

# Buddy Line<sup>®</sup>



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

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November 2017

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## ***KEY WEST HERE WE COME***

The Key West reunion that everyone wanted is coming a year early. The date for the next FO/UWSS Reunion has been set to May 10-13, 2018 in Key West, Florida. Since that is Mothers Day weekend we are planning special activities for families and to honor mothers.

Accommodations are being made available for us in the Fly Navy building (Gateway Inn). Information about making reservations will be in the February issue of the Buddy Line.

The reunion will kick off at 1400 on Thursday with a time to sign in, pick up badges, and browse the Lolo Gear store. The Icebreaker starts at 1600 at the Chief Petty Officers Club.

We are invited to tour Special Forces Underwater Operations Center on Fleming Key on Friday. Then we will have a tour of Key West with a special loop for remembrance of the Truman annex where we all trained, see where the school was, the boat house and the beach where we swam to back then. We'll wind up the day with a BBQ at the Chief Petty Officers Club at 1600. We'll finish the evening with an auction if enough "old stuff" is donated by members, so bring some treasures and some junk from UWSS days

Saturday morning we have the business meeting at 0900. The first order of business will be election of officers. A slate of candidates for president, vice-president and secretary/treasurer, nominated by the board from a list of volunteers, will be



presented and additional nominations will be accepted from the floor. The second business is choosing the location of the next reunion. After the business meeting we have free time until the banquet at 1800

The February Buddy Line will have more information about activities for the ladies and for families. We hope to wind up this reunion with a Mother's Day brunch Sunday morning to honor mothers, and fortify you for your travels.

See more reunion information on page 3

**UWSS LOGO ITEMS**

**All prices include shipping.**

Beefy-T t-shirt.....25.00 ea  
white or ash gray, large logo back, small logo pocket  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL\*

Long sleeved t-shirt.....28.00 ea  
white or ash gray, large logo on back,  
small logo on front (no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL\*

Polo shirt 50/50 cotton/poly.....28.00 ea  
white or ash gray, small logo on pocket.  
Sizes M, L, XL, XXL\*

Pique polo all cotton.....29.00 ea  
birch gray, embroidered logo left front ,(no pocket)  
Sizes S, M, L, XL, XXL\*

Blue denim shirt, short sleeves .....38.00 ea  
embroidered logo above pocket  
Sizes M, L, XL, XXL\*

**\*All shirts size XXL add \$2.00 ea**

Cap – natural with logo .....20.00 ea

Baseball cap – blue, embroidered logo.....30.00 ea  
**Cap 3.00 less if ordered with shirt**

Embroidered Patch ..... 12.00 ea

UWSS logo decal – transparent or white .....3.00 ea

UWSS commemorative coin ..... 12.00 ea  
enameled brass, raised design, 1 5/8 inch diameter

UWSS all-service commemorative coin..... 15.00 ea  
enameled brass, raised design, 2 inch diameter

Key Chain with enameled logo medallion ..... 10.00 ea

**Make check to FO/UWSS**

**Send with order to Bob Shouse Jr., Treasurer  
274 Boca Ciega Point Blvd N.  
St Petersburg, FL 33708**

Questions? e-mail: [stonefish8@gmail.com](mailto:stonefish8@gmail.com)  
or phone (561) 391-6727

*All logo items are pictured on the web site*

**Secretary/Treasurer's Report**

Membership November 1, 2017

Members in database	226
Members in good standing	124

Account Balance August 31,2017	\$13,293.66
Dues	+650.98
Logo Gear Sales	+292.61
Logo Gear Purchase	-179.76
Logo Gear Postage	-42.65
Buddy Line Printing & Mailing	-67.08
Account Balance November 1, 2017	\$13,947.76

**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 to1973.

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.

**FO/UWSS Officers**

President.....	Bob Bureker
Vice President.....	Dave Byers
Secretary/Treasurer.....	Bob Shouse Jr

The Buddy Line newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August and November.

Buddy Line editors are Don and Art Stone.

e-mail: [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org) phone: (561) 391-6727  
snail mail: 1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Ave., Boca Raton, FL 33432

**WEBSITE: [www.uwss.org](http://www.uwss.org)**

**Buddy Line by 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 mail out. To receive the Buddy Line by email, send your request to [buddyline@uwss.org](mailto:buddyline@uwss.org).

**Dues** (\$25.00 for 2 years) are payable in May of odd numbered years. Your paid thru date can be found on your label or in the Buddy Line delivery email. Make check to FO/UWSS and send to Bob Shouse Jr., 274 Boca Ciega Point Blvd N., St Petersburg, FL 33708.

## The Executive Corner

Bob Bureker, President

Dave Gholson is a true hero of our Reunion Plans and has been working hard to batten down our 2018 Key West Reunion. He has a fantastic plan and has great contacts in Key West. The 10–13 May 2018 schedule uses the Chief Petty Officer Club as the center of operations.

Yes, we know it is Mother's Day Sunday. However, there is a special plan in the works for honoring our beloved mothers. More to come as the plans firm up in the future. It will be great to see Key West again under better physical comfort conditions than the training program we all had the honor of enjoying in our past involvement.

The sad news is that Don and Art Stone will be stepping down as Logo Store Operator and Buddy Line Editor in May. The Last Man Standing survey provided several members who want to serve in various positions for the organization. Now is the time to step up and get ready to participate.

The FO/UWSS board will be having an online Board meeting soon and will be reviewing the volunteers for UWSS officer positions and operation of the Buddy Line newsletter and Logo Gear store to be ready for the changeover at this Reunion.

We owe a great deal of thanks for the service of the current board members and all the hard work it takes to put together the Reunions and keep the Logo Store and Buddy Line going.. Now it is time for others to put in time and effort to continue the operations necessary to keep on with a great tradition.

I will continue to provide the free web hosting and website operations in the future as long as my health allows. However, I will be stepping aside as President in May. It has been a pleasure working with our current board members and I know some of our exceptional members will be able to do an excellent job in the future. I am looking forward to enjoying many more reunions in the coming years.

## Welcome new members

Robert E. Blansett, Virginia Beach, VA  
USN 62-81, UWSS 1969 EOD

Nelson Citta, Lake City, FL

Donald A. Ashby, Virginia Beach, VA  
USN, UWSS Class 7AUG70

## Reunion information

Continued from page 1

### Tentative Schedule

**10-13 May, Key West Florida.**

#### Thursday

**1400-1600 Sign in, get goody bags, badges**

**1600-2100 Ice Breaker, Chief Petty Officers Club**

#### Friday

**0900-1100 Visit to Special Forces Underwater Operations Center**

**1600-1900 Cookout – Chief Petty Officers Club**

**1900-2100 Auction**

#### Saturday

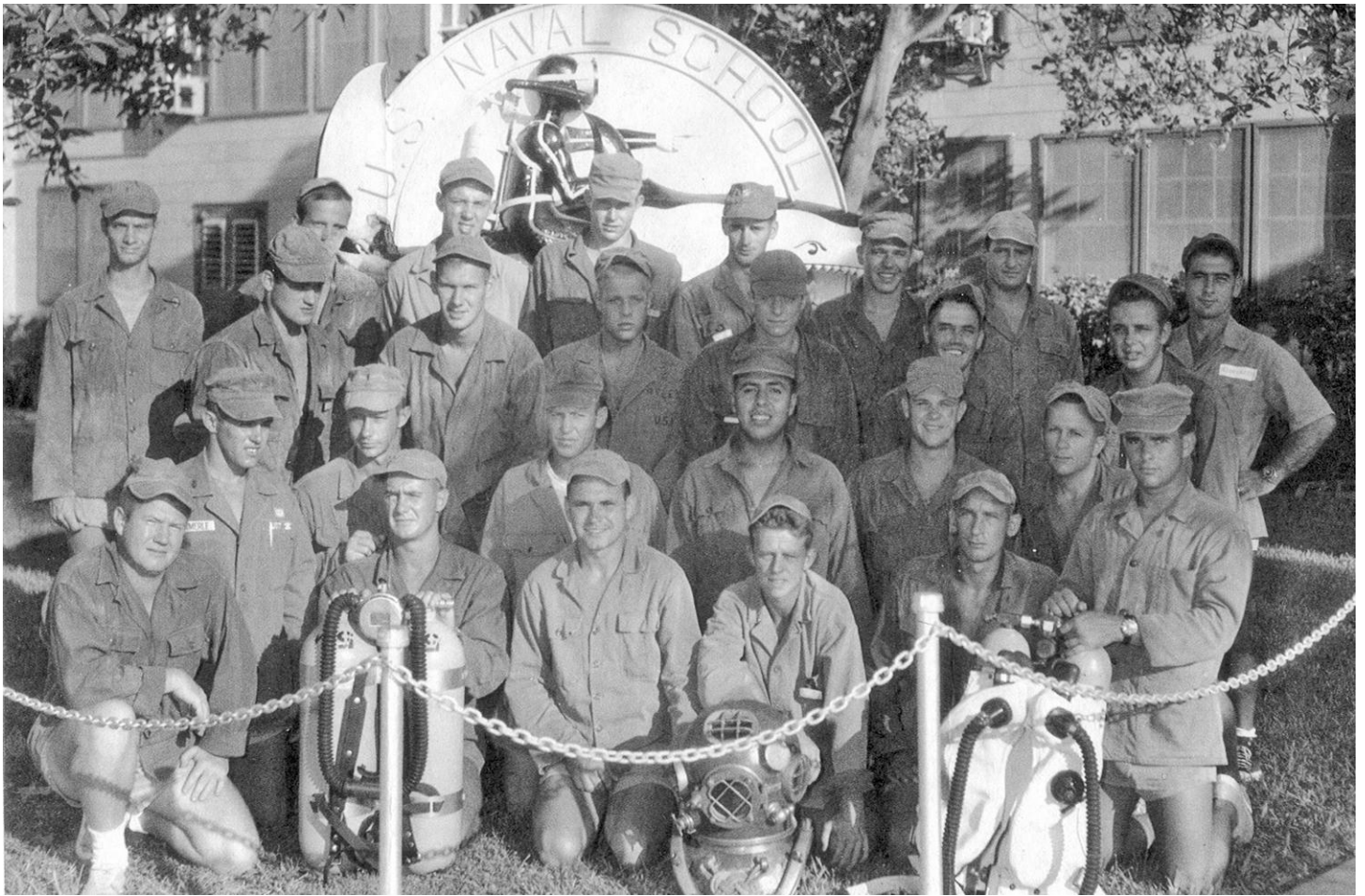
**0900-1100 Business Meeting**

**1100-1800 Free time**

**1800-2200 Banquet To be announced**

#### Sunday Mothers Day

**Optional activities to honor mothers**



Unidentified class photo from the archives. Can you identify the class or the students?



UWSS Staff 1973

## Remembrances of U.S. Navy Underwater Swimmers School

By Chris Segar

The choice to join EOD after OCS sent me to Underwater Swimmers School in Key West, Florida in the spring of 1961.

The school day started with an hour of heavy calisthenics led by the very fit Don Stone, followed by a two-mile run through the town and out to the sugary beaches of Key West. Running in soft sand was much harder than jogging along on a street.

We kept up a good pace, as we chanted bawdy songs and counted cadence together. Going by the Marine barracks included a version of *"I don't want a BAR, all I want's a candy bar...take me to the Coke machine, I'm a candy ass Marine."*

In the beginning of training thighs were burning and we were sweating profusely when we came to the turnaround point on the beach where we were allowed a short rest before running back to the base. Initially, it required considerable willpower for me to stay with the pack, but as the days went by it became much easier, and eventually was something we looked forward to every morning.

Besides demanding workouts, our days in dive school were filled with classroom time studying the equipment, learning the science of diving, and beginning to use the equipment in the pool. Arcane theories such as Boyles Law and the Partial Pressure of Gasses were explored and mastered. I was not a science major in college, so I found myself scrambling to understand the physics and consequences of diving pressures, gas mixtures, nitrogen narcosis, and the bends. Our lives as divers would depend on how well we mastered these theories.



In the classroom, in the pool, and on the dive barge we learned every detail of the various diving equipment. My favorite rig was the old Mk V. Getting into this rig took some time. First came the thick rubber and canvas suit with the cumbersome three-fingered gloves, then the 35-pound canvas and bronze shoes. I then sat on a little three-legged



stool while my diving mates put the heavy chest plate over the rubber neck piece with the bronze studs sticking out to secure the chest plate to

the diving suit. In the photo are training officer, Dave Schaible, my dive buddy, Peter Wells, George Coughlan and Ed Abel.

The helmet came next, and if one were in the least bit claustrophobic, this is where you would find out. The crew lowered the spun copper helmet over my head, and, with a clank, it dropped into the bayonet type fitting. With a slight jerk to the right, the helmet threaded tightly into the breast plate and I was locked inside. I could see out of the helmet through four small portholes, one directly in front of my face, one on either side and one slightly above me. All communication took place with a two-way radio in the helmet through a speaker just above the right ear.

Now I stood up and my dive mates eased the 85-pound weight belt over my shoulders and buckled it in front. I checked communications, confirmed my knife was in place, and the air was turned on. Excess air was dumped from the rig by pushing a chin button inside the helmet. When ready to dive I awkwardly moved over to the ladder at the stern of the dive barge.

Continued on page 6

**Remembrances** Continued from page 5

In Key West, I weighed about 150 pounds wearing only my skivvies, but fully dressed in the Mk V rig I weighed an additional 185 pounds.

Walking around on a heaving dive barge was not easy, but once down the ladder and into the water the Mk V rig was in its element.

The hissing sound of incoming air and the steady voice of the dive master calmed the adrenalin rush that came as the surface slipped away above my viewing port and I eased down toward the ocean floor, connected to the surface by my air hose and a thick steel wire.

Each 33 feet I descended added another atmosphere of pressure--about 15 pounds-- to every square inch of my body, including my ears. In the hard hat rig, there was no way to relieve the pressure except to yawn vigorously or to place my lip on the edge of the port in front of my face and push it up against my nose. If I blew against my

nostrils I could equalize the pressure and continue the descent. Sometimes I was not able to do that maneuver and had to ascend a few feet to ease the pressure and try it again.

If I did it right, I could fill the suit and helmet with just the proper amount of air so that I was slightly negatively buoyant, and my descent was gradual and controlled. Too much air and I would float back to the surface; too little air and I would plunge out of control toward the bottom.

It was a marvelous sensation to descend from the surface in a gradual freefall with the sound of gurgling air escaping from the helmet dump valve and the colors of the surface gradually losing their intensity until I reached the sandy bottom 125 feet down, and became part of a gray-white monochromatic and alien world.

There was plenty of light at that depth because the white sand reflected it, but there was very little marine life. No coral, few fish, and only the occasional sea slug on the bottom.

TO BE CONTINUED





**New Member Application**  
**Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School**

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City St Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

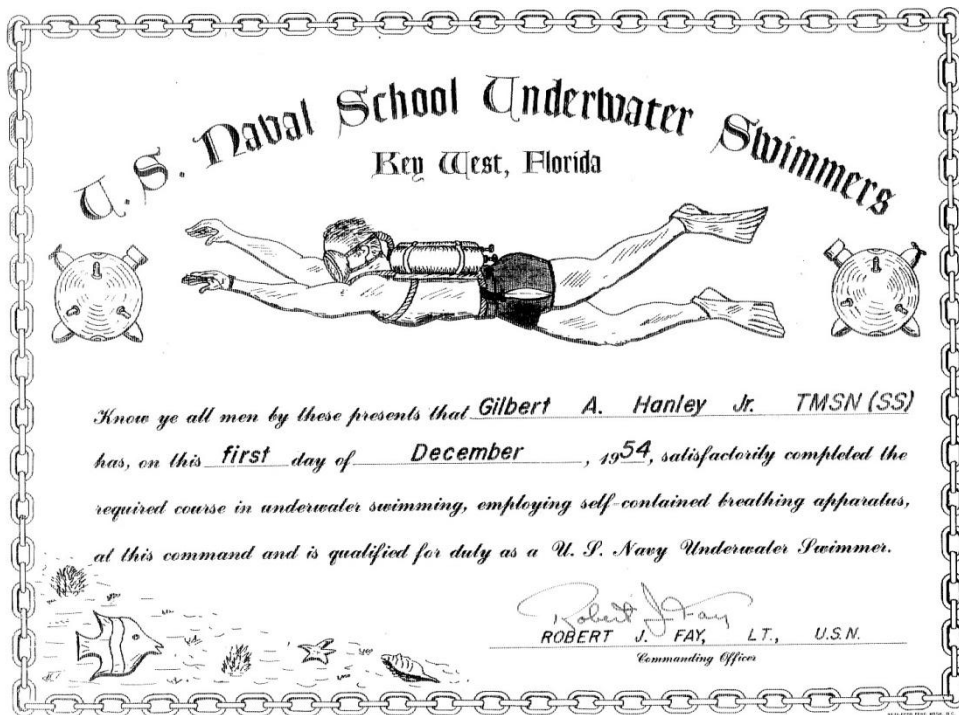
Wife's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Buddy Line Newsletter by email \_\_\_\_\_ or snail mail \_\_\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates & Class # at UWSS \_\_\_\_\_

Send copy of class picture if you have one.      2 Year Membership \$25.00      Make check payable to FO/UWSS  
and mail to Bob Shouse Jr, Treasurer, 274 Boca Ciega Point Blvd N, St. Petersburg, FL 33708

## The way it was....



Fraternal Order of Underwater Swimmers School  
Buddy Line Newsletter  
1440 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Boca Raton, FL 33432