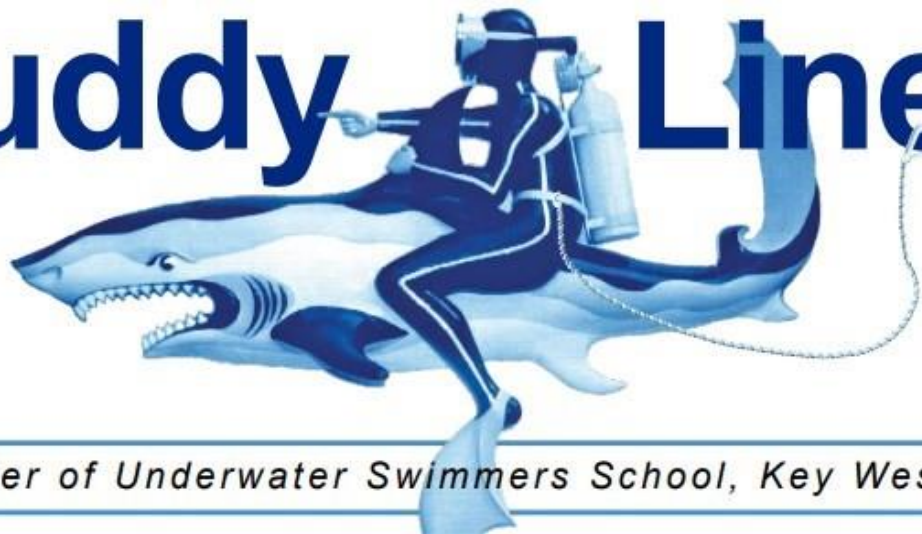


Buddy Line



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida

REUNION

May 2023 KEY WEST, FL

YOU CAN TIE THE KNOT ON THIS ONE!



KEY WEST WE ARE HEADED YOUR WAY.

EXECUTIVE'S CORNER:

By DAVE GHOLSON

Attention military divers.

US Naval School Underwater Swimmers in Key West, Florida trained over 6,000 divers from 1954 to 1974 in SCUBA, 2nd class, EOD, and many other underwater skills. Trained were members of the Navy, Army, U.S. Marines, Air Force. Coast Guard, East Coast UDT, East Coast SEALs, NASA astronauts, CIA, DOD, and foreign Armed Forces.

The Fraternal Order of UWSS was formed in 1998 to retain the friendship and camaraderie of those divers who worked and trained in Key West. Its membership is now open to any US military trained diver.

The UWSS will be holding a reunion / recall May 18, 19 and 20, 2023 in Key West,

Florida We will be guests of Command and will be staying on the base. There will be events and excursions, at reduced prices for the divers, wives, and guests.

Thursday May 18, 2023, Ice Breaker at the CPO club, with food, entertainment, and cash bar.

Friday, May 19, 2023 Boat ride to the reef for snorkeling, with open bar.
Sunset Cruise, with open bar.

Saturday, May 20 2023 Conch Train tour of Key West, Banquette cash bar

Plus - A 4-day western Caribbean cruise Monday May 21, leaving from Miami is available for those who want to extend the fun.

Any military trained diver is welcome to join our fraternity or register with our group and come to the event with guests at our costs.

Please visit our website at FOUWSS.org and visit our ships store, photo library, reunion history, membership application, and command history pages.

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SECRETARY'S REPORT:



by Ken Recoy

FO UWSS SECRETARY/TREASURER'S REPORT:

FO UWSS Membership July 31, 2022

Members in database = 294

Total Active Members = 241

We learned of no members passing away this Quarter.

We currently have 4 brothers in Hardship that FO UWSS is helping.

Donations Are accepted.

New Members this Quarter = 1.

Don Maglio Rejoined us June 5th
Class of May 1959. Lady Gayle.

FO UWSS Treasurer's Quarterly Report:

Account Balance May 1, 2022, = \$11,321.65

Dues Income + \$800.00

Label Fees Income + \$20.00

Logo Gear Sales Income + \$1,454.91

Other Income (Donations) + \$114.20

Reunion Expenses -\$0.00

Logo Gear Expenses (Purchases, mail) - \$370.66

BuddyLine Expenses (Copies, stamps) - \$43.95

Business Expenses (Ink, paper, postage) - \$0.00

Account Balance July 31, 2022, = \$13,296.15

FO UWSS Secretary's - Notes and updates

1. It is with sad news I must tell you all my health is failing. "I have Leukemia and my Immune System is Severely Compromised." After almost 5 years, I am in the process of stepping down as the FO UWSS Secretary/ Treasurer. I plan to stay until the May 2023 Reunion at which time a new FO UWSS Sec./ Treasurer can be Voted in. Currently, I am training Tom Hodgins, FO UWSS Secretary/ Treasurer **Pro Temp**. So, watch for details on our website.

2. Dave Gholson FO UWSS President is also our **Reunion Committee Chair**. Note: Dave Gholson has Appointed Jim Houle as Vice President **Pro Temp**.

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. 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 154 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 us 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
UWSS Graduation Class March 1972.

Submariner, Radioman and US Navy Diver.

Tom Hodgins, FO UWSS Sec./Treas. **“Pro Temp”**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/682196168496022>

www.uwss.org

FROM THE MAILBAG: _____

Larry Bailey



Larry Bailey is passing on a sobering moment in his time at the Key West. Hey, BuddyLine! I have one story, and it happened on Nov. 22, 1963. My UDT Class 30 was in a classroom when one of the instructors came in and informed us that President Kennedy had been assassinated. Total silence for the rest of the class session.

Erasmio “Doc” Riojas was the only respondent to the question about the VW bus question asked when I was stirring for stories this quarter. Hey, BuddyLine! I was an instructor at the school (1965-66). I never heard about that VW bus in the swim area.

However, I do have a comment about the physical training while I was an instructor. We had a "burn them out" instructor Solomon Atkinson, a Native American from Alaska who did the deed.

Dow Byers a senior instructor took a class out for a moonlight swim because they said we did not know how to swim. He led them on that swim. He got a slap on the wrist. However, I got suspended from HMC when I took a USAF class out for a moonlight run at the field after I heard them say the instructors were not in shape to run. I had a different CO so that is why I did not skate as Dow did previously. Freaking boat personnel would not allow me to drive the LCPL because I always crashed the pier. Hah Ha-ha! It was fun and my three children did NOT want to leave Key West when I got orders to SEAL Team Two at little creek. A crazy part of my naval career. About water Jumps. I only made one because the f**king officers in Spec War Gru never wanted to jump on hard ground. I dumped the T-10 once higher than 50 feet it did hurt when I hit the water. Ha-ha! Ha-ha! good old days

MAILBAG continues

Cole Panning

Cole Panning, who could have been a student during Doc Rio's instructor time at Key West, says Hey, BuddyLine! My Pararescue Class 67-2/3 completed USS in May/June 1966. After completing the rest of the required schools, we were finishing Transition School at Eglin AFB in Dec/Jan. We were completing our Scuba Jump requirements with a night Scuba (jump). As I exited the aircraft, I went through my risers and got my Duck Feet fin hung up in the suspension lines. I was descending upside down. It took me some time to pull myself up my leg and untangle my fin. By the time I was back under the S-17 parachute I was quite a bit off target. Chief Vigari was not pleased. He asked what the hell happened (luckily it was a night jump). I was not a shining star in our class. I said I confused all the other lights on the water with the target boat. He bought it. I escaped, his wrath. Shortly after, we airmen finished an E-6 returning from Vietnam that needed to do a re-qual jump (no jumps for the year in Vietnam). He was a little nervous and as he got to 100 feet started trying to release his canopy (quick release cover) cap-well into his forearm. It would not release so he tried pulling the ring with both hands. Yep, the canopy got away and he fell while swearing all the way down. The boat crew shouted are you all right and he gave a thumbs up. As he got to the ladder, they said pass up your fins. He said he could not. As he came up the ladder, we saw his duck feet fins up around his crotch. They had to cut them off.



My first mission jump was equally exciting but another time. Cole we will be waiting for the other stories for the November BL mailbag story,

Peter Wells says. Hey, BuddyLine! Jim, I forget whether I answered the question about another reunion. Answers: I wish there were a reunion, I definitely would come, and I do not care whether it is Key West or Panama City. I will try to think of some Buddy Line stories. Peter Wells is joining Panning Cole with his promise to provide a story for the November BL Mailbag.

Pete Wells, CAPT USN Ret. UWSS class 5/61...Sent from my iPhone

Bernie Coño says Hey, BuddyLine!, I completed SCUBA training at the end of May 1962. To continue my PJ training, I went to Airborne training at Fort Benning, GA in July. Heat stroke had me returned to my assignment in Oregon. Six months later, I received a letter asking if I wanted to return to Fort Benning to continue my training in cooler weather. In the meantime, I had gotten married. My wife and I talked it over and concluded that the top physical requirements were not for me. My remaining career was in Special Services which reflected my ability in that field as I went to Master Sergeant with minimum time in grade. Now for a UWSS story. We had two marines in my class. Gunny Long and a six-foot first lieutenant who had to be number one in everything. On a night swim he jumped in, lost his face mask, panicked, and grabbed his swim buddy. By the time we got back the Lt was gone. At Ft Benning, I bumped into Gunny Long who was there for some advanced training. I asked him what happened to the Lt. He said he was "pushing a pencil" and his career was over. With all the training he previously had, one moment of panic "killed him".

MAILBAG continues

Bernie Coño

If there is going to be a reunion in Key West, I want to attend. Want to combine it with visiting family in Marathon Key.

I am fortunate that at age 86 I do not have any major medical problems.

YOU be well, Bernard 'Bernie' Siebert

Chip Harman says Hey BuddyLine! Greetings, and thank you for the information. I have proposed this before, and we had a reunion at sea once. Let us think about it again. A four or five day out of Florida. would work nicely. Probably would not. Even need passports. We all know one of the differences between fairy tales and sea stories. Fairy tales start out, " Once upon a time in a faraway place there lived a beautiful ...". And sea stories start," There I was up to my knees in grenade pins, down to my last full magazine, and there were three of them...." In the Summer of '71 our class at UWSS was about to graduate. The only thing left was "log PT" the last morning. Unfortunately, the UDT/ SEAL class ahead of us had stolen the logs and buried them behind the dugout at the baseball field next to medical. No logs, no log PT, right? Wrong! The instructors took us to the public works boneyard where they found enough assorted pier piling pieces for us to use. Off we went all around the base for a workout. Down on the mole beach we dropped a log and crunched the ankle of a first-class GMT who will stay unnamed for now. We got him to medical after PT where they thought his ankle was broken and he might have to roll back to the next class. No way Jose. He had them tape him up and grabbed a crutch and a cane and turned out for graduation the next morning, we were an interesting class at graduation in our summer whites with an ugly collection of creosote burns on our hands, legs, ears, and shoulders from the log pilings the day before.

Our GMT1 fired up his new blue firebird and quickly put Key West in the rearview. When we met again two weeks later at Ft McClellan, Alabama he said that he used the cane to work the clutch and brake pedals. He healed well enough to have a Navy career and make E-9. Now fifty years later, he still puts in a respectable round of golf. Just thought you would like to know. Warmest Regards, "Chip"



Cheer a buddy up. Send us your story

buddyline@uwss.org



MAILBAG continues Aaron Farrior says Hello BuddyLine! Hi my name is. Aaron Farrior. CMSGT para-rescue retired. This is what happened to me in Key West at the dive school. They sent five of us to the dive school because of our job. When the first space shots occurred, they only had a general idea where the capsule would come down if there was a malfunction in the reentry system. They tried to keep the capsule over water so we could find it. So, the Air Force was given the responsibility to locate and retrieve it. We were already parachute qualified to jump any where ever in the world, which we did even in the oceans of the world even without scuba gear. Several of our guys stationed in Hawaii were scuba qualified with the local scuba club. All our Pararescue sections had heavy duty sewing machines. We were always modifying equipped to

jump with. They started out with a single 72. But that was bulky. They came up with the idea of modifying our 20-man oxygen bottled. The first ones were 24s. They had them static tested and filled. The problem was the US Divers regulators were 3/4 and the tanks were 1/2 inch. They had the machine shop modify an adapter to fit. They test jumped with them and it worked beautifully. They demonstrated it to some NASA officials, and they sold it to the Air Force. That is why we started attending Navy Diving. Schools. This was 69 years ago, and they are still doing it that way except now they use HALO. I would be happy to talk about it if someone wants to.

Sent from my iPhone

TELL US YOUR STORIES:

Rudy Enders

continues from Mays BuddyLine. (Fishing has always been in my blood. From the first day my father took me to Jamaica Bay where I caught a small eel, I forever loved the sport. Before entering the Merchant Marine Academy in February 1952, I worked the previous summer at Montauk Point, Long Island for George Potts about his charter boat Tuna. Later that season I served as a fishing guide for pleasure boats tied up at the Montauk Point Yacht Club. In Key West I had shelved my love for line fishing, substituting skin-diving and the hunt for ever-larger fish. This later changed as I experienced much pleasure in the pursuit of light tackle game fish. My neighbor, Dr. Lenny Berg, introduced me to light tackle fishing. We went out one morning casting plugs into an area thought to hold tarpon near Caldas Channel. There is nothing like a tarpon hitting a top water lure

and fighting this electrifying acrobatic dancer. My first fish was a small one compared to later standards, but for me it was a bigger than anything else I had ever caught on eight-pound test line. After I caught the tarpon, Lenny said he thought he heard tarpon crashing bait near Demolition Key. I heard nothing and thought he was putting me on. We cruised to the key. Low and bold there was a football-sized area loaded with tarpon tails. They were concentrating east of the key feeding on what might be known as a "worm hatch." We hooked and jumped a few hundred pound plus tarpon, which spooled our reels. From then on, I became a dedicated light tackle angler and spent as much time spin casting and plug casting as I did to diving. During my tenure, Dr. Duane Puckett became the Underwater Swimmers School diving physician. He was a light tackle fisherman

and enjoyed fingers crossed in hopes it would head toward the sand bottom in deeper water. Nevertheless, light tackle amberjack proved to be a wonderfully exciting and almost impossible challenge. I landed a fifty pounder once, but it was tiny compared to the much larger ones we hooked. Skindiving. During my tenure, Dr. Duane Puckett became the Underwater Swimmers School diving physician. He was a light tackle fisherman and enjoyed fingers crossed in hopes it would head toward the sand bottom in deeper water. Nevertheless, light tackle amberjack proved to be a wonderfully exciting and almost impossible challenge. I landed a fifty pounder once, but it was tiny compared to the much larger ones we hooked. My skin-diving experience was helped in knowing where various types of fish could be located at various times of the year. This gave me a big edge in tournament fishing, which included the annual Miami Metropolitan Fishing Tournament (MMFT), and the Key West Navy Fishing Tournament. These contests contain four divisions consisting of a spin casting (8-pound test line), plug casting (15-pound test line), fly casting, (12-pound tippet), and effort to engulf its prey. Even with a line attached to its tail, the blue runner can evade the slower cobia under most circumstances. Every cobia on the wreck seemed to rise to the surface and give it a try. All I had to do to hook a record fish was to wait until I could spot a potential record breaker and toss a large spoon or jig close to its nose. Catching the fish is another story. When a cobia is hooked, it usually heads straight down for the wreck. After losing many fish, I learned to tow the blue runner, with the cobia in pursuit, at

least five hundred yards from the wreck before casting the lure. This technique enabled me to break the MMFT cobia record for spin casting two consecutive years, 1959 (36 lbs-6oz), 1960 (41lbs-8oz)



WINNING COBIA 1960 WITH GAINNEY MAXWELL



CROSSING THE BAR**Charles MacArthur Ratliff**

January 6, 1942 – May 11, 2020

Charles MacArthur Ratliff of La Paz Valley, Quartzsite Arizona, passed away at his home on May 11, 2020, after suffering a stroke last October. He was born in Big Fork Arkansas in 1942 to the late Charles William and Susie McCully Ratliff. Charles was united in marriage September 20, 1962, to Pamela Walker at Mena Arkansas, they were married for 57 and a half years. He is survived by his wife, Pam; his dogs, Rosie and Daisy Mae; his sister, Noma Rowton of Wichita, Kansas; his three children, Robert “Bob” and Noel Ratliff of Black Canyon City, Arizona, Dori and Ed Frazer of Union, Oregon, and Shannon Wayne and Krissy Ratliff of Welches, Oregon; seven grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, several nieces and nephews; and many friends from his career in the U.S. Navy as well as in his civilian life. He was proud of serving his country and helping keep us free. He started his Navy life as a gunner’s mate, which included nuclear weapons and evolved into special warfare, UDT and explosive ordnance disposal. They are called Navy SEALs today but back then they did not have protective gear, cameras, or robots to help out. He was a Vietnam veteran. He also provided security for three different presidents. Between his enlistments he was a police officer-patrolman. His second career was in commercial and residential construction. From an early age Charles was an avid outdoors person: hunting, fishing, and sports. He was at home in the woods and mountains, later in life in the desert. Besides his wife, children, and extended family he loved his dogs and horses. Enjoyed leading ATV rides and showing people our historic area (in Arizona), old mines, ghost towns, ranches, pictographs, bigfoot prints and ancient campsites.





We Dive the World

Dave Gholson - President
 Tom Hodgins - Secretary/Treasurer
 Danny Mize - Buddyline
 Bob Bureker - Webmaster
 Jim Houle - Ships Store

Contact: Ken Recoy
 kenrecoy@aol.com

Item	Size	Retail
Logo Decal Transparent 4"		\$4
Logo Decal White 4"		\$4
Embroidered Patch		\$12
Face Mask (covid)	Blue/White	\$10
Key Chain		\$11
LED Pocket Flashlight 3 ⁵ / ₈ "		\$12
Polo Shirt Sm-XL	White or Gray	\$32
Polo Shirt 2XL	White or Gray	\$34
Microfiber T Shirt SM-XL	Blue or Gray	\$35
Microfiber T Shirt 2XL	Blue or Gray	\$38
Long Sleeve Tee Short Sleeve Shirt SM-XL	White or Gray	\$30
Long Sleeve Tee Short Sleeve Shirt 2XL	White or Gray	\$33
Blue Denim Long Sleeve Shirt SM-XL	Long Sleeve	\$42
Blue Denim Long Sleeve Shirt 2XL	Long Sleeve	\$44
Blue Denim Short Sleeve Shirt Sm- XL	Short Sleeve	\$42
Blue Denim Short Sleeve Shirt 2XL	Short Sleeve	\$44
Baseball Cap	Blue or Khaki	\$35

Item	Size	Retail
All Service Commemorative Coin	2"	\$15
USWW Commemorative Coin	1 5/8	\$13