

MAY 2022

# Buddy Line



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



**Narcosis**— One side effect is euphoria. Truthfully, I believe I saw the girl above while we were doing the one hundred twenty foot dive.



However, I never even thought I would be so hung up on “chickens” after reading Doc Ri-ojas’ mailbag talk of the chickens of Key West. Or did

I find the Tell Us Your Story from LTJG Jack Kleinert who was sent to Key West UWSS by a unit that seems to be a little short on longevity. Especially, while in the assault mode against a well en-



trench defender overlooking an open beach and you are the one coming a shore.

But just maybe it was Rudy’s stories of shark encounters that swayed me to stick with the adventures above the water line where I felt like I was not too close to the bottom of the food chain.

Either way, the mailbag and stories were fun reading.



*Read on for the back stories & send yours to [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org)*

**EXECUTIVE'S CORNER:**

by Dave Gholson

**Greetings Divers!** I was reminded it was Buddy Line time and I need to give an update on our efforts to pull us out of the Covid Virus dol-drums. We have scheduled an online meeting with the officers and committees in early July. The agenda is open, but so far, we will talk about the next reunion, declining membership, and requirements for membership.

When FOUWSS was formed 25 odd years ago we did not vote for any bylaws or rules for governance. The only requirement for membership was you had to have attended the school in Key West. We have had military personnel who took dive training elsewhere and after the school closed the Key West location request membership, and we will discuss all the issues in July.

Stay tuned by checking the website FOUWSS.ORG or even Facebook at US Naval Underwater Swimmers. Also, if your logo gear is getting a little battle work, check out the sales in our web page and in this issue of Buddy Line.

Fraternally,  
Dave Gholson



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**SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

by Ken Recoy

**FO UWSS Membership April 30, 2022**

Members in database = 291

Total Active Members = 241

We recently learned of the loss of our brother Jerry Padrta on March 23, 2022. Rest in Peace Hero. We currently have 4 brothers in Hardship that FO UWSS is helping. Donations are accepted.

New Members this Quarter = 2.

Jack Kleinert Joined us February 1st

Class of May 1955. Lady Kathy.

Bruce Reid Joined us March 5th

Class of August 1969. Lady Gloria.

**FO UWSS Treasurer's Quarterly Report:****Account Balance February 1, 2022 = \$10,935.29**

Dues Income + \$225.00

Label Fees Income + \$0.00

Logo Gear Sales Income + \$557.44

Other Income (Donations) + \$0.00

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Reunion Expenses - \$0.00

Logo Gear Expenses (Purchases, mail) - \$109.19

BuddyLine Expenses (Copies, stamps) - \$137.46

Business Expenses (Ink, paper, postage) -

\$149.43

**Account Balance April 30, 2022 \$11,321.65****FO UWSS Secretary's Notes and updates -**

1. If you are Not receiving your **BuddyLine**, please let me know.
2. Dave Gholson FO UWSS President is also our **Reunion Committee Chair**. Note: Our Vice President position is currently vacant.
3. Jim Houle is our **Logo Gear Chair**. You can order by going to the UWSS Website and printing out the Order Form and sending us a check or by sending an email to: [kenrecoy@aol.com](mailto:kenrecoy@aol.com) and then sending us a check. Our address is in the

BuddyLine and on our UWSS Website.

4. Please be sure to pay your "**Label fees**" to

receive your BuddyLine by regular mail. Label

Fees are \$5.00 per year. We currently have 17 members that receive their BuddyLine by regular mail.

5. Please check to make sure you have paid your UWSS **Membership Dues**. We currently have 177 Members that have expired Dues.

FO UWSS Dues remain at \$25.00 for 2 years.

6. **UWSS Graduating Class pictures**. If you do not see your Class picture on the FO UWSS Website, please send in a copy for the FO UWSS Archives.7. **If you have changed your address, phone number/s, or email address**, please send me an update, so we can be sure to stay in contact for important News, Updates and your BuddyLine.8. **So we may honor them**, if you know of a UWSS brother that has passed, please let us know and please send in a copy of the Obituary.9. About 5 years ago, I created a **UWSS Facebook Page** and if you are interested in joining, the Link is below. It is free and only members of the UWSS FB Page can see who is a member and our Posts.10. **It is important to reach out to our UWSS dive buddies** and check on each other from time to time. Especially in this time of COVID 19, and none of us are getting any younger. It is always good to hear from a brother.**Stay in touch. Stay safe. HooYah!**

Ken Recoy, FO UWSS Secretary/Treasurer

25810 E. 330 Rd. - Chelsea, OK. 74016

620-305-9900 Cell (And text is ok).

UWSS Graduation Class March 1972.

Submariner, Radioman and US Navy Diver.

**FROM THE MAILBAG:**

Erasmio “Doc” Riojas on Feb 20, 2022, shared a little tidbit of knowledge about the streets of Key West with a short note to Ken Recoy’s as they discussed another topic. Doc shared June 2019 picture of the Main Gate Guard House to the U.S. Naval Station, Key West, FL. That picture was nice, but the next picture struck me with wonder since I had no recall of the picture. Chickens of Key West! It was a picture of a chicken on the streets of Key West dated June 2019 and labeled “Chickens are protected by law. I must say I remember the long days for us trainees and the even longer nights in the bars just off base but chickens. I do remember the galley having powder eggs three times a day but actual chickens no!

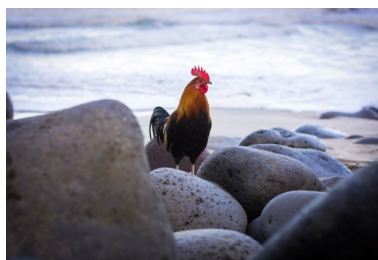
According to Lynn Hatter’s article in the WFSU - The Florida Keys boasts a variety of flora and fauna, and tourists flock to the region to soak up the sun and enjoy the climate. The area has tried hard to protect its vanishing native wildlife in recent years and repel the invaders who could harm the natural balance. But not all invasive species are of the ‘exotic’ variety. There is a corny joke that starts with “why did the chicken cross the road?” Well, in Key West —the chickens are always crossing the road. Or hanging out by the local bars. They also love to chill out by the beach .... They crow at all hours of the day and night, and they strut the streets like they own it. While they do not get any special protections in the Keys, residents cannot shoot them, and cruelty laws are enforced. In case anyone is wondering—these are wild, feral chickens and do not make a good dinner.... the chickens don’t have many natural predators.... “What a key west chicken does better than any animal on the planet is pest control,” .... At one point, about 10 percent of the city’s population were chickens. And they are an island icon. But they also poop—a lot, leading to concerns about the quality of the

water, and the beaches. Furthermore, the population is spreading up the Keys, leading to concerns they could crowd out some of the last remaining native species of the Florida Keys.

**Can you imagine this logo being a chicken not a shark! Well, I might have gotten a little carried**



**away, but I really do not remember seeing a live chicken in 1973. Thanks, Doc, you stirred my curiosity. Comments?**



John Marinovich writes: Just a note to say THANK YOU for stepping up and providing this old diver, class 30 with the Buddy Line....I remember Rudy Enders who I believe was XO then and still picture him and his Chief going out in a landing craft personnel to spear grouper ....They would throw sand at us in our boat after they DOVE down to the bottom as we were on our way out to make the 100 foot dive....I graduated third in my class because of how little air I used. The Certificate with the Red ribbon hangs proudly on my wall. (Breathe easy! Young man)

**FROM THE MAILBAG:**

Hal Goforth writes in response to a forgotten inquiry but who cares about the inquiry. Read on. Hal's response sounds so inviting. "Fish (Erick Fisher) ... knows all about the Keys so ask him. Sharon and I will be in Islamorada at Over Seas Hwy Mkr ~72 for ~ 2 months (circa June- July TBD), I spend 2 hrs. filleting after landing and my wife shuttles me beer, etc. And she is a great chef, too. I have an annual rental with 2 floors with downstairs bar, beds, and toilet/shower. I have a dock, a 27ft Dusky Suzuki 300hp, a canvas roof cover, etc. I mainly go deep dropping for Blueline Tilefish, (Wt. ~6-13#, and others and (some small schooling Dorado, and ~9- 30# Grouper, occasional reef yellowtail, etc.) Hope you can find time to visit us, Hal Goforth (google Islamorada Resorts Florida Keys).

Paul Krokovic - UWSS Stories and pictures needed for the Buddy-line. These are at Key West facility.... Paul is quite a character you got to love what follows. I do not remember anything before yesterday. I do have one or two pics of myself and another SF soldier. If I didn't have these picks, I'd remember nothing before yesterday.... Paul asks if anyone knows what the 1st pic this column is of? The 2nd pic is Al Cairns on the left, center is one of your navy guys and right is me (Paul). Next one down Paul is on the left next to ladder.



*Swim*



*Eat*



*Sleep*



*Repeat*



*KEY WEST*

**TELL US YOUR STORY:**

by Rudy Enders

(Continued from Feb 2022 BuddyLine)

During April and May, the reefs off the Marquesa can be dangerous. This is the time of year large schools of kingfish move from west to east and there is no telling exactly where they will show up. Nevertheless, sharks love to eat kingfish. It is quite common for fishermen to reel in only a head after a short fight. We often dove off the Marquesas in April and May, but never without a bodyguard equipped with a twelve-gauge powerhead. One of us would ride shotgun as the other hunted grouper below. On several occasions, Scott Slaughter hit a shark behind me as I struggled to pull a speared grouper from under a coral ledge. The unexpected detonation of a twelve-gauge powerhead behind you is enough to cause heart failure. We usually had to spear a grouper before seeing a shark. When hit, the grouper bleeds and gives off vibrations which attract sharks. One April weekend, we anchored west of Cosgrove Shoal and jumped into the water. Without shooting anything, I counted eight different species of sharks below me. We climbed out of the water that day and let those sharks own the reef. The Luckenbach freighter was torpedoed by a German submarine during WWII twenty five miles north of Key West in seventy feet of water. The vessel was loaded with magnesium and became the salvage target of Mr. Taylor of Key West. Over the years he blasted the wreck to where it was a pile of rusting rubble. At the same time, he created, unknowingly, one of the finest fish habitats in the Gulf of Mexico. It was a long trip out to the wreck, and it took a special effort to get there. Once Bill Hamilton said to me, "Rudy, we have been dealt a big trip to the Luckenbach this weekend on a torpedo retriever." This would be a great trip with first class transportation. We took a large load of double tanks with us that day and decided to tie them off on the bottom to avoid repetitive dives, which would complicate decompression. I shot several large jewfish, tying them to the anchor line rather than bringing them up to the surface. Water clarity around this wreck is hor-

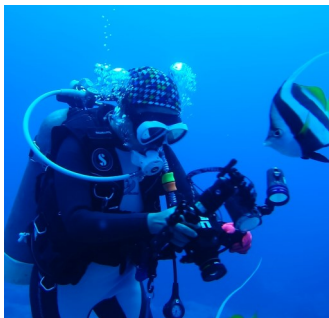
rible. An eerie mass of suspended plankton begins at fifty feet, becoming denser the deeper you go. For some reason water clarity around the wreck itself is much better. Bill and I were diving on the east side of the wreck when I hit a large jewfish with my powerhead. It was a lousy shot. Although seriously wounded, the fish tilted at a fifteen-degree angle, slowly swimming away from the wreck. We never wanted to leave a wounded fish in the water, so we quickly followed in hopes of a lethal shot. When we were about fifty feet away from the wreck, we saw the tail of a huge shark pass within five feet. It took about a microsecond for us to head to the wreck. To this day we wonder how big that shark might have been. The tail alone was over four feet high. Scott Slaughter had become quite adept at killing sharks with his twelve-gauge pow-



erhead. Not too much was known about sharks in those days and the idea of killing them in the water was certainly unique.

**TELL US YOUR STORY:**

An underwater photographer friend of Bob Stevens named Bert McNeeley was interested in obtaining 35mm movie footage of Scott killing a large shark. We took the LCPR to Colbin rocks and anchored over a coral ledge in forty five feet of water. After shooting several groupers and a few moray eels, we began baiting the area with what we had shot. We took one of the eels and threaded him like a worm to a large chain leader shark hook tied to a one hundred-foot one inch diameter nylon line. We suspended the rig in the water using a rubber life vest as a bobber, tying the end of the line to the towing bit on the LCPR. Our aim was to hang baits around the boat in hopes of luring the sharks between the camera and the diver in the background. We attracted a sizable number of sharks but none of them would swim between the camera and the swimmer. Instead, they circled the outer perimeter moving ever closer to the bait. While everyone's attention was focused forward during filming, a gigantic shark hit the moray eel rig at a very fast speed. We heard a loud crack as the nylon line broke, followed by a crashing splash. I never did see the fish, but Scott claims it was a monster.



(to be continued in the Aug 2022 BuddyLine)

**Jack's memories**

(continued from Feb BuddyLine 2022)

I am just starting this story from the beginning again. Jack start by explaining the story to Raelyn. *Raelyn, these are scattered recollections from 67.5 years ago, when I was young and agile. These were hastily written and are just a few of the buried memories I have unearthed from this delightful period of my life. Key West*

*early mornings -- is what first comes to mind when I recall my months assigned to the Navy Underwater Swimmers School in the Spring of 1955. They were glorious mornings: dappled tree lined streets, rippling ocean water, the yellow haze of light right after dawn. Chuck Pollock (another Ensign from our outfit, Beach Jumper Unit Two in Little Creek, Virginia) and I had driven down from Little Creek on TOD for six days to allow us leisure time to get all the way to Key West in my '54 Chevy hardtop. After crossing the Florida-Georgia state line we stopped frequently for the free orange juice that was advertised by roadside signs. When we arrived in Miami, we stayed the night and explored the Latin District of the city. I checked out some of the local night-life, then on our final day of the trip we drove from Miami down to Key West where we encountered the new adventure that this assignment represented. Upon arrival, after being assigned quarters in the BOQ section of the base, I walked the few blocks to Duval Street and encountered sidewalk cafes featuring rum and coca cola. The Cuban expatriate influence was strong then, in the days before tourism took over. On the base we were shown our quarters at the BOQ and were introduced to the training area at USWW. The next day when we assembled for our first meeting, we met Ray Hogland who was one of our main instructors and became a friend, as well. He introduced us to the purpose of the school and the training and demonstrated some of the equipment that we would be using. We were walked around the school's area which consisted of the main building where classes were held and the nearby dock where the boats were that were used to take us out to our training assignments.*

*Still reading? Join the story with your own and keep folks a reading. \_\_\_\_\_*

**TELL US YOUR STORY:** We also met Walt Kohler, officer in charge, and later spent hours with him enjoying the music and food of old Key West. During the mornings we had classroom instruction covering various subjects such as medical and safety issues, scuba technology and nighttime operation under water. Back at Beach Jumpers in Little Creek Chuck and I had already trained in cast and recovery, ordnance disposal, surreptitious night maneuvers and raid and reconnaissance so we had some background in what was to come. Some weekends I would drive to Miami and billet at one of the Miami Beach hotels. During the 1950s the spring and summer seasons were idle, no tourists. On Miami Beach there were very few visitors, but the hotels would stay open and would offer rock bottom prices, especially to servicemen, so I can remember staying there for less than five dollars a night. Miami had the USO Stars and Bars organization which hosted weekend events where we would meet with the locals and enjoy refreshments, music, dancing with the ladies of the area who attended. One memorable Easter I recall going to sunrise service with an attractive young lady whom I had met the night before at one such event. Another pleasant memory I have is boating offshore after instruction was over for the day. We were allowed to go spearfishing and my buddy Chuck and I would motor out to the reef in the school's 14-footer and would snorkel. I recall the reefs being stunning and the multiple colorful fish darting in and out of coral formations where I would see eels and goliath groupers – the smaller one's barracuda's favorite target. Our favorite target also while spearfishing were the groupers. And then, finishing each trip, we would toss our spear guns back into the boat and put our gloves on and go down to the 20-foot depth where the reef formation would house caves and we would find lobsters crawling in and out of the crevices. Conch back then were abundant in the waters off Key West. We occasionally would bring a large one up to clean and dry out on land. Memorable also were the night-time training when we swim to attach

simulated plastic explosives to the underside of the ships moored in the harbor as we would do on a night operation during warfare. The fluorescent sparkling as we moved under the hulls were like fireworks.

The town of Key West itself was a picturesque place in 1955; of course, it had been in existence for a century or more prior to then but it was mainly as an unattached island and heavily influenced by Cubans who had moved the 90 miles from Havana to come live there. Key West had a small-town atmosphere. The café were mostly like those on Havana's Malecon. The little cafes tables were mainly outside with counters serving as bars where Rum and Coca-Cola was the drink of choice. After graduation in May we returned to our command in Little Creek, newly qualified as scuba divers supreme. While gone I learned I had been promoted to Lieutenant Junior grade and enjoyed my new status during my last year of duty with the amphibious force. Looking back over my 3 1/2 years of active duty, stateside and towards the end of the Korean War, I think my two months in Key West with the Underwater Swimmer School was one of the best parts of my service and I have always treasured the memories ... now from 67 long years ago.

LTJG JACK KLEINERT, APRIL 1955, KEY WEST UWSS



**Send us your Story?**



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**CROSSING THE BAR:**


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**Joe N. Mares** age 82, a resident of Rio Communities, New Mexico, passed away on September 14, 2021. He was a member of Our Lady of Belen Parish, Navy EOD Association, American Legion Post 81 and The Fraternal

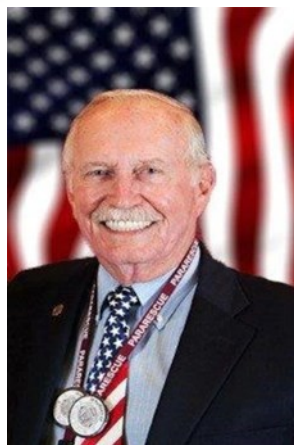
Order of Underwater Swimmers School. Joe was preceded in death by his daughter, Linda L. Richards; son Victor Mares; parents, Juan and Marita Mares and brothers, Rudy and Julio Mares.

He is survived by the love of his life of 53 years, Dolores; daughters, Joann (Joel) Christina, Carme (Robert); son-in-law, Jeff Richards; 10 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Also surviving is siblings, Ruth Gonzales, Mabel Mares, John Mares, Jerry Mares and Lorraine Ashford.

Joe spent 26 years in the Navy, earning the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He completed six tours in Vietnam, three in country and three on ships, the last one being the Coral Sea. He also took part in experimental diving operations. He was the recipient of two bronze stars as well as many other commendations.

He was funny, intelligent, gentle, and though sometimes quiet, his silence spoke volumes. He always gave the best advice and supported his family. He had many talents; he could fix anything, disarm explosives, deep dive a quarter mile, hand craft wood, and was a beautiful painter.

To say we are all devastated to live life without him is an understatement.



**Chuck Marrow** age 76, a resident of Holly Springs, Mississippi, passed away on Jan. 23, 2019, at Baptist Hospital in Oxford, Mississippi. He was retired from the U.S. Air Force. He was a member and prior president of the USAF Pararescue

Association. He enlisted in the Air Force in March of 1966 and retired in December of 1986 with an extensive history of service in Vietnam, while serving as a Pararescueman. He received three Silver Stars, five Distinguished Flying Crosses and 22 Air Medals.

He leaves his wife, Mary Humphreys Morrow; two sons, Charles D. Morrow Jr. of Byhalia, Mississippi; Bryan Humphreys of Chattanooga, Tenn.; a daughter, Robin Gordon (Mark) of Hardy, Ark.; a sister, Janice Kesler of Nashville, Tenn.; and seven grandchildren.



**Jerry Clement Padrta, Sr** age 90, of Port St Lucie, Florida passed away on Tuesday, March 22, 2022. Jerry was born October 26, 1931. Jerry qualified in submarines on the USS Balao (SS-285) in 1959 and was a LCDR when

he left the Navy. He also served aboard USS Threadfin (SS-410) 1962-64 and USS Chopper (SS-342) from 1964-1966. He was a USSVI Life and Holland Club member of San Diego and Treasure Coast bases.

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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**

