

Buddy Line



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida

LARRY'S MEMORIES



Truman visits Underwater Swimmers School

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Underwater Swimmers
School Officers**



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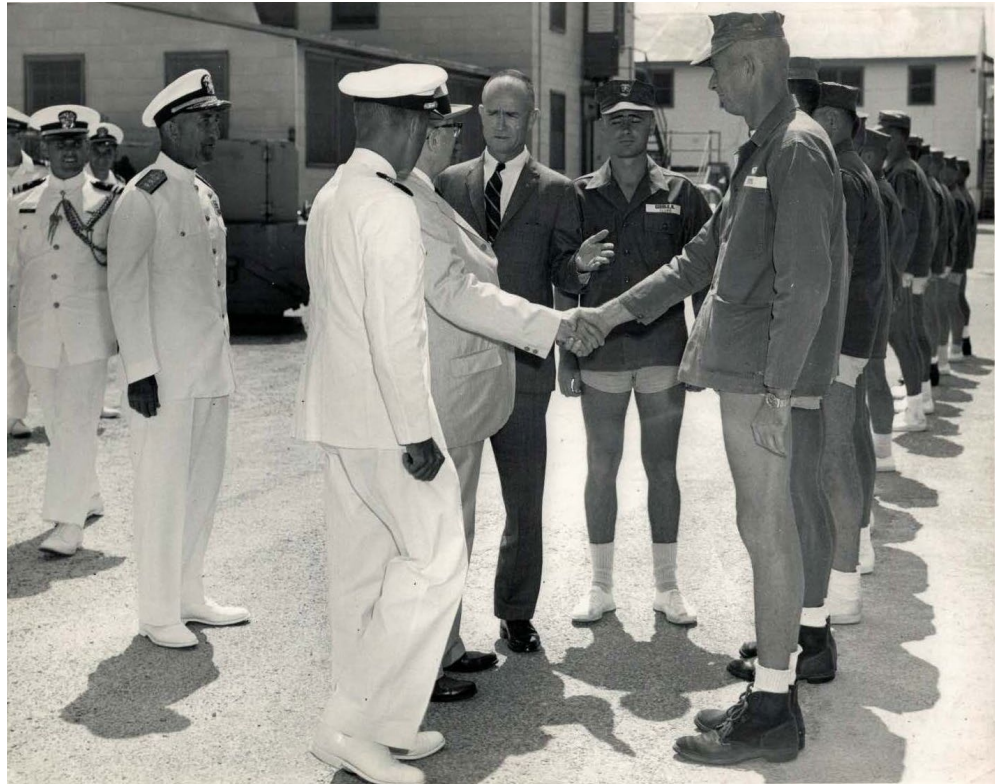
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Chief Byers shaking hands with Truman



My name is Lawrence Keen...I was a 24 year old enlisted Reconnaissance Marine out of Montford Point, Camp LeJeune, N.C. that attended and completed the Underwater Swimmers (Scuba) Course down there in Key West, Florida during the months of late February & early March of 1964 if I remember correctly. I do remember doing swimming qualifications in the 'Officers' swimming pool that was directly across the street from our Scuba building there on the corner. Truman's summer White House (vacation home) was just in back of our building there and right behind our wash rack that was in back of our building and next to the street facing Key West and the bar that was up there on the corner and across the street from the bases front gate.

U.S. Navy Woody Woodward was one of our class proctors during our course until he had a collapsed lung (pneumothorax). (((I just called Woody and I reminded him that he had hosted twice your reunions down there in Key West lately. He said to say hello to all and that he is still alive and kicking but with Parkinson's disease these days))). He ended up marrying one of those beautiful blonde bartenders right across the street from the front gate.

During our class there, I was the #1 swimmer there along with my Marine buddy. Then one day, the then Governor Celica Ferris Bryant (?) had invited dick head Truman over to the school since Truman was down there vacationing next door there at the time. We were instructed to stand by at the wash rack out back while

in our swim trunks, utility jackets, caps, tennis shoes and having 80 (bottles)? on our backs with regulators attached. We stood there on the wash rack deck for hours until Truman and his entourage was to arrive. Finally, when they arrived, they were escorted back to the wash rack where we were sweating our butts off and tired from standing there with those tanks on our backs at ease. Then as normal, they viewed the front row of which I was about the sixth person down from the first man on the front line. I was viewing what was going on from the side of my eye facing to my right. As I was watching what was going on as they arrived to the front of myself. I did notice, that Truman had totally passed up four different individuals who had on a cover with the Marine Corps emblem on it, along with the Marine Corps emblem on their left pocket of their jackets, categorizing them as Marines. As he approached myself, I happened to curse him out slightly under my breathe, but enough for them in the entourage of himself and others on each side of him. I was immediately whisked out of the front row and taken up to the office there at the school.

Upon arriving up at the C.O.'s office of the school, I was hammered about what I had done down on the wash rack. They asked me why I had done this so I told them why. My answer to them was, that I knew from many years, that Harry Truman and his wife never did like the Marines, and in fact, Truman wanted to get rid of the Marine Corps at one time.



I was guessing at that time, that the C.O. & Ex.O. wasn't too happy with me as they then proceeded to inform me that they had made a decision to drop me and send me back to my parent organization (2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, Montford Point, CLNC). Here...I was the top swimmer in the class and my swim buddy and I were #1 in the class standing at that time.

I then informed them that they should call my Commanding Officer first before doing this, as just a suggestion to them in preventing repercussions in their decision to drop me and send me back. That might just make my commanding officer make a decision not to send any more Recon Marines from his command to the UWSS any longer. And here I was, just a Corporal E-4, but with years of service behind me in the intelligence fields with Top Secret Clearances and all from duties in French Morocco, North Africa, Germany, on board various ships doing that intelligence work. I was not just a low ranking Marine and I was 24 years old at the time and had been around the block so to speak.

(Just spoke on the phone with Woody Woodward and got to speak with him for quite a while about old times. We knew each other from various occasions in our careers and one of those when we were both stationed at the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, CA. I, and one other Marine diver, assisted Woody in some deep, quick bounce dives for practice mines off the coast there in San Diego. He said to say hello to all and informed me that he had some Parkinson disease

problems going on at this time and that he was dealing with that and some other issues. It was great getting back together with him for a quickie).

Anyway...and getting back to my story... after speaking with my commanding officer of 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion back there at Montford Point, CLNC, they thence made a decision (due to my C.O. informing them, that if they (UWSS) sent me back to my unit, he would not send any further Marines down to their school), the UWSS thence, put me back into the training there and I (and my swimming partner) finished first of the class...as I was the fastest and most accurate swimmer in the long distance underwater compass swimmers).

Funny as I type this up...I do remember, someone in our class had gone out on a weekend swim and strung a line to the 1,000 yard buoy out from the beach there just East and a short distance from the old trash dump cove there, back to the target beach for the compass swims. One time, a team of swimmers swimming the compass swims from the 1,000 yard buoy, somehow ended up in the trash dump cove. Needless to say, they caught hell from the school instructors.

Another time(s), we ended up swimming through swarms of the Portuguese Man-of-War tentacles (one swimmer with the compass board and the other partner clearing the way through the tentacles). Once on the beach, the instructors had cases of calamine lotion to pour over us



as we were hit so very bad and did not get any real relief until we got back to the showers at the school. We even got hit with them (Portuguese Man-of-War) when we were doing the deep dives and ascents for the diving bell out there in the deep water. I remember getting hit real bad one time when I was down around 100' if I remember correctly here. Chief's Rose, Black, Novak were there also, along with Woodward. I believe it was Chief Novak that was running the Scuba Locker and I would go in and work with him on my extra time, since I was going to run the Boathouse and Scuba Locker once I got back to the battalion.



Wasn't it Chief Novak that made all the various plaques for everyone there? He also made one up for our new forming 3rd Force Reconnaissance Company there in Camp Geiger CLNC when we formed up. I had given him a drawing of a scuba swimmer swimming long wise through our Navy/Marine Corps parachute insignia. It is a beautiful plaque of which I still have in my procession to this day.

I believe it was Chief Rose that was later written up in the Viet Nam newspapers when he assisted in removing a delayed M-79 round from a friendly wounded Marine if I remember this correctly.

It was a real privilege and pleasure to have been selected and able to go through this special training. It stayed with me way past my 23 years in the Marine Corps and into being a diving instructor with PADI there in San Diego for several years (there in Point Loma, S.D.). I'm known around the world from teaching diving students graduating from there. And it all started for me there at UWSS, Key West, Fl.

Thanks to all those that served there when I went through down there over some 60 years now. What a thrill, what a privilege, what an honor, what wonderful memories. All thanks to the outstanding instruction, dedicated and overly qualified instructors and their entire staff there at the school. Thanks everyone and I'm positive, that everyone of us that attended and completed the course, carried on the traditions and honors of the school throughout our careers.

Sincerely and appreciatively yours in allowing me to write something like this up (could go on and on though with all the great experiences we had and accomplished tasks that who knew could be accomplished without this training and dedications).

Semper Fi and 'Fairing Winds, Calm Seas & Safe Harbors' etc...Lawrence Keen
Class of 2 (?) of '64

*Send your memories to
buddyline@uwss.org*



Rudy's Memories

(continued from the November BuddyLine)

When I returned to Indian Head, the news was good. Orders were there to report to the Naval School, Underwater Swimmers upon completion of my course of instruction at the Naval Powder Factory. I also learned Lt. Bill Hamilton had been assigned there also and would be my Executive Officer. Was I lucky?

At the conclusion of EOD, most students continued on to Special Weapons Disposal School. This super secret facility was surrounded by four chain link fences. You had to sign in at the first security check station where you surrendered your ID card. You were then issued a different colored badge containing your photograph to be worn inside the main building. Here we learned nuclear physics and atomic theory. The building contained models of the first atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and the weapon dropped on Nagasaki. We also worked on the first hydrogen bomb and the latest nuclear missile warheads. We were even exposed to experimental weaponry and the hazards of nuclear radiation. The one thing I did learn, however, was to never rely on one's memory. You always referred to technical manuals, doing things step by step in consultation with fellow team members. To do otherwise was to invite disaster. We learned about a serious incident which occurred a few years earlier at Wheeler AFB, Tunisia. An US B-29 crashed and burned with a plutonium bomb aboard. The EOD team rushed in with Geiger Counters to measure radiation. When plutonium burns, it emits Alpha rays, which must be detected by an Alpha Meter and not a Geiger Counter. The seven-man

team had not been clad in impermeable clothing, causing them to become highly contaminated. One team member later flew to Spain on a commercial aircraft and sat next to another passenger. When all team members began to get sick, their radiation levels were checked and found to be so high there was virtually no chance of recovery. They all died, as did the passenger on the plane to Spain. Several other people in contact with this team were also hospitalized for radiation poisoning.

Upon return to the Swim School, a number of changes had taken place. Commander Roe had been relieved by Lcdr Charles Hinman, with Bill Hamilton the XO. The CO was one of the first graduates of the WWII frogman school at Fort Pierce, Florida. Though not an exceptionally fast swimmer, he ran a tight ship and was very supportive. The staff was basically intact, consisting of many war veterans of remarkable quality. When I looked at the staff, I understood why the US had won WWII. There was Chief Jim Hazelwood, a ship fitter. He was aboard Lexington in the Battle of the Coral Sea. While at his gun station, a Japanese bomb exploded near his turret wounding him in the heel. He was in the ship's hospital below decks when the abandon ship order was given. Jim lowered himself to the deck in the smoke filled inferno, using his fingertips to follow weld marks on the plates leading to the nearest exit. He was one of the few to make it out. Jim was later rescued by a cruiser that he remained aboard throughout the Battle of Midway. His vessel was pouring water into the blazing Yorktown when a Japanese torpedo finished off this heroic aircraft carrier. At 43, Hazelwood was a wonder. One of



the fastest swimmers in the school up to 500 yards, he could crank off 200 push-ups on demand. Chief Hazelwood was one hell of a role model. Bob Shouse and Jay Stanley were also graduates of the Fort Pierce frogman school and veterans of the Pacific. Both saw action at Iwo Jima and other islands invaded by US forces. Bob was a strong, conscientious, serious instructor who drew everyone's respect. Bos'n mate Stanley was from the same cut of cloth. Besides a great sense of humor, he had a sensational work ethic. Originally from Alabama, he dedicated his entire adult life to naval service, becoming an officer of the highest quality. Both of these men along with Chief Hazelwood would remain lifelong friends. Frank Kappesser was another great instructor. This wiry athlete was full of pep and vinegar. His quick wit and enthusiasm breathed life into the staff. Dick Tappy is what you would expect of a UDT man. A Popeye-like figure, Tappy kept a smile on his face no matter what the circumstances. The others, Lemay, Crowel, Bowser, Pence, Roper, Del, were equally competent as well. Interestingly, many years later Bill Hamilton would join the CIA and bring with him Shouse, Kappesser, Tappy, and Lee Barber who later joined us at the school. I would work with these men again in the future.

Besides Hinman, Hamilton, and me, the officer staff consisted of Ensign Schlumpberger, whom I replaced as Training Officer, and Dr. Charles Aquadro. Dr. Aquadro was also highly regarded. To my knowledge, he is the only man to have ever survived an air embolism without being severely debilitated. A submarine diving officer, he made a buoyant ascent in the Pearl Harbor submarine escape tank

and passed out on the surface. He went into a decompression chamber where he stayed for two days, coming up on Table IV. Apparently a small bubble from previous lung damage had lodged in his blood. When compressed, it worked its way to the brain causing an embolism. Charlie described this experience as being nightmarish. Ensign Schlumpberger was a real study. He came out of the EOD program and was fairly strong in the water. He was a very intense individual, always trying to prove himself. Our instructors had seen hundreds of Ensigns like Schlumpberger and knew exactly how to handle him. The men respect being led, they don't respect being told. Unfortunately, Schlumpberger's dominant style represented the latter. Soon after I returned to the school, Schlumpberger invited me to join him on a mile run. I wore sneakers and he was wearing boondockers, heavy UDT issue shoes. Nevertheless, he smoked me by 50 yards. Next he asked to be my swim buddy on a 500 yard swim. This time I did a little better and managed to reach the beach 10 yards ahead. This bothered him. Besides Hamilton, he was considered the fastest school swimmer. I could always run faster than I could swim, so I got in shape by running every morning. Two weeks later, I challenged Schlumpberger to run with me. I smoked him by nearly a half track length. From that moment on, he would never run or swim with me. Hamilton was another story. You could run circles around Bill, but he was a real fish in the water. Bill would always cheat and laugh about it. If you got ahead, he would start free styling and zip by. We were not supposed to pull our arms out of the water, using only underwater recovery strokes and by doing so



I could handle him. Bill had been idle for two weeks while I worked out every day. I was convinced this was my time to beat him. I walked into his office saying one morning saying, "Bill, I'm ready for you. There's a 2000-yard swim this afternoon and we're going to find out who gets to the beach first. No holds barred. Anything goes. Use your arms, use your ears, wiggle your tail, I don't care what, it's all fair. The only thing that counts is who gets to the beach first." He looked me in the eye and answered, "Your on, you little squirt, I'll have your ass anyway." We dove off the ramp scrambling to get the smallest edge. I kept my head down and breathed through my snorkel, moving my arms and legs as fast as they would carry me. At the 500-yard mark I looked back and had a 50-yard edge. I opened it to 100 yards at the 1000 marker. There was a good sea running with us at the time yet the swimming was difficult. Water kept entering my snorkel as I my breath shortened. Fatigue set in, but had enough strength to turn my head, look back at Bill, and smile as though I still had a lot left. It just about killed me but was well worth it psychologically. When I passed the 1500 mark I was expecting Hamilton to be out of sight. I was shocked to see him 50 yards behind and still closing. Halfway home I realized he took advantage of heavy inshore waves by body surfing. I tried to do the same without success; my legs were just too stiff. We reached the beach side by side. I had to hand it to him, he was real man. Our time was 17 minutes; the fastest 2000 yards ever swam at the school.

Sigsbee Park was a Naval housing facility east of Key West. My assigned quarters were a two-bedroom house at 2 Main Road. The house sat diagonally across

the street from a protected cove, which was occupied by my fellow Kings Pointer and friend, Bob Stevens. Mickey and I had visited Bob a few years earlier on a trip to the Keys. Bob took us to Cosgrove Shoal on a spectacular diving adventure. I shot a 60-pound amberjack that almost pulled my arms out of its sockets. Bob had a fiberglass plywood boat with twin Johnson engines, enabling him to explore far off places. He was a Navy helicopter pilot attached to Helicopter squadron 5. When flying offshore, Bob always kept one eye open for sunken wrecks hoping to find either the Margareta or the Atocha, two Spanish galleons loaded with treasure. He looked like a red-headed string bean, but was extremely strong and capable in the water. Bob was a first generation spear fisherman. He started diving a few years earlier than me and dove with such legends as the Pinder brothers and many featured in Skindiver Magazine. Across the street to my left lived Dr. Leonard Berg, a diving medical officer assigned to a submarine squadron. Lenny was the consummate light tackle fisherman. I didn't realize what I was missing until he later guided me on a trip where I caught my first tarpon, a 20 pounder, on plug casting gear. While growing up in Miami, Lenny teamed with Stu Apt and others who would someday become famous fishing guides.

(to be continued in the May 2021 edition of the BuddyLine)

What do you remember about your time at UWSS?

Send them to buddyline@uwss.org



MEMBERSHIP JANUARY 2021

Members in database = 285

Members in good standing = 236

We learned about the loss of these brothers this Quarter. Rest in Peace Heros.

- Eugene "Sop" Sopchick passed 8/15/2020 Grad. Class 6410
- William Tamboer passed 1/4/2015 Grad. Class 5503
- David W. Wales passed 10/10/2010 Grad. Class unknown
- Ray Hoglund passed 2/8/2021 Instructor 1954-1957

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

We have had one new member join us in the last Quarter:

- Richard Pambrun 6311 (Lady Pat) 12/24/20

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance:

November 1, 2020	\$16,003.06
Dues Income	+ \$782.60
Label Fees Income	+ \$50.00
Logo Gear Sales Income	+ \$1,514.82
Other (Donations) Income	+ \$0.00

Reunion Expenses	- \$0.00
Logo Gear Expenses	- \$4,357.69
BuddyLine Expenses	- \$157.41
Business Expenses	- \$115.66

Account Balance:

January 31, 2021 \$13,719.72

NOTES AND UPDATES -

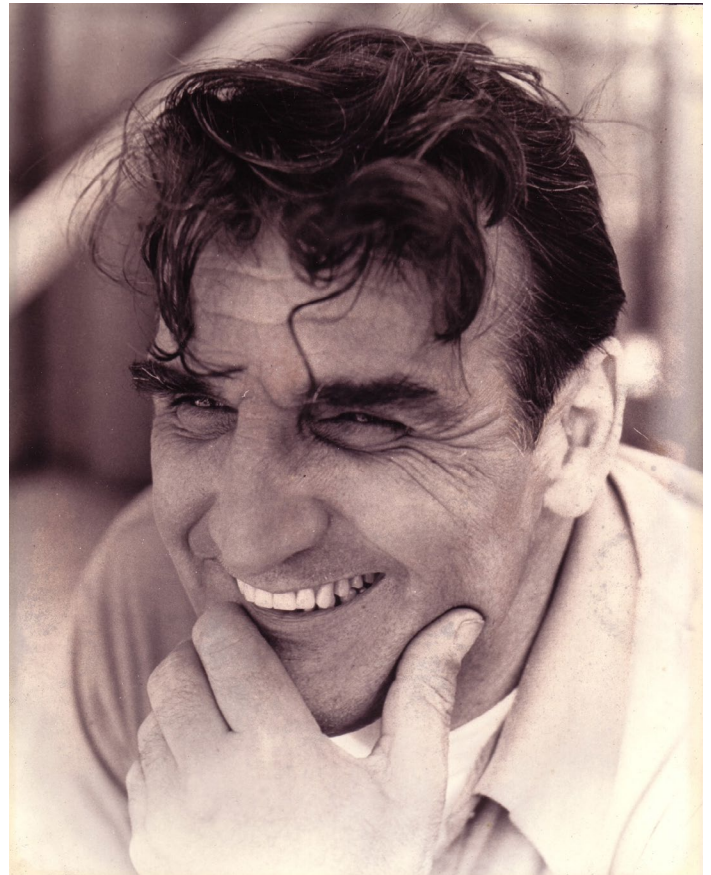
1. If you are able to Volunteer as our FO UWSS Chaplain, please let Dave Byers know asap.
 2. Dave Gholson is our Reunion Committee Chair. For our safety, the Reunion is currently postponed due to COVID 19. Watch for updates.
 3. Jim Houle is our Logo Gear Chair. You can order (and pay) by going to the UWSS Website or by sending an email to: kenrecoy@aol.com And you can also pay by check. My address is in 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 24 members that receive their Buddyline by regular mail.
 5. Please check to make sure you have paid your UWSS Membership Dues. We currently have 114 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 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 if available send in a copy of the Obituary.
 9. It is 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.
- 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 and US Navy Diver.
Join us on Facebook at U.S. Naval Under Water Swimmers School



WILLIAM E TAMBOER

William E. Tamboer graduated from UWSS 5503 and was on Staff at UWSS 1954-56. And his dates of Service in the US Navy are 1950-72

William Edward Tamboer born 17 July 1933 and died January 4, 2015. His Funeral was at the El Cajon Lakeside Santee Mortuary & Crematory in El Cajon, CA., 619-440-8033. And he is buried in the Miramar National Cemetery in San Diego, CA.



EUGENE J. "SOP" SOPCHICK

9 SEP 1925 -15 AUG 2020

In 1942, Sop joined the U.S. Navy and served aboard the USS Monrovia, the USS Barnett, he participated in the WWII invasions of Sicily, Salerno, Normandy and southern France; then, proceeded to the Pacific for the invasion of Iwo Jim and Okinawa. He served as a member of the Commissioning Crew aboard the USS Kitty Wake from 1946-1948, the Torpedo Testing Range, 1949-1952. Home-ported in Key West, FL, he was aboard the USS Penguin, 1953-1955, where he participated in Underwater Swim School and graduated from the EOD School the same year. 1956-1959, he coordinated the



design and supervised the construction of the NAVSCOLEOD Diving Complex. From 1960-1963, Sop's next tour was the EOD Unit One.

After 24 years of active duty, Sop retired in 1966 at the rank of BMCM Master Diver. He began his civilian career: Westinghouse (Saturation Diving Project). Then to NAVEODTECHDIV/Stump Neck Shortly after arrival, Sop began a redesign of the TECHDIV's Diving Complex and later in 1968 he supervised the design and occupancy of the TECHDIV's Hyperbaric Complex. Additionally, in 1976, he supervised the design and building of the TECHDIV's Decompression Chamber.

Over the span of his Navy career, Sop trained and qualified literally thousands of divers. Moreover, under his supervision, innumerable EOD tools, technical procedures and underwater operations were tested; most noteworthy was his instrumental work in getting the MK16 Underwater Breathing Apparatus designated as the "standard" Navy Diving Rig.

DAVID WEBSTER WALES

David was born March 13, 1926 in Abington, MA and died on October 10, 2010 in Marysville, WA. As he requested, no services will be held. No Obituary.

The family would like to thank the staff at Marysville Care Center who gave him wonderful care and were his second family, and to his friends at Windsor Square in Marysville. Donations can be made to Marysville Care Center.



Raymond W. Hoglund

March 2, 1930 - February 8, 2021

In 1947, Ray enlisted in the US Navy. He served at the NAS in Key West, Florida (1947-49). While aboard the USS Macon, Ray volunteer for EOD training. He was stationed in Guam (1950-52) then West Loch, Hawaii (1952-54), Ray was among the first in the US Navy to learn to use SCUBA. This knowledge led to the opportunity to be a plank owner at the Underwater Swimmers School in Key West, Florida (1954-57). Ray next served aboard the USS Midway (1958-60) and then back to West Loch, Hawaii (1960-65). Ray retired after being an EOD instructor in Indian Head, Maryland (1965-67). He found an exceptional quality of men that could be counted on in the Navy's EOD community.

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

