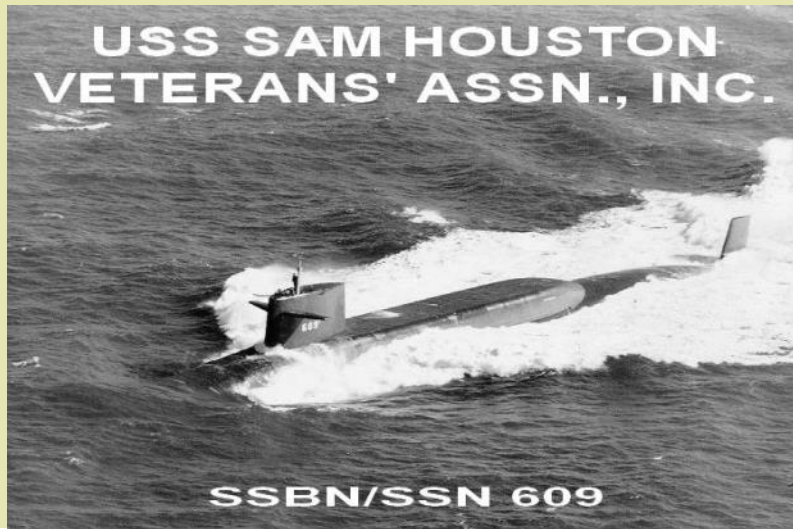


USS SAM HOUSTON VETERANS' ASSN., INC.



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2^d Edition 2016



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



The Raven

An official publication of the USS Sam Houston Veterans' Assn., Inc.,
a 501(c)(19) organization.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Shipmates & Associate Members:

This year is ending soon, so I thought that I'd better find time to get a newsletter out—the second one for this year. Time is tight for me, and I need 6-8 weeks to assemble a newsletter that I must work on piecemeal. Many things have occurred since the previous newsletter; our Fourth Biennial Reunion likely being the most significant event.

Our newsletter is the best of newsletters that I have seen among many other veterans' reunion groups. I say this not because I am the editor but because of the content of our newsletters. More than 98% of the content of each of our newsletters originates from our members. You have provided information that directly concerns our members or the boat in one significant way or another. I am in a newsletter-exchange program with a handful of other veterans' organizations, and their newsletters contain little information directly related to their members or information submitted by the members. Thus, our newsletter is one of our members, by our members, and for our members (a modified claim of our federal government!). Many veterans' organizations struggle to assemble a newsletter that contains two pages of non-repetitive content. Their attitude is to "get something out by a deadline." The result is often a four-page document that contains little information about the experiences and memories of their members. For the SHVA, the thanks goes to our members who continually provide nearly all of the content for each newsletter. Please continue to do so; this sets us apart and above nearly all of the other veterans'-reunion groups.

Best wishes to all during the holiday season,

Howard Dobson [ETR2(SS), Gold, 1969-1972]
28 Colony Blvd
Wilmington DE 19802-1402
Phone/Fax: 302-764-1197
E-Mail: howardvaldobson@verizon.net

OUR FOURTH BIENNIAL REUNION

Many of the attendees provided favorable comments about this reunion such that it was an enjoyable and memorable event for all. The peak attendance on Friday and Saturday was forty-six members and thirty-six guests. The Sheraton Reston Hotel in Reston, Va. hosted our reunion in this suburb of Wash., D.C. I chose this area because the hotels there are military-reunion friendly and the Sheraton Reston Hotel offered a reasonable guest room rate and it was readily accessible via the D.C. Metro System. A few of our attendees arrived early and/or stayed afterward to take advantage of the Metro to tour the D.C. area on their own along with the discounted hotel guest room cost extended for three days before and after the reunion.

Brad Lawrence [IC2(SS), Gold, 1972-1973] took professional portraits and candid shots throughout the reunion and will produce a 2016 Reunion-Memory Book. **Dave Maag** [HMSN, SSN, 1988-1991, Decom Crew], who operates a professional photography business, also took a multitude of great pictures throughout the reunion, many of which will be included in the memory book. He has posted all of those pictures on the web site

<<https://davidmaagphotography.shootproof.com/gallery/d.c.>>. You may download the pictures and use them *royalty-free* which means that you do not have to pay Dave any money to copy and use those pictures as you wish. Many thanks to Dave for taking those pictures and sharing them with us.

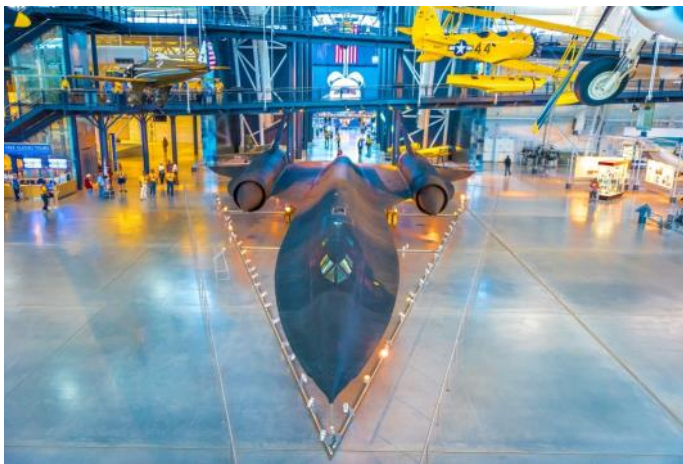
We toured the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum (Chantilly, Va.), the National Museum of the Marine Corps (Quantico, Va.), the U.S. Capitol Bldg., U.S. Navy Memorial, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and the World War II Memorial—all in D.C. Lunch and shopping were at Union Station [Amtrak], and we held our Memorial Service on the grounds of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. In 2013, the SHVA purchased a Commemorative Plaque for display in the U.S. Navy Memorial. A mounted replica of the plaque is available for purchase; a subsequent article provides the details for purchasing a replica. The following two pages of pictures were taken during the reunion; Dave took them.



Mark Manzer and family talk with Howard "Tank" Davis while waiting for the tour coach to arrive.



Space Shuttle *Discovery* at the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum



Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird (Spy Plane) at the Smithsonian Air & Space Museum



One of the many lifelike exhibits at the National Museum of the Marine Corps

OUR FOURTH BIENNIAL REUNION (cont.)



Two more lifelike exhibits at the National Museum of the Marine Corps



Within the Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol Bldg.



At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial



Our Memorial Service on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial grounds



A portion of the World War II Memorial

OUR FOURTH BIENNIAL REUNION (cont.)



Various pictures during the reunion banquet



MINI-REUNION OF EIGHT SHIPMATES

Don “Gabbie” Rairdan [MM2(SS), Blue, 1975-1977] recently informed me via e-mail that eight shipmates from the Blue Crew held a mini-reunion in May 2016. His message and a picture follow:

“After a few conference calls spanning a couple of years, some of the USS Sam Houston Blue Crew got together for a mini-reunion in mid-May 2016. Ray Gillies [no info on roster] was the main man in getting this organized, and his efforts were greatly appreciated. We gathered at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for a few days of reminiscing, laughter, lie-telling, drinking, and all-around good fun.”

“In attendance were Frank Woechan [MM1(SS), Blue, 1974-1978] (Michigan), Ray Gillies (Indiana), Dennis Stearns [no info on roster] (Arizona), Bruce Long [MM2(SS), Blue, 1973-1977] (North Carolina), Russell Richardson [MM1(SS), Blue, 1973-1978] (Kansas—soon to be Georgia), Rick Gregory [MM1(SS), Blue, 1975-1978] (Florida), Steve Sadler [MM3(SS), Blue] (Ohio), and Don Rairdan (Washington state). As you can tell, we came from all over the country. A couple more were contacted but could not attend for various reasons. Ray’s wife, Beth, came by for part of a day to bring the forgotten fire pit; was great to see her as well.”

“We partied and told lies around the campfire Thursday evening; laughing until our bellies hurt. Ray, an Indy Car fanatic, got us passes into the speedway on Friday for touring the garage area and the pits. Friday evening was more eats, drinks, and lies around the campfire. Ray also got us tickets for the Angies List Grand Prix on Saturday. It was a cold day, but well worth the shivers. We were standing in the grass right at the first turn before they went into the road-course part of the track. Most of us had never been to an Indy Car Race before, let alone being that close to the action; what a treat for us all. Saturday evening was more of the same, just different lies! Also, less drinking as it was hard to hold a beer with our hands shaking from the cold—not saying we didn’t; just harder.”

“Some of the guys brought gifts for everyone. Rick brought us all a stainless steel bottle opener with USS Sam Houston engraved on it. Russell brought hats for everyone with the Dolphins and Sam Houston on the front and our name and rate on the back. Those made it easy for us to spot each other when we got separated inside the massive speedway. Last, and certainly not least, Frank brought us granite plaques engraved by him. A friend of his, Jerry (a retired HMC), made frames for all of them. As you can imagine, there were some tears shed when he handed each of us our plaques and said, “thanks for keeping my dumbass alive!” Which, by the way, is what Brothers of the Phin do.”

“Sunday brought the inevitable—saying goodbye and going our separate ways. Hugs around and a few tears certainly told the story of how much brotherhood we all share. Our minds were full of new memories and our hearts were full of the rekindled love and respect we all have for our Bros. We have already had another conference call and planning is in the works for another mini-reunion next year. The anticipation has started, and the thoughts are daily of when we can share that camaraderie again.”

Don (Gabby) Rairdan, MM2 (SS)
USS Sam Houston, SSBN 609 (B), '75-'77

L to R:

Bruce Long, Frank Woechan, Ray Gilles,
Dennis Stearns, Steve Sadler, Russell
Richardson, Don Rairdan, and Rick
Gregory



ENGRAVED GRANITE PLAQUE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE

I was impressed after learning that the plaques given to those at the aforementioned mini-reunion are engraved granite. Frank Woechan produced them, and I asked him if he was willing to produce them for the members of the SHVA who would request a plaque. His reply below indicates that he would do so.

"Recently, my submarine-brother and shipmate, Don Rairdan, sent you an article about our mini-reunion in May 2016. In the photographs was a picture of us with the engraved plaques I did for my brothers. Don forwarded the e-mails between the two of you, and in one, you asked if I would consider providing similar plaques to the veterans of USS Sam Houston. Yes, I would!"

"A standard plaque would be around \$80—\$100 all-inclusive. It takes me about 12 hours to put together the information on a template, cut the 1/2"-in. thick tile to size, and then engrave by hand the final product. NO LASER EQUIPMENT! This is modern day scrimshaw. It is done by hand with a dental drill. If I were to do this for another boat or a Marine (God forbid, although I have a nephew that I want to engrave his K-BAR knife for him), I would charge more.

"The standard plaque includes the shipmate's name and rate engraved and inlaid in gold under the rating badge as well as the span of service aboard—the months and years—inlaid in gold under the Ship's Crest. I need the following information from a purchaser: full name to be engraved, rank/rating upon leaving the boat, month and year when reporting aboard, the month and year of departing the boat, and whether the hull designator was SSBN or SSN during your service aboard. (Some of you might have served under both designations.)

"I can be reached by e-mail at: <fwoechan@gmail.com>. I prefer e-mail because my phone service sucks at home. If we want to set up a phone call, I can to drive into Caro to get a good signal; my cell number 989-673-7174. Funny thing is . . . I can receive and send text messages by phone with no problem!"

My home address is:

Frank Woechan
2587 E Dayton Rd
Caro MI 48723

So if anyone wants to order a plaque, you must do so with Frank as indicated above. The mentioned price range of \$80—\$100 is subject to change. Also, the cost includes the granite plaque and a wooden frame (shown in the picture below). Frank can accommodate some special orders at a different cost—most likely a higher cost.

If you are interested in ordering a plaque from Frank and you do not have Internet access, contact me (302-764-1197); I will coordinate your order with Frank.



REUNION 2016 MEMORY BOOK

Brad Lawrence has assumed the tasks of production of each of our Reunion-Memory Books. The task is both complicated and time-consuming which necessitates that he work on a book piecemeal to produce top-quality books. He expects to have the book for our 2016 ready by the late first quarter of 2017 provided nothing significant and unpredictable occurs in his personal life.

I will inform the SHVA members whenever the 2017 Reunion-Memory Book becomes available for purchase. The notification will occur in a special mailing with instructions on how to place your order for books. Brad designs the books on a web site that also assembles the final product.

I thank you in advance for your patience.

Howard Dobson

2018 REUNION PROGRESS

At the 2014 reunion in Seattle, the members voted for a potential 2018 cruise reunion that would depart from somewhere in Calif. Since then, the Reunion Committee learned that all of the worthwhile cruises out of Calif. are both too expensive and lengthy. At a subsequent military-reunion-related conference that I attended, I learned of the existence of The Queen Mary, a floating hotel and museum, located in Long Beach, Calif. My immediate thought was that this hotel might provide a cruise ship environment without putting to sea and without the cruise ship cost. Group Sales of The Queen offered **Brad Lawrence** and myself a night's stay to evaluate the hotel/ship. (Brad had been in the Long Beach area before this and was aware of many of the attractions in the area.) We both were convinced that our members would enjoy a reunion aboard the ship. Group Sales offered a guest room rate of \$99 + tax = \$114/night for rooms with openable port holes. (The typical rate is about \$124 + tax on weekdays and \$164 + tax on weekends). Also, the contract with Group Sales has some favorable items/clauses. I expect that I will receive a contract from The Queen early in 2017 for signing.

I'm confident that you will enjoy a reunion hosted by The Queen and find many nearby attractions suitable on Thursday. For Friday, I'm thinking that we will spend Friday in the Los Angeles area. I'll look into a tour of one of the movie studios there.

2020 REUNION PROGRESS

At our Business Meeting during the 2016 reunion, we voted to have our 2020 reunion somewhere in the midsection of country. Suggestions included:

- San Antonio, Tex.
- Houston, Tex.
- New Orleans, La.
- Branson, Mo.
- Saint Louis, Mo.
- Kansas City, Mo.

I am also evaluating the following two locations:

- Omaha, Neb.
- Grand Rapids, Mich.,
- Chicago, Ill. (suburbs)

Branson is ruled out because of expensive transportation from the airport in Springfield that is about 50 mi. away. Houston has not responded to any of my three requests for information over the past 6 years. That city apparently shuns military-reunion business in lieu of corporate business that provides large profits throughout the year.

I will probably receive favorable proposals from the remaining areas. The Chicago area has many surrounding locales that solicit military reunions, but all are distant from O'Hare and Midway Airports. I am aware of one area that is served by local rail transportation that also serves the airports, but the situation is that one would have to travel into Chicago and transfer trains to arrive at the region of the hotel. The cost of rail travel will be somewhat inexpensive.

I have requested that all areas being considered submit proposals to me by the end of Mar 2017.

DON KASSAKATIS ISSUED THE NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

Donald “Leroy” Kassakatis [ET1(SS), Gold, 1968-1971] was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for saving a shipmate’s life while performing a comprehensive test on board **USS Sam Houston** on 30 Apr 1971. It’s a horrific and near-death situation that both Don and myself will never forget. It was the dreaded test called “OI-62B”—a lengthy and comprehensive verification of correct interactions among certain pumps, switchgear, and valve positions with the Reactor-Protection System. One Electrician, one Reactor Operator, and a second person from RC Division were required; I was the second individual from RC Division. The Electrician would operate a box that had numerous wires that would be inserted into areas of circuit breakers to simulate pumps being on/off, valves being open/shut, or circuit breakers being open/shut. The Electrician would have a multitude of those wires installed simultaneously, and he would be required to shift their locations periodically. Most of the wires were installed a distance from the control box. The box had switches to energize/de-energize each wire. A specific combination of energized and de-energized wires simulated specific situations. Often, the Electricians would not de-energize the wires before he needed to remove a wire and relocate it. This shortcut saved lots of time. As long as he did not touch the energized ends of the wires, he would be OK. This would not be the case on 30 Apr 1971.

Bill Deabenderfer [EM1(SS), Gold, 1970-1971], an Electrician well experienced with the test, was not de-energizing the wires before relocating them. The test was proceeding without incident. Switchgear in the area obstructed visual contact between those involved; so, oral communications provided the “OK” or “Ready” to proceed after simulating different situations. Don and I were ready to proceed, but heard nothing from Bill. Don yelled again to Bill, but no reply. Shortly afterward, we both heard a low moan from the area where Bill was. Both of us suspected something was wrong and headed to Bill’s location. Don arrived before I did as he was closer. He noticed that Bill had a wire in each hand and was leaning motionless against some switchgear. Don yanked the wires from Bill’s hands, and he collapsed by the time I arrived at the scene. Don told me that Bill had received an electric shock, and while Don remained with Bill, I immediately went into Maneuvering to have the watch stander notify Control and the Tender that we had a casualty.

450 volts had been applied across Bill’s arms and through his chest for, maybe, 30—45 seconds. Electric current was passing through his heart. Moreover, the current caused both of his hands to lock tightly around the energized ends of the wires. Don quickly and correctly acted to yank the wires from Bill’s hands because attempting to de-energized them at the control box or to de-energize the entire control box would have taken considerable time. Don’s quick and accurate response also prevented himself from becoming a second casualty.

This happened only a few days before departing for patrol. Bill was unable to make the patrol. Don had met with him aboard the Tender after that patrol and said that Bill’s healing process was progressing fine although his hands remained heavily bandaged.

Don left the Navy after that patrol (mid-1971) and thought little more about the situation. A few months after his discharge, he began receiving phone messages from the Norfolk Naval Base which requested only that he return the call. Certain that the calls were related to reenlistment, Don refused to return the calls and directed his wife neither to answer the calls nor return any! Numerous calls from the base continued for weeks. Finally, Don decided to call the number. He learned that Admiral Wilkinson wanted to present him the Navy Commendation Medal for his heroic action on 30 Apr 1971. What neither Don nor nearly all still aboard USS Sam Houston were aware of was that the Engineering Officer, **Mike Coyle** (LCDR, & Eng. Officer, Gold, 1970-1972), had submitted a recommendation that Don receive the medal—even though Don had been discharged from the Navy.

In December 1971, Admiral E. P. Wilkinson issued the Navy Commendation Medal & its accompanying Certificate to Don in the presence of his wife, Donna, at the Norfolk Navy Base.





DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY HAS AWARDED THE

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

TO

ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN FIRST CLASS (SS) LEROY D. KASSAKATIS, UNITED STATES NAVY

FOR

HEROIC ACHIEVEMENT ON 30 APRIL 1971

GIVEN THIS 17TH DAY OF DEC 19 71



John H. Chafee
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

DON KASSAKATIS ISSUED THE NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL (cont.)



Commander Submarine Force
United States Atlantic Fleet

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in presenting the
NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL to
ELECTRONICS TECHNICIAN FIRST CLASS (SS) LEROY D. KASSAKATIS
UNITED STATES NAVY

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION

For heroic achievement while serving in USS SAM HOUSTON (SSBN609)(GOLD) on 30 April 1971. Petty Officer KASSAKATIS discovered that one of his shipmates was receiving a severe high voltage shock from an energized cable. At the risk of serious injury to himself, he seized the insulated portion of the cable and freed the injured man. He then held the cable clear of other personnel coming to the scene until the cables were deenergized. By his quick and deliberate action, he undoubtedly saved the life of his shipmate. Petty Officer KASSAKATIS' quick thinking, courage and initiative reflect great credit upon himself and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

For the Secretary of the Navy,

E. P. Wilkinson
E. P. WILKINSON

Vice Admiral, U. S. Navy
Commander Submarine Force
U. S. Atlantic Fleet



LOST & FOUND—JIM “MONTE”

I lost contact with **Jim Montemurro** [MM2(SS) {A Div.}, Gold, 1966-1970] about two years ago. E-mails to him were undeliverable; a post card sent to his address was not returned; and phone calls were not answered. On 12 Nov 2016 when I had to drive my wife into southern New Jersey, I decided to drive farther and attempt to locate Monte. I knocked on the door of the address that I had, and he answered! The loss of communication was the result of his buying the multi-unit property where he had lived and building a new single home there. I guess that the USPS was confused about the post card sent during the changeover. The phone line existed, but there was no place to connect a phone. Anyway, that's Jim on the left.



COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE INSTALLED AT THE U.S. NAVY MEMORIAL

You may purchase a replica of the Commemorative Plaque (shown below) displayed at the U.S. Navy Memorial by submitting a completed Plaque Replica Order Form shown on the next page. The replica plaque itself (the imprinted metal plate) measures 7 in. X 3.75 in. with the border being 6.75 in. X 3.5 in. It is imprinted on a 16-gauge, archival-matte finish, aluminum plate. (This is the same material and dimensions of the plaque displayed at the U.S. Navy Memorial.) The replica plaque is mounted on a handsome, hardwood base.



ORDER FORM FOR A REPLICA COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE



**UNITED STATES NAVY MEMORIAL
PLAQUE REPLICA ORDER FORM**

Mail to:
United States Navy Memorial Foundation
Attn: Lesley Rubinger
701 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW • Suite 123
Washington, DC 20004-2608

\$150.00
POSTPAID



Replicas are exact reproductions of the plaque displayed on the Memorial Wall at the United Navy States Memorial, Washington, D.C. Plaques are mounted on a handsome hardwood base, suitable for hanging or exhibiting on a desk. If you have any questions, please call Lesley Rubinger, at (202) 380-0718 or e-mail lrubinger@navymemorial.org.

ORDER INFORMATION: Please print

Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ ZIP: _____

Phone (____) _____ FAX: (____) _____ e-mail: _____

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Check enclosed (payable to USNMF) Quantity _____ @ \$150.00 each = \$ _____

VISA MC AME DISCOVER 3 Digit Number on back of your card (CVC) _____

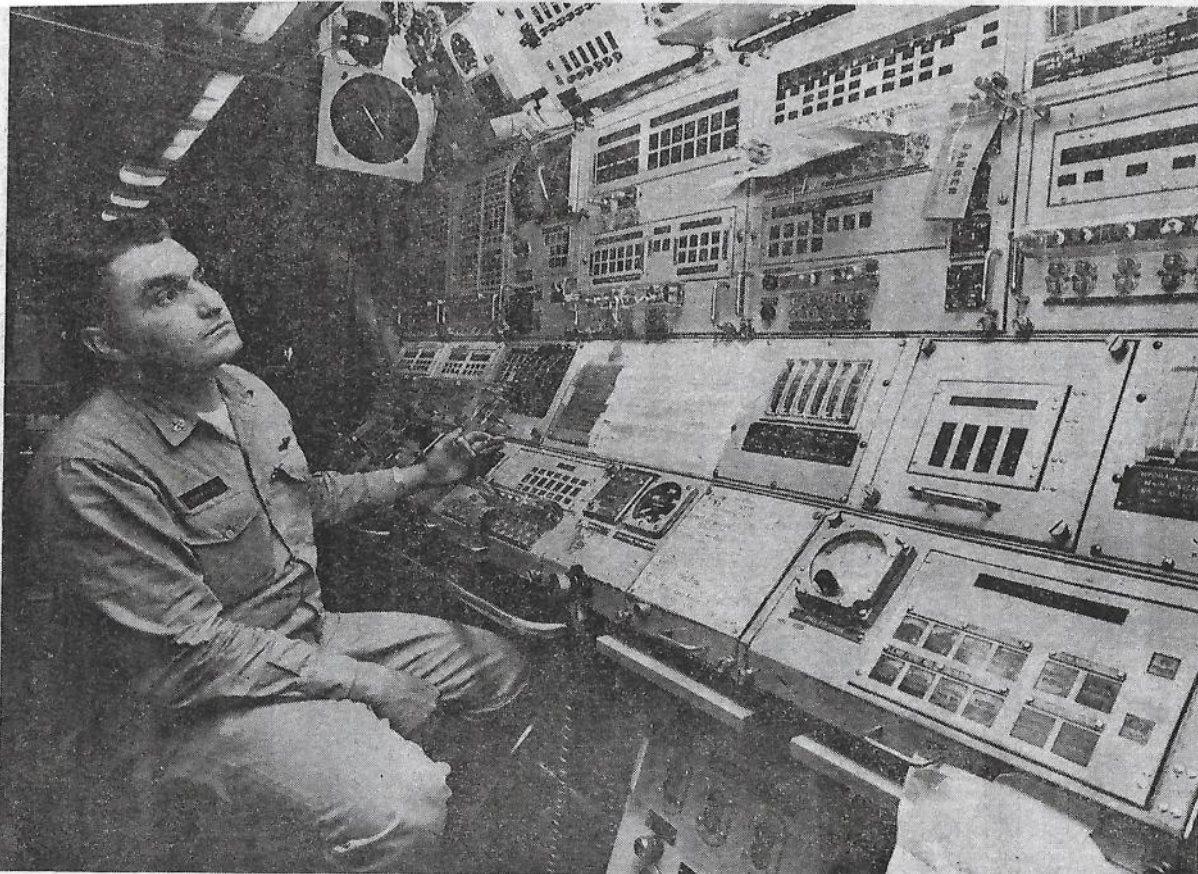
Card #: _____ Expiration date: _____ Signature _____
(Required)

PLAQUE NAME: _____ USS Sam Houston SSBN/SSN 609 _____ (ship, individual or group)

Approval: _____ date: _____
(Please sign order form)

PICTURES FROM STARS & STRIPES

Don Kassakatis also submitted the following pictures from *Stars & Stripes* (Sept. 1970)—a military newspaper:

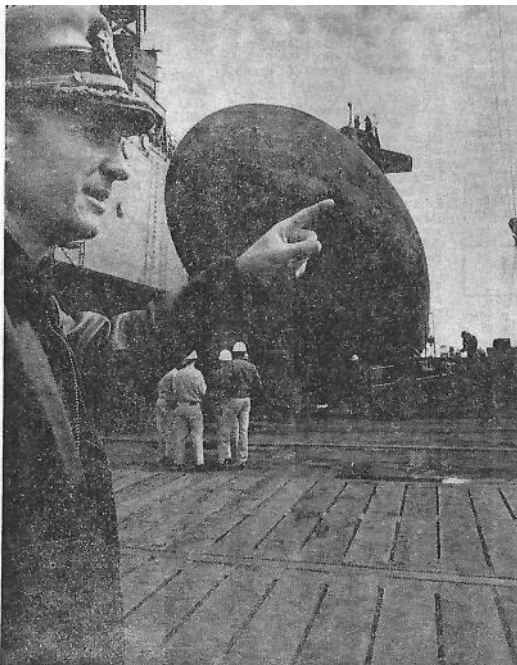


Chief Machinist Mate Bill Burkhead tests a control panel. All systems are carefully checked during the drydock.

—S&S Photos, Cole

THE STARS AND STRIPES

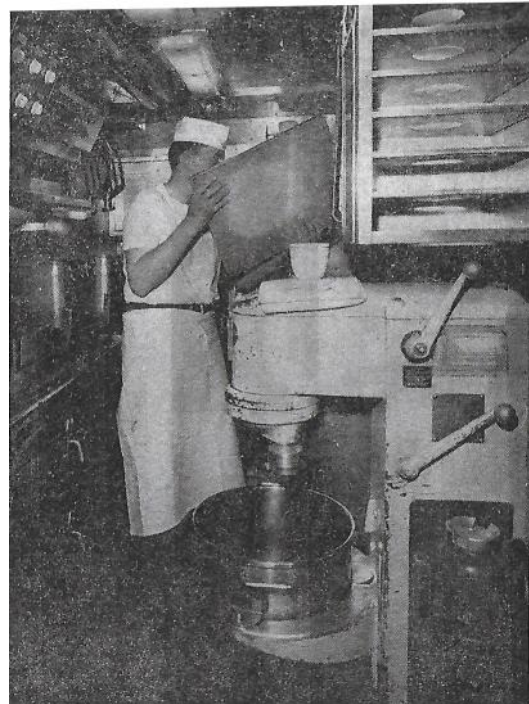
Page



Cmdr. Arthur C. Bivens, veteran skipper of the Sam Houston's "gold" crew, gets his ship ready for another 60 days "down under."

Page 10

THE



The galley is cleaned and will carry 25 tons of foods stored in freezers.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

ARIZONA SUB MEMORIAL BRICK PAVER

At the 2016 reunion, the members voted to purchase an engraved Brick Paver (Commemorative Brick) to be installed at the footprint of the Arizona Silent Service Memorial (ASSM) to be erected in the Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza of the Arizona State Capital in Phoenix. A special collection was held during the banquet at the reunion for funds to purchase the brick. We collected \$457; the cost of the brick was \$200. The balance would be used to purchase commemorative bricks for similar projects.

The memorial is schedule to be completed before Oct 2017. Visit the web site for the memorial at <www.arizonasilentservicememorial.org> for more information.

The text to appear on our 8 X 8-in. memorial brick follows:

**SOLEMN RECOGNITION
OF THOSE WHO
SERVED ABOARD
USS SAM HOUSTON
SSBN/SSN 609
1962-1991**

The SHVA Board has approved the purchase of a Brick Paver for installation at the Submarine Force Museum & USS Nautilus in Groton, Conn. The size of this brick is 10 X 10-in. but has 5 lines of text. The text will be the same as that for the ASSM brick but without to last line (the span of being commissioned).

THE HOEYS MEET WITH THE GRIFFINGS

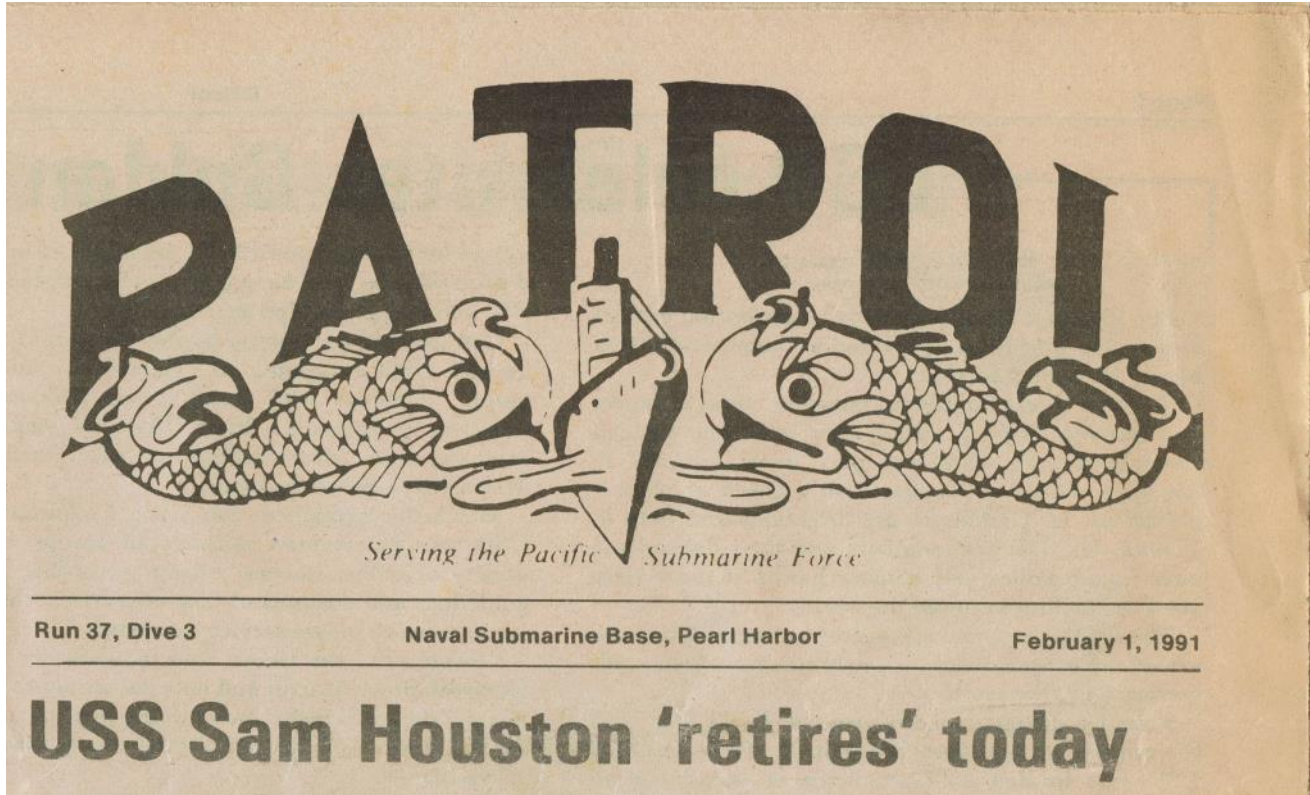
In Nov 2016, **CAPT Ed Griffing** (CDR & CO, Gold, 1970-1972) and Kennon traveled to Tampa, Fla. for a cruise. **Jim Hoey** [ETR2(SS), Gold, 1971-1973] and Jeanne, who live about 35 miles away, met with the Griffings at the hotel where they were staying prior to the cruise.



Jim and Jeanne Hoey are at the left; CAPT Ed Griffing and Kennon, right.

ARTICLE FROM *PATROL* ABOUT USS SAM HOUSTON DECOMMISSIONING

Ross Thomas [Dual Service: {STSC(SS), Gold, 1967-1970 (COB) / STSCS(SS), Blue, 1976-1979}] sent me the February 1, 1991, Run 37, Dive 3 edition of *Patrol*—a newspaper produced at Naval Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor that concerned the Pacific Submarine Fleet. Of primary interest was the article entitled “USS Sam Houston ‘Retires’ Today.” Because of the size of the newspaper and its articles, a scan of the article would not result in readable print; so, I retyped it for “The Raven.” I did scan the heading of the newspaper that appears below.



The article:

“USS Sam Houston (SSN 609) will be deactivated in a formal ceremony at 2 p.m. today at Pier Sierra 1B. USS Sam Houston (SSBN 609) was the third nuclear powered submarine and the first 608 class SSBN to be built at the Newport News Shipbuilding and Drydock Company. The keel for this revolutionary weapon system was laid on December 28, 1959. On February 2, 1961, the ship was christened by Mrs. John B. Connally, wife of the Secretary of the Navy. The launching followed an address by Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz in which he remarked, ‘. . . the recent development of nuclear propulsion has probably done more for the submarine than for any other type of vessel and when equipped with the Polaris missile system, the submarine becomes the deadliest weapon in our arsenal.’

“Upon completion of sea trials, Sam Houston was commissioned on March 6, 1962. Thereafter she departed on an initial shakedown cruise, fired her first missiles and subsequently departed on her first patrol in October 1962. The third patrol provided two historic “firsts” in FBM submarine history. Sam Houston was the initial FBM submarine to deploy to the Mediterranean and join the NATO forces there, and also the first Polaris submarine to make a port-of-call visit to Izmir, Turkey. Since her first patrol in 1962, Sam Houston has completed 54 strategic deterrent patrols.

“After nine years submerged on Polaris patrols, Sam Houston consolidated crews in 1980 and was re-designated SSN 609 and the crew underwent extensive training for Sam Houston’s new role as an attack submarine. A change in home port to Bremerton occurred with the change in the ship’s role. Sam Houston entered into a comprehensive overhaul that concluded in August 1985. Alterations were made to allow Sam Houston to operate with the dry deck shelter atop her missile deck. Following sea trials, Sam Houston changed homeport to Pearl Harbor. Sam Houston installed, certified and conducted manned operational testing of the first SSN 608 class dry deck shelter (DDS) system in the Pacific Fleet. Since operating with the dry deck shelter, Sam Houston has accomplished numerous ‘firsts.’

ARTICLE FROM *PATROL* ABOUT USS SAM HOUSTON DECOMMISSIONING (cont.)

“Among them are:

- *Establishing the first Pacific Fleet submarine capable of employing naval special warfare forces on sustained operations in a forward area due to her expanded ordnance storage and berthing abilities as well as physical conditioning equipment maintained on board.*
- *Served as the host SSN for manned operational testing of the first dry deck shelter in the Pacific Fleet. From March 1988 to July 1988, Sam Houston was the host SSN for cold water testing of the MK-8 and MK-9 SEAL delivery vehicle in the Puget Sound area. Sam Houston conducted full mission profile operations to evaluate SDV/DDS radiated noise and to evaluate procedures and capabilities for conducting submarine naval special warfare operations in a cold water environment. These operations significantly enhanced both procedures and planning for potential real world contingencies in the northwest Pacific Ocean theater.*
- *In July 1988, Sam Houston conducted six varied naval special warfare missions in support of RIMPAC 88. This marked the first integration of submarine dry deck shelter delivered naval special warfare forces into this multi-national exercise and significantly broadened the capability and experience of the Third Fleet to employ the unique capabilities of the fast attack submarine in this role.*
- *In August 1988, during MARDEZEX-Adak 88, Sam Houston further extended the capability to conduct joint special warfare operations. Embarking elements of the Army’s 2nd Special Forces Team at a remote site, Sam Houston successfully conducted a covert night time insertion of these forces, using dry deck launch techniques, north of Adak, Alaska.*
- *In December 1988, Sam Houston was the host SSN, and her commanding officer was the officer in tactical command (OTC) for COMNAVSPECWARGRU One SINKEX 89-1. This was the first demonstration in which a ship at anchor was sunk by SEALs inserted clandestinely by a swimmer delivery vehicle from a submerged fast attack submarine.*
- *In 1989, Sam Houston conducted a Western Pacific deployment which was the first forward deployment of a dry deck shelter equipped submarine in the Seventh Fleet. During her 1989 Western Pacific deployment, Sam Houston participated in PACEX-89, conducting 18 highly successful naval special warfare missions.*

“At 28 years old, Sam Houston is the oldest nuclear submarine in the Pacific Fleet. She displayed exceptional material reliability throughout her deployment. During that deployment, Sam Houston conducted the largest scale and longest sustained submarine naval special warfare operation on record. Sam Houston was nominated by COMSUBPAC for the fiscal year 1989 Arleigh Burke Award. This nomination recognized Sam Houston as that submarine which demonstrated the most significant improvement in battle readiness during the fiscal year.

“Since her return from the Western Pacific, Sam Houston executed a five-month restricted availability, participated in RIMPAC 90 and provided support for naval special warfare operations, including one SINKEX.

“Sam Houston has been recognized for her continued contribution to naval special warfare through the awarding of a Meritorious Unit Commendation in June of 1990.”

.....

The last paragraph indicates that **USS Sam Houston** received an MUC Award in 1990. This would be an MUC award different from the one issued to the boat in the fall of 1969 for the Blue Crew’s launching of Polaris missiles. The 1969 award was mentioned in “The Raven” 2d Edition 2015. If you were aboard when either MUC was issued, that MUC award should be listed in the “Decorations, Medals, Badges, Commendations, . . .” section of your Form DD-214.

MILITARY HUMOR—MARINE CORP MATH

Submitted by Brad Lawrence:

The Korean War in which the 1st Marine Division fought and won some of its most brutal battles was not without its humor.

During one such conflict, an ROK (Republic of Korea) Commander whose unit was fighting along with the Marines called legendary Marine General "Chesty" Puller to report a major Chinese attack in his sector.

"How many Chinese are attacking you?" asked Puller.

"Many, many Chinese!" replied the excited Korean officer.

General Puller asked for another count and got the same answer, "Many, many, many Chinese!"

"#%\$@^\$@#!" swore General Puller; "put my Marine liaison officer on the radio."*

In a minute, an American voice came over the air: "yes, sir."

"Lieutenant," growled Chesty, "exactly how many Chinese you got up there"?

"General, we got a whole shit load of Chinese up here"!

"Thank God," exclaimed Puller, "at least there's someone up there who knows how to count"!

MORE HUMOR—WOMEN ON SUBMARINES

Submitted by David "Doc" Jenkins [HMCS(SS), Blue, 1964-1967]

Female Quarters on Submarines or How the COB Made 2nd Class!

Addressing sub sailors at Groton, SUBLANT advised:

"The female sleeping quarters will be out-of-bounds for all males. Anybody caught breaking this rule will be fined \$20 the first time."

He continued, "anybody caught breaking this rule the second time will be fined \$100. Being caught a third time will cost you a fine of \$1,000. Are there any questions?"

At this point, a Master Chief stood up in the crowd and inquired:

"Admiral, how much for a season pass"???

ASBESTOSIS & MESOTHELIOMA

A few months back, I was diagnosed with asbestosis—a chronic lung disease that produces scarred lung tissue. The disease often results in shortness of breath and can lead to mesothelioma—the related form of lung cancer. At the reunion, I was discussing my situation with **Larry Ferrell** [MM1(SS), Blue, 1968-1970] who has been diagnosed with asbestosis that has resulted in shortness of breath for him. Because asbestosis usually develops many decades after inhalation of asbestos fibers (in my case, that's about 45 years as the boat is the likely source of my exposure), Larry provided the following information to share among our members because anyone with the disease should notify the VA.

“Having attended numerous submarine-crew reunions and USSVI Conventions over the last several years, I learned that the No. 1 health problem with most of us [submariners] is breathing-related. (Hearing concerns are also numerous among those who served aboard diesel boats.)

“I developed serious breathing-related problems around 2008 and reported this to the VA. I underwent examinations (CT Scans, X-rays, and breathing-related tests) and was asked if I had any asbestos exposure. The scarring in my lungs is typical of that caused by exposure to asbestos fibers. I was diagnosed with asbestosis in 2008 with breathing rated at 60%, and in October 2014, asbestos pleural disease—another disease related to the inhalation of asbestos fibers. The VA then granted me total and permanent 100% Disability for my breathing-related problems because it deemed the inhalation of asbestos fibers occurred while serving in the Navy.

“I do not recall any single incident of inhalation of asbestos fibers, but as an MM (an Auxiliaryman on diesel boats and Nuke MM later), I worked on/operated air compressors, diesel engines, ship's air and water systems, steam systems, etc.—all that had asbestos insulation. Gaskets for many pumps and valves also contained asbestos. The danger associated with the inhalation of asbestos fibers was not known then.

“Those who served on WW II-era boats and nuclear boats constructed during much of the 1960s have been exposed to asbestos fibers. While at a commissioning ceremony for a submarine at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, a Navy Chief MM at the ceremony who was directly involved with dismantling the Sam Houston after its decommissioning informed me that the entire ventilation system on the boat was internally lined with asbestos.

“All veterans of USS Sam Houston who have breathing-related problems should be aware that we have been exposed to asbestos fibers and should report this to the VA. I have done considerable research on the subject, and it seems that only about 25%-35% of those exposed will develop mesothelioma.”

Larry has indicated that those with breathing-related problems and/or asbestos-related diagnoses should notify the VA of any potential service-related exposure to asbestos fibers and, especially, any diagnoses related to the inhalation of asbestos fibers. As such, you might be eligible for medical care by the VA and monetary compensation based on any adverse effects from such exposure.

I thank Larry for his willingness to share this personal experience with the membership.

“HELL BELOW” and “THE SILENT SERVICE” TV SERIES

The recent TV Series “Hell Below” comprises six episodes of WW II situations that concern a specific submarine in each episode—either a U.S. boat or a German boat. If you are interested in the series, you can purchase the six DVD series from me for \$9.00 all-inclusive price.

I also have copies of the TV Series “The Silent Service.” that aired in 1957-1958. This might be news for those who joined us within the past three years. The 50 or so episodes (about 25 minutes each) of this B&W series are reenactments that involve U.S. submarines during WW II. This series is available in two formats: twelve disks in the DVD format and two disks in the “mp4” format. The DVD format will play in standard DVD players (not very old ones), and the “mp4” will only play on computers and computer-controlled equipment that accept DVD disks. The cost of the DVD series is \$30; the cost of the “mp4” format is \$15.

Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a version of either of the series mentioned.

HIGHWAYS NAMED FOR SUBMARINER VETERANS

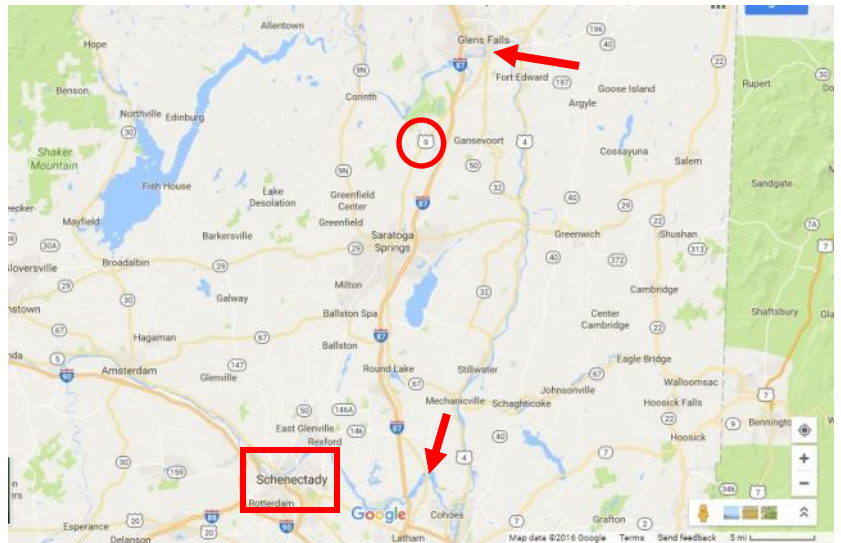
Bob Lewis [ETR2(SS), Gold & O'72, 1971-1974], who lives in New York State, informed me that the state has named State Route 9 in the entire Saratoga County the "U.S. Submarine Veterans Memorial Highway." The 40-mile run extends from the Cooper's Cave Bridge over the Hudson River to Glens Falls.

The designation not only honors all who served aboard submarines but the area's "dense naval presence"—the Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit in Milton, Knolls Atomic Power Labs in Niskayuna, and naval support units in Glenville and Scotia. About 57,000 students and staff have been stationed at the regional nuclear training program; President Jimmy Carter was one of them.

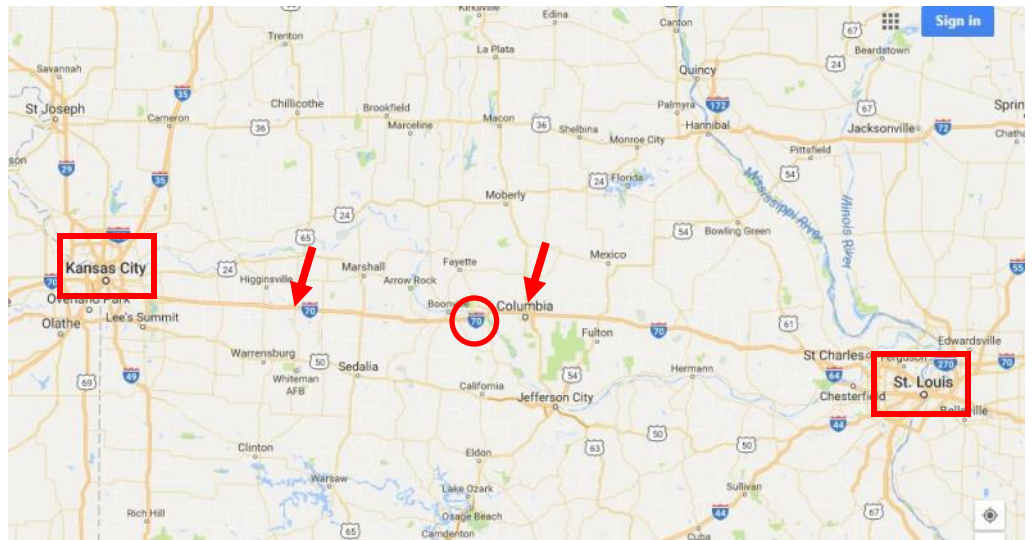
I needed to search for information to include in this article because Bob had submitted information that he obtained from the News10 web site on the Internet. That text is copyrighted, and I can't reproduce it. I found information about the highway on the NY state government's web site; that information is not copyrighted. But while searching for information, I learned that the state of Missouri is in the process of designating a portion of Interstate 70 in Saline County to submariners. The section of highway is between mile markers 69 and 123—a distance of 54 miles that passes through Columbia. The proposed law states in part ". . . shall be designated the 'U.S. Submarine Veterans Memorial Highway' and shall represent in its fifty-four-mile stretch the fifty-four submarines lost during war and the Cold War."

These two states might be trend-setters. I also noticed that local bases of the USSVI were involved with these projects. I will contact the USSVI National Headquarters and request that the USSVI consider pursuing to have highways in all states named in honor of submariners. I will suggest that local bases contact state legislators to initiate the projects. In a parallel path, we as individual submariners should contact our state legislators about naming highways in honor of our service.

U.S. Submariners Memorial Highway (Rt. 9) in Saratoga County, New York. Extends from Glenn Falls in the north to Crescent in the south (identified with red arrows).



U.S. Submariners Memorial Highway (I-70) in Saline County, Missouri. Extends from Columbia in the east to about 1.6 miles short of Sweet Springs in the west (identified with red arrows).



SUBMARINE SPECIALTY LICENSE PLATES—FLORIDA

Don Pybas [TM2(SS), O'72 & Blue, 1972-1975], a resident of Florida, provides the following information about obtaining the specialty plate:

"As of this year, the State of Florida has added several of new specialty license plates for a number of military-veteran groups, including the Navy Submariner license plate. I recently needed to renew my plate—intending to obtain the new submariner plate. I am writing this to assist shipmates prior to their heading over to the local tag agency to obtain this tag. Much to my surprise, there were some requirements beyond the normal registration formalities, which I suppose was to safeguard the status of rightful recipients.

"There is a lengthy application form that requires the usual information such as the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number), but it also requires the Title Number. The most challenging information requested was proof of "certification" of having served on submarines. The requested proof was for a DD214 or other verification of serving. As I did not have this information with me I had to return another day with the required documentation. My DD-214 does not list "qualified in submarines" but only listed the boats I served on and the dates. I had my Qualification Certificate as well. I was uncomfortable giving the agency a copy of my DD-214 as my service number is my Social Security Number, but they had to have a copy. I also offered up my first born child if necessary!

"Regardless of the bureaucracy, I did obtain the Navy Submariner tag. I trust this will be helpful when any Florida former sub sailors attempt to obtain a specialty license tag. By the way, the tag agency only had one in stock at the time I received mine."



Don's Specialty Plate

Mike Snare [ETR2(SS), Blue, 1968-1972], another Floridian, poses with his Submariner Specialty Plate



WHO ARE THEY?

Debbie Norbraten (Associate Member) and daughter of **George Clanton** [SM1(SS), Gold, 1961-1964 {Plank Owner}, **Eternal Patrol**] found the picture below of her dad with three other shipmates. She included the following information:

“Just found this photo of my dad. The back says it was taken in Holy Loch, Scotland around '63 or '64 when he would have been stationed on the Sam Houston. My dad is the one on the left side of the picture. Does anyone recognize the other gentlemen in the picture? Any information would be helpful.”



If you can provide any information about the other sailors, please contact Debbie via e-mail at <idic4dln@yahoo.com>.

DONATIONS REQUEST FOR THE SHVA

The year 2017 is an odd year, and these are the years that I request donations from our members to support the administration of the SHVA. For the information of new members, the SHVA does not impose yearly dues on its members for them to remain in good standing. This is because much of the communications with members is accomplished via e-mail. While this is a cost-saving measure, it nearly eliminates costs associated only with postal mailings—one aspect of the expenses necessary to operate the SHVA. So, I request donations from members on odd years only and suggest that each of us contribute \$25. Any contribution is appreciated if your financial permits.

The SHVA has acquired a federal tax-exempt recognition from the IRS under section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code. One of the requirements imposed by this recognition is that when the association ends its existence, any money/assets that remain in its treasury must be given to another “veteran or charitable” organization. While I am not against this ruling, my logic is that **your** money is better off in **your** pocket. Unlike the SHVA, many somewhat large veterans’ organizations that collect dues have \$10,000 or more in their treasury. In most cases, the amount will significantly increase over the years based on dues payments far exceeding expenditures. In time, that money will be given to some other organization. That translates to extra money paid by their members being given away. Once dues/contributions are paid to a 501(c)(19) organization, that money cannot be used to benefit any individual of the group; hence, it cannot be returned to any payees. But if you keep your money from the start, the SHVA will not have to give away your money when it ceases to exist. I hope that you can appreciate this logic.

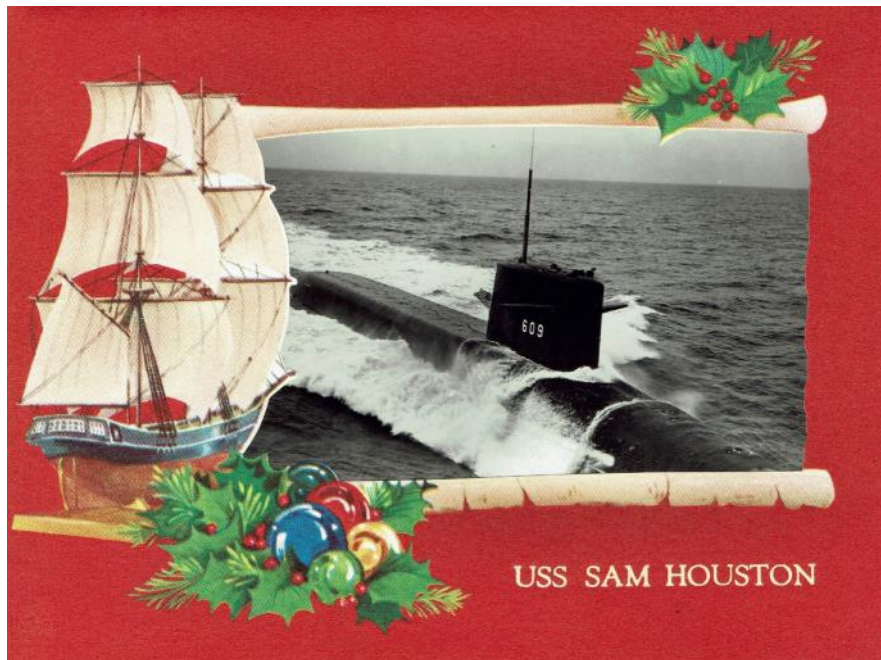
Please send your donation check or money order payable to “USS Sam Houston” to our Treasurer at:

Mark Manzer
10118 NE 41st Ave
Vancouver WA 98686-5811

Thank you for contributing.

USS SAM HOUSTON CHRISTMAS CARD

Bill Truslow [MM1(SS); Gold, O'66, & Blue; 1963-1970] sent me the following 3-panel, USS Sam Houston Christmas Card to share with the members. He dated the card circa 1964. A 4 X 5-in., B&W photo of the boat is inserted into the front panel of the card.



*From Our Ship to your home
go friendly greetings
for Christmas and the New Year*



