



# Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

June 2015 Issue



## President's Message

Shipmates & 1st Mates:

And for an update to all our shipmates out there, it was a very hard winter in the country this past year. I really hope that by now everyone is enjoying our summer temperatures. I know that Carol and I are getting outside as much as we can.

The USSVI National Convention is taking place in Pittsburgh, PA, this coming September 7-12, 2015. Your Sea Owl Shipmate Ron Goron ET 68-69 is a part of the Committee running this year's Convention. He has asked that any Sea Owl shipmates who want to attend this year, please do so - he would like to see everyone there! Carol and I do plan on attending. Registration forms and information can be gotten at <http://www.ussviconventionsteelcity2015.org/>

The Sea Poacher 2015 Reunion has also invited the Sea Owl sailors to join them at their reunion, taking place in Branson, MO, from November 8th-12th. Attending this reunion is myself, Greg Hankin SN 67-68, and Ed Welch CS 66-69. We are going by ourselves this year; the girls are passing on this one. I will have to inform the authorities in Branson that the 3 bad asses are coming to town! We would love to have other Sea Owl shipmates join us at this reunion. I've been to Sea Poacher Reunions - they really know how to do it right! A great time is guaranteed! For registration and information, see this page: <http://seapoacher.com/page2.html> then click on 2015 registration.

The Groton Picnic, June 12th-14th, was a raving success! The weather could not have been much better. I'm sure that Ken will have pictures of the shipmates who attended this year's picnic. We were very happy to sell enough raffle tickets to have a Bose Radio System to raffle off this year. This year's winner was Shipmate Fred Bruno QM 68-69. I talked to Fred on the phone just after pulling his winning ticket. He's not familiar with the Bose Radio, but I'm certain that by now he is and loves it. We also had a 50/50 drawing this year. The very happy and enthusiastic winner was Theresa Keavany, the wife of Shipmate Jim Keavany FT 65-67. Congratulations to both of our winners this year. My sincere appreciation to all shipmates who help support the raffle and the picnic each year. As has been the case in almost all of our picnics, the Welch family has done all the work in putting this together - they prepare the food, collect the money, purchase raffle items - they do it all! A heartfelt "Thank You" to all the Welch family! We have also gotten Ed's Grandsons involved this year in having them pull the raffle tickets and calling out the numbers - they were great

and enjoyed doing it! I plan on continuing this in future picnics - a great way to build family memories for both of them.

On a sad note, we lost a shipmate who was in attendance at this year's picnic: Shipmate Herb Hawes IC 65-66 passed away on June 25, 2015, surrounded by his loving family. Herb succumbed to cancer that he did not know he had when attending the picnic. He knew and told me that something was wrong, but did not find out what it was until the following Monday. Then on Wednesday of that week, he was discharged from the hospital, under Hospice care, to go home with his family and enjoy the last few days that he had. Your Association has made a donation to the Finnish American Heritage Society; we know that Herb was very proud of his Finnish history. Rest in peace Shipmate!!

Everyone have a great Summer and Fall.

## "Cartoon Bob" D'Amico

Once again Bob D'Amico has provided a great cartoon for this issue which you can see on page 5! Once again it has been partially "crowd sourced" from comments from submarine related Facebook pages where he posted an initial pencil draft of it. Thank you Bob for continuing to provide such great cartoons for the newsletter! What I had not realized until this year's Groton picnic where I got to meet him is that I should also thank Bob's son, Nolan, who has assisted him with many of them. Nolan is a talented, tattoo artist in his own right

As you may not realize, Bob has been doing these cartoons for Hooter Hilites since 2007. If you are on Facebook and follow the USS Sea Owl Association page there, you will find an entire album containing all of the cartoons that he has done up to and including the one in this issue. Bob has picked up quite a Facebook following by posting links to this album on several of the submarine related pages.

It would be difficult for me to pick a favorite among the many Bob has done, but I think the one he did for the June 2013 issue has to be one of his best where he actually drew recognizable caricatures of those attending the picnic that year.

## Florida Atlantic University High School Sea Owls

By Ken Johnson

*On 3 June we received the following email from Janet Weinthal of the FAU Sea Owls.*

I'd like to give you an update on behalf of the FAUHS/ADHUS Sea Owls. We just competed in National Seaperch competition at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. We brought two Middle school teams, Sea Owls Sunrise and Sea Owls 8, and one High School team, Sea Owls SS-405.

We competed in three different challenges, a presentation, an obstacle course, and "finesse" which involved moving PVC beads across an abacus, poking an activation pad, and picking up rods and placing them in the smallest possible hole.

All teams did admirably well in each challenge. Sea Owls Sunrise and Sea Owls 8 won 2nd and 3rd place in middle school presentation, respectively. Sea Owls SS-405 won 1st place in high school presentation, 2nd place in high school "finesse," and 2nd place in high school overall.

As always, thank you so much for the honor of continuing your name, your support, and your service to our country. We couldn't have done it without you!

### Groton Picnic

Here are those who attended this year's Groton picnic.



Kneeling left to right: Bob D'Amico SN 68-69, Bob's son Nolan, Bryan Purtell (Roy's son), Herb Hawes IC 66-67, Roy Purtell TM 66-69  
 Standing Left to right: Ed Welch (Ed's Son), Bob Kristian FT 44-45 (Plankowner), behind Bob is Jim Madigan FT 68-69, John Barnes MM 63-67, Greg Hankin SN 67-68, Mike Polhemus SO 56-57, Stu (Jim) Jack LT 62-63, Bob Russell QM 62-65, Clyde Turner EN 64-66, Standing behind Clyde is Ed Welch CS 66-69, John Salerno SO 52-55, Jon Warn LT 63-64, Jim Keavany FT 65-67, Ken Johnson LTJG

Again at this year's Groton picnic we were blessed with the presence of "plank owner" Bob Kristian and his sons Paul (on the left) and Chris (on the right). At age 90 we were happy to see that he was able to come and share this picnic with us!



Not to forget the ladies:



Kneeling left to right: Wendy Salerno (John Salerno's daughter), Fran Russell, Carol Purtell, Emma Welch (Ed's granddaughter)

Standing Left to right: Paulette Welch, unknown, Theresa Keavany, Theresa Keavany's daughter, Julie Welch (Eds granddaughter), Barbara Turner, Dianne Hawes, Carol D'Amico, Friends of D'Amicos, Karen Welch (Ed's daughter-in-law)

### Sea Poacher Reunion

*For those who may be interested, this summarizes the events planned for this reunion.*

The next Sea Poacher National Reunion will be held in Branson, Missouri starting November 8, 2015 and concluding November 12, 2015. **You should arrive by November 7** as we start with the free "**Red , Hot & Blue**" Show at 10AM Sunday Nov 8

Our Hotel is the Grand Plaza Hotel 245 North Wildwood Drive Branson, MO 65616. Call them at 417-336-6646 to make your Hotel reservations, advise them that you are with the Sea Poacher (Group Code SEAPOA) for reduced rates of \$90 plus tax per night. These rates include a hot Buffet breakfast for two each morning for those staying at the hotel. These rates are good for 3 days before and 3 days after our Reunion based on hotel availability. Rooms not reserved by October 8, 2015 will be released from our group block.

The Hotel now offers valet parking which is wonderful if the upper parking area is full. You are encouraged to use the upper hill entrance as it leads directly into the second floor.

Our **Activity Package** is organized by Gatherings Plus Company and is hosted by Pam Brown. Those who were at our 2010 National reunion remember that Pam and Gathering Plus treated us very well.

In addition to the Gathering Plus scheduled activities , your USS Sea Poacher Association has reserved 40 seats for the "**Red ,Hot & Blue**" Show at 10AM Sunday Nov 8 in rows 6 & 7& 8 Center stage in the Clay Cooper Theatre . Then we keep these seats for the free 11:30 AM "**Vietnam Mini Reunion Show**" ( Hundreds of people are expected for this show..open seating for them.)

Our Hospitality room opens at 3:00 p.m. followed by "**Welcome Aboard Reception** at 6 PM.

Monday Nov 9, we have a 10:30 AM **Guided Tour and lunch** at the Keeter Center followed by the “**Tolling of the Bells**” at Veterans Grove on the College campus.

Dinner will be on your own followed by the 7:30 PM **Clay Cooper Show**.

Tuesday Nov 10, we have the 10:00 AM **Brett for Vets Show** followed by Lunch on your own.

At 2:00 PM , we have added an optional show, “**The Letterman in Concert Show**” The cost includes transportation to and from the show.

At 8:00 PM, we take the Showboat Branson Belle for Dinner, Show and Cruise on beautiful Table Rock Lake.

Wednesday November 11, we **RIDE the DUCKS** in the Veterans Day Parade followed by Lunch on your own and Business Meeting at 2:00 p.m.

At 6:30 PM we have our Group Photo and at 7:00 PM we have our Banquet with Entertainment.

You are encouraged to invite your family, old shipmates and friends to our National Reunion in Branson November 2015. We had several family members and guests attend our Charleston reunion this year who added to the enjoyment. I suspect it also made transportation easier for many.

About November 1, there is a wonderful metamorphosis in Branson. It seems all the Shows Honor veterans and they start the Christmas Season. Branson truly honors our Veterans and it swells to over 125,000 people during Veterans Week. It is a heart warming experience to see the love, honor and respect shown to our Veterans and Military. You will return proud to be an American, singing songs and filled with the Christmas Spirit.

During our Reunion a short video and presentation on the outstanding effort by “**Wreaths Across America**” whose motto is *Remember –Honor-Teach*. This group has placed a fresh handmade pine wreath with a large red bow on Veterans graves at over nine hundred locations. These wreaths are produced in Maine. A week long convoy makes several stops at Veterans Cemeteries before arriving at Arlington National Cemetery. Many organizations volunteer to place the wreaths on the Veterans Graves. After Christmas, volunteers remove the wreaths.

To fully enjoy Branson you should know that other events are happening that you might want to add to your Agenda and extend your stay at the Grand Plaza Hotel. First, there are over 100 Shows going on in Branson which you can attend. Details can be found on the website [www.ReunionPro.com](http://www.ReunionPro.com). Hover your mouse over the Shows and Attractions Link and you will see the drop downs of “shows” and “attractions”. The November 2015 Show schedules will be available from January to March 2015. However, usually the 2015 Shows are the same as the 2014 Shows so that you can begin your preliminary planning as to what you want to see.

Questions? Contact Joe Murdoch at [jdmurdoch13@comcast.net](mailto:jdmurdoch13@comcast.net) or Bill Brinkman at [seapoacher@austin.rr.com](mailto:seapoacher@austin.rr.com)

## From the Editor

After 13 years of doing this I have decided that I have had enough and will stop doing it after the December 2015 newsletter. As you know, after the December 2012 issue I stopped doing the newsletter four times a year and went to twice a year in June and December. Many times in the past I have suffered “writer’s block” in trying to come up with ideas for a newsletter. Several of you have contributed in the past and for that I am grateful, but it is time for someone else to take over the task. If interested, let’s discuss!



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. In this issue there are more names to report than in any single issue that I can remember. We have learned since the last newsletter of the passing of these shipmates:

Henry Richgels – EM2 46-48 - December 11, 2014
Matt Mattich – RM 54-55 - December 22, 2014
Warner Harvey – TM 57-60 - December 24, 2014
Michael LaRose – ST 68-69 - January 24, 2015
Harold Maurer – EN3 54-56 - February 17, 2015
Charles Rush – XO 44 – February 27, 2015
James “Skip” Weingartner – MM 50-52 - March 17, 2015
Donald Besette – ET3 50 - June 15, 2015
Herbert Hawes – IC1 66-67 – June 25, 2015

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.

### Sea Owl Association Officers are:

**President** – Roy Purtell, 4 Garden Court, Troy, NY 12180-1307, (518) 330-8794, e-mail [roy@ussseowl.com](mailto:roy@ussseowl.com)

**Vice-President** – Ken Nichols, 8375 125<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Dunnellon, FL 34432, (352) 465-7732, email [kenlorna@juno.com](mailto:kenlorna@juno.com)

**Historian** - Tom Moniz, 8765 Carlisle Ave., Sacramento, CA 95828, (916) 682-9306, e-mail [tmoniz@frontiernet.net](mailto:tmoniz@frontiernet.net)

**Secretary/Treasurer** Ken Johnson, P.O. Box 561, Oakham, MA 01068-0561, (508) 882-3738, e-mail [seaowl@charter.net](mailto:seaowl@charter.net) or [oakhamgraphics@charter.net](mailto:oakhamgraphics@charter.net)

**Storekeeper** – Ed Welch, 151 Wakefield Street Rochester, N.H. 03867, (603) 330-3976, e-mail [ewelch6621@yahoo.com](mailto:ewelch6621@yahoo.com)

**Newsletter Editor** – Ken Johnson, P.O. Box 561, Oakham, MA 01068 (508) 882-3738, e-mail [seaowl@charter.net](mailto:seaowl@charter.net) or [oakhamgraphics@charter.net](mailto:oakhamgraphics@charter.net)



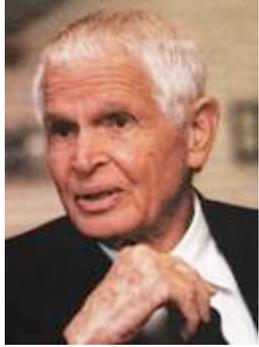
# The 40's

June 2015 Issue



## Charles "Charlie" Rush

by Ken Johnson



Capt Charles "Charlie" Rush, USN (ret) departed on "eternal patrol" on February 27, 2015 at the age of 95.

After graduation from the Naval Academy on February 7, 1941, Charlie served on destroyers in the Pacific until he volunteered for submarine duty while in Pearl Harbor. He was assigned to the submarines USS Thresher (SS ) and USS Billfish (SS ) for seven war patrols in the South

Pacific and East Indies. On his sixth patrol, Billfish was attacked by three Japanese destroyers that made extremely severe depth-charge attacks over a period of 12 hours. These attacks rendered the Captain and all officers senior to Charlie unable to take action. Charlie, then a Lieutenant, took command in the face of seemingly certain death, saved the ship and the entire crew. Nearly 60 years later, when the facts of his actions were revealed, the Navy awarded Charlie its highest honor, the Navy Cross. His story was told in the 2010 book "War Beneath the Waves: A True Story of Courage and Leadership Aboard a World War II Submarine" by Don Keith.

In 1944 during the construction of Sea Owl then Lt Rush was assigned as her first XO only to be reassigned to the Navy Bureau of Ordnance prior to Sea Owl's commissioning.

Post-war, Charlie attended graduate school at Caltech in Aeronautical Engineering and developed a number of submarine-launched missiles, including a notable high-speed wake-less torpedo. He served in command of the submarines USS Queenfish (SS 393 ) and USS Blackfin (SS 322 ) before retiring from the Navy in 1961.

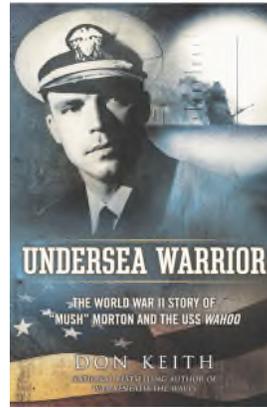
Those of you who attended our reunion at Virginia Beach got to meet Captain Rush and hear him speak at our banquet there. I invited him after reading the book (mentioned above) and he came with his wife, LaVonne. On Sunday morning I drove the two of them to the airport thinking that they would be returning home to Florida only to learn that they were going on to the USS Queenfish reunion instead.

Rest in peace, shipmate! Others have the watch!

## Undersea Warrior

By Ken Johnson

Following the book "War Beneath the Waves: A True Story of Courage and Leadership Aboard a World War II Submarine" Don Keith went on to write about another WW II submarine hero, Dudley "Mush" Morton, in this book "Undersea Warrior: The World War II Story of "Mush" Morton and the USS Wahoo".



Much of the book covers the strange relationship between Dudley Morton and Marvin Kennedy (aka "Pinky") and how they both came together aboard USS Wahoo with Morton as PCO and Kennedy as CO. Kennedy and Morton were USNA contemporaries with Kennedy being in the class ahead of Morton. The fact that a PCO rode the boat that he would then take over as CO was unheard of and the circumstance under which this happened was even

more unusual. Morton's prior experience as CO of USS R-5 and later USS Dolphin (SS 169) were less than inspiring. (As an interesting aside, Morton's XO on Dolphin was Carter Bennett who was , of course, Sea Owl's first CO. According to the book, Morton told Bennett, "This old bucket is a death trap. I'm going to do my damndest to get off her and I advise you to do the same.") Morton's division commander John Haines at one time told Morton, "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."

So, how did "Mush" Morton go on to become what to many would be considered among the best if not the best submarine CO of World War II? Well, it is a fascinating story and much credit can go to Richard O'Kane who was Kennedy's XO on Wahoo and who stayed on as Morton's XO. There was that and, believe it or not, the strength of Morton's handshake.

Things changed dramatically aboard Wahoo under Morton's command with his confidence in O'Kane probably having much to do with Richard O'Kane later receiving the Medal of Honor. Morton was also recommended for the Medal of Honor but instead was awarded the Navy Cross. Many attribute his failure to receive the Medal of Honor to an incident which occurred after Wahoo sank the Japanese troopship Buyo Maru in January 1943 when Wahoo fired upon survivors.

Morton's own fate came later when Wahoo was lost while transiting LaPerouse Strait after a patrol in the Sea of Japan in the fall of 1943. The wreckage of Wahoo was found in the fall of 2006 due to the determined efforts of several people who wanted to locate Wahoo's final resting place. The epilogue to this book describes the efforts and the eventual memorial which now exists near the site. The memorial inscription says in part: THIS MEMORIAL WAS ERECTED BY THE MEMBERS OF THE JAPANESE ATTACK GROUP AND RELATIVES OF AMERICANS LYING IN WAHOO. OLD ENEMIES MET AS BROTHERS TO DEDICATE THAT OUR COUNTRIES WILL HAVE A LASTING PEACE AND WAR WILL NEVER AGAIN DESTROY THE FRIENDSHIP WE NOW ENJOY TODAY.

# SUBSEQUENTLY

## HOW SUBMARINE HABITS FIND THEIR WAY INTO CIVILIAN LIFE AFTERWARDS

Many thanks for my fellow sub sailors on the FaceBook site: Cold War Submarine Veterans

Taking a 2 minute shower...  
or an ENDLESS SHOWER!

Remaining very calm during civilian  
emergencies, when others freak out.



Flashlight Fetish!

Sleeping with a fan pointed at your kisser.



Using 'Say Again'  
instead of 'Excuse me?'

Verbatim repeat backs AYE!

YAWN!!  
This is nothing  
compared with  
having a down  
bubble at  
crush depth!



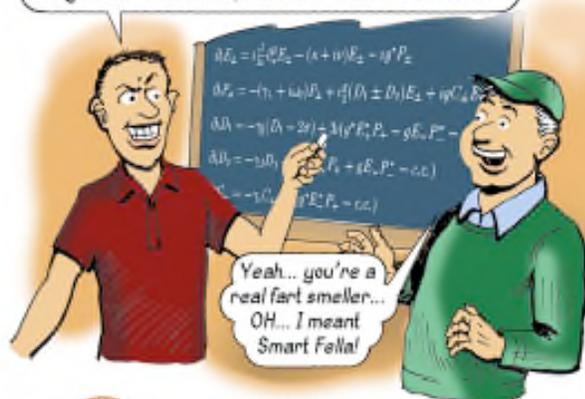
Stacking  
up on  
things...  
e.g.  
toilet  
paper!

Endrun out-of-the-box thinking...  
great problem solving.



Sleep anywhere... OK ewith multiple wake-ups.

Bel you don't know the I.Q. needed to become a sub sailor!



Yeah... you're a  
real fart smeller...  
OH... I meant  
Smart Fella!



Ability to fold 10 T shirts,  
10 skivvies and 5 pairs of  
socks in the same space  
your wife folds 4 T shirts.

Bob Dlamter  
www.cartoonbob.com



Hooter Hilites • A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association • Web Site: <http://www.usseaowl.com>  
We still give a hoot! • June 2015 Issue





# The 60's

June 2015 Issue



## NR-1

by Ken Johnson

On June 24 I was at the Submarine Force Museum in Groton for the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newly completed NR-1 exhibit there. Featured speaker for this event was the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Jonathan Greenert, USN who earlier in his career had served as engineer of NR-1.



This is Admiral Greenert speaking at the ribbon cutting with Congressman Courtney seated under the canopy. Also present for the ribbon cutting was RADM Sam Cox, USN (ret) who now heads the Naval History and Heritage Command. The Submarine Force Museum is one of several official U.S. Navy museums that come under his jurisdiction.

This is a photograph of NR-1 that I took back in October 2006 just outboard of USS Nautilus taking on a tow line from her support ship SSV Carolyn Chouest. NR-1 with a speed of 4.5



knots surfaced and 3.5 knots submerged on her own was towed to and from her operating area by the Carolyn Chouest which also provided communication,

berthing and mission support for the NR-1.

Many former crew members of NR-1 and Electric Boat workers who worked on her attended the ceremony.

NR-1 operated from 1969 until 2008 when she was retired from service. She was a special project of Admiral Rickover and over the years of operation she performed many classified and unclassified missions of ocean research and object recovery. Some of the unclassified missions included location and recovery of parts of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986, debris recovery from EgyptAir Flight 990 and surveys of the civil war ship USS Monitor and USS Akron wreck sites in 2002. Robert Ballard rode NR-1 on several missions. Her last mission prior to being removed from service in 2008 was a search for the remains of the revolutionary war ship Bonne Homme Richard off the east coast of England.

## Thresher Memorial



This year I attended the 52<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary Memorial Service for USS Thresher (SSN 593) at Kittery, ME. This gave me the opportunity to visit the final phase of the memorial there adjacent to the Kittery Town Hall. This memorial is just off of the traffic circle where the 129 foot flagpole stands.

The flagpole was dedicated in 2013 on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of Thresher.

Keynote speaker for this year's service was Capt. Joseph Yurso, USN (ret) who was the Commander of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard at the time Thresher was lost in 1963