



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

Web Site: <http://www.usseawol.com>

We still give a hoot!

March 2007 Issue



Shipmates & 1st mates

President's Message

Before I say anything, it would be improper for me not to mention Tom Gilbert. Tom passed away on March 11th. He was the founding father of our Sea Owl Association. I know that it meant a lot to him, knowing that his shipmates were getting together to reignite old friendships and to talk about old times. He will forever be in our thoughts.

As most of you know, our next reunion is going to be in St. Marys, GA. There is more about the reunion dates & times in another piece in this newsletter. It's my hope that everyone that's able makes the reunion; it's a great time, as those who have been to one, often return year after year.

Our Groton Picnic is another great time for all. Something we have started the last few years is a large raffle item for the picnic. This year it's a 20" LCD television. Everyone is encouraged to buy tickets for this TV....free shipping to the winner. Hope to have a large turnout at the picnic, as well as those shipmates buying raffle tickets. Our cruise on November 3rd is really taking shape. As of now, we have 57 people taking this cruise as a part of the Sea Owl group. There are still cabins available. Don't miss a great time at sea again with your shipmates.

St. Marys Reunion

October 30th thru November 2nd 2007

Arrive in [St. Marys](#) on or near Tuesday October 30th.

Make yourself comfortable with the area.

Our rooms are available at the [Sleeps Inn, 1321 Hospitality Ave, Kingsland GA](#)

Call (912) 673-7116; let them know you are with the Sea Owl group.

Room rate is \$55.00 per night (plus tax)

Rooms may also be available on the base at the Navy Gateway Inns

& Suites; call them directly for availability, (912) 573-4871

This is the former TVQ & BOQ

The Sleeps Inn does not have meeting rooms available for a hospitality room.

Wednesday October 31st

This is an open day--as of right now there is nothing planned.

Would be a great day for Halloween Party !!!

Thursday November 1st

We will gather at the [Borrell Creek restaurant](#) for our meeting/dinner.

I have this planned to begin at 4pm

More on this is forthcoming

Friday November 2nd

At 10:00 we will muster on the base at the WWII Memorial Pavilion.

11:30 Tour of Trident Training Facility (directly following the service)

18:00 Memorial Dinner at the Clubs of Kings Bay on the base. SSBN tours are dependent on the availability and the status of the boats at the time we are there. They are not guaranteed, thus far boat tours are set up as follows.

1 on Wed, 2 on Thu, 1 on Fri and 2 on Saturday

Saturday November 3rd

Is moving out day, see everyone next year in Manitowoc, Wisconsin For those shipmates taking the cruise departure time from Jacksonville is 16:00

The following information is from John Crouse, Manager of the St. Mary's Submarine Museum: ***This is important for those attending our St. Marys reunion this year.***

Anyone who doesn't have subbase access, and wants to attend the memorial dinner or get a chance to tour a SSBN must submit MY registration form. No exceptions. I sponsor the subvet. The subvet can sponsor his wife, relative, friend or a duty driver. ALL must be a US Citizens, no exceptions. So make sure your people know they need to register with me in addition to registering for the Sea Owl reunion, two different registrations, one for attending the SubVets Memorial Service and one for attending the Sea Owl reunion. Anybody with a military ID can enter the subbase and attend the memorial, many locals do. Due to the numbers of those attending (700 to 800) I can't book tours and dinners just for the different reunion groups, but I do try to group the reunion groups in smaller groups when going on the boat tours. My number #1 priority is the WWII Subvets (their guests) during this week with us. Cold War Subvets (their guests) next. This is expected as this is their memorial that they created back in the 1980s. I just do the work for them. For SSBN tour all must be able to walk, talk and chew bubble gum for three hours without stopping. Those with physical condition, even in a wheel chair, can go on the Trident Training Facility tour on Friday after the memorial service.

Anybody not registered with me will NOT be put on the MEMORIAL SUBBASE ACCESS LIST, or the SSBN TOUR ACCESS LIST or attend the memorial dinner Friday night. Those registering with me must have the memorial forms to me no later than 20 October. When registering, make sure your people mark their form which reunion group they are attending with. For SSBN tours kids must be above 10 years of age. I have to verify ID of the ALL subvets registering for subbase security to get on either of the two access lists. Must be a SS Qualified and a member of Subvets WWII, Subvets INC or submit a copy of their DD-214 with their registration form. EACH subvet must complete his own form and pay the memorial registration fee. Each of their guests must also submit their own form and pay the registration fee. Registration fee was \$10 this last year, subject to change. The fee pays for the memorial expenses and event expenses. The MEMORIAL SUBBASE ACCESS LIST will only be good from 30 Oct - 4 Nov. So don't attempt to enter the subbase unless you have your own military ID. The SSBN TOUR ACCESS LIST will be submitted prior to your

arrival to the tour coordinators.

Major events Thu-1700 Local Officials Welcome, Fri-1000 WWII Memorial Service, Fri-1130 Tour of Trident Training Facility (directly following the service) & Fri-1800 Memorial Dinner at the Clubs of Kings Bay

New change as of 21 Nov 2006. The Subase TVQ is now called 'Navy Gateway Inns & Suites'. This is a whole Navy wide change for all TVQs on all Navy bases. If you don't know what a TVQ is, it's what we used to call the BOQ, where the officers stayed. They have 3 types of rooms here on Kings Bay. Multi Bed Rooms (max 2 per room), Single Occupancy rooms and Suites. Suites are divided into 3 groups, Flag Officer Suites, Mini Suites and Standard Suites. Prices vary from \$17.00 to \$50.00. Early reservations will be accepted sometime next spring. Normally you can only book out a couple of weeks in advance for the Navy Gateway Inns & Suites, unless you are a senior officer then you can book about a month in advance. They change the rules for the WWII Memorial Service during the summer before. The TVQ doesn't have a hospitality room for groups. Phone number for the Navy Gateway Inns & Suites is (912) 573-4871

SSBN tours may or may not happen, and schedule subject to change, which it has in the recent years. Tours are assigned by me on an individual bases, subvet & his registered guests. Remember my priorities in 1st paragraph. I don't assign a whole tour to just one group, as every group would want their own. And everybody can't go on the Friday tour. I've requested to have 6 tours next year, 1 on Wed, 2 on Thu, 1 on Fri and 2 on Saturday. 2004 & 2005 they totally changed the schedule at the last moment, this year was OK. Those who want the best shot for a tour needs to be here for at least two-four days and sign up for all of the tours that you can be available for. After 20 October I'll assign tours, since the 20th is the last day to register, and I need all the requests by then. Subase needs time, couple of weeks, to conduct required security checks, prior to people arriving on the 31st. Those who fail to register by the 20th most likely won't get a tour, as subase security personnel thinks security comes first, not piss poor planning.

If you provide the name and home address, no PO Box, I can mail them my form and cover postage. You will need to send me their names to verify that they are from your group. I'll send you some extras in case you happen to see any face-to-face or want to mail them. In May I'll send out the forms, after I get the first meeting with the subase skipper and security. Navy transportation is provided here in St. Marys and on the subase. Unfortunately they quit going out to Kingsland a few years ago due to cost of fuel. Make sure your people have transportation. In the past most from Kingsland just drive to the events or go to Cumberland Island Inn & Suites for pick up to subase, which has worked out OK. Those registered with me will be able to get a car pass to get their car, registered and insured, on the subase. Everybody must have an official PHOTO ID CARD. This should get you started. Just tell your people to remain flexible, as things & schedules change every year, and that is from the time I send the form out in the spring until you all arrive in the fall. Being Subvets they should be used to changes. At check in we provide an updated schedule and latest info.

From the Editor

We will have more definitive information about the above in the June issue of "Hooter Hilites", but for now this is all that we have been given.

As always a newsletter would not be complete if we were not to remind everyone to pay their dues. Again, the two digits or letters

following your name on the mailing label to indicate your dues status according to our records. To review, if there is a "LM" on your mailing label, you are a Life Member and you never have to pay dues again. A "06" would mean you are paid up through October 2006, etc. If you are overdue or "dink", but still within a year of being paid up, you will continue to get the newsletter with a note reminding you to pay your dues before October 31st or you will no longer receive the newsletter by mail. If you believe that your dues status is in error, please let John Leers know.

I am always looking for interesting stories and articles to publish in the newsletter that would be of interest to shipmates. If you have sea stories, unusual hobbies, stories of trips you have taken or any other material you think would be of interest to your Sea owl shipmates, please send them on to me. If you prefer to remain anonymous and not take credit for the story, Howland Owl is always happy to tag on his byline instead. This month I received an excellent story from Shipmake Ken Boyer that you can read on the '50s page. His story of how he qualified as an enlisted man aboard Sea Owl and later completed his underway qualification as an officer on Sea Owl while assigned to the USS Robert E. Lee made me curious as to whether anyone had ever COMPLETED both his enlisted and officer qualification aboard the same boat. After posting this question on Ron Martini's submarine BBS, I got just one response as follows: "Sort of ... VOLADOR - enlisted qual in 1956 as a GUPPY-II and again as an officer in 1965 - by then, the boat was a GUPPY-III so there were a lot of differences starting with a 15' longer Control Room, prairie masker, PUFFS, a 504 cell Gould TPX battery, and a fire control system that supported wireguided MK37-1s and nuclear warhead MK-45 torpedos, plus a higher sail with 2 bridge hatches, one on either end of a long trunk (I think it was 11'), floating wire VLF antenna, and a gaggle of the latest and greatest electronics in both Radio and ESM gear, LORAN-C and that damnable piece of junk DUUG-1C.

But all four of my beloved FM 38D-8-1/8X10s were still there and that is what really counted. The rest was window dressing."

Last month I had the pleasure of spending two days in Providence, RI with author, David Poyer. Many of you have read one or more of his books. He has written over 30 novels, many with a historical "flavor". David is a retired Navy Captain and the occasion of my spending this time with him aboard the Russian Juliett submarine in Providence had to do with research he was doing for a new book he has in the works which involves a former Russian Juliett class cruise missile submarine. While I have seen a partial outline of the book and we had several discussions about how the Juliett submarine will factor into the plot, I really can't reveal too much about it other than that its probable title will be "Espion". Look for it to be published sometime around December of this year. This was a fascinating and unique opportunity to meet a successful author and get a feel for the research that goes into writing a successful novel for an often very critical audience. I did manage to get from him autographed copies of two of his books, "The Passage" and "That Anvil of our Souls", and look forward to reading both.

Groton Picnic

by Ken Johnson

The following information is the schedule and what is being planned for this year's Groton picnic. We look forward to seeing as many of you there as can make this event. If you get to Groton early on Friday, drop by the Submarine Force Museum and say hello. I will plan to be on decent duty there that afternoon and will give you the VIP treatment.

Friday, June 1st

Dinner at the Groton Motor Inn, 6:30 PM, \$25.00 per person

Menu:

- Clam Chowder, Salad, Rolls & Butter
- Prime Rib Roast or Baked Chicken or Filet of Fish
- Baked Potato, Vegetable Medley
- Strawberry Shortcake, Coffee & Tea

Guest must select one entree.

Saturday, June 2nd

Family Picnic at Sutton Park, 11 AM till ?

\$15.00 per adult - \$8.00 per child

Menu:

- Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Chicken, Italian Sausage
- Macaroni Salad, Bavarian Potato Salad, Chips
- Pickles, Condiments, Beer, Soda & Water

Sunday, June 3rd

10 AM - Gather at local restaurant for breakfast, on your own
Need to know the number of attendees.

Ed Welch, CS 66-69, is planning this event. Those shipmates planning to attend should contact [Ed](#) at (860) 446-9104
Send your checks to:

Ed Welch
33 Waco Court

Groton, CT 06340-4719

NO LATER THEN MAY 27th PLEASE!

This year's Raffle prize:



The raffle prize for this year's Groton picnic is a 20" Magnavox LCD television set. (The above photograph of the TV set was done with a little help from PhotoShop.)

Features of this set include:

- 20.0" Screen Under Cabinet Television with LCD Technology
- Audio Features: Broadcast Stereo
- Automatic Skin Tone Correction, Green Enhancement, Black Stretch, Blue Stretch

- Inputs: Component Video, Left/Right Audio, Connects Your PC to Your TV
- Outputs: Headphone
- On-Screen Clock Display, On-Screen Menu Display
- 4:3 Standard Aspect Ratio
- 640 x 480 Resolution
- Contrast Ratio: 800:1
- 16ms Response Time
- 2 Speakers Side-Panel Speakers
- Viewing Angles: 160x160
- Accessories Included: Power Cord, Quick Use Guide, Remote Control, Right Angle Antenna Adaptor, Warranty Card, Remote Control Battery, User Manual
- UL Listed
- 22.1"W x 20.1"H x 19.8"D Tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00.

To enter this raffle, send check or money order made out to Ed Welch to:

Ed Welch
33 Waco Court
Groton, CT 06340

This raffle is open to all shipmates their family members and friends. When your check is received by Ed, a raffle ticket will be added to the bowl with your name & phone number. Tickets will be drawn on Saturday, June 2nd at our annual Groton Picnic. You do not need to attend the picnic to win and the TV will be shipped to the winner at no charge, if it is won by someone who is not in attendance at the picnic.

Sailors Rest Your Oars

One of the saddest parts of doing the newsletter is always the listing of those shipmates who have departed on "eternal patrol" since the last issue. Since the last newsletter we have learned of the loss of the following shipmates:

Alden B. Anderson, XO 64-66 – February 11, 2007

Thomas Gilbert, MM 63-66 – March 11, 2007

Robert Kerzykowski, FN 62-63 – December 17, 2006

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of our departed shipmates.

*There is a port of no return, where ships
May ride at anchor for a little space
And then, some starless night, the cable slips,
Leaving an eddy at the mooring place . . .
Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor, rest your oar.
No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.*

(See the '60s page for more information.)

Hooter Hilites is a quarterly publication of the USS Sea Owl Association. Issues are published in March, June, September and December.

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The 40's

March 2007 Issue



Lost World War II Submarines Found

By Ken Johnson

Over the past year the remains of four of the 52 submarines lost during World War II have been located and identified. These are the USS Wahoo (SS 238), USS Lagarto (SS 371), USS Grunion (SS 216) and USS Perch (SS 176).

Over sixty years after it was abandoned by its crew after suffering severe damage from attack by Japanese destroyers, the USS Perch was found by a team of international divers and photographers who were on a regular dive charter in the waters north of Surabaya City, Java. The sonar aboard the dive vessel revealed a long, slender object on the sea floor that merited investigation. Vidar Skoglie and dive team members Kevin Denlay, Dieter Kops, Mike Gadd, and Craig Challen soon found a wreck at a depth of approximately 190 feet. Although the divers immediately knew that the wreck was a submarine, they were unsure of its identity until they discovered a plaque on its conning tower. Even under a layer of more than a half-century of marine growth, the large lettering of the plaque could be read:

USS PERCH
SUBMARINE

The Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., and the USS Bowfin Submarine Museum, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii were provided photographs and evidence of the identity in early December of last year and final resting place of the vessel was confirmed.

In July, a Russian dive team photographed wreckage lying in about 213 feet of water in the La Perouse Strait between the Japanese island of Hokkaido and the Russian island of Sakhalin. The divers were working with The Wahoo Project Group, an international team of experts coordinated by a relative of Wahoo's famous Commanding Officer, Cmdr. Dudley W. "Mush" Morton.

Wahoo was last heard from Sept. 13, 1943, as she departed the island of Midway on her seventh war patrol en route to the Sea of Japan. Wahoo conducted what appeared to be a highly successful patrol based on Japanese records of losses in the area during this period and was expected to make contact with Midway in late October upon their departure from the Sea of Japan through the Kurile Island chain. No such contact was made. Following an aerial search of the area, Wahoo was officially reported missing Nov. 9, 1943.

At the time, the loss of Wahoo was believed due to mines or a faulty torpedo. But Japanese reports later stated that one of its planes had spotted an American submarine in the La Perouse Strait on Oct. 11, 1943. These reports indicate a multi-hour combined sea and air attack involving depth charges and aerial bombs finally sunk Wahoo.

The discovery of Wahoo follows more than a decade of work by an international team dedicated to finding the ill-fated submarine. In 2004, electronic surveys sponsored by a major international energy company identified the likely site. Japan Maritime Self Defense Force retired Vice Adm. Kazuo Ueda assisted the group with

providing historical records from the Imperial Japanese Navy that identified the location where Wahoo was sunk.

The Bowfin Museum in Hawaii worked with the team as an independent observer and confirmed the find as they also did with the other three submarines.

USS Lagarto was last heard from May 3, 1945, as she was preparing to attack a Japanese convoy under heavy escorts in the Gulf of Thailand. Japanese war records later revealed that the minelayer Hatsutaka reported sinking a U.S. submarine at roughly the same time and location.

In May 2005, British wreck diver Jamie MacLeod reported finding a sunken submarine in the Gulf of Thailand believed to be the USS Lagarto lying upright in about 225 feet of water. U. S. Navy officials waited to see the wreckage for themselves before stating for certain that the wreck was Lagarto. The Thailand phase of exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) in June 2006 provided an opportunity for Navy divers to visit the site. "During the initial planning conferences, we realized we would have a salvage ship very close to this site," said Cmdr. Tony San Jose, U.S. 7th Fleet's diving and salvage officer. "So by incorporating this into CARAT, we would be able to bring closure to the families and at the same time accomplish some training objectives."

Based on copies of the original plans and photos of Lagarto from the National Archives, consultation with the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, Wis., where Lagarto was built, and an inspection of Lagarto's sister ship, USS Torsk (SS 493), identity of Lagarto was verified. Lagarto, for example, was one of only three World War II-era submarines known to have been fitted with two 5-inch deck guns, one forward and one aft. Certain other factors also helped in making a positive identification.

Location and identification of the USS Grunion has been an ongoing project of the sons of Mannert L Abele, the commander of the sub, since Japanese records of the freighter, Kano Maru, were translated and made available, offering clues to the possible location of the sub. Grunion was known to have engaged the Kano Maru and to have been fired upon by the freighter's deck gun.

In August 2006 the ship sonar images, taken at 1,800 ft depicted a smooth, oblong object with features that could be a tower and periscope mast. Subsequent imaging passes have revealed more detail about the object that could be the long-lost USS Grunion. The Abele brothers plan to continue with surveys of the site in an attempt to get positive confirmation of the identity of the vessel.

Location of these lost boats has provided some degree of closure for surviving family members as to the final resting place of their loved ones. With the exception of the Perch whose crew survived the loss and became Japanese prisoners, these boats are considered to be war graves and as such will not be disturbed. We honor the sacrifice that their crews made on our behalf along with the crews of other lost boats whose precise locations may never be determined.



The 50's

March 2007 Issue



How I “Qualified” Twice on the Sea Owl

By Ken Boyer IC 59-60

When I joined the Navy in August, 1958 at age 17, the Navy was eagerly recruiting young men into the Submarine Nuclear Power Program, which had been given new emphasis, due to the Russian launch of Sputnik less that a year earlier. With some heavy-handed convincing by the local recruiter, I signed up as a future “Nuke”. After getting my parents to sign for me as a minor, four days later I was in boot camp in San Diego. Then came IC “A” School also in San Diego, followed by Sub School in New London (had to do the tank training free assent twice; no Stinky hoods in those days). This was all exciting stuff for a kid that grew up in a tiny village of 75 people in NW Missouri.

On May 7, 1959, I reported on board the Sea Owl in Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, where she was undergoing a refit. The same day, I was promoted from ICFA to ICFN and started drawing sub pay, which nearly doubled my pay! My first job was scraping rust from the inside of ballast tanks. If you have ever gotten stuck inside a ballast tank, you really know what “claustrophobia” means. Within a few weeks we left the shipyard and transited to New London, where we began regular operations.

Initially, I was assigned to the deck gang, plus getting qualified. As a regular line handler, I was usually stationed right forward of the bridge, where I could hear all the commands the OOD gave to maneuver the boat. I soon began anticipating the OOD’s commands and would give them under my breath before he gave them. This was great practice and little did I know how valuable this would be to me in the future. By Dec ’59, I finished qualification (with the generous help of just about everyone on the boat), made IC3 and got to go below to practice my IC training, stand Maneuvering Room watches, and was soon put in charge of the IC gang. Again, this was all very valuable training (even “watering the batteries”, which was almost as claustrophobic as being stuck in a ballast tank).

As a designated “Nuke”, I had to leave all my Sea Owl friends on June 30, 1960, and head off to Nuclear Power School (NLON, July to Dec ’60), then to Nuke Prototype (West Milton, NY, Jan to May ’61). My two roommates and I arrived in Saratoga Springs (where we had rented an apartment) on Dec 30th, 1960, minus 30 degrees F, and 30 inches of snow on the ground. This part was neither fun, nor exciting.

In Nov ’60, I had been recommended for NESEP, took the exam, and while at the prototype, found out that I had made the program. I hurriedly finished prototype qualification, headed to NESEP Prep school, then 4 years of college (degrees in chemistry and math), OCS in July ’65 (trip to DC for Rickover Interview while at OCS) and a commission as ENS in Oct 1965, and back into the Submarine Nuclear Power Program. This meant Nuclear Power School, Prototype (Idaho – even colder than NY in winter), and Sub School all over again, but officer versions this time.

From Sub School I was assigned to the USS Robert E. Lee (SSBN-601)B and reported aboard in June 1967, and made 6 patrols and 7 refits (that’s another story), and left in Sept 1970 for grad school. On the Lee I was cycled through almost every division as division officer, made LT, and finished my tour as Operations Officer. By mid-1968, I had finished almost all my qualifications. However full officer SS qualification required some at-sea operations that were not possible on a Boomer, which was either “on patrol”, or turning over to the other crew, or in refit preparing for the next patrol. These operations (certain drills, emergency surface, landings, etc) were usually performed on a diesel boat during the “off patrol” time in New London, which also depended on the availability of diesel boats. I finally got my chance to finish “SS” qualification in Dec 68.

Out of pure luck, I (along with a couple of other officers, who were also finishing their qualification) drew the Sea Owl. I didn’t dare tell anyone that I had qualified on the Sea Owl while I was enlisted, since they might shift me to another boat. In Jan 69, my 4 days at sea “doing angles and dangles”, handling drills, etc, were a breeze, since I already knew the boat inside and out, and had been through many of the same drills before. Even making a perfect landing at the Sub Base with a swift inflow of a rising tide in the Thames River, was easy, since I had done it many times before as a line handler giving necessary orders to myself. A few days later I was designated fully “SS” qualified, for the second time, and proudly so, since both qualifications had been completed on the USS Sea Owl (SS-405). Shortly thereafter, the Sea Owl was sadly decommissioned from active service.

This time I had definitely “drawn the right straw”. Thanks to all the shipmates that helped me get “SS” qualified, both times.

Editor’s Note: My thanks to Ken Boyer for providing this account. I look forward to getting similar stories for future issues.

With the decommissioning of diesel boats, no longer are there “school boats” as Sea Owl once was and opportunities for officers to ride other submarines to complete their qualification are few. Nuclear submarines provide far fewer opportunities for officers to practice landings and other exercises which used to be a part of officer qualification. It is now not uncommon for officers to complete their qualification aboard the same boat and not ride another for underway qualification.

Much of the shiphandling training and practice is done by computer using the VESUB system which I described in a previous issue. While this may be an effective means of developing the skills, somehow it doesn’t seem the same as the real thing.





The 60's

March 2007 Issue



Alden "Andy" Anderson

By Ken Johnson

Alden B. "Andy" Anderson, 75, a retired Navy Captain, defense-industry executive and a Lutheran lay minister, died Feb. 2 of cardiac arrest at his home in Springfield, VA.



Born in Cranston, R.I., the son of Scandinavian immigrants, he graduated from Brown University in 1952, and was commissioned in the Navy. His 29-year career included submarine duty, amphibious warfare and strategic and materiel planning, with service as Executive Officer of the USS Sea Owl, Commanding Officer of the USS Cobbler and the USS Trenton, chief staff officer of Submarine Squadron 16 in Rota,

Spain, and Commodore of Amphibious Squadron 2.

After retiring he became a vice president of Science Applications International Corp. In a 20-year career, he managed projects worldwide, primarily command and control center operations, and was a mentor to countless colleagues.

I last saw Andy Anderson when Mike Polhemus and I had lunch with him and Shipmate Peter Boyne in Springfield, VA while on the way to Branson, MO. Andy was Executive Officer on Sea Owl from 1964 to 1966. He relieved as XO under less than happy circumstances when then CO Russ McKechnie had his XO, Pete McGreevy, relieved. At the time, Andy was serving as Squadron 8 Engineer so we already knew him. He will be greatly missed!

Tom Gilbert

By Ken Johnson



It is with deep sadness that we learned that Tom Gilbert's long struggle with heart disease ended on March 11th. This photograph, taken of Tom, Suzy and grandson, Tommy, was taken at our reunion at Mobile in 2003. Due to failing health, this was the last Sea Owl reunion that Tom was able to attend.

Tom graduated from high school in 1958. After graduation he joined the U.S. Navy, entered the Submarine Service and served aboard the USS

Sea Wolf, USS Harder, and USS Sea Owl. After serving in the Navy, Tom worked for the Department of Defense as an inspector until retiring in 1998..

Tom was very much instrumental in making the USS Sea Owl Association the organization it is today. In addition, he was very active in the Drum Base of USSVI in Mobile, AL.

You may recall that two years ago the USSVI set up a fund for Tom to help him to obtain a heart transplant. Over \$10,000 was raised on his behalf and many of you contributed.

Our sincere condolences to Suzy and Tom's entire family. You will remain in our thoughts and prayers.

A Pleasant Surprise

By Ken Johnson

Recently I received a notice in my mailbox of a package that was too big for my mailbox and which I needed to sign for. When I opened it, I found it contained the following:



It had been sent by someone named John E. Merrill III from an address in Florida. While the above photograph is too small to read, it says, "Be it known that: LTjg Kenneth Johnson served aboard this fine submarine FROM: 1962 TO: 1965 alongside his shipmates listed below." The list is of all who served aboard during this period during those years.

I had no idea who the sender was or why this had been sent to me, so I emailed a picture of it to Roy Purtell and Tom Moniz to see if they had a clue. Roy recognized the name as someone who he believed had served aboard the USS Sea Poacher and forwarded it on to Shipmate Bill Brinkman. An email followed from Bill saying that this was made for me in appreciation for my making copies of Sea Poacher's war patrol reports, something I have been doing for Sea Poacher while at the Submarine Force Library & Museum in Groton doing research.

What a nice gift! I take this opportunity to publicly thank Bill Brinkman, John Merrill and any other Sea Poacher sailors who had a part in putting this together. While I did not serve with ALL of those listed, having reported aboard at the very end of 1962 and departed in April of 1965, I recognize most of the names as shipmates I did serve with.

This has given me an idea of something that could be done for any other shipmate who may like to have a similar remembrance of their time aboard. Let me know!