

# Buddy Line



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Newsletter of Fraternal Order of Underwater Swim School, Key West, Florida

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August 2006

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## President's Corner by Don Stone

During the business meeting of the May 2006 reunion, the membership decided to hold the next reunion in 2007 back in Key West. We sent a letter request to Capt Scholl, CONAS Key West, but received no response, probably because a change of command was imminent.

Captain J. R. Brown is the new CONAS Key West. Mike Driscoll went to the Change of Command ceremony in July and learned that Capt Brown's uncle went through UWSS. This may help us get approval. A new letter request has been sent to Capt Brown and we are waiting for response. We again asked for a block of rooms for the members.

When approved, we probably will still be in a space A category. So keep your fingers crossed that Key West doesn't get hit this year by a bad storm that dislocates Navy families from their housing into the Visitors Quarters.

Several members have requested a dressier sport shirt, so we have added a cotton pique short sleeve polo with an embroidered UWSS emblem. I tried out one of the new shirts at the SEAL/UDT reunion and can report that they are comfortable and look good even after many hours of wear.



The new UWSS commemorative coins were very popular at the 2006 reunion. Another order has been received and they are now available for purchase in the logo gear section.

We also added a baseball type cap with the embroidered emblem. All logo gear is pictured on our web site, [www.uwss.org](http://www.uwss.org)

## UWSS LOGO ITEMS



The following logo items are available, so send in your orders and they will be shipped pronto. Prices include shipping. Availability is subject to change. We can obtain other items if there are enough requests.

White Beefy-T shirt..... 13.00 ea, 2 for 24.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on pocket  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL

Ash gray Beefy-T shirt..... 14.00 ea, 2 for 26.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on pocket  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL

White long sleeved T shirt ..... 16.00 ea, 2 for 30.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on front (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL

Ash gray long sleeved T shirt ..... 17.00 ea, 2 for 32.00  
Large logo on back, small logo on front (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL

White polo shirt, 50/50 cotton/poly.. 18.00 ea, 2 for 34.00  
Small logo on pocket. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Ash polo shirt, 50/50 cotton/poly.... 18.00 ea, 2 for 34.00  
Small logo on pocket. Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Pique polo, all cotton, birch gray..... 20.00 ea, 2 for 38.00  
Embroidered logo left front. (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL

Cap – natural with logo 12.00 ea  
8.00 ea if ordered with shirt

Baseball cap – light tan, embroidered logo 15.00 ea  
12.00 ea if ordered with shirt

UWSS logo decal 2.00 ea  
Transparent background 2.00 ea

White background 2.00 ea

UWSS logo lapel/tie pin 4.00 ea

UWSS plaque - Bright brass logo on blue 25.00 ea

UWSS commemorative coin 5.00 ea  
1 5/8 diameter, enameled brass with raised design

**Send payment with order to Don Stone,  
1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Boca Raton, FL 33432**

## **Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

Membership- August 2006 207 members

Account Balance May 31, 2006	\$8,582.95
Dues	+225.00
Logo sales	+138.00
Buddy Line printing & postage	-185.00
Logo purchases	-1440.57
Account Balance August 11, 2006	\$7320.38

## **FO/UWSS Mission**

The Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School was formed in order to keep lines of communication open between personnel of the armed forces who were staff or students at the Navy Underwater Swimmers School Key West, Florida. Associate membership is open to family, friends, and others who share an interest in the goals and activities of FO/UWSS. Associate members do not have voting privileges, but are encouraged to participate in all other activities..

One of the most important reasons for our existence as an organized group is to plan for and participate in biannual reunions, which will be held at various locations to be selected by members' votes.

## **FO/UWSS Officers**

President .....	Don Stone
Vice President.....	Bob Holmes
Secretary/Treasurer .....	Roger Lynch

The Buddy Line newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. Buddy Line editors are Don and Art Stone.

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snail mail: 1440 S.W. 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33432  
phone: (561) 391-6727 fax: (509) 472-6492

**WEBSITE:** [www.uwss.org](http://www.uwss.org)

**All logo items are pictured on the web site**

## **Buddy Line by email**

If you use email you may prefer receiving the email version of the Buddy Line newsletter. It is delivered to your inbox as a .pdf file for Adobe Acrobat Reader.

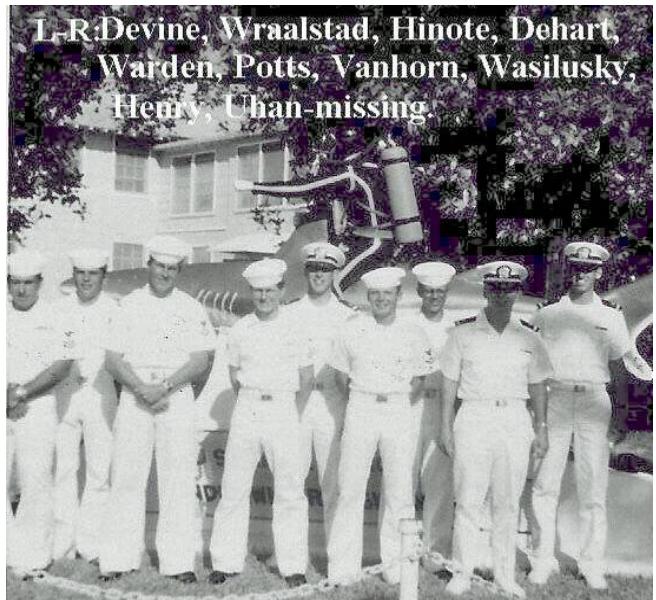
The benefits to you are faster delivery and **color** photos (when originals are color).

The benefits to the FO/UWSS are the savings on printing and postage for the Buddy Line mailout.

To receive the Buddy Line by email, send your request to [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org).



Photo from Jerry Padrta – March 1955



U/WSS May 1970

Photo from John Potts



Photo from Joel Gringras Class ? 1. Joel A. Gringras, 2. Philip N Girard, 3. David J. Graves, 4. A. Allyn Padgett, 5. Kenneth Gibble, 6. James F. Durell, 7. James V. Moseley, 8. Kent N. Foerster, 9. Ray Berube, 10. Gordon D. Roat, 11. William Odum, 12. Terrence D. Hesser, 13. Arthur Wydell, 14. James Hannigan

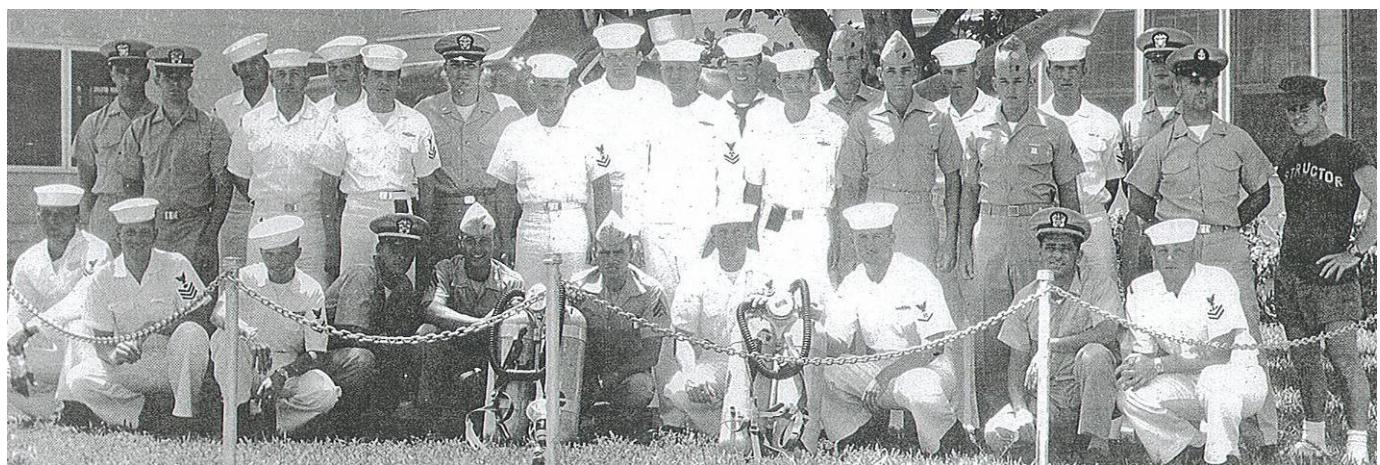
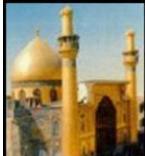


Photo from Andy Sendry – April 1966.

First row – 5. M. P. Starr USMC, 6. R. Hardwick USMC; Second row – 7. A. Sendry USMC, 10. Instructor Rabbit UDT/SEAL; Third row – 7. B. Soul USMC



## Najaf Chronicles

*By Rick LaRoche*

*UWSS member, Rick LaRoche, who works for the US State Department as Action Officer for Najaf, continues to share short narratives of his life and feelings as he carries out his sometimes dangerous duties in Iraq.*

**November 2004:** Greetings from a rainy and muddy Najaf, home of the “world famous Najaf Men’s Garment Factory” as the sign at the city limits proudly proclaims. Well, aside from the U.S. elections, the big news here is that we have moved from good old Camp Baker to Camp Hotel, which is definitely not even close to what the name implies. The base is large and provides ample room for running (2 mile circuit) if and when I have time. It also has a tent with weights, but I haven’t checked it out yet. We have such luxuries as a 24-hour laundry service. As one of the people here put it: “The laundry here is where your clothes go to die!” I hardly recognize what I get back. Did I really buy pink underwear? Have I gained that much weight in 24 hours?

As I write this, It is Tuesday (11/2) in Iraq, but still very early in the U.S. This is the big day the world is watching. Iraq itself seems to have the following split: Baghdad residents (not the government) favor Kerry; everywhere else seems to favor Bush. The “infamous” Sunni Triangle” continues to favor Saddam. I guess they missed the message that he is not running for president in the U.S. or Iraq!

On a recent trip to Hillah (1hour north of Najaf), our gunship (code name for the rear vehicle) and its “road-rage discourager and ex-Navy SEAL” had to fire on three separate vehicles. The gunship is an SUV and has a “rather large caliber” machine gun mounted in the cargo space. It also has a HUGE sign in Arabic warning: “Keep your distance or deadly force will be used.” Despite this drivers continue to speed up to our 3-car convoy when we stop at checkpoints and intersections. Given the deadly use of suicide car-bombers here, we simply cannot let any vehicle get to close to us. Our “tail-gunner” waves them back, throws flares and fires a warning shot onto the road in front of them. If they continue, he then fires a volley into the engine block, which usually does the trick. It’s better to shoot the car than the driver. After all, we are still trying to win hearts and minds.

Speaking of that, we had packaged up about 100 bags of food for poor families that we intended to give out during Ramadan. Whenever we drive through poor areas (especially rural areas), we try to throw out food, candy and toys from the last vehicle. We cannot afford to stop for security reasons. At any rate, the bags of food simply “disappeared” during the move from Baker to Hotel. It seems that the Iraqi movers, who are already making “big bucks” by Iraqi standards, stole the food for themselves. It’s impossible to say exactly which group

did it, so there is nothing we can do. It gets very frustrating when you see the “thug-thief” mentality that Saddam bred here for so many years. Everyone is into some type of corruption or graft. The lines of cars waiting to get gas stretch for miles due to an “official” shortage of fuel. Yet Iraqi Police are notorious for barging to the front of the line in their private vehicles, filling them up along with every container they can find. And surprise, surprise, the Black Market for gas is alive and healthy. There’s always plenty of fuel there!

I took my first regional break to Stockholm at the end of October. Boy, did I ever need that. Hanne kept looking at me as if I was crazy when I was amazed to find the following: 1) Hot water on demand (we have to wait about 5 minutes). 2) Electricity that stays on 24 hrs. 3) INDOOR TOILETS AND SHOWERS- WOW! And 4) People actually walking around and enjoying life – some of them even smiling and laughing. I never see people smiling and laughing here. I still felt uncomfortable if a car got too close to us, however. Anyway, I arrived on a Monday and left six days later. It wasn’t long, but it helped tremendously. Poor Hanne, I was so tired I slept a good portion of the time I was there. I’m already counting the days to my next break, which will be longer. I get to spend two weeks at Christmas. That will also mean I will have completed one-third of my tour in Iraq. And speaking of that, I got my onward assignment once I’m done here. I got my top choice (Stockholm wasn’t on the bid list) – Auckland, New Zealand! “Just throw me right back into the briar patch.”☺

Hanne and I are already surfing the web looking for information about the city. We will be living in a four-bedroom house in the Auckland suburb of Ponsonby. It seems to be a great place to live. The Consulate is small, but we have a large reporting area: Samoa, Cook Islands, Antarctica (a real “garden spot” I’ve heard) and a few other small island territories. And let’s not forget that NZ is known for extreme sports and rugby. Just my cup of tea. I’m looking forward to it, but I must admit, it will seem strange to exchange my AK-47, K-Bar knife, Glock 9 mm and body armor for a suit and tie. I’m also wondering how well I’ll make the switch from exciting and dangerous nation-building to stamping visas (my next tour is a consular tour). Life may be crazy here in Iraq, but it is addictive for adrenalin-junkies, which is what most of us here in Iraq are. Whatever the case, I have promised Hanne that this is my last “dangerous” assignment, so I’ll just have to get used embassy life again☺

To all my friends out there, please take care and enjoy your lives, loved ones and friends. Never take these things for granted. It’s going to take a long time for the poor people of Iraq to be able to do this. At least when I leave, I will be able to say that I have done my part to try and help those Iraqis who want to be helped. “Inshallaha,” (God willing) they will have these things that we in the free world take for granted.

*The material in the Najaf Chronicles is not for public use and may not be re-printed or used in any other context.*



**Memories of the  
2006 Reunion  
May 11-14  
Key West, Florida**



**Membership Application****Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates &amp; Class # at UWSS: \_\_\_\_\_ or Associate Membership: \_\_\_\_\_

Send copy of class picture if you have one. 2 Year Membership \$25.00

Make check to Roger Lynch, Treasurer and mail to FO/UWSS, 1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave, Boca Raton, FL 33432**The Way It Was**

Diving supervisor,  
Bob Shouse,  
checking off the students  
as they prepare to enter  
the calm water of the harbor  
from an LCPR.

Photo from  
Bob Shouse

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