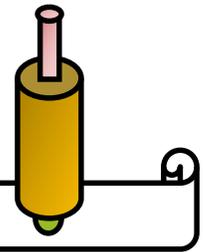




# The DASHPOT



The Official Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

### In This Issue:

- Mining Campaigns and Mine Warfare History
- MIW Articles
- Navy Munitions Command Reports
- TAPS and Binnacle List
- Miscellaneous Mineman Flotsam and Jetsam



The special device minesweeper USS Washtenaw County (MSS-2) making her final check sweep in Haiphong Harbor on 20 June 1973

U.S. Navy - Official  
U.S. Navy photo  
USN 711573

## From The President

*MNCM John Epps, USN (Ret.)*



Here's wishing everyone had a fulfilling Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas/Happy Holidays and are starting off with a safe and prosperous New Year. Our winter here on the Southeastern side of Washington State has been pretty mild so far (knock on wood) with not very much rainfall or snow. Hopefully you, in the other parts of the country, have had nice weather as well.

I'd like to pass on my condolences to the families of recently departed shipmates and family members. Know that you, as well as those on the Binnacle List, are in our thoughts and prayers.

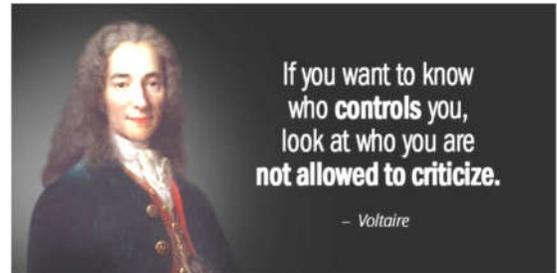
**Charles Humbard** has finalized the Charleston 2020 Reunion details. Check out the initial dates and hotel information on page 3. He is still looking for any volunteers to assist him in this endeavor. Planning, scheduling and setting up a Reunion by one person is not any easy task. Please lend your shipmate a hand.

The Facebook page continues to boom. There are currently 727 members. Welcome aboard Shipmates. Your input and participation is making the page a success. I'd like to thank **Don Moody** once again for his management of the AOM Facebook page and AOM Website.

God bless our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and God bless the USA!

*John*

## Notable Quotable



**"CORRECT A FOOL AND HE WILL HATE YOU. CORRECT A WISE MAN AND HE WILL THANK YOU"** ANONYMOUS



## Six Ethics of Life

**Before you Pray - Believe**

**Before you Speak - Listen**

**Before you Spend - Earn**

**Before you Write - Think**

**Before you Quit - Try**

**Before you Die - Live**



Association of Minemen

Dedicated to Serving the U. S. Mine Force

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

OFFICERS

President

John Epps (17-20)
231 Silverwood Ct.
Richland, WA 99352
Ph.509-366-0214
mncm@aol.com

Vice President

Eddie Atkins (17-20)
117 Quaker Meeting House Rd.
Williamsburg, VA 23188-1851
Ph.757-565-3333
weatkins@cox.net

Secretary/Treasurer

Nate Miranda (18-20)
5728 N. Gladys Ave.
San Gabriel, CA 91775-2466
(626) 824-0727
assocminemen@yahoo.com

Board of Directors

Philip DeChene (17-19)
1827 Broadway Dr.
Graham, NC 27253
Ph.336-229-1951
pdechene@triad.rr.com

Warren Savage (19-21)
10331 Settle Rd.
Santee, CA 92071
Ph.619-258-1478
chiefskip@aol.com

Tom Hoffman (17-19)
2266 East Hurd Rd.
Monroe, MI 48162
Ph.734-289-2279
mdau0302@sbcglobal.net

Charles Humbard (19-21)
111 Calhoun Ave
Goose Creek, SC 29445
PH 843-425-9932
charleshumbard@gmail.com

Danny Epperly (18-20)
123 Yorkshire Dr.
Yorktown, VA 23693
Ph. 757-870-1376
depperly1@verizon.net

Gary Cleland (18-20)
12201 Sunrise Ct
Poway, CA 92064-2865
Cell: 858-848-4030
Home: 858-747-3835
g.l.cleland@gmail.com



COMMITTEES

A.O.M. Historian

Don Moody (18-20)
2559 King Richards Rd.
Melbourne, FL 32935-2932
PH 321-223-5337
donmoody8@gmail.com

Scholarship Chair

Ron Glasen (12-20)
540 Cambridge Ct. (1-D)
Munster, IN 46321
Ph. 219-678-3228
searchcoil@hotmail.com

Membership Chair

Nate Miranda (18-20)
5728 N. Gladys Ave.
San Gabriel, CA 91775-2466
(626) 824-0727
assocminemen@yahoo.com

Communications Chair

Don Moody (18-20)
2559 King Richards Rd.
Melbourne, FL 32935-2932
PH 321-223-5337
donmoody8@gmail.com

Chaplain

Denson Rivers (19-20)
hawgrunner52@aol.com

Parliamentarian

Warren Savage
10331 Settle Rd.
Santee, CA 92071
Ph.619-258-1478
chiefskip@aol.com

Reunion Committee 2019

Chairperson
Charleston SC

Charles Humbard (19-21)
111 Calhoun Ave
Goose Creek, SC 29445
PH 843-425-9932
charleshumbard@gmail.com

"The DASHPOT" Editor

Ron Swart (16-20)
305 Fairview Dr.
Canton, GA 30114
Ph.678-880-9008
dashpot-editor@comcast.net

Please send input to:
dashpot-editor@comcast.net

Input for Spring 2019
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01 May 2020

From the Editor...



Perhaps it is a sign of my growing older, but lately I'm often heard 'commenting' on how poorly our Navy remembers their own history in mine warfare, and how the experiences and past lessons learned, with respect to the discipline and art of mine warfare, are either lost or ignored.

Whether it is mining or counter-mining, the collective memory of our military and political leadership is short and the application of lessons learned, wholly inadequate for retaining readiness. You may draw your own conclusions in this issue as you read about what our own history reminds us about the hard realities of mining and counter-mining.

Congratulations to CDR Nichol Schine on her very successful tour as COMOMAG. She moves on to assume the Force Combat Systems Officer chair at AIRPAC.

Welcome CDR Eric Olsen who assumed command of the MOMAG Staff on 30 Jan 2020.

Also, we welcome the 1st time input from NMC Far East Division, Unit Misawa, Japan, with a very important mining capability - and a key location - as our focus has shifted to challenges in the Pacific theater.

All the best! RON





## Secretary Treasurer Report

***2020 is here! ...and the Association is here to serve its members and our Scholarship program! But this does not happen without member support! Thank you all for being involved and committed!***

***As the plans for our 2020 Reunion in Charleston South Carolina arrangement are finalized, like last year's reunion, we'll be providing both mail in and online registration forms. Stay tuned!***

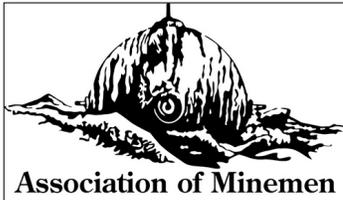
***If you can think of anything that could improve how we do business, please feel free to email me your suggestions at:***

***[assocminemen@yahoo.com](mailto:assocminemen@yahoo.com)***

***A sincere thank you for your support!***

***Nate***

Nate Miranda,  
Secretary & Treasurer



## 2020 A.O.M REUNION

### **Double Tree Hotel & Suites Charleston Airport 7401 Northwoods Blvd**

The dates for the reunion are Thursday 15, October (Early bird, Meet and Greet) thru Sunday 18 October (Picnic/ Auction). The Hotel is located in North Charleston and they have an airport shuttle. We have guaranteed rates three days prior and three days after. Due to a National Sales Conference our codes for Reservations are not entered yet. I will let everyone know when I receive it (Watch for it on Facebook). They have reduced the Breakfast Buffet cost to \$10.00. The room rate was also reduced to \$125.00. This is the basic cost before local taxes are added on. Thank you for your patience and support! We hope to see you in Charleston. Thanks, Charles



## Membership Committee Report

I like to welcome our 2 new and 3 reinstated members since our issue. On a similar note, we received 2 Dashpots via returned mail with no forwarding info for the members! Hopefully as they realize that they have not received the latest Dashpot issue, they'll get the new address' to me! Thanks to the 23 members that have either renewed or caught up on their dues! Remember, if the date on your Dashpot label is highlighted, please send your dues in via mail: Association of Minemen, P. O. Box 2180, Temple City CA, 91780 or via electronic transaction by going to: <https://form.jotform.com/90215855401148>.

Thank you!

***Nate***

Nate Miranda,  
Membership Chairman

## AOM Membership Reminder

Your membership expiration/due date can be found on the DASHPOT mailing label just above your name. *Example:* If Oct. 2020 and beyond is on your label, you are up to date. If Oct. 2019 and lower, you are behind and should catch up as soon as possible. Dues can be paid up for as many as 5 years in advance, if you choose that option.





NICHINAN, Japan (Nov. 21, 2019) Minemen on Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Pioneer (MCM 9) hoist up a Mk 49 Training Target Mine during Mine Warfare Exercise 3JA 2019. USS Pioneer, part of Mine Countermeasures Squadron 7, is operating in the 7th Fleet area of operations to enhance interoperability with partners and serve as a ready-response platform for contingency operations. (U.S. Navy photo by Lt. j.g. Alexander Fairbanks)

**Moored Targets**

- Target MK 49 Mod 1
- Target MK 47 Mod 0
- Target MK 53 Mod 0/1
- Target MK 59 Mod 0

**Navy Instrumented Threat Targets (NAVITTAR)**

- Conical Bottom Target
- Cylindrical Bottom Targets
- Moored Target

**Stealth Targets**

- Target MK 44 Mod 0/1
- Target MK 58 Mod 0
- Target MK 46 Mod 0
- Target MK 51 Mod 0

**Bottom Targets**

- Target MK 52 Mod 0
- Target MK 57 Mod 0/1

**Surf Zone Targets**

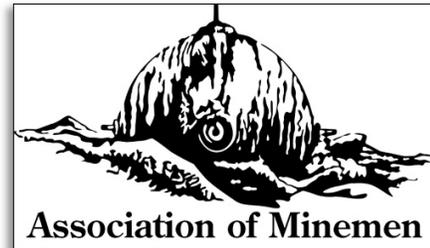
- Target MK 48 Mod 0/1
- Target MK 50 Mod 0
- Target MK 45 Mod 1/2

What the heck is that mine??? It isn't one of ours!!!

Training mines for Mine Countermeasures Forces need to look like **THE THREAT!**  
 Here is a primer for the different types of threat mine "targets" that our forces train with.

# 50 Years

Azuma Island Japan  
Mine Shop  
Reunion 2020  
Charleston, SC



The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closing of the Naval Ordnance Facility on Azuma Island in Yokosuka Japan will be held in conjunction with the 2020 AOM East Coast Reunion to be held in Charleston, SC. All former Minemen and Shipmates in other ratings who served there, are invited... AOM members or not! We have many of the names but need contact information and more photos from your time in Japan. Our AOM website will dedicate a page to all those who served on Azuma Islands, in whatever capacity. The very idea brings back some wonderful memories of "Baka Shima" among those who served there. We want to know all those who served with NOF in the middle of Tokyo Bay. If you ever served on Azuma Island or know of someone who did, please send it to **Don Moody** at [donmoody8@gmail.com](mailto:donmoody8@gmail.com) and/or **Bill Holloway** at: [william.holloway1010@gmail.com](mailto:william.holloway1010@gmail.com)  
The AOM Reunion Coordinator for 2020 is **Charles Humbard** at [charleshumbard@gmail.com](mailto:charleshumbard@gmail.com)



File photo of Navy Mine Depot (NMD) Yorktown, circa 1918. After being established in 1918 and following World War I, the U. S. Navy transferred most of the underwater mines in their inventory to NMD Yorktown. At the time, the mines had been stored in open fields until storage and maintenance buildings were built. Later, the stockpile of mines that were maintained at Yorktown would be used during other wars. NMD Yorktown became Naval Weapons Station (NWS) Yorktown in 1958, when the Navy expanded the mission of the base. NWS celebrates 90 years of providing ordnance and technical support to the U. S. Navy. (U.S. Navy photo)

# Inside America's daring plan to mine Hyphong Harbor

Marcelo Ribeiro da Silva, Vietnam magazine

On the night of May 8, 1972, President Richard Nixon was preparing for a major TV speech. He wanted to communicate his dissatisfaction with the leaders of North Vietnam and their allies, especially the Soviet Union. The speech also had a more militarily important purpose: to announce an operation that would hasten the end of a war that had been waged by U.S. combat troops for almost 10 years. Nixon, dressed in a blue suit and holding a large wad of paper, began the speech in a calm tone, with pauses between declarations: **"Good evening. Five weeks ago, on Easter weekend, the communist armies of North Vietnam launched a massive invasion of South Vietnam, an invasion that was made possible by tanks, artillery and other advanced offensive weapons supplied to Hanoi by the Soviet Union and other communist nations."** After those opening words, the speech included a long stretch full of justifications for an action Nixon would announce eight minutes later — an operation to drop mines in Haiphong Harbor and other major North Vietnamese ports that were entryways for the military supplies, mainly from the Soviets, that supported the communist war effort. At that point in the war, a massive U.S. troop withdrawal was nearing its conclusion. By then, only two U.S. combat brigades remained in Vietnam — the 196th Light Infantry Brigade around Da Nang and the 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), near Saigon. Meanwhile, the South Vietnamese were increasingly uncertain and tense about their country's future. The goal of Hanoi's Easter Offensive, begun on March 30, 1972, was to overrun South Vietnam through a conventional military campaign with tanks and artillery while U.S. forces were winding down. Finally, Nixon reached the climax of his narrative. **"There's only one way to stop the killing,"** he said. **"That is to keep the weapons of war out of the hands of the international outlaws of North Vietnam.... I have therefore concluded that Hanoi must be denied the weapons and supplies it needs to continue the aggression. In full coordination with the Republic of Vietnam I have ordered the following measures, which are being implemented as I am speaking to you. All entrances to North Vietnamese ports will be mined to prevent access to these ports and North Vietnamese naval operations from these ports. United States forces have been directed to take appropriate measures within the internal and claimed territorial waters of North Vietnam to interdict the delivery of any supplies. Rail and all other communications will be cut off to the maximum extent possible. Air and naval strikes against military targets in North Vietnam will continue."** Nixon explained to his audience that those measures were not aimed at other nations. Indeed, the United States would wait three days before it activated the planted mines in North Vietnam's harbors so the foreign ships currently there would have time to leave safely. Only after that period, would the mines be activated and become a threat to any ships navigating North Vietnamese waters. That speech was the start of **Operation Pocket Money**. As Nixon announced the measures being taken against North Vietnam's ports, the calm pauses in his presentation had a strategic reason. They were timed to coincide with the take-off of fighters, attack aircraft and surveillance planes conducting airstrikes while Nixon was still speaking. The aircraft chosen to carry out Operation Pocket Money were the A-7E Corsair II and A-6A Intruder attack planes based on the aircraft carrier Coral Sea, which was stocked with airborne sea mines. The Coral Sea, part of the U.S. 7th Fleet's Task Force 77, was positioned at Yankee Station, an area of the South China Sea where the Navy launched attacks on North



Vietnamese targets. Nixon's May 8 speech aired at 9 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time, which was 9 a.m. May 9 in Vietnam. Hours earlier, a burst of activity had begun among Navy crews responsible for armament, fuel and aircraft maintenance on board the Coral Sea. From the carrier's lower deck crewmen were preparing mines to be attached to Operation Pocket Money's aircraft. The weapons were Mark 52 Mod 2 naval mines—magnetic mines that lie on the bottom of the sea, triggered to detonate when a metal-hulled ship passes over them and causes an alteration in the Earth's magnetic field, which the mines can detect. The mines would be released at ports under Hanoi's control and form a strong barrier at the entrances of key harbors. Mineman 2nd Class Robert D. Gill was one of four sailors with his rating on board the Coral Sea. They worked in the bomb assembly division with aviation ordnance men, and "12 hours a day was the norm," Gill remembers. In February he was put in charge of the mine assembly team. "After a 14-hour day I was called up to Ordnance Control," Gill said. "I walked into the area where the captain of the USS Coral Sea, other officers and chiefs were waiting for me. I was told we had about three dozen Mk 52 underwater mines that had to be assembled in Alpha condition." I said: 'Are you sure you want Alpha condition?' — which meant the mines would be live and ready to go." "It was very rare," he continued. "I couldn't believe it. They handed me a bunch of papers with settings, limits and other info I needed. I would end up working about 44 hours straight to get this done ASAP." In the naval mines put together by Gill's team, an arming device that activated the dropped mines was set for a three-day delay. "I didn't know where they were going until the captain announced that President Nixon went on TV to say what this was all about," the petty officer said.



Sailors from the aircraft carrier Coral Sea affix sea mines to an A-7E Corsair II assigned to the Mighty Shrikes of Attack Squadron VA-94. (National Archives)

Nine aircraft were prepared for the mission — three Corsairs from the Fighting Redcocks of Attack Squadron VA-22, three from the Mighty Shrikes of VA-94 and three Intruders from the Fighting Bengals in All Weather Attack Squadron VMA (AW) -224, a Marine Corps unit. Each

## Inside America's daring plan to mine Haiphong Harbor

aircraft received four 1,000-pound Mk 52 mines. Some mines were outfitted with special fins and semi-spherical aerodynamic covers in their front sections to reduce drag on the aircraft during flight and improve stability during the mine's fall. However, only a few aerodynamic kits were available in the carrier, so some aircraft would have to take off with additional drag. The armed, fueled and waiting attack fighters received the order for Operation Pocket Money's takeoff at 8:10 a.m., May 9. The mission had been kept in absolute secrecy until that moment. There were 10 launches in sequence.

Accompanying the nine attack aircraft carrying the mines was an EKA-3B Skywarrior of the Black Ravens of Electronic Attack Squadron VAQ-135, an electronic warfare plane capable of jamming enemy radar. The attack would take place exactly at 9 a.m. The mines would be planted at the same time that Nixon was talking about them on live national TV. To synchronize the speech and the attack, the planes took off and circled the Coral Sea until the moment calculated to head to the target. For two weeks Nixon had been reluctant to implement the mining option. At the outset of the communist Easter Offensive, the balance of forces favored the North. Quang Tri in northern South Vietnam had fallen on May 1, and other important cities, such as Pleiku and Kontum in the Central Highlands, were under siege. An Loc, only about 60 miles north of Saigon, was partly in the hands of the North Vietnamese Army, and Hue, near the North-South border, was seriously threatened. It was time for a strong U.S. response, but there was concern — not unfounded — that mining Haiphong and other harbors could escalate the war. Those ports were filled with ships of Hanoi's allies, most notably Moscow and Beijing, and had previously been considered off-limits, even though North Vietnam received almost 90 percent of its war-making materiel through Haiphong. Both Hanoi and Haiphong had been spared total annihilation essentially for an overriding political reason: the fear of provoking military intervention by the Soviet Union and as happened in the Korean War in 1950 — communist China. The Navy's report on Operation Pocket Money indicated that Haiphong received about 400 ships annually. Some 4,000 tons of supplies went in and out of the port daily, far more than were brought into North Vietnam by land from China using two railroads and eight conventional roads. The policy of sparing the North's ports was not popular with some American strategists who argued that mining Haiphong was essential strategic leverage on communist leaders.



*President Richard Nixon and cabinet members Donald Rumsfeld, John A. Volpe, Peter Peterson, Melvin Laird, William Rogers, Rogers Morton, Elliott Richardson, Caspar Weinberger, Robert Finch, George Romney, Earl Butz, George Shultz, Spiro Agnew, Richard Kleindienst, James Hodgson, David Kennedy and George H. W. Bush, photographed on 16 June 1972. (National Archives)*

Adm. U.S. Grant Sharp Jr., commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Command 1964-68, addressed the issue in his 1986 book *Strategy for Defeat: "Haven in Haiphong. Of all the things we should have done but did not do, the most important thing was to neutralize the port of Haiphong."* In Nixon's mind, strong action against the North's ports was a matter of national honor. Even though Hanoi had been warned throughout the war of the consequences of crossing the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Vietnam, Northern forces deliberately made the crossing in March 1972. Not responding would, in Nixon's view, be an affront to American credibility. In a memorandum to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, the president wrote: **"I have determined that we should break it down. ... We must punish the enemy."** The harbor mining decision was made by Nixon during a meeting of the National Security Council on May 6, 1972, and the speech was set for three days later, giving U.S. naval strategists and Mine- man 2nd Class Gill's team on the Coral Sea very little time to refine the details and prepare the operation for execution. The mining mission, not by accident, fell in the lap of one of the most experienced aviators in the U.S. Navy: Cmdr. Roger "Blinky" Sheets, commander of Carrier Air Wing 15 and a veteran of nearly 300 combat missions. He had taken command shortly after the air wing's former leader, Cmdr. Thomas E. Dunlop, was shot down and killed by an anti-aircraft missile on April 6. Sheets and Cmdr. Leonard E. Giuliani, executive officer of the VA-22 Corsair squadron, selected the air crew for the Haiphong attack. When naval officer Sheets became wing commander, he chose Marine squadron VMA(AW)-224 as his "home" to elevate the morale of the Marine air crews. He picked a young Marine captain, William D. "Charlie" Carr, as his bombardier/navigator. Operation Pocket Money was not their first mission together, but it would certainly be the most memorable one as they participated in one of the landmark events of the air war over Southeast Asia. The Mk 52 magnetic mines were parachute-braked, purposely chosen because they would be more effective against large-hulled oceangoing merchant ships and had the most advanced delayed-activation system in the Navy inventory. The selection of the Mk 52, however, put the operation's planes at risk because it increased their vulnerability to North Vietnam's MiG fighters and ubiquitous anti-aircraft artillery defenses. The A-6 and A-7 aircraft would be forced to fly low and slow. They flew low, below 500 feet, to reduce the chances of contact with high-flying enemy MiG fighters and to stay below the tracking system of land-based radar. The slowness came from the large size and high-drag characteristics of the mines they were toting. But the Mk 52 mine did have a big benefit. Once the operation achieved its goal, that mine was the best option for future deactivation, so ships could again pass through the ports without fear. The order for the Coral Sea's circling aircraft to head to Haiphong was given at 8:40 a.m., with Sheets, as "Vulture 1 Alpha," leading the three Marine Intruders, and Giuliani leading the six Navy Corsairs. The EKA-3B Skywarrior, an electronic warfare plane, was launched from the carrier. At the same time, a four-engine EC-121 Warning Star, specializing in electronic surveillance, took off from Da Nang. While the aircraft bound for Haiphong were taking off from the Coral Sea, attack sorties of 17 Intruders were launched from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk, 20 miles to the southeast, to strike railway lines at Nam Dinh and distract attention from the harbor mining operation. Due to bad weather over Nam Dinh, the planes went after secondary ground targets at Thanh Hoa and Phu Qui. The land targets were hit at 8:45 a.m., moving the enemy's focus away from what would happen moments later on the North Vietnamese coast. The threats from the North Vietnamese MiG fighters and the dense air-defense network around Haiphong were the U.S. pilots' primary concern during the mining mission. To mitigate those threats,

## Inside America's daring plan to mine Haiphong Harbor

guided missile cruisers Chicago, Long Beach and Sterrett were positioned between Haiphong and the Coral Sea. Another naval group consisted of the destroyer /guided-missile destroyers Berkeley, Myles C. Fox, Richard S. Edwards and Buchanan, which attacked batteries of anti-aircraft missiles and artillery in the Do Son peninsula, about 6 miles west of Haiphong. They hit the enemy batteries with more than 900 5-inch projectiles between 8:25 and 8:55 a.m., shortly before the American attack planes arrived. At 8:49 a.m. the radar screen on the Chicago plotted three MiGs, which had taken off from the Phuc Yen air base near Hanoi and were flying toward Sheets' squadron. The ship promptly fired two RIM-8 Talos missiles. One hit a MiG at 8:52 a.m; it caught fire and fell. The other two fighters turned and withdrew. The Do Son air-defense site fired three surface-to-air missiles, but none hit U.S. aircraft. The Intruders of VMA(AW)-224 proceeded into the channel from the southeast, while the Corsair IIs from VA-22 and VA-94 headed for Haiphong's outer harbor, flying from the east. The first mines were dropped from Sheets' Intruder at 8:59 a.m., just as Nixon was starting his speech. One of the Corsair pilots missed the launching point for releasing his Mk 52 mines, but he turned and dropped the mines in a pass from the opposite direction. Exactly at 9:01 a.m., when the 36 mines were in Haiphong's waters, Sheets reported the completion of the mission to Adm. Howard E. Greer on the Coral Sea. Greer contacted the White House, which immediately signaled Nixon — who by then was speaking live — to inform him about the end of the Haiphong mining action and the aircrafts' turn back toward the carrier. The U.S. aircrews had placed 12 mines in the inner section of the port and 24 outside. After the Haiphong mining, the port was closed for 327 days. Haiphong was the only harbor mined on May 9, but beginning on May 11 mines were dropped and activated at 10 other ports: Thanh Hoa, Dong Hoi, Vinh, Hon Gai, Quang Khe, Cam Pha, Cua Sot, Cap Mui Ron, Cua Day and Cua Lac Giang. Nine ships took advantage of Nixon's three-day warning and left Haiphong, while 27 vessels remained in the harbor for nearly a year. On Aug. 4, 1972, an aircraft belonging to Task Force 77 sighted between 20 and 25 explosions in an area previously mined near Hon La, an island off the coast of North Vietnam. The explosions were sporadic and occurred within a period of about 30 seconds. An additional 25 or 30 "mud spots" were seen by other aircraft, indicating that more explosions had occurred. Also, several destroyers in the region reported that they detected shock waves. There was seemingly no reason for the multiple explosions since no sea traffic was in the area. Several possible reasons were considered but dismissed by the Navy, which decided at the time that the most plausible culprit — and the one now accepted after additional research— is a huge solar storm that struck in early August, causing variations in the Earth's magnetic fields and detonating the (DST) mines. Hanoi felt the immediate huge drop in supplies and armament, as its entry doors closed. The mining action, along with the bombing campaigns of Operations Linebacker I (May 10-Oct.23, 1972) and Linebacker II (Dec. 18-29, 1972), was a key reason that North Vietnam agreed to negotiate a peace deal in Paris. The mining continued until January 1973 as part of both the Pocket Money and Linebacker operations. About 5,200 Mk 52 and Mk 36 Destructor (DST) magnetic-seismic mines were seeded in Pocket Money. About 6,500 Destructor mines were dropped during Linebacker flights. The last of the approximately 11,711 mines were dumped near Vinh, about 150 miles south of Hanoi, by an Intruder of the VA-35 Black Panthers from the aircraft carrier America on Jan. 14, 1973. The peace treaty was signed Jan. 27. During all eight months of the mining campaigns, only one aircraft was lost. A Corsair of the VA-113

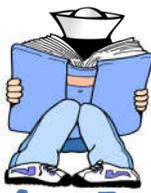
Stingers, based on the aircraft carrier Ranger and piloted by Navy Lt. Philip Spratt Clark Jr., was destroyed on Dec. 24, 1972, during a mining action. Clark was killed. From the outset, the U.S. government planned to deactivate the harbor mines after the desired strategic and diplomatic effects had been achieved. Between February and July 1973, U.S. ships and aircraft conducted Operation End Sweep, scouring the waters of Haiphong and the other ports to locate all the mines, which were deactivated or purposefully detonated. The deactivations ended one of the most daring, unexpected and successful actions of the American military involvement in Southeast Asia. **Operation Pocket Money proved to be a critical mission in the history of the war, one carried out with skill, precision and complete synchronization with a presidential speech being given half a world away.**



*During Operation End Sweep, a Sikorsky CH-53D Sea Stallion of HMM-463 with a magnetic orange pipe in tow, sweeps Hon Bay, North Vietnam, on 18 March 1973. (Photographer 1st Class George Norris, now in the collections of the National Archives)*

*Marcelo Ribeiro da Silva is a Brazilian journalist and military aviation history researcher with a special interest in the Vietnam War and Cold War. He writes for military aviation history magazines in Brazil and abroad. This article originally appeared in the December 2019 issue of Vietnam magazine, a sister publication of Navy Times.*





# Mine Warfare Book Review

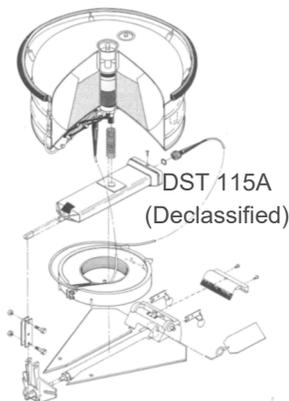
## Gators Offshore and Upriver

The U.S. Navy's Amphibious Ships and Underwater Demolition Teams and Royal Australian Navy Clearance Divers in Vietnam

Cdr. David D. Bruhn, USN (Retired)



This latest book from Cdr. Bruhn honors those who operated along the coast and up rivers during the Vietnam War, our most decorated Minemen among them. While this book isn't specifically about Mine Warfare, it thoroughly illustrates the complexities of getting the Navy/Marine Corps team to the fight while dealing with a determined enemy. We have AOM Members still with us that served valiantly in the Mobile Riverine Patrol Forces and, after reading this book, I now have a much greater appreciation for what they experienced and endured. This challenging operational environment, that must have been like a lethal game of 'whack-a-mole', led to the development of the once highly classified DST 115A (that some of you Minemen from this era might remember) among other highly innovative ways to fight in this hostile environment. Gators Offshore and Upriver is extensively detailed with hundreds of photos, illustrations, maps, charts and tables that support this historical narrative. Cdr. Bruhn has contributed greatly to the historical record by documenting this broader aspect of the Vietnam War and his book is definitely worth a read and is an excellent addition to your personal library.



We received some great photos from the Mine Shop at Navy Munitions Command (NMC), East Asia Division, Unit Misawa (the former MOMAU 12) as they prepare for their MRCI this Spring. We are grateful for the chance to highlight these excellent Sailors and encourage future input from NMC Unit Misawa. Good luck on your MRCI! Our thanks to Craig Rosenberg and his team!





# AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

**NMC COMOMAG** By MN1(SW) Joseph R. Fields , USN

Greetings from Commanding Officer, Mobile Mine Assembly Group (COMOMAG). We hope everyone was able to celebrate the holidays and enjoy some much-needed relaxation! We, at COMOMAG, are extremely fortunate to be able to spend the holidays with our families, so our hearts go out to the Sailors who were unable to do so. The holidays are always a busy time both operationally and recreationally. Here is a look at what we have been doing throughout the winter.

Our annual No-Shave November contest continues to be a growing success! No-Shave November may be a great time to witness caveman-like facial hair, but it is also for a fantastic cause. It is hard to pinpoint an exact beginning to No-Shave November, but every story revolves around one key aspect: raising cancer awareness. More recently, there has been a push to donate the money you would have spent on grooming throughout the month of November to one of the many cancer-fighting charities! Our little contest at COMOMAG came to a halt during our Thanksgiving Day potluck in which families voted on the "best" mustache. Some may say the decision was rigged but, nonetheless, MNCS(SW) Keith P. Roers came away with the win. Congratulations on having one hairy mustache!

This year's Holiday Party was another outstanding success! The party was filled with great food, a bouncy house, amazing door prizes, and even a surprise visit from Summer Santa! There was also a very exciting White Elephant Gift Exchange where things seemed to get a bit heated, but it was all in good fun. Also, here at COMOMAG, we had a close running for our annual Sailor of the Year (SOY). We would like to take a moment to congratulate MN1 (SW) Tyler G. Cowen for being our FY19 SOY. We would also like to congratulate all other nominees, as well.

**Operationally**, the N31 Service Mine Team consisting of CWO4 David L. Sledge, Mr. David M. Epton, MNCS(SW) Favian Garcia, MNC(SW) Duncan G. Ellson, and MN1(SW) Tyler G. Cowen, took a short trip up north to Seal Beach, California to perform a Mine Readiness Assist Visit. An important aspect of the certification process in support of Mine Readiness Certification Inspection. CWO4 Sledge also went to a planning conference for the upcoming FY20 Assessment of Taiwan Navy Mining capabilities.

The N32 Exercise Mines and Training Division headed to several different Mid-Planning Conferences (MPC) for major exercises in the coming year. The MPC is essential in ensuring exercises run smoothly and all goals are accomplished. Mr. Rodney A. Biggs traveled to Copenhagen Denmark for the 6<sup>th</sup> Fleet/NATO exercise BALTOPS IPC. MNC(SW) Patrick R. McReynolds went to Norfolk for the United States Fleet Forces Large Scale Exercise. MNC(SW) Jonathan D. Wampler flew to Hawaii for the 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet sponsored Rim of the Pacific Mid-Planning Conference.

The COMOMAG family would like to bid farewell to CWO3 Aquella O. Montero. She served at COMOMAG as the Admin Officer for 3 years and is now at Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 49 (HSM 49). Fair Winds and Following Seas! Additionally, we would like to welcome a few new faces. LTJG Kristine L. Gavino arrived from USS GERALD R. FORD (CVN 78) and has taken over as the Admin Officer. MN1(SW) Joseph R. Fields arrived from LCS Crew 217 onboard USS CHARLESTON (LCS 18) and is now working in Operations Department.

The new year is finally here and COMOMAG looks forward in hopes that everyone will have a successful year. As always, COMOMAG is steady on the helm at the forefront of Mine Warfare, making mining great again, one mine at a time! Let's have a fantastic year!



MN1 Cowen SOQ 4th QTR 2019



Christmas Party



No-Shave November



CWO3 Montero pinning and farewell ceremony



# NMC COMOMAG Change of Command



*“Mobile Mine Assembly Group’s storied history has been built by decades of dedicated Sailors and Civilians working together to deliver Mine Warfare excellence and lethality. Each generation builds on the proud legacy of Mine Warfare by embracing with tenacity the challenging task of reinventing and reimagining the humble but very capable mine, and the way we employ them to hold our adversaries at risk.*

*Each of you have contributed greatly to provide our Navy and our Nation with the tactical and strategic advantage needed to counter the enemy over the course of three decades with limited investment in new mine weapons technology. Your stewardship, innovation and constant support has helped to return mining to the forefront as an option for the warfighter and is ushering in a new era of mine weapons technology and employment options that will help our Navy retain supremacy at sea!*

*I want to personally thank you for all your tireless efforts, your unmitigated enthusiasm and grit. I am so proud of you, and tremendously proud to have served as your Commanding Officer and had the opportunity to be your spokesperson, cheerleader and advocate in Making Mining Great Again!”*

**CDR Schine is now headed to Commander, Naval Air Forces Pacific as the Force Combat Systems Officer.  
Fair winds and Following Seas!**

**Commander Eric C. Olsen, USN**  
is the new Commanding Officer of  
NMC Mobile Mine Assembly Group.

He enlisted at New Orleans in 1989. He advanced to Chief Electronics Technician in 1998, and was commissioned as a Surface Electronics Limited Duty Officer in 2001.

Commander Olsen’s sea tours include USS CHANDLER (DDG 996), USS FITZGERALD (DDG 62), USS PREBLE (DDG 88), USS DENVER (LPD 9), USS BUNKER HILL (CG 52), two tours onboard USS RONALD REAGAN (CVN 76), and USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 71).

Commander Olsen’s shore tours include instructor at Fleet Training Center San Diego, Assistant Program Manager at PEO Submarines PMS 485, and N6 at Littoral Combat Ship Squadron One, as well as augmentations to Third Fleet and US Central Command.

Commander Olsen’s qualifications include Master Training Specialist, DAWIA Program Manager Level Two, Force TAO, and Fleet Battle Watch.

As the newest member of the COMOMAG family we want to give a warm welcome to him and his family!

**Welcome aboard!**



**BRAVO**



**ZULU**

COMOMAG underwent their Change of Command on 30 January 2020 where CDR Eric C. Olsen relieved CDR Nichol M. Schine. The COMOMAG Staff thanks the Mine Warfare Training Center for allowing the use of Martin Hall, as it was the perfect place for this ceremony!

The ceremony honored CDR Schine and all that she has accomplished during her time at COMOMAG, “Making Mining Great Again!”, Now the torch has been passed and they are excited to welcome CDR Olsen and his family into ours!

Accordingly, we here with the Association of Minemen wish to thank CDR Schine for her excellent service as COMOMAG and wish her all the best in her new position on the COMNAVAIRPAC Staff.

The Association of Minemen welcomes CDR Olsen to the Mine Warfare Team as the incoming COMOMAG!

The AOM membership represents the history, experience and lessons learned in U.S. naval mining. We stand ready to be of service.



# AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

NMC CONUS West Unit Seal Beach

By MN3 (SW) Colton Cook

Greetings from the Navy Munitions Command Pacific CONUS West Division Unit Seal Beach, Underwater Weapons Department (UWD) in sunny California!

## ~MISSION UPDATES~

Moving into a new year NMCPAC CWD UWD picks up the pace with upcoming exercises! Our team is currently preparing over 350 exercise mine assets to be distributed throughout the fleet.



MN2 (SW) Mitchell, MN2 (SW) Fonseca, MN3 (SW) Murray build dunnage for MAU-91A/B fin assemblies.



Underwater Weapons Department Sailors conduct mine assembly training.

After completing the Mine Readiness Assist visit training in September, the crew is training new sailors to make them proficient before the actual Mine Readiness Assist Visit (MRAV) in March.



In addition to the training underway, our Sailors are deployed to San Diego to retrieve training mines from Exercise Global Storm and Shore-to-Shore Bombardment (SHOBA) exercises.

Unit Seal Beach would like to welcome aboard **MNCS (SW) Just, MN2 (SW) Topp, MN3 (SW) Johnson, MN3 (SW) Murray.**

The Command is also pleased to Re-enlist **MN2 (SW) Cruz, MN2 (SW) Bati, MN2 (SW) Fernandez.** Congratulations on moving forward with your careers!



# AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

Happy New Year from **Mine Warfare Training Center**, Point Loma, California, where we are busy training the next generation of Mine Warriors! During the last quarter, we welcomed 41 new Mine-men to our ranks across eight "A" School graduating classes. Additionally, we taught 12 "C" School classes covering a wide range of topics, to include Minesweeping Boatswain Mate, Littoral Combat Ship Mine Warfare Evaluator and Precision Integrated Navigation Systems. We rolled out two new courses, Coastal Battlefield Reconnaissance and Analysis (**COBRA**), and the Staff Officer Course collaborated with Surface and Mine Warfighting Development Center, MIW Division.

Not content simply covering the material in the classroom, whenever possible our dedicated "A" School instructors seize the opportunity to take new accession students to the waterfront to tour active Minesweepers so they can see for themselves first hand. Our most recent Test Set Maintenance (TSM) course also got a field trip, when ET1(SW) Wilson took them to Seal Beach to see an operational TSM lab.

Mine Warfare Training Center would like to recognize **MNCS(SW) Adolphi** on his six-year reenlistment, as well as our Junior Sailor of the Year, **MN1(SW) Meier**, and Sailor of the Year, **ET1(SW/AW/EXW) Almanza**. Petty Officer Meier had an exceptionally great year, not only was he selected as Junior Sailor of the Year, in December he advanced to First Class Petty Officer. In addition, we would be remiss to not give a huge shout out to **MN1(SW) Weatherford**, who was selected as MWTC's Mid-Grade Instructor of the Year, and went on to beat out thirteen other learning sites to be selected as Center for Surface Combat Systems (CSCS) Mid-Grade Instructor of the Year!

Our MWR team worked tirelessly during the holiday season to pull off a memorable trunk or treat, haunted house, and children's Holiday party in Martin Hall's Mines Bay. We wrapped up the year with a staff party hosted at the Tavern and Bowl in beautiful downtown San Diego. The venue was a perfect mix of relaxation, comradery, with a little friendly competition mixed in. Most will agree that "A" school took home the trophy at the end of the night, despites Tactics Department's best efforts to rig the competition.

Finally, MWTC received a wonderful early Christmas present. Special thanks to **ETN3 Bradshaw** and **CWO3 (retired) Wahl** for rescuing a large number of Mine Warfare Training photos and slides taken between 1940-1970 and ensuring they found a new home at MWTC. Bridging the past and future, proof that all roads lead back to Mine Warfare!!



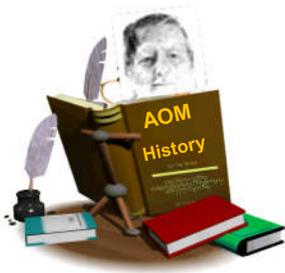
MNCS Adolphi Reenlistment - MNCS(SW) Adolphi with MWTC XO LCDR Munoz conducting his reenlistment.



Ship Visit - Mineman "A" school classes conducting a ship tour aboard the USS Champion.



Students Marching - "A" School Students marching to the graduation ceremony for the Fleet's newest Minemen.



## AOM Historian Don Moody



ROK YMS 516 STRIKES MINE

### Four Mining Campaigns (#4)

## AN HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DECISIONS OF THE COMMANDERS

### The Frustration of an Assault



*A research paper prepared by  
Commander James A. Meacham,  
U.S. Navy, (Ret.) Circa 1968-1970*

*This is the last Mining Campaign  
analyzed by Commander Meacham.  
In this case the minefields were  
placed by the North Koreans. It  
isn't too far fetched to consider*

*that this challenge may well become a threat the U.S. will  
be facing again. We, as a nation, have a remarkably  
short memory when it comes to mine warfare, with its  
often devastating military, commercial and political  
impact and outsized challenges, particularly for those  
who are not prepared. Ron Swart, Editor*

**Operations.** The idea of an amphibious landing at Wonsan on the Eastern coast of Korea, had its origins in the results of an earlier landing at Inchon. The Inchon operation was the key element in the plan of the U.N. commander, General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, to break out of the infamous Pusan perimeter. In the Summer of 1950, the impetus of the North Korean Army's rapid advance down the peninsula had carried it to within a few miles of Pusan on the Southeast corner of the Korean Peninsula. There, from a tiny enclave, the remnant's of the South Korean Army, supplemented by what fee U.S. units could be scraped together in the far East, had fought gallantly and desperately to keep from being driven into the sea. Gradually, the defenses hardened and the forces in the perimeter were built up. Power poured in from several directions, but only so much could be projected from the tiny area with remained to the South Korean and the American Forces (and by this time, elements from the United Nations).

In a brilliant and decisive stroke, MacArthur assaulted Inchon, the seaport on the western coast for the South Korean capitol of Seoul, from the sea on 15 September. The attack was superbly successful. The North Korean supply lines were placed in mortal danger and the bulk of their army was threatened with encirclement. This attack, together with a powerful push from the perimeter itself, lifted the siege. A war of movement began with the North Korean Army in headlong retreat. MacArthur was given permission to push on into North Korea. More troops poured in and another port was necessary...one on the East coast, to shorten the supply lines. Wonsan was selected.

Plans went forward, and a debate developed as to how to

take it. Generally, the Navy favoured the idea of having X Corps march across the peninsula to do the job, while Army planners wanted to go by sea. Many factors had to be considered: the difficulties of outloading through Inchon while simultaneously with incoming supplies, the difficult terrain between Inchon and Wonsan, and the undesirability of removing the X Corps from action, even temporarily, among others. MacArthur made the decision...the X Corps would go to Wonsan by sea.

D-Day was 20 October. In view of the mines that had been encountered at Inchon and elsewhere, and the historic Russian predilection for them, it was anticipated that mines would be encountered at Wonsan. Vice Admiral Arthur D. Struble, Commander Joint Task Force Seven mustered all the mine sweeping material and talent he could find and ordered it to Wonsan. Sweeping operations began on 10 October. In command of this operation was Captain Richard T. Spofford, whose credentials for such an assignment were impeccable. He had previously served on staffs concerned with mining operations. After World War II he had commanded a mine sweeping group in Japan which operated against the mines laid during Operation Starvation. There were two ways to get into Wonsan, a channel to the North which the Russians normally used and a more direct route to the landing ground that lay to the South. Between the two, almost in the center of the harbour mouth, was Yodo Island. Spofford thought that the Russians channel would likely be less heavily mined because of its more recent use, but decided to try the southern route. This route was considerably shorter to the objective area, and he believed that the only chance to make the D-Day deadline was by sweeping the shorter channel. The forces available to Spofford were meager indeed, for the job at hand. These were three MSF, 220 ft steel-hulled sweepers of excellent effectiveness against moored-contact mines, but quite vulnerable to magnetics; and six MSC, 136 ft wooden sweeps of good overall capability, but old and tired. These were later supplemented by a few ROK Navy sweepers and some Japanese civilian sweepers under contract. The area to be swept comprised of about 50 square miles. The first day of operations went well up until the end: roughly 10 miles of the South channel were covered and 18 moored mines swept and destroyed. However, just before dusk, a helicopter from USS Worcester spotted a dense minefield just ahead in the channel. Thus, at first light on 11 October, the sweepers

started over again, this time in the northern channel. Again, they made good progress, sweeping 16 moored mines and clearing the channel to within about four miles of the outer chain of islands. However, on 12 October, USS Pirate and USS Pledge, two of the steel hulled sweepers hit mines a few miles further on and sank within three hours of the commencement of the sweep. Spofford forged on with the remainder of his force and by 18 October had reached the designated landing beaches on the peninsula of Kalma Pando. No further casualties were sustained by the U. S. forces, however a Japanese contract sweeper was lost to a contact mine and a small ROK merchant freighter was damaged by an explosion well astern. Previously on 10 October, ROK troops attacking overland had captured Wonsan. This took some of the pressure off, but there was still the urgency to get the X Corps back into action. Also, the requirement for an East coast port remained, perhaps more important than before, now that the battle line was moving North. In the late afternoon of 18 October, close to the landing beach area, three exceptionally heavy explosions occurred. Two of these were near the moored sweep gear of a U.S. sweeper. The third demolished the ROK YMS-516, a recent addition to Spofford's force, which was working about 2500 yards East of Kalma Gak Light. Although four days of magnetic sweeping had been done prior to this time, with negative results, the presence of magnetic mines was clearly indicated by these explosions. The next day, investigations ashore turned up some North Koreans who said they had observed the assembly and planting of magnetic mines and magnetic mine components were found by a U. S. Navy Officer. Admiral Struble recommended postponement of the landing. Spofford pressed on with the sweeping and on 25 October it was finally considered safe to land the landing force. From 19 to 25 October, three magnetic and six moored mines were swept. None of the moored mines were in the areas which were to be used in the landing. But, the magnetic mines were all on the edge of the transport area. After the landing, check-sweeping and enlargement of the safe areas continued until 4 November. Seven additional moored mines were swept, six of these from the line which had been the undoing of Pirate and Pledge. All in all, 91 moored contact and 6 magnetic mines were accounted for (3 swept and 3 exploded by ROK YMS and USS Redhead sweep gear on 18 October).

**Generalizations from the Operations.** The decision to delay the landing at Wonsan is an exceptionally clear-cut case for the study of decisions taken in the face of mines. There are no complicating factors. It was the mine sweepers against the mines while facing some degree of urgency to get ashore. A good many mines had been swept by the evening of the 18th, and the northern channel was considered clear of the moored type. The decision to delay was clearly the product of the sinking of the ROK sweeper and the discovery of the magnetic mines ashore. This is confirmed by Vice Admiral Smith, Commander of the Advance Force, and Spofford's immediate superior in this operation. In answer to a direct question from the author as to what was the decisive factor in his decision to delay, he said: ***"The information that we had magnetic mines ahead of us when the ROK YMS blew up. I***

***happened to be looking at her at the time...The ROK Army was in Wonsan, so why risk the transports and the men?"*** Captain Spofford however, believed all along that there were magnetic mines present. He says, ***"As we arrived off Wonsan, we received one message which gave prisoner testimony of cigar-shaped mines that it took seven men to carry. We had recovered influence magnetics at Inchon, so the possibility that influence mines would be encountered at Wonsan made the task uncertain of duration. Our suspicions were confirmed when a ROK merchant ship coasting to Wonsan blew a mine in her wake."*** Thus, Spofford knew, or at least strongly suspected that there were magnet influence mines in the northern channel. At that point, he believed that the channel to the South was the ***"only chance"***. Clearly his estimate of the time required for clearance was colored by the idea that magnetic mines were present, as there was abundant time to complete a simple moored contact mine sweep prior to 20 October. In fact, this was done in spite of the loss of two of the most effective moored mine sweeps in the force and three days lost due to logistic problems and high seas. The mine explosion in the wake of the merchant ship was confirmation of Spofford's expectation that he would encounter magnet influence mines. Struble and Smith were both aware of Spofford's belief. They held daily conferences and Spofford had appraised them of the situation as he saw it.

The central feature which emerges from this examination of the events leading to the decision to delay, is the role played by the destruction of the ROK YMS. Previous intelligence had indicated with near certainty, that magnet mines would be encountered. Spofford, the mine countermeasures commander, was confirmed in his view when the ROK freighter fired a mine in her wake prior to 18 October. Yet it was not until the ROK YMS was blasted into matchsticks that the decision was finally made to delay the landing. Had this not happened, the landing would have gone ahead on schedule. How much of the decision to delay the landing was due to this providing confirmation of magnetic mines presence or was it due to the emotional impact of the loss itself? Why was 'confirmation' due to loss (YMS) more valid than confirmation due to damage (freighter)? Did the personal shock that Smith certainly felt when he saw the YMS blown to bits play a major part in shaping his conclusion that that no landing was possible on the 20th, regardless of urgency? It is impossible to know for sure, but the impact of the loss of the ROK YMS was obviously an important factor in the decision to delay. However, nothing had changed. There were no more mines in the channel than there had been before. Spofford had swept the channel magnetically on each of the four preceding days with negative results. There existed the possibility of facing mines with high ship counts but was judged to be a low probability...until the loss occurred. It was clear that the loss of the ROK YMS brought home the danger of magnet mines in a way that no other form of intelligence did. Struble, Smith and Spofford agreed to the postponement of the landing, in view of the fact that remaining mine presented a significant danger and the ROK Army was already in Wonsan. There was no general agreement on the amount of remaining risk to

## FRUSTRATION OF AN ASSAULT

mines and the degree of urgency for the landing. Spofford, who was least aware of the overall strategic situation (having been focused totally with minesweeping tactics) said: **“If the landing had been critical, I would have recommended a direct assault of the beaches on schedule after completion of the moored mine clearance... There is no question in my mind that the landing could have been made on time with light losses if the need had existed.”** Perhaps this was hindsight, however it is unquestionably correct. If the transports had exercised reasonable caution, the troops could have been landed on the 20th with no casualties at all. (Ed. note- *The minefields caused a 250-ship amphibious task force with 50,000 Marines and soldiers aboard to travel up and down Korea’s East coast for two weeks as NAVFE waited for Wonsan harbor to be cleared.*) It is now known that only the three magnetic mines swept on 24 October were close to any planned transit lane or anchorage, and were in such a position that transports in their assigned positions would not have actuated them. That said, hindsight does not alter the validity of the decisions made with less substantive information. Smith clearly believed that there was no real choice to be made. More sweeping had to be done. In a letter shortly after the Wonsan episode he makes this plain: **“At Wonsan with 10 days allowed for minesweeping, it required 16 days to get...into the beaches. Probably more risk could have been accepted if necessary and one or two days cut off of the extra six...if the Campaign had depended on the time factor in landing at Wonsan, a failure might have resulted.”** Spofford saw the landing in terms of black and white. He believed the risk was negligible, but not worth taking in view of the objective was in friendly hands. Smith was better appraised of the strategic situation and the urgency to get X Corps ashore regardless of the ROK presence at Wonsan. He assessed the risk to be higher than did Spofford. Of course no one knew the actual risk and any assessments were subjective. According to Smith: “We did not think in percentages of losses.” They thought in terms of ships and bodies of men and above all, of that ROK sweeper blown to pieces by a magnet mine, right before their very eyes.

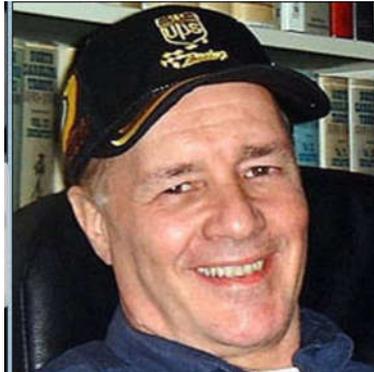
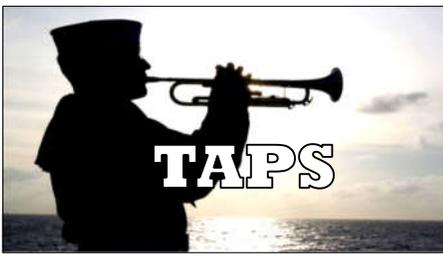
**“We have lost control of the seas to a nation without a Navy, using pre-World War I weapons, laid by vessels that were utilized at the time of the birth of Christ.”**



USS *Pirate* (AM-275) sinking at Wonsan just before the USS *Pledge* (AM-277) in background hits a mine after being bracketed by North Korean shore batteries.

**IN CONCLUSION:** Surveying the four mining campaigns, certain facts stand out regarding men and mines...Although the four campaigns were diverse in nature and their surrounding circumstances, common factors appear that influenced commanders in similar ways.

First, **simple initial threat**, the numerical probability that a single transiting ship will be mined in a single passage. While useful for the minefield planner when comparing one minefield design with another, there is no indication that a risk value was ever considered by the decision makers faced with mines. There is sufficient evidence that they did not and saw the risk as an *entity* and not a specific percentage of risk. While commanders naturally do consider degrees of risk, they most often have no way of determining the percentage of risk presented by a minefield. For the minefield planner (and those who approve of these plans), there is some danger of becoming enamored with figures for their own sake, forgetting that it is *the manifestation of which the opposing commander is aware* that influences his decisions and not what is actually there. The North Sea, the Dardanelles and Korea all illustrate how potent appearances can be when influencing decisions. In all three cases, ship loss under dramatic circumstances caused major revisions to plans and tactics. In the North Sea it was the loss of four U-Boats over a short period in January 2018 that caused rerouting the Flanders boats out of the North Sea. In the Dardanelles, the great disaster of 18 March caused the abandonment of the effort an entirely *different* minefield (and one that had lost most or all of its effectiveness). In Korea, the mining of the ROK YMS delayed the landing by confirming what the most knowledgeable mine warfare officer already knew at the outset. These reactions were not isolated nor were they unreasonable. Hindsight is irrelevant and the responsible commanders made decisions that appeared to be best when considering all things. Thus, a “Demonstration Effect” may be of use in future minefield planning. Campaign analysis shows that commanders tend to be extremely wary when operating warships in the presence of a mine threat and much less so in the case of merchant vessels (as was the case in *Operation Starvation*). Warships cost more, contain more people and cannot be replaced quickly. A minefield planner can expect two different responses to a minefield, one for merchant traffic and another for warships (*mine countermeasure ships perhaps the notable exception...ed.*). **Successful mining or mine countermeasures require officers with experience and expertise in the field.** At Dover, Keyes produced the only effective mine barrier in the entire campaign based on his experience in the Dardanelles. At Wonsan, Spofford appears to have grasped the situation completely. Mines themselves, as developed to this point, had no inherent stand-alone intelligence or decision making ability and respond according to human direction, settings and placement. They cannot stop an enemy who will not be stopped. For example, Air Force planners realized that the Japanese could not be totally blockaded during Operation Starvation, so they set the mines with decreased firing widths to increase sinkings. Mines are a weapon of attrition. Technical features of mines count for much less than what the enemy thinks, who will assess options in light of the risk from mines, even not knowing specifically what the numerical risk is. **Those who understand this will receive good service from this weapon...those who don’t risk grave peril at sea.**



**Derick S. Hartshorn**, born 10-12-1938 and died 11-03-2019. The AOM's intrepid Membership and Communications Chairman, Derick brought his own special energy to our association with his warm personality and willingness to pitch in support wherever needed. It is often a sad reality that when one spouse passes, the remaining partner isn't far behind. Derick lost his wife Lana on 21 July 2018. We then learned of his cancer, untreatable *lymphoplasmacytic lymphoma*, that finally took his life. Derick was hoping to attend the 2020 Reunion to celebrate the closing of the Mine Shop in Yokosuka, Japan 50 years ago. As a young Mineman, he had been stationed on Azuma "Baka-Shima" Island in the 1950's. His funeral is planned for the first week of March 2020 - details to follow. Fair Winds and Following Seas Derick and thank you for your service to our Nation and the AOM!



Bootcamp- Bainbridge MD 1955



**Jasper J Kennedy**, DOB: 11 Oct 1933 - DOD: 31 Jan 2020, Summerville, SC

### The Binnacle List



#### Minemen posted on the Binnacle List...

- ◆ **Roger Kropf** recovering from prostate cancer having undergone "Brachytherapy". Doing fine and back at work
- ◆ **Tim Paton** undergoing physical therapy while recovering from hip replacement surgery. He's doing well and on his way to a full recovery.
- ◆ **Mark Scott** having undergone a triple bypass in 2017 is feeling much better.
- ◆ **Rick Roderick** reports he is now cancer free after 3 surgeries, but has remaining issues as a result of chemotherapy and radiation.



# Health & Wellness

**2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV)** is a virus (more specifically, a coronavirus) identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China. Early on, many of the patients in the outbreak in Wuhan, China reportedly had some link to a large seafood and animal market, suggesting animal-to-person spread. However, a growing number of patients reportedly have not had exposure to animal markets, indicating person-to-person spread is occurring. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably this virus is spreading between people. The latest situation summary updates are available on CDC's web page.

For confirmed 2019-nCoV infections, reported illnesses have ranged from people with little to no symptoms to people being severely ill and dying. **Symptoms can include:**

- **Fever**
- **Cough**
- **Shortness of breath**

Your healthcare provider may order laboratory tests on respiratory specimens and serum (part of your blood) to detect human coronaviruses. Laboratory testing is more likely to be used if you have severe disease.

**Novel Coronavirus Outbreak**  
(2019-nCoV)

**Symptoms\* of Novel Coronavirus**

Patients with 2019-nCoV have reportedly had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

\* Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure. If you have been in China within the past 2 weeks and develop symptoms, call your doctor.

[www.cdc.gov/nCoV](http://www.cdc.gov/nCoV)

CS 314705-9



On July 21, 2018 **Malcolm Edward Strandberg** passed away peacefully after many health consequences related to cigarette smoking. Malcolm was born August 1, 1940 to Carl and Valla Strandberg in Evanston, Illinois. An only child, Malcolm cherished the time he spent with grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. He spoke fondly of his memories with these family members and was proud of his Scandinavian heritage. Upon graduating from high school, Malcolm joined the U.S. Navy and served his country honorably and proudly for 21 years. Once retired, Malcolm entered the automotive service industry and enjoyed the many friends he made in the 15 years he worked at Airport Exxon. Malcolm was a spiritual, loving, humble, and sentimental man. He was not afraid to cry when moved by stories of love, beauty, or tragedy and was known to tearfully share heartfelt stories of his experiences and family. He adored his family, friends, and faith community. He loved the military, history, motorcycles, hunting, and most of all fresh water fishing. Malcolm leaves his legacy in the love he had for his wife of 48 years, Janet, his children Shannon Leary and her husband Ken, son Jimmy, and grandchildren Evan, Kenny, Lauren, Madisyn, and Trevor. He left an indelible mark in each of their hearts and he will be dearly missed forever. The family wishes to thank the many skilled and compassionate healthcare providers that treated Malcolm during his health journey including a very special thanks to Dr. Kannarket and the loving staff at Riverside Oncology and the staff and nurses of Heartland Hospice. The family hosted a celebration of Malcolm's life July 28th at the Student Center of Northside Christian Church (1300 George Washington Memorial Highway, Yorktown, VA.



**Rosemary Hodgins Bostick, 64**, passed away on November 26, 2019. A memorial service and a celebration of her life was held on Saturday, December 7, 2019 in the chapel of Heritage Memorial Funeral Home. Mrs. Bostick was born on October 12, 1955 in Glasgow, Scotland to the late James Hodgins and the late Margaret Brown Hodgins. She was an easy going and loving person who had a heart of gold. Mrs. Bostick was a door greeter at Wal-Mart, homemaker, tailor, and enjoyed spending time with her family. She was a loving wife, mother, sister, aunt and friend. Survivors include her loving husband of 30 years, Warren Bostick; son, Sean Bostick; brothers, John Hodgins and Terry Hodgins; sister, Doreen Hodgins Worm; niece, Carina Worm; father-in-law, Melvin Warren Bostick, Sr; brother-in-law, Chris Bostick; sisters-in-law, Debbie Bostick and Trisha Swain; and extended family and friends.



**Rodney Lloyd Barker, USN (ret)** was born on September 1, 1945 in Sunny-side, Washington and passed away on November 3, 2019 in Las Vegas, NV.

Rodney Lloyd Barker was a man for whom actions would speak louder than words. His life motto might well have been "if it isn't logical, it's not important." He was analytical and observant. Rodney was modest in his actions and extremely literal in his

thoughts and in the manner in which he communicated with others. When Rodney said something, he meant it.

Rodney realized the importance of being treated fairly, and in return, he treated everyone around him the same way. This belief in fair play served Rodney well throughout his life and despite his natural shyness; he enjoyed a solid group of friends. Rodney was raised with two siblings, a brother John and a sister Bonnie. Rodney was constantly involved in activities with his siblings. On May 7, 1967, Rodney exchanged wedding vows with Gloria Autencio at the St. Joseph Catholic Church of Zambales, Philippines. Rodney and Gloria were blessed with one son John and one daughter Bonnie. They were also blessed with six grandchildren, Brandy, Bryan, Brayden, Bomani, Nathan and Andrew as well as two great grandchildren, Jayden and Brianni. His primary occupation was a Mineman in the US Navy and an alcohol and substance abuse counselor. He was employed for twenty four years with the Navy and six years in the reserves. Rodney always made the effort to be a team player, doing what was necessary in order to get the job done. As a Navy Retiree. He understood his duty to serve his country and the importance of getting a job done. He was comfortable with the routines of the military, especially when it came to grasping the clear instructions and guidelines. He served in Long Beach, Charleston, The Philippines and Guam. Through his hard work and dedication, he achieved the rank of Senior Chief.

He was a member of St. Sharbel Catholic Church in Las Vegas and Yigo Church in Guam.

Rodney passed away on November 3, 2019 at his home in Las Vegas, NV after fighting a long battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Gloria and children Bonnie and John. Services were held at Palm Southwest Mortuary in Las Vegas, Nevada. Rodney Lloyd Barker will be greatly missed.





# Mineman Miscellany

*On October 12, 1943, The Navy Bureau of Ordnance (BuOrd) established the Mineman rate and re-designated those Gunner's Mates (Mines) and Ordnance Technicians, whose primary duty was the maintenance, assembly and planting Navy Underwater Mines, as Minemen.*



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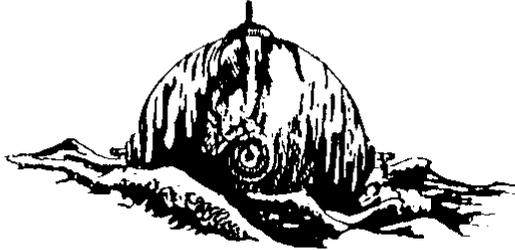
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1974 - 2020

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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