



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

December 2014 Issue



President's Message

Hello Shipmates & 1st Mates:

Carol and I would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year, 2015!

As we begin the New Year, I would like everyone to check their e-mail address to be certain that you are receiving messages from me. There are a few shipmates where your messages are bouncing back to me, telling me that I don't have your current e-mail address.

We will again have our Groton, CT summer picnic, thanks in a very large part to Ed Welch and his family. Mark your calendar now for June 12-14, 2015. The picnic will be Saturday, June 13th, at Sutton Park, Groton, CT.

Friday, 12 June: Muster at Groton Inn & Suites (formerly the Groton Motor Inn) at 1830 for dinner; order food and drinks from the menu, and pay individually. If you plan to attend the dinner Friday at the Groton Inn, let Ed Welch know so that he can arrange seating in the restaurant.

Saturday, 13 June: Picnic at Sutton Park Pavilion from 1130 to whenever.

Price: \$20.00 per adult; children 6-12, \$10.00; children under age 6, no charge. Price includes all food and beverages.

Sunday, 14 June: Breakfast at 1030 at Groton Town House. Order from the menu and pay individually.

If attending the picnic, send your checks payable to Ed Welch or Sea Owl Assn., letting Ed know how many are coming and mail to: Ed Welch, 151 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867.

Shipmates have always responded well to our raffle for the Groton Picnic, so we don't want to disappoint anyone. Again this year, we will be raffling off a Bose Wave III Radio/CD player combo.



Features include:

- Lifelike sound from Bose® waveguide speaker technology

- Plays all your music sources: CDs/MP3 CDs, FM/AM--plus your iPod®, smartphone, computer, tablet or Bluetooth® device with optional accessories
- Includes CD player, advanced FM/AM tuner, headphone jack, remote, clock
- Now with: Touch-top on/off/snooze controls; dual independent alarms; displayed song/artist radio info

These tickets are available to all shipmates, family members or friends. Let your friends know that they can take part if they would like. Raffle tickets are \$5 each, or six tickets for \$20. Send checks for tickets to:

Ed Welch
151 Wakefield Street
Rochester, NH 03867

The drawing will be held at the Groton picnic in June. As with our other raffles in the past, you need not be present to win.

The Sea Poacher Association, lead by Sea Owl shipmate Bill Brinkman FN 59-60, has sent out an open invitation to all Sea Owl shipmates to join the Sea Poacher at their annual reunion being held in Branson, MO on November 8-12, 2015. Having attended other Sea Poacher reunions, believe me, they really know how to do it right! Guaranteed to be a good time!

USS Sea Poacher Reunion Invitation

As Roy mentioned, our shipmate Bill Brinkman (FN 59-60) has extended an invitation to any Sea Owl shipmates to attend the next USS Sea Poacher reunion which will be held at Branson, MO on 8-12 November 2015.

Location for this reunion will be the Grand Plaza Hotel at 245 North Wildwood, Branson, MO 65616.

Room reservations can be made by calling the Hotel directly at 417-336-6646. Mention the group code SEAPOA for the reduced rate of \$90 per room per night plus tax which includes a hot buffet breakfast for two. This rate is good for both three days prior and three days after the reunion based on availability. Rooms not reserved by 8 October 2015 will be space available at the then current selling price.

Reunion activities package will include but not limited to:

- Hospitality Room and Welcome Aboard packets /w Name Badges
- Red, Hot and Blue Show /w Lunch and Vietnam Veteran's Show
- Welcome Aboard Deli Buffet in the Hospitality Room
- Guided Tour and Lunch at Keeter Center
- Tolling of the Bells at Veteran's Cove
- The clay cooper Show and the Brett for Vets Show
- Showboat Branson Bell Dinner, Show, & Table Rock Lake Cruise
- Ride the Ducks in the Veteran's Day Parade
- Final Banquet with Entertainment

If you would like to attend, there is a fee of \$290/person which covers an Activity Package which includes the Hospitality Suite for all days. Fifty percent of the Total Due must be received by 8 September 2015 with the balance on 8 October 2015. No refunds on the activity package can be given after 1 November 2015! There is a registration form including the daily schedule of events on line here:

<http://www.seapoacher.com/2015reunion.pdf>

Mail registration form and check payable to:
Gatherings Plus
P.O. Box 1023
Branson West, MO 65737

From the Editor

Once again for this issue Howland Owl has exchanged his wizard hat for one more appropriate for Christmas. He and I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Also in this issue "Cartoon Bob" D'Amico decided to recall some of his favorite, or maybe not so favorite, spots aboard Sea Owl. The result you will find on page 5 of this newsletter. (Personally a not so favorable spot for me was the wardroom bench which, as a junior Ensign, was my bunk for my first 6 months aboard.)

Finally, as a reminder, those of you who receive this newsletter by U.S. Mail can see always your current dues status printed on the mailing label. If you believe your status is in error, please let me know! Those whose dues status for this issue is 13 will also receive a note with this issue that this will be the last issue mailed to you unless you pay your dues up to date. Dues are \$10/year and \$35 for Life Membership if you are over 75. A \$10 dollar dues payment will make pay you through 2015 at this time since you do not have to pay past due amount.

Groton Base Thanksgiving

Once again the USSVI Groton Base again served a traditional Thanksgiving dinner to those sailors in the area not able to go home for the holiday. Prior to Thanksgiving the Groton Base holds a series of fund raising events to help finance the cost. The Sea Owl Association, as we have done for several years, made a cash donation of \$100 this year. As reported in the New London Day: "The Subvets have done this event so many years in a row that they have it down to a science. Deep-fried turkeys in pans flew around a packed room as volunteers called out various groups and directed people to their seats. Groups waited upstairs to be seated downstairs 74 at a time. Seven deep fryers were set up outside. By 3 p.m., volunteers had deep fried about 60 turkeys, most of them in the 13- to 15-pound range. There were 190 turkeys in total, and whatever wasn't eaten was going to be donated to the local food bank.

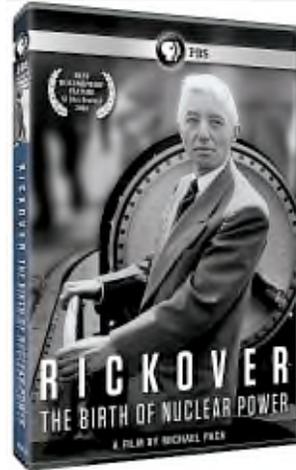
"Volunteers also delivered Thanksgiving dinners to area first responders, veterans and boats in new construction at Electric Boat and on the waterfront, and boats that had their galleys shut down for various reasons. Dinners were delivered from North Stonington to Old Saybrook to Norwich.

"The Subvets served about 500 people at the clubhouse and there were more than 700 deliveries, bringing the total number of people served to about 1,250."

Also as in the past the Groton Base made donations with funds left over from Thanksgiving to the Submarine Group 2 Caring and Sharing Program, the local Navy Relief Society, and to the Groton SUBVETTES for their charitable program. Those donations will go a long ways to helping many Sailors and their families for Christmas.

Rickover: The Birth of Nuclear Power

by Ken Johnson



This month PBS broadcast an excellent documentary about Admiral Rickover. In case you missed it, PBS is currently offering it on DVD for \$19.99.

The documentary includes a number of actual clips of Admiral Rickover but his part is portrayed in most of it by actor Tim Blake Nelson in many scenes who, according to many who met the Admiral, does a good job of recreating his speech patterns. I was impressed by his makeup job which gave him a remarkable resemblance to the Admiral for this documentary.

Admiral Bruce DeMars, who served 8 years as Director, Naval Nuclear Propulsion (NAVSEA 08) was a major advisor to this documentary film and Ted Rockwell who worked closely with Admiral Rickover appears in the documentary and it is dedicated to his memory. (Mr. Rockwell passed away March 31, 2013.)

As you may already know, Hyman Rickover was born in Poland in 1900 which at the time was ruled by Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, making it somewhat ironic that he would later be so instrumental in developing a major weapon in the Cold War. What you may not know is his birth name was Chaim Godalia Rickover and that he came to the U.S. at age 6 with his parents unable to speak English. How he became an engineering genius (and SOB to many) is quite a story!

Outhouse Racing

(Editor's note: Last January shipmate Ken Florey sent out an email about outhouse races that they have each year in the Pacific Northwest. I asked him if he would mind my using it in a future issue of Hooter Hilites and he said okay. I thought the following might be of interest to those wondering how old submarine sailors spend their free time.)

My good friend Guy Thornburgh has a cabin on a small lake in north Central Washington at a place called Conconully, WA. Another great friend of mine, Tim McDaniel and I join Guy every year to bird hunt in the area. Every winter the town has an outhouse race, Basically you mount a outhouse on runners and two of you push a third person who is sitting in the outhouse down a city block. Tim built us a very cool outhouse racer this past fall after watching a video of last years race and getting the rules from the website. This race was the 31st annual. Usually there is a lot of snow in Conconully but none this year so it had to be hauled in.

There are several divisions, Men's Women's, teenagers, Seniors, Family, bucket race, (pushers must wear a bucket over their

heads and take instructions from the rider). There is also an obstacle course race.

Winners get a trophy and bragging rights. They also have trophies for Peoples Choice and Most Fun Team. We managed to win the Senior Division, People's Choice and Most Fun Team. The women made it to the semifinals and ran into a very young woman's team and lost. There wasn't a Senior Women's Division

Tim and I were the pushers in the Senior's Division, your combined age had be at least 125 of all three team members. Terrie, (Guy's brother Patrick's wife) was our rider. She probably weighs about 100 lbs soaking wet. Our combined age was 198, the team we beat in the finals was 145. I personally think all members should be at least 55 They had one that was 39 and another who was 43 and one 63.

Anyway both Guy and Patrick have bad Achilles tendons so it was Tim and me pushing. Mind you I've had two open heart surgeries since last July so had the paramedics standing by just in case I had the big one. Actually I felt great. Tim and walked back with the outhouse pretty slow for the finals since we were both winded and the other team had gotten a by round so were well rested. I protested the final race because we thought the total combined age was 185 which was what we were told when we registered. It said 125 on the website but I was stalling for time so Tim and I could catch our breath. Mind you we had it figured out. Put a hole shot on them, (drag racer's term) and then get in the middle of the track as it is almost impossible to pass. Age and cunning plus a little treachery wins over youth and skill most of the time.

Here is a picture of our outhouse, It is not quite finished in these pictures as we mounted a bunch of stuff on it for the race. It even has a stained glass lamp shade Tim mounted as a ski light. Name of our outhouse is Party Pooper.



(What follows is a screen capture from a video of the race.)

We are the first outhouse you see and we are the very first race which is the Senior's final race. I'm the guy pushing on the left and Tim on the right. Terrie is in the outhouse. Riders had to wear a helmet. You can see we beat them off the line then get in



the middle of the track so they can't pass. Lots of fun, looking forward to next year.



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 this shipmate:

Don Gregg – QM 63-68 – July 13



At the time of his death, Don was serving as Vice-President of International Submariners Association/USA and had been reelected to serve another term. Don and Betty attended four International submariners Congresses beginning with the one in Moscow in 2006. We extend our deepest sympathy to Don's wife Betty and friends of our departed

shipmate.

*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 semi-annual publication of the USS Sea Owl Association. Issues are published in June and December.

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The 40's

December 2014 Issue



WW II Submarine Memorial in Chicago

By Ken Johnson

(The following should be especially interesting to those of you who attended our 2008 reunion at Manitowoc, WI.)

The USSVI Crash Dive Base located north of Chicago in Lake Bluff, IL and the USSVI Chicago Base are working on a WW II submarine memorial for Chicago. Information about it can be viewed on this YouTube video which they produced:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48K9t0azA&app=desktop?WWII+Submarines=>

The following is an artist rendition and description of the memorial as found at this web site:

http://crashdivebase.com/?page_id=48



Our memorial project is in the form or representation of a “submarine bulkhead.” The “bulkhead” will be made of steel, and coated with a marine grade epoxy paint, to represent an actual submarine bulkhead. On it there are several facets. On the west side of the bulkhead, at the top center, the Submariners Dolphin Insignia will be engraved. Below that and on the left, an inscription will read “Dedicated to all U.S. Navy Submariners, past, present and future, who defend our nation in peace and in war.” “28 Submarines built in Manitowoc Wisconsin passed this spot on their way to war, after Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941” is also included. This meets our challenge to not forget Pearl Harbor and Pearl Harbor Day. Included on this side, is an artist’s rendition of a WWII submarine that was built in Manitowoc Wisconsin, passing through the Lake Shore Drive Drawbridge and entering the Chicago River on its way to Lockport Illinois, the next to last stop on their Stateside journey before going off to war.

To the right of the picture and inscription, we have obtained and will have installed, a watertight door salvaged from the USS Trout (SS- 566) that will be rendered non-functional. It will not be able to either open or close, but the public will still

be able to traverse or step through the “bulkhead” using the door. Also on this side there will be seating facing the memorial so the public can sit and view the whole side of the memorial. At a special spot, people can view the artist’s rendition previously mentioned, then look through the water tight door opening, and get that “Ah-Ha” moment connecting the past with the present by viewing the Lake Shore Drive Bridge through the door opening. The seating material will be made of teak to represent the teak decking of those “boats,” but the outer seating will be steel, also coated with the marine grade epoxy paint, made to represent the shape of the superstructure, including several “limber holes.” On the back of one portion of the seating, we will have engraved the famous quote from Adm. Chester Nimitz, “*We shall never forget that it was our submarines that held the lines against the enemy while our fleets replaced losses and repaired wounds.*”

On the east side of the bulkhead, at the north end, there will be the list of the twenty-eight submarines that were built at Manitowoc. Four of the 28 submarines were lost in combat. Each of the four will have an asterisk by their name denoting “Lost in Combat.”

The “Bulkhead” will all be placed on a thirty-three foot wide circular base made of concrete and pavers. Thirty-three feet represents the approximate outer hull diameter of the Gato & Balao class submarines built at Manitowoc, and other shipyards, during the war.

Our vision is to draw the public to the unique design of the memorial. Once they arrive, the design should pique their interest with the shape of the bulkhead, the picture, and then viewing the present day scene through the watertight door. We feel that this will produce the desired “Ah-Ha” moment, looking through a real submarine watertight door at the present day Lake Shore Drive Bridge, referring back to the artist rendition of the boats passing by this spot in the past.

When visitors view the route these boats took going towards the Mississippi River en route to their destination at New Orleans, Louisiana on the map that will be part of the memorial, they can continue their journey by exploring the website we will have included with the map. The website will enable them to continue their journey by going to the various links to the submarine related museums and information that we will provide. Our hope is that it will spike their interest to the point that they then visit the various museums and libraries mentioned in the website. Being placed next to the existing bike path / walkway, and next to where the “tall” ships tie up is a perfect spot and should draw a lot of attention. We also plan to have our memorial included as a point of interest for the various Chicago River tour boats.

Special Places I Remember

During submarine duty on the USS Sea Owl, SS405

By Bob O'Amico, (CARTOONBOB...) Seaman on the deck crew, 1969

MY RACK Forward torpedo room, top bunk, port side. I could pat a warhead with my hand. A pipe ran right over me, and would hold me in during a big roll if I bent my left leg against it. (surface transit). During a deep dive, I could hear the tubes leaking.

THE CRANE BUCKET Had to do something to the top of the sail for the COBBER one day while in port. Don't remember what... but I DO remember the ride UP in the crane bucket!

RADIO SHACK ONIONS Our Chief Radioman made jars of pickled onions in the space over his radio equipment. Amazing what a TREAT a pickled onion could be during a long cruise.

HOGAN'S ALLEY Patiently waiting for your 'shift' to eat... Always tried to be there for the first of 3 shifts.

STARVATION CORNER Least popular seat in the galley of 4 tables of 6 guys each... 'STARVATION CORNER' was last spot to receive the food being passed out by the cook.

TURTLEBACK BLOOPER Once, while mess cooking, I was rinsing the steel shitcans... and bumped one with my butt... knocking it overboard.

it failed 'the float test!'

THE FOGHORN WATCH Just inside the bottom part of the sail, starboard side. Stopwatch in hand... one pull of the lever every few minutes to sound the foghorn.

THE LOOKOUT NOOK While on the surface, from this 'lookout nook'... sometimes huge waves broke right over me... (had to be strapped in!) From this nook I viewed a Caribbean sky with more stars than I've ever seen before or since...

PERISCOPE & BILGES Seas so rough one day that we did lookout watches through the the periscope. Rolls up to 49° while looking through this peephole gave new meaning to seasickness. Made multiple 'contributions' down the periscope well... to the bilges!



The 60's

December 2014 Issue



History of NR-1

By Ken Johnson

(The following information is mostly from the web site of the Submarine Force Museum in Groton.)

In 1964 Admiral Hyman Rickover conceived of the idea of a nuclear-powered research submersible. On 18 April 1965 President Lyndon B Johnson announced that the Atomic Energy Commission and the Department of the Navy had undertaken the development of a nuclear powered, deep submergence submarine. The capability of this manned vehicle, designated SUBMARINE NR-1 would greatly surpass that of any other vehicle planned or in use at the time because of the vastly increased endurance made possible by nuclear power.

Previous research subs had limited time under water, and were extremely limited in their range of operations once they dove. With the concept considered viable, Rickover gave this ship her name in March of 1965. NR stands for Nuclear Powered Research Vehicle, and the inestimable Rickover thought that this, the number 1, was but the first of a series of similar vessels. She was launched and subsequently placed in service in 1969. We never built another.

She was 150 feet long, weighed 450 tons and was propelled by twin screws and four thrusters, two each at the bow and stern. NR-1 also used conventional submarine fairwater planes and a rudder for maneuverability. Her unique features included retractable bottoming wheels, three viewing windows, 13 low-light cameras and 15,000 watts of external lighting for underwater illumination. The ship also had systems for recovery of both large and small objects from the sea floor including a manipulator arm and retractable work module.

NR-1 was equipped with sophisticated electronics that aid in her navigation. She is also equipped with advanced sonar systems used to search the sea floor. The ship was specifically designed to maneuver on or in close proximity to the ocean floor, to detect and identify targets on the bottom and lift objects from the sea floor. With her extreme depth capability, NR-1 routinely operates well below all other submarines. Through technology sharing programs with civilian industry, she has been continually upgraded to improve her mission capabilities.

For years the Navy denied the existence of the NR-1, or when that was impossible, they gave conflicting and nebulous accounts of this one-of-a-kind vessel. For example, underway photos were routinely heavily retouched, usually removing the fixed mast and prominent television camera that she carried in lieu of a conventional periscope.

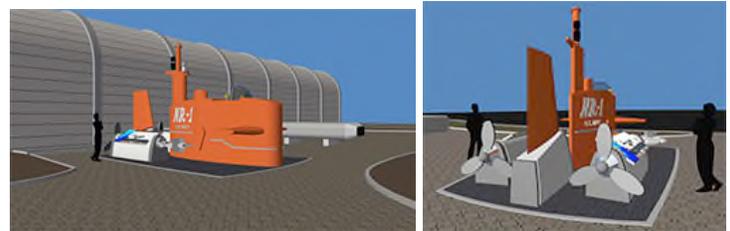
The missions of the SUBMARINE NR-1 have included oceanographic research, object recovery, geological surveys, shipwreck discovery and investigation and the installation and

maintenance of underwater equipment. Most missions however remain classified. The ship's nuclear reactor gave her tremendous endurance and autonomy that greatly exceeded all other deep submersibles. SUBMARINE NR-1 was the longest serving nuclear powered submarine in the U.S. Navy and enjoyed a long history of accomplishing its unique missions. Examples of unclassified missions include sea floor surveys in support of the Space Shuttle Challenger disaster investigation in 1986 and the crash of EgyptAir Flight 990 off the coast of New England in 1999. SUBMARINE NR-1 has been featured in National Geographic Magazine and newspaper articles.

After 1997, The NR-1 continued to be involved in the significant underwater archeological and scientific expeditions in the Mediterranean Sea, Gulf of Mexico and various parts of the Atlantic Ocean. Included were expeditions to the Akron, a WW1 US Navy airship, deep-water coral reefs, an active volcano at Castro Bank, and many other biological and geological missions.

SUBMARINE NR-1 returned to its homeport for the very last time on 23 July 2008. NR-1 was in service for 39 years and is the Navy's only nuclear-powered, deep-diving ocean engineering and research submarine. During its last overseas deployment, which lasted 4 ½ months, NR-1 performed several military missions and a highly publicized search for the Bonhomme Richard, the famous ship belonging to John Paul Jones. SUBMARINE NR-1 was transferred to Portsmouth New Hampshire and underwent inactivation process.

Following her deactivation, the Submarine Force Library and Museum, home to the USS Nautilus, the first and finest nuclear submarine, obtained many parts of the NR-1 and is currently planning on revealing a new NR-1 exhibit late 2015. These are artist conceptions of what the exhibit will look like just outside the Museum entrance.



NR-1 has some interesting facts. For example, the name and hull number do not follow conventional Navy practice. You'll note that this is not the USS NR-1 or USS anything. It also might be the only submarine ever equipped with tires. During her latter years she also used MV Carolyn Chouest, chartered by the Navy to act as a support ship, which towed her to and from operating areas. While in service prior to her deactivation, visitors to the Museum could watch tow lines being attached