

Buddy Line



U S Navy Underwater Swimmers, Key West, Florida

Hey, Underwater Swimmers (UWS)!
Just a reminder your officers are:

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The Executive Corner:



Danny Mize & Jim Lake

Welcome to your BuddyLine. I hope all are doing well. To all those that were at the last reunion I hope you are over the heat wave of Key West. I thank you for your attendance and hope to see you all at the next reunion.

There were various comments about keeping the reunion in Key West for each reunion. Time has come for your executive to get your input for the 2025 Reunion. I am asking for each member to express their opinions and concerns for the next reunion even if you will not be attending. If you prefer, please respond to the upcoming survey around Mid-December. The following are just ideas.

The 2025 Reunion: Where? Look around. Starting with Google’s Best Military Museums which are all around the country. Even our own Ken Recoy in Oklahoma has or had a submarine just off I-40. Panama City has the Museum of Man in The Sea (you can put on various diving suits and gear. Kansas City has the National WWI Museum and Memorial while we need to turn to New Orleans for The National WWII Museum. The Military Museum Trail is remarkably interesting, and the locations are great for all types of events. When? Depending on the area’s climate, Spring Breaks, Numerous members would attend the afore mentioned locations. More to come on the Reunion topic.

(Executive Corner continued) This brings me to next topic of inquiry. Do we have any small groups say 2 to 10+ members who live in the same area, state, or region? Would you consider taking part in a mini reunion between our normal Bi-annual?

The mini reunion I am talking of is just several members meeting in a mutual agreed place now and then chatting, playing golf, skydiving, or fishing. Even eating out together. If you enjoy your group, the group might bring more

of the members to the Bi-annual Reunion. Remember our organization is open to any military trained diver. So, your buddies do not have to be members, but it would be nice if you could get them to join us.

Either way, I am encouraging small group gatherings among our members. If you are not sure who lives close by send me an email. I will help you get started. Your first meeting can be in Bermuda.

God Bless, the USA!

The Treasurer's Report: Jim Houle



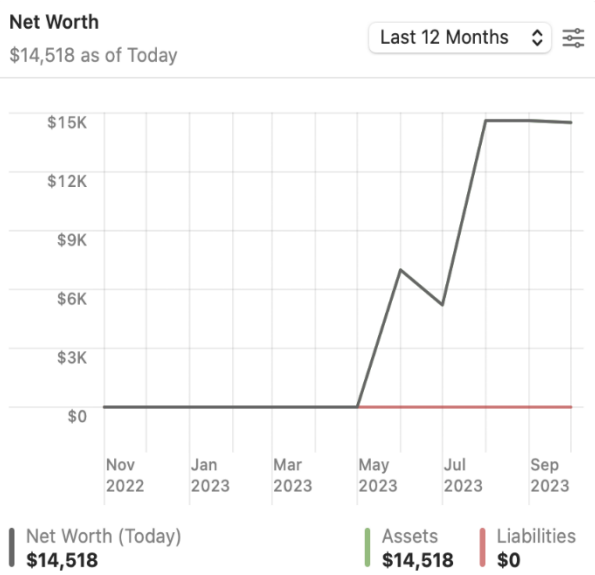
We Dive the World

The Secretary's Report: Jim Houle

Please, update the mailing address that you use when doing transactions with US Navy Underwater Swimmers. Jim Houle has been gracious enough to take on the Treasurer and Secretary for our group. Use the address below:

Jim Houle
UWSS Treasurer
3220 W. Pebble Beach Ct
Lecanto, FL 34461

We had \$233 in Logo Gear Sales and \$25 in membership due. The net worth chart starts in May when I took over the banking.



Cash Flow for the organization.

CATEGORY	2023 1/1-10/31
▼ Inflows	
▼ Business Income	
Other Income (Business)	\$8,877.37
Personal Income	\$7,000.00
Uncategorized	\$114.60
Total Inflows	\$15,991.97
▼ Outflows	
▼ Fees & Charges	
Service Fee	-\$29.48
Logo Gear	-\$1,843.95
Logo Gear Roger Lynch	-\$32.30
Membership Dues John Schaal	-\$25.00
raffle	\$440.00
USPS	-\$10.40
Total Outflows	-\$1,501.13
Total	\$14,490.84

From the Mailbag:



We Dive the World

Rudy Enders

I was happy to see the reunion was a success. I could not make it because of other obligations and commitments.

I will never forget the fantastic time I spent at UWSS. Many Instructors were WW2 UDT vets that proved to be perfect Navy role models. I miss them to this day.

Danny Mize- Rudy, would you expound on these comments?... the WWII UDT vets ... role models... I cannot imagine the stories you have. Please an encore.

Let us begin with my years at The Merchant Marine Academy. I was an avid spearfisherman and President of our dive club. We made several deep dives with double tanks off Montauk Point at the southeastern extremity of the South Fork of Long Island, New York. We dove once on a sunken German submarine off Block Island. We also planned to recover the ship's bell on the Andrea Doria after Gimble made the first dive. That background led me to become an EOD officer that included SCUBA, Hard Hat, Mixed Gas, and later closed circuit. Later the UWSS CDR. ROE planned for me to become the Training Officer after graduating from EOD school. For me, it was like being assigned to heaven. I extended my tour to stay there, but near the end of my commitment, the CIA approached me to participate in a secret operation that involved my expertise. This was during the Eisenhower Administration that included the National Security 5412 Committee responsible for planning and approving covert paramilitary operations. I readily signed up, but when President Kennedy took office, the Special Group under Landsdale replaced the 5412 Committee and nixed this operation just when we were prepared to go. I was then asked to become a Maritime Case Officer. My job changed to infiltrating paramilitary and intelligence teams into Cuba. So that was the beginning of my long career in the CIA that ended when I retired in 1989. Although I was a Navy officer, my experience at the time was no way near some of the fine instructors that fought in WW2.

For example, Chief Jim Hazelwood, Master Diver,

fast swimmer, excellent instructor was aboard the Lexington during the battle of the Coral Sea. A bomb exploded near his gun station and tore off a chunk of his leg. He was then moved to sick bay at a lower level. After several bombs hit, the entire compartment was filled with heavy smoke. Men were yelling for help, but none came. Jim, being a ship-fitter, knew the difference between transverse and horizontal welds, so he rolled out of his bunk and used his thumb atop the welds to navigate out to the upper deck where he managed to jump into the water where they fished him out. He was then recovering aboard a Navy cruiser that happened to alongside the aircraft carrier Yorktown helping to fight the fires during the Battle of Midway when the carrier was struck by a torpedo. Hazelwood was special. He could do over 100 push-ups at age 45 and was one of the most competitive individuals I ever met. Students looked at him in awe.

Lee Barber arrived at our UWSS from the West Coast, just as our XO decided to teach the instructors a lesson for not swimming with the students while the officers had to attend a meeting. This became known as the Sand Key Swim, roughly from the lighthouse to the shore, about 5 or so miles, but sometimes against the outgoing SE channel. Hamilton asked Barber whether he wanted to be a candy-ass or make the swim. Being a new guy, Lee readily volunteered to make the swim. He later became shocked when the boat was so far out land was almost non-visible. Anyway, Lee was one of the original Fort Pierce Navy Combat Demolition Engineers trained to blow up obstacles at Normandy beaches during the planned invasion. ([Underwater Demolition Team - Wikipedia](#)). During icy water training in early June with only a canvas suit, Lee became sick and was in the hospital during D-Day. He said he felt crushed after all this training, having missed the show. However, a few days later, one of his team members arrived in the hospital and filled him in on what happened to his unit. One LCPR was hit with an enemy shell killing everyone aboard, another unit was wiped out when a bullet hit the prima-cord trunk line, killing everyone, and the final unit ended up hiding behind iron barriers after blowing up their targets. Lee then



We Dive the World

commented, "It was then that I learned what war was all about." He was later transferred to the Pacific (continued Rudy) where he participated with UDT units during the invasion of [\(Bougainville Island | Autonomous Region, Papua New Guinea\)](#). After leaving the Navy, I had the pleasure to meet him again when he joined my Parent organization, CIAs Special Operations Group as a Maritime Officer.

UWSS instructor Chief Jay Stanley was also a WWII veteran that was trained at Fort Pierce. He came from a farm and was used to hard work. He once told me that while going through the tough training he was not about to quit, because he thought they would send him to jail. Months later he ran into one of the guys that quit and could not understand why he was free. Stanley participated in the invasion of Saipan ([Battle of Saipan | Description & Facts | Britannica](#)) and was aboard ship during the Okinawa campaign. They were great role models.



From the mailbag: Rasmu "Doc" Riojas"



Thank you, Danny, for the Bodyline. Kudos on another great edition.

I had a tour of duty at UWSS as a student and then as an instructor. My three children DID NOT want to leave Key West!

You probably heard the sea story about John Francis Rabbitt getting washed away by strong current on one of our open sea qualifying dives by the 12-mile reef. He laid on his twin bottles and floated on down towards CUBA.

Boca Chica Helicopter rescued him. He returned to the school red as a freshly cooked lobster.

Please tell Capt. Lake: "too bad he did not know that an empty SCUBA bottle floats!"

I must defend our Vice President "Doc."

Jim Lake, thank you for the BuddyLine story "Never forget the first dive experience." August 2023 great story. My First Dive by Captain Jim Lake (USN, Ret)

Empty scuba tanks should float, right? I have heard a packed reserve parachute should float too. Well, I never had to use empty scuba tanks as floatation gear. However, I did need the buoyant reserve parachute to float once upon a time. Nota!

 Tell us your story:



We Dive the World

 Rudy Enders

(Continued from AUG 2023 BL) Some of the Key West charter boatmen were extremely jealous and vindictive. One of them was particularly offensive. On my first trip out of the harbor, he tried to bottle me by keeping his boat across the access route to the main channel. I knew what he had in mind. So, I waited him out. After thirty minutes of keeping his party waiting, and mine too, he gunned the engines and headed off. Later that morning he came steaming at me amidships on a collision course. I stopped, dropped anchor, and sounded the emergency horn. I also called the Coast Guard and reported him. That evening he came storming down to my dock while I was unloading kingfish. He started calling me names. When he became threatening, I swung a kingfish by the tail swatting him across the face with a twenty pounder. It knocked him backward. I told him I was a college wrestling champion and would break his arm if he did not leave and get out of my way and off my leased property. He left and later spread the word that someone might pour sugar in my fuel tank. My answer was, "someone might sink all the charter boats in the harbor while I was at a party." Just when everything was going smoothly, the Coast Guard paid me a surprise inspection. They wrote twenty-six requirements and gave me two weeks to comply. With difficulty, I made the requisite repairs on time, yet they were not satisfied. Though I could never prove it, I suspect the inspectors were bribed because they became outright unreasonable. I managed to stall them until the busy season ended, but they persisted anyway. Their newest demand was to inspect the chime, requiring costly removal and replacement of the chime plank, and the installation of reach rods. With the chime removed, they added replacement of the entire stern, a very costly repair. Instead of doing the work at a shipyard, a few Navy buddies helped me out. Chief Hewitt, one of my swim school instructors and master diver, was also pattern maker and a splendid wood worker. He chiseled the chime plank and fitted in a new stern in less than two weeks. It was a masterful job. Lee Barber and Frank [Grab your reader's attention with a great quote from the document or use this space to emphasize a key point. To place this text box anywhere on the page, just drag it.]

Kappesser helped also. The Coast Guard had no choice but to give me a seaworthy certificate after complying with all their unreasonable demands. We were now approaching the off-season and business dropped off considerably. Between Coast Guard headaches and the lack of business, the Mystery became a distraction. I was extremely eager to accept when Captain Tony offered to buy the MYSTERY at a reasonable price. He made a twenty-five percent down payment, followed by two further monthly payments, and then he stopped altogether. I had to repossess the boat and fight for the electronic equipment he removed from the boat. Nevertheless, by the summer of 1961, the Mystery was again running as before. The only licensed captain available was a young and fairly good fisherman named Frank Mendosa. He was just the opposite of Captain Williams. He knew how to fish but knew truly little about boats and engines. He at least kept the boat sailing until he burned out an engine when an oil line let go. Before leaving the navy, I managed to sell the Mystery to a retired sailor who planned to offer low-cost fishing trips to the nearby NW channel. I lost track of both the man and the boat after being consumed by other activities. Before selling, I took the boat on several spearfishing trips with Bob Stevens and Scott Slaughter. We always managed to fill the iceboxes with large groupers and other fish. Scott was having trouble making ends meet at this time and decided to reenlist in the Navy if they would send him to UDT training. They agreed. Yet when he was finally sworn back in, they assigned him to the submarine tender Bushnell berthed at Charleston, South Carolina. When I learned of this, I wrote a letter to Bushnell's executive officer explaining what he was promised, what a great underwater swimmer he was, and that I would love to have him as one of our swim school instructors. I mentioned that he previously won the National Spearfishing Championship and was one of the top divers in the world. As months passed, I learned the XO did sign off on papers to enroll Scott to the next Basic Underwater Demolition class in California. Scott graduated at the top of his class that included future famous SEAL Richard Marcinco, their anchor student. Scott later was selected as a member of the first Navy SEAL unit composed of what they

Tell us your story:


Rudy Enders

(Rudy continues) called "plank members", and later became an expert in swimmer delivery vehicles.

Lobster diving was a hit and miss thing. I usually made the rounds of my favorite spots including a small wreck just off the southwest corner of the small island west of Key West's main ship channel, a round cement clump at the destroyer squadron base, scattered coral heads to the east of the Underwater Swimmers School swimming school's beach area, and large brain coral heads in 30 feet of water near Hawks Channel. There was no limit on size and amount, so we usually kept everything over a pound. On one trip Chief Hazelwood and I made a dive under the Fleming Key Bridge during the change of tide. The current usually rips through there at about five to eight knots, but quiets down to one to two knots before and after slack water. This leaves a forty-minute window in which to dive. The bottom on the bridge's west side is stacked with numerous old pilings stacked to a height of about four feet. When Hazelwood and I hit this area, all we could see were spiny lobster antennas protruding from the cracks between the stacked pilings. The most efficient way to catch them was to reach in with gloved hand, grab one by its antenna, pull it out, and wring off its tail. We would drop the tail, which let the current push it against the bottom piling and push the carapace over the top piling allowing it to flow downstream. Before the current changed directions, we swam down the line placing all the lobster tails in a gunnysack. We then repeated the procedure on the other side of the pilings until the current proved too strong to stay in the water safely. In this manner Hazelwood and I once filled a large potato sack with tails in less than forty-five minutes. Lobster tails were always in great demand. Along with fried grouper, they were the main staple at beach parties, outings, and dinner engagements. No matter how many lobsters we captured, it never was enough. Diving for lobster in winter is not fun, not even in sunny Key West. Surprisingly, the water temperature drops to where a wet suit eventually becomes a necessity. After a cold afternoon of lobstering, Chief Stanley and I decided to find an easier and more dependable way to capture those delightfully tasting creatures. We decided to

try our luck with lobster traps. The commercial fishermen seemed to do well so we gave it a shot. After a modest investment in wood, slats, galvanized nails, cement, rope, buoys, and a lot of sawing and hammering, we made about fifty traps. We ran them slightly north of Hawks Channel in forty to fifty feet of water. We baited each trap with a can of low-cost cat food, letting the trap sit for three days before pulling. The first trap recovered had over twenty-five lobsters inside and some weighed up to three pounds. From that moment on our supply of lobster far exceeded demand. We eventually sold the surplus to Dedeck's Patio Restaurant on Truman Avenue. Dedeck specialized in fine wine and broiled lobster tails. One Saturday morning, Jay Stanley and I were pulling lobster traps when we noticed what looked like a bloated body floating in the water. We pulled alongside and sure enough it was a dead black man in his late forty's. We notified the Coast Guard, and they recovered the body. There was a subsequent investigation and coroner's jury to determine cause of death. We were requested to attend without making statements, although we did talk to the police previously. The star witness in this case proved to be a real character. He was a friend of the deceased and was with the man fishing a few days earlier. Dr. Lester's father, Lance, was the State Attorney and was questioning the witness. He asked, "Tell me what you know about the man's death?" "Wells sur, me and Clyde went out there in dat boat and we were a fishing and din I looks around and said, 'Clyde, where are you?' And Clyde did not say nothing. I called him again and said 'Clyde' and Clyde did not answer dat time either. I could not find Clyde, so I says to myself, 'Clyde ain't heh. Lord knows where Clyde went.'" It scared me. I went back to the land as fast as I could." He then stopped talking. The Judge asked, "You do not know anything else about your friend?" The reply was, "Dat's all I knows." The Judge subsequently ruled the case had been an accident and nothing else ever became of the incident. We concluded it was Clyde had been pulling one of our traps and he became entangled in the line when he released it overboard. We might have untangled the knot when we later pulled the traps, which enabled the body



We Dive the World

Crossing the Bar:

Aaron Farrior

to float to the surface. Truth is, we will never know.

Aaron Farrior

Born June 2, 1935 - June 3, 2023

Aaron Farrior was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his service as Reunion 2015 Chairman.



We Dive the World

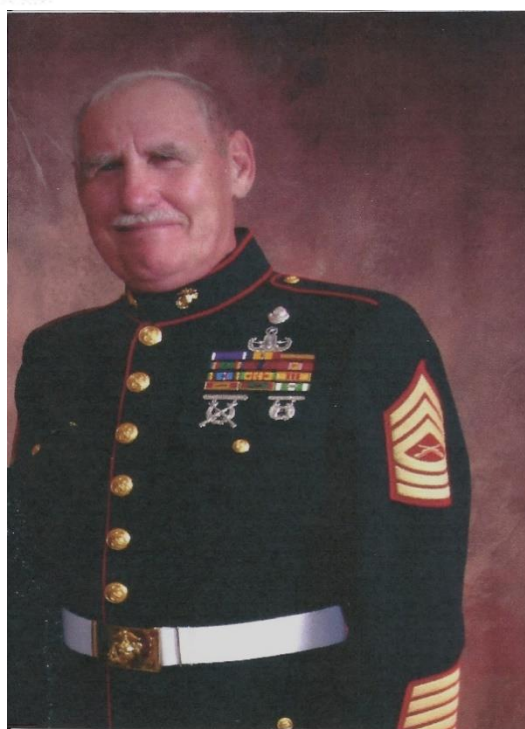
CROSSING THE BAR:

John B Grace

John B. Grace, Born February 16, 1939, Died June 23, 1978, South Carolina USMC Ret E.O.D.

John was the beloved husband of Marilyn Grace for over 50 years. John was born in Follansbee W. VA. He passed away peacefully at home with family members present.

May 1956, he joined the USMC and attended recruit train at Parris Island. He was initially assigned as combat engineer until 1964 with world-wide assignments. While at U.S. Marine barracks, Key West, Florida assisting another government agency in demolition work as a 1371 engineer in the disposal of the Bay of Pigs military weapons and explosive items. John contacted graduates of a naval explosive ordnance school and requested a change in M.O.S. to 2336 Explosive Ordnance Tech-



CROSSING THE BAR:**John B Grace***We Dive the World*

nician. His M.O.S. change approved he took the first step by attending the U.S. Navy Underwater Swimmers School in Key West before leaving for the E.O.D. School at Indian Head Maryland in June of 1965. Training was followed by assignment with E.O.D. platoon, camp Lejeune, NC. Only after a short hitch, he was assigned to a Marine Corp battalion landing team which embarked to the Mediterranean as part of the U.S. N.A.T.O. commitment. After returning to

camp Lejeune, he received orders for the 3rd M.A.F. located at Da Nang (R.V.N.) to serve as a member of the Marine Corps combat operation in I-Corp R.V.N. While engaging operations a road I.E.D. struck our personal carrier and all Marines aboard were badly injured. We were evacuated by helicopter to the naval medical facility in Da Nang R.V.N. General Herbol presented us with the Purple Heart July 1967.

CROSSING THE BAR:**John E Fraser***We Dive the World*

- **John Edward Fraser** passed away on **November 20, 2023** at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Charleston, South Carolina. He was the youngest of three sons born in Logan, Utah on July 31, 1950.

- **Fraser** joined the Navy in 1972 and served as an EOD officer for 33 years. He held various positions, including the highest command position of commodore over the Navy EOD community. He also served as the chief of staff for the Joint Special Operations Command and the commodore of the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa.
- **Fraser** retired from the Navy in 2005 and became a senior vice president at TSAE, a defense contractor. He was an avid golfer and enjoyed traveling with his family.
- **Fraser** is survived by his wife, Kim, and his daughter, Crystal, from his previous marriage. He also leaves behind his brother, Jim, and his sister, Alice, and their families.