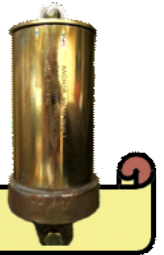




The DASHPOT



The Official Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

From the President

MN1 Charles Humbard (ret)



My sincere condolences to the families of recently departed, shipmates, and family members. Those who are on the binnacle list or suffering from a medical issue, but know that your shipmates are wishing you a speedy recovery. Each of you remain in our thoughts and prayers throughout your ordeal.

I would like to invite everyone to attend our 52nd AOM Reunion in San Antonio TX. We had a great time on our last visit there.

For the local Charleston Minemen there is a lunch the first Friday of every month at 11am. The lunch is held at the Stones Throw Brewing in Goose Creek. We have around 12 attendees on a regular basis.

Please pass the word about our AOM Scholarship Awards Program, we have awarded 240 scholarships totaling \$161,900.00. This is our way to help our families afford College. Also I would like to thank the Scholarship Chairman and committee for their hard work.

Remember our Shipmates and their families who may need help or just a phone call, text, or email now and then to lift their spirits or just to reminisce old times. We are still a close knit community that has always supported each other through the good times and bad times. Great job!

God bless and protect our Solders, Sailors, Airman, Marines, Space Force, and Coast Guard. God bless the USA.

Charles & Kim

Fleet News

Mine Warfare Training Center



MWTC Supports the “Chalk the Walk” event to kick off SAPR (sexual assault prevention and response) Awareness Month! Sailors came together today to leave encouraging messages of empathy and empowerment.

For upcoming events, check out the event calendar for April to get involved!



At Mine Warfare Training Center, we train how we fight!

Class 26-090 participating in hands-on-training during their Navy Munitions Command (NMC) course here at mine an A-School.

Our subject matter experts provide the tools and knowledge our sailors need to succeed at their ultimate commands.

Sailors aren’t born. They’re forge

DEDICATED TO SERVING THE U.S. NAVY

MINE FORCES

The DASHPOT, published quarterly is the newsletter of the Association of Minemen (AOM), a non-profit organization incorporated in the State of South Carolina ... to perpetuate the knowledge of undersea mine warfare, necessary to America's first line of defense.

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From the Editor

MNC Dave Badger (ret)



Welcome,

I hope everyone's Spring is great so far. Spring is great with things blooming and the leaves coming out.

Our prayers are with our military currently in harms way. I'm sure there are some who have family members in the gulf right now. My oldest granddaughter is currently there with the Air Force.

I'm seeing history repeat itself for the Mineforce, mines and minesweeping are always put on the back burner until someone uses them in warfare and we scramble to get back up to speed. My condolences to those on the departed list and prayers for a speedy recovery to those in sickbay. It is tough seeing names of shipmates I was stationed with on either list.

Is everyone looking forward to the next reunion in San Antonio? It is sure to be a good time seeing old friends and the sites for those who have never been there before. There is a lot of history in the area.

Times are tough at the moment but as always things will get better. Life works on cycles. Gas prices go up and down all the time. The same with groceries. If you are having a tough time don't forget to reach out for help. There are a lot of resources out there for veterans. Til next time. Hunker down and hang in there.

Secretary Treasurer Report-

Apr. 2026

Our finances are holding in the black, thanks to you all who support the AOM by sending your dues in on time and the many folks who also donate to the scholarship fund. If you have any ideas that would be helpful in the successful operation of this fine association, I and the Board of Directors would be very happy to hear them. My email address is

assocminemen@yahoo.com. Or, if you would like to send me a note by mail, here is the address. Association of Minemen, P. O. Box 2180, Temple City CA, 91780.

Thanks again Shipmates!

Nate Miranda



Membership Committee Report- Apr. 2026

Membership stats are 12 Minemen that are overdue since October 2023, 19 that are overdue since October 2024 and 33 that are overdue since October 2025. If we were to lose these members and not replace them with new ones, we will lose our USPS mailing permit. What that mean is, mailing will jump from around .22 cents to \$1.01 each!

As you know, keeping up with your dues helps the AOM stay in the black on printing and mailing the Dashpot, as well as the twice a month Mineman newsletter, PO Box and general operating expenses. So please, take a look at the printed date just under your name in the address sticker. It will begin with OCT. and the year the dues are due. The other date on the right of your name is the Post Office mailing date. Do not confuse these dates! Remember, there are two ways you can send in your dues. 1) you can mail it to; Association of Minemen, P. O. Box 2180, Temple City CA, 91780 or 2) electronic transaction by going to <https://form.jotform.com/90215855401148>. Thank you for supporting our AOM!

Nate Miranda



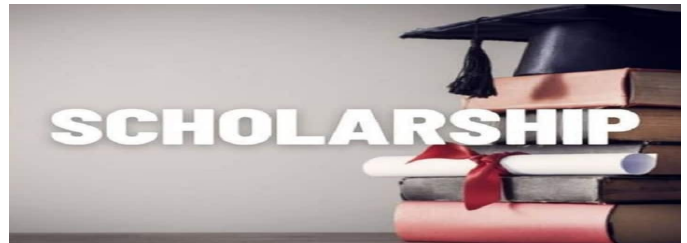
Flurry Of Navy Minesweepers Appear To Be Heading Toward The Middle East

The migration of U.S. Navy minesweeping assets west from the Pacific indicates preparations are underway for a major de-mining operation.

[Joseph Trevithick](#)

Published Apr 13, 2026

A pair of *Avenger* class mine-hunters homeported in Japan have been tracked sailing westward out of the Pacific Ocean in recent days. This comes as President Trump and other officials say an operation is taking shape to clear Iranian mines from the Strait of Hormuz, which will be essential to fully reopening that critical waterway. The United States has also now announced a blockade of all of Iran's ports.



SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Scholastic Assistance Scholarship Program

The objective of the scholarship program is to attract young people who are enrolled in an ongoing scholastic or training program leading to their personal advancement in a qualified educational or training field in arts, sciences, or engineering.

The scholarship is called the

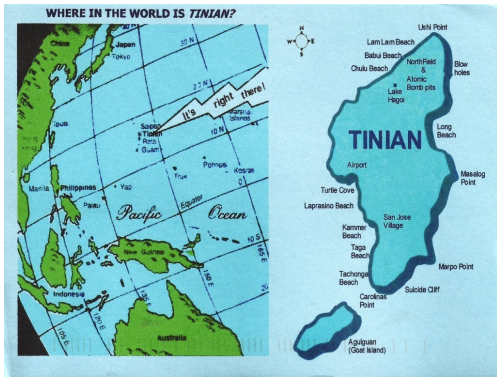
Association of Minemen Scholastic Assistance Scholarship.

Could you or a family member use help with college or trade school funds? Checkout the Association of Minemen (AOM) Scholarship program at minemen.org/wp 1 Aug Submission Deadline.

Ronald Glasen

History Report

Working on Tinian Island in World War 2



The sun over Tinian Island in 1945 was a relentless, oppressive weight, turning the jagged coral landscape into a shimmering furnace. For the men of the U.S. Navy Mine Assembly units, life was a grueling rhythm of high-stakes precision and primitive survival. Tinian, a tiny speck in the Marianas, had been transformed from a Japanese sugar cane outpost into the busiest airfield in the world, yet for the Minemen, the world felt as small as the steel casings they labored over.

The work was conducted in specialized assembly areas, often under camouflage netting that did little to block the heat. Their task was the meticulous preparation of Mark 12 and Mark 13 acoustic and magnetic mines. These weren't just heavy ordnance; they were complex machines. Minemen worked in teams, their hands slick with sweat as they installed detonators, adjusted clockwork mechanisms, and checked the sensitivity of the firing circuits. One slip of a wrench or a static spark could be catastrophic. The air was thick with the smell of grease, salt spray, and the faint, sweet rot of the surrounding jungle.

Living conditions were a testament to "island hopping" austerity. The men lived in rows of canvas pyramidal tents pitched over coral dust that turned into a blinding white mire during the frequent, torrential tropical squalls. There were no women on the island; it was a strictly masculine world of sun-baked skin, olive drab fatigues, and the constant drone of B-29 Superfortresses taking off for Japan. Freshwater was a luxury, strictly rationed for drinking and the occasional "G.I. shower" from a suspended barrel.

Off-time was a precious commodity, a brief window to reclaim a sense of humanity. When the sun dipped low, the heat finally relented, the Minemen sought escape. Mail call was the undisputed highlight; men would sit on their

cots, reading and re-reading letters from home until the paper frayed. In the absence of civilian entertainment, they became masters of improvisation. They played endless games of poker and pinochle for cigarettes or IOUs, their "tables" often being empty wooden crates that once held mine components.

Sports were a common outlet for their pent-up energy. On any given afternoon, a makeshift baseball diamond or volleyball court carved out of the coral would be filled with shirtless men, shouting and competitive. Others took to the beaches. Tinian's coastline offered crystal-clear water where men could swim or try their hand at "depth charge fishing" to supplement their diet of C-rations and dehydrated eggs. As night fell, many gathered at the makeshift outdoor theater—a screen made of bedsheets stretched between poles. Sitting on the ground or on their helmets, they watched Hollywood films that felt like transmissions from another planet. In those flicking moments of cinema, the war, the mines, and the isolation of Tinian faded away, replaced by the dreams of the homes they were fighting to return to.

Have a great day!

[Don Moody](#)



Do you know these Minemen?

Hope to see you in San Antonio. Why are reunions held? To bring together young and old Minemen to remember days gone by. We forget about the hard times and tell sea stories about the past. There is plenty to do for all, even if you aren't a member. Hope to see many of you shipmates in attendance.

I'm so glad I met all of you at this point in my life. There is no chance my mother would have let me play with you guys growing up.

Don Moody



Navy Munitions Command Atlantic Unit Charleston



NMCLANT Unit Charleston takes pleasure in recognizing MN2 (SW) Kodi Burdick as this quarters Outstanding Performer.

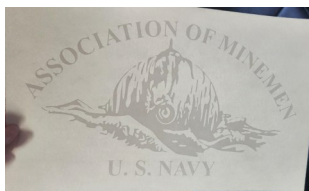
MN2 has led his team in the successful on time completion of over 400 components and mine assets with zero discrepancies. His leadership has directly contributed to one advancement and 2 junior Sailors of the quarter. MN2 embodies the Navy core values and consistently demonstrates professional and seasoned technical acumen.

Bravo Zulu Shipmate !!!!



Leadership Visit to MWTC – Martin Hall

Mine Warfare Training Center (MWTC) was honored to host CAPT Dwan Commander of Surface Combat Systems Training Command, during a visit to Martin Hall this week. Our MWTC team delivered an outstanding effort in preparation and execution—showcasing the professionalism, expertise, and warfighting focus that define our command. From start to finish, the staff's attention to detail and commitment to excellence were on



Navy Munitions Command Pacific CONUS West



NMCPAC CONUS West Division Sailors and civilian teammates recently took part in a Community Relations event at the Seal Beach National Wildlife Refuge on Naval Weapons Station Seal Beach, Detachment Fallbrook, Detachment Norco, supporting the cleanup and preservation of the endangered California Least Tern Nesting Habitat. Through hands-on teamwork and a shared commitment to service, our personnel helped remove debris and restore critical habitat areas to ensure the continued protection of local wildlife and the surrounding coastal environment. Events like these highlight the strength of our military-civilian team, reinforcing the values of stewardship, accountability, and mission-focused excellence. Whether supporting operations across the fleet or serving our local community, NMCPAC CWD remains committed to readiness and resilience - because a stronger community helps build a stronger warfighting force.



full display.

CAPT Dwan engaged with leadership and Sailors across the command, gaining valuable insight into our training mission and the direct impact we deliver to Fleet readiness. The visit concluded with a Commander's Call later that afternoon, where she shared her vision, reinforced priorities, and recognized the hard work and dedication of our team.

Visit the A.O.M Ship's Store

[Htps:// minemen.org/wp/aom-ships-store/](https://minemen.org/wp/aom-ships-store/)



U.S. Navy to Increase Hammerhead Anti-Submarine Mine Order

By: Aaron-Matthew Lariosa March 17, 2026 2:52 PM USNI News



Sailors assigned to the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Annapolis (SSN-760) load a MK 67 submarine launched mobile mine (SLMM) onto Annapolis, May 4, 2022. US Navy photo

The U.S. Navy is looking to increase its order of next-generation anti-submarine mines to “meet operational requirements,” according to a recent contract modification.

The sea service is requesting General Dynamics Mission Systems, which was awarded the initial contract, to deliver more Hammerhead mine systems. Hammerhead carries a torpedo and moors itself to the sea floor at intermediate and deep-water depths. Once the mine detects an underwater threat, the encapsulated torpedo will be fired at the target.

This modification, which seeks an unspecified increase of mines, was in response to meet operational requirements that needed to be met by late 2026, reads the contract. It was also revealed in the contract modification that the government plans to procure a Hammerhead technical data package, indicating that the system could be made by other defense firms capable of producing the next-generation anti-submarine mine. The government wants to complete the procurement of the full system design by October 2026, before the end of the current fiscal year. The Hammerhead Encapsulated Effector is [one of several mine programs](#) the sea service is developing to bring surface and underwater maritime denial capabilities to the fleet, which has long relied on Cold War-era systems. Large-scale American mine deployment relies on the air-delivered Quickstrike series via Navy aircraft and Air Force bombers. U.S. sub-surface mining uses Submarine Launched Mobile Mines, but their deployment could strain the already limited magazines of the fleet’s attack boats. New mining systems in development extend the ranges that mines can be deployed from, increasing aircraft survivability and potentially opening up the possibility of mine field laying in contested environments. Since the mid

-2010s, the Navy has eyed unmanned underwater vehicles for the deployment of mines. Orca drones [were initially procured](#) to meet the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command’s direct operational need for an underwater mining platform, a capability that could prove crucial to denying Chinese forces from landing on Taiwan or surging across maritime chokepoints.

These new systems come as American naval forces seek capabilities to counter China’s large conventional fleet and Western Pacific aspirations. U.S. submarine commanders are also looking for capabilities that could combat the anticipated nuclear-powered attack boat and underwater drone expansion of the People Liberation Army Navy.

Recent [congressional testimony](#) revealed that American attack boat commanders expect their Chinese counterparts will be a serious threat in the coming years as Beijing modernizes its submarines and expands operations beyond the first island chain.



Photos from shipmates, Thank you.

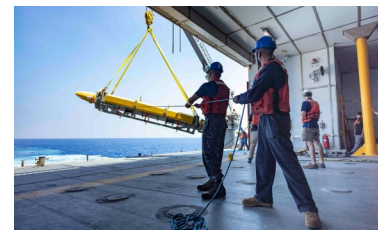


The Crisis in Mine Countermeasures

The solution lies in a renewed and sustained investment in U.S. MCM capability.

By Captain Kevin Eyer, U.S. Navy (Retired)

April 2026 Proceedings Vol. 152/4/1,478



As we now see, planners contemplating any conflict with Iran must account for Tehran's most potent asymmetric lever: the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Preparing for this contingency was never theoretical; history demonstrates its plausibility and its effects.

During the "tanker war" phase (1984–88) of the Iran–Iraq War, both sides attacked oil tankers and commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf to cripple each other's economies. The United States intervened in 1987 with Operation Earnest Will, during which it escorted Kuwaiti tankers that were reflagged under U.S. registry and protection.

On 24 July 1987, the reflagged tanker *Bridgeton* struck an Iranian M-08 moored mine during the first Earnest Will convoy, just after transiting the Strait of Hormuz. The ship was heavily damaged but completed its voyage under its own power. The incident exposed a critical gap: While U.S. planners anticipated air and surface threats, they had not adequately prepared for mine warfare. No precleared "Q-routes" existed, and in the immediate aftermath of the blast, escorts followed in *Bridgeton's* wake, effectively relying on it to absorb additional mines. The Navy quickly adapted, deploying a mix of surface, airborne, and improvised mine countermeasures (MCM) forces.

Nine months later, on 14 April 1988, the USS *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG-58) struck another Iranian mine. That attack triggered Operation Praying Mantis, the largest U.S. naval surface action since World War II, which marked a shift from defensive escort to offensive retaliation.

Mine threats persisted beyond the war. On 18 February 1991, during Operation Desert Shield, the USS *Princeton* (CG-59) and USS *Tripoli* (LPH-10) struck Iraqi mines and sustained significant damage. Mines in the Gulf were cleared after that war, and conditions remained relatively stable because of deterrence, sustained presence, and economic realities. But the core lesson endured: Once deployed, mines cannot be retrieved, only cleared.

To go to war with Iran without considering that Tehran might again employ mines seems folly. Yet, that appears to be exactly what happened.

The Strait is Declared to be Closed

On 2 March, a senior Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) adviser declared the Strait of Hormuz "closed" and warned that transiting ships could be attacked. Iran then refined its messaging, describing the strait as "open, but closed to our enemies"—specifically the United States and its allies—while permitting select vessels to pass with authorization.

Reporting varies, but most recent strait-specific estimates indicate that approximately 15 vessels have been attacked since 28 February. Iran has employed a layered approach, combining shore-launched antiship cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and explosive unmanned surface vessels (USVs) to threaten or strike shipping in and around the Strait of Hormuz. Although naval escorts—similar to those used during Operation Earnest Will—remain feasible, the risk of successful attacks against U.S. warships appears unacceptably high. In practical terms, the strait is effectively closed, and escort has yet to be undertaken.

On 15 March, President Donald Trump warned that NATO faces a "very bad future" if allies fail to assist in reopening the strait through naval deployments. The president seems to want allied nations to join the United States in escorting ships in the strait. However, Japan, Australia, Germany, Greece, the United Kingdom, Italy, the Netherlands, and the European Union have explicitly ruled out involvement in the Israel–U.S. conflict with Iran. For now, the United States stands largely alone, despite ongoing discussions—and so far, the United States has not undertaken naval escorts of commercial shipping.

Notably, there have been conflicting reports about whether Iran has or has not deployed naval mines in the strait. But the threat remains, layered with that of air and surface attacks.

The Effect of Mines

Iran is estimated to possess between 5–6,000 mines. The discovery of just one in the Strait of Hormuz would compel interested parties to assume there are many more. Once laid, mines cannot be recovered—they can only be painstakingly cleared. The challenge is not merely detecting mines but proving their absence. Without precise knowledge of what has been deployed and where, the task of sanitizing the strait would be formidable, and the economic consequences are substantial.

The Strait of Hormuz is a critical chokepoint, through which pass 21 percent of the world's oil and 20 percent of global

The Crisis in Mine Countermeasures

The solution lies in a renewed and sustained investment in U.S. MCM capability. (Cont)



liquefied natural gas. Since 28 February, equity markets in the European Union, India, Japan, South Korea, and the United Arab Emirates have declined between 8-17 percent, while oil prices have surged as high as \$127 per barrel. For shipping, the cost of insurance alone could render operations fiscally untenable. Historical precedent underscores this risk: Some reports from 1987 show that insurance premiums in parts of the Gulf increased significantly, with certain underwriters raising rates at Lloyd's to 0.5 percent of vessel value by mid-August—roughly double the earlier rates in some areas of the Gulf prior to the escalation of attacks. Thus, virtually any Iranian effort to mine the strait would carry profound and long-lasting economic consequences.

Waking to this Reality

U.S. military leaders in March appeared to recognize the possibility that Iran could employ naval mines and treated this option with heightened concern. More troubling, senior leaders—from the Chief of Naval Operations to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense—have been forced to confront a stark reality: The Navy's MCM capacity is severely limited.

The Cold War "Offset Strategy" provides important context. The strategy reflected a series of U.S. defense approaches designed to counter adversaries' numerical advantages through superior technology and doctrine. The First Offset relied on nuclear deterrence against the Soviet Union, while the Second Offset, which emerged in the 1970s and matured under President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, emphasized precision-guided munitions, stealth, advanced sensors, and integrated command-and-control systems. This approach enabled the United States to prioritize qualitative advantages—speed, accuracy, and information superiority—over quantitative parity. More recently, a Third Offset has been framed around artificial intelligence, autonomy, and human-machine integration.

In practice, offset strategies have proven highly effective. Their success was most clearly demonstrated during the Gulf War, when U.S. forces rapidly defeated an Iraqi military equipped with Soviet-era systems. However, maintaining a technological edge is increasingly expensive. Since 1989, U.S. defense spending in real terms has fluctuated—declining after the Cold War, rising during the post-9/11 wars, and stabilizing more recently—resulting in a net increase of roughly 15–30 percent compared to late-Cold War levels. These fluctuations impose tradeoffs: Priority programs are protected, while others face inconsistent funding that undermines development and readiness.

Cost pressures vary across naval forces. The submarine force must deal with high procurement and nuclear sustainment costs, exemplified by platforms such as the *Columbia*-class submarine. The surface fleet, including ships such as the *Arleigh Burke*-class destroyers, is driven largely by personnel and steady-state operations. Naval aviation, represented by systems such as the F-35, is primarily shaped by operations, maintenance, and readiness demands.

U.S. MCM has been consistently underprioritized within this mix. Historically, the Navy has relied on an implicit division of labor in NATO: Allies would provide substantial MCM capacity while the United States focused on power projection. Although funding for MCM increased following the Tanker War, it followed a cyclical pattern and declined over time, leaving limited capability in critical theaters such as the Middle East. This shortfall is unlikely to go unnoticed by competitors. Countries such as China can reasonably assess that mining operations could disrupt U.S. plans during contingencies, including around Taiwan.

The United States now faces a clear imperative to recognize and address this critical gap in its force structure.

The Crisis in Mine Countermeasures

The solution lies in a renewed and sustained investment in U.S. MCM capability. (Cont)

Where the Force Lies

There are two platforms traditionally associated with MCM: helicopters and surface ships. For decades, the primary aviation asset for U.S. Navy MCM operations was the MH-53E Sea Dragon, which was optimized for minesweeping rather than minehunting. In mine warfare, sweeping refers to the use of mechanical, magnetic, or acoustic systems to clear mines by triggering or severing them without precise localization, whereas mine hunting involves the detection, classification, and identification of individual mines—typically using high-resolution sonar—followed by neutralization. The MH-53E's heavy-lift capability enabled it to tow large sweep systems over wide areas, making it highly effective for rapid clearance but less suited to the deliberate, high-fidelity detection associated with dedicated minehunting platforms. Increasingly, the Navy is shifting toward distributed, unmanned systems—such as autonomous underwater and surface vessels—to perform both sweeping and hunting functions with greater persistence and reduced risk to personnel.

The Navy's MH-53E Sea Dragon detachment in the Arabian Gulf—long a backbone of airborne MCM operations in the U.S. Fifth Fleet area—was shut down in August 2025 as the [platform was phased out](#) in favor of newer manned and unmanned systems. As a result, the Navy no longer maintains a dedicated airborne MCM capability.

This leaves the surface force. During a final decommissioning ceremony on 25 September 2025 in Bahrain, [the Navy retired the last forward-deployed Avenger-class MCM ships](#)—the USS *Devastator* (MCM-6), *Sentry* (MCM-3), *Dextrous* (MCM-13), and *Gladiator* (MCM-11).

So, what does the U.S. Navy do now if Iran mines the Strait of Hormuz? Its options are limited to three *Independence*-variant littoral combat ships (LCSs). The decision to assign the MCM mission primarily to the *Independence*-variant, rather than the *Freedom*-variant, reflects considerations of space, weight, stability, and mission integration. The trimaran design of the *Independence* provides a large mission bay (approximately 15,000 square feet) and a wide beam, enabling the embarkation of multiple unmanned systems and their support equipment while retaining capacity for maintenance operations.

However, not all *Independence*-variant ships are available for MCM missions. Although the Navy plans to acquire 24 MCM mission packages—for operational use, training, and development—only four have been fielded to date, and one remains dedicated to testing. This shortfall reflects persistent developmental challenges across the disparate systems that comprise the MCM package. While the LCS program was initiated in 2002–03 with a modular mission concept, the MCM package did not achieve initial operational capability until 2023.

All three operational modules are assigned to the LCSs homeported in the Arabian Gulf: the USS *Canberra* (LCS-30), *Santa Barbara* (LCS-32), and *Tulsa* (LCS-16). Only the *Canberra* is immediately available for tasking. The *Santa Barbara* and *Tulsa* [are in Southeast Asia for scheduled maintenance](#). This raises questions about the immediacy and availability of U.S. MCM capabilities in the Middle East, given the geographic separation between assigned forces and their sustainment base.



The Evident Strategy

If mining the Strait of Hormuz would have such a catastrophic effect on the developed world—from Japan and South Korea to Europe and the United States—it is reasonable to wonder why Iran has refrained from employing this tactic.

On 13 March, U.S. forces struck Iranian military targets on Kharg Island, deliberately sparing the island's oil and LNG infrastructure while degrading Iranian defensive capabilities. About 95 percent of Iran's crude oil exports flow through Kharg Island, providing up to 70 percent of government revenue.

On 18 March, [Israel struck the South Pars gas field](#)—the world's largest—which produces roughly 70 percent of Iran's gas. This

The Crisis in Mine Countermeasures

The solution lies in a renewed and sustained investment in U.S. MCM capability. (Cont)

action created tension between Washington and Jerusalem. President Trump criticized the strike and stated that he had told Israeli leaders not to repeat such attacks, reflecting concern over escalation and energy infrastructure damage.

It is likely that these two strikes were part of a larger strategy—one that includes a clear warning to Iran: If Tehran mines the Strait of Hormuz, Jerusalem will target its oil industry and cripple its economy.

The lack of mining thus suggests that reason still prevails in Iran, despite the loss of key leaders. Yet, the risk remains that more ideologically motivated actors could act unilaterally. Cognitive biases such as mirror imaging further complicate analysis: Iran may not assess the economic and political costs of closure in the same way the United States would. The threat remains.

For now, Iran is sporadically attacking shipping by conventional means—air and surface—while the United States retains the capability to strike Iran’s oil and gas infrastructure if the strait is closed. Once mines enter the water, however, reopening it would require slow, resource-intensive clearance amid significant economic damage.

President Trump’s calls for allied assistance do not appear to specifically include MCM vessels. Yet, while allies may be reluctant to send frigates, Iran mining the Strait of Hormuz would have such severe consequences that allies might deploy MCM assets. After all, mine clearance is inherently defensive and deescalatory.



The Future

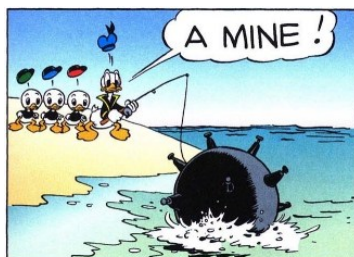
The current conflict has exposed the yawning gap in U.S. MCM capability. The United States has three MCM-countermeasures ships, no dedicated MCM helicopters, and a limited number of LCS MCM modules, all of which face operational challenges. For example, the Knifefish unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV)—designed to hunt sophisticated Iranian influence mines resting on the seabed or buried in sediment—is experiencing significant growing pains. Unlike the *Avenger*-class ships of the past, all MCM systems on board an LCS must be deployed individually, a process that consumes substantial time and is limited by system endurance and range. Issues concerning the data link between the LCS’ two deployable USVs and their host ships further slow operations. The result is that mine clearance is now a complex, slow, and resource-intensive process; the days of sweeping simple moored mines with a cable are long gone.

If Iran were to mine the Strait of Hormuz, the U.S. and allied navies would need to establish swept channels, or Q-routes, before shipping could safely transit. The strait’s traffic separation scheme stretches roughly 100 nautical miles. While a standard Q-route is 1,000 yards wide, supporting both inbound and outbound oil and LNG traffic would require two channels, each 2,000 yards wide, covering roughly 200 square miles.

China is certainly observing and taking notes. In a potential conflict over Taiwan, resupply through Taiwan’s international port system, comprised of five major deep-water commercial ports, would be critical. Mining these ports would forestall U.S. resupply efforts and hinder support for Taiwan.

The solution lies in a renewed and sustained investment in U.S. MCM capability. All *Independence*-variant LCSs must be equipped with operational MCM modules, and those modules need to be honed, tested, and put to work as quickly as possible. These ships should then be based overseas, along with the necessary support infrastructure.

The administration is left asking how the United States arrived at this point without an effective MCM force, while the military must confront how it overlooked this critical capability gap.





MNCM Michael Femrite 4-9-1952 to 1-29-2026

Michael Dean Femrite, 73. It is with great sadness that the family of Michael Dean Femrite, U.S. Navy, retired, announces his passing on January 29, 2026, after a long battle with cancer.

He was born in [Minneapolis, Minnesota](#), on April 9, 1952, to the late Murton and Dorinda (Olson) Femrite. After graduating high school, Michael joined the U.S. Navy and served for 24 years, finishing his career as a Master Chief Petty Officer.

Michael loved cars and was an active member of various car clubs. He enjoyed playing amateur pool, traveling the world, and serving as Treasurer for the Association of Minemen.

Michael is survived by his son Keith (Katie), stepchildren David (Diane) Ferguson, Ronald (Robin) Ferguson, Mark (Cheryll) Ferguson, Robin (Leonardo) Selvaggi, and Donna Ferguson, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and sister Barbara "Bobbi" Reuper. Preceding him in death were his parents and wife, Nancy.



Garry Kellogg, MN1,
Chandler, AZ,
1 Aug 1957 - ? Jan 2026, no obit

MN1 Lyric Marie Oakes

August 26, 1996 - January 26, 2026

Petty Officer First Class Lyric Marie Oakes was born on August 26, 1996, in St. Mary's County, Maryland, to Jason Tarr and Angela Potter (Oakes). Lyric was raised in Calvert County, Maryland, where she attended local elementary schools and graduated from Patuxent High School in Lusby, Maryland, in 2014. During her high school years, Lyric took great pride in her involvement with JROTC. Over her four years, she earned numerous medals and ranks while participating in Color Guard and orienteering, demonstrating early her discipline, leadership, and commitment to excellence.

After graduation, Lyric attended Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina, where she studied Marine Biology. Following two years of study, she answered a higher call to serve and enlisted in the United States Navy in 2016, where she faithfully and honorably served her country.

Lyric began her naval career at her duty station in Okinawa, Japan. In 2020, she was deployed to Bahrain aboard the minesweeper USS Gladiator (MCM-11). Over the next several years, her service took her across the globe, including deployments and assignments in Germany, Afghanistan, South Korea, and Africa.

Her most recent duty station was in Panama City, Florida, where she served as a subject matter expert for all Mineman's. Her knowledge and experience led her in getting advanced to Petty Officer First Class (MN1).

Lyric deployed within the 5th Fleet Area of Operations, training sailors in Bahrain. At the time of her passing, she was stationed in Little Creek, Virginia where she was attached with EOD unit 2.

Beyond her distinguished military career, Lyric cherished her time at home, often found in comfy clothes, enjoying life with her husband, John, and their four cats. She loved video games, music, reading, and traveling — especially trips to Texas to visit her mother and younger brothers.

Lyric was extraordinarily gifted in music and could play the cello, piano, ukulele, and guitar. She enjoyed playing tennis and was deeply committed to her community. She is survived by her devoted husband, John Holden, and stepdaughter, Evangeline ("Eva") Holden.



Carl Dickey, MNC

2 Apr 1952 - 5 Dec 2022

Carl Dickey West Ashley - Carl Eugene Dickey, age 70, of West Ashley, South Carolina, passed away on Monday, December 5, 2022. Carl was born in Great Lakes, IL on April 2, 1952. Carl is survived by his wife, Oxana; his step-son,, Leo; his children, David and Jillian, and their mother, Barbara; his grandson, Hunter; his nieces Tammy, Carol, and Gail; and his nephew, Tim. Carl is preceded in death by his parents, David Carl Dickey, Jr. and Chloe Betty Dickey; and his sister, Dee-Dee Bourne. Carl graduated from St. Andrews High School. He served proudly in the United States Navy for 24 years and retired with the rank of Chief Petty Officer. Carl was a loving father, grandfather, uncle, and friend. All services held for Carl will be private.



John David Dean

August 8, 1952 - March 20, 2025

John David Dean, 72, of Hot Springs, Arkansas, passed away March 20, 2025, at the John L. McClellan Memorial Veterans Hospital in Little Rock, where a memorial service was held for the family. He was born August 8, 1952, in Hot Springs, Arkansas to Ruth Wallace Dean and William Ruffian Dean.

John grew up in the spa city where he attended Rix Elementary, Central Junior High School, and Hot Springs High School. Prior to his senior year, he transferred to Waldron when his mother became an egg rancher.

John graduated from Waldron High School and then earned an Agronomy degree at the University of Arkansas; and later, a P-12 multiple subject teaching degree from Chapman University in Orange, California.

He served 15 years in the Navy aboard the USS Princeton and USS Kitty Hawk; and was a veteran of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars. John was chosen "Sailor of the Year," which recognized high-performing enlisted Sailors who exemplified the Navy's core values and represented the ideals of a professional Sailor.



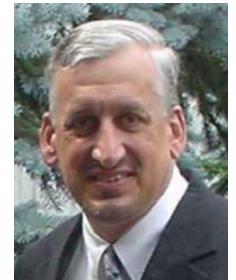
William S Johnson, LCDR,

Warren, OH,
31 Dec 1942 - 13 Mar 2026
no obit: heart attack



Donald Plack, Jr.

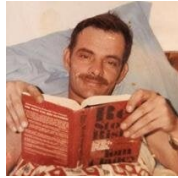
July 18, 1955 — March 26, 2019



Donald E. Plack, Jr, age 63, of Paola, passed away Tuesday, March 26, 2019, at Olathe Medical Center. Born in Buffalo, NY to Donald E. and Ruby (Burnett) Plack, the second of three children, Don graduated from East Aurora (NY) High School, spent six years in the US Navy's MOMAG group, then earned an associates degree in design and drafting from Alfred Ag & Tech in 1984. He was recruited by Sprint/Nextel, and within days of graduation was on the job. Working for Sprint took him to Reston, VA, Atlanta, GA, and eventually to the Kansas City area at the start of 1994. From Atlanta, Don rented a crown vic for a house hunting trip, and set off with his dog, Heidi. Not a city boy, he started visiting smaller towns on both sides of the state line, working his way out further from the city, looking for a place to call home. Once he found Paola, he and Heidi both agreed they had found it. Don settled in to his new home, and started quietly putting down roots. Don continued working for Sprint till early 2009, when he took early retirement just before the CAD work was outsourced to India. He started his own business doing CAD work for smaller telecom companies - the work he enjoyed, but without the long commute. Most people who move around a lot can make new friends in each new place, but very few keep up those friendships. Don kept in touch with friends from his childhood, Navy buddies, people he worked with across the country. He headed back to his home town twice a year, visited Navy friends often, and even on vacations to visit family, would often stop somewhere to have lunch with a Sprint engineer or co-worker from years ago.



Derrel Winfred McKee, MN1,
Pauls Valley, OK,



Sep 17, 1951 - Mar 26, 2026

Derrel was born on September 17, 1951, in Wynnewood, Oklahoma, to Earl McKee and Roxie Ann (Morrison) McKee. Derrel passed from this life on March 26, 2026, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma at 74 years. He attended school at Satterwhite and later completed his education at Elmore City, where he was a pitcher on the baseball team.

In his early years, Derrel worked alongside his family on their broomcorn farm, where he developed a strong work ethic that stayed with him throughout his life. He also had a lifelong passion for working on cars.

On September 10, 1982, Derrel married the love of his life, Denise (Gilbert) McKee. Their marriage was one of the proudest highlights of his life.

Derrel proudly served his country in the United States Navy, retiring after more than 20 years of dedicated service as a Mineman. His military career was a source of great pride and accomplishment.

Following his retirement from the Navy, Derrel enjoyed spending time in his home shop. He especially loved building toy train tracks and working with his tractor—simple pleasures that brought him great joy.

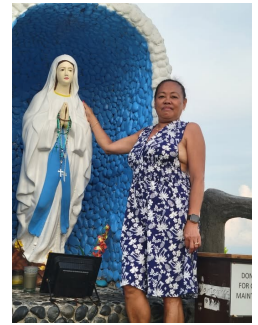
Derrel was known for his strong values and the lessons he shared with others. He believed in hard work, responsibility, and always having a job to provide for one's family. His example left a lasting impression on those who knew him. He will be deeply missed by his family and friends.

Derrel is survived by his wife, Denise McKee of the home; Step-children, Brian Hayes and wife Georgia of Elmore City, Oklahoma, Kari Wilson and husband Ron of Elmore City, Oklahoma; Brother, Earl McKee Jr; Granddaughter, Sarah Lambert and husband Jeffrey; Great grandchildren, Elisabeth Lambert and Samuel Lambert.

Derrel was preceded in death by his parents, Earl and Roxie McKee; Step-daughter, Lisa Jackson and husband Billy; Grandson, Jordan Jackson.



Estrella (Eva) Kropf
Sept 15, 1954 - Feb 1, 2026
Battle Creek, IA



Estrella Cana Kropf was born on September 15, 1954, in Caloocan City, Philippines, to Semion and Paz (Micaller) Cana. One of eight children, Estrella was raised in a close-knit and loving family that shaped her deep devotion to those she loved throughout her life.

Estrella's life changed forever when she met Roger Kropf, a handsome sailor serving with the United States Navy. Their love grew steadily, and on May 24, 1975, they were united in marriage at the Parish of St. Roche in Olongapo City, Philippines, a union built on devotion, partnership, and unwavering support.

For the next 25 years, Estrella traveled alongside Roger as he proudly served his country. Their journey eventually led them to Roger's hometown of Battle Creek, Iowa, where they settled in 1991 and made their forever home.

Estrella found her calling working at a local nursing home, where her compassion and gentle spirit touched countless lives. She formed deep bonds with her coworkers and residents alike. With a special soft spot for the elderly, Estrella often spent many hours beyond her workday visiting, helping, and simply sitting with those who needed companionship. Her kindness was quiet but profound, and it left a lasting impression on everyone she met.

Family meant everything to Estrella. Despite the distance that separated her from loved ones across the world, she remained closely connected through frequent phone calls and cherished visits. Her heart always found its way home.

In her quieter moments, Estrella found joy in the simple things. She adored her dogs, who brought her comfort and happiness, and she looked forward to each summer when she could plant, tend, and admire the flowers she loved so much, each one a reflection of her nurturing soul.

Left to cherish her memory are her beloved husband of 50 years, Roger Kropf of Battle Creek, Iowa.

LCDR William Stanley Johnson

From U.S. Naval Mines and Minemen A History



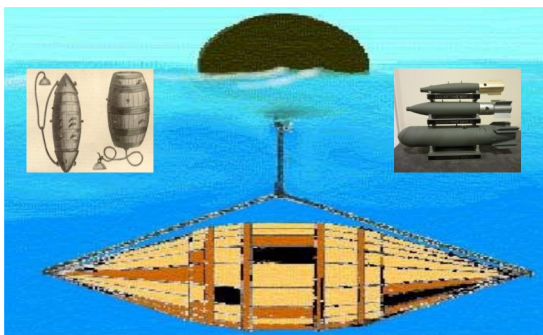
William Stanley Johnson is a native of Ogdensburg, New York, where he was born on 31 December 1942. He graduated from Heuvelton High School, Heuvelton, New York, June, 1960, and in August enlisted in the Navy.

Following recruit training he attended Torpedoman's Mate "A" School in Key West, Florida and then reported for duty aboard USS Waldron (D-699) in Norfolk, Virginia, as a Torpedoman's Mate Seaman. Subsequent enlisted assignments included USS Bainbridge (DLG-N-25); Naval Station, Bermuda; Torpedo MK-48 Westinghouse Factory Training School, Baltimore, Maryland; Naval Underwater Research Engineering Station, Newport, Rhode Island and Key West Test and Evaluation Detachment, Key West, Florida.

Appointed a Warrant Officer in August, 1969. Attended Officer's Indoctrination School at Newport, RI and then reported for duty as Torpedo Repair Officer aboard USS Yosemite (AD-19) in Mayport, Florida.

Commissioned a Chief warrant Officer W-2 in August, 1971 and later designated a Surface Warfare Officer. Promoted to LTJG from CWO-3 in April, 1977 under the Limited Duty Officer Program and attained his rank of LCDR on 1 January 1984.

Other assignments after being commissioned included Torpedo MK-48 Project Officer, Naval Underwater Systems Center, Newport, RI, 1973-75; Transportation Officer, Naval Magazine, Guam, 1975-76; Weapons Assembly Torpedo Officer, Naval Weapons Station, Earle, Colts Neck, NJ, 1976-79; Operations Officer and Chief staff Officer, Mobile Mine Assembly Group, Charleston, SC, 1979-82; Mines Director, Fleet and Mine Warfare Training Center, Charleston, SC, 1982-86; Mines Inspector Mine Warfare Inspection Group, Charleston, SC, 1986-88; and Commanding Office MOMAG Unit Three, Colts Neck, NJ, 1988 until his retirement 1 Oct. 1990. LCDR Johnson now resides in Keyport, NJ.



The Binnacle List



I'd like to request everyone show support and prayers for MN Brenda Lee VanDixon. She is currently going thru chemotherapy



Jim McGoldrick

From Kim (from Facebook)

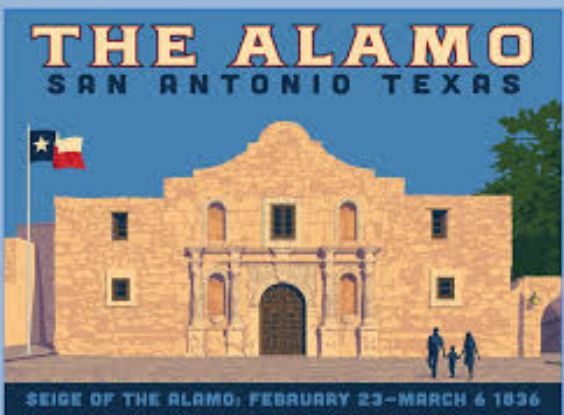
To those of you who know us, we are not asking for prayers for ourselves but for our friends and family, so that they can overcome the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness.

Jim has Stage 4 Renal and Lung cancer. Oncologist stated it could be 6 months or immediate given his additional condition. Family and Jim decided not to have any treatments provided, given he already has Lewy Body Dementia which is on the Parkinson's side of the dementia spectrum. We are in Christ and know God is with us always. God Bless to all and know we are at peace with our decision and situation. Take care of yourselves and each other.





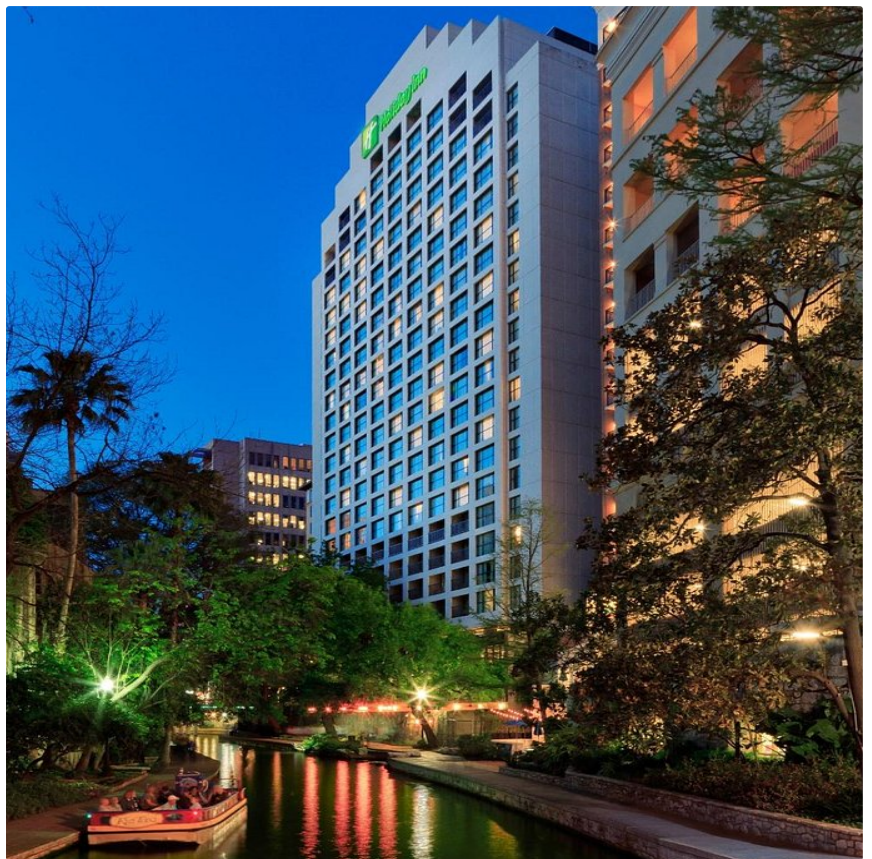
**ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN 52nd
ANNUAL REUNION & MEETING
SEPT. 1-3, 2026 - SAN ANTONIO, TX
Registration Form**



**52nd Association of
Minemen Reunion
September 1-3, 2026**



**217 N. St. Mary's Street
San Antonio, Texas 78205
T: (210) 224-2500**



Here is your group's booking link for August 30 - September 6: <https://tinyurl.com/4sy3fpde>

Once you copy the link to your browser, you will be directed to our hotel website where your group details will automatically populate. Please enter your arrival and departure dates and select your preferred room type at your discounted group rate of \$139 + taxes. (Same rate 3 days before and after)

You may also contact our 24-hour reservations line at 210-224-2500 and select option 2. When calling, please be sure to reference your group's block code: AMI

As a friendly reminder, the final day to make reservations at your discounted group rate is: August 12, 2026

\$20 Inclusive Full American Breakfast Buffet (discounted from \$25.47) available in the Windows Restaurant

Parking Information

Parking Information

\$24 Overnight Self-Parking (discounted from \$39) with unlimited in & out privileges at no extra charge. Parking is first-come, first-served and not guaranteed. Vehicle clearance is 6'8". Our parking facility is not accessible for dually trucks, including the F-250 and larger, Ford Excursion, Hummer 2500 and larger, and trucks and SUVs with lift kits.

Popular Amenities

Pool - Health/Fitness Center - In hotel restaurants - Business Center - Free Wi-Fi - Kids Eat Free Children activities - On-site Laundry Facilities. Sorry, No Pets Allowed

Hotel does not provide Airport shuttle services.



San Antonio Riverwalk Boat Tour
\$10.00 per person. (Taxes, & Tips are included)
Wednesday, September 2nd, 2026 - 4:00 PM

Take a narrated tour of the San Antonio Riverwalk on a boat exclusively for AOM. The boat will pick us up and drop us off at our hotel. There is a limit of 35 tickets sold, so unfortunately it will be first come first serve! When that number is met, we will reimburse those who paid after the first 35 seats were filled. If you do not make the cut off, you will be able to purchase tickets at the Go-Rio ticket booth and join the general public on a tour. Those tickets are \$15.50 General Admission, \$9.50 Child (Age 1-5) and Seniors and Military for \$12.50.



travelocity
10 essential stops along the San Antonio River Walk

San Antonio is the most visited city in Texas, and we're here to tell y'all that's for good reason. The city oozes Texas charm, is chock full of history (Remember the Alamo!), and offers no shortage of amazing spots serving housemade guac. The best way to sample it all is through its famous River Walk, a stretch of pedestrian waterway lined with cafes, shops, and boutique hotels. If you go, be sure to check out these essential stops along the walk!



- 
1. Acenar
 Duck into this contemporary eatery for some of the best modern Tex-Mex cuisine in town. Don't miss their famous chile rellenos!
- 
3. Bier Garten Riverwalk
 This open-air hangout is the perfect spot for a midday cold one paired with traditional German food and costumed, singing waiters.
- 
5. Arneson River Theatre
 Catch a music or theatrical performance at this outdoor theater, featuring a stage on the one side of the river and spectators seated on the other.
- 
7. Drury Plaza Hotel Riverwalk
 Just steps from the river, this hotel boasts an outdoor pool, and a nice bar and lounge. You'll be shocked at the size of the rooms!
- 
9. Museum Reach
 Meet the newest addition to the River Walk! The 4-mile stretch of pedestrian waterway leads to the Pearl Brewery area and is framed by native foliage and funky art installations.
- 
2. The Country Line
 Bring a bib to this BBQ hot spot. The funky roadhouse atmosphere will delight the entire group, as well as the hefty, finger-licking platters.
- 
4. Shop at the River Center
 Peruse 50+ stores housed within the historic Joske Building. Enjoy everything from retail favorites to Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville.
- 
6. Go Rio River Cruise
 Gather the whole family aboard a river boat and do the River Walk via water. Go Rio offers fun and informative river cruises.
- 
8. Hotel Havana
 Filled with old-world beauty, this historic hotel lures guests with retro Cuban flare and colorful common spaces overlooking the buzzing waterway below.
- 
10. Pearl Brewery
 This former brewery is now home to the city's hippest restaurants. Expect fun public spaces and an expansive green lawn that the kids love.





**ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN 52nd
ANNUAL REUNION & MEETING
SEPT. 1-3, 2026 SAN ANTONIO, TX
REGISTRATION FORM**

DATE

NAME

FIRST

LAST

CELL PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

AREA CODE

BANQUET DINNER - Thur. Sept. 3rd - 5:30 to 10:00 PM
(Tax and gratuities are included)

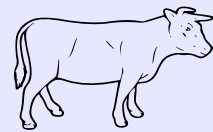
*All Plated Dinner Entrees Includes: Riverwalk Tossed Salad,
Chef's Selected Starch, Vegetable, Dessert
And Warm Rolls with Sweet Butter Rosettes.*

*Served with Iced Tea On Table, Water, and Freshly Brewed Royal Cup
Regular Coffee and Decaffeinated Coffee Service Available.*

ENTREES

Fire Grilled Sirloin Filet - \$60.00

Top Sirloin Seasoned in Olive Oil, Sea Salt
And Freshly Cracked Black Pepper, Char-Grilled



Chicken Picatta - \$55.00

Lightly Breaded Boneless Breast of Chicken
Topped with a Lemon Caper Butter Sauce



Seared Salmon - \$55.00

Atlantic Salmon Filet Lightly Seasoned. Seared
And Topped with a Lemon Dill Beurre Blanc



Cash Bar from 5:30 to 9:30 PM

Auction Picnic Luncheon on Site – Wednesday, Sept. 2nd.

Variety of Sub Sandwiches, Chips, Cookies & Beverages

You are welcome to bring your own food, No Charge!



\$15.00 Per Person



"The most fun you will have spending money for our Scholarship Fund!"

52nd AOM Reunion		COST EA.	QTY.	AMOUNT
RIVER CRUISE GROUP EVENT		\$10.00		
BANQUET DINNER ENTREE CHOICE				
	Fire Grilled Sirloin Filet	\$60.00		
	Chicken Picatta	\$55.00		
	Seared Salmon	\$55.00		
Auction Picnic Luncheon				
	Sub, Chips Cookies	\$15.00		
	BYO Food - No Charge	\$0.00		
Membership				
	Reinstatement or New Member Fee	\$5.00		
	Annual Dues	\$15.00		
Reunion Fee		\$20.00	1	\$20.00
Scholarship Donation				
		TOTAL DUE TO AOM		

MEMBERSHIP SECTION

There is a \$5.00 fee for new or 3 years past dues members.
You can pay up to 5 years in advance.

REUNION FEE

Member approved for
Incidental Reunion Cost

Please note:

For the River Cruise, we are having a dedicated boat just for AOM. The boat will pick us up at the hotel. It holds 35 people, so it will be first come first serve for a seat!

Attach this form with your check payable to the
Association of Minemen
P. O. Box 2180
Temple City, CA 91780-8180
Or if you prefer to submit and pay on line, go to;
<https://form.jotform.com/90268038916160>

You do not need to have a PayPal account to utilize this method.

**Association of Minemen
P.O. Box 2180
Temple City, CA 91780**

**Non-Profit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
San Gabriel, CA.
NO. 270**

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



Established in 1974

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____ RANK/RATE/TITLE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____ - _____

DATE _____ EMAIL _____

TEL _____ SIGNATURE _____

ELEGIBILITY _____ APPROVED _____

Application Fee: \$5.00 - Annual Dues: \$15.00 - NOTICE: To maintain membership, dues must be paid annually by the month of October. The dues expiration date is printed on the mailing label above your name. Mail checks to the Association of Minemen, P.O. Box 2180, Temple City, CA 91780 Our on-line member application link- <https://form.jotform.com/90215855401148>. If you have any questions about your membership, please send an email with your question to: assocminemen@yahoo.com.