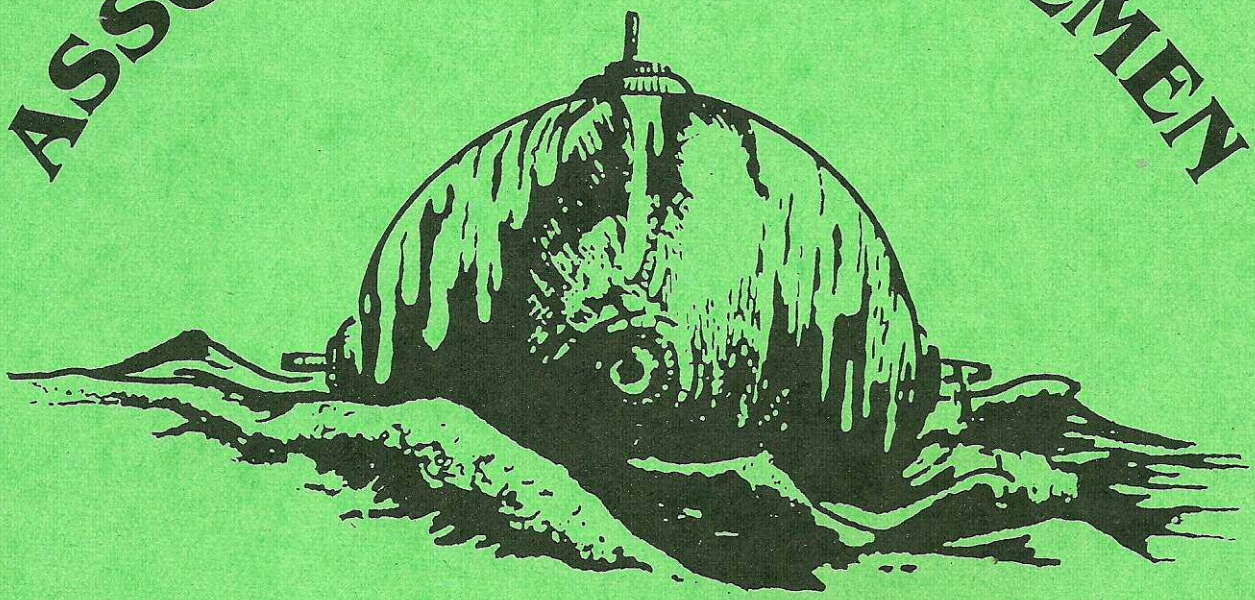
ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN



DEDICATED TO SERVING THE U.S. NAVY MINE FORCE

12TH ANNUAL REUNION

Charleston, SC

August 15 - 17, 1986

ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN
P O BOX 71835
CHARLESTON S C 29415

November 1985

The Association of Minemen is a group of retired and active duty Naval personnel and others that are interested in perpetuating the history and heritage of the Mineman rating of the United States Navy. We have prepared the Underwater Naval Mine Museum on board the USS Yorktown which is permanently moored in Charleston harbor and continue to provide upkeep to the museum. We are also working on the creation of a mine warfare library aboard the USS Yorktown that would be available to historians and students of Mine Warfare.

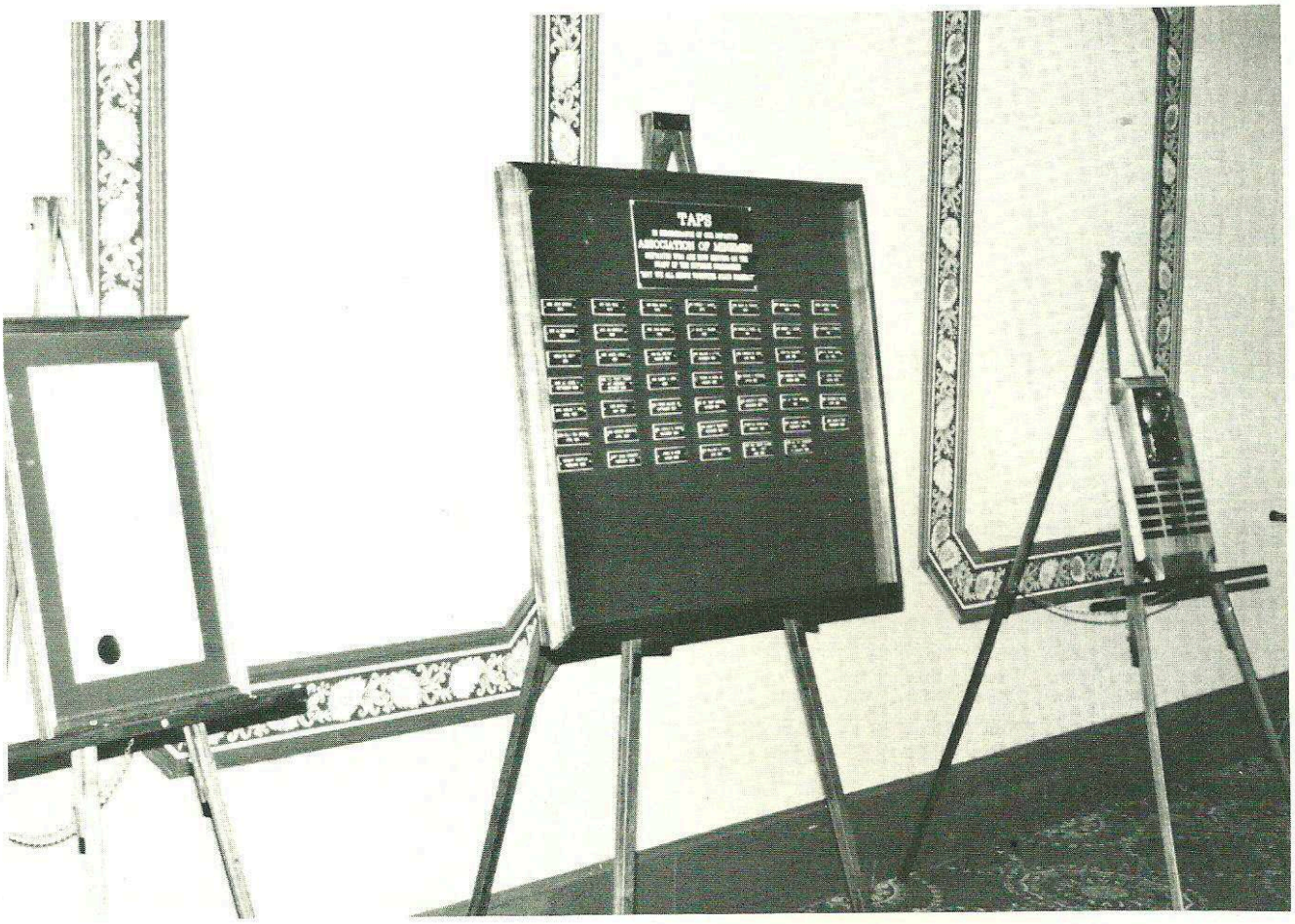
In mid 1970, a group of Minemen started to meet annually to renew old friendships and discuss ways in which they could help preserve the tradition and history of the Mineman rating as well as the mines they worked with during their careers in the U.S. Navy Mine Forces. These informal pay as you go meetings continued until 1977 when Constitution and By-Laws were adopted and the first Association of Minemen officers were elected. In 1980 a new set of officers were elected and the membership voted to officially incorporate. The Association of Minemen was incorporated in the state of South Carolina on 3 February 1981 for the purpose of being a fraternal association of Minemen promoting patriotic and historical interest in Minemen.

The Association meets annually, and has been alternating between Charleston South Carolina, home of the U.S. Navy Minemen and Yorktown Virginia, site of the first Naval School Mine Warfare and only Mine Depot. Future plans are to hold the annual reunion and meeting elsewhere as the support may dictate.

Honorary Mineman awards are given periodically to people that have contributed significantly to the area of Mine Warfare. To date, eight awards have been made to the following, Radm's Hoffmann, Monger and Horne, all previous Commanders Mine Warfare Command; Mr. Haines Miller, first Technical Director of the Naval Mine Engineering Facility and Mr. Trist McConnell, current Technical Director of the Naval Mine Warfare Engineering Activity (formerly NMEF); Lcdr Arnold Lott, author of the book "Most Dangerous Sea"; Captain R. Fromholtz past Commanding Officer of the Fleet and Mine Warfare Training Center; John E. (Jack) Shreve past Deputy Program Manager Mine Warfare Systems (PMS407) Naval Sea Systems Command, Washington DC. All Honorary Mineman awards are voted upon by the members at the annual business meeting each year during the reunion.

The long range plan of the Association of Minemen is to continue to develop the Mine Museum on board the USS Yorktown, which was partially opened to the public 28 September 1983. This Mine Museum is the largest and most complete outside a Naval activity which is open to the general public. We plan to expand the display with more current mine types as they are made available to us by Commander Naval Sea Systems Command in Washington DC.

The active duty Minemen number approximately 500, which is a small number when compared with other rates. However, the Minemen, possibly because of the small numbers, have developed a great sense of pride in what they do, and do well, even though there are a lot of people in the Navy as well as in civilian life that do not understand Naval mines. One of the goals of the Association is to help spread the word of the need and worth of mines as an important part of the overall U.S. Navy in protecting our nation.



Entrance to Dinner Meeting, Charter, Taps Board, Honored Members Plaque

Swearing in of new officers, L to R: Toby Horn, Dick Schommer, President; Phil Dechene, Vice President; Tom Morris and John Lemieux, Board of Directors.

COCC Awards, L to R: J.J. Sbei, Dick Schommer, Ken Harder.



Roger & Elizabeth Adams

Philip & Helen Adams

Rodney & Gloria Barker



Al & Yachiyo Bauer

Bob Benintende

Al Boreen



Guy & Linda Campbell

Swede & Irma Carlsen

John & Joann Caulder



Curtis "T" Christian

William & Lucy Condon

Jim & Judy Cottrell

Capt. Campbell, Chief of Staff Cominewarcom presents AOM Mineman of the Year Award (MNI D.G. Mack) to Capt. Massey Comomag.

Lyal Stryker presents AOM t-shirt to Associate Member Fred Massey, The Comomag Runner.

Mike & Pat Cummings

Charles & Grace Daughtrey

Phil & Evelyn Dechene

Sue Dunn

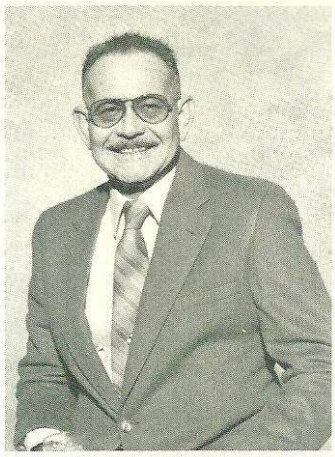
Timothy & Mary Ann Ealy

John & Carolyn Epps

Bob & Hiroko Forbes

John Frey

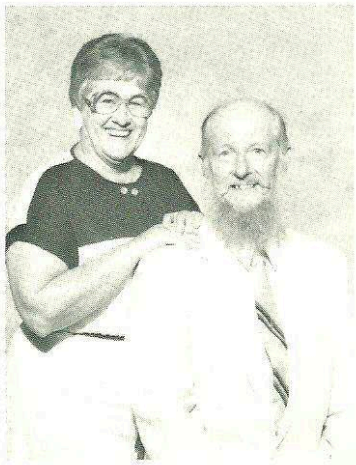
Donald & Evelyn Gatewood

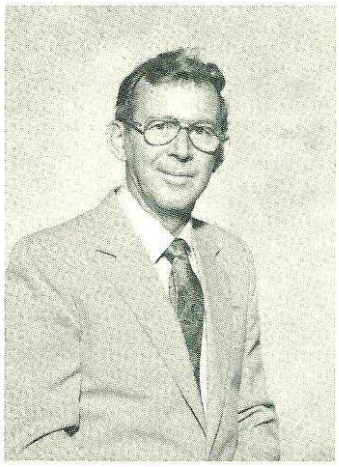


Robert & Penny Gochnauer

Bing & Helen Hajnal

Ken & Sadie Harder

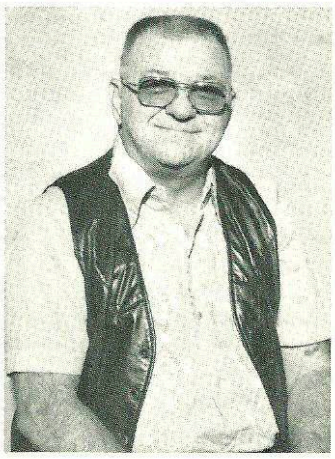
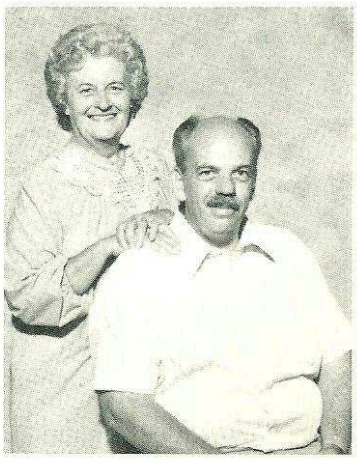




Lorrimer & Diana Hogge

Toby & Jani Horn

Harvey & Barbara Jacobs

Bill & Sheila Johnson

John Keen

Frenchy & Edna Lemieux



John & Bobbi Lounam

Garry & Tommie Sue Mason

Fred & Janet Massey



Francis (Mac) McCarthy

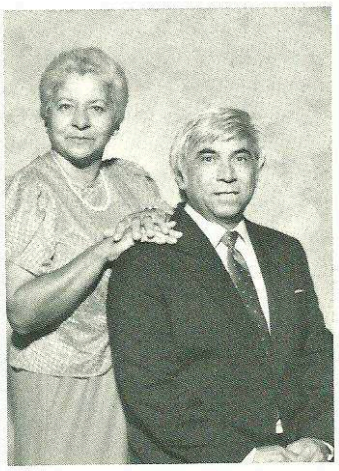
James & Helen Melanson

Tom & Johnda Morris

John & Klyoko Muessig

George & Vera Oxendine

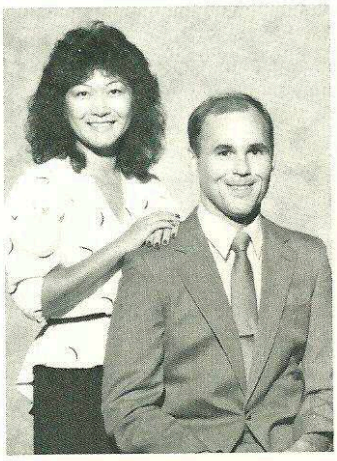
Charles & Joyce Parks


Ralph & Yukie Parsons

Tim & Louise Paton

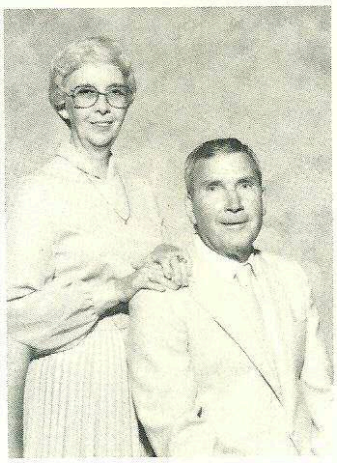
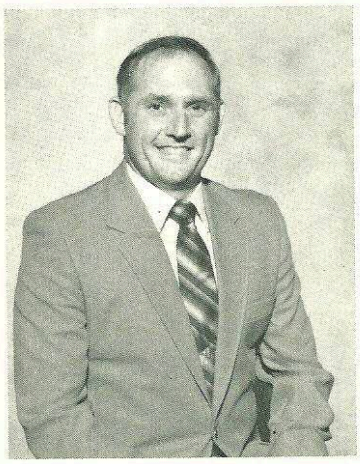
Bob & Connie Reed


John & Sue Reeve

Fred & Millie Reid

Marcus Roberts

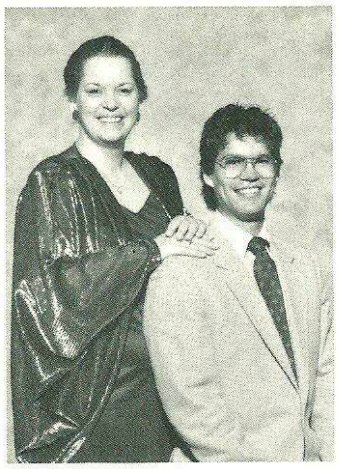
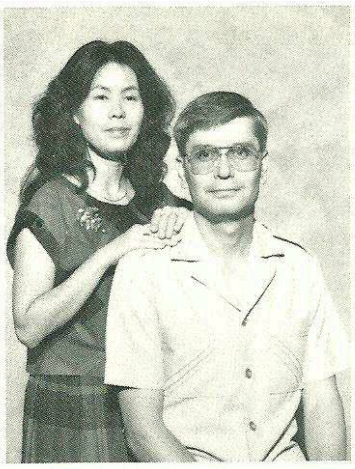




Tim Rogers

J.J. & Yumi Sbei

Gene & Eileen Schmidt



Dick & Sue Schommer

Thomas & Marisa Bright Shade

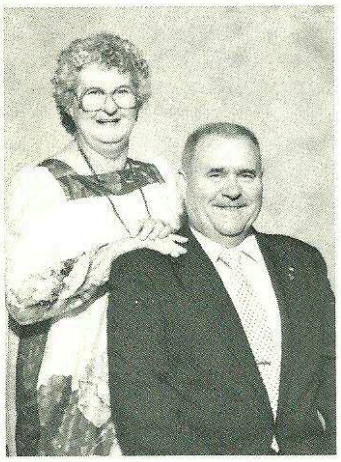
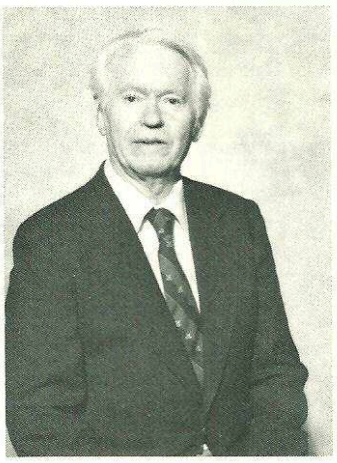
Ed & Yoshi Simmons



Robert & Irene Stancik

Jimmy Stanford

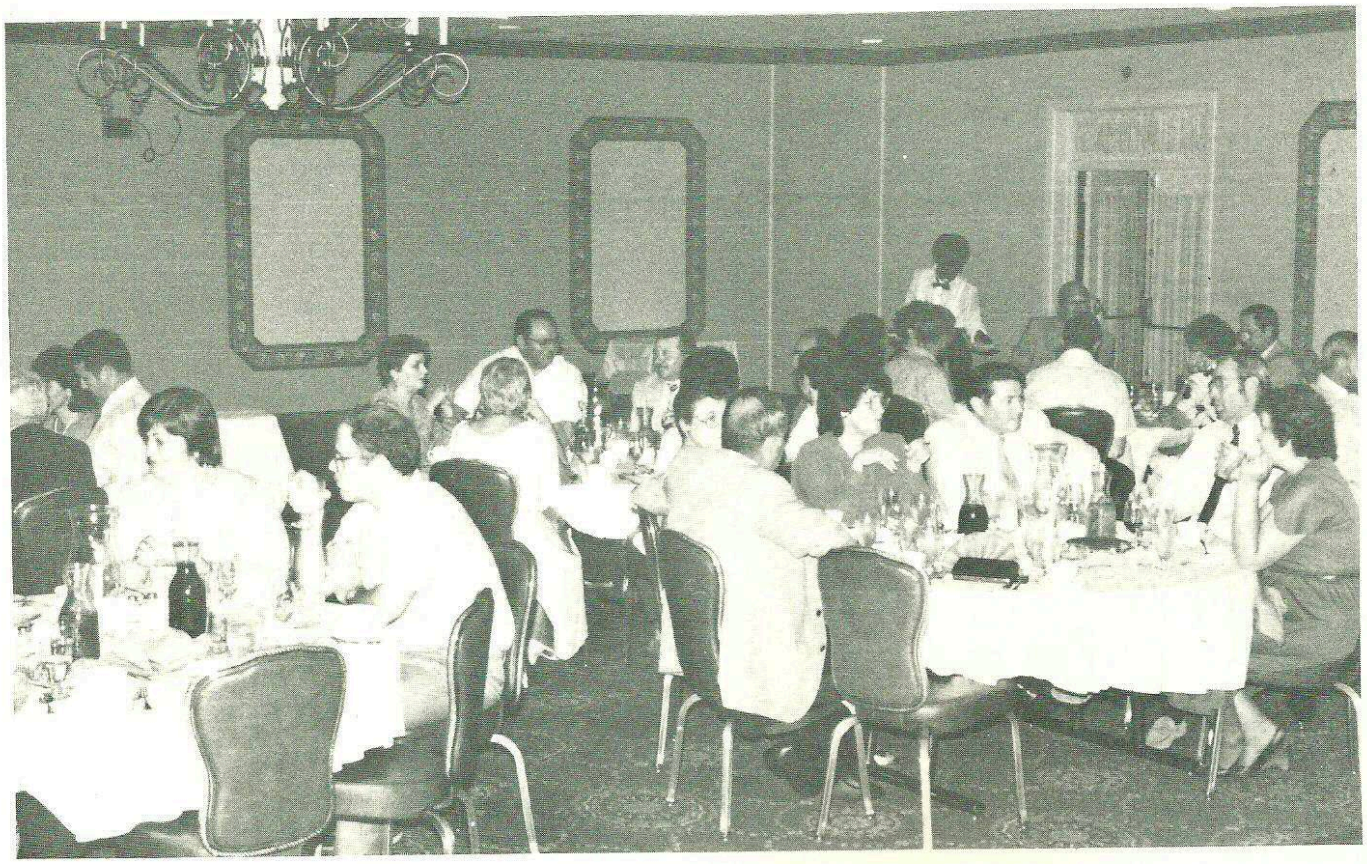
Horace & Shelby Stewart


Lyal & Doreen Stryker

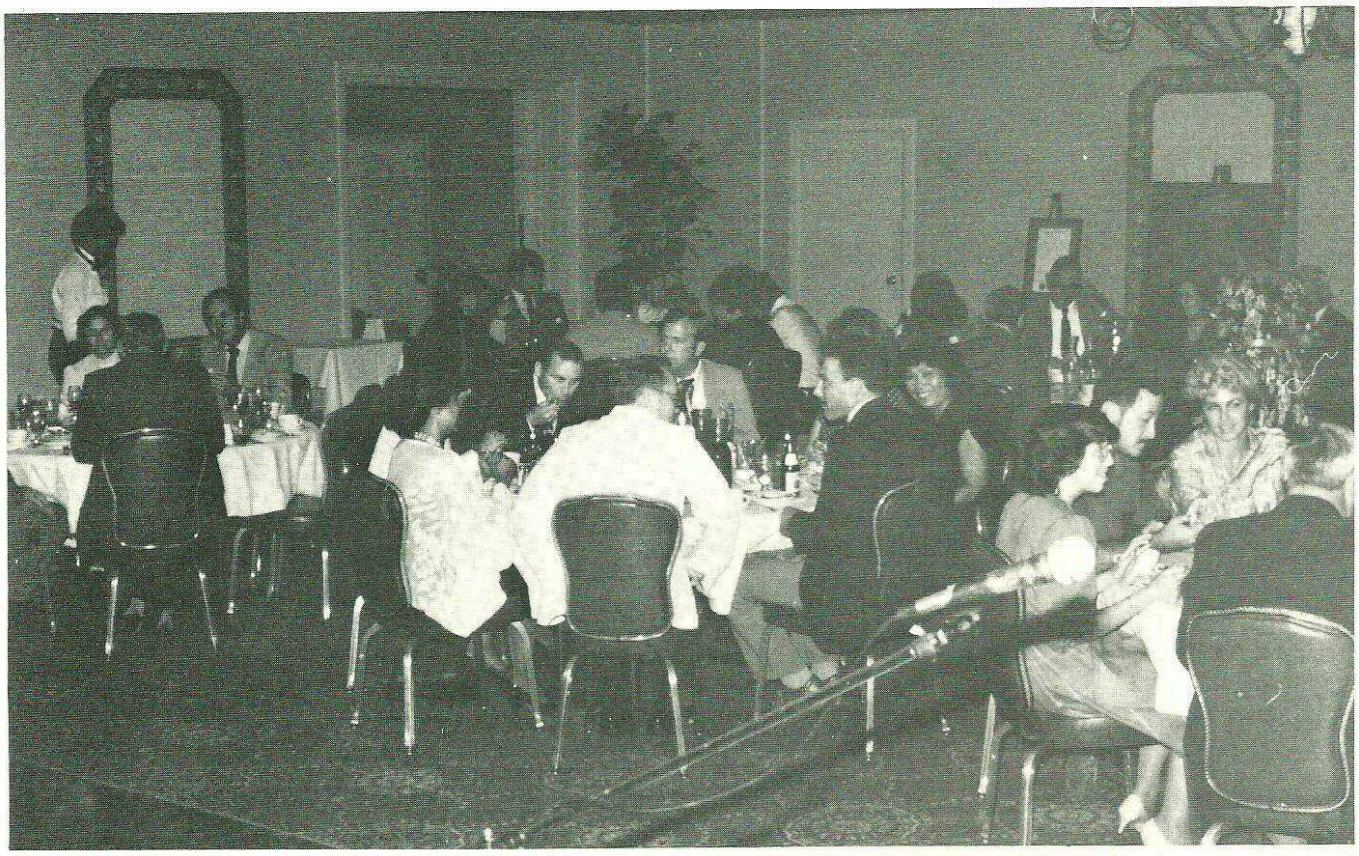
Jack Tripp

Henry & Louise Williams



Chow Time

Wine Time



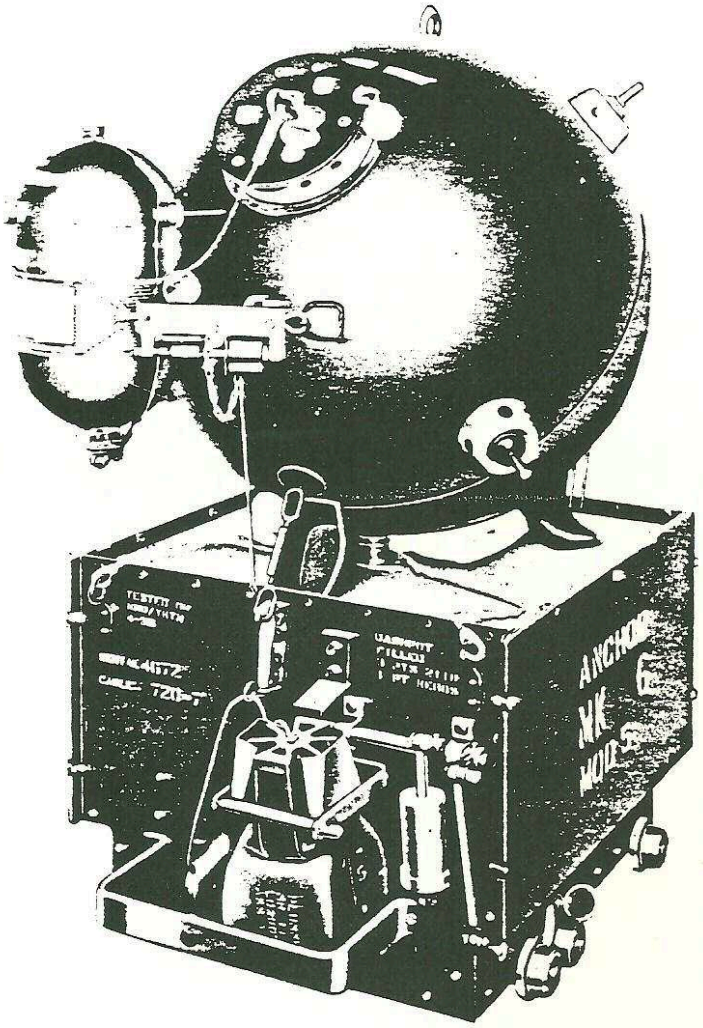
Chow time again.

Dance Time

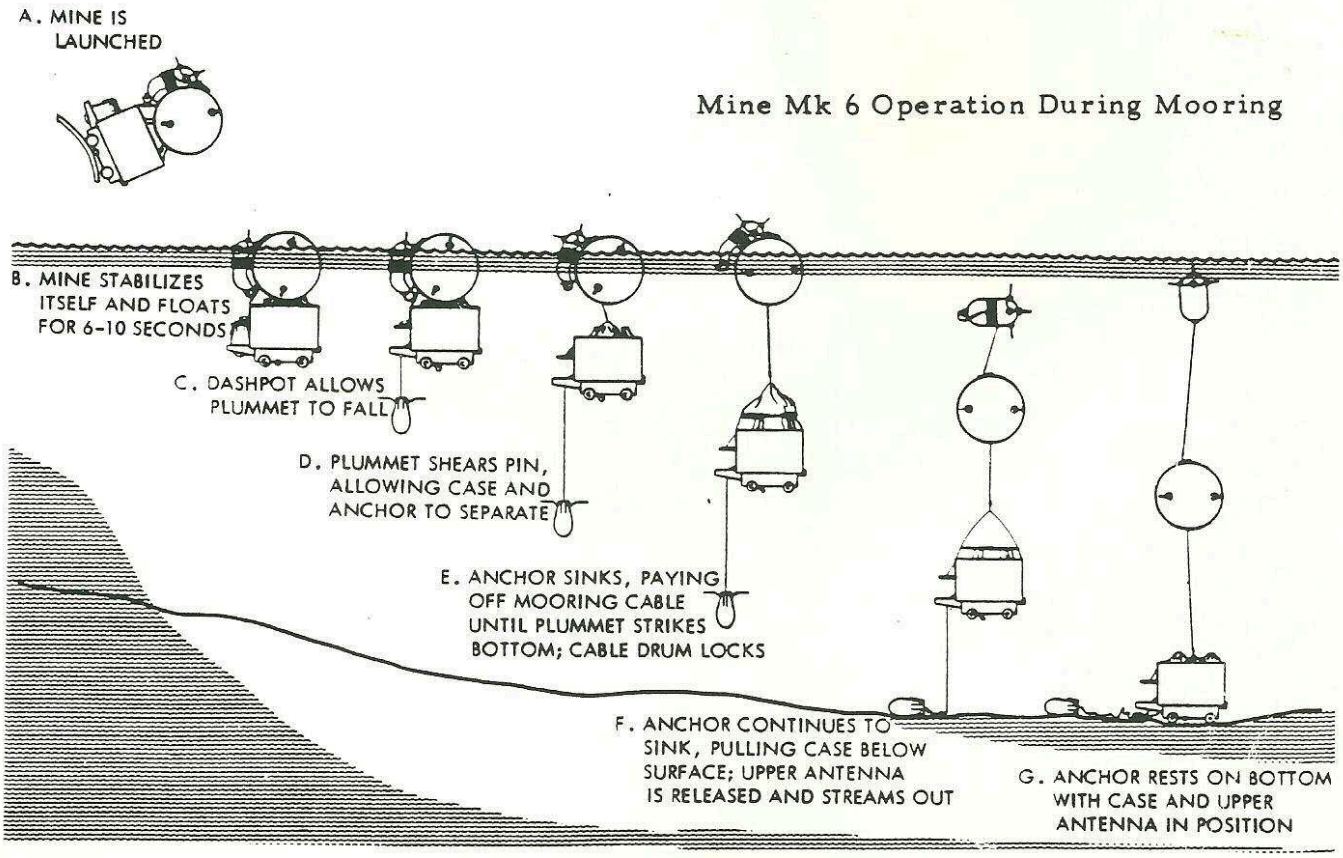
Focus Time

Naval Base Charleston Navy Band

Mine Mk 6



Mine Mk 6 Operation During Mooring



HISTORY/MISSION

When David Bushnell, the inventor of sea mines, set adrift his kegs in the Delaware River, he started a form of naval warfare that was at first branded unethical. And for many years thereafter the sea mine was considered a "devilish device" used only by "unchivalrous" nations.

Robert Fulton, of steamboat fame, designed several sea mines between 1797 and 1812 which he tried unsuccessfully to sell to France, then to Great Britain, and finally to the United States. Although many of his mines were successfully tested, none ever received much support. Up to the middle of the 19th century, sea mines were used in several wars in Europe and Asia, but with little or no consequence.

It was not until the American Civil War that mines were used on a relatively large scale. At that point in time, it was no secret that the Confederate Navy was inferior to the Federal Navy and, to compensate for this disparity, it needed a weapon that could be quickly and cheaply produced. The Confederates then adopted and put to effective use several types of mines (still called topedoes at that time). As a result, the losses inflicted upon the Federal Navy were quite large; twenty-seven Federal vessels were sunk by mines while only nine were sunk by artillery fire. And history, as it pertains to the Battle of Mobile Bay—a battle in which the victorious Admiral Farragut is famous for having said "Damn the torpedoes (mines) Captain Drayton, go ahead"—might have read somewhat differently but for the fact that, after the battle, the Federal forces found that the Confederate mines had been rendered inert due to immersion and wave action.

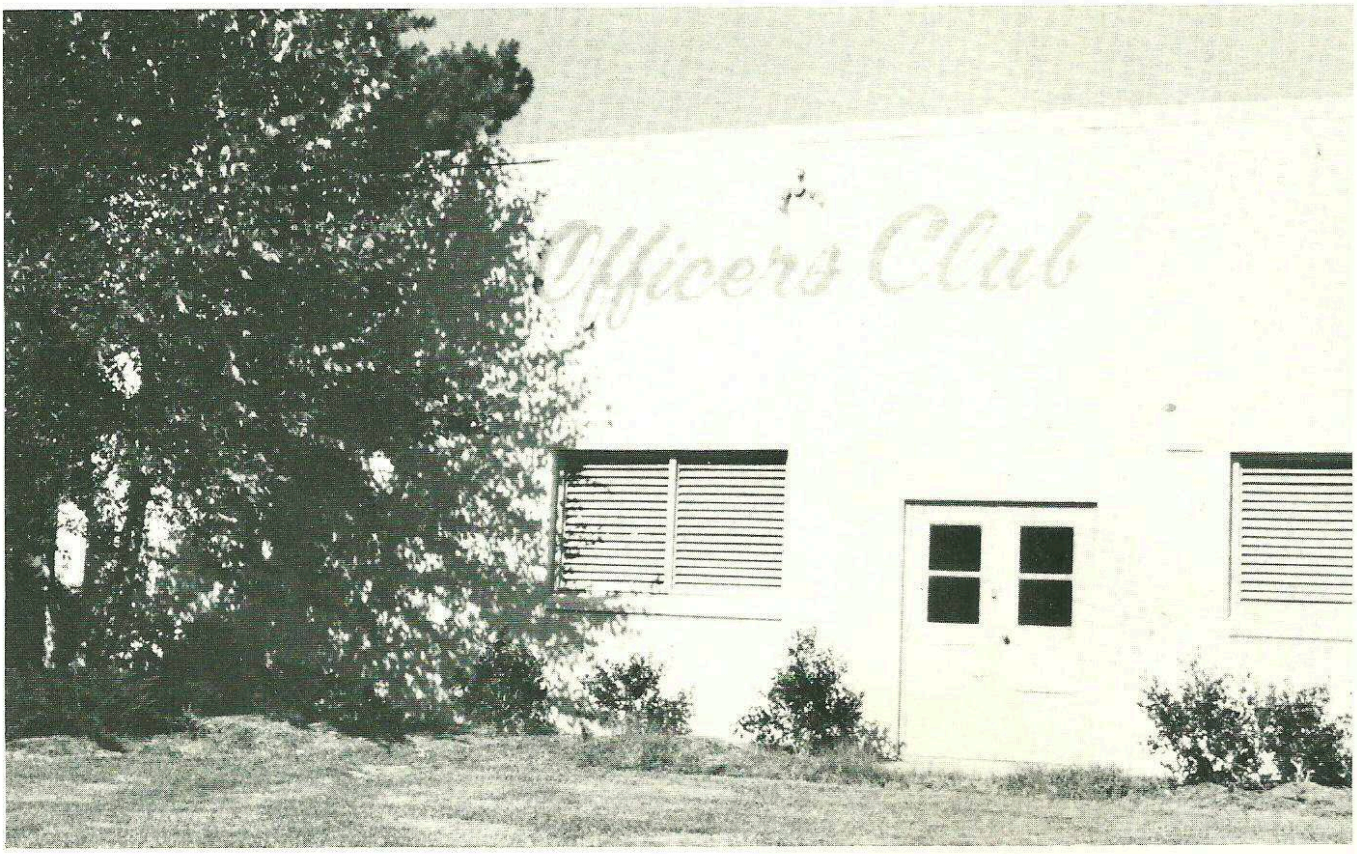
During World War I, the naval mine emerged as the Allies' primary weapon against the German submarine. To contain these U-boats, the laying of a gigantic mine barrage in the North Sea, extending 250 miles from Scotland to Norway, was undertaken in June of 1918. Within five months American and British minelayers planted over 72,000 mines. However, the war ended as the barrage was on the verge of completion; so how successful it would have been had it been completed earlier remains an unanswered question. Nevertheless, the barrage sank at least six submarines and damaged many more. Moreover, the subs that risked the barrage and managed to reach the Atlantic wasted most of their valuable time and fuel in having to employ the necessary evasive tactics.

In the final analysis, the mine had at last become accepted as having played an important and significant role in naval war strategy. Yet in the years of peace that followed, the mine—although it had performed admirably in war—was all but forgotten. It might be concluded that, since the mine was an unspectacular weapon, it was not worthy of any great development effort. However, with the start of World War II, mine development was revived. At that time, the submarine and airplane were introduced as mine layers and a series of influence mines was designed. As opposed to contact mines, which were essentially mechanical devices, these influence mines employed electronic target detectors that responded to or were influenced by magnetic, acoustic, and pressure changes resulting from a ship entering the mine's ambient field. In addition, these mines had the capability of being laid in waters that we did not control, and they also contained the technology to defend themselves against countermining attacks by the enemy. It wasn't until the latter part of World War II, however, that these magnetic, acoustic and pressure mines were used operationally. But following their introduction, they were used in large numbers and with a marked degree of effectiveness. Needless to say, the extensive use of these weapons with ship counters and arming-delay devices placed an immense burden upon the mine countermeasures forces of both the Allied and Axis powers.

One of the classic examples of the use of influence mines was a multiphased mining campaign called Operation Starvation, carried out by the U.S. against the Japanese during the final stages of the war in the Pacific. U.S. aircraft laid over 12,000 mines in Japanese shipping routes and harbor approaches, sinking 650 Japanese ships and totally disrupting all maritime shipping. Japan was unprepared to cope with these influence mines which saturated her home waters; and those ships not sunk by mines were either forced to stay in closed ports or divert to a few overcrowded ports where they were prey to submarine and aircraft attack. Virtual collapse of Japan's seaborne transportation and heavy industry resulted.

A new family of mines called "Destructors," a bomb-type mine, first came into use in 1967 during the Vietnam Conflict. Apparently the term "destructor" was employed to circumvent any political implications resulting from the use of the term "mine." The destructors contained highly sophisticated (solid-state circuitry) firing mechanisms which were inserted into the fuze cavities of general purpose bombs. Early mods of the mechanism were entirely magnetic, but by the end of the mining campaign destructors also incorporated a seismic sensitivity.

Clearly, the mine of today has come a long way since Bushnell's keg of 1777. Not only is the mine more sophisticated—more "devilishly intelligent"—but its strategic potential has steadily increased. Unspectacular, yes, but it is one of our cheapest and best weapons for sea control.



Emergency Exit

Club Employees

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