

Buddy Line



Newsletter of Fraternal Order of Underwater Swim School, Key West, Florida

February 2006

President's Corner by Don Stone

Reunion 2006 in Key West, May 11-14, is just two months away and reunion planning is moving into high gear. Key West is continuing the recovery from last year's storms and Navy families are moving back into their renovated quarters. While the needs of the active duty personnel who train at NAS take precedence over our needs at the visitors quarters, we feel we have a good chance of getting the 15 additional rooms that we have requested. If you are coming to the reunion and don't have a room reservation, you can call a Key West reservations service, AA Accommodations Center, at 305-296-7707 for help finding a hotel/motel room.

Now a description of the events:

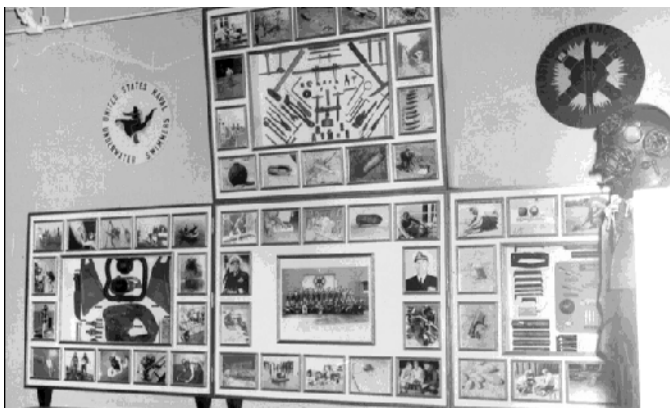
May 11th Thursday: Check in at the Fly Navy Building, Trumbo Point Annex. Look for a UWSS member in the

lobby between 1200 and 1500 and pick up your Reunion Packet. Or check in at the Ice Breaker at 1800, also at the Fly Navy Building. Your logo gear orders can be picked up at this event. Bring photos and memorabilia to share. We'll have a scanner there to capture your photos for addition to the archives and for publication in the Buddy Line.

May 12th Friday: We are still trying to arrange a visit to the Special Forces Swim School on Fleming Key. Muster at the Sunset Lounge Outer Deck, Sigsbee Park, at 1800 for pizza, beer and sea stories. The view from the shore will be outstanding if the weather is good.

May 13th Saturday: All activities today are at the Fly Navy Building. A continental breakfast at 0900 will be followed by a business meeting for election of officers and choosing the next reunion location. The banquet at 1800 will be our finale with a guest speaker and door prizes.

Historic UWSS Emblem Donated



The UWSS emblem and the EOD emblem in this display, both painted in 1964 by John Bartleson and Ed Jeffords, were originally displayed in the diving locker of EOD Unit Two in Charleston, SC. This whole display was movable and was used on Armed Forces Day and as a recruiting tool. When EOD Unit Two moved to Fort Story in 1968 the display was also moved..

It eventually fell into disrepair for lack of interest and was discarded. The 23 inch diameter UWSS emblem was rescued from a dumpster in 1984 by George Gray who

took it home and hung it in his shop. EMC (DV,PJ) George T. Gray Jr, USN Ret, known as Terry to his friends back then, spent 17 years in EOD, and while he never attended UWSS, he felt the emblem was a piece of history worth preserving. Recently, while looking for someone who would share his appreciation of this piece of naval history, he learned of FO/UWSS and gave Don Stone a call. After several telephone conversations with Don, George decided to donate the UWSS emblem to the fraternal order so it could be displayed at future reunions.

George thought John Bartleson had painted it, and when Don called John to check that out, John verified he had and sent the history and photo of the whole display.

Look for this historic emblem at Reunion 2006 in Key West!



UWSS LOGO ITEMS

The following logo items are available, so send in your orders and they will be shipped pronto. Prices include shipping. Availability is subject to change. We can obtain other items if there are enough requests.

White Beefy-T shirts..... 13.00 ea, 2 for 23.00
Logo front and back (pocket or no pocket – your choice)
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
Childs 6/8, 10/12 (no pocket)

Ash gray Beefy-T shirts..... 14.00 ea, 2 for 25.00
Large logo on back, small logo on pocket
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL
Childs 14/16 (no pocket)

White Polo shirt 18.00 ea, 2 for 33.00
Small logo on pocket, 50/50 cotton/poly
Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Ash Polo shirt 19.00 ea, 2 for 35.00
Small logo on pocket, 50/50 cotton/poly
Sizes M, L, XL, XXL

Coffee mug with logo 12.00 ea
Cap – natural with logo 12.00 ea
8.00 ea if ordered with shirt

UWSS logo decal
Transparent background 2.00 ea
White background 2.00 ea

UWSS logo lapel/tie pin 4.00 ea

UWSS plaques
Bright brass logo on blue 45.00 ea
Standard brass logo on blue 25.00 ea
Plaque price reduced \$5.00 if ordered with shirt.

**Send payment with order to Don Stone,
1440 SW 5th Ave
Boca Raton, FL 33432**

**Photos of all logo gear items
are on the web site!
www.uwss.org**

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

Membership- February 2006	196 members
Account Balance November 2005	\$4,850.38
Dues	+300.00
Logo item sales	+204.00
Buddy Line printing	-184.38
Account Balance February 2006	\$5,170.00

FO/UWSS Mission

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 Navy Underwater Swimmers School Key West, Florida. Associate membership is open to family, friends, and others who share an interest in the goals and activities of FO/UWSS. Associate members do not have voting privileges, but are encouraged to participate in all other activities..

One of the most important reasons for our existence as an organized group is to plan for and participate in biannual reunions, which will be held at various locations to be selected by members' votes.

FO/UWSS Officers

President Don Stone
Vice President..... A. Dee Clark
Secretary/Treasurer Roger Lynch

The Buddy Line newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November. Buddy Line editors are Don and Art Stone.

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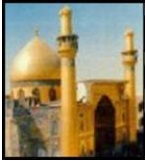
Buddy Line by email

If you use email you may prefer receiving the email version of the Buddy Line newsletter. It is delivered to your inbox as a .pdf file for Adobe Acrobat Reader.

The benefits to you are faster delivery and **color** photos (when originals are color).

The benefits to the FO/UWSS are the savings on printing and postage for the Buddy Line mailout.

To receive the Buddy Line by email, send your request to buddyline@uwss.org.



Najaf Chronicles

By Rick LaRoche

UWSS member, Rick LaRoche, who works for the US State Department spent a year in Iraq as Action Officer for Najaf. While there, he shared short narratives of his life and feelings as he carried out his sometimes dangerous duties

This issue of the Najaf Chronicles begins yet again on a somber note. Yesterday morning, the State Department Embedded Team (SET) gathered together to force ourselves to watch a video of the beheading of two Americans. These videos are posted on a radical Islamic website for all to see. I would not recommend that anyone visit this site. It is filled with the most virulent, narrow-minded propaganda I have ever witnessed. These individuals, in my humble opinion, have forfeited all rights to call themselves human beings. And I am confident that the vast majority of Muslims around the world agree with me.

So why did we force ourselves to watch these horrible events? The answer is simple. As Americans, we need to remind ourselves of the environment that we live and work in. We need to remember that, as Americans, if we are ever captured, this will be our fate. The US does not and should not negotiate with terrorists – ever! Consequently, we all agreed that allowing ourselves to be captured will NEVER be an option. Never, ever empty your magazine! I will leave my readers to ponder what we mean by that.

On to brighter things, reconstruction efforts are moving ahead. I spoke with the Provincial Director of Youth and Sports and will finance the establishment of a youth soccer league for the cities of Najaf and Kufa. The USG will purchase soccer goals, nets, balls, uniforms, whistles, flags and provide some sort of compensation for the organizers and officials. We will also fund a youth center to open at the beginning of Ramadan with all sorts of activities and food at night to break the fast.

There is now an Internet café up and running in Najaf that is funded by the USG. Najafis are now able to get

information from outside Iraq. The Navy SeaBees are building new roads and streets, the Army Corps of Engineers are building waste-water treatment plants, drinking-water plants, power plants and other infrastructure-related projects. USAID is reconstructing and building schools, and the USG is training and equipping Iraqi Police and Iraqi National Guard forces. What ISN'T happening in Najaf is preparation for the upcoming elections.

And that brings me to an important reflection about the whole process here. Are we inadvertently putting the cart before the horse? What we should have done is establish a secure and safe environment first. Without a secure environment, it's extremely difficult to do business and rebuild a country, as we are seeing on a daily basis. The order ought to be as follows:

- 1) Establish public security, 2) Establish/rebuild good governance, 3) Create an environment where people can do business, 4) Promote political reforms, build political parties, establish a free press, promote a representative government, and then and only then, 5) Improve/rebuild the infrastructure. Political transformation must take place BEFORE economic transformation. We should focus on improving the social structures before moving on to improving the infrastructure. Iraqis keep comparing this process with the Marshall Plan, Germany and Japan. Well, for one thing, the Marshall Plan didn't begin until 1948, well after the war had ended. And let's not forget that no German or Japanese terrorists were setting off IED's or murdering civilian contractors.

Well, that's about it for this time. Lot's of small-arms fire around the camp each night. We can sit outside and watch the tracers go through the air. The odd mortar drops in to say "hello" now and then. And that, my friends, is life in Najaf. Just another day in paradise! As the Dali Lama says: "Approach love and cooking with reckless abandon." Sounds like pretty good advice to me. Hey, maybe we should consult the Dali Lama on reconstruction efforts. Take care and enjoy life!

The material in the Najaf Chronicles is not for public use and may not be re-printed or used in any other context.



1000 yard night swim

April 1956

Photo from John Bartleson

Class of February 1962

Photo from Mike McDowell

Front Row:

Alton R. Patin, Gordon Sybrant, R. H. McGill, Felix Ramos, Wayne Orr

Second Row:

J. E. Sanders, John Pendry, Romeo Amansec, Tom King, Jim Goad, Rick Navin, Fernando Braile, Mike McDowell

Third Row:

Jack Erdman, Mickey Heinz, Bill Simmons, Jim Sheldon, Carlos Azevedo, Jerry Hess



Class of March 1955

Photo from Jerry Padrta

Second Row:

2 Howard Bissell,
3 Jerry Padrta,
4. Dick Gregory,
5 Rieck, 6 Reed

Third Row:

1 Line Annas,
4 Dick Fleishman,
5. Ralph Kates

Fourth Row:

4 Chuck McMillan,
5 Van Tassell,
6 Seas

Class of June 1956

Photo from Gene Sheridan

Top Row:

3rd from left Chief Conley,
1st from right CWA Calhoun,
2nd from right Gene Sheridan

2nd Row

2nd from left P Ramos (Sheridan diving partner)



MacKenzie's Diary

Robert B. MacKenzie, a 1957 UWSS graduate retired after 30 years service in the Marine Corps, shared the diary he kept of his days as a UWSS student. Here are the last entries ending with graduation day.

13 June: The very last swim is in sight - after five long weeks, we have finally been able to use the pipeline legally, and for 1,000 yards too.

Getting in the water was easy enough, but once in, things didn't go quite so well, you might say. Al had his face mask knocked off accidentally by Dutch. I, unknowing, went to the bottom and started the swim. When I missed him, I figured that he had gone on his own independent way, as he often does, and so I hitched up with Dutch and Gunny for the ride in. Fortunately, I thought to stop, return to the 1,000 yard buoy, and come to the surface to inform the waiting boat that my partner was missing. Just at that time, Al came up 50 yards or so away to seaward, and swam over.

The actual swim started, five to seven minutes late. Even with that handicap, we passed everyone easily except for Bostain and Anderson - the only one of six pairs who could beat the champs to the wire with that much time spotted them. We found out from Kennedy later that our float was under water almost all the time - pulled under by the tremendous speeds we were making. Naturally, my hands and knuckles were all skinned up from pulling on the pipe and we were both exhausted beyond repair, but we did amaze the spectators. Our actual time - 19 to 21 minutes, 4 to 2 minutes ahead of the pair already on the beach when we saw the light of day.

For the first time, we were allowed to do some pleasure diving with the lungs on. When everyone ran out of air in 30' of water, the lungs were left on the boat, the boat moved to Fort Taylor, and skin diving started. Alfa made out like bandits. We even got to pick up Anderson, Brown and Bostain UDT style - with Burke as the sling man. He nearly drowned Bostain, for the boat couldn't go as fast as it should have been able to for those types of runs on stationary swimmers.

The afternoon was very nearly as good as the morning, for we had made up our minds to dunk all the instructors, not letting things rest with Hoaglund, Tappy and Chief Del, who had the pleasure of hitting the water in the A.M.

Things started out quietly enough with our underwater repair course on the barge - taking apart and putting back together again a set of pipes and two flanges. First, Dutch ran out of air and then I, for we had not re-filled our bottles after last night's bottom search.

When the last pair had come up, in went Henry Staples and in went Crowell. Our punishment? Instead of calling

up a truck to get our lungs back to the House, we had to carry them for that mile: sore shoulders, but smiling faces, showed that the end was in sight.

Griswell got caught and dumped in the practice tank; Tucker followed him closely and, no one else being in the area, prepared for tomorrow's inspection and the night's party. I did neither. I caught two hours of Zs.

Party time at the Silver Dollar! The class convened for two barrels of Schlitz and food "borrowed" from the mess hall. Playing of the ukulele (Bill Fischer), the guitar (Wally), dancing (Fenner), singing (LeMay, Griswell, Hager, MacKenzie, Snellenberg and Fenner), drinking (all hands) and the usual yelling and screaming followed in short order. Tex Hager was thrown in the bay!

The police were called (and came) by the old lady down the street. Fortunately, they arrived while the mob was down throwing Tex off the pier behind the Aquarium.

Dutch chased, on a dead run, two motorcycle doxies and never caught them.

Chief Vann was chased, caught, and would have suffered the same fate as Tex had not the respect for Key West policemen been injected into our bleary minds.

Al and I visited for the last time - what? Why, the Mardi Gras, of course. They had gotten rid of the Cuban girls and had replaced them - if that's the proper expression - with a juggler-jokester, a black-checked-suit type. We stayed through that act, stayed through the lovely blond with the nice hop, skip and jump dance, and then returned to the party.

14 June: Field day all morning, plus turning in as little gear as possible and packing what we could get away with - fins, face masks, life jackets: they all disappeared into seabags if they could be lied about to the supply man, Morgan.

Inspection was followed by graduation: Anderson First, MacKenzie second, Quinton Third, Aquadro fourth, Brown fifth.

Three cheers for Kappesser!! Hip hip HOORAY! Hip hip HOORAY!! Hip hip HOORAY!!

The heartfelt cheer closed the class, which had graduated with the highest average ever, with the least number of men dropped, and with the man who had attained the highest instructors' grade ever given in the school's history. Ahem.

Off for the north at 1430. Jim Gafney (Springfield College; Irvington NY), Bill Fischer, Don Snellenberg and I. Drive, Drive, Drive.

The class was over.

Membership Application

Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School

Full Name: _____

Wife's Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Branch of Service: _____ Dates of Service: _____

Dates & Class # at UWSS: _____ or Associate Membership: _____

Send copy of class picture if you have one. 2 Year Membership \$25.00

Make check to Roger Lynch, Treasurer and mail to FO/UWSS, 1440 SW 5th Ave, Boca Raton, FL 33432

The Way It Was



First Reunion
Key West
1998

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Buddy Line Newsletter
1440 S. W. 5th Avenue
Boca Raton, FL 33432