



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

March 2012 Issue



President's Message

Shipmates & 1st Mates:

I hope that everyone has had a great start to this year. I know for us in the Northeast, this winter has been one for the record books, the 2nd least snowiest winters on record. We still have several weeks that it can snow, but it's been a great winter – little snow, mild temperatures - thus far!

As we look forward to this coming summer, our Groton picnic is going to be held in New London. I have been in contact with the people at Captain Scott's Lobster Dock, 80 Hamilton Street, New London, CT. Mark your calendars for Saturday, June 9th, 2012.

As in past years, we will have a few shipmates meeting at the Groton Motor Inn for dinner on Friday, June 8th; picnic at Captain Scott's on Saturday, June 9th; then Brunch Sunday in Groton, before heading home. Here is the website for Captain Scott's: <http://captscotts.com/Pages/Default.aspx> We are allowed to bring our own beer, soda, water, or wine, for those wine connoisseurs.

I have been very slow in updating our web page, but I do promise to have all of the information about the Summer Picnic and what is happening about Cleveland, 2013, up and on our web page. Watch for updates there.

Bill Brinkman, FN '60, is still looking for Sea Owl sailors to attend the Sea Poacher's Reunion in San Antonio, TX, this coming April, 2012. I will be flying into San Antonio on the 16th of April and staying until the 20th. Any shipmates who want to attend or join us in San Antonio can contact Bill at seapoacher@austin.rr.com for details.

Speaking of Bill Brinkman, I will be meeting Bill and a few of his Sea Poacher Shipmates May 1st, 2012, at Arlington National Cemetery for the burial of Jack Gentry, who was a 20-year Navy veteran. The burial will be with full military honors. Anyone who would like to attend is more than welcome to join us.

49th International Submariner Congress

By Ken Johnson

This year the International Submariner Congress is being held at Kiev, Ukraine from September 20-24, 2012

What follows is a brief outline of the program for this congress:

Thursday September 20—1900 (7:00 PM) Evening cocktails and socializing with other guests.

Friday September 21—08:00—09:30 Breakfast

09:30—10:00 Transportation to Congress Park of Glory

10:00—11:30 Wreath Laying at Glory Park located on the Dnieper River with views of Kiev. The park only consists of memorials and monuments dedicated to those who gave their

lives defending their homeland. People come here to pay tribute to the soldiers, pay tribute to their heroic deeds.

13:00 Lunch and tour of the Dnieper River by boat.

16:30—23:00 Opening Ceremony of the Congress including statements from each delegation, Holiday Concert and Gala Dinner.

Saturday, September 22—08:00—09:30 Breakfast

9:30—10:00 Transportation to Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, this is the first of the Monasteries founded in the greater Russia, founded in 1051. This visit will include a religious ceremony.

10:00—11:30 tour of Kiev-Pechersk Lavra

11:30—16:00 Tour of City Administration Buildings and reception at the Ministry of Defense and Hall of Columns.

16:00—19:00 Free Time

19:00—22:00 Visit to the National Opera of Ukraine (National Academic Opera and Ballet of Taras Shevchenko). Greeting Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

Sunday, September 23 - 08:00 - 09:30 Breakfast

09:30 - 10:30 - transportation to "Outdoor Museum"

10:30 - 14:00 tour and lunch. This museum showcases Ukrainian life in the Seventeenth Century

14:00 - 15:00 Transportation back to hotel.

15:00 - 18:00 Free Time

15:00 - 16:00 Heads of Delegation Meeting

18:00 - 23:00 Closing Gala Concert and Dinner, includes exchanges of gifts

Monday September 24 - 08:00 - 09:30 Breakfast

09:30 Beginning of transfer guests for departure

OPTIONAL

10:00 - 18:00 - Tour of the Chernobyl zone, including eyewitness accounts of the disaster and its consequences - past, present and future for the Chernobyl region.

The official web site for this congress is here:

<http://www.isa-ukraine-2012.org/> (Please note: This web site is in Russian, but if you use the Google Chrome web browser it can translate it into English for you.)

International Submariners Association-USA is taking a different approach for this congress and has designated a Convention Coordinator who will assist with questions, comments or suggestions about traveling to Kiev for this ISA Congress. You may be interested to know that they have designated Sea Owl

shipmate Don Gregg (QM 63-68) and his wife, Betty to serve as coordinators.

If you plan on attending or even think you may attend, please contact Don or Betty Gregg. They will add you to their list of attendees and as things develop, they will keep you informed.

Don Gregg - djgregg@aol.com

Betty Gregg - bgregg1115@aol.com

Or they can be reached by phone at: **508-823-3958**

You will, of course, need a valid passport for this, but Ukraine does not require that you have a visa

From the Editor

I hope that you all enjoyed the DVD that went out as the December issue. It was my way of sharing the experience that we had at our reunion in Virginia Beach. Hearing Captain Charlie Rush speak was something that needed to be shared with all Sea Owl shipmates and not just those who were at the reunion. If I decide again though to send out 200 CDs or DVDs, I will use a duplicating service to create them. I was able only to burn five copies per hour which, if you do the math, means it took me 40 hours to make 200 duplicates. In addition to that, I managed to burn out a drive in the process.

Based on feedback to me from Admiral William "Bill" Houley, who I served briefly with on Sea Owl in early 1963, "Cartoon Bob" D'Amico has blessed us once again with a continuation of the series of "Thank You Sea Owl" cartoons.



Thanks to a recent Facebook post by one of my nieces of a March 9th Washington post article, I learned that my sister, Eleanor, was recently honored as a woman veteran of the Korean War by the Department of Defense 60th Anniversary Commemorative Committee.

After graduating from the University of Rhode Island in 1951 and working for a while testing water at the City of Providence water treatment plant,

she joined the Army Woman's Medical Specialist Corps and became a physical therapist. It was during her service at Fort Sam Houston, Texas and then Fort Carson, Colorado that she met her husband, Tom Porter, an Army 2nd LT who lost both legs just below the knee in Korea. They have been married 58 years and for several years now have made weekly visits to the amputee ward at Walter Reed Army Hospital in Washington, DC. They have made many lasting friendships with Walter Reed patients.

USSVI Virtual Online Submarine Museum

Did you know that USSVI has an extensive museum of submarine related photos online? I know that many of you already follow this Facebook page, but even if you don't you can still visit it on line.

This page was created as a internet museum for United States Submarine Veterans is maintained by former USSVI National

commander, Pat Householder. USSVI is the largest association of U.S. submarine veterans in the world.

There are two ways to see this collection.

If you are a Facebook member, search out USSVI Virtual Museum and "Like" the page, then read the historical info and look at the extensive photo collection.

To keep track of museum updates as they happen, you should click the "Like" button at the top of the page.

If you are not a Facebook subscriber (and don't want to be) just follow the link below which will take you to the photo portion of the online museum where you can see what has been posted.

Each picture represents a separate album, so click on the picture to see the rest in the album

Enjoy!

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/USSVI.Museum.online?sk=photos>

Here is an example of what you can find there from the album of Museum Subs and Memorial Sails:



This is the sail of the USS Parche (SSN 683) which is on display at Bremerton, WA. On it are displayed the many awards earned by this submarine during its Cold War service. Parche is the most decorated ship in U.S. Navy history, receiving a total of nine Presidential Unit Citations, ten Navy Unit Citations, and thirteen Navy Expeditionary Medal awards during her thirty years of service. As more of the Los Angeles class submarines reach the end of their useful life you can expect to see more of their sails being acquired by the cities for which they are named and put on display. Also, there are future plans to display the NR-1 sail and artifacts at the Submarine Force Library and Museum in Groton.

Other things you can find here are videos including a tour of the St. Mary's Submarine Museum recorded by the late John Crouse in 2009.

New USSVI Base in San Diego

Congratulations to Sea Owl shipmate and Life Member Rocky Rockers (EN 56-58), Base Commander and his crew of the newly chartered USSVI Doug Smay Base, meeting at the Sub Base at Ballast Point, San Diego, CA. Their first meeting was held on 18 February. Our wish for them is "fair winds and following seas".

2012 SUBVETS Anniversary Celebration

The dates for this years SUBVETS Groton Base Anniversary Celebration are 3 - 5 May 2012.

All of the information for this event is posted here: <http://www.subvetsgroton.org/anniversary> including registration forms, Hotel information, Scholarship Appeal information, etc. Registrations, sponsorships and donations are coming in.

The SUBVETS Anniversary Celebration is a 3 day event that has two official purposes:

1. To give SUBVETS, their guests, and Families the opportunity to share comraderie and have a great time.
2. To help raise funds for the SUBVETS Groton Base Scholarship Fund

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday 3 May 09:00 AM **Scholarship Golf Tournament**

This event is scheduled rain or shine. Price is \$120.00 and will include greens fees, cart, coffee and doughnuts, turn around lunch, banquet dinner and prizes. The Tournament will be held at River Ridge Golf Course, in Jewett City, CT.

Thursday 3 May 11:30 AM **SUBVETS Anniversary Luncheon**

This is scheduled to be at the SUBVETS Groton Base Clubhouse at 40 School Street. There will be a special of the day and you can order off the menu. This is a "pay as you go" event.

Friday 04 May 08:30 am **Return to Submarine School**

This includes a Basic Submarine School Graduation Ceremony, Submarine School tours, and lunch at the Sub Base Galley. The cost is \$10.00 each. All participants must provide date of birth, citizenship, and last 4 of SSN on registration form. (If you have not had a tour of Submarine School in recent years, you will be amazed at the changes!)

Friday 04 May 6:00 pm **Welcome Aboard Reception**

This event will be held at the Groton Inn and Suites starting at 6:00 pm. There will be Hors d'œuvre and a cash Bar. The cost is \$20.00 each.

Saturday 05 May 9:00 am **Submarine Tour**

This event is strictly dependent on SUBASE security conditions and Submarine availability. It can be cancelled without notice. The cost is \$10.00 for each. Those wishing to tour a boat must be physically able to climb up and down two decks of vertical ladders. All participants must provide date of birth, citizenship information, and last 4 digits of your social security number on the registration form.

Saturday 05 May 1:00 pm **Tolling of the Boats Ceremony**

This event will be held at the SUBVETS WWII National Submarine Memorial East, Groton CT. There is no cost and this is open to the general public.

Saturday 05 May 5:30 pm **Anniversary Banquet Dinner Dance**

This event will be held at the Port and Starboard Banquet Room at Ocean Beach in New London and will begin with a social period and cash bar at 5:30 pm on 05 May, then dinner with a choice of entrees; our guest speaker, several raffle prizes, and then dancing and music. The cost is \$30.00 each.

Another feature we added to this year's banquet like we did last year is the opportunity for members and attendees to sponsor students from Naval Submarine School to join us at the banquet to bring the past together with our future in our celebration of SUBVETS. The cost to sponsor a SUBSCHOOL Student to join us at the banquet is \$25.00 each.

Even if you do not plan to attend this celebration there are numerous sponsorship opportunities available in addition to the above mentioned one. For example there are several levels of Scholarship Golf Tournament sponsorship available to choose from. To see the full range of donation opportunities go to the <http://www.subvetsgroton.org/anniversary> web page and download the application form.

If you do plan to attend, please bear in mind that certain events have limits on the number who can participate. For example the Return to Submarine School event has a maximum limit of 150 and the Submarine Tour has a maximum limit of 100 persons.



As always, one of the saddest parts of doing the newsletter is the listing of those shipmates who have departed on "eternal patrol" since the last issue. We have learned since the last newsletter of the passing of these shipmates:

Pink A. Neal – RM 53-57 – March 6

John A. Evans – EN 53-56 – March 14

Pink Neal served aboard USS O-7 (41-44) and USS S-17 (43). He then became a "plankowner" and made three war patrols aboard USS Sea Robin SS-407 (44-48). Following that he served on USS Diablo SS-479 (48-51), USS Sea Owl SS-405 (53-57), and returned to USS Sea Robin SS-407 (59-60).

We extend our deepest sympathy to family 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.*

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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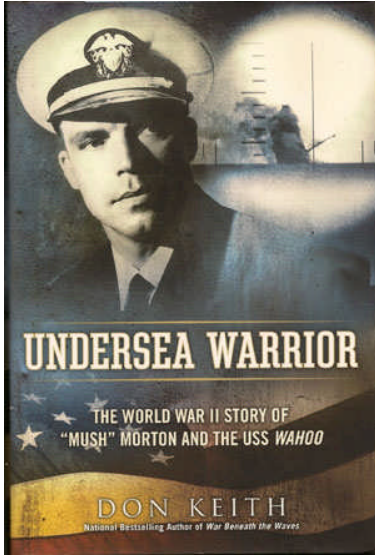
The 40's

March 2012 Issue



“Undersea Warrior: The World War II Story of ‘Mush’ Morton and the USS Wahoo” by Don Keith

Reviewed by Ken Johnson



In the June 2011 issue I wrote a review of “War Beneath the Waves”, a different book by Don Keith which is the story of World War II hero and Sea Owl shipmate Charlie Rush. That was a story that remained a secret for nearly 60 years. The story of Dudley “Mush” Morton and his six war patrols aboard USS Wahoo (SS 238) is one of legend yet until this book we did not have his full story.

Both “Mush” Morton and Charlie Rush received the Navy Cross with Morton receiving four of them. Both,

in my opinion, should also have received the Medal of Honor, but the reason they did not are different. In Morton’s case the reason most given has to do with what happened after Wahoo sank the Japanese transport Buyo Maru when Wahoo surfaced and fired on survivors in lifeboats.

Perhaps the most surprising part of his story is how close Morton came to not ever becoming the commanding officer of Wahoo at all. His first submarine command was of USS R-5 (SS 82), a World War I vintage submarine built in 1918. Based on the R-5 encounter with a German U-boat off the Virginia capes in February 1942 during which his superiors thought was not aggressive enough, it seemed unlikely that he would be given another command. His next very brief submarine command experience was USS Dolphin (SS 169) with Carter Bennett, Sea Owl’s first CO, as his executive officer. According to the book, Morton told Bennett, “This old bucket is a death trap. I’m going to do my damnest to get off her and I advise you to do the same.” Sometime later his Division Commander called him in and said, “Your boat is filthy, and frankly I don’t think you are capable of running her. From what I see of Dolphin and your record on your previous boat, I do not believe you are cut out to be in submarines, Lieutenant.” He subsequently relieved Morton of command of Dolphin and had paperwork prepared to transfer him to duty on a surface vessel.

Fortunately there were others more senior who recognized Morton’s value. One of them, John “Babe” Brown, a former football star and coach at the Naval Academy, remembered Morton’s gridiron performance there. Through a series of fortunate circumstances, Morton was assigned to Wahoo for a

PCO patrol under LCDR Marvin Kennedy. This was Wahoo’s second war patrol and during her first LCDR Kennedy had failed to gain the confidence of her crew and wardroom, including her XO, Richard O’Kane. It was actually largely due to O’Kane’s lobbying that Morton was given this assignment.

Following this patrol Morton assumed command of Wahoo and thus began a series of some of the most successful US submarine patrols of World War II.

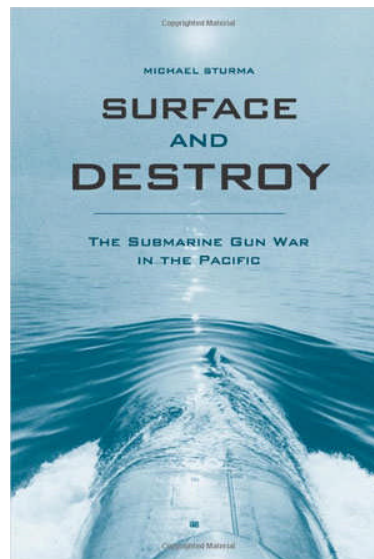
During her seventh war patrol on 11 October 1943, the date Wahoo was due to exit the Sea of Japan through La Perouse Strait, an antisubmarine aircraft sighted a wake and an apparent oil slick from a submerged submarine and combined air and sea assault was made. In 2005, underwater surveys in the region yielded what turned out to be a U.S. Gato-class submarine in the Strait. In July, 2006, a Russian team investigated the site which contributed further evidence of location of Wahoo. On 31 October 2006, the United States Navy confirmed that the images provided by the Russian team are of the wreckage lying in about 213 feet of water in the La Pérouse Strait are indeed Wahoo.

“Surface and Destroy: The Submarine Gun War in the Pacific” by Michael Sturma

Reviewed by Ken Johnson

A new book just published addresses the use of deck guns by American and Allied submarines during World War II.

Sea Owl is mentioned in the book for the shelling of a Japanese radio and weather base on Pratas Island on 26 March 1945 in which she participated along with USS Puffer and USS Piranha. The book states that Puffer’s patrol report described it as “probably the first submarine divisional bombardment on record”. This would have been Sea Owl’s second war patrol and we know



from the patrol report that she expended a total of 75 rounds of 5” shells during this attack.

During her third war patrol Sea Owl attacked a 4-masted schooner using 5”, 40 mm and 20 mm guns. She also destroyed numerous floating mines with 20 mm gunfire.

According to the book, for many submarine crews surfacing and engaging in gun action proved to be a morale booster. It also served as a means to engage smaller craft than would justify the use of even one torpedo.

An appendix lists the number of gun attacks each year by ship type for the years 1942-45.



The 50's

March 2012 Issue



Thank you Sea Owl...

Hi Ken... Special credit to you for the extra effort of a CD and the "Thank you SEA OWL" humor. Having spent a year in the relative luxury of a then new destroyer officer bunkroom, my status of an Ensign earned me a torpedo in SEA OWL. Not my last humbling experience, I should add. SEA OWL was the first of dozens of subs in which I served, but all the memories are still clear (and happy). ADM (ret) Bill & Judy Houley LTjg 60-63

Thank you Sea Owl... for allowing me to be a new Diving Officer and suffering the indignities offered by many Conning Officers for failing to reach and maintain ordered depth.



YO... WE JUST BROACHED THE SURFACE!

GEE HOULEY... YOU'LL NEVER MAKE LIEUTENANT LIKE THIS!

WHO'S IN CHARGE OF OUR DEPTH? WE'RE DOIN' A CHA CHA HERE!

WERE CAVITATIN' ALL OVER THE PLACE!

EVER GET SEASICK UNDERWATER?

WHO'S ON HELM? IS IT SNAKE-WAKE D'AMICO?

BLOW NEGATIVE! BLOW POSITIVE!

ER... SIR... THERE IS NO 'POSITIVE'... UNLESS YOU WANTED TO BLOW MAIN BALLAST TANKS and REALLY SURFACE!

Thank you Sea Owl... for the many opportunities to see first hand, while still a young and very impressionable officer, how well and how enthusiastically young submarine sailors, many in their teens, could handle important responsibilities while young and very junior - and how these same young shipmates could teach what they had learned about submarines to those even less experienced than themselves.

Bill Houley



The 60's

March 2012 Issue

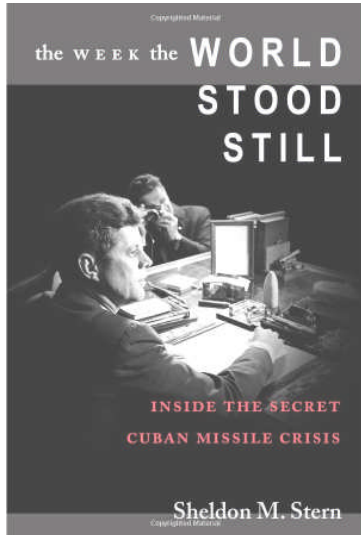


Remembering the Cuban Missile Crisis

By Ken Johnson

This year marks the 50th anniversary of what has become known as the Cuban Missile Crisis. I am sure that each of you has his own memories of where you were and what you were doing in October 1962. As for me I was 2/3 of the way through Basic Officer Submarine School as a member of Class 120.

Back in December I made my first visit to the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library in South Boston. One of the reasons for doing this was to see what information they may have there about the aircraft carrier USS John F. Kennedy that a group in Rhode Island hopes someday to bring to Newport as a museum. I was surprised to find that there is no mention of it in the museum nor is there anything in the gift shop about this ship.



What I found most interesting there was the exhibit devoted to the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962.

During a second visit to this museum I was more interested in what books might be available in the gift shop pertaining to the Cuban Missile Crisis. What I found was a book titled "The Week the World Stood Still: Inside the Secret Cuban Missile Crisis" by Sheldon M. Stern who was Historian at the JFK Library from 1977-99.

What was known by very few people within the Kennedy Administration was that a secret taping system had been installed to record conversations within the Oval Office and Cabinet Room during the summer of 1962. The President could turn the system on and off from various concealed switches in either location. After Kennedy's death in November 1963 on orders from Attorney General Robert Kennedy the taping system was disconnected and eventually 248 hours of meeting conversations and 12 hours of telephone conversations were turned over to the John F. Kennedy Library. Of these there were 43 hours of tape recordings of meetings held between October 16 and November 20, 1962 when the blockade around Cuba was finally lifted. This book organizes and summarizes these conversations in a fascinating, readable form.

These conversations were, for the most part, between President Kennedy and members of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (abbreviated throughout the book as ExComm). Key members of the ExComm included George

Ball Under Secretary of State, McGeorge Bundy Special Assistant to the President for National Security, C. Douglas Dillon Secretary of the Treasury, Roswell Gilpatrick Deputy Secretary of Defense, Lyndon Johnson Vice President, U. Alexis Johnson Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Robert Kennedy Attorney General, Edwin Martin Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, John McCone CIA Director, Robert McNamara Secretary of Defense, Paul Nitze Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, Dean Rusk Secretary of State, Theodore Sorensen Special counsel to the President, General Maxwell Taylor Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Llewellyn Thompson US Ambassador-at-Large and of course President Kennedy.

After the failure of the Bay of Pigs invasion just three months into the Kennedy administration, the President initiated Operation Mongoose, a secret CIA program of propaganda, psychological warfare, and sabotage against Cuba to remove the communists from power. Meanwhile Kennedy had met with Nikita Khrushchev in June 1961 and Khrushchev perceived possible weakness on the part of the new President as a result of the failed Bay of Pigs operation that he might exploit to his advantage. In August of 1961 the Berlin Wall was erected dividing East Berlin from West Berlin. On November 30, 1961 President Kennedy authorized aggressive covert operations against the communist government of Fidel Castro. This became a prime focus of the Kennedy administration up until October 1962 and did not remain secret from the Soviets for long.

In the spring of 1962 Khrushchev proposed and got approval to deploy intermediate range nuclear missiles to Cuba in response to the US deployment of Jupiter missiles to Turkey. It was also felt that this would even the odds which at the time favored the US in intercontinental range missiles. On October 14, 1962 aerial photographs made by U2 overflights of Cuba produced the first positive evidence of their presence in Cuba.

What followed was a series of ExComm meetings during which the various options of how to respond were discussed. Berlin and what the Soviet Union might do in response was very much a part of the discussion. There was anything but a consensus with the Joint Chiefs advocating air strikes against the missile sites followed by an invasion. As we all know what came out of these discussions was a naval quarantine and a resulting removal of offensive nuclear weapons from Cuba with the US agreeing in secret to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey.

While recording technology of the day was primitive by today's standards, the fact that these recordings exist and that the tapes have now been declassified provides an excellent "snapshot" of the decision-making process during this tense period.