



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

December 2008 Issue



Shipmates & 1st mates

First and foremost, Carol and I send a very Merry Christmas and a Happy Holiday Season to everyone. This is a great time to gather around your family members and count your blessings. As we gather with our families, let us never forget our armed service members who are presently protecting us overseas, and to remember our brothers in service who have gone before us.

On a personal note, since stopping work in 2006, I have gotten very busy and close to my church, St. Patrick's of Troy, New York. Without actually knowing it, I have taken on the position of buildings maintenance supervisor or manager. It is something that I enjoy doing and a job that was really needed by the Church, and leaves me no time to get bored with retirement. Also since 2006, I have converted from Episcopal to Catholic, which now makes my immediate family all Catholics.

I have much information to share with each one about our upcoming reunion in San Diego, CA. Let's get started. We are again having our Sea Owl reunion during the USSVI & ISA National Convention. We are expecting to have many SubVets of WWII in attendance as well. Dates are September 8th thru 12th, 2009. The host hotel is the Town & Country Resort & Convention Center; call (800) 772-8527 to make reservations or visit this web page:

<http://www.usvisandiego.org/Convention2009/Hotels.htm> where you can make hotel reservations online. Rates go from \$119.00 to \$129.00. I'm asking everyone to register early as these rooms are expected to go very quickly. There will be a hospitality room at the Town & Country for Sea Owl sailors to enjoy.

Important: You MUST register and pay USSVI to attend events that they have offered during the Convention. DO NOT send Ken Johnson money for these events. They are events offered by USSVI; money must be paid to USSVI. For registration see this page:

<http://www.usvisandiego.org/Convention2009/Registration.htm>

Again, these tours, such as the harbor cruise/dinner & the award banquet dinner, will sell out quickly. If you want to get onboard these, register early! Don't wait!!! Most questions can be answered by visiting these two web pages. If you do not have access or can't get to these web pages, call me, I will help you obtain these registrations.

As of now, I see no need for a registration form for only the Sea Owl Association. Our hospitality room will hold 50 people. We will provide snacks & beverage as needed.

Shipmate having a hard time:

Our Shipmate & friend Doug Jensen MM 63-66 has suffered a fire at his family home in Wisconsin on November 22nd. He was very lucky to escape from the fire when he did. He suffered some burns to the back of his head. He was sleeping in a chair, with the fire coming at him from behind, when he awoke to run out of the house, with only the clothes he had on at the time. Your Shipmates have already collected some money for Doug's support. USSVI has sent Doug a check for \$1,000, plus other USSVI bases around the country have

taken collections which will be forwarded to Doug when they reach USSVI National Office. To make matters worse, his Home & Auto Insurance policies had expired while he was away on vacation, something he was unaware of until he called the insurance company to file a claim. Doug's address is: Doug Jensen, 1098 County Road J, Friendship, WI 53934. Put Doug on your Christmas list this year; maybe we can bring a smile to his face. God knows he needs it.

From the Editor

Once again for this issue Howland Owl has donned his Christmas hat and comes to you with my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. If you have paid dues since the last newsletter mailing, you will find an updated membership card with this newsletter.

As always, if you have sea stories, unusual hobbies, stories of trips you have taken or any other material you think would be of interest to your Sea owl shipmates, please send them on to me. If you prefer to remain anonymous and not take credit for the story, Howland Owl is always happy to tag on his byline instead.

Sailors Rest Your Oars

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

Richard B. Steele, EN 63-65 – September 18, 2008

Rufus Weaver, CS1 47-59 – October 18, 2008

CDR A. Michael Hayes, CO 57-58 – November 4, 2008

We extend our deepest sympathy to the 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

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Japanese submarines in WWII

By Ken Johnson

Recently I watched a TV program on History International about Japanese submarine operations during World War II. During this program a salvo of six torpedoes from the IJN submarine I-19 was mentioned as being “probably the most effective torpedo salvo in submarine history”. Why? What was so special about it? Could it be that two of these torpedoes struck U. S. Navy warships at a range of 12,000 yards?! Well, I decided to try and find out more about it.

Mentioned as a source of information for this program was the book, “Submarines of the Imperial Japanese Navy” by Dorr Carpenter and Norman Polmar, published by the Naval Institute Press in 1986. I was able to find and purchase a used copy of this book on Amazon.com.

According to the book, the incident happened on 15 September 1942 in the Solomons off San Christobol Island. At the time a line of nine Japanese submarines was deployed in a picket line. The submarine I-19 under command of Captain Takaichi Kinashi was near the center of the picket line.

On the afternoon of 13 September Japanese reconnaissance aircraft had reported sighting a U. S. carrier group about 200 miles southeast of San Christobol Island. At noon on 15 September I-19 detected distant screw sounds and 50 minutes later sighted a carrier, cruiser and escorting destroyers at a range of 8 miles. At 1345 Captain Kinashi fired a spread of 6 torpedoes at the carrier which at that time had closed to a range of 1,000 yards. Three of the six torpedoes struck the USS Wasp (CV-7) which subsequently sank. The other three torpedoes missed the Wasp and continued onward toward another U. S. task force more than five miles away! One of them struck the battleship, USS North Carolina (BB 55) killing five crew members and creating a 36 foot tear in her outer hull and causing her to withdraw to Pearl Harbor for repairs. Another struck the destroyer USS O'Brien (DD 415) causing severe structural damage which ultimately caused her to break in two and sink while enroute to the United States for repairs.

What kind of torpedo could travel such a distance? Most likely it was a Type 95 Mod1 torpedo which the book lists as having a range of 13,000 yards at 45 knots! According to the book, Japanese torpedoes of the WW II era had the longest ranges, highest speeds and largest warheads of any naval torpedoes. The Japanese were also note hampered by the exploder problems with their torpedoes that plagued U. S. and other submarine torpedoes during the war.

Most potent of all Japanese torpedoes was the surface launched Type 93 “Long Lance” which could travel 22,000 yards at 49 knots or 44,000 yards at 36 knots! Toward the end of the war a modification of the Type 93 torpedo was developed as the Kaiten human suicide torpedo which could be carried on deck by “mother submarines”.

This book contains much interesting information about WW II Japanese submarines. The Japanese I-400 class or sen-toku

“special submarines” were the largest submarines to be built by any nation up to that time. They were capable of carrying and launching two float planes. Only three were completed and these were surrendered to U. S. forces at the end of the war. They were examined, then scuttled in 1946.

The IJN lost 133 submarines during WW II, more than twice as many as the U. S. The fact that Japanese submarines were not more effective during WW II has been attributed to several factors. These include lack of a high level consistent strategy, poor communications, and lack of effective leadership.

The book also contains reference to K6 Type medium submarines including the RO-46 which it lists as having been “sunk by USS SEA OWL (SS 405) off Wake Island 18 Apr 1945”. Below is a photo of RO-46 from the book.



Killer Toilet

By Ken Johnson

While many of us may have stories, some humorous, about experience with submarine toilets, I know of no incident where the loss of a U.S. Navy submarine can be attributed to a toilet. The same cannot be said for German U-boats. There are some sources that claim U-120 was lost due to the malfunction of a toilet on board, but this has been pretty much disputed and on line sources list U-120's fate as having been scuttled at Bremerhaven on 2 May 1945. In the case of U-1206, though, its loss in April 1945 has been blamed indirectly on a toilet on board. The story is as follows.

German U-boats apparently did not have sanitary tanks, but pumped wastes directly overboard when used. Early in the war these toilets could not be used below 25 meters (82 feet) depth. Toward the end of the war high pressure toilets were developed and fitted to later boats. The U-1206, a Type VIIC, was one of these. Use of these toilets was complicated and required special training or “toilet qualification” to be used safely.

On 14 April 1945 about 10 miles off the British coast Captain-Lieutenant Karl-Adolf Schlitt, (that is *Schlitt* ☺) Commanding Officer of U-1206, attempted to use the toilet at a depth of 200 feet without the help of a “trained toilet specialist”. Something went wrong and even the “toilet specialist” could not prevent a significant amount of water from entering the submarine and reaching the battery compartment below. This caused chlorine gas to be released and the submarine was forced to surface where it was attacked by allied aircraft. The sub was damaged extensively and unable to dive so it was abandoned.

Did you know?

Before WW II the high command of the U. S. Navy was known as CINCUS (pronounced “sink us”)? For obvious PR reasons this was changed after Pearl Harbor!



The 50's

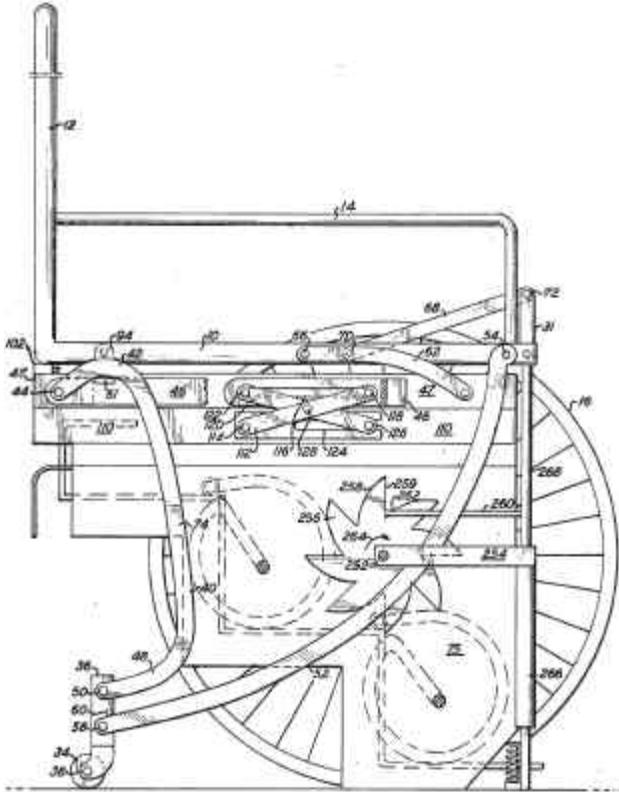
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Shipmate Rufus Weaver

By Ken Johnson

Who knew we had an inventor among us? We learned only after his death on October 18th that Rufus Weaver, CS 47-59 had filed for and was issued a patent for a stair climbing wheelchair. Below is one of a dozen or so detailed drawings from U. S. patent 3,411,598 issued on November 19, 1968 to Rufus J. Weaver.



We do not know whether Rufus ever profited from his invention, but the drawings which accompany his patent filing certainly display a great deal of mechanical design talent.

Most of us knew Rufus and his wife, Marguerite, from his quiet presence at Groton picnics. He will be missed!

CAPT A. Michael Hayes

By Ken Johnson

Captain A. Michael Hayes, Jr., USN (Ret) age 84, died November 4, 2008, at his home after a 4-year battle with melanoma. He graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in June of 1945 (with the Class of 1946) and served 26 rewarding years on active duty, which were highlighted by four commands at sea including the submarine USS Sea Owl (SS-405) and the destroyer USS Power (DD-839). Upon retirement in 1971, Capt. Hayes taught science in the Virginia Beach school system for 15 years.

CAPT Hayes was not an active member of the USS Sea Owl Association, but served as her Commanding Officer from January 1957 until December 1958. I would love to hear from shipmates who served under CAPT Hayes as their CO.

Allen Carl Bryson

By Ken Johnson

I know, this may not seem to fit the theme of the 50's page, but I could not let the passing of this exceptional submariner go without recognition in our newsletter. The following obituary is from the December 4, 2008 New London Day:

Allen Carl Bryson, 91, formerly of Pequot Avenue, New London, the last survivor of the USS Squalus, died Monday at Fairview in Groton.

Carl joined the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) and then enlisted in the Navy on Jan. 5, 1936. After completing basic training and trade school in Norfolk, Va., he served on the ships USS Henderson, USS Medusa and the USS Mississippi. He was transferred from the Mississippi to Submarine and Diesel School in New London.

He served on the USS R-4 (SS-81) and, in 1939, was assigned to the USS Squalus (SS 192) to put her into commission at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. Carl was aboard the USS Squalus when it sank on May 23, 1939. He was rescued from the sunken sub, and then worked in the salvage crew until the boat was towed into the shipyard. He was then transferred to the USS R-14 (SS 91) in November 1939, and in 1941 was assigned to the Escape Training Tank, where he trained Tyrone Power for the film "Crash Dive."

Other vessels he served on were USS O-4 (SS 65), USS Sea Robin (SS-407), USS Tench (SS 417), USS Valcour (AVP 55), USS Macon (CA 132), USS Fulton (AS 11), USS Leyte (CVS 32), and USS Sunbird (ASR 15). He retired with the rank of chief warrant officer four after 30 years of service.

Self taught, he furthered his education while in the Navy by attending the University of Illinois and the College of William and Mary. From 1966 to 1979, worked at the Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics as a planner and project head. He also taught English to Russian immigrants from 1979 to 1996.

Oliver Naquin, Commanding Officer and survivor of the Squalus, has the following inscription on his gravestone at Arlington National Cemetery:

"My Officers And Men Acted Instinctively And Calmly. There Were No Expressions Of Fear And No Complaints Of The Bitter Cold. Never In My Remaining Life Do I Expect To Witness So True An Exemplification Of Comradeship And Brotherly Love. No Fuller Meaning Could Possibly Be Given The Word 'Shipmate' Than Was Reflected By Their Acts."

Carl has now been reunited with all of his Squalus shipmates. I was privileged to be among the SubVets Honor Guard at the funeral home in Groton on December 5th along with Sea Owl shipmate, Mike Polhemus.



The 60's

December 2008 Issue



Doug Jensen Fund

By Ken Johnson

Roy has mentioned the fire that our shipmate, Doug Jensen, has suffered at his home in Wisconsin. Let me just add the below picture from the front page of the November 26th Adams County Times.



As you can see, Doug's house and everything in it is a total loss. Doug had just recently returned from a trip to Egypt and apparently his property insurance had come due while he was gone. Soon after learning about it, Roy sent out an email setting up a fund for Doug and asking that contributions be sent to me. As of this date, Doug's shipmates have sent checks to me totaling over \$2,500! Those who may still wish to contribute can still send checks to me. This just goes to show that **"WE Still Give a Hoot!"**

In addition, as Roy has stated already, USSVI responded to Doug's need with a check for \$1,000 from the Brotherhood Fund.



For those who may not be familiar with this fund, the purpose of this fund is to provide emergency relief to SubVets in the case of catastrophic situations, and to annually provide additional financial support to the Active Service Submariners through the SubLant and SubPac Caring and Sharing programs. It comes under the USSVI Charitable Foundation and is currently administered by CAPT John D. Peters, USN (Ret) as Chairman.

The USSV Charitable Foundation (USSVCF) is administered by a Board of Directors made up of non-paid elected and appointed members. Expenses incurred by the Charitable Foundation are

minimal and consist of expenses such as postage, certificates, website fees, stationary supplies, and informative brochures. The foundation was approved for tax exemption under Section 501 (C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code on December 5, 2000. To facilitate the many activities that may arise, the foundation is split into various dedicated funds.

- Brotherhood Funds
- General Fund
- Memorial Funds
- Scholarship Funds
- Submarine Library Fund
- Submarine Museum Fund

Brief descriptions of the purpose of these other funds are as follows.

The US Submarine Veterans' Charitable Foundation General Fund was established to accept general donations to the Charitable Foundation. This fund is administered by the Executive Director of the Charitable Foundation in cooperation with the Board of Directors and is used to further the foundations programs as determined by the Foundation Board of Directors. If you do not have a fund program preference and wish to donate to the 'SubVet' Charitable Foundation, just donate to the USSVCF General Fund.

The Memorials Fund acts as a tax deductible means to aid in the construction, maintenance and repair of submarine related memorials. Many of these existing memorial sites were originally constructed, repaired and maintained by SubVets of WWII, but most are being turned over to the USSVI Base volunteers that devote their precious spare time to insure the presentability of our heritage. In addition, USSVI is building additional memorials and some bases carry our maintenance work on USN Museum Submarines.

The Scholarship Fund is exclusively directed toward providing part of the bridge spanning the gap between the educational resources the Submarine Veteran's candidate child has available and what may be needed to advance their education and knowledge acquisition.

The Library Fund is established to facilitate the procurement of submarine related books, videos and other media. This material is on the shelves and available to researchers at the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum in North Little Rock, AR. Donations of submarine related books or of funds to procure them are greatly appreciated.

The Museum Submarine Fund, part of the Memorials Fund, is established to aid in the restoration of displayed U.S. museum submarines that are open to the public. These submarines are representative of our U.S. Submarine Force and are part of our collective heritage as submariners.