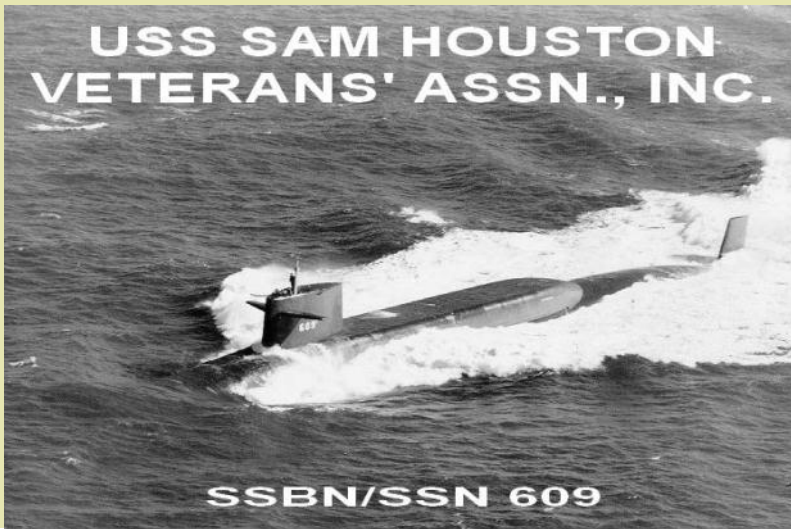


# USS SAM HOUSTON VETERANS' ASSN., INC.



## IN THIS ISSUE

Birthday Comments From Plank Owners	p. 2—6
Pictures From Plank Owners	p. 7—11
USS Sam Houston Medallions	p. 12
Ship's Plaque Location	p. 13
USS Thresher Medallion	p. 13
Thresher Medallion Order Form	p. 14
Blue Crew Wardroom 1996	p. 15
Sam Houston Windbreaker	p. 16
Cruise Reunion Comments	p. 17
Members Seek Other Members	p. 18

**2<sup>d</sup> Edition 2012**



A Society of Distinguished Naval Veterans  
Web Site: [www.USSSamHouston.org](http://www.USSSamHouston.org)



# The Raven

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



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY EDITION



### FROM THE CHAIRMAN

#### Shipmates & Associate Members:

This newsletter promises to be a great one because our Treasurer, **Mark Manzer** [STS3(SS), Gold, 1979-1982], remembered that the boat's birthday was 06 March. Mark reached out to our Plank Owners for some comments. Their comments, remembrances, and pictorials follow. I thank Mark for his thoughtfulness and effort.

The 2012 reunion (25-27 Oct) in Charleston, S.C. is close at hand, and I will be issuing the Reunion-Registration Packet near the end of April. I encourage those who have the time and money to attend along with your First Mates/partners and/or other family members and friends. This will be a great reunion with scheduled activities that include a dedication ceremony for the granite memorial bench already installed at the Cold War Submarine Memorial at Patriots Point on behalf of the SHVA and a visit to the museum of CSS H. L. Hunley!

Hoping that you can attend the reunion,

**Howard Dobson** [ETR2(SS), Gold, 1969-1972]  
8 Colony Blvd., Apt. 338C  
Wilmington, DE 19802-1426  
Phone/Fax: 302-764-1197  
E-Mail: [howardvaldobson@verizon.net](mailto:howardvaldobson@verizon.net)

## BIRTHDAY COMMENTS FROM PLANK OWNERS

06 Mar 2012 was the 50th anniversary of the commissioning of **USS Sam Houston**. To commemorate the occasion, I asked our Plank Owners to share some of their experiences. Their replies follow:

Treasurer, **Mark Manzur** [STS3(SS), SSN. 1979-1982]

### From Tom Owens [ETC(SS), Blue, 1960-1968]:

*I was a Plank Owner and served 12/60 through 6/68—ten Patrols, two Shakedown, and numerous Sea Trials.*

*The most memorable Patrol was my tenth Patrol in 1968. On our way to the Patrol area from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, we had numerous problems such as flooding in the Engine Room over Maneuvering and a fire in the ventilation system. But, the most memorable was the stern plane casualty which sent the ship toward the bottom at a 45-degree-plus down angle!*

*I was a qualified Diving Officer but was the Chief of the Watch/BCP Operator paired with a new Diving Officer who was getting his minimum watches in so he could start standing the Officer of the Deck watch. We had just relieved the watch and were traveling at "All Ahead Full" heading for our Patrol area when the ship suddenly did a quick up and down motion. I jumped up and asked the Stern Planesman what he was doing. He moved the stick forward and back and said, "I don't have any control over the planes." I immediately shouted, "BAILOUT," the code word for a stern planes casualty, to Lt. Inman, the OD, and actuated the Emergency Blow Valves which were installed during the overhaul. The ship started down toward the bottom. The down angle was in excess of 45 degrees because the hard stops on our SINS—Inertial Navigation Systems—were 45 degrees. One was totally destabilized, and the other was running erratically because it hit the stops but did not lose its stability. Because I was busy, I didn't notice the downward speed. Going through my mind was the fact that in the 20+ times we ran this drill in the Diving Trainer in New London, we never saved the ship!*

*Credit for saving the ship belongs to the "Nukes." They happened to be running the reactor coolant pumps in the "2+2" mode for PMs. They said this provided the extra power to save the ship, and the Fast Attack-trained Throttleman (name unknown) had experience in this type of maneuver. When we broke the surface, the down angle never came off the ship which meant a lot of the air had been dumped out of the ballast tanks. The ship was pulled up by the screw which pegged RPMs when the screw came out of the water. I was totally amazed that we were bobbing around on the surface, and the entire crew was not crushed into the Torpedo Room between the tubes. The Captain came into the Control Room and yelled, "blow the tanks" because we could have lost too much air out of the ballast tanks due to the angle. The Forward ICman, IC1 Bunch, cycled the Emergency Blow valves, but it really didn't do any good. I had completely used up all the air on the initial blow.*

*A lot of funny stories came out of the incident:*

*Most of the Storekeeper's Parts Cards in his office ended up on the office floor. It took the rest of the Patrol to get them re-filled!*

*Since we had just taken the watch, they were setting up for the second serving in the Galley. They said every cup and plate on the tables were broken, and the Mess Cook got to wear the dishwasher which spilled out of the sink!*

*The Lower Level Engine Room watch started running forward as the ship started down and had to jump up to the forward bulkhead to escape the bilge water. It only got him wet up to his waist!*

*The Missile Compartment watch got to ride his stool half the length of the Missile Compartment and crashed into the forward bulkhead!*

*The Engineer of the Watch bragged he handled the casualty perfectly. He said, "every time someone yelled something, I said, 'very well.'"*

*Many crewmen were in their bunks and woke up crunched head-first into the top half of their bunks!*

*The entire crew was shaky after that. So naturally, when I was on the dive and we were going to periscope depth to look around, I used a large up angle. This always attracted a crowd to the Control Room asking, "what's happening?"*

*My favorite recollection of USS Sam Houston was when STC Bob Foster, the Chief of the Boat, would catch me screwing up, he always said, "caught you again, friend!" As you may have guessed, he caught me doing a lot of things I shouldn't have.*

## BIRTHDAY COMMENTS FROM PLANK OWNERS (cont.)

From Jim Cannell [ETR2(SS), Blue, 1961-1962]:

*My submarine experience started in January 1960 aboard USS Tang (SS 563) as a seaman fresh out of Sub School. While aboard USS Tang, I received my crow (ETR3). I had just earned my Dolphins in August 1960 when I received orders to school at Dam Neck, Va. to learn the FBM navigation system. While at school, I was assigned to the Blue Crew of the Sam Houston.*

*The first time I actually saw the boat was on launch day, February 2, 1961. School was dismissed for the day so that we could drive over to Newport News and be part of the ceremony for our new home. It was a miserable day—air temperature was about 15°F, windy, and threatening snow. The whole crew needed to be aboard two hours before launch, so that the Yard Birds could clear the scaffolding. We were on deck in Dress Blues and Peacoats. I remember **Tom Owens** complaining about having no medals to wear; so, he fastened a big button to his uniform (under the Peacoat) that read “When you are as great as I am, it’s hard to be humble.”*

*(Mark’s note: Jim’s comment about Tom Owens was shared with Tom. He replied, “there is a good chance I said that. I was always outspoken about the fact that the FBMs never received any recognition for our efforts. But, that happens when you’re very good at your job.”)*

Jim continues:

*I had never felt so cold in my life as I did that day—standing out on the open deck in that miserable weather. Our only consolation was that the officers were even worse off up on the sail planes!*

*After completing school in June, I reported aboard and spent the next several months on shift work—learning the navigation equipment, monitoring Yard Birds, requalifying, etc. The time was pretty much a blur, but we learned to be a crew rather than just a bunch of sailors thrown together.*

*Late in the year, we finally were able go out on Sea Trials. There were six of them, alternating between the crews, although key people from both crews were aboard all six. One incident that I remember happened the first time that we went to test depth. There was a loud bang. Before the sound of it died away, a flank bell had been answered! The quick reaction was a great sign that we had come together as a crew. After we returned to the yard, it was discovered that the bang was no more than a superstructure shift.*

*Commissioning Day, March 6, 1962, found all of us up on deck again in our Dress Blues. It was quite an honor to see and hear the keynote speaker, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz. I don’t remember the speech, but remember the Admiral. I also remember Capt. Willis in his remarks, justifying the cost of the boat, by noting that it had cost each taxpayer only the price of a pack of cigarettes!*

*After a successful Shakedown Cruise, we went to Cape Canaveral in the early spring to load and fire two test missiles. Many admirals were aboard for the test firing. The Exec, Cdr. Wise, was sweating bullets over that. He decided with that much brass aboard, he needed a sharp crew; so, he did not allow us to go on liberty the night before. He forgot one little detail. The Gold Crew was there to relieve us after the missile test, and then to go on their Shakedown Cruise. Their Exec gave them liberty. They managed to bring us back enough liquid presents that the whole crew was snockered by the time we got underway. Still, the missile test went flawlessly. Fifteen minutes after we fired the first missile, the report came from down range that it was right in the “pickle barrel.” At that point, the big brass said, “you guys are good; let’s go home.” We never fired the second missile; the Gold Crew got to do that.*

*The summer of 1962 was spent in the yard refitting in response to info developed during Sea Trials. By early fall, we were ready to head for Charleston to load live missiles and go on our first Patrol. At that time, my hitch was up. I was under a great deal of pressure to either extend or ship over. At that time, I felt that if I shipped over, I was really in it for 20. I did not think that I would have made a good career military person; so, I opted to take my discharge. Later on, I often had second thoughts about that decision. I missed out on actually doing what my training had prepared me for. I missed my shipmates and the good and bad times we had together.*

## **BIRTHDAY COMMENTS FROM PLANK OWNERS (cont.)**

**From Richard O'Keefe [MT2(SS), Gold, 1961-1962]:**

It's been over 50 years ,but here are some of my memories of NNNSY [Newport News Naval Ship Yard] and USS Sam Houston:

*Trying to find a parking space near the gate was always an adventure. I lived in Virginia Beach and carpoled with 3 guys so that made it a little easier.*

*USS Sam Houston was the first 608-class boat built by NNNSY. I believe that it was built cost-plus and that the final cost would determine the price for subsequent designs. Toward the end of the outfitting period, word went out that valve wheels could be sent to the plating shop, lots of Formica trim was added, and we got a bunch of tools from Sears, probably because of the contract.*

*The crew was really top-heavy. I was an E5 on USS Sam Houston, but we had some E4s mess cooking. When it came time for working parties, they would pass the word "all E5s and below lay topside to handle stores."*

*I was on the Gold Crew but was assigned to ride her on Builder's Trials because (I think) I had qualified on a diesel boat and had lots of helm-and-planes experience. I was a Lookout during the first Maneuvering Watch, and I remember a tug assisting us away from the pier, and then the boat heading out to sea on our own power. We ran at about 15 knots on the surface, and I remember seeing the bow wave coming back to the sail—a much different look than I had [seen] on the diesel boat.*

*Diving was also a different experience. On the diesel boat, it was just like in the movies: "clear the bridge, clear the bridge, 2 blasts on the diving alarm—Lookouts scooting down the ladder from the Bridge to the Planes Station in the Control Room, the QMOW dogging the upper Conning Tower hatch, the COW reporting 'pressure in the boat' and 'green board,' and getting completely under water, all in about 30 seconds." On USS Sam Houston, it was "prepare to dive, unrig and secure the Portable Bridge Control Station, lock the ice barriers, and then descending down to the Attack Center. Man the planes, then the announcement on the 1MC, 'Now hear this, Dive, Dive' followed by 2 blasts on the Diving Alarm. Two minutes or so later, we were under! Feeling the boat's response to the planes and rudder was a completely different experience. My old boat was a WWII nonGuppy-class with a big Regulus hanger aft of the superstructure. The 1/3 submerged speed was about 2.5 knots so it took lots of plane and rudder angle to maintain course/depth. Watching USS Sam Houston changed depth with 1 or 2 degrees on the planes was really great.*

*The first descent to Test Depth was fun. For some reason, they had officers manning the Diving Station. We went down in increments and leveled off to look for damage. I was in the Missile Compartment with a grease gun pumping grease into Zerk Fittings on the tubes which were leaking. There were lots of groans and strange noises from the hull being compressed for the first time. The one thing I remember was that during the descent, the ladder handrail from the Crew's Mess into the Berthing Area buckled, and the aluminum bulkhead also got bent up. There were other minor problems, but all-in-all, it was successful.*

*The 30-degree, up/down tests were fun. I think they were later named Angles & Dangles, but I don't remember that term being used at that time. I was again in the Missile Compartment looking for damage and hanging on for dear life. We had a pretty significant personnel casualty that I remember. We carried lots of Yard Birds with us, and some of them slept in hammocks suspended from a rail in the upper level which was used for moving guidance capsules around. The trolley which carried the capsules weighed several hundred pounds and had a friction brake that was supposed to hold it in place. Well, the brake wasn't adjusted properly, and the trolley slid during the angle test and wacked a Yard Bird in the head!*

*My best memory about the trials was walking into the Attack Center during the High-Speed Trial and seeing the Pit Log reading over 25 knots. After having served on USS Barbero which had a max submerged speed of about 7 knots only for about 30 minutes, that was awesome!*

*Commissioning day was cold. My young wife came and sat in the audience.*

## **BIRTHDAY COMMENTS FROM PLANK OWNERS (cont.)**

From George Goodwin [ETR1(SS), Blue, 1961-1965]:

### Story 1 of 2—About a Shipmate.

*"My old shipmate, **Don Spratlin**, lies forever in Hampton, Virginia. Don was part of the Commissioning Crew for USS Sam Houston being built at Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company. He drove a Austin Mini and loved good music, true friends, home-cooked meals, and sports cars—European ones.*

*I met Don at Dam Neck, Virginia while I was being schooled in computers and inertial-navigation systems. Don was GS3(SS); I was ETSN(SS). We bunked in the same quad and met there initially thinking we were going to be in the Precommissioning Crew of USS Thomas Edison—the 610 boat. All of us at Dam Neck who were slated for the Edison were re-designated for Houston, the 609 boat.*

*After we graduated our respective courses—Don in missile guidance and I in navigation systems—we showed up at the shipyard in Newport News. Don was single, and I was newly married. After a few months at the yard crawling through the boat on the ways and learning systems, we gravitated toward each other more and more. Don was living in a "snake ranch" with a couple of guys who were wearing him down with their single-john ways, and he was bored with drinking and partying 24/7. He elected to come to Hampton where I lived in a duplex with my wife above Denny and Pat Breese. I think it was on Van Buren Street.*

*Denny drove a Peugeot, I drove a SAAB, Don a Mini, Bob Folks a DKW, a couple of guys drove Alfa Romeos, the Engineer drove a Porsche. It was the early 60's, and there was a major interest in foreign cars. We all drove Gymkhana Races and a few rallies as well.*

*During the building period, the crew worked hard and played hard. We were excited about this new type of boat, and we all formed friendships rapidly. Don and I were assigned to the swing shift (1600–2400) as part of the command's way of distributing the large number of crew around the clock to observe yard work and to begin quals. We often drove to work together, but more often, we would take a dinner break at 1900 and go over town to a restaurant.*

*One particular evening, Don and I agreed to meet on the Crew Barge—tied up at the south end of the yard—at 1900 to clean up and head out for dinner. I was tracing a system in the Ops Compartment, and I got distracted long enough so that I got to the barge too late to go out with Don. He had all ready been there, and the Barge Watchstander let me know I missed him by about 10 minutes. I hung out with the barge watch for about 10 more minutes wondering how I was going to go out to get dinner when the phone rang. I was closer to the phone than the watch; so, I picked it up and gave the customary greeting: "Sam Houston Barge, may I help you?"*

*A female voice on the other end of the line told me she needed to report that a "young boy was involved in a car accident and had been killed." I responded appropriately not knowing who the "young boy" could be and who's child he was. I asked for the child's name, and the female (a nurse on duty at the city hospital) said, "his name is Donald Spratlin."*

*My horror and astonishment cannot be described. I asked her to repeat what she just told me, and it was the same as before. Don had been T-boned by another vehicle, and he was killed instantly in his Mini. Later, more details became known. Don was sitting at a traffic signal waiting to go on green. The light changed, and he pulled ahead into the intersection. Another vehicle—a pickup truck—was running the light from the left and T-boned Don's Mini. The Mini rolled over a few times, threw Don onto the pavement, and the automobile then rolled over on top of him crushing his head. It was quick and over just like that.*

*When we passed the word along to the Yeomen, they needed to contact Don's brother in Canada, his only living relative. His brother came to Hampton and made arrangements for Don to be buried locally. The crew was still forming, and we only had a few friendships formed. So Don, being a laid-back kind of guy, just had about a dozen or so pals in the Houston crew. We all showed up to the cemetery for the graveside service, though. Even our wives came. They thought the world of Don. He was so sweet and polite around them, and they loved to spoil him with food and attention.*

*I miss Don very much. I have been to his graveside each time I go to the Tidewater area for reunions and such. Each time, I am moved by the beautiful setting his body is resting in and the memories of him and driving our little cars around that area.*

*One memory stands out from this event. That is, Don never wore his seatbelt. I think that was why he was thrown out of his car. Ever since then, I have worn mine with no exceptions. Nearly every time I get into the driver's seat now, I think of my old pal, Don. RIP, Don. You would have made a great shipmate.*

## **BIRTHDAY COMMENTS FROM PLANK OWNERS (cont.)**

From George Goodwin [ETR1(SS), Blue, 1961-1965]:

### **Story 2 of 2—About the Builder's Sea Trials**

*USS Sam Houston was at sea, and the event involved that hairy system—Depth Control—which used the Depth Control Tanks located under AMR 1 aft of the Missile Compartment. We had two tanks that used huge suction and discharge lines to the sea that were intended to maintain neutral buoyancy while preparing for a missile launch.*

*MM1 Reich was manning the Ballast Control Panel during the event which also involved people being at a modified Battle Station readiness. This ensured all of the best people were involved in the operation of critical equipment for the test.*

*The skipper, W. P. Willis, was on the Con for the test. Basically, we were at Battle Station Missile for the event. I'm not sure who was at the other stations in the Control Room, but the place was crowded with participants and observers.*

*The Planesmen were struggling to maintain depth for a launch, and the Chief of the Watch was trying to be as patient as possible with the guys and calling to Reich on the BCP to pump and transfer water as needed to correct pitch and ballast. Things were not going well, and Captain Willis was growing more and more anxious as the event wore on with no indication that the boat was going to be stabilized any time soon. He had given the order to "Hover," and he was waiting for the boat to be steady at launch depth. Pump, flood, trim, try going ahead a bit—all to no avail. The boat was angling and sinking or rising with no control. The Hovering Crew had no command of the situation, and the skipper was growing very impatient.*

*After about 10 minutes of an occasional "Hover!" and all the finagling with the control systems, people were all getting more and more testy, and the tension in the Control Room was unbearable. At this point Captain Willis gripped the stainless steel handrails that surrounded the Conning Station, and he yelled, "HOVER!!!"*

*Reich jumped up onto the chair at the BCP and tucked his hands into his armpits. He began to pump his elbows up and down and shouted at the skipper, "I'm flapping as hard as I can, Skipper, but I'm losing ground!!!"*

*Not a creature stirred. No one even cracked a smile. Skipper Willis was the most serious skipper I have ever served with. He was also the best I have ever served under.*

*The skipper was stunned for just a moment. He looked at Reich, who is normally a rather serious guy while on watch, with astonishment. He wasn't quiet for long.*

*"GET THAT MAN OUT OF HERE!!!"*

*We finally got to hover, but that was anti-climactic for most of us.*

From George Nault [EMCM(SS), Gold, 1961-1964]:

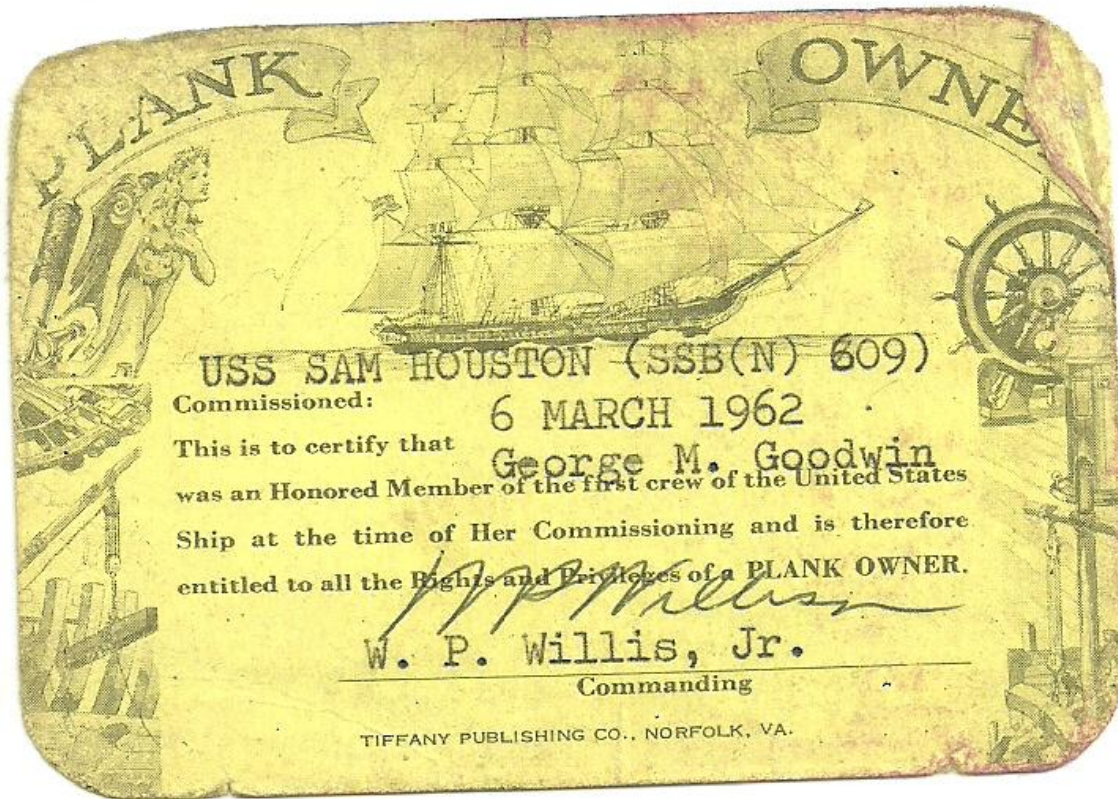
*I am a Plank Owner on USS Sam Houston. I made the first two Patrols as a EMCS(SS). I did not receive an e-mail concerning the birthday, but a fellow shipmate Plank Owner, **Jesse Davis** [EMC(SS), Gold 1961-1965], told me about it. There isn't much to say about the commissioning, but I recall the launching very vividly. I had on my Bridge Coat standing topside on the deck, and it was one of the coldest days of my life as we went down the ways. My wife and two small boys were there freezing the whole time. The guest speaker was Governor Connolly of Texas; he was shot with President Kennedy. His wife broke the champagne bottle and christened USS Sam Houston. I remember she gave the Wardroom a painting of Santa Anna surrendering to Sam Houston. That painting was probably still hanging in the Wardroom when you [Mark Manzur] were on it.*

*[Mark's comment: I wrote back to George saying that the painting was still there when I was on the boat for patrols 50-54 and during the SSN conversion.]*

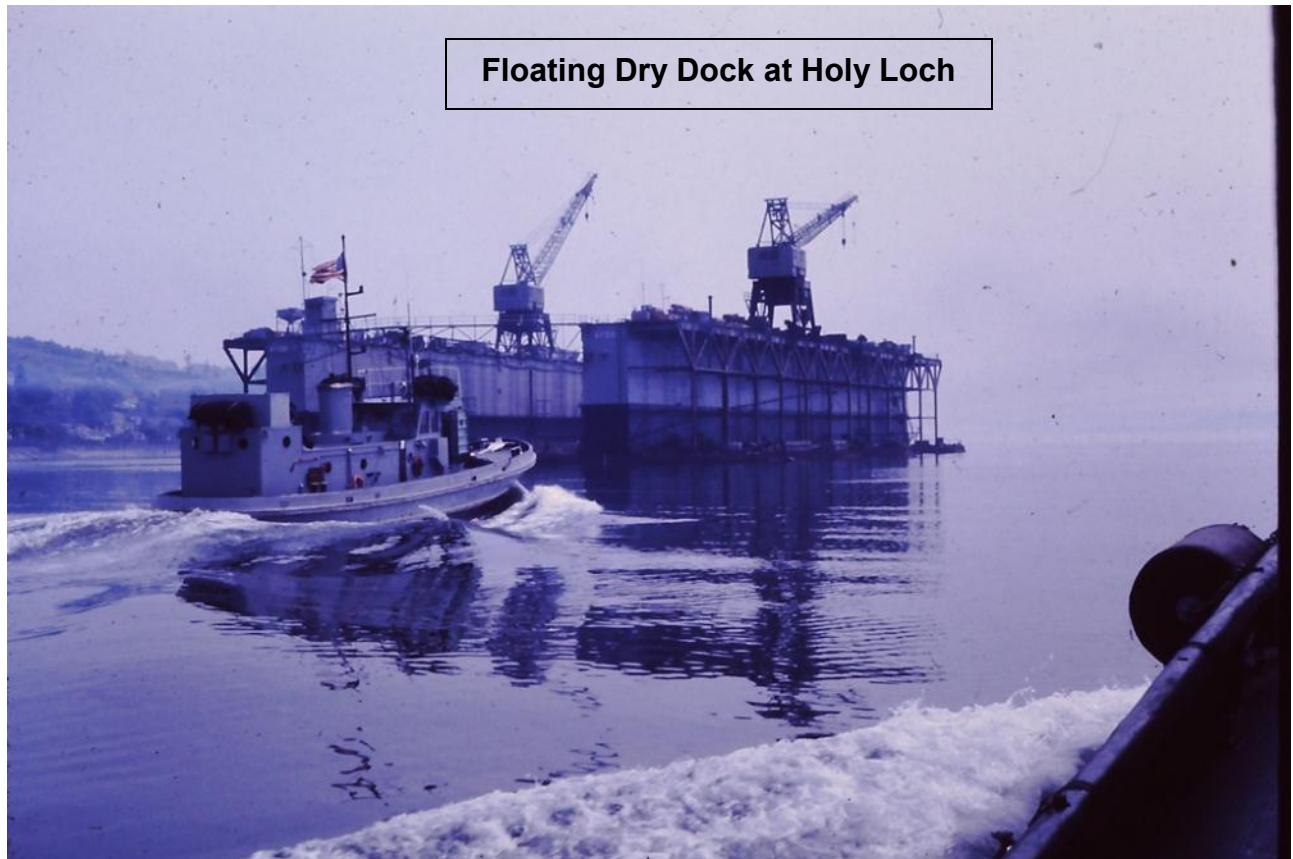
**Pictures from the Plank Owners follow.**

**PICTURES SUBMITTED BY PLANK OWNERS**

From **George Goodwin** [ETR1(SS), Blue, 1960-1965]

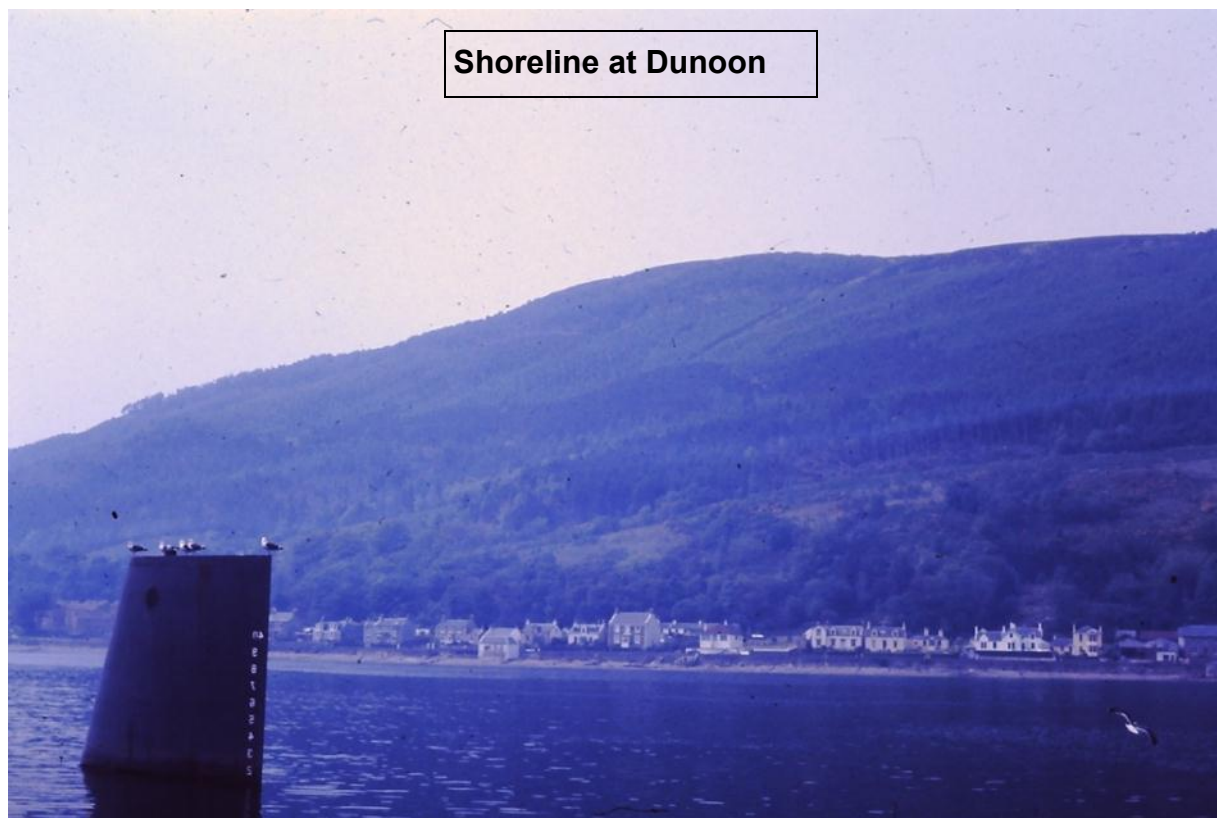


From **Thomas Owens** [ETC(SS), Blue, 1960-1968]

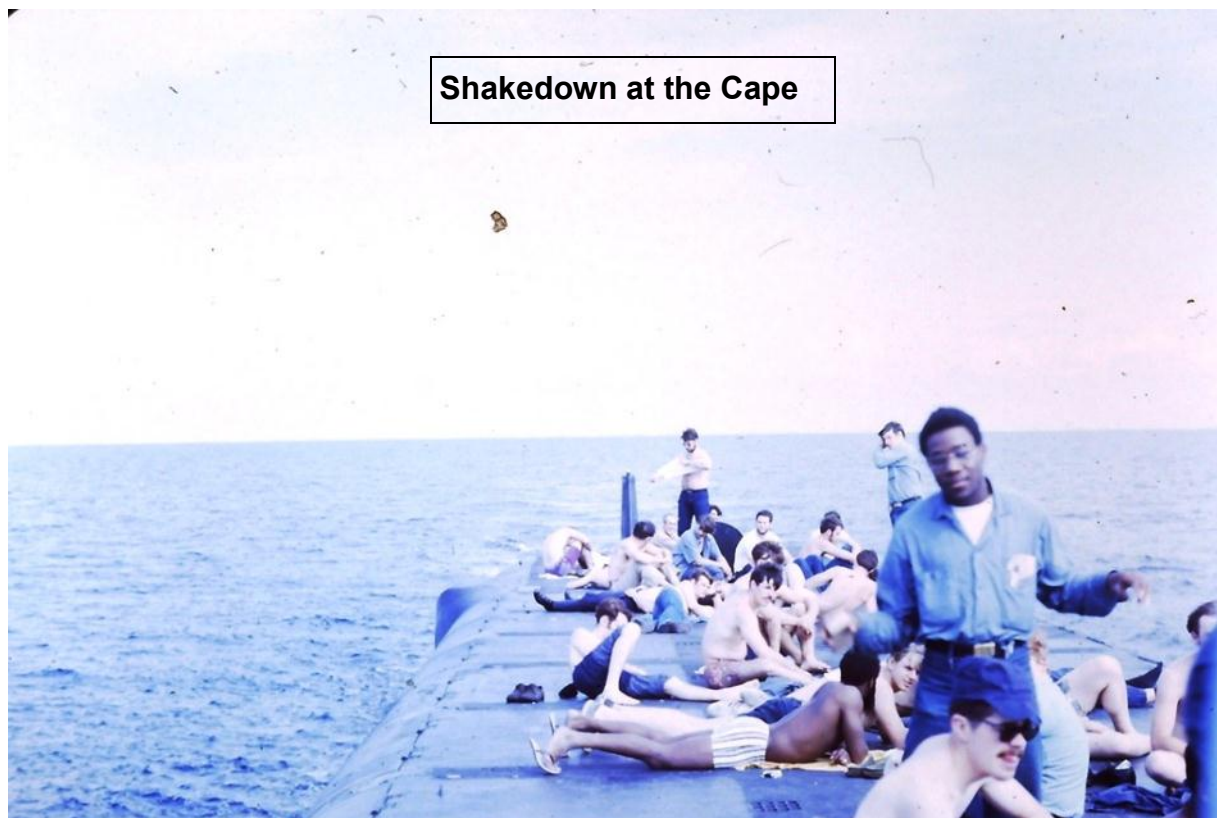


**PICTURES SUBMITTED BY PLANK OWNERS**

More pictures from Thomas Owens:



**Shoreline at Dunoon**



**Shakedown at the Cape**



**PICTURES SUBMITTED BY PLANK OWNERS**

Still more pictures from Thomas Owens:



**Shakedown at the Cape**

**PICTURES SUBMITTED BY PLANK OWNERS**

And more pictures from Thomas Owens:

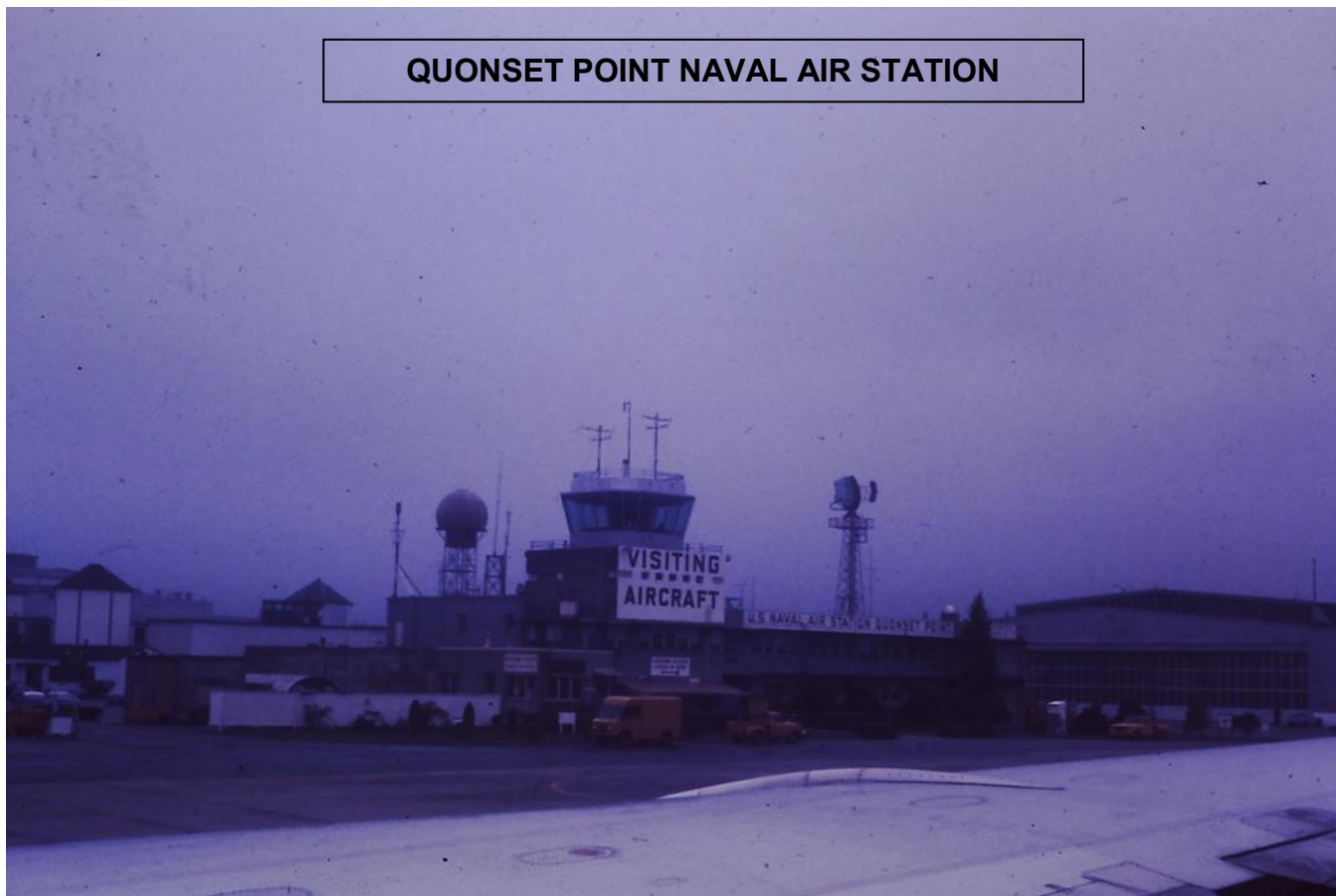
**Don't Know What's Happening Here?**



**PICTURES SUBMITTED BY PLANK OWNERS**

And still more pictures from Thomas Owens:

**QUONSET POINT NAVAL AIR STATION**



## SSBN 609 MEDALLION

We have received the Sam Houston SSBN Medallions or 'Challenge Coins' and are now making them available to members of the USS Sam Houston Veterans' Association. We paid \$9 ea. for their manufacture and have determined that it will cost a buck apiece to ship them. So, we came up with a reasonable price of \$12 ea. with the difference going to the Association's kitty for future expenses.

The coins are the same as the one passed around at the last reunion. On one side it has the Sam Houston crest, "Try Me," below the raven with a background in orange. "USS Sam Houston SSBN 609, 1962-1991" is engraved on the same side. The other side is engraved with "Forty One for Freedom" and "SSBN Deterrent Patrol." Also with a set of Dolphins is the following statement by General Colin Powell:

**"No one has done more to prevent conflict—no one has made a greater sacrifice for the cause for peace—than you, America's proud missile submarine family. You stand tall among our heroes of the Cold War."**

You may order this coin via postal mail or you can purchase it at the 2012 reunion. To order by mail, please send a check or money order payable to USS Sam Houston to the following address:

**USS Sam Houston Vet. Assn.  
c/o Howard Dobson  
8 Colony Blvd., Apt. 338C  
Wilmington, DE 19802-1426**



Larry Ferrell [MM1(SS), Blue, 1968-1970], our Storekeeper, will mail the coins to you from his home in Maine.

This coin is associated with the SSBN configuration of the boat. The following article addresses a medallion for the SSN configuration of the boat.

*Howard Dobson*

## SSN 609 MEDALLION

Ernie Lockwood [CDR & CO, SSN, 1983-1987], Larry Ferrell, and myself have finalized the design for a medallion associated with the SSN configuration of the boat. Hopefully, the new SSN coin will be ready for sale by June or July. I will inform you when this new coin is available for purchase. Because a new mold was required for this coin, it will cost a few more dollars than the SSBN coin.

This medallion has different circumferential wording and statement within the text box. That different statement addresses the different mission of boat:

**"With the ever-challenging world situation, the revised mission of intelligence gathering, enhanced ASW capabilities, and Special Forces delivery systems greatly improved our efforts to thwart terrorism and any other threats to our peace and safety."**

**Ernie Lockwood, CAPT, USN (ret.)  
First Commanding Officer after Conversion Overhaul**



- 187 C Red
- Black
- White
- Reflex Blue
- Orange
- 123 C yellow
- Raised brass
- Recessed TEXTURE #3

## USS THRESHER MEMORIAL SERVICE & MEDALLION

Larry Ferrell requested that members of the SHVA be informed of the availability of a medallion of USS Thresher. He writes:

*"The Thresher Memorial Service is held every year in Kittery, Maine, adjacent to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The Maine Submarine Veterans organization [Maine Base of the USSVI], of which I am the Base Commander, has participated in the yearly event for as long as we have been an organization.*

*"The Thresher Memorial Group has come out with a coin that they are selling to raise funds for the 50th memorial meeting to be held in 2013. The coin goes for \$20 (+\$5 shipping). The coin/money is for a worthwhile cause which I understand the proceeds will go towards helping make a DVD of the memorial to send to survivors' families who are not able to attend and to help subsidized a group dinner for those who are unable to attend the 50th Memorial Service in 2013.*

*"Most of us that served on USS Sam Houston were around when USS Thresher went down (I was in Sub School at the time.); so, this might be something to present to members of the SHVA. Pictures of the medallion are below, and an order form is on the next page."*



The small print is:

### *Navy Hymn for Submariners*

*Bless those who served beneath the sea,  
Through the lonely hours the vigil they had to keep.  
May eternal peace their mission ever be,  
Bless each one we ask of thee.  
Comfort those who at home who waited and prayed  
For their return night and day  
Sailor, rest your oars."*

(*Vis tacita* is Latin for "silent strength.")

## FATE OF THE SHIP'S PLAQUE LIKELY KNOWN

John Mosier [LT, SSN, 1989-1991, and Decom Crew] suggested that this plaque and some other significant items might be in the Naval History & Heritage Command [Museum] at the Navy Yard in Washington, D.C. Based on info from the Internet about this museum, that is likely the location of the plaque. Contact with the museum by those not on the property can only be done via postal mail. Regardless, acquiring possession of the plaque is likely not possible. I might pursue having a plastic replica made. Any ideas on what companies might do that?

**Howard Dobson**



**USS THRESHER MEDALLION ORDER FORM**

**USS Thresher SSN-593 Order Form**

Please fill out this order form and return along with your check or money order made payable to "Victoria Sallade-Thresher Family Funds" to:

Victoria Sallade  
22 North Central Avenue  
Sicklerville, NJ 08081

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL FOR COINS (\$20.00 each) \_\_\_\_\_

COIN SHIPPING (flat \$5.00 per order) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Free if you want to pick-up at 49th Dinner Service

RAFFLE TICKETS (\$1.00 each) \_\_\_\_\_

\*If you are ordering raffle tickets only please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.

DINNER TICKETS (\$20 per person) \_\_\_\_\_

\*Family and Former Crew only

OPTIONAL DONATION \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_

I can be reached anytime at 609-519-1707 or bobjs36@aol.com with any questions.

The entire Thresher Family thanks you for your support!

## BLUE CREW WARDROOM—1966

Below is a photo taken of **USS Sam Houston** Wardroom in August 1966. We were finishing 71 days submerged, including a submerged transit from the Norwegian Sea to Charleston, S.C. where we were to offload missiles at the Naval Weapons Station prior to an overhaul and refit at Portsmouth (NH) Naval Shipyard.



**Seated:** LCDR Harris (A Div.), LCDR Dickinson Smith (XO), CAPT Dan Brooks (CO), LCDR Dave Harscheid (ENG), unidentified Midshipman, LT Chuck Kiger (SUPPLY).

**Standing:** LT Inman (WEPS), CWO Pat O'Connor (Fire Control), LT Skip Roman (OPS), LT Bill Wieting (MED), LT Hardy (Torpedo Off.), LT Smrcina (NAV), unidentified Midshipman, LT Mike Jacqmin (E&RC).

**Absent** (on watch): LT Wayne Moyer

The portrait on the port bulkhead is of our sponsor, Mrs. Joan Connolly, wife of the Governor of Texas.

Submitted by:  
Bill Wieting (LT, Blue, 1966)

## SHIPMATE & HIS JACKET

Charles "Chip" Porter [ETN2, Gold, 1971-1976] submitted the following pictures of himself in his Sam Houston jacket that he acquired while in Guam.



If anyone desires a similar windbreaker today, I suggest using the following vendor:

**Naval Shopping.com.**  
**1109 Main St**  
**Hellertown PA 18055**

**Phone: 800-866-6434**  
**Web Site: <[www.navalshopping.com](http://www.navalshopping.com)>**

This vendor has a multitude of items that can be monogrammed with ship information, and most can have additional customizing. Items range from numerous types of gifts, apparel for men, women, and children, and even a bandana for a dog! The nylon windbreaker is embroidered as is the one that Chip is wearing above.

The owner of Naval Shipping.com is Bonnie Upton, and she is a recent widow of a Navy veteran. Her company is also a member of The Alliance of Military Reunions of which the SHVA is also a member. I prefer to support member vendors when feasible. I have seen samples of her items, and they are high-quality.

I will be ordering a total of four windbreakers from Naval Shopping—two for myself and two for my wife. Two of the jackets will be for USS Sam Houston and two will be for USS Willis A. Lee (DL 4) on which I served.

*Howard Dobson*



## A PLUG FOR A CRUISE REUNION BY LARRY FERRELL

At the Business Meeting during our upcoming reunion, we will be voting on geographic areas for our next two reunions: 2014 and 2016. A cruise reunion is suitable for military reunions and has become quite popular recently. The cost of a cruise reunion is about the same for a land-based reunion with the same number of days. **Larry Ferrell** [MM1(SS), Blue, 1968-1970] submitted the following article with information about cruise reunions for your consideration. Larry and Deborah cruise often. Larry's comments follow:

*History: My wife had been pushing me for years to do a cruise someday for an anniversary. Having spent 10 or so years in the US Navy, serving on 4 submarines, and crossing the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans several times (my DD 214 says 6 years, 2 months sea time), I was not too keen on doing any more sea time.*

*After I retired and had more free time to enjoy life, I got active in the Submarine Veterans organization, both the Maine Base Submarine Veterans and the National Submarine Veterans organizations (USSVI). I started attending USSVI conventions in addition to the submarine-crew reunions for the various subs I served on. In September 2007, the USSVI held its annual convention by going on a one-week, Seattle-to-Alaska cruise. My wife talked me into going, along with another 6 couples from the Maine Base Submarine Veterans group. There were some 1500 ex-submarine sailors and wives in attendance.*

*We had a ball. And, they did not even make me stand watches! I/We had one of the best experiences of our lives! The food met the reputation in the cruise industry as being extraordinary. (Even though I remember the food on the Sam Houston as being the best I ever had.) We chose mixed seating for our dinners and ate with a different group every night—letting us spend quality time with more people.*

*Since then, my wife and I have been going on yearly cruises, tremendously enjoying both the time at sea and all the places we have visited. We have done a South Pacific cruise, a Panama Canal cruise, a Trans-Atlantic/Med cruise. We have been below the equator and the other side of the International Date Line.*

*The cruise industry, while experiencing the economic boom of the late 1990's and early 2000's, overbuilt the number of cruise ships. With today's depressed economy, they are having trouble filling the ships with passengers. The result is that you can get cruises for very reasonable rates and even find last minute bargains at unbelievably low prices.*

*The base cruise price usually includes everything (except drinks). Therefore, the price of a one-week cruise compares to staying and dining at most resort centers and convention sites. Meeting rooms can be set up for members to visit. They provide limitless activities on a cruise ship. I came away with an opinion that if you were bored on a cruise, then there was something wrong with your requirements for entertainment, not the ship.*

**Larry Ferrell**

I add that for a cruise reunion, I, as Reunion Planner, will have no control over arranging a cruise reunion and its venues. In fact, that will be turned over to an agency that specializes in arranging military-cruise reunions. THIS IS NOT A BAD THING. The travel agency will take information from me and come up with cruises that best match the information provided to them. For a land-based reunion that is held at a full-service hotel, a military-reunion planner provides the hotel with reunion dates, intended activities, and meals, and hotel will provide guest rooms and function spaces. That planner also arranges tours through a tour company. The planner then negotiates related prices for everything. None of this occurs with cruises because they have their own agenda, and the reunion group must "fit in." Thus for a cruise reunion, members attending the 2012 Business Meeting need to consider the following aspects BEFORE voting related to a cruise reunion becomes final:

**Reunion Period** (dates or days of the week desired)

**Port of Departure** (beware of Gulf and lower Atlantic during hurricane season!)

**Ports of Call** (this one might become a "take what's available")

Other aspects such as the cruise line we will not be able to be chosen directly as this will likely be dependent upon the combination of the above aspects. Also, the cost is not negotiable because the cruise lines have their pricing policies. Despite the inability to choose certain aspects and essentially control none, cruise reunions are the rage and receive nothing but favorable reviews from military-reunion groups who have had them. I went on my first cruise in 2009 that happened to be a military-cruise reunion. It was great!

Larry has provided food for thought. If you will be attending the 2012 reunion and think that a cruise reunion will be suitable for the SHVA, please research options related to the three aspects above. This will save considerable time at the 2012 Business Meeting. Keep in mind that some combinations are not available; e.g., you will not get an Alaskan cruise leaving from the Port of Baltimore.]

### **ANY LEADS ON THE FOLLOWING SHIPMATES?**

**Bob Bishop** [MMCS(SS), Blue & Gold, 1960-1970] wishes to contact **Richard Slocum** [MM1, Gold, approx. 1962-1966]. Richard was also the Lead ELT. Bob believes that Richard went on to Become Master Chief of SubPac.

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**David Middleton** [FTB2(SS). Gold, 1971-1975] seeks "**Doc**" **Groves**. Doc was from Maine and an HM1(SS) with the Gold Crew. He came aboard in 1970 or 1971 and remained with the boat into the Charleston yards (1973-1975?).

If anyone has any leads on either of these shipmates, please inform me so that I can update the roster and relay any information to those who seek the information.

Thanks,

[Howard Dobson](#)

### **OMISSIONS FROM THIS EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER**

A few shipmates have submitted information for the newsletter that is not included in this edition. But, your information is neither neglected nor forgotten. I will include it in the next edition of the newsletter. This edition has become a large electronic file that might be approaching the size limit for e-mail attachments of some Internet Service Providers. The information from our Plank Owners took priority in this edition.

[Howard Dobson](#)

**ENJOY THE SPRING AND SUMMER.**

**I HOPE THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO JOIN YOUR  
SHIPMATES FOR A GREAT REUNION  
IN CHARLESTON THIS OCTOBER.**

**BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE  
REUNION-REGISTRATION PACKET  
IN A WEEK OR TWO.**