



Hooter Hilites

A Publication of the USS Sea Owl Association

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

We still give a hoot!

September 2005 Issue



Branson Reunion Attendees: Front Kneeling, holding banner: Francis Rabaey TM 53-55, Tom Moniz EM 62-66 Sitting: Lamar Taylor CO 52-55. First row standing: Peter Bailey QM 54-56, Jerry Farr QM 62-64, Bill Kirby RM 66-68, Mike Silvaggio QM 66-68, Bob Evans EM 44-45, Dennis Doyle QM 65-66, Roy Purtell TM 66-68, Walt Deal TM 62-65, Frank Kenyon ST 68-69, John Leers YN 53-57, Ed Welch CS 66-69, Back row: John Barnes MM 64-66, Mike Polhemus SO 56-57, Ken Johnson LTJG 62-65, Jim Franks TM 66-68, Ron Pingleton EN 64-67, Bob Ruppel MM 63-65, Bob Kail ET 64-65, Henry Fulkoski EN 68-69, Ed Bess EM 64-69, Mike Toomey ET 63-64, Bill Brinkman FN 59-60, Don Clouse EM 52-54, Bob Laird EM 53-56. (Missing from this photobut also attending were: Dick Buscher EM 62-65, Norris Dalton YN 59, Dan Hicks IC 59-60, Mike Jansen TM 59-62, Mike Maloon IC 66-69, John Salerno SO 52-54, Howie Stein IC 59-61

Shipmates & 1st Mates

President's message:

The first item I will cover is our Branson Reunion. I believe that everyone in attendance had a very good time. There are more shows to see than you can attend in four days, but I do know a few shipmates who did give it a good try at any rate. I applaud each shipmate and their friends who attended the reunion - it was a good time for everyone.

Being the Association President is without a doubt a lot of work: There is Ken Johnson asking for my input for the Newsletter, which I'm always giving him at the last minute; Ed Welch asking to purchase an item for our Ship's Store; I try to keep up with various e-mails. I must say that after my Branson reunion hospital stay and seeing how my shipmates treated Carol and Adrienne, being the President of this Association, which is made up of fellow shipmates and their family members, is a position that I am very proud to hold,

to be President of this Association is more an honor than a job. My sincere thanks to everyone for allowing me to be your President!!!

As the holiday season nears, may each and everyone of you have the very best holiday season possible!!!

My Hospital stay in Branson:

On Thursday, 9/29/05, at 5:30 a.m., I was taken by ambulance from the hotel room to the Emergency Room at Skaggs Community Hospital in Branson, Missouri, experiencing shortness of breath and heaviness on my chest, and rapid heart beat; arrived at about 5:45 a.m. Blood work was done to check enzyme levels for possible heart attack (enzymes were elevated, but not enough to indicate a heart attack - just that the heart had been working very hard); a chest X-ray was taken and an ultra sound of the heart, as well.

I was admitted for observation and had three more episodes of rapid heart rate Thursday, 9/29/05, even with medications. An angiogram

was done on Friday, 9/30/05 at 9:30 a.m. I received a clean bill of health and released that same day, Friday, 9/30/05, at 6:00 p.m., with a cardiac diet of low salt, low fat, and 2 prescriptions – Verapamil, 180 mg (twice a day) and Atenolol, 50 mg (once a day). Permission to ride as a passenger to get home was granted.

Since returning home I have seen a local cardiologist who has given me a clean bill of health with permission to return to work. I'm presently still on the meds that doctors in Branson had given me. The best that my local doctors have come up with is maybe what triggered this episode was a wine tasting tour and a dip in the hot tub a few hours after the wine.

Carol and I want to thank you all for your support and prayers while I was admitted into the hospital in Branson, MO, and for showing our daughter Adrienne a good time to remember and how much fun these reunions can be.

I would also like to say that your Association Officers stepped right into action during my absence. Tom Moniz setup and ran the business meeting; John Leers was prepared with his expense reports; Ken Johnson had set up his sound system, that was a great item to have during the meeting. Ed and Paulette Welch were there when the EMT's took me out of my hotel room. Ed visited my hospital room often and provided Carol transportation to and from the hospital. He played a large part in keeping everything together. My thanks to each one of you - you really came through!!!

Groton Picnic:

Looking forward to our Groton Picnic. Ed Welch & I have decided that this year's raffle item will be a Bose Wave Music radio, as pictured below. If you have never heard one of these radios, you are really missing something - they are superb quality radios.



Tickets will be \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20.00; they can be purchased by sending a check payable to Ed Welch, 33 Waco Court, Groton, CT 06340-4719. Tickets will then have your name put on them and dropped into the box for drawing during our picnic in June of 2006. No tickets are returned to those buying tickets. This is open to shipmates, family members and friends. Pass the word around on this raffle - everyone will want a chance to win this great item. The dates for the 2006 Groton Picnic are June 11-13, 2006.

2006 Reunion

During our business meeting, as we do each year, it was decided that our next reunion take place in Charleston, SC. Shipmates Walt Deal & Jerry Farr have taken the lead on this reunion, as they both live and work in the area. As with other reunions, I'm certain that this reunion will have much to see and do while visiting the area. We

have set the date for this reunion as Oct 29 – Nov 2, 2006 at the Clarion Hotel Charleston International Airport. Their web site is <http://www.charlestonclarion.com/html/lobby.html>. These dates coincide well with the SubVets of WWII memorial service held each year in St. Marys, GA, which is held during the first week of November. This would be to accommodate those shipmates that travel east from the west coast. More information will be available in future Hooter Hilites issues as we near the reunion date.

2007 Reunion:

As of now, our 2007 reunion will be in St. Marys, GA, home of Kings Bay Submarine base. The reunion will take place during the 1st week of November, which is also the same time of the SubVets of WWII memorial service, held each year at this site.

Shipmate Howie Stein IC 59-61 will be working on a 5-day cruise that departs from Jacksonville, FL, a short drive from St. Marys, GA. The response from those attending our Branson reunion was overwhelming in favor of a cruise of this type, from Jacksonville that would take place after our St. Marys reunion. We had been in St. Marys for our 2002 reunion, and I have heard from many shipmates that they wanted to return to Kings Bay - now is your chance. As more information becomes available, I will get it out to everyone....watch for your 2007 reunion cruise information!!!

From the Editor

First, let me apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. I had hoped to get it out shortly after returning from Branson, but other priorities intervened and I got behind. These had to do with the Russian Sub Museum

As always a newsletter would not be complete if we were not to remind everyone to pay their dues. Adding the two digits or letters following your name on the mailing label to indicate your dues status according to our records proved to be a great success and resulted in many shipmates catching up on their dues. I will continue this. To review, if there is a "LM" on your mailing label, you are a Life Member and you never have to pay dues again. A "06" would mean you are paid up through October 2006, etc. If you are overdue or "dink", but still within a year of being paid up, you will continue to get a note in your newsletter reminding you to pay your dues before October 31st or you will no longer receive the newsletter by mail.

Congratulations to all who worked hard to keep the Submarine Base in Groton and the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard off of the base closure list. Hopefully they both will remain active and productive for many years to come.

One of the new items available through the Internet and on line map technology is something called a Frappr! Having seen a few of these, such as the one for Ron Martini's submarine BBS, I thought it would be a good idea to set one up for the Sea Owl Association. Frappr, which stands for Friend Mapper, lets you see the zip code where your friends, or in our case, shipmates live by showing a "pin" on a map. Many other boats and organizations are creating these for their membership as a means of showing where their members live. Our Frappr address is: <http://www.frappr.com/ussseaowlassociation>. I have made most of the entries so far using photographs of my own



from picnics, reunions, etc. You can make your own entries or add a "shoutout" comment to your existing entry, even though it may have been set up by me. As the "Admin" person for the

Frappr, I can delete photos, comments and entries that may not be appropriate. Roy has placed this link to it on the home page of the Sea Owl web site so you can access it from there. If you are not sure how to make an entry or add a photograph, you can send the information to me and I will do it for you. I prefer photographs as you look today and I try and limit the size to 300 x 400 pixels, a size that seems to display very nicely. Your entry does not disclose any information about you other than your name, photograph, the city where you live and the information included in your "shoutout". For the entries I make, I select the best photograph I have of you and include only your rank or rate and years aboard the Owl, unless you are a Plankowner, or were CO or XO. At this time, I have not made this "public" which would make it searchable by selected keywords. This status may change in the future.

This Fall has been a difficult time for many shipmates who live in areas of the country affected by hurricanes. Katrina impacted our shipmate, John Kolodziej, LT 63-65 as it passed through his town of Diamondhead, MS. After doing our best to try and find out his fate, John finally emailed us on October 20th to let us know he made it through okay. His house is 60 feet above sea level and suffered relatively minor damage, but the school where he taught is no more. John gave me an email update on November 23rd indicating that he plans to stay in the Diamondhead area for now at least. There is much destruction all around them that will take years to recover from. On the way to Branson, Shipmate Mike Polhemus and I tried to locate Richard Halloran, TM 45-48, and Edwin Davis, CSC 64, who had been residents of the Navy Home in Gulfport, MS. I understood that the residents had been evacuated to the Veterans Home facility in Washington, DC in advance of the storm. Mike and I visited this facility and checked through all the lists we could find. Neither shipmate was on the lists and we learned from some who knew of them that there was a possibility that both shipmates had departed on "eternal patrol" months before. If anyone has information on either of them, please let us know.

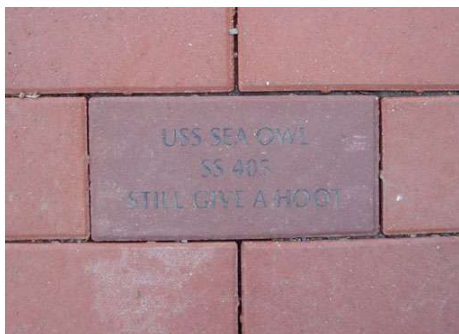
Other shipmates in southern Florida were undoubtedly affected by hurricane Wilma. We would like to hear from you to see how you fared. We still give a hoot!

Avery Point Lighthouse Walk

In past issues I have reported on progress with the restoration of the



Avery Point Lighthouse in Groton. I am pleased to report that the walk has been developed and the bricks that were donated are now in place. The Sea Owl Association sponsored two bricks in the walk and they are as pictured here.



The first, for the USS Perch (SS 176), is one of the bricks dedicated in honor of the 52 boats lost during WW II. These 52 bricks are grouped together near the head of the walk.

The second brick is the one purchased by the

Sea Owl Association to honor our boat. I am not sure how many bricks there are in the walkway, but it shows that progress is being made in the restoration of this landmark.

In September, a replica of the original lamp house was set in place atop the stone structure.

Book Review: "The New London Submarine Base" by David J. Bishop

This book is a great look back at the Submarine Base in Groton and an excellent addition to any collection of submarine memorabilia. It even includes a photograph of our Sea Owl on page 111 at a pier in 1965 during a change of command ceremony at an adjacent pier. David Bishop was employed at the submarine base from 1971 to 1997 and is a former curator of the Submarine Force Library and Museum and the New London Maritime Society's 1833 Robert Mills Custom House Museum. Many of the photographs are from the Submarine Force Library and Myseum and Mr. Bishop's private collection. It traces the history of the submarine base from its origin in 1868 when the state of Connecticut and city of New London granted the U. S. Navy one hundred twelve acres of land across the Thames River in Groton for a depot for drydocking and laying up ships not in service. It first began use as a submarine base in 1915. Fortunately, this book did not turn out to be an "obituary" for the Submarine Base which was spared from the closure decisions of BRAC, the Base Realignment and Closure Commission. We are all thankful that the base has been spared and want to thank all who worked hard to save it from closure.

The book is available for \$19.95 from the Submarine Force Museum Gift Shop in Groton or for \$13.59 from Amazon.com

Sailor Rest Your Oars

One of the saddest parts of doing the newsletter is always the listing of those shipmates who have departed on "eternal patrol" since the last issue. Since the last newsletter we have learned of the loss of one shipmate:

William Belt, EM – 45-47 – May 6, 2005



This was Bill at our King's Bay reunion in 2002. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mary and the family and friends of our departed shipmate.

*There is a port of no return, where ships
May ride at anchor for a little space
And then, some starless night, the cable
slips,
Leaving an eddy at the mooring place . . .
Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor, rest your oar.*

No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.

Hooter Hilites is a quarterly publication of the USS Sea Owl Association. Issues are published in March, June, September and December.

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The 40's

September 2005 Issue



Veterans Oral Histories

By Ken Johnson

I have finally started recording veteran oral histories for submission to the Library of Congress Veterans Oral History Project. This is something I have long wanted to do. My priority for now is WW II submarine veterans while the opportunity is still available for me to interview them. In addition to Lamar Taylor and Bob Evans, who I interviewed in their rooms at Branson, I have since interviewed Sea Owl plankowner Stan Ainley at his home in Greenville, Rhode Island and have visited with Ernie Plantz and Carl Bryson at their homes in Gales Ferry and Groton, CT. Ernie is 83 years old. He enlisted in the Navy in July 1940 and joined the crew of the submarine, USS Perch in April 1941. On March 3, 1942 during her second war patrol, the Perch was lost off of what is now Makassar, Indonesia after enduring two days of heavy depth charge attacks and the crew became prisoners of the Japanese for the duration of the war, 40 months in all. Conditions under which they held were appalling and they suffered greatly. Six died in prison from starvation and disease and Ernie nearly died in January 1945 from the effects of starvation, malaria and dysentery. His life was saved by a Dutch doctor prisoner who injected crushed quinine and fermented coconut juice into his veins with a homemade needle. He retired from the Navy in 1970 as a Lieutenant after a 30 year career and went on to serve his State and community in a variety of jobs. On Thursday, November 10th Ernie was honored as one of the first 10 Connecticut veterans to be inducted into the Connecticut Veterans Hall of Fame at a ceremony held at the Connecticut State House.

Carl Bryson, who just turned 88 on October 31st, is the last living survivor from the USS Squalus lost in May 1939 off Portsmouth, NH. Carl has been interviewed many times for History Channel and National Geographic specials and for several books about the Squalus disaster. Subsequent to his rescue from the Squalus, Carl took part in the salvage efforts, raising the Squalus and bringing it back into the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard to be refurbished and then renamed USS Sailfish. Carl spent most of World War II assigned to the training tank at the New London Submarine Base, teaching the use of the Momsen lung for submarine escape. Toward the end of the war, he made one war patrol aboard the USS Tench. Later on he worked in the Engineering and Repair Department at the sub base. He retired from the Navy in 1966 after 30 years service and worked 14 years at Electric Boat, doing much the same as he had done in the Submarine Base E & R Department. Later he taught English to Russian immigrants.

He has a remarkably sharp memory for names and I enjoyed the interview very much. Recent heart problems have slowed him down somewhat, but he says he feels he has been very fortunate to survive this long.

I have much work to do before submitting these interviews to the Library of Congress. I plan to send both a VHS tape and DVD of the actual interview, but first need to go through and make notes of

what topics were discussed at what time during the interview. This gets submitted as part of the package. I heartily encourage any of you to get involved in this project, either by recording and submitting your own stories or recording interviews with veterans in your area. The Sea Owl Association has a microcassette tape recorder which I can send to any of you interested in making audio recordings. Don't think that you have nothing interesting to contribute. Let the Library of Congress decide. If you are interested in learning more about the Veterans Oral History Project, I encourage you to check this web site <http://www.loc.gov/vets/about.html>. You can download Adobe PDF information including a "Field Kit", forms, and instructions on how to do this.

Bob Evans

By Ken Johnson



Bob Evans was the only Sea Owl "plankowner" to attend the Branson reunion. I was able to do a video tape interview of him in his room which I will eventually submit to the Library of Congress to be included as part of the Veterans Oral History Project. This is a picture of Bob from 1945 with an insert of him at Branson.

Bob graduated from high school in 1941. At the time, because he worked

for the Western Electric company doing military installation work, he had a draft deferment. After 18 months, he enlisted in the Navy and attended Electrician school in Ames, Iowa. His volunteering for submarine duty was somewhat accidental. While playing soccer at Ames, he suffered a broken collar bone. He was sent to Great Lakes to have it set. Since he missed much of his Electrician class, he volunteered for submarine duty because it gave him an extra week to study for exams. He used the extra time, passed his exam and, much to his surprise, passed the physical for submarine duty.

After completing Submarine School, Bob reported to the Sea Owl at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard after she had been launched and made all three war patrols.

One of the more interesting items mentioned by Bob during the interview was that he had injured his knee and had been treated for an infection with a new experimental drug. That experimental drug was penicillin.

He left the Navy after three years service and returned to his job with Western Electric. Later he worked for Pacific Northwest Bell and eventually retired getting 36 years total retirement credit.



The 50's

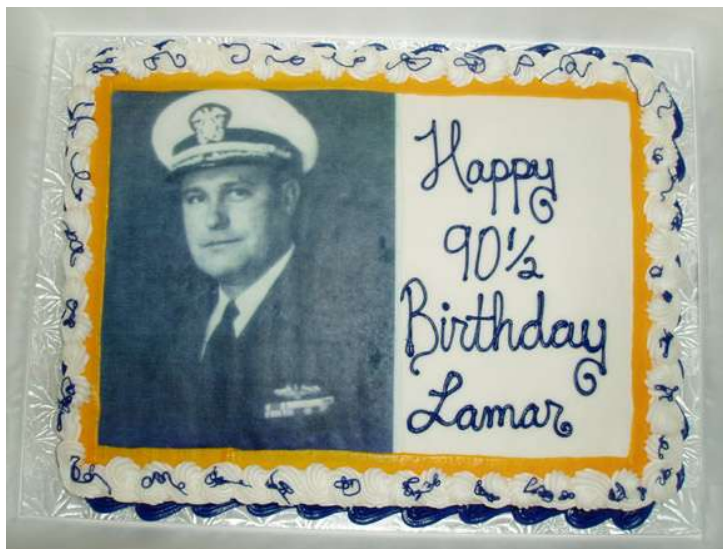
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Lamar Taylor

By Ken Johnson

As you know, Lamar Taylor celebrated his 90th birthday in March 2005. John Leers was the only Sea Owl shipmate who made it to Macon, GA at that time to celebrate it with him. At the suggestion of Frances Rabaey, who served with Lamar from 1953 to 1955 as a Torpedoman on Sea Owl, we decided that we would have a 90 ½ birthday party for Lamar at Branson complete with an appropriate cake for the occasion.



The picture used was taken 55 years ago in 1955. I managed to scan it and found a local market early Thursday morning that was able to create a half sheet cake on about 4 hours notice. After the picnic on Thursday afternoon, we brought out the cake and had a celebration. Needless to say, Lamar was very surprised and we all enjoyed celebrating with him.

Lamar dictated the following letter and asked that I include it in this issue:

Dear crew,

It is a pleasure to be with you at this annual convention. I definitely want to thank everyone for all the love, care and comments you gave me and the many deeds you did. I couldn't have done it without you. I hope you have a Merry Christmas and a very prosperous year and I hope that Roy has no permanent damage. Again, I just want to thank you out of the bottom of my heart for the cake and for everything that you did for me the hauling and mauling and with this I just say "thank you".

During the Branson reunion, Lamar became my first oral history interview on camera as we sat in his hotel room. Lamar, as you probably already know, is a Pearl Harbor survivor in addition to having served as Commanding Officer of Sea Owl from 1952 to 1955. As an Ensign aboard the USS California, he was assigned to the Electrical Department. The Engineer Officer of the California was Oliver Naquin who was the Commanding Officer of the USS Squalus at the time of its loss in May 1939. Lamar gave his account of the events of that day and of reunions he has since

attended of Pearl Harbor survivors. Lamar later served aboard the USS Curtiss, a seaplane tender and the submarines USS S-17, USS S-20, USS Chivo, USS Sea Leopard and, of course, our own Sea Owl as Commanding Officer. Later he served aboard the cruiser USS Canberra and retired from the Navy in June 1962 after 22 years service. Later Lamar had another 20 year career in hospital administration and spent another 20 years as a hospital consultant.

I was able to make several DVD copies of my interview with Lamar at Branson and some shipmates went home with one. Any one else interested in getting a copy can contact me and I will send one out to you.

The Joey Riley/Bob Laird Show

I could hardly pass up the opportunity to mention Shipmate Bob Laird's participation in the Joey Riley Comedy Review Show at Branson. During the show, Joey asked for a member of the audience to come up on stage and take part in the show. This was Bob's chance to display his talents and he agreed. The result is history and was recorded on video tape which many shipmates purchased at the end of the show. We didn't know Bob was so



talented. With a little help from Joey, Bob played a fiddle solo and accompanied it with his duck boat tour "quacker". Some might say that it was really Joey doing all the work, but without Bob's steady hands he couldn't have done it. We all got a good laugh and most of us were thankful it wasn't us up there on the stage. Just wish I could include a video clip here of his performance, but many Sea Owl shipmates purchased the video after the show and can see it.

Joey had a little give and take fun with Lamar too who managed to give it right back and we all had a good time.

New Face at Branson from the 50's



One new person from the 50's who had not been to a previous Sea Owl reunion was Norris Dalton, YN 59. Norris lives in Fayetteville, Arkansas not very far from Branson. Welcome, Norris, we hope to see you at future reunions as well.



The 60's

September 2005 Issue



The Tom Gilbert Fund

Just over \$16,000 was raised for Tom Gilbert through the USSVI Brotherhood Fund. This is a list of contributors. We thank you all!

Albany-Saratoga Base
Austin Capitol Base
Barb Base
Batfish Base
Blueback Base
Boise Base/FRA #316
Bremerton Base
Bullhead Base
Central Florida Base
Central Oregon Base
Charleston Base
Cod Base
Corvina Base
Corvina Base
Cuttlefish Base
Dallas Base
Denizens of the Deep Base
Dolphin Base
Drum Base
Escolar Base
Farragut Base
First Coast Base
Gold Country
Gold Country Base
Golden Triangle Base
Grayback Base
Groton Base
Gudgeon
Hampton Roads
Hudson Valley Base
LA Pasadena Base
Lockwood Internet Base
Long Island
Louisville Base
Marblehead Base
Mare Island Base
Montana Base
Nautilus Base
New Jersey South
Pasadena Base
Pelican Harbor Base
Perch Base
Ponce DeLeon Base
Razorback Base
Razorback Base
Reading Base
Redfish Base
Requin Base
San Diego Base
Scamp Base
Seattle Base
Snug Harbor Base
South Florida
South Sound Base
Springfield Base
Sturgeon Base

Tang Base
Tarheel Base
Tennessee Volunteer Base
Tri-State Base
Tullibee Base
USS Maine Base
Wahoo Base
Wisconsin Base
Sub Vet WWII San Francisco
USS Sea Owl Assn
Shipmates contributing included
Peter Bailey
John Barnes
John C Bergen
Luther E Bess
Charles Betty
Bruce Blessington
Gerald Bliss
D.D. Boos
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