

Buddy Line



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

August 2005

President's Corner by Don Stone

We returned from a five week trip to find a laundry basket full of mail, several logo gear orders, and new member applications from USAF PJ's that had graduated from UWSS. Apparently some pictures and information about FO/UWSS were posted on their web site and four guys responded by joining our organization. A hearty welcome to the PJ's and to all our new members..

Reunion planning is moving along. The results of our survey on whether to have the ice breaker on Thursday night or Friday night were close, but Thursday night won out. Friday's schedule is not firmed up yet but the outlook on a cookout with special forces is promising. We have two super speakers lined up for the banquet Saturday evening, so that is looking good.

There are many optional activities available in the area so allow yourself some extra time if you can. We will report on some of these in the November Buddy Line. The reunion registration form will be in the February 2006 Buddy Line.

The block of 40 rooms that has been set aside for us at the BOQ/CBQ has been popular. Members have been calling and emailing asking for assurance that a room will be held for them since they want to make travel reservations in advance. A list of the members that have requested these rooms has been started; there are 25 names on the list already. If you want a room held for you please let us know, and we will add your name to the list. The plan is to forward this list to the manager of the BOQ in late December. After that time, those on the list can call in to the BOQ and confirm their reservation with credit card data.

Member, Rick LaRoche, author of the Najaf Chronicles, has just safely returned to the US after completing his one year State Department assignment in Iraq as Action Officer for Najaf. He leaves in 2 months for the Consulate in Auckland, New Zealand where he will serve for two years. We have several unpublished Najaf Chronicles that you will be seeing in the Buddy Line. Maybe Rick will be able to join us at our 2008 reunion.

UWSS Volleyball Team Captures Crown!

Lead and coached by Sol Atkinson the Underwater Swimmers experienced little difficulty in capturing the Volleyball Championship. In the course of the season only three matches went the entire three games; and only once was the outcome in question.

The well coached, well disciplined Swimmers, playing the traditional pass, set, kill, proved too much for all opposition. They compiled an 8-0 record and easily proved themselves the class of the competition. John Hobbs and John Rabbitt again and again provided excellent sets for the School's Spikers lead by Atkinson, "Sam" Houston, Ernie Caltenback, Alva Hale, Shelby Jones, William McLaughlin and Tony Smith.

In the first game the Swimmers took the measure of a disorganized 6947th team and quickly gained the advantage. From this moment on the hustling Swimmers easily wrapped up the match.

The following week a surprised group of Swimmers lost the first game to a hopped up VS-30 team. Coaching and discipline paid off, however, as the Swimmers settled down and easily wrapped up the final two games.

Next came the most powerful contender to the Volleyball Crown; NSGA. The Security Group took the opening game but again the Swimmers settled down and played an inspired game of volleyball to take the match.

The two following games proved to be breathers for the Swimmers as they easily defeated the Marine Barracks and Key West EvDet. The Marine Barracks game proved to be one of the best games the School played and they easily pasted the Marines.

The AUW School gave the Swimmers a scare, but again the School settled down and played good volleyball winning the match, by a wide margin.

It looked like the Swimmers had met their match in VX-1 but again coaching and hustling paid off. After winning the first game by a close margin the Swimmers lost the second. In the third game, however, the School finally broke the defensive game of the Airmen and proved victorious.

All that remained was a routine win over the Naval Station and the Underwater Swimmers School wrapped up a very successful volleyball season.



VOLLEYBALL CHAMPS — (back row) ENS. J. A. Smith, ENC S. Atkinson, BMI S. Jones, EN2 S. Houston, HM1 W. McLaughlin, and YNC D. Byers. (front row) EO2 A. Hale, BMI E. Caltenback, AME1 J. Rabitt, GMGS J. Hobbs, and SK2 B. Phillips.

1966 Naval Base Cup Volleyball Tournament

Article sent by Ernie Caltenback

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- August 2005
 164 paid members

Account Balance May 2005	4776.21
Dues	300.00
Logo item sales	286.00
Logo item expense	-342.50
Postage	-42.30
Buddy Line printing	-69.01
Account Balance August 2005	4908.40

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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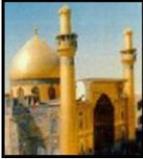
Buddy Line by email

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.

September 2004 - Greetings to all from sandy, dusty and hot Najaf, center of the "known universe" as far as U.S. foreign policy on Iraq is concerned right now. In other words, this is where the rubber meets the road. Little did I know when I was assigned here that the State Department would decide to use the reconstruction and "hearts and minds" effort in Najaf as the model for the remainder of Iraq? In the 7 days I have been here, I have hosted the Ambassador, one admiral and a number of Army and Marine Generals. The Washington Post has called and 60-Minutes was here with a film team. Since I could not get clearance from Embassy Baghdad to be interviewed, I managed to "dodge" them when they "came a calling."

My living quarters are Spartan to say the least. I have a room with a desk, a closet, a bookcase and a bed, but at least it's got AC☺ and my commute to work is all of 1 meter (ca. 3 ft for non-metric types). There is no running water in the building. The closest toilet, aside from the "port o johns" (also known as the blue boxes of death because the temperature is about 125 F inside) is in another building about 50 meters away, while the showers are in a trailer some 200 meters in the other direction.

I try to get up around 06.00-06.30 each morning to get in a "sand run." Four laps around the perimeter equals 2 miles. The El-Salvadorian troops that are stationed here keep blasting out all type of music 24 hrs a day. They play everything from Reggae to Elvis Presley and

country. Sometimes I think I'm back in Key West again when I hear the music. My thoughts drift off to gentle tropical breezes and clear blue water. And then I wake up. Anyway, crazy bunch of guys, but great fighters. Glad they are on our side. A few of them were trapped outside the perimeter in the last firefight, ran out of ammo and had to fight their way back with knives. One of them killed an al-Sadr fighter right outside the gate and ran into camp with his bloody knife still in his hand! I try to do some PT and then get to work. The days are long here, 08.00 to 23.00 or later, but there's nothing else to do except eat. I have been riding around town and meeting the local dignitaries, some of whom speak excellent English after living in exile in the U.S. and the U.K. for decades. I have also met the "Keeper of the Keys to the Holy Shrine," a very interesting figure who will try to get to know better. He wears clothing that looks as if he is part Turkish, part Iraqi and part Iranian – very cool!

Our convoys always consist of three vehicles, including a "heavily armed gunship" in the rear with a massive 50 caliber gun on a mount. As we head through town with sirens wailing (usually on the wrong side of the road to foil possible ambushes and IEDs (improvised explosive devices), oncoming traffic doesn't know what to do. Some stop and put up their hands, but most just pull over to the side of the road. I have visited a training hospital that was "trashed and looted" by al-Sadr's militia before they were driven out the building. They lose a battle, so they deny their fellow Muslims use of the town hospital! Go figure! Right now, al-Sadr and his gang of thugs have been quiet, but who knows what the future will bring? One of his top aids was ambushed and killed just outside Najaf yesterday (something of a "wake-up call" to remember that this is still a dangerous environment), which could bring his militia out in force again. My gut feeling is that we haven't heard the last of him. Only time will tell. That's it for now. May peace be with all of you!

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



Photos from Bob Bureker Operations from the LCU:

Left - Warman, Creighton, Marshall, and Peatie with the Jack Brown shallow water diving apparatus.

Right - Peatie, McVey and others launching the diving bell for buoyant accents.





Class of November 1960 Photo from Bill Arens



U/WSS Class Jan. 1965
U.S. Naval Station,
Key West, Florida

Class of January 1965 – Photo from Bob Bureker

1. Rutledge, Edward A., 2. Creighton, G.A., 3. Turl, Charles Wayne, 4. Marshall, Frank E., 5. McVey, Leonard J., 6. Mickelsen, 7. Burcham, W. R., 8. Rawls, 9. Myers, 10. Bureker, Robert, 11. Michaelsen, Larry, 12. Hills, Willard A., 13. Bantan, 14. Crutchfield, Instructor, 15. Picard, L.F., 16. Aidanati, 17. Berry, 18. Knowles, James R., 19. McPherson, Benjamin C., 20. Warman, Michael S., 21. Peatie, J.A., 22. Wilson

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 more excerpts from his diary.

4June: We started off preparing for our Running Jackstay Bottom Search by coiling 21-thread into barrels. The interruption came about 0915 when I was ordered to report to the Captain. He kept me in his office for quite some time asking me questions, writing down the answers and generally carrying on. Naturally, I had been briefed beforehand by Gunny and Kap and knew nothing about that party the other night. How could I? It took place over five feet from me, the five feet being the limit of my hearing and visibility.

The troops had already taken off to lay the Jackstay by the time I got back below, so I buffed the Training and Instructor's offices, tried to fix my Scott and pressed my uniform while waiting for them to return.

The Running Jackstay lasted all afternoon - five men up the enclosed corridor at one time with a buoy at the #3 position to mark the progress of the men.

After we had returned to the barracks, washed off our gear and hit our cleaning stations, the weekend duty section #3 was gathered in Mr. Jones' office and called up one by one to Commander Roe's office. First: Burke: He was "asleep all Sunday night;" Quinton: he "heard noises on the lawn, but did not recognize any of the voices and did not step out to see anyone." He did, however, issue Kennedy's liberty card. Kennedy goes in and was grilled for an hour. MacKenzie "saw nothing and heard nothing" and was given the advice that "you'd better stand a more vigilant watch in the future." Naturally, I rose indignantly to the occasion and launched a tirade.

While waiting, Bostain and I split a doubles cribbage game with Henry Stables and Mr. Jones. Nuttall brought chow over for us from the mess hall and we had a picnic in the Instructors' office.

5June: Underwater photography classes were given all morning by Chief Vann. I believe it is safe to say that I learned more in one hour in his class than I have ever before about photography - not the prize-winning photo type of learning, but the mechanical and theoretical operation of the cameras themselves. In addition to the "book learnin'," it somewhat awed us all to hold in our hands the \$700 and \$2,200 Fenjohn cameras.

The much dreaded full dress trial of the Northhill came this afternoon. Surprise! They turned out to be favored by almost all of us. Al and I got rolled up onto the beach first again - 16 minutes and 400 pounds for 750 yards was enough to win, but hardly anything sensational.

I received a letter from Chuck Hines inviting me to anchor a 200 meter medley relay in the JCC meet in Rochester in early July in company with Chuck, Mike McLean and Bill Comstock. I didn't take any time at all before accepting the offer, even at an age where it could be sufficiently embarrassing to be competing, even though it is for an American Record.

6June: I wish that I were so facile with a pen that I could recapture the grandeur of this day. Everything went right; nothing untoward blighted the hours of training. The weather was even cooperative.

The morning started out by all of us loading up a few lungs in the "cattle car" and heading for Boca Chica NAS and the fresh water in the pool there. FRESH WATER! The water/ Copper sulfate blue. The sun? High and not too hot. The day itself? Glorious.

Quinton, Wallace and I were subjects for the underwater "moom pitcha" camera with our outstanding exhibitions of ditching and donning of the three lungs.

Then - all hands got to operate the still camera - taking pictures of each other in ridiculous underwater poses. As it turned out later, Vann had shot my camera before I got my hands on it, so Al's picture didn't even exist.

The "work" finished, we adjourned to the shallow end for relays - no hands, no feet, no hands or feet. Kap, Gunny and I played hand-slapping with Devlin. It is a remarkable game which can go on for hours with barely a pause except for stifled merriment. I'd be willing to wager good mazuma that Devlin's hand has never been quite the same since that concentrated attack upon it.

The afternoon started off with the demolitions test - a 94 on my part was good for only 4th place in the class results, but good on the other hand for two points better than Louis Anderson - chief rival for first place honors in the final class standings. That was enough.

Into the water again! 750 yards - rubber suits and aqua-lungs. First on the beach? Ahem. Eighteen minutes and 750 pounds of air. Butch came out with elephantiasis again - this time the "swelling" being confined to his pedal regions. It seems he has worn off the beer gut which came ashore with him the other day.

Three hours of rest and then back in again. This time it was a 1,000 yard aqua-lung dogleg course that awaited us in the warm, calm waters of the sea. Twenty minutes and 800 lbs. of air.

The water was clearer, almost, than the daylight could have made it. We could see, with the fluorescence, nearly as far. I could nearly forget to add that the compass work was perfect for a change.

To close the evening, a beer, a watch, a letter home, a letter of suggestions to the next group of Marines to come through here - and bed.

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

Photo from Bernie Campoli



This view of NAVSTA Key West looking toward Mallory Square in the early 60's no longer exists. All of these bldgs have met the wrecking ball. Top Left: Sub piers, workshops, and support buildings. Near Center: NEX, theater, bowling alley, etc. Other buildings include Sub barracks, Acey Deucey Club, Marine Barracks, Underwater Swim School, and NAVSTA Admin Bldgs.

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