

Buddy Line



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida

RUDY'S MEMORIES



UWSS pals, Rudy is at the top right

**Fraternal Order of
Underwater Swimmers
School Officers**



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*The BuddyLine newsletter
is published quarterly in
February, May, August & November.*

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My memoirs shed light on the fantastic instructors I was fortunate to meet and work with at the UWSS. Their Navy experience during WWII in UDT, along with their exceptional performance at the school, put these men in a class by themselves. For me it was heartbreaking to say good-bye to these fine men when I finally left the Navy and joined CIA's Special Operations Group. I was also loved spear-fishing off the outer reefs west of Key West when hardly anyone dared to swim in those shark infested waters. Looking back, they were the most enjoyable days of my life. That's mainly what my memoirs include besides details about UWSS and EOD instruction. They are all included in my Navy Years chapter.

Rudy Enders



(Continued from May and August 2020 BuddyLine)

Shallow water diving in the bunny suit was really tortuous. The air hose fed into a triangular mask. The suit was made of canvass and was anything but waterproof. On some days we chopped holes through the ice to descend below. When your head went under, ice water leaked through the back hood laces almost knocking you out. Your hands turned numb instantly, since they were exposed below the wrist cuffs. Upon reaching the surface your fingers were shredded and bleeding from the mine's barnacles and you would shiver uncontrollably for near an hour. No wonder many in our class packed it in. Some of them were good guys who should have made it through. This wasn't a course on how to dive; it was a test on how much pain you could endure. I felt the instructors were somewhat sadistic and resented their superior demeanor. Years later, the Navy would require them to be SCUBA qualified. I would see them again.

BOQ life at Indian Head was pleasant. Our rooms were nicely furnished, the food was good, and we were fairly close to the fine restaurants in Washington D.C. We spent weekends playing touch football, eating steamed blue claw crabs at Pope's Creek, and taking in the local nightlife. D.C. was beautiful in those days and a fun place. I nearly crashed my T-Bird one day at the intersection of 14th street and Constitution. A car ran the intersection's red light stopping on my side of the

road. I was traveling at 45mph when I hit the brakes on the wet road and skidded straight at the car's left door. I turned the wheel hard left then hard right, skidding around him without touching. My car finally stopped at the curb facing in the opposite direction. It took a few minutes for my heart to start beating normally again. The 56 T-Bird proved very unstable. Any hard turn would force the rear end forward. This defect was corrected when they lengthened the 57 model and added rear fender fins.

Lt. Hamilton was intent on teaching Kappes a lesson. His chance came when Mickey flunked a final bombs exam. Bill convened an academic board meeting and the panel agreed unanimously to flunk him out. Bill called him in, read him the riot act, and said the Navy would straighten him out aboard a destroyer where he would spend the remainder of his active duty. This didn't shake Mickey one bit. He simply said, "You can't." Hamilton responded, "Yes I can, we're going to make a man out of you yet." Mickey then said, "If you read the terms of my Active Navy Duty Extension, it reads: 'Upon successful completion of the EOD School I agree to extend three years.' Since I haven't successfully completed the course, my Active Duty ends next week and I'm out of here." Taken back, Bill responded, "You're out of here today, and I don't want to see you around here anymore." The next day "KEEP MICKEY OUT" signs were posted at all security entrances.



All practical demolition work at the EOD School was held across the Potomac River at a place called Stump Neck. Here students would be given hands on training in rendering safe certain types of ordnance. These exercises were made realistic by rigging small TNT charges near the torpedo or mine one was working on. One mistake and the charge would blow scaring the hell out of you. For example, they would rig the exploder mechanism of a Mark 27 torpedo with a mercury switch. Tilt the fuse more than three degrees and a half-pound block of explosive would detonate splattering mud all over the place. Other ordnance was rigged the same way so we learned to work under pressure. At the demolition range, we learned to use various shaped charges to knock off the fused rocket base plates and to bring about incomplete detonation of larger explosives.

After each demonstration, students would police up bits of shrapnel and debris. On one such occasion, a scrap of metal containing the fuse and booster exploded shortly after a student pick up. It blew off a Marine's hand, killed the sailor alongside, and wounded three other class members. Working with explosives proved to be a very dangerous business. One day, we went into this building to disarm booby traps. I went in first. I found a pressure switch under a floorboard, noticed the electric eye across the entrance, carefully tied a trip wire in place, (not knowing whether it was set to blow on pull or release) found a mercury switch

behind a mirror, cut all loose wires which led nowhere and found a clock timer. Thinking I had done well, I overlooked ten other devices in the room that would have killed me six times. And my run was one of the best in the class. I'd rather blow any booby-trapped building than attempt to disarm one.

At the end of the Bombs course, we flew to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida for some interesting training. Dud bombs were dropped from high altitude and it was our job to find them. It was easy to find where the bomb entered. But locating them was another story. We used long thin irons with T handles to probe for the bombs. Upon hitting metal we would dig a tunnel downward, bracing the sides with wood to prevent cave in. After finding the bomb 10 feet down or so, we would disarm the fuse and crank it to the surface with a winch. We were also exposed to mass demolition. A pile of surplus bombs, rocket motors, artillery shells, and other ordnance would be stacked in a pit for detonation. Rocket motors would be placed to fire downward and the bombs stacked to prevent scattering. Some of those explosions resembled atomic bombs. It was a worthwhile week.

(to be continued in the next BuddyLine)

Tell us your story!

Send them to buddyline@uwss.org



There was a good ole boy from the everglades that stood about 6'5" in my class. He had made the cut to the open sea free ascent phase. Several of us popped up in the deepest bell that measured about 100 feet in depth. The first bell was set about the 50 foot mark.

Having easily made the buoyant ascent and surviving Chief Pates words of wisdom as we bobbed up inside his bell, "don't spit in my water if you want to survive this evolution," it was now time to test our grit by exiting the bell.

We held onto the outside rim of the bell holding our breath waiting to be tapped as a signal for us to let go and float to the surface without kicking. Five students let go extending our hands above our heads pointing towards the clear surface just one hundred feet away. We knew we were safe because we were told safety divers would surface with us to ensure we exhaled all the way up to avoid being embolized. As we passed the first bell and only fifty feet to go, all of us had expelled the air we had in our lungs. It was now time to put our faith and trust in the instructors that said don't worry about that you still have a residual volume of air that will sustain you to the surface.

As I smoothly glided towards the surface the urge to inhale was just on the verge of overwhelming, but I noticed air bubbles continued to exhaust from my mouth. I knew I couldn't rise faster than my bubbles so stayed relaxed and set my mind to the task.

What do you remember about free ascents or panicking at UWSS?

Send them to buddyline@uwss.org

At that moment three students raced by me stroking for the surface at top speed. Each had an instructor in tow. That shook me but I saw Instructor Sweezy grab the waist of the boy from the Everglades and punch him in the gut. I had been taught that would happen if I was to shoot to the surface in a panic. The punch would push air out of the lungs preventing a lung blowout. The second time he received a thump he punched back in an uncontrollable panic to break the surface into the fresh air. I rose by them as Sweezy continued to provide lifesaving instruction.

On the surface after deep gasps for air, my lungs filled and hyperventilated, we were all in the open ocean and Instructor Sweezy raised his arm and waived it back and forth over his head, This signaled to the boat crew that there were possible hyperbaric chamber patients to be treated for the bends or embolism because of their forced rush through the water column.

The last thing I heard before us students were hurried onto the boat was Instructor Sweezy yelling, "get this guy out of here. I don't want to see him again." And we never did.



by Ray Hoglund

Students came to Key West from all over the US and many of them were naive about the ocean and sea animals so we instructors would make up myths about them and give the gullible students all kinds of bad data about the creatures they would find swimming around Key West on the weekends. One came up often when they brought back a conch shell.

Inevitably the animal inside the shell was still alive and we told the students all they had to do was



put it in their car, or their locker for a few days to get rid of it. Of course that wasn't true, the best way to clean out a conch was by knowing the spot where the animal is attached to the inside of the shell and making a hole in the shell there. But they trusted us and it didn't take long for them to figure out from the stink that we had tricked them.

Pranks like this were pretty common in diving circles. I remember when I was first learning hard hat diving. We had to blow on a device, about the size of my fist, to test our lung capacity. I didn't know that they had filled it with black powder so when I blew on it, black powder went all over my face.

Congratulations on an outstanding Buddy Line. This is really 4.0 and highly enjoyable reading.

Chris Seger UWSS Spring 1961.

Thank you so much, Ken. My mom and I appreciate your kindness and warm condolences. My dad loved every minute of his time with UWSS as well as the wonderful folks he served with. I'm still so pleased to have been able to join my parents and good Navy friends for the 2013 reunion in Panama City.

Many thanks for enclosing the current Buddy Line. I always enjoy reading them. In the group photo of the first reunion (1998), my dad is in the plaid shirt, standing, far right. I'm still working on his obituary and will be glad to share it as soon as it's complete. Or, if some type of notice is already planned, I'll be glad to contribute any information that may be of help.

Sincerely,

Jeana Aquadro

What do you remember about pranks at UWSS?

Send them to buddyline@uwss.org



CHARLES (CHUCK) DETMER JR.
1943 - 2020

Baltic - CWO4 Charles (Chuck) Detmer Jr. USN (Ret.) died peacefully Friday January 2, 2020. Chuck enlisted in the Navy at age 17 and served faithfully for 30 years. He completed two combat tours with SEAL Team Two, earning numerous citations including two Bronze Stars with Valor and the Republic of Vietnam Valantry Cross. He also earned his Ranger tab and duty stations included UDT-22, Beachmaster Unit Two, USS Saratoga (CV-60) as ship's boatswain, Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit-2, and as base security officer at Naval Submarine Base New London. After retiring from the Navy he studied at Three Rivers Community College and played on the golf team. He worked as a security guard at Millstone and at Great Brook driving range. Chuck loved spending time with his family and hanging out with his friends at Sprague Rod and Gun Club.



**DR. CHARLES FRASURE
AQUADRO (CHARLIE)**

1929-2020

Passed away on March 2, 2020 in Savannah GA at the age of 90. He served in the US Navy from March 31, 1953 to August 15, 1963 as the Medical Officer with Underwater Demolition Unit (UDU) One, Amphibious Force, Pacific Fleet 1954–56; Underwater Swimmers School 1957–58; Submarine Squadron Twelve, Atlantic Fleet 1958–60; Medical Research Laboratory, Submarine Base 1960–62; USS Patrick Henry 1962; Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Submarine Medical Division, 1962–63.

Dr. Aquadro had an extensive career using his expertise in both the medical field and diving. And then served the coastal community of Beaufort, NC with a private medical practice.

Charlie treasured his experiences with the US Navy and had an enduring fondness and respect for his shipmates and colleagues. In later years, when asked if he had a medical specialty, he liked to say, with a smile, "I specialize in people."

**STEVEN L. WATERMAN**

1946-2020

Passed away September 3, 2020 peacefully after an accelerated bout with military service-connected brain damage.

Steve was a 1964 graduate of Rockland High School. After graduation, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy as a photographer's mate, went to dive school, became a First-Class diver, and continued on to be one of an elite group of servicemen as an underwater combat photographer. He was attached to UDT-13 during the Vietnam War, and served a nine-month tour with them in 1969.

He was owner and operator of Waterman Oceanics dive shop, published extensively including his autobiographical account of his time in the Navy, *Just a Sailor*.

Steve was a great mariner. Always involved in his community. Photography was the one constant throughout his entire life. Steve loved through his lens. He chronicled his adventures, his loves, and his life and watched them all through the lens of his camera.

**GEORGE WASCOVICH**

1943-2020

Passed away in the comfort of his home on Wednesday, October 7, 2020. George was a 1961 graduate of Scranton Technical High School and earned an Associate's Degree in business from Goldie-Beacom College. He was employed as a conductor with the Pennsylvania Railroad, Penn Central, Conrail, Amtrak and Norfolk Southern and enjoyed 20 years of retirement, during which time he loved traveling, playing golf and spending time with his grandchildren.

A proud and patriotic American, George dutifully served our country in the United States Navy as a Naval Seal, having been stationed with Underwater Demolition Team (UDT) 21. He was a lifetime member of the Fraternal Order of UDT/Seal and enjoyed the yearly gatherings with his fellow members. He was also a member of the UDT Seal Museum in Fort Pierce, FL, a life member of the VFW Post 7234 in Ocean View, DE and a life member of the American Legion Post 28 in Millsboro.



1. If you are able to Volunteer as our FO UWSS Chaplain, please let Dave Byers know asap.
2. Dave Gholson is our Reunion Committee Chair. Watch for updates.
3. Jim Houle is our Logo Gear Chair. You can order (and pay) by going to the UWSS Website or by sending an email to: kenrecoy@aol.com
And you can also pay by check. My address is in this Buddyline and on our Website. Watch for upcoming Logo Gear Special Sales!
4. Please be sure to pay your "Label fees" if you want to continue to receive your Buddyline by regular mail. Label Fees are \$5.00 per year. We currently have 26 members that receive their Buddyline by regular mail and for 9 of those, their Label Fees have expired. If not paid, these nine will no longer receive a Buddyline by regular mail after 12/31/2020.
5. Please check to make sure you have paid your Membership Dues. We currently have 37 Members that their Dues expired 5/1/2020. 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 the Buddyline.

8. So we may honor them, if you know of a UWSS brother that has passed, please let us know and send in a copy of the Obituary.
9. Important to reach out to your 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. Thumbs up!

Stay in touch. Stay safe. HooYah!

Ken Recoy, FO UWSS Secretary/Treasurer
620-305-9900 Cell (And text is ok).
UWSS Graduation Class March 1972.
Submariner, Radioman & US Navy Diver.
www.uwss.org





MEMBERSHIP OCTOBER 2020

Members in database = 288
Total active members = 238

Currently 37 Memberships expired
5/1/2020 Active

Currently 45 Memberships expired
5/1/2019 Active

Note: These 45 Members will go Inactive
5/1/2021.

Currently 20 Memberships expired
5/1/2017 Inactive

Currently 22 Memberships expired
5/1/2015 Inactive

Currently 8 Memberships expired
5/1/2013 Inactive

We lost two brothers this Quarter.

- Steve Waterman — 9/3/2020
- George Wascovich — 10/7/2020

Also two others died earlier this year.

- Charles Detmer — 1/2/2020
- Charles Aquadro — 3/2/2020

Rest in Peace Heros.

We currently have seven Hardship Cases
(brothers) we are helping. Donations
accepted.

We have had two new members join us in
the last Quarter:

- Ron Gecks, joined 8/25/2020
- Rich C. Craig, graduated Sept. 1968

Welcome Aboard!

TREASURER’S REPORT

Account Balance:
August 1, 2020 \$15,681.23

Dues Income	+ \$1,010.10
Label Fees Income	+ \$0.00
Logo Gear Sales Income	+ \$94.93
Other (Donations) Income	+ \$105.00

Reunion Expenses	- \$0.00
Logo Gear Expenses	- \$835.43
BuddyLine Expenses	- \$52.77
Business Expenses	- \$0.00

Account Balance:
October 31, 2020 \$16,003.06

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





NEW MICROFIBER T-SHIRTS



GREY

We've replaced our grey cotton T's with a new MicroFiber Performance T-shirt. These new T's are wick-away type shirts with printed logo rather than the old style iron-on. The back has the large Swimmers Logo with "We Dive the World" and the front has the small Swimmers logo over the left breast. Sorry, these shirts are not offered with a pocket.

And being made with a microfiber these shirts fit all body shapes much better.

The cost is the same as the old ones which is \$25 for small to extra large and \$28 for the 2XL shirts. The price includes shipping anywhere in the US.

And we've added a new Navy Blue Micro-Fiber T as well.



NAVY

Make check to FO/UWSS
Send with order to Ken Recoy, Treasurer

You can also order via the website and use PayPal (which takes your credit card) instead of sending a check.

www.uwss.org/LogoGear.html

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

More logo items are available on the UWSS website:

www.uwss.org/LogoGear.html

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

*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.*

MISSION:

FO/UWSS

