

Buddy Line



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School, Key West, Florida

WHAT'S YOUR SIGN?

by Art Stone



EOD 1-54, FIRST UW/SS CLASS, 01 NOVEMBER 1954:

**Fraternal Order of
Underwater Swimmers
School Officers**



PRESIDENT:

Dave Byers

dabyers@uwss.org
386-295-9050

VICE PRESIDENT:

Dave Gholson

goatlocker@msn.com
(270) 945-0719

**SECRETARY/
TREASURER:**

Ken Recoy

kenrecoy@aol.com
(620) 305-9900

25810 East 330 Road
Chelsea, OK 74016-5262

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EDITORS:

Ray Hoglund

Raelyn Webster

buddyline@uwss.org
(385) 222-9824

PO Box 593
Provo, UT 84603

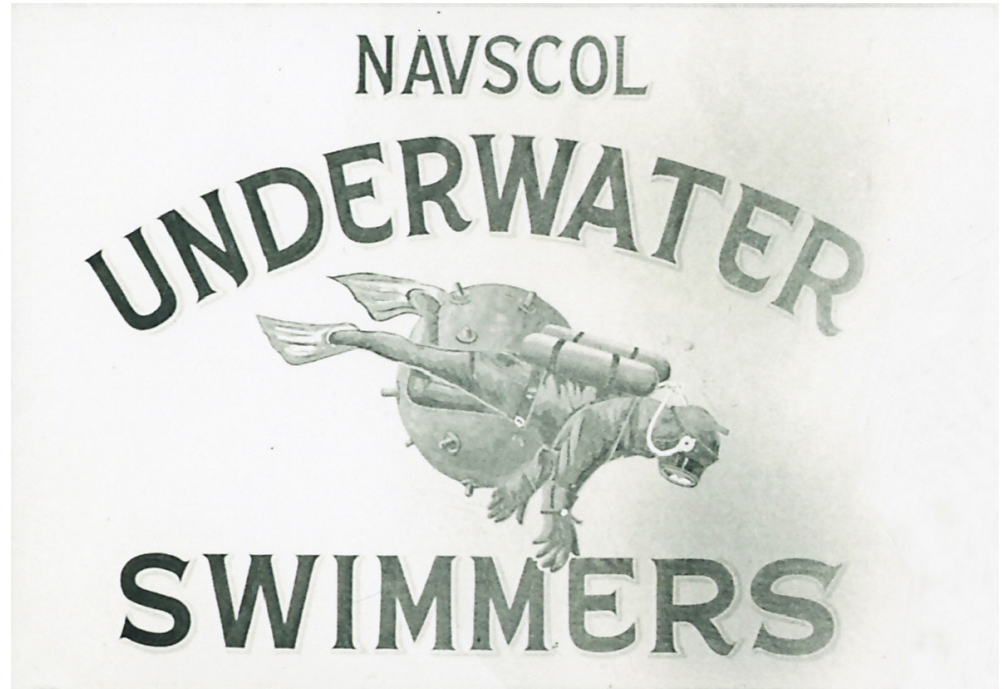
WEBSITE:

Bob Bureker

navybob@q.com

www.uwss.org

1954-1955



EOD 1-54, FIRST UW/SS CLASS, 01 NOVEMBER 1954:

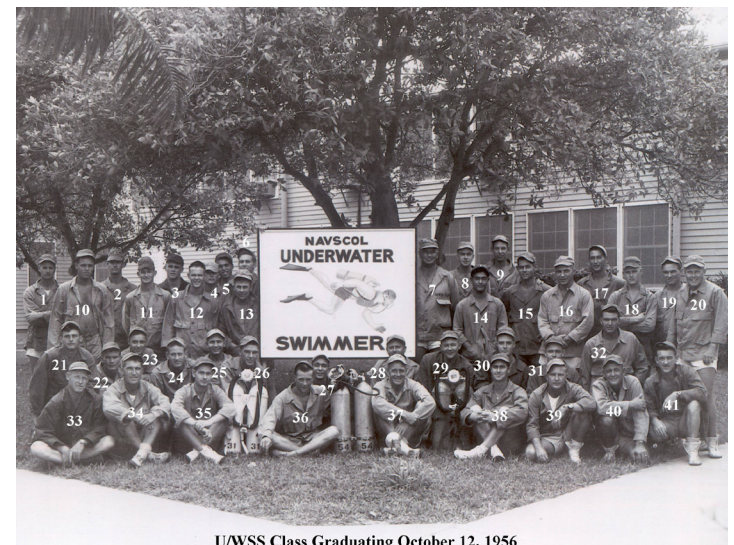
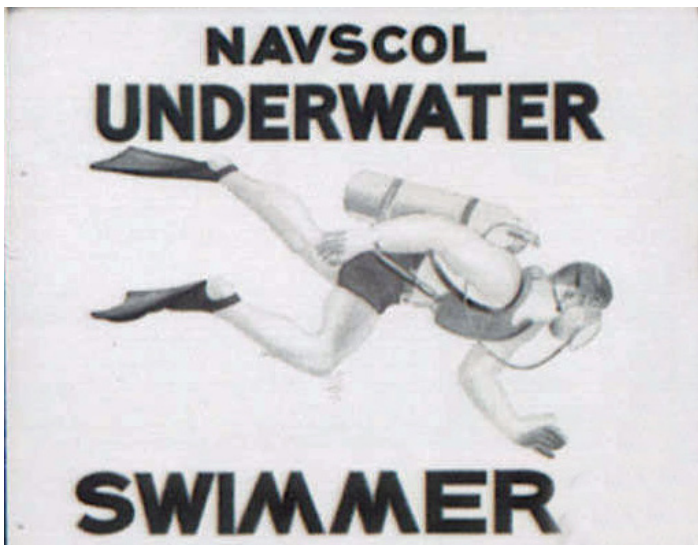
The sign in front of the U. S. Naval Underwater Swimmers School Key West evolved over the years from a flat sign with a picture of a diver and the name of the school to a 3D life size diver riding a shark. Do you remember which one adorned the front yard of the school when you were there? Here is a collection of sign photos to help jog your memory. —Art Stone



1955-1956



1956

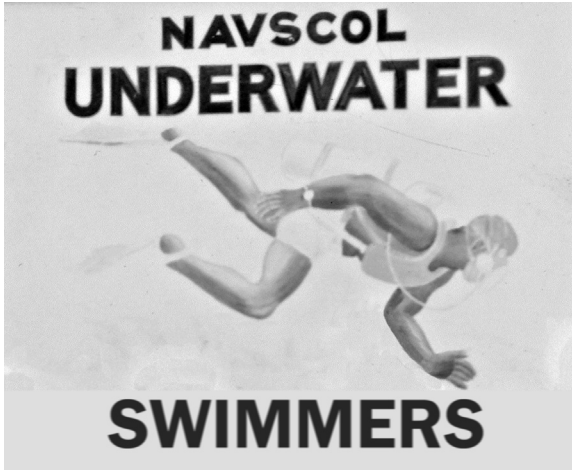


*Do you remember the first time you saw the UWSS sign?
What about class picture day? What do you remember?
Any other stories you can share about the sign in front of the UWSS?*

Send us your memories of the UWSS sign to buddyline@uwss.org



1956-1961



1961-1965



1966-1973





I hope you all had an excellent Thanksgiving holiday. Cheryl and I were part of the migration multitude heading to the special someone(s). For us, it was Buffalo (and yes, it was cold and blowing snow to greet us). The trip back to the warm Florida sun in a couple of days will be a little less stressful depending always on the weather this time of year.

It's already been six months since the reunion and the planning has begun for the next one in 2020. **We are looking for help with organizing the reunion. If you are willing to get involved, we have lots of assignments.** First come – first served.

Right now, the thinking is to have the 2020 reunion in Panama City or maybe Jacksonville, Florida. This is primarily because we always got our best attendance when we had it in Panama City perhaps because the majority of our members reside in the southeast and Texas. We are also considering changing the timeframe to get away from that first weekend in May. Seems it's a popular time for graduations, weddings, cruises, and other life events. Any thoughts along those lines? Let me hear from you.

Some of you may be wondering what happened to the directory idea. A few months back, we announced our intent to publish a member directory like the ones we used to put out every so often. In this age of identity theft, we asked if you wanted to opt out of having your information [City, St, Email] published in

the directory. By opting out, your name would still appear as a member – just no additional information. Several of you answered in the affirmative but others specified what and how information they wanted to appear. That is just totally unmanageable. It was meant for you to either opt-out or by default, we can assume you are good with it. By the way, we did hear from about 60+ who were enthusiastic about the directory.

So we're going to try this again. If you are a member and you want to opt-out of having any additional info as described below to appear in the directory, please let us know. The full listing would appear as:

Lastname, Firstname
City, St
email@email.com

It was a toss-up to offer either email or phone number to give members an ability to contact each other directly. E-mail seems to be safer way to initiate contact than having your home or cell phone number put out there. The directory will be published as a pdf file like the BuddyLine and will not be sold or given out to anyone except members. Other than that, no warranties, guarantees, or promises that you'll ever get spam are given, expressed or implied.

We'll make a formal announcement for members to opt out in the next couple of weeks after this edition of the BuddyLine is published. Stay tuned.

Dave



In the August BuddyLine we asked you to tell us your story of how you got to the UWSS. Here are the stories you submitted.

**Send us your memories
of your journey to UWSS
buddyline@uwss.org**

Early in the spring of 1954 the call went out from BUPER for two instructors at the still to be formed Underwater Swimmers School in Key West, Florida. At EODU-1, we were among the first in the Navy to use the new SCUBA equipment, so we were qualified. I volunteered along with my friend Demofonte.

Prior to leaving EODU-1 West Loch, I turned my car into Naval Supply Center to be shipped to Oakland, California. After finishing instructor school, in San Diego, I picked up my car to start my journey across the United States. This was my first time driving cross-country, the previous times I had gone by airplane, so this was a new experience for me.

After spending the last four years in Guam and Hawaii with a top speed limit of 45 mph, there was a big adjustment to the speed and traffic of the early California freeways. It took me several hours to figure out why some cars were driving with their lights on. I wondered if they forgot to turn them off. I finally learned it was for safety.



*Los Angeles traffic 1954
from USC Digital Library's online archive*

I went south from Oakland to Los Angeles and then headed east toward Las Vegas. The San Joaquin Valley was remarkable for its agriculture and so much green from the irrigated crops. I was struck by the change in vegetation as I drove into Nevada and then across Hoover Dam into Arizona. The stark landscape of sand, rocks and desert vegetation continued until the majestic San Francisco Peak (elevation 12,633 feet) came suddenly into view as I neared Flagstaff, Arizona.



*Flagstaff, Arizona - View of San Francisco Peak
from Lantern Press*



I came across little stands out in the middle of nowhere in Arizona and New Mexico where Indians would be selling their wares. I gained a greater appreciation for the trappers and early settlers and wondered how they survived not knowing where to find water. There were no chain restaurants or motels in those days, they were all little mom and pop places. There were the famous Burma-Shave signs along Route 66 too.



As I drove through Texas, the arid landscape gradually changed to flatter with more naturally growing vegetation as I moved eastward toward Louisiana. In Florida there were little stands that sold orange juice and nuts, I think pecans. In contrast to the tower height of San Francisco Peak, the highest landmark in Florida is just over 300 feet above sea level. By the time I got to the Florida Keys, the highest ground is about 20 feet above sea level.

Traveling down the oversea highway, I still remember fearing that a fisherman would catch a fish just as I drove past and would step back off the narrow ledge (so small that my size 12 shoes hang over) and I would hit him.



*Overseas Highway - Florida Keys, 1957
from State Archives of Florida/Johnson*

It was good to be back in Key West. I really enjoyed my time there at the Naval Ordnance Unit from 1947-49. Somethings had changed, like not as much military presence and cock fights and gambling were not as prevalent but the local people were still the same. I was excited for this opportunity to put my year and a half of SCUBA experience to use and be involved with the new school while sharing my love of SCUBA with others.

from [Ray Hoglund](#)



*house on Margaret Street, Key West 1965
from [activerain.com](#)*



From Portland, OR reserve center on Swan Island. Inshore Undersea Warfare Group sent me to dive school. I was fresh out of Vietnam as an advisor on PBR river boats. Thought I could easily handle anything. That was reinforced when I asked the candidates sent before me who had flunked out even after several nights of stupid study, why they were let go. They told me because they could not leap frog. I asked if they meant bend over and jump over the next guy? Yup, that was it. Well, I was a leap frogging son-of-a-gun. I raised my hand and volunteered.

An EOD Lt rogered up to it and I was on a plane to Key West, FL. Wait a minute. Those guys flunked out of the San Diego school so what was I getting into. The Lt knew but was staying pretty hush hush. I landed and was checked in with hair to the bottom of my ears and no clue what was going on around me. For a Gunners

Mate who made Second Class in country I was very ignorant about any diving program. They kidded me for a couple days then made me get a haircut and square myself away.

The next few days were spent at the pool. Half of those who checked in with me washed out then. I had worked inserting and extracting SEALS in Vietnam so was surprised to find out there were SEAL instructors there. Underwater Swim School, Key West was the beginning of a long job opportunity for me. I was in the navy 32 years and a deep sea diver for 28 years. Had a great time with the instructors and support staff. I met a few throughout the following the years. Seven graduated in my class plus one rollback from another class so we would have enough to dive the hardhat at submarine piers.

from TJ Hodgins



I am an old retired USAF Pararescueman. I was an E-3 stationed at Brookley AFB, Mobile, Alabama, when I got my orders to report to the UWSS@KEY WEST. Brookley AFB a large base, which employed 26,000 civilians with a additional 365 military personal.

I traveled by plane and then by taxi to the school. I arrived there to find 3/4 sailors sitting around a desk, shooting the breeze. I told them who I was and asked what room was mine. That brought a "surprised" look to the sailors faces. On of them, with a voice dripping with sarcasm, stood up and said, "let me show you to your room sir". I didn't realize what a fool I had made of myself, but over the next 4 weeks I was to find out over and over.

I followed the sailor up the stairway to a large room, filled with double wooden bunks. He announced, "These are all yours, sir, pick whichever one you want, and look sir this locker is also all yours - no one else can put anything in it, just you."



Over the next four weeks I was asked to "approved" different lamps, their color and quality, proposed new bedding, etc. etc. The whole class caught on to the joke, and I soon learned to watch what I said.

During the time I was there the Cuban crisis broke, and the class had to pull guard duty. One night a marine decided to sneak up on me. I spotted his shadow and cocked my 45. When I identified (and when I stopped shaking) who it was I cussed him out. Then a Gunny Marine (named Jarbor) came up and really lit into him.

I was assigned a partner from the Coast Guard, a great big fellow who would make 3 of me. He could outswim anybody, but he couldn't handle the undergrowth on the sea floor. He quit after the first night swim. I was one of 3 USAF guys in the class. Dudley Peckinpaugh, who died one day after retiring from the USAF, and Tony Willis -- Tony went to Vietnam, completed a couple of tours and was known for wearing a LARGE pair of panties over his flight helmet. He was married 8 times. He retired to Melbourne Beach, Florida and died a happy man.

from Henry "Harry" O'Beirne

FROM THE MAILBAG:



The entire program of the UWSS was the GREATEST military training I have EVER received; BAR NONE !! USAF PARARESCUE retired MSG.WHOOOYA!!

Tommy Miles Jr. USAF Retired

Just a quick note to say how interesting this new email Buddy Line is. Congratulations on putting out a fine newsletter here.

Chris Seger - UWSS May 1961

Damn, you guys are doing really great on the BUDDYLINE. Reading all those sea stories brings back fond memories while I was an UWSS instructor there.

Have you guys heard or read about the Midnight Swim? Or the Midnight RUN? Maybe some of the Air Force graduates remember. I got a suspended 6 month bust from E-7. I did the run because air force students said that some of the instructors could not do the PT and run that as we forced them to do. I would have never happened but one of those students father was a big wheel in the airforce and contacted the UWSS command. SO they asked students to write one page of what happened. 99% said that i came into the barracks and asked who would go run with me to get dressed and go to the field. Good old days.

Maybe that is why i never got promoted to E-8 or E-9 or E10

thank you, Doc Rio

Thanks for the memories

Bruce Cullen

I just found your web page and looking thru your Newsletters, I found something interesting.

But first, I went thru the class in October 1965. I was a US Air Force Pararescueman. In fact I'm heading to San Antonio, TX this week for a PJ Reunion.

Anyway, I plan on joining UWSS as soon as I get back. I wish I had a class picture but I don't remember ever having our picture taken.

In the November 2016 Newsletter on page 6 you show the history of the Shark Rider decal, coin and patch. On page 7 you show a picture of the shark rider patch from a reader named Mike Cox. You state that UWSS has no record of the patch pictured and to contact Mike if anyone has info on the patch.

Well, I have two of them that I purchased from UWSS while attending there in 1965. One of my PJ classmates also has one of the patches. So I know the Navy School sold them and there should be some type of record of them.

Then I could be wrong, but I'll talk to him about it this week when I see him. Anything could have happened 53 years ago.

Before I join UWSS I'll dig out my Navy Certificate to confirm my dates. I was hoping to purchase the patch but it's not to be.

Thanks, Mike Swafford

We also had some feedback on wanting the BuddyLine printed in booklet style the way it used to be. So starting with this issue, hard copies will be printed on 11 x 17 paper and folder to form a booklet.

**Let us know how we can do better. Send your thoughts to
buddyline@uwss.org**



by Ken Recoy

CLARKE L. GEORGE



January 10, 1941 to November 20, 2018

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER, W-4, Clarke L. George, U.S. Navy (Ret.) He enlisted in the U.S.N. in 1960 and went to ADJ "A" school. While stationed at NAS, Alameda, CA he was introduced to scuba diving and loved it. In 1963, he completed Underwater Swim School, Key West and completed EOD training in July 1964. He served aboard USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) in 1965. Then EOD Unit One in Pearl Harbor. After a three year break he returned to the Navy qualifying with the Hard Hat, Mk V Deep Sea Diving rig and Parachute training and later Jumpmaster Training at NAS Lakehurst, NJ. He was commissioned as a Chief Warrant Officer in 1977. He retired after 24 years in the Navy in April, 1986.

MEMBERSHIP OCTOBER 31, 2018

Members in database = 278
Members in good standing = 223

We have had one new member join us in November:

Daniel Ludwig graduated from UWSS in May 1968. He was a Submariner, Nuclear Machinist Mate and a Diver. He was in the service from 1964 to 1972 and now lives in Redwing, Minnesota.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Account Balance:		
August 1, 2018		\$18,411.01
Dues Income	+ \$348.97	
Label Fees Income	+ \$20.00	
Logo Gear Sales Income	+ \$224.75	
Other (Donations) Income	+ \$0.00	

Reunion Expenses	- \$0.00	
Logo Gear Expenses	- \$143.83	
BuddyLine Expenses	- \$62.33	
Business Expenses	- \$721.89	
Account Balance:		
October 31, 2018		\$18,076.68

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.



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 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, which are held at various locations selected by members' votes.

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