

USS SAM HOUSTON VETERANS' ASSN.

SM



(SSBN/SSN 609)

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1st Edition

2009

A Society of Distinguished Naval Veterans
Web Site: www.USSSamHouston.org

The Raven



An official publication of the USS Sam Houston Veterans' Assn.

Message From the Acting Chairman

Shipmates & Associate Members:

I thank **Jeff Walsh** (STS2, 86-89, SSN) for volunteering as our Newsletter Editor. This edition is his first production, and I trust that you will find that it meets your expectations.

The reunion-planning process is moving "ahead full," and I anticipate that I will select the host hotel by mid-April 2009 after having sifted through mounds of information from each of the three contenders. As I have repeatedly mentioned, the choice involves getting the best deal for the dollar, and this is simply not the cheapest prices. The decision also involves another important matter—attrition. While this might seem insignificant to unsuspecting reunion planners or those planners who ignore this situation, attrition intrinsically carries penalties. Nevertheless, I expect to meet with the sales staff of the selected hotel in Apr or May of 2009 to discuss details of our planned functions to ensure compatibility with the function spaces already mentioned during my previous visits. We will also establish menus and specifics for the function-room setups. Additionally, details and prices with the destination-management service (tour company) will be worked out. After all of this, I will prepare the Reunion-Information Packet (RIP), a large document that will contain details of reunion venues, prices, and a registration form. Registrants will pick and choose the activities that they want to be involved. Attendees will make their room reservations directly with the hotel. The RIP will contain a group code to use so that the contracted, discount room rate will apply.

Please read on for more interesting info.

Fair winds and following seas,

Howard Dobson (ETR2; 69-72, gold)
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner

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Message From the Vice Chairman

Hello, all shipmates & Associate Members:

My name is **Jeff Walsh**, and I have asked our Chairman to let me assist him by taking on the duties as the Newsletter Editor and Vice Chairman since he has his hands full planning our reunion for the fall of 2010. A real quick and dirty history of my tour on the Sam Houston: I was assigned to her during 1986 to 1989 as a member of the Sonar Division. I also served as Deck LPO and Dry Deck Shelter (DDS) Coordinator. I left the ship in the middle of deployment in 1989 while the ship was in Subic Bay.

“The “Raven” is your publication, and I have found that it not only serves as a source of important data but as a way to bridge the gaps from the ship’s SSBN-to-SSN era. I have enjoyed reading the stories from the crews that came before me and would love to find stories from those who came after my tour, as would others. The Sam Houston has a long history with numerous sea stories that I think we all would love to recall and laugh over.

In this edition of “The “Raven,” there is a copy of “The Shaft.” I found it quite interesting, and for those who remember seeing it originally, I hope it brings back fond memories of the shipmates that you served with during that time.

So search your old records and files for those old Sam Houston documents that you would like to share with the rest of the Association.

***Jeff Walsh (STS2, 86-89, SSN)
Vice Chairman & Newsletter Editor***

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Groton, CT 06340

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Volunteers Still Needed to Fill Vacancies on the Board

The shipmates listed below have volunteered for the positions indicated:

- **Jeff Walsh** (STS2, 86-89, SSN): *Vice Chairman and Newsletter Editor*
- **Mark Manzer** (STS3, 79-82, gold): *Treasurer*
- **Art Sullivan** (MT1, 70-75, gold): *Finance Committee*
- **David Dinwiddie** (MM2, 85-89, SSN): *Chaplain*
- **Pat Pecorelli** (IC2, 69-72, gold): *Storekeeper*

The Following BoA Positions Remain Open or Will Become Open

Chairman

I, **Howard Dobson**, fill this position in an acting capacity. This means that I have not been elected to the position and am essentially self-appointed. Because the SHVA is not yet a formal society, this was necessary to get it started. Formal elections will occur at the Business Meeting during our reunion. The situation with the Chairman position for me is that I do not wish to remain in this position and function as Reunion Planner simultaneously. I can best serve the SHVA as Reunion Planner. Besides, both positions will have voting rights, and no individual will be able to hold two such positions on the BoA simultaneously.

The major duties of the Chairman are to:

- Manage the overall operation of the SHVA.
- Preside at meetings and functions (or delegate others!)
- Approve spending and reimbursements.

This position will not be overwhelming, and I will always be available for consultation.

Chief of the Boat (Position does not require the individual to have been a Chief Petty Officer)

The major duties of the COB are to:

- Manage membership.
- Perform ancillary functions at meetings as needed.
- Produce mail labels or related files for various mailings of the SHVA—maybe.

This position will require knowledge of a basic use of either Microsoft Excel or Microsoft Access. (**Howard Dobson** might perform the function of producing mail labels and related files as this requires more than basic knowledge of the computer programs mentioned.)

The Following non-BoA Positions Remain Open

NOTE: Any individual—First Mate or nonmember—can fill any of these non-BoA positions.

Recording Secretary

The major duty of the Recording Secretary is to produce the minutes of the Board of Advisors (BoA) and Business Meetings.

Reunion Committee

This will consist of 3-4 people who will help with activities for and during our reunions. This committee essentially will be inactive at other times but reactivated a few months before a reunion.

Nominating Committee

This is a one-person committee who duties are to:

- Assemble names of nominees for elections.
- Present the candidates at the Business Meetings.
- Conduct the voting.
- Swear in new and old members of the BoA during the banquet at reunions.

Volunteers Still Needed to Fill Vacancies on the Board, continued

I do not anticipate that anyone will be overwhelmed when serving in any official position because I plan on keeping things simple—from the organization through the reunions. Also, I do not expect that meetings of the BoA will be necessary between reunions. As such, members of the BoA should not have to travel to attend any meetings other than the ones that will occur during our reunions. The use of e-mail and phone calls should be sufficient for conducting official business.

Serving in any official position of the SHVA will not require the individual to attend a reunion or an unlikely special meeting. If you are interested in filling one of these vacancies, please let me know.

Howard Dobson
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner

Membership Dues to Begin in 2009

Once our Treasurer has established a bank account in 2009, I want to begin dues collections because administrative costs of the SHVA are mounting. \$20/yr. for shipmates and \$15/yr. for Associate Members will probably be sufficient. All dues will be payable to the Treasurer by check or money order. I am contemplating issuing membership cards yearly, but I need to investigate the cost and any advantages of doing so.

Regardless of when dues start, I intend to operate the SHVA immediately as if we are incorporated and have acquired a tax-exempt status with the IRS. Hence, all monies received will be managed under the requirements of those two situations. This assures that monies will be used only for legitimate purposes of the SHVA from the beginning. Once we become incorporated and acquire the tax-exempt status, no changes will be required in the financial aspects of our operation.

I will notify you when to mail your dues payments in a subsequent newsletter or a special mailing.

Howard Dobson
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner

Bylaws Being Drafted

Based on my experience with the Destroyer Leader Assn.—another military-reunion association of which I am a member and had served on the board of directors—and a suggestion from **Rod Johnson** (ETN2, 64-65, gold) who is a member of the USS James K. Polk Assn., I have decided that our bylaws should be a combination of these two organizations with the bulk of the regulations based on those of the Polk. The final version of the bylaws to be submitted for a vote of acceptance will be fine-tuned to allow balloting by e-mail and postal mail which is a method that I feel would be the heart of facilitating conducting our business. Hopefully, I can have a draft ready by late 2009.

Howard Dobson
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner

The deck of a Russian nuclear sub provides a comfortable bed for a weary walrus!



Westinghouse Port Main Engine Plaque

To raise money for the SHVA, **Tim Bohdan** (Lt., 87-90, SSN) has graciously offered, for auction or raffle, a splendid keepsake from the USS Sam Houston. The wooden plaque contains the nameplate that was affixed to the port main engine. The plaque was presented to Tim as a gift from his shipmate **Ron Focia** (SSN) who was still serving aboard the Sam Houston during its decommissioning phase in the early 1990s. The inscription reads, "**FROM THE PORT MAIN ENGINE OF THE FIGHTING THUNDER-CHICKEN. HERE'S YOUR PIECE OF THE PIG.**" The submarine warfare insignia (the Dolphins) is etched in exquisite detail below the inscription. According to Tim, the starboard main engine nameplate was retained by Ron. Assuming the main engines were fabricated several years before commissioning, this nameplate must be approaching 50 years old.

It has been proposed that we have an auction night at the "main event" of the reunion. This would be a ton of fun. I suspect that we can round up all sorts of memorabilia. Perhaps, you can invite others to donate keepsakes worthy of the auction. Who knows? If we can gather enough valuable items, the turnout for the reunion event might increase.



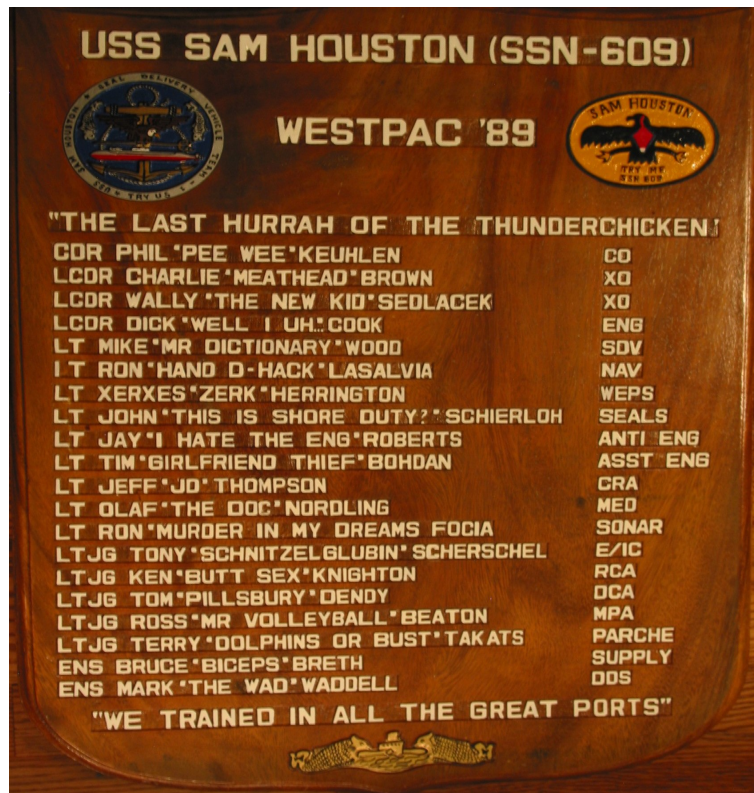
USS Sam Houston (SSN 609) July-December 1989 WestPac Plaque

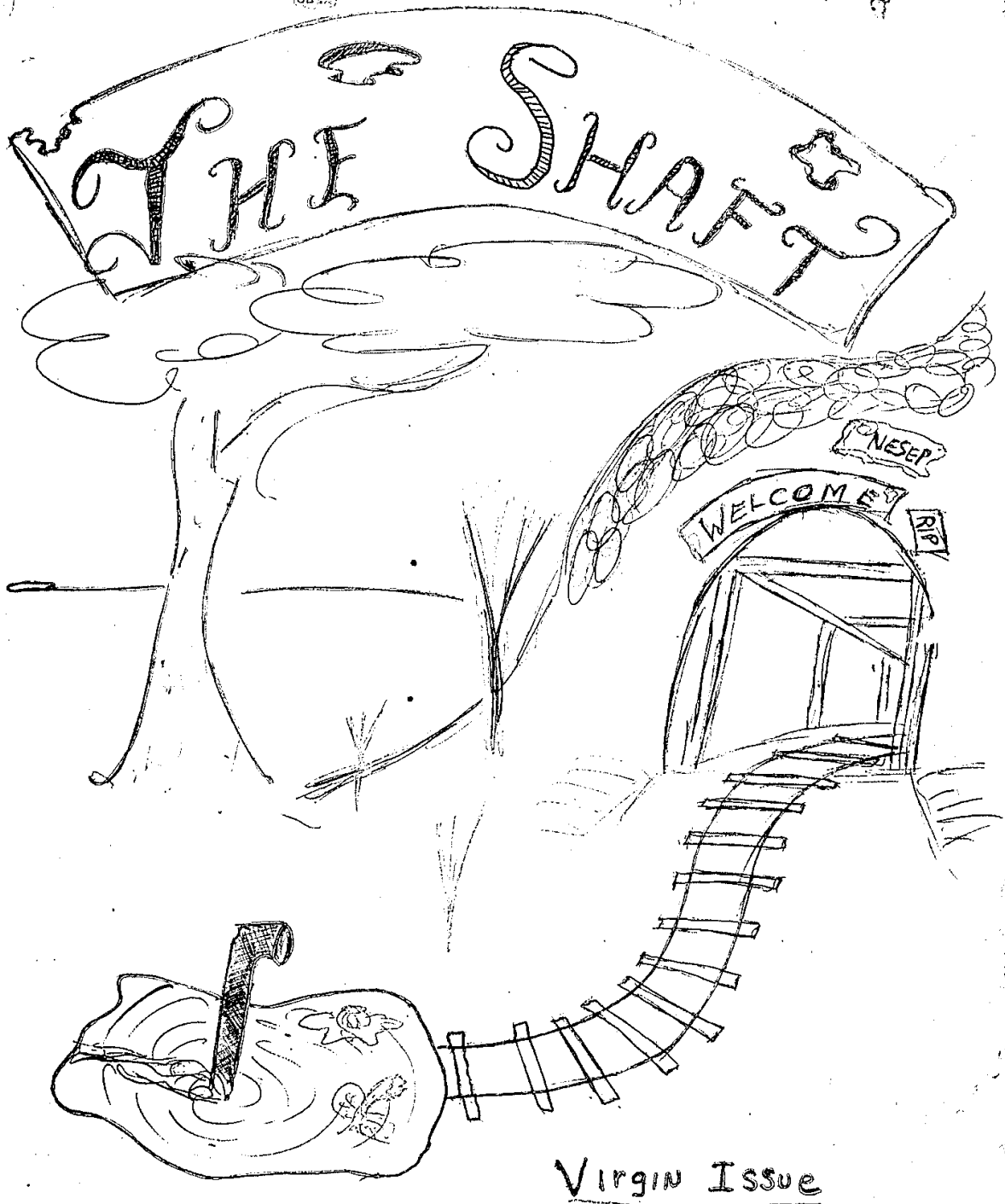
This picture shows the WestPac Plaque from the USS Sam Houston (SSN 609), circa October 1989, commemorating the ship's final deployment to the Western Pacific Theater from July-December 1989. At the time, the USS Sam Houston was a fast attack, special-operations submarine that was configured to carry 1 or 2 platoons of Navy Seals, a Dry Deck Shelter, and a battery-powered miniature submarine called the Seal Delivery Vehicle (SDV).

The plaque contains the traditional "Try Me" logo with the familiar Raven (aka, the Thunder Chicken) in the upper right and a "Try Us" logo in the upper left. The body of the plaque contains a listing of the wardroom officers and their satirical, if not inglorious, nicknames. The phrase at the bottom lampooned a wildly unpopular decision by the CO to secure liberty in The Philippines and other ports-of-call to conduct training for an upcoming ORSE. The "Try Us" logo was designed by Lt. **Bill Schultz** (SSN), circa 1986, shortly after the Sam Houston commenced its partnership with Seal Delivery Vehicle Team One (SDV Team 1), also based in Hawaii. The "Try Us" logo combined elements of the Navy Seal, the Submarine Warfare Insignia, and a side-profile of the USS Sam Houston without its Dry Deck Shelter.

Only four copies of this plaque were ever made, and they were hand-crafted in The Philippines by a local artist hired by **Tim Bohdan** who conceived the idea for the plaque. The plaque is made of a prized, local, furniture-carving wood called monkey-pod, *Pithecellobium Saman*, a dense, fast-growing tree naturalized to the rain forests of The Philippines.

The first three copies of the plaque were made for **Jay Roberts** (SSN), **Tim Bohdan**, and **Ron Focia**. The fourth copy of the plaque was given to the Submarine Sanctuary at the submarine base in Subic Bay, Philippines, where it was proudly hung on display for other visiting Westpac submariners to enjoy. The current location of the fourth plaque remains a mystery, since the naval station was closed temporarily following the eruption of Mt. Pinatubo in 1991. Political disagreements between the US and Philippine governments on a myriad of issues eventually forced the permanent closure of the US Naval Station, Subic Bay, in 1992. Does anyone know what happened to all of the WestPac Plaques from the Submarine Sanctuary in the Philippines after the base was closed? If so, please notify Howard Dobson.





Virgin Issue

Dear Readers,

There comes a time in every boats life when it must take an unprecedented giant step backwards. In this case, that step is bringing aboard Sam Houston a second newspaper. Our crew now has a choice in reading the junk the "other" tabloid puts out, or the smut and mud-slinging which will adorn our pages.

So be forwarned mates of the 609, if theres a skeleton in your closet, keep the door closed. Remember our motto, "IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE TDU, IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR THE SHAFT."

The Shaft Staff



THE ADVENTURES OF SECRET AGENT TL-29

Having majored in Zoology at Cambridge, I was especially interested in my next assignment. Posing as a crew member on the nuclear submarine Sam Houston. A finer collection of animals couldn't be found anywhere else in the world.

After a three week crash course in obscenity and barroom technique, I reported aboard just as the crew was about to get underway on one of their patrols.

I was welcomed into the crew and patted on the ass. (A custom much like our hand shake).

Next I was issued the necessary clothing needed for patrol. I received three sets of skivvies, (the third set, I was told, was in case of an extended patrol), and two "poopy" suits. I later found out where this term came from after one unsuccessful trip to the head, when I couldn't get it off fast enough.

After being shown to my spacious accommodations, a space about the size of a small coffin, I sat down to rest a moment before assuming my on board duties as "shit house mouse".

-3-

The first three weeks of patrol went by without incident, then I noticed quite a lot of interest and enthusiasm building up among the crew. It seems that a mid-patrol party was in the making.

Invitations were sent out and a few last minute dates were made. I received several offers, but declined graciously, since my mission was business and not pleasure. The party was a huge success, the highlight being the sacrificing of the "dinkies".

There was one other ceremony that took place when we crossed the arctic circle. I think it was called a "brown nose" initiation or something like that.

Finally the patrol came to an end and after much bitter protest we were relieved by the "Blue Crew". The ceremony was something to behold. The Blue crew all came aboard grumbling and in chains as we left the ship and boarded the plane for our flight back to the states.

-4-

WEATHER

The forecast for today and tomorrow is a high of 72 and a low of 72. This temperature range will hold at least thru tomorrow and possibly thru early August. The humidity is at 50% with the possibility of rain only 10% in the berthing areas near the shower regions. The hot air mass forming in the "goat locker" is holding steady; it extends as far back as AMR 1 where it meets the sweat front which was formed in maneuvering. This situation formed a high pressure steam area in the reactor compartment. There is no letup forecasted in the near future. Thats it for the weather till next edition. Remember, sunburn is painfull so don't take more than you can get.

* * *

NOTICE

NOTICE

NOTICE

In the future Shaft will carry two new departments; The Shaft Advisor, and The Shaft Forum. The letters for these departments as well as advertisements will be collected in MCC. We realize the need for privacy, therefor names will be held upon request. Feel safe with us, the watch in MCC has been ordered to eat the letters in case of capture.

Advertisements

Advertisements

Doc Gortner's Body Shop

24 hour a day Medical care and supplies. Going abroad for the summer? Stop and see us for all necessary shots. We feature 1 day service for cuts, lacerations, broken bones, and cancer. Plan your minor surgery 1 week in advance, this weeks specials include:

Heart transplants 2 / \$1.87

Nose job \$.99 / inch
(see Mr. Brodeur for testimonial)

Wooden legs \$2.05 / board ft. (finished)
\$1.49 / board ft. (unfinished)

All new parts carry a guarantee of 5000 miles or 10 minutes which ever comes first. Remember in by 9 out by 5. S&H green stamps with all transplants.

* * *

FROG SQUAD

Do you have an enemy thats bugging you? Why not hop on down to the "pond"? You'll find the Missile-Target Package just right for your personal needs. Be the first one on your block with an ACIP key. There is a limited supply, so hurry down and see Mod-Frog Johnson or one of his tadpoles. If you can't hop down, just leap to the phone and dial 7. We deliver 24 hours a day, anywhere.

NOTICE: All bills not paid in 30 days will be collected by the old "Hole in the ground where your house was" trick.

WWII Submarine War-Patrol Reports

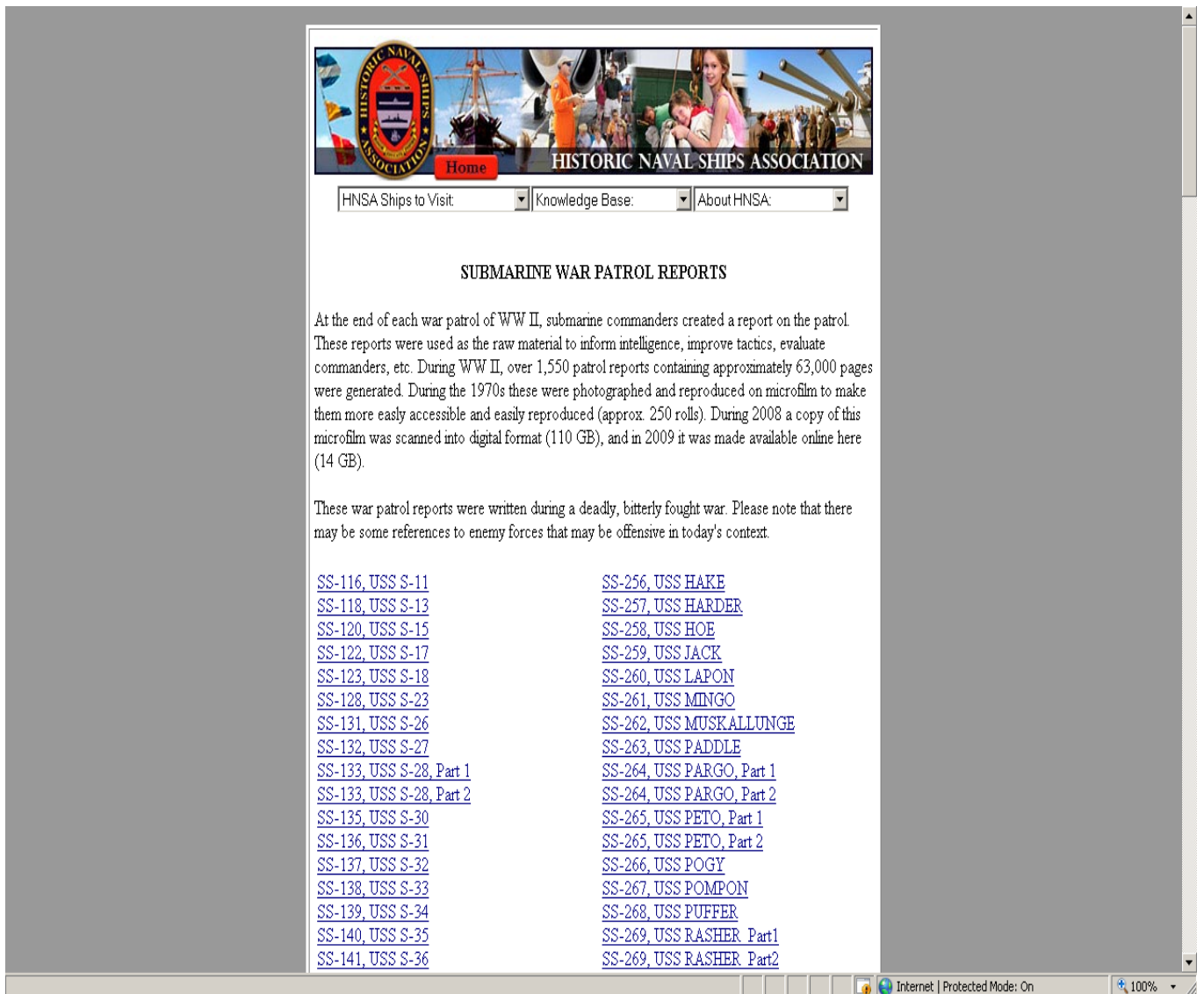
[Herbert] Jack Harden (RM2, 63-66, blue) recently sent Howard Dobson the following e-mail that Jack had received from **David Barger** (FTG1, 69-72, gold):

“There now is a site that has the war patrol reports of all WWII submarines available for your use. It you did or did not know, all submarines submitted a detailed report of each patrol they made. At the end of the war these reports totaled approximately 1,550 and over 63,000 paper pages. During the 1970's these were photographed and reproduced on microfilm to make them more easily accessible and easily reproduced (approx. 250 rolls). During 2008 a copy of this microfilm was scanned into digital format (110 GB), and in 2009 it was made available online here (14 GB).

<<http://hnsa.org/doc/subreports.htm>>

As a hint, if when you open a report and the print is small do a right click on your mouse then click on zoom. Like I said, play around with the tools to see better.”

Howard has verified that the site is as Jack describes and finds the random reports he viewed to be interesting reading.



The screenshot shows the Historic Naval Ships Association website. At the top is a banner with the association's logo and a photo of a woman. Below the banner are three dropdown menus: 'HNSA Ships to Visit', 'Knowledge Base', and 'About HNSA'. The main heading is 'SUBMARINE WAR PATROL REPORTS'. The text below explains that at the end of each war patrol of WW II, submarine commanders created a report on the patrol. These reports were used as the raw material to inform intelligence, improve tactics, evaluate commanders, etc. During WW II, over 1,550 patrol reports containing approximately 63,000 pages were generated. During the 1970s these were photographed and reproduced on microfilm to make them more easily accessible and easily reproduced (approx. 250 rolls). During 2008 a copy of this microfilm was scanned into digital format (110 GB), and in 2009 it was made available online here (14 GB). A note states: 'These war patrol reports were written during a deadly, bitterly fought war. Please note that there may be some references to enemy forces that may be offensive in today's context.' Below this is a list of submarine reports, each with a link to the report. The list is organized into two columns. The first column contains reports for submarines SS-116 through SS-141. The second column contains reports for submarines SS-256 through SS-269. The reports are listed as follows:

SS-116, USS S-11	SS-256, USS HAKE
SS-118, USS S-13	SS-257, USS HARDER
SS-120, USS S-15	SS-258, USS HOE
SS-122, USS S-17	SS-259, USS JACK
SS-123, USS S-18	SS-260, USS LAPON
SS-128, USS S-23	SS-261, USS MINGO
SS-131, USS S-26	SS-262, USS MUSKALLUNGE
SS-132, USS S-27	SS-263, USS PADDLE
SS-133, USS S-28, Part 1	SS-264, USS PARGO, Part 1
SS-133, USS S-28, Part 2	SS-264, USS PARGO, Part 2
SS-135, USS S-30	SS-265, USS PETO, Part 1
SS-136, USS S-31	SS-265, USS PETO, Part 2
SS-137, USS S-32	SS-266, USS POGY
SS-138, USS S-33	SS-267, USS POMPON
SS-139, USS S-34	SS-268, USS PUFFER
SS-140, USS S-35	SS-269, USS RASHER, Part 1
SS-141, USS S-36	SS-269, USS RASHER, Part 2

Google 411 Free Directory Service

At last, a 411 information system that is really free exists, thanks to the internet giant, Google. I learned of this service through an article in *American Submariner*, a publication of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. The service is limited to telephone numbers of businesses only—no personal numbers. There is no charge for requesting and receiving the directory assistance, AND there are no advertisements or commercials to listen to. You don't have to invest in mobile internet service or buy an expensive GPS unit, and you don't have to note or dial the number of the business that you wish to contact—the service dials the number and connects you.

All you need is a telephone—any telephone, home or mobile. You dial 1-800-GOOG-411 (1-800-466-4411) then provide a city and state and the business name or a type of business. Next, the system dials the number and connects you.

Although the directory assistance is free, your phone carrier might charge you for the phone call itself as determined by the plan that you have. For example, if you call during the day with a cell phone, you will be charged for the call as you would for any other daytime call. If you have unlimited cell phone minutes in late evenings and weekends or unlimited calling on a home phone, you will not incur a charge for the call.

I hope that you find this information useful,

Howard Dobson
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner



Dial from any phone

1-800-GOOG-411
(1-800-466-4411)

About GOOG-411

Google's new 411 service is free, fast and easy to use. Give it a try now and see how simple it is to find and connect with local businesses for free. (*)

[Learn more - FAQ](#)

Liked the video? Want to comment or guess who the voice of GOOG-411 is? Post your opinion on our [YouTube page](#).

1 Dial 1-800-GOOG-411 from any phone



2 State the location and business type



3 Connect to the business for free



Thanks for the Donation

On behalf of the officials of the SHVA, I thank **David Koeppen** (ETC, 71-74, gold) for a generous donation to the organization. Despite the SHVA not yet being incorporated or having achieved a tax-exempt status, the money will be accounted for and used for reimbursement of some expenses in accordance with procedures and practices that will be imposed upon the association when it achieves those statuses.

Thanks again,

Howard Dobson
Acting Chairman & Reunion Planner

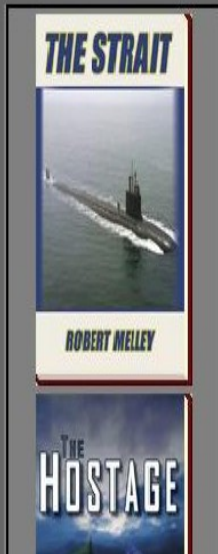
The SubReport.com

Looking for a great site to get up-to-date news on the happenings of the submarine fleet of not just the USA but around the world? Then, go to <www.thesubreport.com>. This site is updated daily to give links to various news articles on all submarine-related events. The site also provides links to submarine-related websites that I am sure you will enjoy.

Jeff Walsh
Vice Chairman & Newsletter Editor



ROBERT MELLEY



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- Submarine News 11APR2009
- Navy confirms it used sonar in Wash. strait
- Australia moves to avert submarine manning crisis
- Repairs finished on sub that hit underwater peak
- Collision Alley