



THE DASHPOT



Issue 87 Newsletter of the Association of Minemen Summer 2015

Mine Countermeasures Training Targets - from Drill Mines to NAVITTAR

CONTRIBUTED BY RON START, USN (RETIRED)



Finding and destroying naval mines has always been, and will continue to be, a challenge for our Navy's Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Forces. It takes lots of practice and the right equipment, which includes the right mix of mine shapes used as minesweeping and mine hunting targets. When the technology for triggering a naval mine advanced beyond physical contact between ship and mine,



to sophisticated influence-based sensors during and after WW II, minesweepers were challenged with having to detonate these concealed mines remotely by replicating the magnetic and acoustic signature of a passing ship while avoiding the chance that a mine may be triggered by their own minesweeping vessel.

Drill Mines, used by the Navy in the 1950's through the 1970's, were training versions of our own service mines that were fully instrumented but contained no explosive charge. These drill mines would eject a signal flare to indicate that it had been swept, detonated and destroyed. As you can imagine, determining the success of this training could be highly subjective. It was often the observer's best guess as to whether the mine was actually swept by a good sweep signal or the minesweeping ship itself. A signal flare popping up near the ship just abaft of beam often went unreported because no ship wanted a bad score. As time passed, these "Drill" or "Dummy" mines became known as Exercise and Training (ET) Mines. Newer exercise and training versions developed to train our mine laying aircraft were not instrumented, but were leveraged by the MCM community to support training for mine hunting as MCM SONAR became the primary tool for locating mine-like objects in the ocean. Unfortunately, our Navy still lacked the ability to conduct minesweeping drills against 'enemy' mines.

Several attempts to improve performance and training value were made during the 80's, including an instrumented, multi-flare Actuation Mine Simulator (AMS) and the British-designed Versatile Exercise Mine System (VEMS). VEMS, the first true computer-based mine simulator, could replicate the performance characteristics of a few different foreign mines, but overall system reliability and time-late feed back on the results were big problems from the

Continued on page 11

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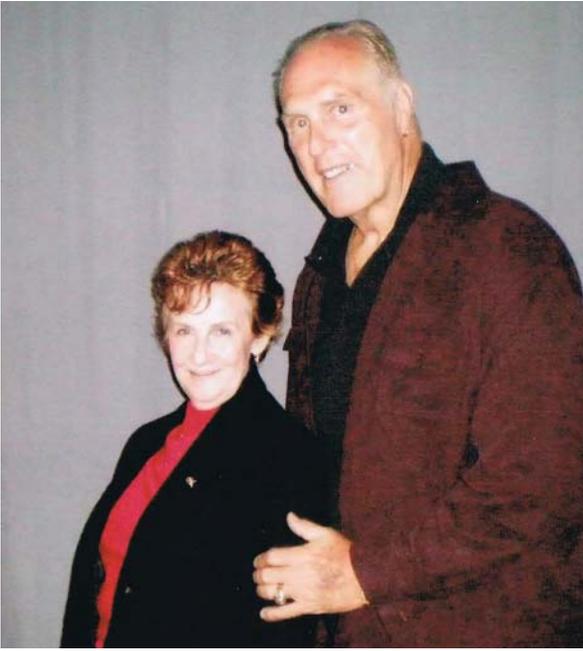
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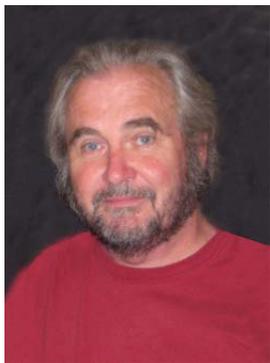
Taps



Gentry, Ronald "DRAGON" Ronald Earl Gentry, 74, LCDR Retired, USN, died on February 3 at his home. Born on April 26, 1940 in Toledo, OH, he grew up in Chicago Ridge, IL. A former Chicago Ridge and San Diego police officer, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in December of 1960 and served as Torpedomanmate Technician aboard the diesel submarine USS Blackfin (SS-322), various underwater weapons facilities and torpedo commands. Early on he served in Okinawa, Japan and San Diego, CA. Gentry served as warrant officer in Yorktown, VA, after which he attended the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, earning dual Bachelor's in Admin. of Justice and Government (Int'l. Relations), and an MA in Mgmt.

Through the 70s and 80s he served the Mobile Mine Assembly Group (MOMAG) across the world in Charleston, SC and Long Beach, CA as well as Pakistan, Crete, Scotland, Sicily and the Philippines. In the Philippines he was appointed to Lieutenant Commander, and his last assignment was as Director of Training for Service School Command, Naval Training Center, in Orlando, FL.

He retired in 1988 after 28 years of service. A love for old corvettes and classic cars fueled a second career, Dragon Corvette, in DeBary, FL. Gentry restored cars from shells and parts to mint condition. An expert in mid-year corvettes, he appraised vehicles, was a master judge for National Corvette Restorer's Society (NCRS) car shows, and also wrote for many hot rod and corvette magazines. He owned several Harley Davidson motorcycles, and "DRAGON" was an active member of US MILITARY VETS MC since 1999.



CWO Ronald Dubois Ronald passed away Thursday morning, May 21, 2015, at his home in Fairmont.

Ronald Edward DuBois was born on August 16, 1950, in St. Paul, MN, the son of Albert and Susan (Kenowski) DuBois. He attended school in St. Paul and graduated from St. Agnus High School. Following his graduation, Ron began attending college and later enlisted with the United States Navy where he served his country during the Vietnam War, retiring after 23 years of service. During his time in the Navy, Ronald was stationed in Vietnam, Scotland, Italy, Crete, and Charleston, SC. On June 18, 2008, Ronald was united in marriage to Kristy Paul (nee Gustafson) in St. Paul, MN. Together the couple made their home in Vadnais Heights, MN, prior to moving to Fairmont, MN, in 2009. Ron retired in August 2013. Ron was a classic car's guy and loved automobiles. His favorites were the iconic cars of the 1950's, 60's, and early 70's.



GOOSE CREEK - Lorrain Caffrey, 77, of Goose Creek, passed away at her home, on Tuesday, June 9, 2015. She was born in Brooklyn, New York, July 11, 1937, a daughter of the late John Edward Rice and Elaine Catherine Thomas Rice. In loving memory of Lorrain C. Caffrey. Her smile lit up the room, her laugh echoed for ages, and her right hand was always on a bingo dauber no matter win, lose, or split. Some called her a friend, while others called her Nana. Corey and Carol called her Mom.

She may not be here physically, but will always remain in our hearts.



Henry "Hank" Villwock, 78, of Benton Harbor, died Thursday, July 9, 2015 at Lakeland Medical Center, St. Joseph, due to complications from pneumonia. Cremation has taken place and, per his wishes, there will be no service. Memorials can be made to the Humane Society of Southwestern Michigan, 641 S. Crystal Ave., Benton Harbor. Arrangements are being handled by the Fairplain Chapel of Florin Funeral Service, Benton Harbor. Hank was born Dec. 29, 1936, in Chicago, the only child of Albert and Emily (Wetter) Villwock and graduated from Benton Harbor High School in 1955. He served four years in the United States Navy in

underwater demolition, receiving an honorable discharge in 1961. He married the former Sandra Smith of Benton Harbor on Aug. 31, 1963. After leaving the Navy, he was employed at Okadee Machine Shop in Benton Harbor until the company closed in the '60s. He worked a brief time at Clark Equipment Co. in Benton Harbor and Bendix Corp. in St. Joseph. He then went to work at Gast Mfg. Co. of Benton Harbor, where he was a machine shop supervisor for 27 years, retiring in 1998. He was a life member of the Loyal Order of Moose, Benton Harbor Lodge No. 1570 and also a member of the American Legion Post 0568 of Stevensville.

Donald Costa, MNCM, USN, ret., 83, of Panama City Beach, passed away Thursday, June 11, 2015, at his home. Donald was born in New Bedford MA, and lived in Panama City Beach since 1977. He retired as a Master Chief Petty Officer after 30 years service in the US Navy. Donald enjoyed his afternoon visits to Dusty's Oyster Bar and spending time with his friends. He was preceded in death by a son, Devlin Costa.



The Editors Corner



This has been a busy quarter for me, and again I forgot how to use this editor. MS-Office and Adobe InDesign do not play well together.

Apart from that, I just received the information about Ron Gentry's passing. I served with LT. Gentry at COMOMAG Charleston during the 70's and 80's. Though I never deployed with the LT, we knew each other through the duty sections and he as investigating officer prior to me going to Captains Mast. Fun days.

Ron Dubois and I deployed to MOMAG Det 2 Machrihanish in the late 80 just prior to his appointment to CWO. Ron, Carl Dickey and I spent many a late night sampling and experimenting with the various beverages of the Scottish culture. Them were the days.

Though it has been a long time, 20 maybe 30 years since I last spoke to Ron Dubois and Ron Gentry, my last memory of both these sailors were good. Ron Dubois was a happy person and always up-beat, and Ron Gentry, well, he was large, professional, and a "nut and bolts" kind of person.

Anyway, this DASHPOT is finished, hope you enjoy reading it, and drop a line or two to let me know how we can make the Next Dashpot better.

Don Healer, DASHPOT Editor.

PS. Thanks LT Hernandez and Bill Johnson for the photos.



This is the Hernandez Family in Hawaii in the Spring of 65. Joe and Rose still live in Albuquerque surrounded by children (L to R) Anne, Dan, Gloria and their children.



NMC COMOMAG

CONTRIBUTED BY MN2 (SW) CHARLES BRYAN

SAN DIEGO, CA

NMC COMOMAG Division, complete with our full complement of mine warfare subject matter experts hopes everyone has had a fun and safe beginning to their summer continued through the end of the year. We here at NMC COMOMAG would like to let you know what's happening in the world of Mobile Mine Assembly Group. We've had exercises; training evolutions, world travel, and many changes to the roster, but all-in-all, things have come together in an ever-forward-moving fashion.

NMC COMOMAG Division N32 Exercise and Training department and N31 Service Mines department have been busy supporting the Fleet. MNC(SW) Jarrod Gibbens, MNC(SW) Matthew Heyer and MN2(SW) Yves Dessources traveled to the 7th Fleet AOR in support of training exercises. MNCM(SW) Allen Alt, MNCS(SW) Felipe Gallegos and Mr. David Epton have continued to keep our Mine Shops busy training and preparing for our up and coming MRAV Inspections.

In addition to the training going on at our Units, NMC COMOMAG Division personnel have also been on the move to Florida learning about Mine Field Planning for continued MIW capabilities. Also, our unit has traveled up and down the California Coast, throughout the Middle East and everywhere in between to support joint-service exercises.

As is customary with the passing of any period of time, we here at NMC COMOMAG Division have our fair share of PCS transfers and retiring's. We want to wish "farewell and following seas" to MNCM (SW) Allen Alt who will be transferring to Naval Mine and Anti-Submarine Warfare Command (NMAWC). We will also be sadly bidding farewell to MNC(SW) Jarrod Gibbens who has joined our Fleet Reservists as his Naval Career has come to an end. After 20 years of faithful service, as he is reunited with his family in Texas.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our two new COMOMAG family members, MNC(SW) Matthew Heyer coming from LCS MCM GOLD and MN1(SW) Daniel Simmons coming to us from the Middle East onboard USS DEVASTATOR (MCM 6). We would also like to welcome back MNC(SW) Jack Angle returning to us from USS CHAMPION (MCM 4).



NMC Guam

Your article could be here!



SEAL Beach, CA

CONTRIBUTED BY MN3 BONNIEKEYA KLIEST

Greetings from Naval Munitions Command Underwater Weapons Department in sunny Seal Beach, California! While completing our Mine Readiness Certification Inspection and preparing for our Explosive Safety Inspection FY15, Underwater Weapons kept strong with operational commitments, fleet obligations and community involvement



-MISSION UPDATE-

In April, the mine shop conducted the Mine Readiness Certification Inspection by NMC COMOMAG Service Mine Division. Our Production personnel displayed a tremendous amount of skill of building mines properly as well as efficiently. Also our Mine Supply excelled in Mission Planning, Asset Accountability, and great execution of all operations including 11 exercises supported this quarter and over 106 assets were issued. With the hard work of all of our sailors, we accom-

plished our mission, and overall did an outstanding job.

-FAIR WINDS

AND

FOLLOWING SEAS-

Underwater Weapons Department said goodbye to LT Garcia, YN1(SW) Piper, GM2 Harsted, and YN2 Alcazar. We wish u all well at your next command and the best of luck in your naval careers!

-WELCOME!-

LT Bednarczyk, MNC Sisson, GM1(SW/AW) Troy, GM2(SW) Gray, MN2(SW) Ramirez, YN2(SW/AW)Williams, MN2(SW) Wilson, YN3(SW) Vineyard, MN3(SW) Young, MN3(SW) Butler, MN3(SW) Eaton, MN3 Kliest, MNSN Jackson, MNSN Mayette, MNSN San-nicolas, MNSN Scalf and MNSN Wipf checked into UWD, we know that they will enjoy their time here in Seal Beach.

-RE-ENLISTMENTS-

Congratulations to MN2(SW) Sauerland on his decision to stay in the Navy.

-ADVANCEMENTS-

We congratulate MN1(SW) Cadigan and MN3 Pier on advancing.

-INDIVIDUAL AUGMENTEES-



Our Quick Response Team traveled to Hawaii to provide assets and assist in preparation and loading of mines for VLS (Vertical Launch Systems).

-AWARDS-

Awards quarters were held on the 12th of



June and the following received awards: MN1(SCW) Yancy, MN2(SW) Cartwright, MN2 Sauerland, MN2(SW) Graham, MN3 Pier and MNSN Hill (Letter of Commendation). YN2 Williams and GM1(SW/AW) Troy (Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal).

A big congratulations to MN1(SW/AW) Morse, MN2(SW) Martin and LSSN Archie for becom-

ing our Senior Sailor, Junior Sailor and Blue Jacket of the Quarter!



NMC Misawa

Your article could be here!



Charleston, SC

CONTRIBUTED BY MNI (SW) PRESTON BEASLEY
VEMS/ET LPO

The following events occurred this quarter.

Senior Sailor of The Quarter; MN1(SW) Toyloy from Service Division,
Junior Sailor Of The Quarter; MN2(SW) Vaughn from Test Set Repair Division and
Blue Jacket Of The Quarter; MNSA Dyer from Exercise Training Mine Division.

The March advancement Cycle of 2015 was very rewarding for the command too have pinned MN2(SW) Newman of Exercise Training Mine Division, MN3 Holloway of Service Division, and MN3 Oechsel of Versatile Exercise Mine System Division.

The command completed it's MRCI in April and the completion of ammo offload on board the USNS Lewis and Clark in April, combined efforts with our fellow Marines and Civilians in this command made them both a successful and safe evolution.

NMC Unit Charleston has partaken in three exercises this quarter: 340 WPS Barksdale, BALTOPS, and WTI Jacksonville. These significant events are on-going to improve our Sailor's ability to operate as a team and train other commands in Naval Mine Warfare.



beginning, seriously degrading the training benefits. Mr. Mark Reynolds, who supports the Airborne Mine Countermeasures Weapon Systems Training School (AWSTS), summed up his concerns with today's limited capability by stating: "The limitations of VEMS emulations and memory capacity has always been an issue. A 'next-generation' influence exercise training mine system is on both the AMCM Tactics Integrated Product Team & MH-53E Naval Aviation Requirements Group (AMCM) top-ten list. Effectiveness of influence sweeping has always been a concern and an in-situ measurement tool would be of great value. We would like to assess influence sweeping during Helicopter Advance Readiness Program (HARP) events but current VEMS are difficult to use efficiently."

In 2005, Commander Operational Test & Evaluation Force needed a threat mine evaluation tool for testing ship vulnerability to mines and tasked Naval Surface Warfare Center Panama City Division (NSWC PCD) to develop a one-of-a-kind system called the Advanced Mine Simulation System (AMiSS). However, only two were built and this system is not available for Fleet training.

As the quantity, quality and variety of naval mines around the globe continued to grow, it became clear that our Mine Countermeasures forces were faced with enormous challenges in minesweeping and mine hunting tactics, techniques and procedures. Operation Desert Storm reaffirmed the enemy's willingness to use mines. Some of these contained homegrown modifications to known mines, adding to the complexity of the mine clearance task. The Fleet clearly felt that existing mine countermeasures training mines were difficult to use as they were heavy, difficult to recover, and unreliable. Feedback on MCM performance against them, if available at all, came too little and too late to provide much benefit. Something much better was needed for Fleet MCM training and performance evaluation, as the worldwide stockpiles of potent naval mines continue to grow.

Enter NAVITTAR, the Navy Instrumented Threat Targets program now being developed under the sponsorship of the OPNAV N98 Targets Program and the Program Management of PMS-495, the Mine Warfare Program Office. NSWC PCD Project Engineer Bryan Smallin, described NAVITTAR program this way: "The Fleet has long needed an instrumented mine-like target that accurately represents the growing threats that the U.S. Navy will face. In order to meet Fleet requirements in an affordable way, our approach was to leverage existing hardware where it makes sense and upgrade obsolete components and the operating software, greatly improving both system performance and maintainability. We are taking a Modular Open System Architecture approach that will allow for future upgrades, so the system can adapt to emerging threats with long term supportability. We want the Fleet to have a training and evaluation minesweeping tool that will provide an accurate assessment of minesweeping performance against a variety of naval mine threats and will provide them with useful feedback in a timely manner. We also plan to expand the customer base for NAVITTAR by addressing the Operational Test & Evaluation community requirements for an accurate test and evaluation tool that will support their work as well." Smallin's approach will use existing VEMS mine cases, and out-of-service Mine Mk 56 cases for a moored version. His technical refresh plan includes state-of-the-art hardware, vastly improving performance and reliability. NAVITTAR's up-to-date processing

power will handle new, sophisticated software with improved sensors to accurately emulate enemy mines. It will have the capacity to expand its performance and capability to meet current and future real-world training and evaluation requirements. In addition to the traditional MCM communities of Surface, Air and EOD, NAVITTAR will eventually extend to include the undersea warfare community by providing an instrumented, deep-water version.

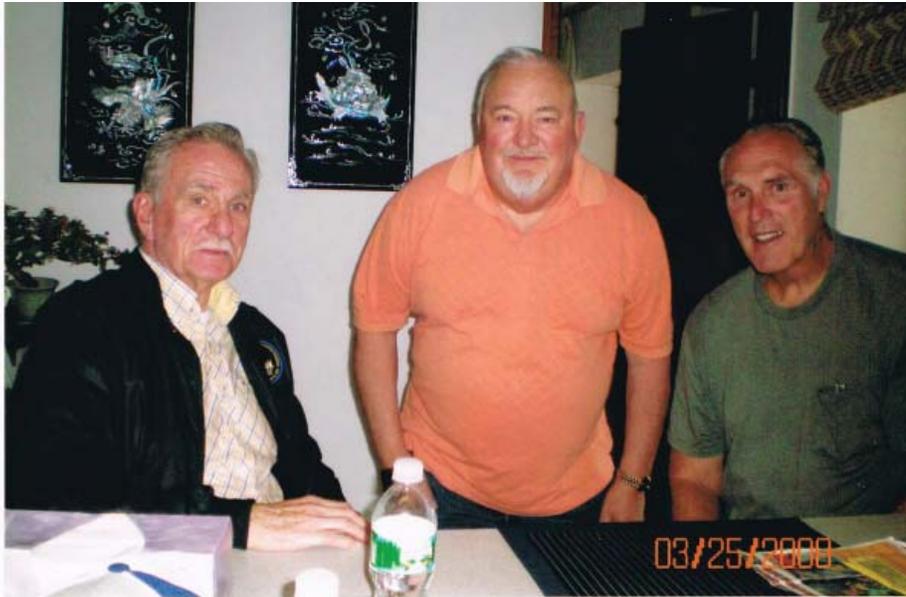
The ultimate customer for this capability are the Fleet MCM Officers and Sailors who will need to be well trained and fully prepared should they be called to action. Mr. Ed Simmons, LCDR, USN (Ret.) the Exercise and Training Department Head on the staff of Commander, Mobile Mine Assembly Group, is the Fleet-wide manager for mine training targets. Considered the Fleet's principal expert, Simmons has long advocated for mine targets that are better performing, more reliable and easier to maintain. "I am looking forward to this upgrade," said Simmons. "Our Minemen have done a creditable job in maintaining and deploying VEMS, but unless we get the much need upgrades provided by NAVITTAR, relevant Fleet training will continue to degrade. I'm routinely asked about improving our instrumented mine target capability during the U.S. Fleet Forces-sponsored experiments with our surface, air and EOD MCM communities. Everyone wants the ability to evaluate their system's performance but there are too many problems with VEMS. The Fleet has sent a clear demand signal on what was actually needed. Looking ahead, we are excited about the capabilities NAVITTAR will bring to the Fleet in terms of realistic training and feedback."

The Navy Mine and Antisubmarine Warfare Command (NMAWC) is responsible for articulating mine warfare requirements. When asked if NAVITTAR will meet the Fleet requirement for a reliable, high performance training and evaluation mine target, Mr. Rich Kimmel, the N81 Requirements Officer, stated that NMAWC fully supports the development of an improved, instrumented mine target and evaluation tool, to advance MIW training, stating that there was tremendous value in the Navy's investment to develop this capability. Kimmel went on to say, "This system is a giant step forward in improving our MCM training capability. With the ability to accurately simulate threat mines rather than simply employing dummy shapes, our MCM forces will be able to train against realistic targets as well as enhance their planning to aid in improving both mine hunting and sweep effectiveness."

Who is paying for this? The Resource Sponsor for Mine Targets is Captain John Krouse, the current Head of the Navy Aviation Training Requirements Branch for OPNAV N98, Air Warfare Division. When asked about the value of a training system like NAVITTAR, he stated, "N98 is excited about the capability that NAVITTAR will provide to train the sailors of today and test the systems of tomorrow. By applying improvements in computer technology to existing systems, NAVITTAR will create an excellent return on investment of Navy funds."

Once under the water, sea mines pose a formidable threat and are practically invisible to the Fleet. Our Mine Countermeasures Forces are tasked with keeping sea lanes clear, making safe passage possible for our Navy and commercial vessels. Conducting Mine Countermeasures is never easy, especially in enemy waters against a mostly unseen enemy. While our surface combatants, aircraft and submarines train and are routinely evaluated against sophisticated and realistic opposing systems and forces, Mine Countermeasures training devices have

not changed much in over 30 years. The NAVITTAR program faces the complex challenge of providing the realistic performance of an enemy influence mine, fast and clear feedback to the Fleet on how well they performed, and then provide sufficient post-mission data to help improve current and future MCM systems. NAVITTAR development is well underway and the “Iron Men and Women” of Mine Warfare are eagerly waiting to add this much needed smart mine target to their training tool kit.



Bill Roberts, Bill Johnson, and Ron Gentry



Pat Johnson, and Ron Gentry

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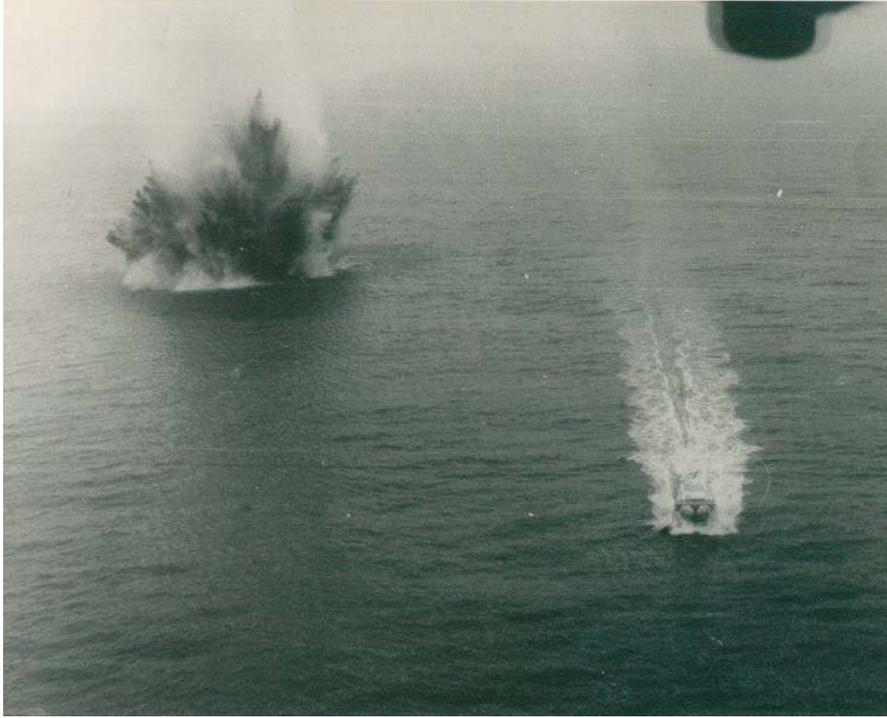
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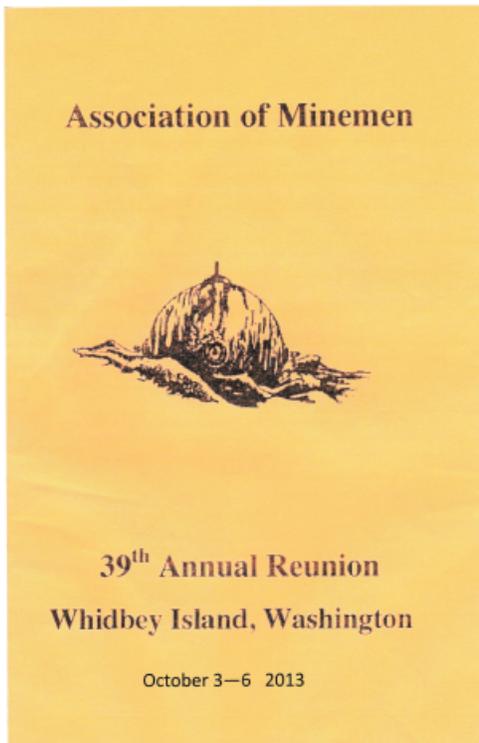
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