered extensive home damage in Diamondhead, Mississippi, which was hit nearly dead center. I coped with it for a while, before deciding to relocate to Virginia. In November 2005, I found information in a Navy Newsletter on a SEA POACHER May 2006 Reunion. I called the number and wound up with Bill Brinkman. After finding out I was living in Mississippi, the first thing Bill asked was "We have SEA POACHER funds to assist – can we help?"

Flabbergasted is the right word to express my feelings. I had not been in contact with SEA POACHER for over 40 years. SEA POACHER offered me more support than that provided by FEMA and the RED CROSS combined. And nearly up to State of Mississippi compensation that was in four figures. This was not to be believed. I did not cry on the phone, but I could have. I saved it later for a private time in Virginia. It had been a long struggle to just recover and move on to a new life.

While we could all use an unexpected windfall, this was not the time or the need. Thankfully, I had a super insurance company called USAA, and they met all my claims.

So I declined the generous SEA POACHER offer.

But will I ever forget what SEA POACHER offered me?

NEVER!

CHAPTER 109

THE SEA POACHER MEMORIAL FUND

Besides the Humanitarian Fund there is also the Memorial Fund. When a shipmate passes on, the widow and family members are personally visited by a SEA POACHER shipmate and a plaque is presented. A few of their stories follow. Our President Bill Brinkman said it best, "I always tell potential presenters that it's an experience that will make them proud."

From Jack Merrill regards history of the Memorial Fund. At the time of the inception of the SEA POACHER Association, it was determined that the Association should be more than just planning reunions where shipmates could get together and mull over the good ole days. Although, in itself, that is very important.

We decided that borrowing the motto and philosophy of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) would be very appropriate. In that regard, we established the SEA POACHER Memorial Fund along with the Ken LeBlanc Humanitarian Fund discussed in the previous chapter. Our motto is that we are, "Dedicated to the men who served on this great fighting ship".

Since our beginning in 2003, we have presented some thirty Memorial Plaques to the next-of kin of our shipmates. May their Final Patrol be peaceful. I have personally taken part in six presentations: Louis Sardo, QM 60-61, Lakeland, FL; Bob Bergs, XO 55, Sarasota, FL; Roy Gallemore, LTJG 44-47, Bartow, FL; Jim Bridewell, ET 63-67, Virginia Beach, VA; Ray Gillen, ET 58-59, Venice, FL; and Stan Martell, FT 69, Kingsland, GA.

Each presentation has its own special memories, but the most overwhelming feeling one gets from the experience is one of great pride. This Memorial Plaques means so much to the relatives of our shipmates, and I am just so proud to belong to an Association that cares so much about its shipmates and "Brothers of the Pin."

A little history of the creation of the Memorial Plaque. When searching for appropriate art work we thought of using the flag, among other things, but settled on a photograph I took from the Bridge of SEA POACHER as we were being dispersed in preparation for the Cuban Blockade in 1962. The submarine in the background is the USS SEA CAT (SS-399), and it reminded me of a shipmate departing. The prayer we decided to use was the Final Prayer used frequently at the Tolling of the Boats ceremonies through out the USSVI.

From Joan Miller, regards LTJG Calvin Miller, 1963-1967. You are doing a wonderful job with the Book, I am sure the end product will be a great tribute to the SEA POACHER and its men. I truly do wish I had something substantial to add to the mix, but alas, I was only Cal's life support. He was living the action on SEA POACHER and proud to be involved with her. His stories were great, and he told and retold many over the years. With him gone, I am afraid that those stories died with him.

I treasure the "Sailor Rest Your Oars" plaque presented to me by the SEA POACHER Association. I fondly recall our housing in Key West and a couple of neighbors, but stories of life on the sub are a blank. Our double barrel Damascus long gun came back to Key West from Italy in a torpedo tube, and my son treasures an oil painting of SEA POACHER underway that

was given to us by a Radioman, Jack Hammitt I believe. Your hard work and publishing a book about SEA POACHER and her men will be a tribute to many, and I salute you for a valiant effort

EDITOR'S NOTE: Cal retired as a Commander after 21 years service. He then went to Medical School at Northwestern and became a Prosthetics Doctor for another 20 years. He played piano, organ, flute, and was involved in deep sea salvage diving. He was also a HAM radio operator. He passed away at age 65 in 2005 in Monterey.

From Bill Dukacz, regards LT Bert Levin, 1957-1958, and a submariner's final request. It was my honor and privilege to present the SEA POACHER Memorial Plaque to Mrs. Grayce Levin in honor of her Husband.

On July 3, 2007, my wife Diane and I made our way from our home in New Hartford to the Levin family residence in New London. We pulled into the drive way and were greeted by his son. His eyes lit up as he talked about his dad and his submarine stories. Stories he told over and over to his children and grand children.

Mrs. Levin then greeted us and brought us to the back yard. We were introduced to her two daughters, daughter in-law, and their children. John Duddy, who served on the TIRANTE with Bert, and long time friend, was also there with his wife.

Mrs. Levin begin telling us of their first meeting in 1958, and how they had known each other for only two weekends, when the young Lieutenant asked for her hand in marriage. They hastily put together a wedding just before Bert was transferred to Hawaii. The result was a loving marriage that lasted throughout the years.

We all gathered together, and I did the presentation of the plaque to Mrs. Levin. It was a very special moment for all of us. Later on, Bert's Son told me about his father's final request. After Bert had passed, the family took a boat out to the mouth of the Thames River about three miles south of the submarine base at Groton. At a spot in the channel, they let his ashes sink to the bottom. Grayce can see that spot by taking a very short walk from her house down to the end of the street.

The next day, two LOS ANGELES Class submarines passed over Bert's spot. Somehow those men must have known that they were on patrol with one of the best.

Jack Merrill added "I remember Bert as a very well liked Executive Officer on TIRANTE when I was aboard her in 1963-1964.

From Edwin Thompson, regards Robert Bergs, 1955. Early in 2007, I was invited by two nearby shipmates to accompany them to a Memorial Service for Robert Bergs, a former SEA POACHER Executive Officer, in Sarasota, Florida. Robert reported aboard shortly after I left, so I did not know him personally. However, after my membership in USSVI and the SEA POACHER Association, a strong feeling of comradeship developed, and I felt compelled to go.

The bonds and fellowship of the Submarine Force are amazing after all these years. As we become acquainted with more and more of the personnel, the Force becomes even stronger and more fulfilling.

During the Memorial Service and the presentation of the SEA POACHER Plaque to the Bergs family, a feeling of pride and accomplishment was present. When we voted to establish this tradition at our reunion, it was not realized how significant this activity would become. It signifies to the families of our shipmates that their contributions to the success of our boat's

mission and the cohesiveness of our crews, no matter when, is recognized, appreciated, and remembered by all who served aboard.

From Bob Henry, regards Ross Wesner, 1961-1963. It was in September 2006 that I was asked by the Association President Bill Brinkman to present a memorial plaque to Ross Wesner, Jr. in memory of his dad for his service on SS-406. Jack Merrill was to send the plaque and letter from the Association to me.

I accepted this assignment, because he lived close to me. After I played a little phone tag with Ross Jr. and his wonderful wife Lisa, we set a date for the presentation at their home about 10 minutes across town from my home in Livermore, California. My son-in-law Brian Harris said he would come along to take some pictures for Jack to put in the Association Newsletter, so I was on a roll.

We pulled up to a beautiful home on the west side of town near the airport and golf course. We met with the Wesner's in their living room for a nice visit and presentation. They were both very happy with everything and were impressed with the way the Association handled everything. They loved the plaque. This made me proud to be a part of the presentation and the Association itself. I also gained new friends and learned about Ross himself. I could not remember if our paths crossed, but it is possible as I didn't leave SEA POACHER until June of 1961, the year he came aboard.

So I really thank all involved for the opportunity to help the Association. It was a real honor for me to present the Wesner's with the beautiful SEA POACHER Memorial Plaque.

From Bill Brinkman regards Morris Ezell, 1946. Lucky for me, Morris contacted me about the SEA POACHER Association in 2003.

Funny, but Morris and his wife Mary, had lived in Austin, Texas for many years and had raised their children there. It turned out that I lived only a few miles from Morris for many years as we moved to nearby Round Rock in 1979.

Of course, we didn't have the SEA POACHER Association until 2003, so Morris and I hadn't met in Texas.

Then to make it even more unique, Morris and Mary moved to Edmond, Oklahoma to be near one of their daughters. And would you believe it, they were living just a mile from my nephew who also lived in Edmond.

So, I visited Morris and Mary during Easter and had a great time discussing SEA POACHER and his main ship, the Battleship TENNESSEE, on which he served during World War II. I also bonded with Mary as she was from Norwich, CT as were my parents Henry and Margaret Kyle.

Mary and Morris met while he was in Submarine School in Groton and they were married in Connecticut. Since Morris was an old time Austin resident, I was fortunate to see his obituary in the local paper and had time to make his funeral in Edmond.

Again, having met Mary prior to Morris' death, it helped when I was able to console her and deliver our condolences from the SEA POACHER Association.

SEA POACHER EPILOGUE

FIND HER

In September 2006 Jack Merrill, Association Vice President, suggested that your Editor of this publication should find SEA POACHER or at least ascertain her status. At that time I was a Committee of ONE.

Why was I so lucky?

INTERNET AND EMAIL SEARCH

So, I started on the Internet, where the last information on SEA POACHER, now BAP LA PEDRERA (S-49) of the Peruvian Navy, stated that she was converted to a cadet training ship in 1995 and was at a Callao, Peru pier. Having that, I contacted by email, letter, and telephone numerous individuals and activities that might have further information. These included current and former Defense and Naval Attaches from Peru, U.S., and England; the Peruvian Embassy in DC; our Embassy in Lima; both the Navy and Submarine Museums in Peru; and their counterparts in the U.S.

I also touched base with COMSUBPAC and COMSUBLANT, Naval Sea Systems Command, CNO (N77) on Submarine Warfare, one officer survivor of the ATULE sinking in 1988 off Peru, Director of the Naval Academy in Peru, the current ABTAO Submarine Memorial in Callao, and a Callao marina.

About one-third of these responded. Most either didn't know, but were quite certain she has been scrapped and melted down for the steel. This is commonly done with obsolete Peruvian vessels, at a specific site in Lima/Callao.

FIRST INFORMATION FROM A PERUVIAN NAVAL PILOT

However, in December 2006 I had a response from a Peruvian Navy Captain and pilot, who wished to remain anonymous, but I had total trust in his comments. In 2004 he flew over this site, and saw a submarine hull with sail removed, and perhaps in the process of being cut up. It could have been our boat, the ATULE (which was raised after sinking), or some other submarine hull as Peru does have a large submarine force. He informed me that his office had requested a formal report on the status of SEA POACHER/LA PEDRERA, and it would be forwarded to me as soon as completed.

In the meantime, he told me of a web site where one could get very high resolution photos and maps of the area and see several hulls on the beach, one of which might be SEA POACHER. These were recent 2006 photos.

One goes to Google, hits the link to Google Air or Google Earth, and downloads the free software, clicks on Lima Peru, and then zooms in on the area. I could not satisfactorily do that, but was able to go another Google site and find another high resolution Lima, Peru map as follows:

<http://maps.google.com/maps?11=-12.046204,77.091923&spn=0.109962,0.151018&t=k>

Placing the scale at about 1 inch equals 1 mile and slewing the thing around a bit, you will find Jorge Chavez International Airport where the main runway is oriented 150/330 degrees True. There is another large airport not far away oriented at about 030/210 degrees True, but stay away from it. It will have lots of planes, but not nearly like Jorge Chavez.

So from the southerly end of the runway at Chavez, I was to go in a 150 degree True direction three miles to the beach, and find two small piers, and continue another 2.2 miles to the scrapping site and look for the submarine hull, by zooming in at 1 inch equals 200 feet and find it. Actually, I found a lot of piers and never found anything of any interest.

So my wife and I decided to go in the other direction from Jorge Chavez (330 degrees True). There we found the beach three miles away and two piers.

I already had a lump in my throat. Moving 2.2 miles we were on a naval base, found a submarine pier, and then the scrapping site with at least 4 submarine hulls on the beach, one with a sail still attached.

I GOT HELP IN THE SEARCH

After the January 2007 SEA POACHER Association Newsletter, where the above was published, I had offers to assist with the search from Bill Dukacz, Robert Sumner, and Bob Henry, so they became my Ad Hoc Committee. All contributed significantly. Robert, probably simultaneously with us, found the same submarine graveyard. The three of them then found a mystery submarine at the head of the Callao Submarine Pier which was of SEA POACHER size. Also on the pier were six other submarines of about 200 feet in length. We carefully analyzed this 2006 satellite image.

Bill found a Peruvian Naval Historian in Panama, Juan del Campo Rodriguez, who was absolutely certain he knew the answer. I sat back silent for a while until Bob Henry revolted, and finally charged me with bringing SEA POACHER back to the U.S., sailing it up the James River, and parking it secretly at a pier in my back yard in Virginia.

Bill had us in trench coats as if solving the Da Vinci Code regards the mystery submarine, and Robert and Bob fully responded.

Peru in 2006 had six German made Type 209 - 200 foot submarines at the Callao base submarine pier. A seventh larger SEA POACHER size submarine (the ABTAO, 1954 U.S. made SHARK Class and formerly TIBURON) was moored at a marina just off the base and currently serves as a memorial and museum. All were clearly seen in the satellite imagery, where we had good 1.5 inch equaling 200 foot resolution.

However it was this eighth submarine of 300 foot length that had our interest. Bill had better resolution on his computer and could make out deck hatches and was certain there was an after deck gun on it.

I supposed it could have been added. There was an outside chance that the mystery submarine was also ATULE. Granted, it sank in 1988 in a collision with a Japanese trawler, but was re-floated 11 months later, and cannibalized for parts. However, nothing was said of the hull disposition. But I had seen photos of it, after raised, and it was a mess, so we ruled it out.

The Committee was reaching a conclusion that the mystery submarine was SEA POACHER, as it was in a perfect spot to be the cadet training ship (actually pretty much a hotel) which had been its assignment in 1995.

SEA POACHER HAD GONE TO WAR IN 1981

Of interest in the search was that Bill Dukacz found a factual account in Spanish where during the Peru-Ecuador conflict in 1981 our boat, now aged 37 years, and called LA PEDRERA (S-49) (The Stone Quarry) was called to alert. The article was posted on www.elsnorkel.com on 16 October 2005. It was written by an officer on board at the time and now Commander Juan Arrisueno Gomez de la Torre and was titled 120 TORPEDOES IN 48 HOURS. Bill did an entire translation of the article, a summary of which had them going through overhaul. New batteries had been installed, and she had completed sea trials. They were certified for depths of 200 feet, but some other modifications were needed to go to test depth.

About this time the Peru-Ecuador War began. They were ordered to take on supplies and 24 torpedoes ranging from Mk-14 and Mk-37-2, which took most of a day. The following day, they were to go on patrol, when the bow of BAP PACOCHA (ex USS ATULE), maneuvering to get out of her way, hit the stern and damaged the propeller. This required dry docking and offload of the 24 torpedoes. However, after the fact it was found that no dry dock was available.

Accordingly, it was decided to change the propeller afloat, which was done, and the 24 torpedoes reloaded. Preparing for departure the next morning, unbelievably, another submarine was returning from operations, and accidentally hit the starboard propeller which had just been replaced.

So the torpedoes were again unloaded to dry dock. However a spare propeller was located and installed without dry docking. The 24 torpedoes were again reloaded, and our boat finally sailed on its delayed mission. So, in less than 48 hours they loaded and unloaded 120 torpedoes. Despite the depth limitation, that crew, like ours, served with the greatest of enthusiasm and dedication.

From our contact, Juan Arrisueno Gomez de la Torre, the LA PEDRERA crew has a reunion every July 1. They have as many good memories of LA PEDRERA as we have of SEA POACHER. Their motto is "Once a Submariner – Always a Submariner."

We left SEA POACHER in really good hands.

LAND PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PIER AND MYSTERY BOAT

Then Bob Henry comes up with a set of land photographs taken in 2003 with particular interest at the head of the Submarine Pier. There, and a total surprise, was the Peruvian Submarine DOS DE MAYO (S-41), of SEA POACHER length, with another ABTAO Class submarine outboard.

One could not tell if there was an after deck gun on it. In any case, it was not SEA POACHER and, our disappointment began.

Bill had continued his correspondence with the Peruvian Naval Historian, Juan del Campo Rodriguez. We were told regretfully that LA PEDRERA/SEA POACHER no longer existed. It had been sold to a private smelting company in 1996, and in Ventanilla, Peru it was cut into pieces and used as scrap iron. This also pertained to the ATULE. He had confirmed his findings with the Peruvian Naval Attaché in Panama, who was also a submarine officer.

Both confirmed that the submarine we were seeing in the 2006 imagery was the DOS DE MAYO (S-41), which will be decommissioned in 2007.

SCRAPPED BUT WAS ANYTHING SALVAGED

I went back to the Peruvian Consul to see if anything had been salvaged. His response was that no “major” equipment or instruments were recovered. The main reason for this was that such procedures are only done where the spare parts can be used for other units. LA PEDRERA was already an old submarine. There were no more ABTAO type submarines, and since its parts were not compatible with the German submarines, the obsolete equipment was not needed and was destroyed along with the ship.

However, he said “some other parts and equipment” of LA PEDRERA were salvaged by the Submarine's officers. Whatever was salvaged, as well as an old submarine simulator, is located in the Snorkel Pub, located inside The Submarinist's Club on the Callao naval base

MORE CONFIRMATION ON SCRAPPING

And now in late January 2007, my previous contact, a high level Naval officer in Callao, who still wished to remain anonymous, informed me that LA PEDRERA/SEA POACHER, was actually towed by a company called Fundicion Marsano in 1993 and one year later ATULE/PACOCKA followed her to the same final destination, where they were cut up for steel.

The skipper of the tug boat was a personal friend of my anonymous contact, and was absolutely certain of this. Also, there had been a visual inspection on the base in Callao and there was no LA PEDRERA/SEA POACHER moored to a dock. There was also no possibility that any of the hulls lying on the beach were it either. Both the Panama and Peru contacts were 100 percent certain SEA POACHER no longer existed.

PUZZLING ASPECTS ARISE

However there were still several puzzling aspects in our search. If scrapped, why the discrepancy in the years? Also, scrapping in 1993 did not make sense if LA PEDRERA was in a 1995 cadet training ship mode.

Plus there exists an account on the Internet of a sunken unidentified submarine in the Valparaiso, Chile harbor. It was 16 September 1976 and Operation UNITAS was taking place offshore. The Chilean naval vessels left the pier and encountered two submarines in the harbor. One was sunk and the other escaped.

There still is conjecture that one of these was a Peruvian Guppy submarine and the other a Russian nuclear submarine. Peru has totally denied this, but from what I have seen on the Internet the mystery has still not been solved. Some comments on the Internet suggest a cover-up, while others totally discount this.

And why was the official report from Peru on the disposition of LA PEDRERA taking so long? And now came even a bigger surprise. Bob Sumner at the last minute came up with a photo of LA PEDRERA/SEA POACHER and PACOCKA/ATULE with a possible date of 5 April 2003. At this stage I was not sure whether to wave or salute.

CONTACT WITH THE SCRAPPING COMPANY

So, I decided verification was needed from the Company that supposedly cut up and melted down both SEA POACHER and ATULE.

I sent an email to Fundicion Marsano in late January 2007 asking for information. A reply was immediately received asking why we wanted the information. A detailed response was provided and the answer on January 26, 2007 from the Fundicion Marsano Callao Export Manager stated: "We are sorry to inform you that the submarine was scrapped and unfortunately there are no souvenirs left."

I told Fundicion Marsano that I was presuming it was scrapped in 1996, but heard nothing more in return.

We subsequently received confirmation from Juan Arrisueno Gomez de la Torre, former submarine officer on LA PEDRERA, that the boat had been scrapped. He said he would search for any possible equipment that might remain from our boat, and would keep in contact.

Bob Sumner's contact regards the possible 2003 photo of LA PEDRERA never came back on the subject.

So what do we have?

Five email reports from high level officials in Peru saying she was scrapped!

Any reason to doubt their authenticity? Absolutely NO!

It is the best information we have, and we believe it certain.

The SEA POACHER hull/major equipments no longer exist.

THE OFFICIAL REPORT FROM PERU

I finally received a report from a high level Peruvian official on 1 May 2007, which I believe is the official report and nothing more will be forthcoming. The letter serial V.200-187 dated 25 April 2007 stated the following verbatim:

"I am pleased to answer your letter dated October 16th 2006, unfortunately I have to inform you that BAP "LA PEDRERA" is out on duty since April 1992. After that I could get information about this Submarine, in Lima – Peru. I am sending you a "Review History" about this Ship.

It resume of more interesting duties and also I attached a compact disk, with photography's, I hope this information assists you in extensive searching about it. Thank you for your interest in knowing about BAP "LA PEDRERA", where many Officers and Personnel to the Peruvian Navy served.

Very respectfully, Signed Rear Admiral Jorge Moscoso, Naval Attaché to the Peruvian Embassy of the United States of America

The "Review History" provided as an attachment to this letter states: "Ex-USS 'Sea Poacher' (SS-406) was transferred by the United States Navy to the Peruvian Navy in 1974, by managements of the Vice-admiral Luis Vargas Caballero, who was the Minister of the Peruvian Navy, and Supreme Resolution 328 dated June 28 1974, became BAP "LA PEDRERA." July 1st 1974 the flag of Peru was affirmed officially, and incorporated to the Naval Force of the Pacific, with Supreme Resolution 720 dated October 10th 1975.

This submarine departure from Philadelphia to Callao Port on December 2 1975, its first Officer Commanding was Luis Bardales Vasquez de Velasco. It took 13 days in it was coming its destination. Also it was scale in Columbus – Panama. In 1976, Cadets of Third Grade from Peruvian Naval College were on board, in order to go littoral of Peru.

After many years on duty, then evaluation technical operational, the Peruvian Government decided gone out of duty this submarine in 1991. With Supremo Decrete 027 DE/MGP, dated Abril 30th 1992, it is retired of the Naval Force of the Pacific.

BAP LA PEDRERA was participated in many different training; basic, intermediate and advanced levels, during its 16 years on duty in the Peruvian Navy, and contributed to formation new Peruvian Submariners.”

The Admiral was also kind enough to provide me with a disk of 35 JPEG color photos of LA PEDRERA. Most show the boat in a floating dry dock/marine railway.

Several are labeled Sin Titulo which probably means a Peruvian shipyard. No dates were provided. The sail appears to be undergoing major modifications.

Several photos show the crew at inspection. Only two show the crew and boat. There is one very nice at sea steaming photo, however this is of the PACOCHA (ex-ATULE) and not us.

What was not answered in this response from Peru was my first direct question.

What is the current status or disposition of LA PEDRERA/SEA POACHER?

We still have a few unknowns.

I wonder why the letter from the Admiral just stops short in 1992 and does not give any information on scrapping or its fate.

Almost all U.S. records indicate it was still being used as a cadet training ship in 1995 and possibly later.

Some other records indicate it was scrapped in 1993 and others in 1996. Even the scrapping company would not confirm the dates for me.

I accept the fact that it has been scrapped, but still do not understand these uncertainties as to dates and status.

MORE UNEXPECTED HELP WITH THE UNCERTAINTIES

In July 2007, I received an unsolicited email from Charles Hart, a recently retired Navy Captain responding to my email to the Editor of UNDERSEA WARFARE Magazine. He offered me several names and contact information to assist in determining the fate of LA PEDRERA.

He was the N2 Intelligence Officer for COMSUBLANT, a former Naval Attaché to Spain, and a person who enjoys a challenge. He currently works for the Joint Forces Command where he manages an intelligence sensor integration project .

Charles tried to put me in contact with Juan Fernandez at SUBLANT and the primary liaison with the Peruvian Submarine Force, but I was never able to get a response from him.

Additionally, he suggested I attempt to contact Jorge Ortiz Sotelo who wrote the definitive work on the history of the Peruvian Submarine Force in 2001, is the Executive Director of the think tank Instituto Peruano de Economia (IPE), a professor at the Peruvian Naval War College, the General Secretary of Thalassa, the Association of Marine and Naval Latin American History, and a former Peruvian Navy officer (O-5). Charles suggested Dr. Larry Clayton, the History Department Chair and Director of the Program in Latin American and Hispanic Studies at the University of Alabama knows him and could help in making contact.

He also suggested I might try Senora Consuelo Iturriaga at IPE where my Spanish had better be good.

I became so tied up with this book that I did not pursue it any further than trying to contact Juan Fernandez, and Charles, on his own, decided to work on the challenge. He tried a friend with the Office of Naval Intelligence, but the only information they had involved LA PEDRERA’S role in the recovery of PACHOCA (former ATULE). He is also awaiting a promised response from SOUTHCOM.

Captain Hart also has done considerable surfing on the Spanish-speaking web, and noted in many places LA PEDRERA was "retired from active service in 1995," however the word "decommissioned" is not used. An "official link" says that it was, in fact, the year 1992.

He also found a photo of SEA POACHER which I already have for the book. A second undated photo shows the Submarine Pier in Callao with six submarines. The two smaller ones I believe are the German Type 209 of about that length in feet. The other four I think are ABTAO Class and about the length of LA PEDRERA, but are not her. We have placed this photo in the book so you can see for yourself. They did make alterations to SEA POACHER and that can be confusing.

Finally, he noted that one of the Staff at the Peruvian Submarine Command (a two-star admiral) is a former Commanding Officer of LA PEDRERA. To that end, he is going to pursue this further.

I certainly appreciate all the assistance being given by Captain Hart, who has gone out of his way to assist us..

STILL SEA POACHER LIVES

What was destroyed after 52 years of service was a machine; a mass of nuts and bolts and other materials. But that was not the SEA POACHER or LA PEDRERA.

Our boat was and will always be a crew and the crew lives on. And we see this at every reunion and get together. We took a hull and good equipment, gave it wonderful life and service for 25 years, and we cared for it well.

Damn well!

It served Peru admirably for 22 years after we let go of it, and it even went to war again at the age of 37, and perhaps later in other skirmishes with Ecuador.

There are very few ships that can make that statement.

The SEA POACHER lives!

My Committee certainly thinks so.

Robert Sumner finally concedes that his 2003 supposedly photo is pre-1988. Bill Dukacz just sent me a tape of the SEA POACHER engines starting up, running, and purring quieter than I had ever heard before.

Robert Sumner and Bob Henry were shipmates on the 1960 SEA POACHER Northern Run and even got their dolphins on the same day on that trip. They had forgotten all about that, and, as a result of this Committee, are finally getting together after 47 years and Robert never even knew that he had relatives living in Bob's home town.

The SEA POACHER lives not only in this Committee, but with all of you!

Now, what do you suppose that Peruvian crew saved and put on display at the Snorkel Pub on the Callao naval base?

Captain Juan Arrisueno Gomez, Charles Hart, and my anonymous Navy contact in Lima have said they would investigate it.

Someone should go there and check it out.

As well as the beer and pisco sours.

I AM A SUBMARINER
By
John Chaffey, Powell, Wyoming

I served on the Holland over a century ago. I still serve to this day on the Trident, Los Angeles and Seawolf class boats and look forward to shipping on the Virginia, Texas and Hawaii. Places like Fremantle, Rota, LaMadd, Chinae, Mattaya, Sasebo and Subic stir my soul. For I am a Submariner.

I rest in peace beneath many seas across this earth. I was on the Barbel off Palawan, the Scorpion off the Azores and the Bonefish in the Sea of Japan. We gave them hell in the harbors at Wewak and Namkwan. I am a Shellback, a Bluenose, a Plank Owner, a MCPO of the Navy, a CNO, and a President. For I am a Submariner.

I heard Howard Gilmore's final order, "Take Her Down." I heard the word passed, "Underway on Nuclear Power." I have done every job asked of me, from Messcook to Torpedoman to Motormac to COB to Skipper. I know "Snorkel Patty" and Admiral Rickover. For I am a Submariner.

*I have twin Dolphins tattooed on my chest and twin screws tattooed on my a**. I know the difference between a Lady and a Hooker but treat both with equal respect. I know Georgia Street and Magsaysay drive. And although the Horse & Crow keeps moving I will always find her. I know the meaning of "Hot, Straight, and Normal." For I am a Submariner.*

I have gone by names like Spritz, Cromwell, O'Kane, Ramage, Breault, "Mush" and Lockwood. I have served on boats like the Nautilus, Thresher, Parche, Squalus, Wahoo and Halibut. On December 7th I was onboard the Tautog at Pearl Harbor. I was also on the Tusk in 49 and sacrificed myself for my shipmates on the Cochino. For I am a Submariner

I have stood watches in the cold of Holy Loch and the heat of the South Pacific. I know what the "41 For Freedom" accomplished. I was on the Sealion at Cavite in 41 and the Archerfish in Tokyo Bay in 45. I have endured depth charges and POW camps. I was on the Seafox when we lost five sailors to a Japanese ambush on Guam. For I am a Submariner.

I tip beers over sea-stories with my shipmates at yearly conventions. We toll the bell and shed a tear for our buddies who are on eternal patrol. Many pilots have been glad to see me, including a future president. I have completed numerous highly classified missions during the Cold War. Because "Freedom is Not Free," be assured that I am out there at this very moment. For I am a Submariner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many to thank for assistance in putting this book together. I could not have done it without the continuous and direct assistance of the SEA POACHER Association Officers: William Brinkman; Jack Merrill; and Jon Nagle. They not only provided me with book input and contacts, but also photographs and other material.

All four of SEA POACHER'S War Patrol Reports were given to the Association by Ken Johnson, a Lieutenant on SEA OWL from 1962 to 1965, who made at least 200 photocopies from the records located at the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, CT. Our Association Officers converted most to text for this book. SEA POACHER Plank Owner George Boyajian was in the 1944 Commissioning Crew and made all four War Patrols. He graciously donated film from Patrols #3 and #4 to the Association. Richard Clubb also prepared track charts for these patrols. Shipmates Bill Buckley, Karl Schipper, Bob Henry, Rick Socha, and Bob Sumner were also instrumental in soliciting input for this book. Their moral support to just keep me writing and on target with this effort was much needed.

And then there are the authors of the various chapters. Without them there would be no book. Most chapters are the result of their direct input to my email or letter requests. Some did not have computers and shipmates like Rick Socha took their inputs, retyped them, and forwarded them to me. A few inputs were obtained from obituaries or newspaper articles. Still others were received by the widows of shipmates who contributed in their behalf. In this regard, credit must be given to Barbara Poole for taking the initiative to first submit a chapter on behalf of her Husband Marshall. It was a wonderful idea that was expanded upon by other widows and family members. This should be very clear in each chapter as to the contribution source.

SEA POACHER'S history did not stop in 1969. She was in the Reserve Fleet for five years, and then was sold to Peru in 1974 and operated for them for over 20 years. I greatly appreciate the Naval Historian of Peru, Juan del Campo Rodriguez, and the Peruvian Consul in Panama, for submitting a chapter of her service at BAP LA PEDRERA (S-49) for his Country.

A search for the status of our boat was also made in 2006 and 2007. My Search Committee consisted of William Dukacz, Robert Henry, and Robert Sumner, and their assistance was important and most appreciated. I also acknowledge help provided in this search, again by Juan del Campo; Captain Fernando Zamudio, Peruvian Assistant Naval Attaché in Washington; Claudia Lanao, Administrative Assistant, U.S. DAO in Lima; former UK Attaché George Hogg; former U.S. Attaché Francis Satterthwaite; LCDR Jeffrey Davis, USN, Public Affairs Officer for COMSUBPAC; J.T. McDaniel and Mike Smith, Managing Editors of Undersea Warfare Magazine; Captain Alfredo Lozado, Peruvian Assistant Naval Attaché in Washington; Juan Arrisueno Gomez de la Torre, Captain de Fragata, and former Officer on LA PEDRERA; Ing. Eliot Torres-Calderon V., Export Manager, Fundicion Callao S.A.; and Navy Captain Charles Hart of the Joint Forces Command. For those I missed acknowledging, it was not intentional. There is a special place for you in that Conning Tower in the Sky.

Finally, my wife Frances put up with me on this for nearly a year, and while neglected, her complaints were few. She also served as a sounding board for many of the efforts, solved all my computer problems, and I trust she knows how important she was to this endeavor.

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