



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

June 2009 Issue



President's Message

Shipmates & 1st Mates:

I hope that everyone is enjoying their summer activities. Our Groton picnic was again a roaring success, thanks to Ed & Paulette Welch & family. This picnic would not be possible if it were not for all that the Welchses do. Our sincere Thanks to them for another great picnic!

The past few months have been hard on the Sea Owl Association. We lost Lamar Taylor CO 52-55 when he received his Eternal sailing orders. Then our shipmate Doug Jensen MM 63-66 suffered a fatal heart attack, thus receiving his Eternal sailing orders. Both Lamar & Doug have been staunch supporters of the Association, helping out whenever they could. As with all of our shipmates that have sailed on the calm seas, we will miss them greatly.

As we must now prepare for our upcoming reunion in San Diego, Sept 7th thru Sept 12th, I am requesting that all shipmates please let me know if you plan to attend. If you are attending, let me know who is going with you so that I can make up name tags for everyone. Also, when you arrive in San Diego and check in with USSVI to let them know you are there, let them know if you are attending the USSVI banquet on Saturday the 12th. Make sure that you inform them that you are a Sea Owl sailor attending the banquet to ensure you get a table assignment with your shipmates; I want to have all Sea Owl shipmates at the same tables. (This has always been a USSVI problem in the past, but from what I have been told, they believe that they have this problem under control.) Should anyone have questions about the reunion or convention, please contact me so that we can get all questions answered.

See you in San Diego !!!!!!!

Groton Picnic Shipmate Attendees



Kneeling in front (l to r) Ken Johnson LTjg 62-65, Roy Purtell TM 66-69, Greg Hankin SN 67-68, George Dion IC 60-63
Standing (l to r) Herb Hawes IC 66-67, Jim Keaveny FTC 67-68, Herb Lathrop EN 68-69, Bob Kristian (Kostyna) FT 44-45 "plankowner", Ralph Stetson TM 67-68, John Salerno SO 52-54, Bob D'Amico SN 68-69, Clyde Turner EN 64-66, Ed Bess EM 64-69, Don Gardner EN 52-53, John Barnes MM 64-67, Ray Lariviere TM 60-62, Jim Madigan FT 66-69, Harry Siska EN 68-69, Ed Welch CS 66-69, Jon Warn LTjg 63-64, Stu Jack LT 62-63



The winner this year of a Sharp 26" LCTV is shipmate Herb Hawes IC 66-67 and his wife Diane. Our congratulations to Herb & Diane for winning the TV.

Bill Noe, EN 68-69

By Ken Johnson

In the last issue I put in a "plug" for Shipmate, Bob D'Amico, and it appears that Bill Noe, EN 68-69 followed through on it and has asked Bob to do some illustrations for a book he is writing. Both have agreed to let me include three of the illustrations in this issue, but I felt that they needed some introduction. The following from Bill is the introduction to his book:

"How I Wound Up On A Submarine" is a story of surviving the 1960s, the threat of nuclear war, Viet Nam, racial tension, flower power, duty to country and life. I have often wondered how a kid who by all accounts, grows up as a normal happy child is suddenly standing in the control room of a World War II submarine with a panel of valves and gauges in his hands; in control of the submarine's ability to dive and surface. This kid did not grow up with some morbid fascination with submarines and his only exposure to them was a toy in a cereal box that with the use of baking powder was able to dive and surface. There were television shows and movies that depicted life on a submarine but many kids were exposed to these influences and yet never stepped foot on one. This story explores the various points in this boys' life which like bumpers in a pinball machine directed and redirected the course of his life to find his way to submarine service in the US Navy. It also looks at how submarine service affected his life afterward as well. This is a novel; any similarities to the author's life are possible.

That being said, here is the first of Bob D'Amico's cartoons done for Bill. The other two are on the '60s page.



When we arrived at test depth we were to report any unusual leaks. The key word here is unusual. I was in the pump room inspecting for leaks. I didn't have to look far. The trim pump was spraying water like a fire hose. I reported the leak. My Chief came down to look at it and said, "Oh, that's normal". I was sitting on a tall chair like a bar stool. Pretty soon I was sitting on the work bench and I was just getting ready to climb the ladder to the control room when maneuvering called me on the sound powered phone to say they were pumping my compartment's bilge with the drain pump. I watched as the water level slowed and then finally started to go down, normal indeed!

From the Editor

The list of shipmates who have departed on "eternal patrol" as listed in this issue reminds us all that our time on this earth is short. It also serves as a reminder that our days as an association are numbered. The number of copies of this newsletter printed for each issue steadily diminishes and some time ago dropped below 200.

Once again we get to see the creative talent of Bob D'Amico. As I said in the March issue, coming up with new subjects that I think would be of interest to Sea Owl shipmates continues to be a challenge. Sometimes I am afflicted with a serious case of "writer's block" when trying to fill a six page newsletter four times a year. If you have any stories that you think would interest your Sea Owl

shipmates or if you have ideas for future D'Amico cartoons, please let me know! One thought I had was to make a future issue a tribute to Sea Owl's Commanding Officers and to ask Bob to make an appropriate collage illustration for it. Unfortunately I only have photographs of less half of them that I could supply to Bob to use. If any of you have good photographs of Sea Owl COs, please let me know. Ones I do already have include Captains Bennett, Hall, Taylor, Wessinger and McCracken.

New Submarine Escape Training Facility

By Ken Johnson

The section titled "Submarine Personnel Selection and Assessment" from the 1956 publication Submarine Medicine Practice states:

"Escape tank training is considered invaluable in the assessment of submarine personnel. By this means the applicant's ability to equalize pressure can readily be determined, and also a moderate stress situation is provided by the tightly packed group in a hot, noisy and somewhat uncomfortably different environment. This many times has revealed phobic reactions in individuals who otherwise may have been unaware of such tendencies or able to conceal them until a more stressful situation arose under operating conditions, when they were unable to accept the necessary responsibility."

This document is available on line at the web site of the Historic Naval Ship Association <http://www.hnsa.org/doc/index.htm>.



All of us remember the escape tank at the sub base and can probably remember making ascents within it, be they using a Momsen lung, free ascent with life jacket or Steinke hood. As of 2004, the Steinke hood was slated for replacement with the Mark 10 Submarine Escape Immersion Equipment (SEIE) suit. The Mark 10 will allow submariners to escape from much deeper depths than currently possible with the

Steinke Hood. Some US Navy submarines already have the system, with an ambitious installation and training schedule in place for the remainder of the fleet.

Because it is a full body suit, the Mark 10 provides thermal protection once the wearer reaches the surface, and the British Royal Navy has successfully tested it at six hundred foot depths.

The Mark 10 Submarine Escape and Immersion Equipment suit is currently in place aboard all US Navy submarines. The navies of twenty-two nations currently use SEIE units of some type.

The former Training Tower, at the Submarine Base in Groton, which was first placed in service in 1930, was demolished in the 1980's



after being damaged by a fire. It was a landmark, and many felt it was the defining motif of the Groton skyline. It was part of the collective memory of the base and left a strong impression on all who trained in it. The photograph at left and description below is from the on line

document <http://www.coaa.org/portals/0/awards/navy%2008.pdf>.

The new submarine escape training facility, completed in August 2007, is named Momsen Hall after Charles B. "Swede" Momsen, the US Navy Vice Admiral who was an American pioneer in submarine escape and rescue. Rather than designing a semi-anonymous building that blended in with the other campus buildings of the SubSchool, the design team for the new facility sought to express the building's unique and important training function in the design's form.

The design and construction of the building is inspired by several factors including the strong sense of history and culture of excellence which surrounds the base, particularly the training tower where escape training, which is one of the "rites of passage" at the sub school, will take place. This very unique 22,600 SF facility, provides a realistic and tightly controllable training environment for practicing escapes and rescues from sunken and disabled submarines. Program requirements included a 20-ft.-diameter x 40-ft. deep dive tank (escape tower) system that is used for submarine escape training, an attached support building for instructional space, infrastructure for related activities such as dive equipment maintenance, and hyperbaric chamber facilities. The building has two distinct sections – the dive tank and the instructional/administrative section. These sections are visually set off from each other by a section of curtain wall. This creates a feature of a rounded tower set apart from the rest of the facility that evokes a form from the historical training tower previously located at the base.

Doug Jensen

By Ken Johnson



We were all very shocked to receive the news that our shipmate, Doug Jensen, had suffered a heart attack and died on June 13th while many of us were enjoying our picnic in Groton. As you know, last fall Doug suffered a great personal tragedy when his home in Friendship, Wisconsin burned to the ground and many of his shipmates as well as others within the submarine veteran community stepped forward to contribute to a fund to help him recover. His friends, the Bottenseks,

took him in and provided a place for him to live while he got back on his feet.

Doug's personal family situation was something he shared only with his closest friends. Few even knew that he had two children or how hostile a relationship he had with his ex-wife. Apparently he had not seen his children, now in their 20s, in several years.

Doug has been a fixture at Sea Owl reunions and has entertained us all with his great sense of humor not to mention his generosity. It is hard to think of what they will be in the future without him! Any one who attended our last reunion at Manitowoc knows what a huge part he played in making it such a success. Doug actually purchased and provided several hundred dollars worth of items which were offered at silent auction during our reunion.

Doug had made many friends beyond our Sea Owl Association and particularly within the International Submariners Association-USA. He attended recent International Submariner Congresses starting with Moscow and St. Petersburg in 2006. I have been contacted by many of those who met him at International Submariner Congresses and who had been looking forward to seeing him again at San Diego in September.

Since his death, I have been checking the web site of Roseberrys Funeral Home in Friendship, WI which handled his arrangements hoping to find a published obituary there. Finally the following notice was posted under the June obituary section: "Doug Jensen - private family services/viewing were held. No obituary."

While it is difficult for me to understand the reason behind this or to accept the fact that there is not an opportunity to leave comments in a guest book, I do not know what we can do to publicly share our grief at his loss. All that I can suggest is that those of you who may feel so inclined can and should write to the Bottenseks and thank them for the kindness they showed our shipmate. Their address is:

Dan and Patti Bottensek
1127 Hwy 21
Friendship, WI 53934

Rest in peace, shipmate! We have the watch.



As usual 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. This month's list is the longest and saddest I have had to date! (*My thanks to Bob D'Amico for the new header graphic.*)

Arthur M Hayes, CO 57-58 – November 4, 2008
John Barrett, LCDR 53 – April 18, 2009
Francis Harvey, EN 49-51 – April 18, 2009
Robert R. Hughes, EN 66-67 – April 20, 2009
Lamar Taylor, CO 52-55 – May 13, 2009
Edwin Davis, CSC 64 – May 24, 2009
Lionel Cyr, FN 44-45 – June 6, 2009
Doug Jensen, MM 63-65 – June 13, 2009

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.*

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

Sea Owl Association Officers are:

President – Roy Purtell, 4 Garden Court, Troy, NY 12180-1307, (518) 272-8614, e-mail roy@ussseaowl.com
Vice-President/Historian - Tom Moniz, 8765 Carlisle Ave., Sacramento, CA 95828, (916) 682-9306, e-mail tmmoniz@frontiernet.net
Secretary/Treasurer Ken Johnson, P.O. Box 561, Oakham, MA 01068-0561, (508) 882-3738, e-mail seaowl@charter.net or oakhamgraphics@charter.net
Storekeeper – Ed Welch, 33 Waco Court, Groton, CT 06340-4719, (860) 446-9104, e-mail ewelch6621@tvconnect.net
Newsletter Editor – Ken Johnson, P.O. Box 561, Oakham, MA 01068 (508) 882-3738, e-mail seaowl@charter.net or oakhamgraphics@charter.net



The 40's

June 2009 Issue



Lionel Cyr

By Ken Johnson

It is unfortunate that sometimes we do not learn about shipmates until after they have left us. On June 10th I received an email from Roy with a brief obituary of Lionel Cyr, a Sea Owl "plankowner". Lionel was not a member of our association and I had never had the opportunity to meet him. Aboard Sea Owl

Lionel served in the engine rooms and after nine years of Navy service learned the plumbing trade, worked as a self-employed plumber and became one of the first licensed Master Plumbers in Massachusetts.

Since his calling hours were in South Hadley, MA on June 15th I saw no reason why I should not attend and pay my respects. I saw the above photograph on display at the funeral home and asked Lionel's son, Craig, if he would be willing to scan it and email it to me later which he did. I subsequently added it to the National WWII Registry entry I had made for Lionel in the name of his Sea Owl Shipmates as I had done for all who served aboard Sea Owl during WWII.

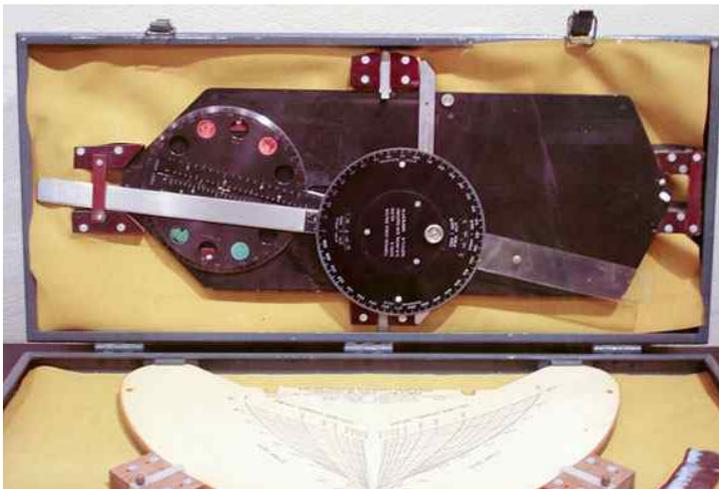
I was pleased to meet his wonderful family.

Torpedo Angle Solver Mk VIII

By Ken Johnson

In the last issue I had a photograph of the Submarine Attack Course Finder Mark I Model 3 commonly called the "is-was".

Subsequently, after talking with Bob Kristian at the Groton picnic, there is some doubt in my mind that the object dropped down the periscope well might have been a Torpedo Angle Solver MK VII commonly known as the "banjo".



Operating instructions can be found at this URL:

<http://www.hnsa.org/doc/banjo/index.htm>

The instrument is described therein as follows:

The Torpedo Angle Solver Mark VIII is a simple portable instrument designed to compute the required data for firing submarine torpedoes of various marks and powers at gyro angles up to 90 degrees from all classes of submarines.

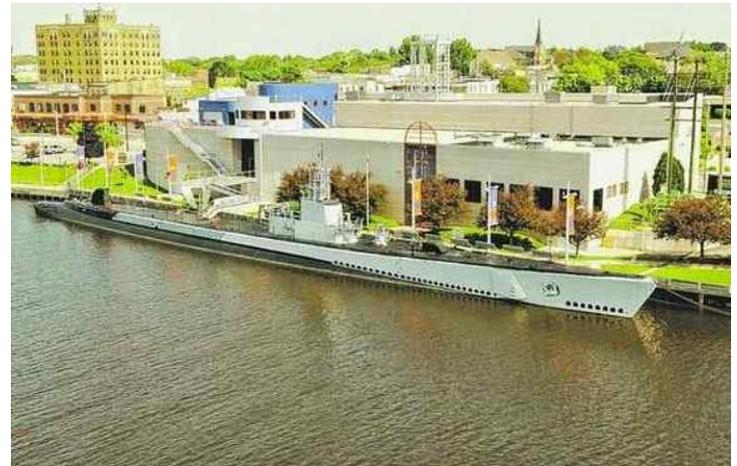
The instrument consists essentially of three arms adjustable in direction and length but so joined as to always form the basic graphic-director triangle, together with subsidiary mechanisms and scales for taking account of the curved path of a torpedo on an angle shot, the launching and running depths of a torpedo, etc. Scales are provided by means of which all quantities entering into the problem may be set or read.

I will not go into the detailed operating instructions here and I do not remember such an instrument being aboard Sea Owl in the early '60s when I was aboard. If you really want to read a detailed description and operating instructions, you can go to the URL listed above.

The photographs of the "banjo" were taken aboard the museum boat, USS Bowfin.

Congratulations Wisconsin Maritime Museum!

By Ken Johnson



This month the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc is celebrating its 40th birthday. The museum had two locations before its current building at 75 Maritime Drive opened to the public in January 1987. In October 1985, ground was broken for this \$2.5 million museum.

Today, the museum has more than 60,000 square feet of space and features a replica of a 19th century maritime community, interactive exhibits, model ships and boats, an operating steam engine and a display of historic vessels and marine engines.

The USS Cobia arrived in Manitowoc in August 1970 and in January 1986 it was designated a National Historic Landmark. While Cobia was built by Electric Boat in Groton, CT, she represents the 28 submarines that were built in Manitowoc during WW II. Today Cobia represents one of the most complete and best maintained WW II museum submarines.



The 50's

June 2009 Issue



Lamar Taylor

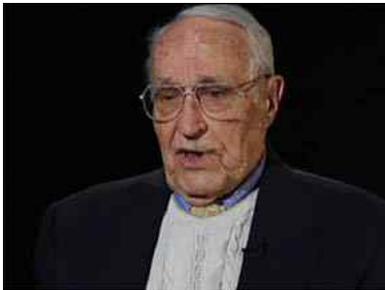
By Ken Johnson

What can I say about Lamar Taylor that hasn't already been said? How can future reunions be the same without his commanding presence? At our most recent reunion in Manitowoc last September it was Lamar who managed by phone to convince the person at the local Chamber of Commerce that we ought to have a tour of the Manitowoc Crane Co. Whatever he said to her it resulted in an excellent tour that we all enjoyed.

I remember Lamar particularly from having spent 12 hours with him in his automobile when I drove him from his home in Macon, GA to Mobile, AL for our reunion there in 2003. He spent almost the entire time trying to convince me that after I retired I should get myself a briefcase and become a hospital consultant as he had done

Recently Tom Moniz emailed me this link to a half-hour on line interview with Lamar:

<http://link.brightcove.com/services/player/bcpid4121802001?bclid=0&bctid=1416618433> I also video taped an interview with Lamar at our Branson reunion.



In lieu of flowers, the Taylor family requested that donations in his memory be directed to the Crescent House operated by The Children's Hospital and Medical Center in Macon, GA and your Sea Owl Association has made a donation of \$100.00 in his

memory. I received a letter from The Children's Hospital which stated in part, "Your gift in remembrance of him ensures that every child who comes through our doors receives the very best medical care. Since 1987, The Children's Hospital has been providing care to the children of Central and South Georgia. We offer a wide range of pediatric specialties from cancer treatment to Pediatric Intensive Care, to Neonatal Intensive Care Your generosity makes advancements such as this possible and helps to maintain the high standard of care associated with The Children's Hospital."

After his retirement from the Navy in 1962, Lamar went on to a full second career in hospital administration and as a management consultant to hospitals, an activity which he continued to engage in until he was 88. Many of us were looking forward to going to Macon in March 2010 and celebrating his 95th birthday with him.

I recently received the following note from Lamar's family:

Dear Members of the USS Sea Owl,

We would like to thank all of you not only for the gift to the Crescent House in dad's memory but all the wonderful stories and memories you shared with us about dad. Being "Navy Juniors" all of us have unique memories of the Sea owl and the times we were on board. I still remember the wonderful Sunday meals when we visited our dad's place of work when he had the weekend watch.

Dad was so proud to have served his country but what brought him the great rewards were the men who he served with or who served after him. I know he touched so many lives but I know he appreciated all the people who touched his life also. Thank you for giving him so many wonderful memories during these last years at the Sea Owl reunions. Please toast him this year!

Sincerely,

Jack, Sandy & Celeste

USS Skate (SSN-578)

By Ken Johnson



While Nautilus is celebrated as the first submarine to reach the north pole on 3 August 1958, it was not long after that on 30 July 1958 that *USS Skate* steamed to the Arctic where she operated under the ice for 10 days. During this time, she surfaced nine times through the ice, navigated over 2,400 miles (3,900 km) under it, and became the second ship to reach the North Pole, earning the Navy Unit Commendation award for "... braving the hazards of the polar ice pack...." On 23 August, she steamed into Bergen, Norway. The submarine made port calls in the Netherlands, Belgium, and France before returning to New London on 25 September 1958. In early March 1959, she again headed for the Arctic to pioneer operations during the period of extreme cold and maximum ice thickness. The submarine steamed 3,900 miles (6,300 km) under pack ice while surfacing through it ten times. On 17 March, she surfaced at the North Pole to commit the ashes of the famed explorer Sir Hubert Wilkins to the Arctic waste. When the submarine returned to port, she was awarded a bronze star in lieu of a second Navy Unit Commendation for demonstrating "... for the first time the ability of submarines to operate in and under the Arctic ice in the dead of winter....". I believe that Sea Owl shipmate Richard Boyle was aboard for much of this.

Skate was decommissioned 12 September 1986, stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 30 October 1986 She was disposed of by submarine recycling at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard on 6 March 1995.

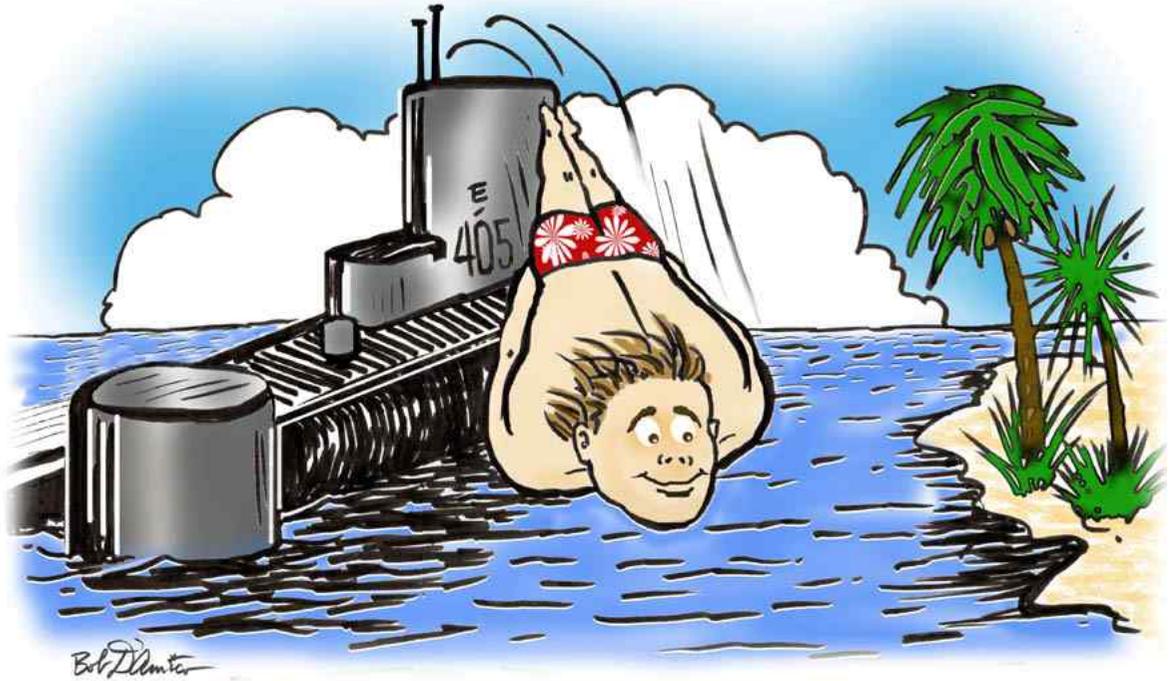


The 60's

June 2009 Issue

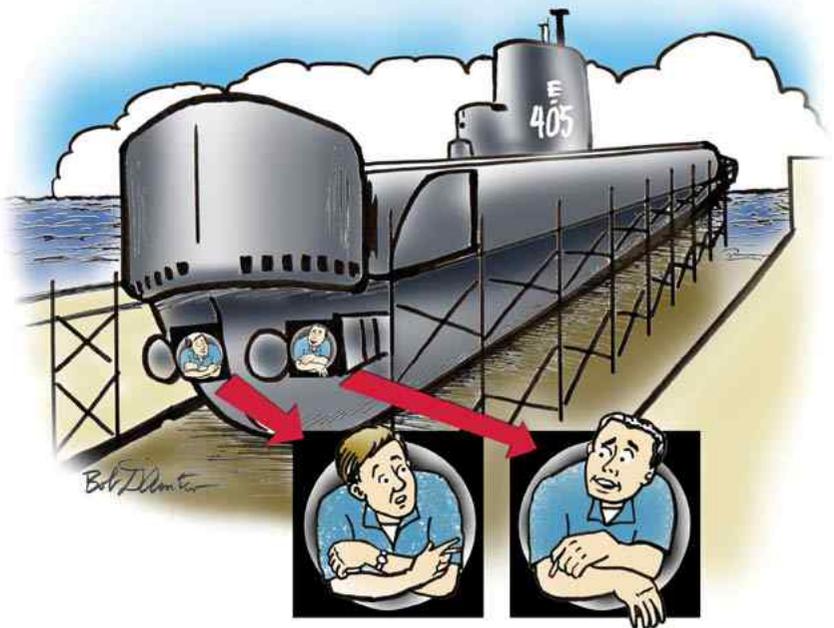


While tied up at the pier at St. Croix I dove off the snorkel mast as the captain tried to stop me. He was alerted when he heard the rack and pinion raising the mast. The mast had only gone about a foot or so when he went to investigate. When he reached the bridge there I was perched on the flange of the snorkel ready to dive. He yelled at me to get



down so off I went in a head first dive but I over rotated slightly and hurt my back but I never let on.

We went into dry dock for a few weeks one time and I am not sure what any of the major issues were but it was cool to be able to see the boat in its entirety. It was hot so we defeated the torpedo tube interlocks that prevented both doors being open at the same time. Once they were open and all the hatches were open and the bulkhead doors were open we had some good ventilation through the boat. Miller and I crawled into the torpedo tubes and slithered out to a point where our heads were hanging outside the boat. We were shooting the breeze and smoking when all of a sudden the inner doors closed.



Now someone with claustrophobia would have freaked out but then they would not have even been able to crawl into the tubes to begin with. After about an hour we got hungry as it was dinner time and we hollered down to some guys and asked them to get our crew to let us out. Someone opened the inner doors but since we could not turn around to look we had no idea who did it. No one ever owned up to closing the doors but there was a lot of snickering going on.