

# Buddy Line



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*Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida*

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## LOOKING BACK



2018 UWSS Reunion in Key West, Florida

*Since the 2020 reunion has been postponed and Arnold Feller recently sent these videos from our 2018 reunion, it seemed the perfect time to share them.*

You can view the videos by going to  
<https://raelynwebster.smugmug.com/2018-UWSS-videos/n-b25v8n/>

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Underwater Swimmers  
School Officers**



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*sights around Key West NAS*

*to see the videos go to  
<https://raelynwebster.smugmug.com/2018-UWSS-videos/n-b25v8n/>*











*left page:  
tour of US Army Special Forces Underwater  
Operations*

*right page:  
BBQ and Banquet*

*to see the videos go to  
<https://raelynwebster.smugmug.com/2018-UWSS-videos/n-b25v8n/>*





**My life as a SCUBA diver in the US Navy: 1967 – 1973**

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Diver's School – Key West, Florida Oct 1970

During an off-patrol period after becoming submarine qualified, I had volunteered to go to Diver's School. Each FBM submarine had to carry two qualified Navy SCUBA divers on patrol and the current divers on the boat were transferring off.

My boat was the USS Alexander Hamilton, SSB(N) 617 and I was a Missile Tech on the Gold Crew, operating out of Rota, Spain, making patrols in the Med, above the Arctic Circle, etc, during the Cold War.

At home as a kid (I graduated High School in 1967) I had enjoyed watching the adventures of Mike Nelson (Lloyd Bridges) in a TV series called "Sea Hunt". SCUBA diving was relatively new then and this was an action-thriller series that revolved around his adventures in solving mysteries, rescues and other underwater pursuits.

It sounded adventurous to me and was something new to try, so I volunteered.



I had no idea what to expect when I got to the school. I had passed the preliminary diving test of swimming laps, etc, and thought I was ready for the school. If I had

known what was coming, I would have prepared myself physically for the challenge.

The US Navy Underwater Swimmer School lasted 4 weeks and was held at Key West, Florida. The school had evolved from the original Navy UDT/

EOD school as had the SEAL program.

The SEALs followed a completely different path and learned combat diving skills and the Draeger closed-circuit rebreather system (no bubbles – CO2 in your exhaled breath is absorbed and you rebreathe the oxygen) in addition to open-circuit SCUBA. If you are trying to stay undetected on the surface, you don't want a bubble trail following you. Using the Draeger is very tricky and if not done just right can lead to hypoxia.

The SEALs did their dive training at Key West also but separately from our class. We would see them emerge from the ocean down the beach from us, wearing their Draeger rebreathers but they must have been having troubles because many of them came out of the water staggering





around like they were drunk.

The Navy has an entirely different group of divers that do only diving - including hard-hat (so-called 'Deep-sea'), mixed-gas, etc. They do salvage work, ship repair, underwater welding and a number of other things only the most highly trained divers in the world can do. They also do open-circuit SCUBA and go through a very rigorous and lengthy training program.

I arrived at the diver's school and immediately learned that the class was comprised of mostly non-Navy types. Of the 24 who remained through the class and graduated, there were 6 sailors, 2 USAF Pararescue Jumpers (PJs) and 16 mixed Recon Marines and Army Rangers.

I had never heard of PJs and Recon Marines before nor did I know what a Ranger was before meeting these men at the school. They were all tough guys and with the exception of the PJs had served tours in Viet Nam.

Once the class got started and we began the heavy swimming and diving portion we got assigned a 'swim buddy' that we stayed with through the course. I got paired up with a Recon Marine Corporal named Emrich. He was a quiet and nice guy. He was also tough as nails and had completed a tour in Viet Nam.

I hope he made it through the war but have never been able to make contact with him to share my story of how things turned out.



Here we are on the dive barge with our Twin-90 tanks, double-hose regulator, swim fins, mask and life jacket, Emrich is on the right:

And here I am in front of the school with the shark and his rider, the mascot of the school...





When I arrived at the school, I had just come off a month of R&R and was not in the best of physical condition.

The first week of school was primarily classroom studies on dive medicine, nitrogen narcosis (the bends) and the chemistry and physics of diving - and a ton of PT.

Each day started with a physical training session and it was soon clear I was way, way out of shape. The instructors were monsters and nearly everyone else in the class was in perfect physical condition except the sailors. The Navy instructors went out of their way to get us in shape to keep up with the Marines, PJs and Rangers.

The base runs were tough – 5 miles over every obstacle the instructor could find on the base and beach at his pace. They ran us in the ocean, out of the ocean, over obstacle course walls, into sand pits, etc.

If you lagged behind (which I did at the beginning) there was a Deuce and a Half truck right behind you with an instructor and a box of donuts, calling out, “Hey you, come on back here and get on the truck - have a donut!”

If you got on the truck you were going to be sent back to your ship or duty station as soon as it got back to the school building.

The first week or so I was at the back of the pack, running alongside a Marine Lieutenant who had half of one foot blown off by a mine in Viet Nam. He was going to make it through that class no matter what and he was an inspiration to me to get myself in gear and move up in the pack.

He successfully completed the course.

At the end of each day I was so sore I could hardly walk but as the course progressed, I got in shape and could stay in the middle of the pack on all exercises and was happy to be there. I would go back to the barracks at night and collapse in a heap.

Some of the Marines, on the other hand, would go into town and hit the bars until early morning, catch an hour or two of sack time then get up and perform like nothing unusual was going on.

Once we were used to our equipment and competent with SCUBA diving, we were taken to the pool for the harassment event.

This was the one where you were stripped of all gear but one set of tanks for both of you – then you and your swim buddy were sent down to the bottom of the pool. I had the tanks for this exercise.

For the next 5 minutes or so (seemed like hours) the instructors would harass you every way they could to try and make you pop to the surface for air. You were buddy-breathing off one set of tanks to start with, then the instructor would push your buddy away from you and turn off your air supply. Then he would take your mouthpiece out of your mouth and twist the hoses around in a knot and then take that mess and pull it behind your back and down under your tanks and winch it up tight against the tank harness.

Meanwhile your buddy is also holding his breath and then has to come over and the





two of you unravel the problem and start buddy-breathing as soon as possible.

They would grab you and shove you around while all of this was happening.

If your head popped above the surface during this exercise you got out of the pool, collected your gear and returned to your ship or command. There was no second chance given in our class – pass or get out.

We had guys leave the class in the pool harassment.

This activity was done to see if we could handle stressful situations underwater and not panic as well as train us for things that could go wrong when we were diving.

The same instruction is used today in all of the various combat dive schools including SEALs.

Another interesting and challenging test

was the 1,500-meter night swim – that's a mile underwater at night in the ocean. You and your swim buddy were dropped off at sea and using a radium-lighted compass board you swam back to the beach to hit a designated target.

Can you see a shark underwater at night?

We got close to our target landing spot on the beach but missed it and wound up nearly swimming into a huge drainage pipe that emptied out into the ocean.

On weekends off a couple of the sailors and I rented a boat on one of the Florida Keys and went skin-diving on the Coral Reef off the coast.

Hamming it up on our way out:

One dive on the Reef I was down pretty deep when I looked up and saw a school of Barracuda swimming above me. I waited a moment then I streaked up and flew



nearly out of the water and flopped over into the boat.

Too close for comfort!

We completed the school and I went back to Charleston, graduating 16th out of a class of 24 with an 88% score and very happy to have done that well, given the competition.

Now I could add “DV” after my rate and wear the SCUBA divers insignia on my right sleeve.

In later years I would meet several graduates of the same training – a Captain in the Green Berets at ON Semiconductor who graduated from the Army Combat Divers School and was in the assault on Grenada, from a submarine escape trunk; a Dive Officer who became a business consultant who had been on the USS Kamehameha FBM submarine after it had converted for use as a SEAL platform; and one of the engineers in my organization at Whirlpool Corporation.

Hooyah!

During Refit for the next patrol I made my first dive on the boat. I got all of my gear on and had to enter the water from the back of the sub on the ‘turtleback’. That’s the long flat surface that sits up off the water where the missile tube hatches are located.

You can see the issue in the photo here...

When I made the jump off the turtleback to the water I had to launch myself way

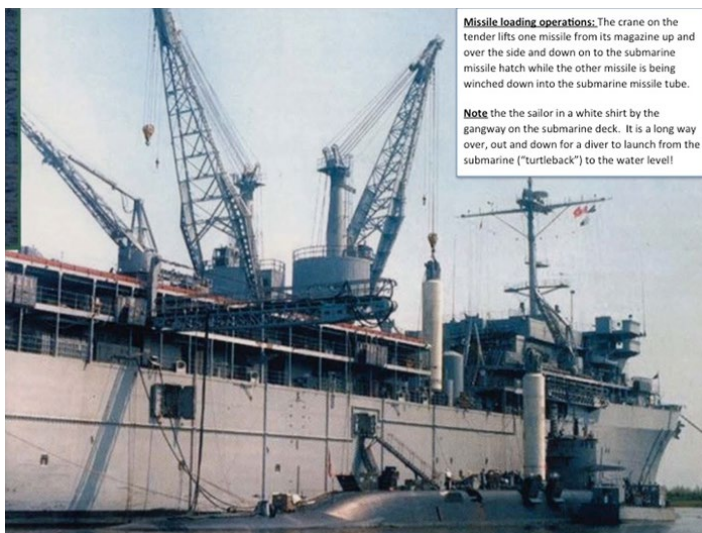
out and over to clear the hull below but in doing so I overextended myself, my tanks made me top heavy, and I began wind-milling my arms furiously in order to prevent going in head first. You never enter the water headfirst as a diver.

It had to look crazy and I was certainly embarrassed by it, but you have to start somewhere!

After that dive making dives on the boat became routine and the divers in the USS Holland AS-32 sub tender’s dive locker gave us plenty of opportunities to dive on our boat while in Refit in Rota.

After R&R in our homeport of Charleston we flew to Rota for the next patrol and life got hectic as usual. I was extremely busy running the Missile crew as LPO and was now doing a lot of diving on the boat as well.

These daily dives were for hull surveillance and I would swim the entire 425’ length of the sub underwater and check for things that shouldn’t be there – like



**Missile loading operations:** The crane on the tender lifts one missile from its magazine up and over the side and down on to the submarine missile hatch while the other missile is being winched down into the submarine missile tube.

**Note** the sailor in a white shirt by the gangway on the submarine deck. It is a long way over, out and down for a diver to launch from the submarine (“turtleback”) to the water level!





mines. I also checked the integrity of the external hull fittings and the screw.

Since most of a submarine is below the water level when surfaced, I was about 40' under the hull for these dives.

One day our Medical Doctor, Dr Clint (first name only) asked if he could make the dive with me.

Usually I dove alone but he had gone through the Navy's UWSS school, too, and was qualified so I said, "Sure!".

What happened next was FUBAR.

We suited up and jumped off the turtle-back into the water without problem. We then proceeded to dive down under the boat.

Once we were completely under the hull – and it is murky, dark and looking up all you see is the black steel hull above your head and in every direction – I got too close to Doc's swim fin when he made a power stroke that kicked me full in the face.

Now I had a problem.

My mask was knocked off, my mouth-piece was kicked out of my mouth and I was deep under a submarine hull in the dim light.

At this point I was extremely grateful for the training I had received at diver school. There is a procedure you follow for recovery from this type of situation and if you do it correctly without panicking you will be fine.

I did the procedure – finding and clearing my mask, clearing my mouthpiece and starting to breathe again – and kept on with the dive.

Thank you, Navy dive instructors, who taught us so well and harassed us in that pool!

Once the dive was over and we got out of the water and climbed up on the back of the sub behind the turtleback, we took our masks off.

What a sight!

The Doc had a sinus infection and his nasal passages were stuffed up. He had forgotten that he would not be able to equalize pressure in his mask during the dive so when we surfaced his face turned black and blue everywhere his mask fit.

His face looked like Rocky Raccoon!

What a dive. Thankfully that was the most excitement I had in my Navy diving career.

And as it turned out, the last SCUBA dive I made was in the US Navy – I never dove again.

Upon reflection now at age 70, I treasure the experience and privilege I had to attend UWSS and serve the country with other divers from the school.



From David K. Mullenex

After finishing boot camp and Navy Machinist mate School at Great Lakes Navy Military Basin the spring of 1959 as a fireman machinist mate striker, I was given orders to report to the U.S.S. Cadmus A.R.14 Norfolk, Virginia. Not long after coming aboard, I saw that there was a request for students to attend Deep Sea Diving School aboard the YFMB 17 stationed at the destroyer piers in Norfolk, Virginia; also explosive training the Under Water Demolition Team 21, Little Creek, Virginia. After finishing the second class deep sea diving school I returned to the Cadmus, working in the valve and outside machine shop as well as the diving locker as needed.

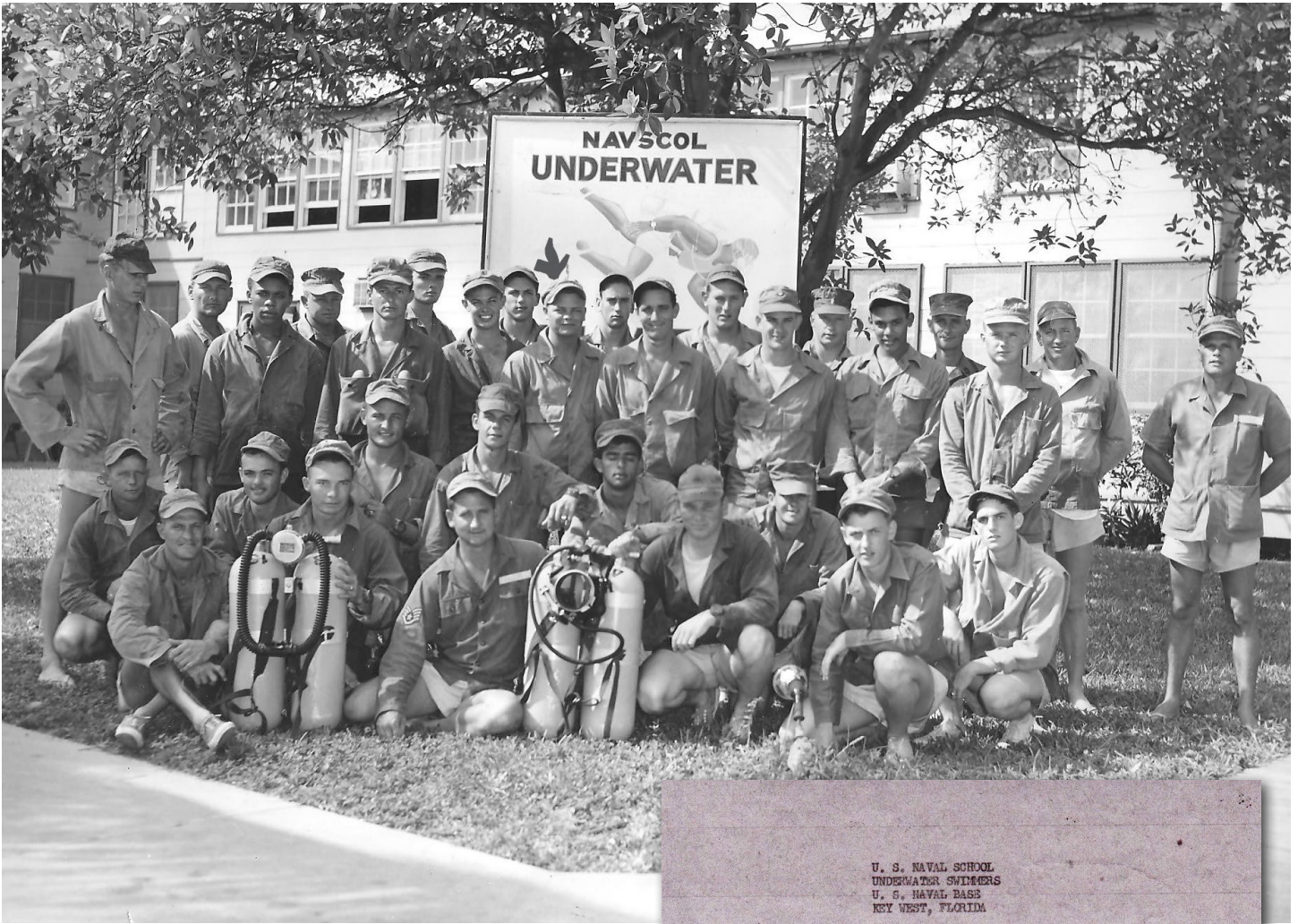


In early summer of 1960, as a second class diver, I was sent on temporary assigned duty by L.S.T. to Argentia, Newfoundland to assist in the installation of a transatlantic cable. After again returning to the U.S.S. Cadmus as a third class machinist mate diver, I requested to be sent to the Under Water Swimmer School at Key West, Florida. After receiving or-

ders to report, I enrolled in the school late summer of 1960. At the time we were told that we were the largest class that had reported for training at the school (75 students). The class was from all services including the Coast Guard. 30 students of the original class graduated. At the graduation ceremonies I found that I would be graduating as first in th class.

Again returning to the U.S.S. Cadmus I wored when needed: out of the diving locker, doing hull inspections, blocking sea suction, for the valve replacement, blocking the stern tubes for repacking and zinc plate replacement and other repairs as necessary on ships that came alongsi-





ade as the Camus was a repair ship. This was back in the day when raw sewage from the ships went into the harbor. We used the Jack Brown mask for diving and a, so called, dry suit before wet suits came out.

I, along with two other Navy fleet divers from the Cadmus, (Pascal-1st class diver, Farmer-salvage diver) were sent t.a.d. to Wallops Island Virginia to salvage the escape rocket that was to be used to carry the capsule away in case of an emergency. This was all part of the beginnings of the Project Mercury Program.

U. S. NAVAL SCHOOL  
UNDERWATER SWIMMERS  
U. S. NAVAL BASE  
KEY WEST, FLORIDA

COURSE: SCUBA DIVER, Class 2-61 (Conv. 24 Oct 60 Grad. 18 Nov 60)

CLASS STANDINGS (Class Average was 86.59)

1.	MULLENEX, David Keith	MC(DV)	USN	93.00
2.	WARREN, Rupert Edwin	SP2	USN	90.68
3.	ETHERTON, Robert Lewis	DC3(DV)	USN	90.08
4.	ZONTINI, Robert Lee	A/1G	USAF	89.34
5.	BEANS, James Dale	1STLT	USMC	88.24
6.	KARNES, John Richard	SA	USCG	88.20
7.	SHEPHERD, William Russell	PHAN	USN	87.71
8.	ELPHICK, Clyde William	PHAN	USN	87.60
9.	BRANCH, Billy Thompson	CPL (E-4)	USMC	86.30
10.	ASTWOOD, Ronald Keith	PFC	USMC	85.52
11.	PAULK, Everett Eugene	TTC	USN	85.10
12.	SMITH, David Tarron	SA	USN	85.05
13.	RYLES, Robert James Jr.	SA	USN	84.74
14.	GUN, Lawrence Henry Jr.	PHAN	USN	84.69
15.	MERTZ, Harry Stewart	GSST	USMC	84.62
16.	ARENS, William Hodgson	SA	USCG	84.44
17.	LAFFERTY, Donald Gene	TC3(DV)	USN	83.77
18.	TARDIFF, William Alvin	AN	USN	83.66
19.	SMITH, Gary Eldon	PHAN	USN	83.46
20.	AVANT, Thomas Jefferson	GH2	USN	82.93
21.	STITT, Frank Jackson	PH2	USN	82.82
22.	MC CLURE, Ray Ellis	SSGT	USAF	82.87
23.	POOL, Donald Lester	PH	USN	82.76
24.	POCLOCK, George Ralph	PFC	USMC	82.72
25.	MARCHESKI, John Edward	L/CPL	USMC	82.27
26.	ARESONA, Rafael (n)	PFC	USMC	81.88
27.	LITTLE, Austin (n)	TSST	USAF	81.72
28.	PUNDSTON, Ronald Eugene	AM2	USCG	81.69
29.	HOLLIS, Billy Ray	SSGT	USAF	81.21
30.	HOLLINGSWORTH, Marcus Jackson	SN	USN	80.19



I believe that my graduation standing in the U.W.S.S of November 1960 class is why I received orders in the spring of 1961, as a second class machinist mate-diver, now including S.C.U.B.A., that I was to report to Pensacola, Florida Naval Air Station as a space capsule recovery diver, as part of the newly formed team installing the flotation collar around the space capsule. After Gus Grissom's capsule sank, the Navy developed the flotation collar as a means of recovery. We were trained for recovery at Pensacola, Florida Naval Air Station as well as the Atlantic Missile Range, Patrick Air Force base in Florida for additional training with the Mercury Astronauts. During Project Mercury the Navy was using Navy fleet divers as part of their recovery operation. The astronauts were doing earth orbits a the time: one, two or three. The ship fleet divers were stationed aboard various ships in the Atlantic Ocean, as to what orbit the capsule might be brought down in. The divers would be helicoptered to the corresponding orbit of which they were stationed, egress the helicopter by jumping to the location of the capsule, then install the flotation collar.

One of my memories of a recovery operation, while stationed for the second orbit recovery aboard the U.S.S. Donner, a floating dry dock, the divers were awoken during the night with a request for a hull inspection in the morning, as the engineers had secured the starboard shaft due to excessive vibration. At day-

break, the ship stopped mid-Atlantic and launched a small boat for the divers. I was dressed and selected to be the stand by diver. The Chief P.O. in our team dove to inspect the problem. Minutes passed; then the Chief made a hasty retreat to our boat. It appeared as to what had happened during the night; The ship had run over a whale, which got trapped under the ship and drowned. This is what was causing the vibrations. One the ship stopped the, now dead whale was free and no longer stuck and began to come in the direction of the Chief. At that time, the Chief demonstrated what a great swimmer he was! The Donner did not receive any honorable mentions as to a capsule recovery as the capsule went down range three hundred miles and was recovered by the fleet divers aboard an aircraft carrier. The Donner did make the local newspapers with the story of the whale.

My time in the Navy other than t.a.d. and schools was aboard the U.S.S. Camus. A.R.14. I disembarked the Cadmus on September 24, 1962 to resume civilian life. my two year inactive reserve was assigned to Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Maryland. I received my honorable discharge September 24, 1964.







*(continued from February 2020 BuddyLine)*

Bill Hamilton was extremely gracious and accommodating. He said he would contact the Third Naval District immediately and attempt to enroll me in the EOD class starting the following week. It worked out. I picked my orders up on Wednesday to be in Key West by Friday, June 28, 1957.

After packing my meager belongings in my white 1956 Thunderbird, I bid my family and friend's goodbye and headed south. Boy was I excited. I drove Route 301 to Highway US 1, passing through nearly every small town on the Florida coast, finally reaching Key West 27 hours later. On the way, I had my Delaware, North Carolina and Georgia license suspended for speeding. I only deserved one of those tickets, the rest I got for just looking fast.

The US Naval School, Underwater Swimmers, was located inside the main Key West Navy Base near the Fleming Street entrance. The School was housed in a very well kept two story white frame building. After checking into the administration office upstairs, I was escorted to the next office to meet the CO. I was greeted by Commander John Roe's growling voice. "Where the hell have you been? The class started Monday and today's Friday." I told him I only received my orders late Wednesday and was told the class was starting the following Monday. "OK," he said, "I'll give you a chance. We have a final test in diving medicine on Monday followed by a 1000 yard swim. Pass the test and make the swim, and I'll let you in.

Another thing, I'll be swimming with you." I was given a book to study and left saying, "Thank you sir."

I checked into the Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ) and submerged myself in the School's manual. I already knew most about the diving medicine, but found the rest of the book new and interesting. I aced the Monday medical exam and was looking forward to the swim. I was in great shape at the time having made several recent dives with a group of classmates that had planned to bring up the ship's bell on the Andrea Doria. We also made dives on a sunken WWII German submarine off Block Island, Rhode Island. Commander Roe looked lean and mean. I had no idea how fast he could swim or whether I could stay with him. However, I looked forward to the challenge.

Besides the CO, I would swim with a tall UDT instructor named Hogland, one of the fastest swimmers in the school. Without having any idea of my swimming abilities, they were taking no chance on the possibility of me drowning. As soon as the LCPR (Landing Craft Personnel) bow ramp dropped we jumped into the water and swam like hell with fins using underwater recovery strokes. The LCPRs had sharks teeth painted on their bow and looked awesome. We swam at a fast pace until we reached the 500 meter mark when Hogland and I began to pull away from the CO. I could tell from his heavy breathing he couldn't keep up this pace much longer. He said, "You guys go on





ahead, I want to check on the rest of the class.” I soon gained my second wind and swim faster. I led Hogland by 100 yards when I reached the beach. We were 300 yards ahead of the rest of the class. As the fastest swimmer in the class, I would later be paired with Joe Polanski, a Special Forces captain, as swim team #1. We were expected to lead the class on every swim and did so. Our class was a mix of Navy and Special Forces led by a Petty Officer drill instructor named LeMay. He was an old UDT hand and looked over us like a mother hen. We all liked and respected him for he was always there to help the weaker students through the more difficult segments of the course.

Because our swim school had the most experienced SCUBA divers in the Navy, our Command was often called upon to assist in such underwater projects as experimental testing and search and recover. We gladly volunteered. Class instruction became monotonous and most dives proved quite exciting. Besides, we were helping to save lives while receiving extra diving pay as well.

At the end of my first week, I was itching to go skin diving. I asked the instructors if anyone was planning to dive the coming weekend and was surprised when no one was interested. While returning to the BOQ, I noticed a lean blond-haired guy walking in front of the building carrying a spear gun and diving equipment. I hailed him and introduced myself as a fellow free diver interested in a place to hit on

the weekend. He introduced himself as Scott Slaughter, a 3rd Class Mineman, attached to the Torpedo Shop. He filled me in on some local hot spots off Boca Chica and some reefs offshore. One spot he mentioned was Eastern Dry Rocks and suggested we rent a boat at Jo Do’s on Stock Island and head out there early Saturday morning. This was music to my ears. I finally met someone who was ready to spearfish at the drop of a hat. He also seemed to know what he was talking about. Jo Do rented us one of his 15 foot outboard fiberglass skiffs. It was all that was available to us at the time, yet served its purpose. We anchored inside the reef in crystal clear water. Visibility was over 100 feet and tall coral heads were spread out throughout the area. Scott quickly shot a two-foot snapper which attracted an eight foot blue shark. The shark circled and began making passes at the snapper. Scott didn’t give an inch. He held the snapper in his lap and kicked the shark’s nose with his flipper. I then realized Scott was no ordinary spear fisherman.

Another week’s training and I was ready for more skin diving. Scott and I decided to try the unexplored reefs west of Boca Grande Key and south of the Marquesas. We left on a flat calm morning, heading straight for Cosgrove Shoal Light some 20 miles distant. The glassy water enabled me to look off the bow and see every detail on the bottom. We passed north of Colbin Rocks running over several coral patches. About midway to Cosgrove I spotted many 30-pound to 40-pound grou-



pers near some brain coral. We stopped to dive. After shooting a few, we ran into a school of sixteen jewfish weighing between 75-pounds and 400 pounds. Scott had a 45-caliber powerhead on the end of a spear shaft. I grabbed it, swam down and hit the smallest fish. It did nothing but make it flee. "This thing doesn't work," I said, and grabbed my CO2 gun. It was improvised from a small fire extinguisher. A detachable swordfish spearhead was slipped on the shaft's end and tied to a fifteen-foot length of 4,000 pound stainless steel aircraft cable. Tied to this cable was a 50-foot rope leading to a plane board. The plan was to fire the detachable head into the fish, allowing the diver to be towed until the fish finally held up.



I speared a 250-pound jewfish and Scott rode the board until the line wrapped around a large coral head, breaking the stainless wire. We rigged another line and hit a second jewfish about the same size. The fish towed Scott to a small reef where

it took refuge. I moved the boat and anchored directly over the spot. When I dove down, I peered into a deep cave where two jewfish; one attached to the line and the other with a spear shaft poking out. (Obviously the first jewfish shot). I began driving spear shafts into the giant fish hoping for a lucky kill. Soon they looked like porcupines. While diving up and down, a 400-pound jewfish stood by following my every movement. I grabbed the powerhead, swam down 35 feet and banged him a few inches behind the eyes at the base of the spinal cord. The shell exploded and the fish immediately turned upside down. I grabbed the jewfish through the gills, swam it to the surface, and tied it to our boat. There was no doubt in my mind now that the powerhead worked; however, you needed to hit a vital spot. With this knowledge, we later powerheaded the other two jewfish inside the cave and added them to our line. As we continued spearfishing, we eventually had four large grouper and three giant jewfish tied under our boat. We gutted them in the water to prevent the meat from spoiling. Shortly afterwards, a 12 foot tiger shark appeared circling our fish. When it had one of the large groupers in its mouth, Scott struck the shark with the 45-caliber powerhead. The fish went belly up and began drifting away. Before it got too far, I threw the end of the anchor line to Scott who lashed it around the shark's tail.

Later Scott took a few underwater photos of the fish under the boat. By this time many sharks moved into the area looking more and more menacing. With great ef-





fort we slid each fish into our small 15-foot boat and headed back home. We had to sit atop the fish but were able to plane despite the boat's tiny freeboard. We arrived at Jo Do's dock at dusk and phoned Chet Alexander for help. He was an expert on how to clean and sell the fish. Chet invented the powerhead we were using and was known locally as "Jewfish Alexander." Chet was truly an amazing guy.



No spear fisherman had ever come in with the catch we had, especially in such a small fiberglass skiff. Chet came armed with a camera and several long sharp knives. After taking pictures, he began sawing the thick skin from tail to head. We later sold the meat at 50 cents a pound to several local restaurants. I had the photos developed at the Swim School. We became instant celebrities. Copies of the catch were placed on the school's bulletin board and my class was in awe over the idea of being in the water with sharks no less being able to kill one. I also noted no one volunteered to dive with us on later weekends.

After graduating at the top of my class, Commander Roe asked whether I'd be interested in an assignment at the Underwater Swimmers School as Training Officer after I completed my EOD training. "Assigned to Paradise with the finest staff I've ever seen? Of course, sir," I replied, adding "It would be an honor for me to work here and I thank you for your confidence." "Well," he said "I'll do what I can with BUPERS and hope we can get you back." Coming from Commander Roe, this was quite a compliment. Along with Commander Doug Fane, he was a UDT founder and war hero having fought throughout the Pacific campaign, including Iwo Jima, which was real tough. I couldn't wait to work for this man.



*(more from Rudy Enders in the next BuddyLine)*



April 30th, 2020

Peter Noonan - UWSS, Class 5-64

**GREEN BERETS COME TO KEY WEST**

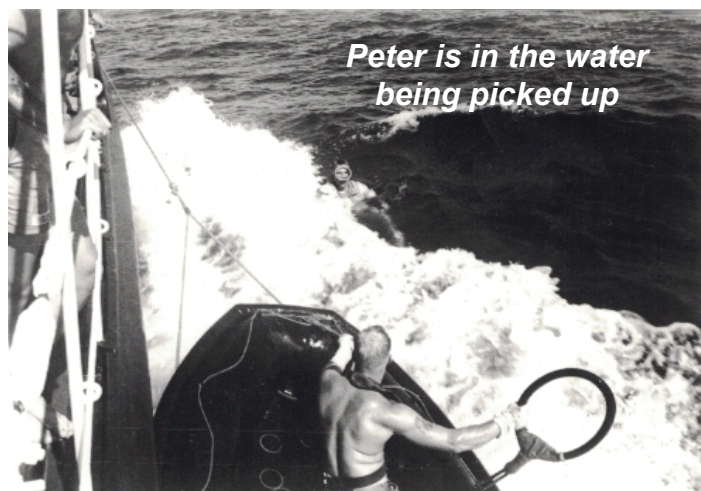


*Joe Battle (deceased) and Peter Noonan*

In 1962 John F Kennedy authorized the Green Beret to be made the official head-gear of the US Army Special Forces, soon after at Fort Bragg in North Carolina the Army increased training at the Special Forces Training Group and sent its soldiers to various types of training to include SCUBA operations at the Navy Underwater Swimmers School at Key West Florida. This training enhanced the capabilities of special operation forces in all branches of the military. I was fortunate to have been selected in the Spring of 1964. My self and approximately ten other soldiers from Ft. Bragg flew on a Caribous, CV2 aircraft which was classified at the time because it had a very short take-off and landing capability.



*high speed insertion and pickup off the coast of Inchon, Korea*



*Peter is in the water being picked up*



Because we were coming in at night, the pilot decided to make a stop at Miami International airport under the guise of some mechanical problem. Because of





*Peter standing on the left and Korean UDT personnel working on equipment*

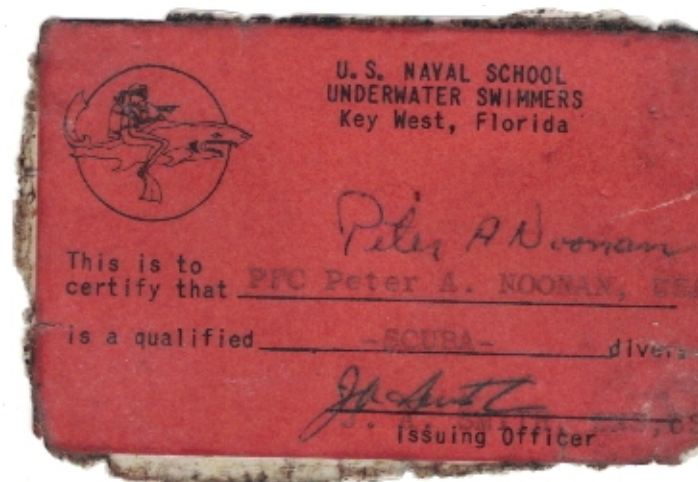


*Peter in full wet suit and SCUBA gear preparing for a submarine mission in Korea*



the classified nature of the aircraft the control tower put us as far out on the runway as possible, even though we could have landed much closer in. We were picked up by an airport bus and those who wanted to go into town, hit the local bars, in our fatigues, berets and jump boots! This was shortly after from the bay of pigs fiasco, and we must have been a sight! The next day, with hangovers, we flew to Key West, for the start of a new adventure. I can attest to the many stories I've heard from fellow alumni over the years. As to the sharks, I think the instructors chummed the waters to have sharks nearby as I and my swim buddy encountered them on two occasions once having what appeared to be a great white swimming along with us underwater less than 50 feet away.

When we were doing work underneath the submarine, we were told there would be no



one on board to activate any of the subs systems, wrong, someone turned on some pumps either to discharge water or take in water. I think this was part of the training!

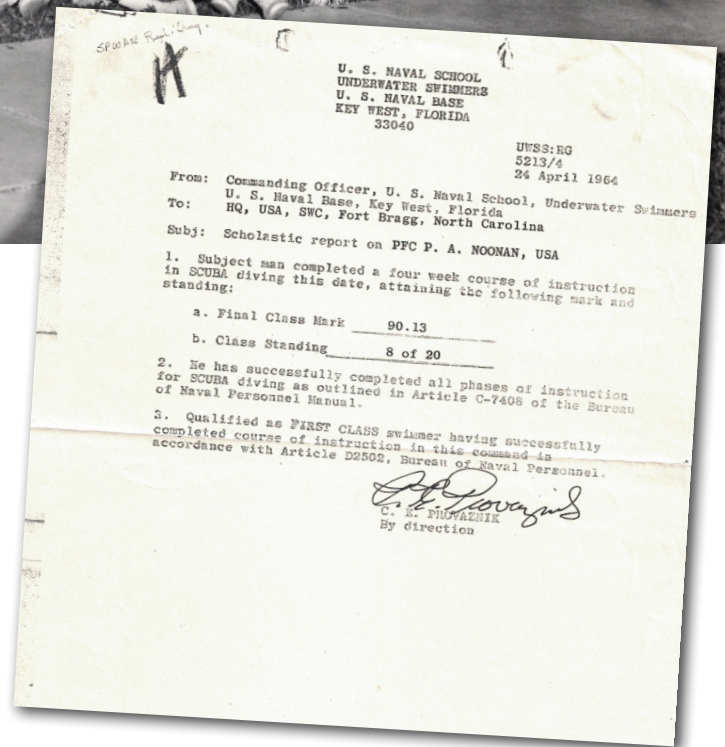
I have to give the Navy credit for giving us access to some pretty capable equipment in the form of ships and subs. When we did our blow and go certification at





60' we had a diving bell that had to be at least 10' in diameter and all plastic or glass with seats on the inside and a hold rail on the outside. You would free swim to the bell and take a seat inside, when the instructor called you would swim outside and two instructors would hold you down and give you a signal to blow out all our air, then didn't seem satisfied and to make sure one instructor punched me in the stomach to get the last bubble out before releasing me. As a final note we also had President Harry Truman at our graduation, it was a real honor.

I have enclosed all of my original documents that I could find and I think after 56 years they are in pretty good shape.



After I left UWSS and completed Special Forces training I was assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group in Okinawa, Japan. Because of my underwater training I was assigned to the Special Forces SCUBA committee as an instructor. I was back



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## TELL US YOUR STORY:

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from Peter Noonan & Alan Brown

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in the Navy having spent time on the submarines USS Razorback and USS Perch. I participated in several classified missions with these subs utilizing locking out procedures for underwater insertion, at night to selected targets. We were also engaged in high speed drop off and pick up as shown in the attached pictures. Most of our operations early in the Vietnam conflict were similar to the Seal operations that became more intense as the war progressed. I am proud to have served in the Army Special Forces and proud to have served in the Army Special Forces and proud to have attended the UWSS who's alumni share the history of military accomplishments from WW2 to the Vietnam war.

### UWSS MEMORIES

from Alan Brown

I read the book, "Silent World", by Cousteau in the early 50's and was immediately hooked on the underwater world. By some miracle, here I was checking into the UWSS in May 1957. The CO of the First Amphibious Reconnaissance Company was sending troops to the UWSS. Tec. Sgt. James Patterson (our Gunny) and Cpl. Bob Arnold were in the class preceding mine. Four of us; SSgt. Burke, Sgt. Quinton, Cpl. Robert MacKenzie, and myself, Cpl. Alan Brown were next. I was lucky to get MacKenzie as a swim partner because he wanted to be first in the class. Three of us graduated in the top five, which included Dr. Aquadro.

I will never forget my five weeks at UWSS. At least once a year I read the detailed, daily journal, MacKenzie wrote. Don Stone has published this journal a couple of times. I had a great time at the last Key West reunion!

One of my unforgettable experiences at UWSS had a sad ending. I had the "Duty" on the evening of 11 June and was uneasy because it was after hours and doors were open and lights on. I was making the rounds, which included the officer's offices. I discovered an officer sitting at his desk pointing a cocked, 1911 at the side of his head. I turned my back to the door and knocked, opened the door and then identified myself and asked if everything was OK. He had hidden the pistol and said all OK and to carry on. I ran to the barracks and woke up S.Sgt. Burk and we immediately woke up our class proctor, Frank Kappesser. Kap and this officer had served together in UDT and were close friends. Kap talked him into laying the pistol on the desk, they talked, then Kap made a grab for the gun, they tussled, it went off. I thought Kap was hit, but thankfully the bullet narrowly missed him. The officer went under guard to the Naval hospital.

LCDR J. Roe, Commanding Officer of the school, wanted a detailed account; so it was a long night for a 19-year old Marine who had just fallen off the turnip truck.



*60 mm Mortar x-ray*

from Bob Bureker

The story about this 60mm Mortar ending up in the side of a South Vietnamese soldier as shown below is:



*60 mm Mortar in his side*

The mortar had come down hitting the hatch of the APC the guy was riding in and then glanced off the side of his helmet. There were two scratch marks on the mortar just behind the fuse area. So yes he was a very lucky guy. The doctor was



*ready for surgery*

a Navy Capt. Dinsmore and I gave him the original mortar after I inerted it.

I did the job with Shorty Lyons. It was Shorty's first week in country and he begged to go on a job with me. I was Chief of the team in Da Nang and he was TAD from Pearl. So I let him come along. The doctor wanted to operate from behind sand bags with a knife on the end of a broom handle. (you can see the sand bags in the second picture below titled "Ready for Surgery") I asked him, "How fast can you duck when the case starts to swell."

I explained a little about how the fuse might work if we increase or released pressure on it. He understood that if we kept the pressure on the fuse constant it would be safe. While I was going over this with the Capt. Shorty got a gown and gloves on to help in the operation room. He held the mortar steady while the doctor cut around it. He gave it to me and I





*after removal*

took it out into a field and unscrewed the fuse from the mortar.

I think Shorty got a bronze star for it later as the newspaper guys all took pictures of him and the Capt. while I was out in the safe area unscrewing the fuse from the mortar. When I got back all the news people had left. grin!



*Doctor Dinsmore did the surgery*

from Dave Gholson

The start of our group is the story, because I was there. Pappy Hewlett was my first Master Chief, and I worked for him two years. I lived the winters in Key West 95-04 and ran across Pappy early on. We had at the mess thirsty Thursday, and dollar drinks on Thursdays. Pappy would come in for his gin and tonic and we would talk old days. Driscol reported aboard in 98 and after a few weeks of listening to Pappy's stories, Pappy told about certifying the free ascent tower at New London. On the final check out, Pappy went in through the lock and up. A crowd was watching him mostly brass. When he got to the surface, he took a breath, dove down 120 feet and entered the lock, pressurized it and walked out to the brass, saying it passed. Driscol confided in me that the old man was full of shit. I told him that he was my first master chief and master diver and I was with him on the trip to New London.

The internet was new, but Driscol did some research and asked why we didn't have a group, he contacted several organizations with adds, placed an add in Navy Times and the rest is history.



*(transcription of newspaper article)*

### **Carpenter, Conrad Among Astronauts Here For One Week Scuba Instruction**

Veteran astronauts Scott Carpenter and Charles Conrad are among the 24 member group from the Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston now undergoing scuba orientation at the Underwater Swimmer School in Key West.

Twenty-two military personnel and three civilians attached to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are at the Swim School for a week of training and familiarization with scuba equipment. Their program is described as a compressed version of the standard six-week scuba course offered at the school.

Carpenter, 41, who piloted the three-orbit Mercury-Atlas flight in May 1962, and Conrad, who with Gordon Cooper flew the eight-day Gemini 5 mission in August 1965, are both Commanders in the U.S. Navy. The additional men in the group come from all services as well civilian post in the NASA program. Many are training for future manned spaceflights.

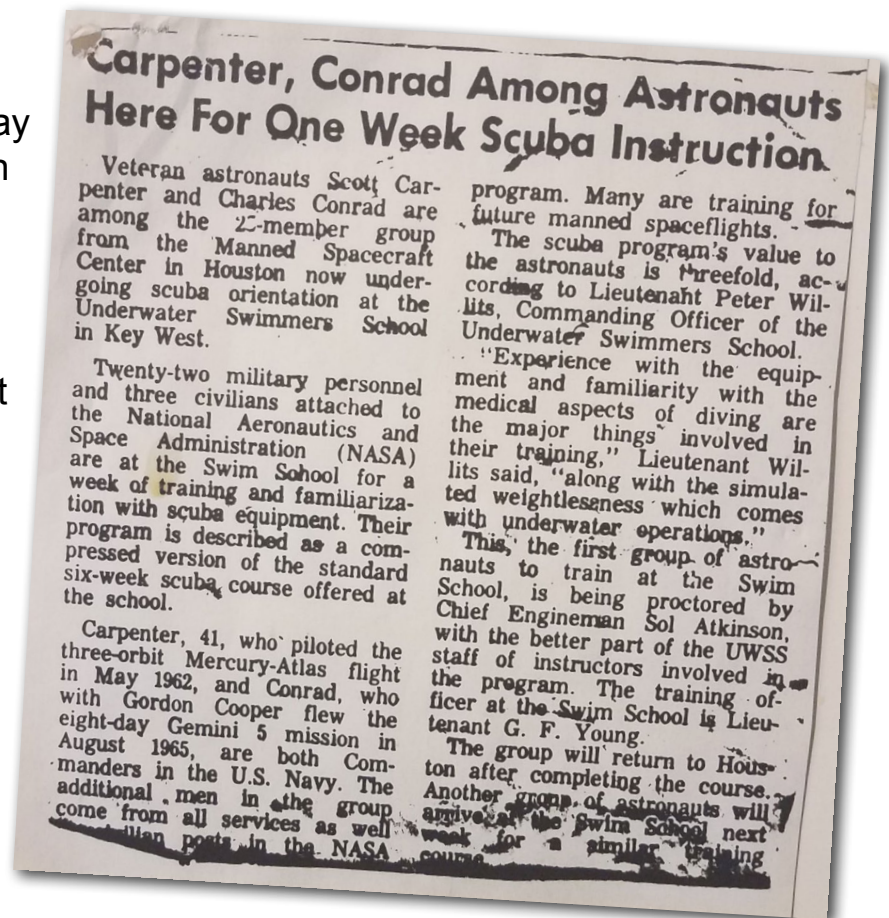
The scuba program's value to the astronauts is three fold, according to Lieutenant Peter Willits, Commanding Officer of the Underwater Swimmers School.

"Experience with the equipment and familiarity with the medical

aspects of diving are the major things involved in their training," Lieutenant Willits said, "along with the simulated weightlessness which comes with underwater operations."

This, the first group of astronauts to train at the Swim School, is being proctored by Chief Engineman Sol Atkinson, with the better part of the UWSS staff of instructors involved in the program. The training officer at the Swim School is Lieutenant G.F. Young.

The group will return to Houston after completing the course. Another group of astronauts will arrive at the Swim School next week for a similar training course.





**THE FINAL TEST OF 48 ORIGINAL ASTRONAUTS AT UWSS, KEY WEST FL**

from John Francis Rabbitt

About the beginning of May 1967 NASA decided that the closest thing to weightlessness, which the astronauts would encounter in outer space, was working under water. They decided to send the available men to U.W.S.S. (Underwater Swim School) in Key West Florida. It was run by the Navy and all the instructors were either First or Master Divers or Underwater Demolition Team divers (UDT).

At the time they taught all four services and the Coast Guard. U.W.S.S. Command put Senior Chief Yeoman (UDT diver) Byers in charge and he picked Chief Engineman Atkinson (UDT) and First Class Aviation Metal Smith Rabbitt (also a UDT Diver) as assistants. The basic SCUBA Course (Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus) was four weeks long. NASA wanted it condensed into one week which Dow Byers did. The only book they had to study was the U.S. Divers Manual which took many months' even years to master. They studied a few hours each night and bugged us each day about the upcoming test on Friday. They were all so competitive.

They knew just a few points here and there could possibly put them on a flight into space. Dow knew this also and knew he couldn't gauge them on a four-week course condensed into one week so he came up with this test. He had bought three beautiful pieces of white parchment

paper and a pen with four buttons on the end of it. The four colors were blue, red, green and black. He said if you are in the Navy, sign your full name in blue three times in red and pass them back. If you are in the Air force, sign your name three times in green and pass them back. And finally, if you are a civilian, sign your name three times in black and pass them back. After some minor grumbling about how hard they had studied, they all complied and received a final grade of 100%.

He also told them to tell the next 24 astronauts who were flying down on Sunday that the final test was a Bitch! Needless to say the next batch spent half the night trying to memorize the U.S. Divers Manual and double bugging the three of us about Friday's test. Come Friday there was considerably more grumbling.

If you count the names, there are 49 instead of 48. Some wise guy signed the parchment in three different colors JAY PEE FOUR (JetFuel) and to this day who did it remains a mystery.

*Note from Doc Rio*

*"I was there as an instructor. It is all 100% true. We had a ball with that class of astronauts. I may have a photo somewhere in the bowels of my laptop. I shall look for it if you want it"*



## **JOHN FRANCIS RABBITT LOST IN THE GULF OF MEXICO**

By Erasmo “Doc Rio” Riojas

Johnny, a UDT diver, was one of the instructors at the U.W.S.S. Key West FL. Back in the 1960’s. Each class had to qualify open sea dives to about 100’ down on the 12 Mile Reef off Key West. The way we made the trip was via the school’s U-Boat. It was fully equipped for deep diving, decompression chamber and the whole enchilada.

Upon arriving at the dive site, the U boat crew would drop anchor and we would lower the descending line from the ramp of the Uboat. At the bottom of the descending line the weight (anchor) was married to a long piece of line which was the circling line. Each instructor would take a group of students down the descending line to the ocean floor. Each diver would take his place on the line with the instructor at the end of it away from the weight. We would stay at that site all day until all the students were qualified and then pull up anchor and return to Key West.

On one particular day, it was noted that the current was somewhat swift. The Master Diver/senior instructor and the Diving Officer decided to put one instructor out. Johnny Rabbitt was the first group’s instructor so he takes the plunge into the crystalline clear blue gulf.

He immediate started swimming towards the descending line but the current was

stronger than his best swimming strokes! Instructor Dow Byers grabs a piece of line and throws it at Johnny, who now was drifting some ten feet from the U boat. The throw was bad and Johnny did not catch it. Now he continues to drift swiftly away from the U Boat hollering for us to come rescue him. The boat crew was busy hoisting the anchor but it was firmly stuck to a coral head and would not break. Using the U boats motor they maneuvered the boat trying to break the anchor loose but no dice. By now Johnny appears on sight about the size of a fly and rapidly drifting away towards Cuba.

Finally one of the Boatswain mates grabbed a fire ax and chopped the cable. Of course this took much more time and by now we cannot see Johnny anymore. We were all in a bit of a panic losing a diver and not able to see his line of drift.

The Boat Officers alerted the USNAS Boca Chica to send a rescue helicopter and we got underway trying to chase down Johnny Rabbitt who by now was probably out of air in his twin 90’s. It was late afternoon when the helicopters finally found and rescued Johnny. The chopper returned him to the Naval Station where we were waiting with an ambulance to take him to the naval hospital if necessary. Johnny was redder than a cooked New England Lobster and in severe pain. We were prepared to give him food and water but the first thing he asked for was a beer. We had a small igloo with a six





pack of beer and a couple of sandwiches. Johnny was not angry, well, hardly at all. He wanted to know why we had not started up the U boat and chased him down and rescued him. He said after running out of air, he lay down on his tanks and floated away to somewhere, he thought it would have to be Cuba. He said he just sang songs and tried to go with the flow. The school doctor checked him out, gave him several tubes of tetracaine for his sunburn and Johnny went home to Sigsby Park Navy Housing. John Francis Rabbitt earned his \$55.00 dollars diving pay that day. John died at a young age in Virginia Beach VA after he retired; may he Rest in Peace in Frogman heaven.

From Paul Payne

My question is this:

In the beginning, it seemed the history of UWSS and the articles written and posted, concentrated mainly on non-SEAL personnel.

Within no time, it seems that almost EVERY article and individual stories were about SEALS!

So, I am utterly confused as to 'where' the 'other' divers fit in as Navy Divers. For example: When we graduated we were issued ID cards (mine was signed by Lt. CDR Badger), certifying me as a Navy Frogman (I still have mine). We were also told that the 4-week school at the time

was considered the same as the first four weeks of BUD's training. True or not??

Now, with all the "hoop-pla" and "hoo-rah" about 'bone frogs', just who is a SEAL??? Are SEALS, EOD and UDT considered the ONLY frogmen??? I was starting to think that ALL UWSS graduates must be considered SEALS now, there were so many SEALS mentioned!

Another question: When I graduated I was to wear the Scuba Emblem with the hard hat with 'S' on my uniform. Later, divers who graduated from UWSS would wear the Combat Diver emblem. So, in the family of US Navy Divers, where do we fit in?? What badges, patches, or emblems are we entitled to wear and call ourselves???

Signed, A little bit confused....

PS: Understand, I am all for SEALS and what they stand for. But, I am against the idea that SEALS should be writing books and shows about what was supposed to be kept.... a secret.

from TJ Hodgins

Where are the cross roads for where the school was located?

***Can you help us with these questions?  
send them to [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org)***



by Raelyn Webster

Thanks so much for all who have sent stories and memories of your time at UWSS. We are excited to move forward with this important project of capturing the unique organization the the Underwater Swimmers School in Key West was. This is a big task so we are reaching out to the FO/UWSS membership for help. If you have interest or experience in any aspect of putting together a history, please reach out to us and we will find a way that you can help us that fits your time and skills. Everyone can help by continuing to help by sending us stories. I don't think we can have too many stories to draw from. We have free copies of the book "You Can Write Your Family History" available to help with recording your memories. Just contact us to request your copy.

buddyline@uwss.org  
(385) 222-9824  
PO Box 593  
Provo, UT 84603

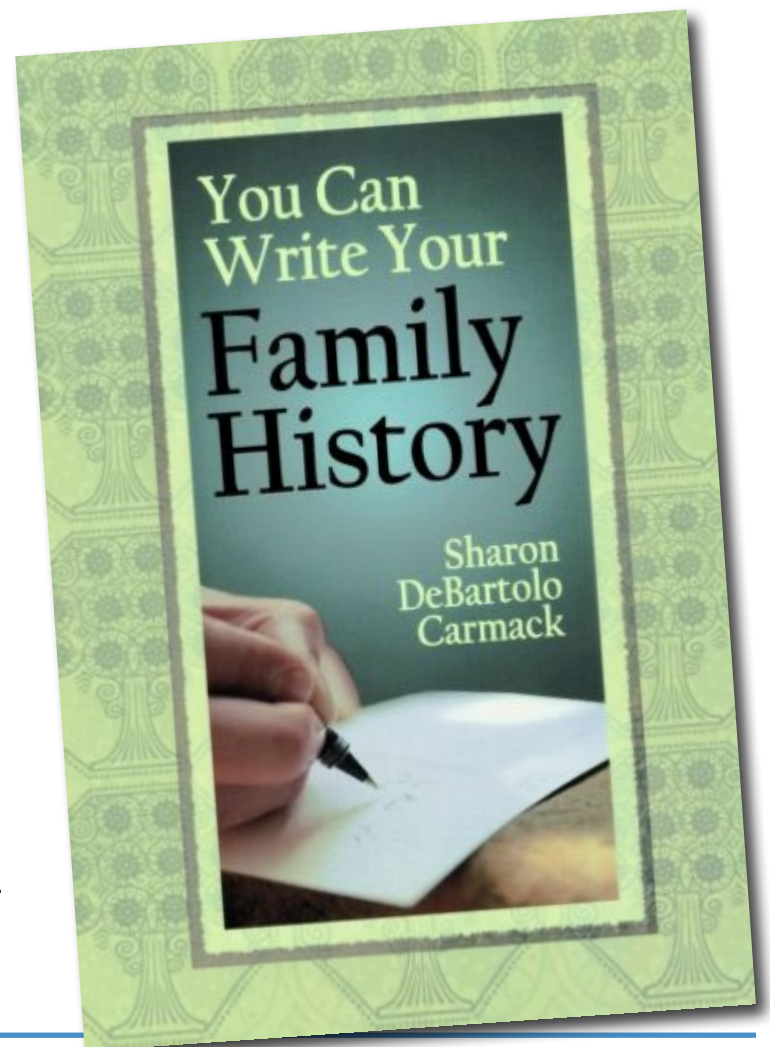
There are still many unknowns on how to best accomplish this project. But I know that the membership of UWSS have tackled much harder tasks than this before. Together we can overcome whatever challenges may come and find a way accomplish this important project. Join us on this journey.

We hope you have enjoyed this expanded issue of the BuddyLine!

## THE UNKNOWNNS ARE NOT ALWAYS BAD

*(thoughts on writing a history of UWSS)*

As we approach the task of writing a history for UWSS one of the sources we have looked at is Sharon Cormack's book, "You Can Write Your Family History." Our intent now is to share some of this author's step by step methods that will be of great help in publishing a history of UWSS. We need everyone's help in this project so we have copies of this book ready to ship out (at no charge) for the first 50 who are interested in learning more about the process.







To get things started, we will be taking a selection of information from this book so that we can move forward despite the delay in our next reunion. We are hoping this awareness will help us as an organization to be able to make informed decisions about this project and achieving a good history that we can all be proud of.

We are proposing that we should write a narrative history. One that reads like a story and not just a compilation of dates and facts. We want the history of UWSS to be one that grabs the interest of the reader, that has a beginning and an end. One that has suspense, and humor with real people, one that is non-fiction with supporting documents as much as possible.

The author Sharon Cormack gives us some bits of advice about writing this kind of history:

- “Writing a book is not as complicated as it seems; it’s just a series of stories.” With that in mind, we have been asking for your stories and you have been sharing them.
- “Don’t worry about spelling and grammar, you can take care of that later—just write.” Just send us your stories, they don’t need to be long or perfectly crafted. Just get them down and send them to us. We can fix the problems later.
- “A big disadvantage of writing your history as fiction is that your descen-

dants won’t be able to tell what really happened and what didn’t.” So we want to document where we can and point out what can’t be documented but are stories that have been shared and enjoyed over the years.

- Another tip that Cormack tells us that makes narrative histories successful stories of a family (think UWSS instead of family) is that it is written in third person (using he, she as opposed to I) the focus is on people and the setting; this helps the story read like a novel.

That is all for now, just wanted to get you thinking. Please let us know if you would like a copy of Cormack’s book “You Can Write Your Family History.”

From Ken Recoy

Hello All - Great email and exciting project for us “band of brothers” who certainly share a common motif of endurance and never quit. , , , I will help as much as possible. You have several of my pictures of my Diving after UWSS School on my Boats (USS Threadfin SS 410 and the USS Nathanael Greene SSBN 636) and some write up from me already. And, I am sure I can add more details as we go.

Thanks Raelyn, Art and everyone for this important step to record a piece of who we are... and for a chance to “tell our story”.



by Ken Recoy

### MEMBERSHIP APRIL 2020

Members in database = 288  
Members in good standing = 237

New Member:

Bob Cooke: Coast Guard diver, class August 1967,

We had 1 member reinstate his membership this quarter, David Burns on 4/9/2020.

### TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance:

February 1, 2020                      \$18,326.54

Dues Income	+ \$346.91
Label Fees Income	+ \$0.00
Logo Gear Sales Income	+ \$302.72
Other (Donations) Income	+ \$0.00

-----

Reunion Expenses	- \$613.31
(wallets, cups, paypal)	
Logo Gear Expenses	- \$1,695.80
(coins, other)	
BuddyLine Expenses	- \$64.85
Business Expenses	- \$89.80
(stamps)	

Account Balance:

April 30, 2020                      \$16,512.41

Wonder if you are up to date on your dues? Contact Ken at [kenrecoy@aol.com](mailto:kenrecoy@aol.com) or 620-305-9900 and he will let you know.

We will want our book to stand the test of time and clearly lay out our Legacy.

I suggest we talk with the US Navy Dive Base in Panama City and ask about putting up a large granite or metal plack with as many of our names engraved on it as possible and that we can find, recover. I think they would be very happy to have us do as we Form the bases for all Military Divers that came, and are still to come after us!

My buddy Diver Mark Nelson, (who is still alive living near Pensacola, FL. and you have pictures of us both diving), and I for sure went through the vortex of diving in our time on the United States Submarine USS Threadfin SS-410, in 1971-72, Mediterranean Sea Cruise, diving in Key West, FL.; Lisbon, Portugal; Rota, Spain, Cartagena, Spain; Naples, Italy; Rhodes, Greece; Iraklion, Greece; Izmir, Turkey and many more places in between... Lots of stories and memories there for us, of which "some" Cannot be "talked about" in detail for classified security reasons.

Together we can do this!!!

I am humbled and truly honored to be a small part of this important work for us all! For US Military Divers History.

Perhaps we might "think about" writing an Intro. to our Book, and an Ending and copying and publishing the Buddylines and some of the Archives as far back as we can find & include in the UWSS Book.





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small logo on front (no pocket)  
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Sizes M, L, XL, XXL\*

*\*All shirts size XXL add \$2.00 ea*

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\$12.00 each**

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1 5/8 inch diameter

**UWSS all-service commemorative coin  
\$15.00 each**

enameled brass, raised design, 2 inch diameter

**Key Chain with enameled logo medallion  
\$10.00 each**

Make check to FO/UWSS

Send with order to Ken Recoy, Treasurer  
25810 East 330 Road.

Chelsea, OK 74016-5262

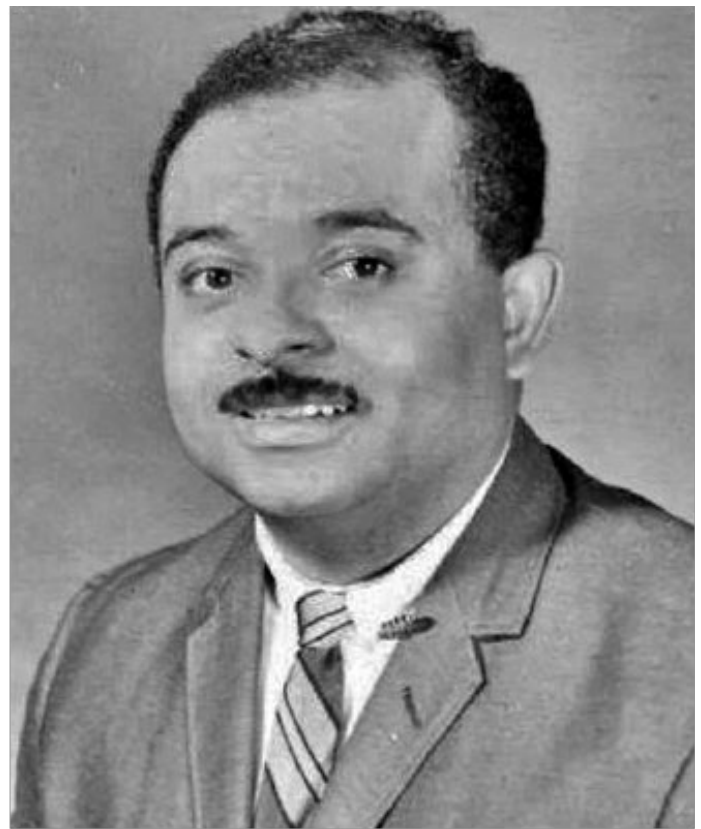
Questions? e-mail: [jhhoule@me.com](mailto:jhhoule@me.com)  
or phone (352) 249-9140

*All logo items are pictured on the web site  
[www.uwss.org/LogoGear.html](http://www.uwss.org/LogoGear.html)*



**Awards:**

- International Scuba Diving Hall of Fame (2016)
- Nick Icorn Award (Historical Diving Society, 2013)
- Commercial Diving Hall of Fame (2005)
- Explorers Club Gellow (1996)
- Legion of Merit (US Navy)



**ROBERT (BOB) A. BARTH:**

1930-2020

Retired US Navy Chief Warrant Officer; saturation diver; helped establish US Nave dive tables; joined the Naval Experimental Diving Unit (NEDU) Genesis habitat program in 1960; Chief Diver in the SEALAB programs; only member of the NEDU to dive all three SEALABs; dove to 312 m (1,025 ft) during Sealab III; trained NASA astronauts to use sonar to identify objects underwater; training pool of the Naval Diving and Salvage Training Center named in his honour (2010); author.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvalYAAAs1QI&feature=youtu.be>

**RONALD DOUGLAS**

FO/UWSS Plankowner

Ronald M. Douglas Sr., 84, of Rocky Mount, NC, entered into eternal rest March 10, 2020. He was born May 22, 1935 in Washington, D.C. and grew up there. After graduation from the Phelps Vocational High School, Washington,





D.C. in 1952 at the age of 16, Ron entered the United States Navy. He completed the Navy's diving school in Keyport, WA and in Washington, D.C. A great swimmer, he became attached to the Navy's underwater diving and demolition team organization early in his Navy career. Ron completed the Navy's Underwater Swim School in Key West, FL in 1959 and was one of the first African Americans to serve as a Frogman.

Ron retired from the Navy in 1972 as a First Class Boatswain's Mate and a First

Class diver. For 20 years, he served his country honorably and with distinction. Among his cherished awards was the Navy Achievement Medal for Outstanding Professional Performance. At that time, it was the Navy's highest award for professional service. Two days after retiring from the Navy, Ron began his second career with the Federal Bureau of Prisons as a Correctional Officer at the Federal Correctional Institution, FCI in Petersburg, VA He retired as Associate Warden at the FCI in Atlanta, GA in 1990.



### **UWSS Class October 1959**

Kneeling L-R: Harrison, CWO O'Connor Douglas, Stephens, Cerra, Kern  
Standing L-R: Lt Stevens, Barber USMC, Lt Lowrey USMC, Kamanski, CWO Benson, Carlson, Stone, Instructor Pence

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Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School  
Buddy Line Newsletter  
25810 East 330 Road  
Chelsea, OK 74016-5262

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*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 U.S. Naval Underwater Swimmers School  
Key West, Florida from 1954 to 1973.  
One of the most important reasons for our existence as an organized group  
is to plan for and participate in biannual reunions.*

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**MISSION:**

**FO/UWSS**

