



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association
Web Site: <http://home.earthlink.net/~purtellr/index.html>

August 2002 Issue



President's Message

Hello Shipmates & 1st Mates:

The first thing you will notice about this issue is that we have a new Newsletter editor. Ken Johnson LTJG 62-65 has taken over the job of getting the Newsletter to you. Many thanks to Ken for taking over this job, getting information to shipmates is primary. He will start sending the Newsletter to those shipmates that are online via their computers, thus saving the Association some postage.

With the forest fires and flooding that are taking place around the country, I hope that all shipmates and their families are safe.

Carol & I have just returned from a trip out West -- Las Vegas for 3 days (no, we didn't break the bank in Las Vegas), then up to Montana for 4 days to attend my sister's wedding. It was a great time traveling that part of the country, even if it was 117° at Hoover Dam.

Our St. Mary's reunion is coming up fast. If you haven't gotten your room reserved yet, do it now. If you intend to register for a Trident tour, you must send in your registration to SubVets now. Don't delay any longer. See the article below.

If any Association members are interested in taking a more active role in the day-to-day operation of the Association, let us know. Elections are held during the business meeting at the reunion.

Sea Owl Ship's Bell

The Ship's bell is now in the very good hands of Groton Base, USSVI. We are told that we can borrow it for our reunions as long as Groton Base doesn't need it for one of their meetings. I hope to have it at St. Mary's.

St. Mary's Reunion October 28th thru Nov 3rd

Act Now !!!!!!!

I have set aside 40 rooms for Sea Owl shipmates at the Cumberland Kings Bay Lodges. Reservations can be

made by calling 800 831-6664. Rooms are \$29.95 per night (no, that's not a typo). When calling the hotel for your reservation, be sure to mention that you are part of the "Sea Owl" group. More information on this hotel can be found at their web site:

www.cumberlandkbl.com.

Our Association business meeting and buffet will be held on Friday, November 1st, at Borrell Creek Restaurant. The business meeting will start at 1:00 PM, following the SubVets of WWII Memorial Service, with the buffet set up to follow the meeting at 4:00 PM. The price, which includes tax & tip, is \$25.00 per person.

The buffet will include:

- Hand Carved Roast Beef
- Honey Baked Ham
- Fried Chicken
- Green Bean Casserole
- Seafood Rice
- Italian Potatoes
- Vegetable Medley
- Polynesian Meatballs
- Buffalo Wings
- Drinks: Tea & Coffee
- Desserts: Key Lime Pie & Peach Cobbler

Payment for the buffet must be made in advance. Please send your checks to:

John Leers, 1453 Marty Drive, Reynoldsburg, OH
43068-2425

SubVets WWII Memorial Service

Shipmates, this is the reason we chose to have our reunion in St. Marys, GA. We are hoping all WWII vets will attend this reunion. Plus, of course all Sea Owl sailors.

The Annual Kings Bay Subvet Memorial Service will be held on Friday November 1st at 10 AM at the Camden County High School. Other events will start on Wednesday, October 30th and end at the official dinner on Saturday night November 2nd.

Because it would not be cost effective to send each shipmate a registration form and a Privacy Act Form that not everyone would use, I have to ask each person that needs these forms to either get them from the internet at <http://stmaryssubmuseum.com/2002.html> or contact me directly by phone at 518 272-8614 or via e-mail; I will send you the forms. I know that not each one of you has a computer, but your local library can download these forms for you. Or, chances are that someone you know has a computer where these forms are available.

Because of Base restrictions, there are only 175 slots available for Trident boat tours. Without filling out a Privacy Act Form, you will NOT be considered for one of these tours. Forms must be returned prior to 14 Oct 2002. If you want to tour the Trident Training Facility, the Privacy Act Forms are required for this also. If there are more than 175 requests for Trident tours, they will select names through a lottery. I'm asking that those shipmates who have already been onboard a Trident tour, not to file a request, thus allowing those who haven't been, a better chance to get onboard.

Privacy Act Forms are NOT required for attending their banquet on Saturday night. But you still have to register with them for this banquet.

Below is the schedule for WWII Memorial events. This should be enough to keep everyone busy while there.

WEDNESDAY - 30 OCT 2002

1200 KB-T Hospitality Room Open / Registration Pick Up Desk at Hospitality Room (Ramada Inn, Kingsland. Across from Howard Johnson's)
1300 SSBN Tour

THURSDAY - 31 OCT 2002

0900-1100 TTF Tour
1200 KB-T Hospitality Rm / Registration Pick Up Desk
1300 SSBN Tour
1700 Local Officials Welcome at Hospitality Room
1800 Buffet & Entertainment at Hospitality Room
Welcome to the Royal Hawaiian!
Get out your Hawaiian Shirts, Grass Skirts, Straw Hats, Coconut Tops and Leis!

FRIDAY - 1 NOV 2002

1000 Memorial Service @ Camden County High School Auditorium. Seating for Service is Limited to the first 1,000 Pre-Registered People.
Speaker: VADM Al Konetzni
1300 SSBN Tour
KB-T Hospitality Room Opens After Service

SATURDAY - 2 NOV 2002

0900 Informal SubVet Meeting KB-T Hospitality Rm.
0900-1100 TTF Tour
0930 SSBN Tour
1300 SSBN Tour
1800 Cocktails & Dinner Buffet @ Clubs of Kings Bay

Memorial Service Registration \$5.00 per person.
Dinner \$25.00 per person

MENU

Plated Salad w/ Ranch or Italian Dressing
Teriyaki Beef Skewers with Rice
Sauteed Chicken Breasts with Italian Cream Sauce
Duchess Mashed Potatoes
Green Beans Almandine
Fresh Baked Rolls w/ Butter Rosettes
Water, Tea, and Coffee Service

DESSERT TABLE

Seasonal Fruit Display, Chocolate Mousse Cups,
Patriotic Sheet Cake with Butter Cream Icing, Berry
Tarts with Vanilla Cream & Cream Cheese Mints

Groton Picnic 2002

The Groton picnic was again a huge success. There were 26 shipmates and their 1st Mates or family members in attendance. A great time was had by all. Watch for this again next year!!!!!!



Front Row L to R: Mike Silvaggio QM 66-68 Ed Welch CS 66-69, Ray Mayo TM 66-69, Jack Hogan EM 61-62, Robert Payeur CS 53-54, Frances Payeur CS 51-53, Frank Maguire EN 51-57, John Souza YN 51-53, John Barnes MM 63-67
Back Row L to R: Robert Hughes EN 59-61, Mike LaRose ST 68-69, Jim Madigan FT 68-69, Ed Bess EM 64-69, Greg Hankin QM 67-68, Herb Hawes IC 66-67, Mike Polhemus SO 54-57, Dick Davis EN 49-57, John Evans EN 53-56, Gib Hanley TM 49-51, Harry Siska EN 68-69, Rufus Weaver CS 47-59, Jim Grilli MM 62-63, Jack Empie EN 62-64 & 66-69, Bill Whitlaw LTJG 54-56, Ken Johnson, LTJG 62-65
Sitting on grass Roy Purtell TM 65-69

Bouncing e-mail messages

If you have changed your e-mail address, you're not receiving mail from Roy any longer. He gets a message that says your message is bouncing back, then he removes your address from his mailing list. Send him a message to get back on his list.

Membership Dues

Your dues are how we support the Association. It's how we can get these Newsletters out to you, plus have shirts, hats & other items in the Ship's Store. Your dues can be sent to: John Leers, 1453 Marty Drive, Reynoldsburg, OH 43068-2425.

The Sea Owl CD

By Ken Johnson

This is a picture of the Sea Owl CD which is in the early stages of production at this time. I am looking for material and ideas for what material shipmates would like to see on it. My intent is to preserve memories of our experiences together aboard a great boat that can be passed on and

shared with anyone who has an interest in Sea Owl. I hope to have a preview showing at the St Mary's Reunion, add content from the reunion and have copies available for distribution shortly thereafter. My plan is to organize the CD along "chapters" which cover the following:

The Boat

- Pedigree (class, design, significant features)
- War Years
- Launching and Commissioning
- Preparations for war
- First patrol (War Patrol Report excerpts)
- Second patrol (War Patrol Report excerpts)
- Third patrol (War Patrol Report excerpts, film)
- Overview of post-war years to 1950
- Conversion to Fleet Snorkel
- Overview of operations during 1950's
- Overview of operations during 1960's
- Decommissioning

The Crew

- Biographies/Obituaries
- Experiences since Sea Owl
- Sea stories and personal experiences, preferably as first person narrative



Upcoming Events

- SubVets of WWII National Convention
Buffalo, NY, 8/26-8/31
- USSVI National Convention
Duluth, MN, 9/16-9/22
- Sea Owl Reunion
St. Mary's, GA, 10/29-11/3

Sailors Rest Your Oars

We have learned since the last newsletter of the passing of these shipmates:

Dave Sherman, QM 52
Robert "BZ" Bzyzinsky. EM 62-65

We extend our deepest sympathy to family and friends of these our departed shipmates.

Storekeepers Locker

We now have Sea Owl Tankards available from Jack Hogan, your storekeeper. These are the same tankards that we had at Hagerstown, MD in '98. Tankards are \$19.00 when sent US Postal Service, priority mail. We will have them available at St. Mary's for \$10.00 each.



Because of the expense, we are no longer going to carry the Sea Owl lapel pins. Have to order 100 at a time, and they just didn't move that fast.

From the Editor

With this issue, we are trying something new, electronic distribution as Adobe PDF. Those who prefer to receive their copy by mail will continue to do so and anyone who has elected to receive it electronically may request a "snail mail" copy, if the PDF format does not work for you. Your comments, suggestions and ideas for future issues are most welcome. Please send them to:

Ken Johnson
P.O. Box 561
Oakham, MA 01068
e-Mail: JAMGraphic@aol.com



The 40's

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Carter Bennett

By Ken Johnson

This pencil sketch of Carter Bennett was sent to Roy by



Carter's son, Michael. Carter Bennett, for those who may not know, was Sea Owl's first Commanding Officer and made the first two war patrols. This sketch was made by Bill Walsh, an Ensign aboard Sea Owl for war patrols 2 and 3. The war patrol reports for all 3 war patrols will be available on

the forthcoming Sea Owl CD-ROM as Adobe PDF documents for those who may be interested in reading them. Video clips from war patrol 3 will also be included on the CD-ROM.

An earlier photo of Carter Bennett as a Lieutenant,



shown here, appears in the book, "Silent Victory" by Clay Blair. It is not known when or where this photo was taken, but since he held the rank of Commander as Commanding Officer, this had to have been somewhat earlier.

Any shipmates who served with Carter Bennett and would like to share their experiences in a future edition of "Hooter

Hilites", we would like to hear from you.

Third War Patrol Video

By Ken Johnson

Through the magic of modern technology, I have converted highlights from the video of Sea Owl's Third War Patrol to digital format and hope to include "clips" on the forthcoming Sea Owl CD. Sound narration of these clips would enhance them greatly, especially if done by those who were actually there. If you would like to assist in this manner, I would like very much to hear from you.

Homeward Bound Pennant

This is a fragment of the Sea Owl's Homeward Bound pennant from 1945. It was sent to Tom Moniz by Stan



Ainley who wrote, "We were in Pearl Harbor after patrol #3 and the war was just over. Captain Hall came back from ComSubPac about 0900 one morning and told the crew that if we were

ready by 1300 that day we would leave and return to the states. I had the forward engine room and had a lower piston in the middle of the deck to re-ring. Needless to say the men put that piston back in #1 engine in record time. I think it was Schlichenmaier, QMC, that went up on the base and somehow managed to get a "Homeward Bound Pennant" made and we flew it from #2 periscope as we cleared the pier and Pearl Harbor. There were a lot of cheers from the other submarines still there as we passed them at their piers. The pennant was only a foot or so wide but long enough so every man aboard received a 1 foot piece."

(Thanks, Stan, for sharing that bit of Sea Owl history with us. We look forward to others sharing their remembrances of their experiences aboard Sea Owl in future issues of "Hooter Hilites" and for inclusion on the Sea Owl CD-ROM currently in production. Many shipmates who served aboard the Owl in later years have no concept of what it was like to be in a life or death combat situation. We honor and respect those of you who went through the experience and particularly those on who served on sister "boats" during World War II still on "Eternal Patrol".)

We wonder how many other fragments of this pennant remain after all these years? Let us hear from you if you still have one in your possession!



The 50's

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The Patch

Why does this page have two different Sea Owl patches? The one at left is the original Sea Owl patch. We understand the original patch design was drawn by a Portsmouth, NH artist named Branner who designed the patches for all Portsmouth built boats. Does anyone have more information about this artist?



This drawing of the original patch design by Mr. Branner, donated by Bob Evans, EM 44-45, bears the signatures of each member of the commissioning crew.

The post WWII patch that has the Owl, with the torpedo under its wing, is "Howland Owl". He was a cartoon character created by Walt Kelly. You can see



Howland in this image of Kelly's cast of characters. Anyone who has more information on how Kelly came to create this patch for Sea Owl, let us know.

The Boat

The late 40's and early 50's were an era of change for Sea Owl. Sea Owl was converted in 1948 from her wartime configuration to a Fleet Snorkel boat and is shown above in that configuration before acquiring the BQR-4A conformal sonar array on the bow. Does anyone know when this array was installed?

Rufus Weaver



Rufus Weaver, shown here at the June 7th Groton picnic, undoubtedly holds the title of the longest service on board Sea Owl. Rufus reported on board in 1947 and served aboard until 1959. An earlier photo of Rufus on Sea Owl appears in the Sea Owl Web site.

We are sure Rufus has many stories to tell of his time aboard Sea Owl and look forward to his sharing them with us in future editions of "Hooter Hilites".

Some Other 50's Era Picnic Attendees



Bill Whitelaw, Ltjg 54-56



Frank McGuire, EN 51-57



Richard Davis, EN 49-54



Robert Hughes, EN 59-61



The 60's

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Who are they and Where Are They Now

Can you identify the shipmates in this photograph? Do you know where they are and what they are doing?



Russ McKechnie, shown cutting the cake, passed on this past April we know. Others in the photo include Tom Sanzalone, John Monroe and Jim Callan. John is deceased, but as far as we know the other shipmates in the photo are alive and well.

Gone But Not Forgotten



We are saddened to learn of the recent passing of Robert "BZ" Bzyzinsky shown here in a recent photo with his grandson, Noah. We are sure those who served with "BZ" have fond memories of him and his unique brand of humor. We know you would not want him to prepare your taxes.

If anyone would care to share some of them, we would like to include them in a future edition

or on the forthcoming Sea Owl CD-ROM.

Jim Grilli

By Ken Johnson

I had the pleasure of chatting with Jim Grilli at the Groton picnic and remembered him from my time aboard the Owl.



I learned that after leaving Sea Owl, Jim served aboard the USS Triton and USS Lapon (SSN 661). After leaving the Navy, Jim worked for Trane and currently operates his own refrigeration and air

conditioning business in Dover, Delaware.

500 Pound Canary

by Ken Johnson

Does anyone have a sketch or photo of the 500 pound canary that roamed the Sea Owl in the early 60's? I never actually saw the bird myself, though I felt its presence as diving officer one night when I kept having to pump water between forward trim and after trim to compensate for its apparent pacing the deck, (or could it have been the 10 or so shipmates who kept quietly moving between the forward and after torpedo rooms?).

The 500 pound canary apparently perished and was buried at sea in a formal burial service, though all that remained were a few bones closely resembling chicken bones. As I recall, some aboard accused "Moose" Money of cooking and serving the canary disguised on the menu as chicken and wore black armbands for several days in its memory.

Shipmate Gets Married

While we were having a good time at our Groton picnic, your shipmate George Snell YN 64-67 was having a good time of his own. George was getting married to his new bride Marie. This was the perfect time for his shipmates to celebrate with them. The proceeds from your picnic raffle, \$250.00, were sent to George & Marie. Congratulations George & Marie!