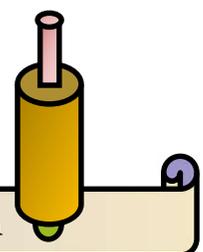




The DASHPOT



The Official Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

In This Issue:

- Mine Warfare in the News
- Underwater Mine History: Nicaragua, Iran
- COMOMAG Update
- AOM Reunion 2020
- TAPS and Binnacle List
- Miscellaneous Mineman Flotsam and Jetsam



Memorial Day
Never Forget Ever Honor

From The President

M.N.C.M. John Epps, USN (Ret.)



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.

I hope that everyone is staying safe during this Corona-virus event. It can be a scary time for us older shipmates, especially those with underlying health conditions. There have been many mandated, as well as suggested procedures that we have been asked to adhere to. We must all do our best to stay healthy for ourselves and loved ones. Carolyn and I are following the necessary steps so we can attend many future Reunions and hope to see you all at them as well. Unless things take a turn for the worse, the upcoming 46th Annual Mineman Reunion will proceed as planned in Charleston, SC. Charles Humbarnd is keeping a close watch on conditions there and will let us know as early as possible if we must cancel the event. Volunteers are still needed to assist so please lend your shipmate a hand.

My term as President is ending and it is time for me to move on and let someone else assume that role. Normally, the Vice President would move up and take command but Eddie Atkins has also opted to move aside, hoping that a younger, more vibrant team will step up and man the helm. Danny Epperly and Gary Cleland's term on the Board of Directors will end this year as well. Since we have four vacancies to fill, please consider volunteering your expertise. Charles Humbarnd and Warren Savage are heading up the Nominating Committee this year. If you are interested in taking on any of the positions, please give either of them a call, text or email and throw your hat in the ring. We need a full staff to maintain the integrity of **your** Association of Minemen.

Our Facebook page continues to boom. There are currently 775 members. Welcome aboard Shipmates. Your input and participation is making the page a success. Thanks again Don for your management of the AOM Facebook page and Website. Please, do whatever it takes for you to stay safe and I hope to see you at the upcoming reunion. God bless our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and God bless the USA!

John

NOTABLE QUOTABLE

"You may not control all the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them." —Maya Angelou

"History doesn't repeat, but it often rhymes..."

often credited to Mark Twain



"Only our individual faith in freedom can keep us free."

Dwight D. Eisenhower



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

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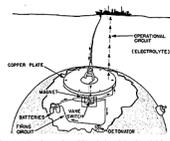


Figure 17 - Shows the assembly and firing circuit and the other switch function.

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Input for Summer 2020
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10 July 2020

From the Editor...



Welcome to a most unique issue of The Dashpot for Spring 2020!

I imagine most of us are sequestered, hunkered down, quarantined, isolated, properly distanced and most likely bored out of our socks (which in Bill Robert's case... I understand his socks are very well organized!)

This Spring issue features some updates on the USN Mine Program, some interesting and mysterious mine warfare history from the not-too-distant past, and the latest on our 2020 Reunion. I'll give a shout out to the Mine Warfare Training Center for the historical photos!

(not the one above, though it was taken 65 years ago...). We were contacted by Lt. Col. David Mackay, British Army (Retired), who is writing his Masters Thesis on the USN presence at Glen Douglas and Machrihanish Scotland. Historical information from our AOM History Book proved to be an excellent resource as well as contributions from Ken Waringa (Thanks Ken!).

Although member and fleet input was a bit sparse (for good reason) our cupboard was not bare and there was plenty of filler, flotsam and jetsam to share. Thanks for your input! Stay safe out there and may the Good Lord watch over us all.



All the best! RON



Secretary Treasurer Report April 2020

Please note that the Post Office will not forward the Dashpot to your new address. Instead, they charge us \$.55 for returned mail and additional \$1.40 to resend the Dashpot to you!

If you did not receive the latest Dashpot, it could be that the address on file is no longer a valid one. Your attention to this matter will ensure that you receive the Dashpot and it will save us money! Thank you!

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. A sincere thank you for your support!

Nate Miranda

Nate



Membership Committee Report April 2020

I'd like to welcome 4 new members and thank the 9 members that have caught up with their past dues since my last report. On another note, we dropped 7 members as a result of 1 who passed away, 2- no forwarding address and 4 because dues were not paid for 3 years. The current numbers for past dues are now 3 from 2017, 8 from 2018 and 25 from 2019. Please note that we print the due dates on the Dashpot mailing label above the names.

Thank you!

Membership Chairman,
Nate Miranda

Nate



AOM Scholarship Report

After a long winter, it's that time of year again. The school year is coming to a close, and the trees and flowers are starting to come to life and turning green. This means students are also thinking of green. Where can they find some green for next years? College tuition.

It must be AOM Scholarship Time. Your scholarship committee is coming out of hibernation, we are sharpening our pencils, cleaning our bifocals and getting ready for the new applications to start coming in. If you know of any applicants let them know of our scholarship program. Let them know that the rules must be strictly adhered to. If anything is left off the application, it will be considered incomplete and will not be considered for a scholarship award. The rules can be found on the AOM web page. All candidates must: (1) complete the application Forms S-1 and S-2, (2) provide a transcript of earned credits from their applicable schools, (3) provide two letters of recommendation, provide a synopsis of their field of interest / study, and (4) include any other pertinent information the candidate feels might enhance their chances of receiving the award.

All applications are to be received by the AOM Secretary by June 1st. Good luck to all the applicants. Your scholarship committee is waiting to start working on all the new applications that will be coming in.

Howard Glasser

searchcoil@hotmail.com





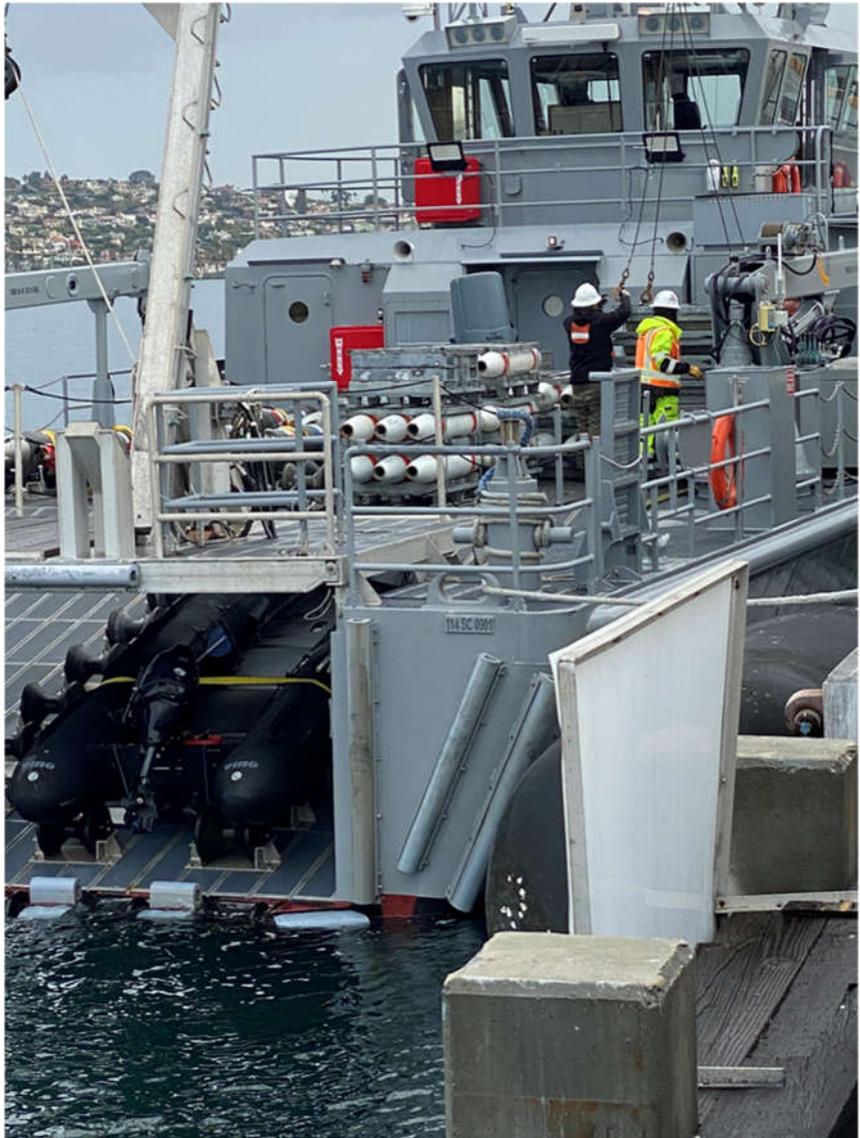
AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

NMC COMOMAG

By MN1(SW) Joseph R. Fields , USN

Greetings from Commanding Officer, Mobile Mine Assembly Group (COMOMAG). We hope everyone is springing into a good year. Here at COMOMAG we have kept pretty busy with inspections, exercises, international events and many other activities. Despite all of the travelling and our day-to-day work we have all been able to steer clear of Coronavirus Disease-19. Here is a brief snapshot of what we have been up to during the past few months...

- For operations, N31 Service Mine Team, Mr. David M. Epton, was sent to Taiwan to support Surface Mine Warfare Development Center's (SMWDC) Taiwan Navy Mine assessment. Our Taiwan partners are very professional Mine Warfare allies.
- On the N32 side of the house, Exercise Mines and Training Division, Mr. Rodney A. Biggs and MNC (SW) Patrick R. McReynolds participated in ARCTIC EDGE-20 Exercise in Juneau, Alaska. The main mission was to train divers of the Expeditionary Mine Counter Measure Company, MK18 Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUV) and experimental UUV's on mine hunting in cold weather conditions. COMOMAG's mission was logistics and to train in laying and retrieving mines in arctic conditions. It was a combined effort between the U.S. Navy, U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Coast Guard. We would like to thank all that participated and we look forward to working with everyone again.
- MNCM (SW) Favian Garcia, Jr. and MNC (SW) Duncan G. Ellson, traveled to NMC-Charleston, South Carolina to take part in the MK 650 Test Set Fleet Introduction and Acceptance Training. The Mk 650 is the Class 'B' Test set for the Quickstrike MK 71 (magnetic, seismic, pressure) Targeting and Detection Device. Naval Munitions Command, Unit Charleston is now certified to do I-level maintenance for this TDD.



Range Support Craft, RSC-1, offloading exercise mines at the Bravo pier

The COMOMAG family would like to bid a farewell to MNC (SW) Jonathan D. Wampler. He served at COMOMAG as a vital member to the N32 team for three years and is now on his way to Littoral Combat Ship Crew 119, homeported in Mayport, Florida. We would like to wish him, "Fair Winds and Following Seas! You will be missed, Shipmate."

In April, we observed Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM). The Navy is hard at work promulgating valuable information in regard to Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention. Sexual assault is an egregious act that has no place in the world. It is the Navy's goal to eliminate sexual assault throughout the fleet and it is every Sailor, civilian, and family member's responsibility.



Mine Hunting UUV - Exercise Arctic Edge 20





AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

Navy Hosts Virtual Industry Day to Keep Hammerhead Mine on Accelerated Acquisition Path

By: [Megan Eckstein](#) April 13, 2020 3:45 PM

The Navy is continuing its push to develop the Hammerhead maritime mine deployment system, with 16 companies attending a recent virtual industry day that allowed the rapid-acquisition program to keep progressing despite coronavirus-related restrictions in place. The service is pursuing an offensive mining system that would be laid by an unmanned vehicle and then lie in wait for an enemy submarine. The heart of the Hammerhead is the MK 54 lightweight torpedo as its effector, and an entire system would be built around that torpedo: a mooring module; an energy module; a sensor module; a command, control, signal processing and decision module; and a communications module; as well as associated support facilities and equipment and shipping containers, according to a solicitation on SAM.gov. "The Hammerhead is designed to deploy from an unmanned underwater vehicle and detect, classify and destroy anti-submarine warfare assets. The day's objective was to improve industry's understanding of the Hammerhead program and accelerate the design, development, and production of the system," reads a Naval Sea Systems Command news release about the industry day.

Last year, USNI News reported the Navy had selected Hammerhead as a Navy Maritime Accelerated Acquisition (MAA) program and was using other acquisition authorities to keep the program moving forward quickly, due to the importance of offensive mining under the National Defense Strategy and other Navy and maritime strategies for peer naval competition.

"A resurgence in mining has taken place for the past few years as the Navy goes to the [National Defense Strategy]. However, we're trying to pivot smartly, deliver the capability the warfighter needs as quickly as we can, so we're trying to use whatever authorities are there, whatever things we can," Sam Taylor, the senior leader for mine warfare within the Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants, said at a conference last year. "As I said, Hammerhead is an MAA, and we're looking at other tools in the toolbox to accelerate that delivery even more." Since that time, a request for information was released in December, a solicitation for the program was posted last month, and an industry day was scheduled for March 23 – though it was held virtually this month instead. A final request for proposals should be released by the fall, with the award of a design and test contract for up to 30 prototypes anticipated in Fiscal Year 2021 and delivery of operationally relevant prototypes by the end of FY 2023, according to the solicitation and news release.

Despite the Navy and industry not being able to gather in person, the virtual industry day should "stress the importance of the program to the fleet – they want it today, they need it today. "... We're still going to deliver the mission-essential capability, so it's important that we proceed," Program Executive Officer for Unmanned and Small Combatants Rear Adm. Casey Moton said in the news release.

The Navy's resurgent offensive mining portfolio now includes improvements in the Quickstrike family of air-delivered mines, and a handful of programs for clandestinely delivered mines that would be deployed by manned submarines and unmanned underwater vehicles, including Hammerhead, the Mk 68 Clandestine Delivered Mine (CDM) and the Mk 67 Submarine Launched Mobile Mine.



Innovations to Counter the Mine Threat

By MN2 (SW) Edmund Howland, U.S. Navy
Originally printed in **March 2020 Proceedings**
Vol. 146/2/1,405

Mine warfare involves more creativity and flexibility than any other type of naval warfare, yet its importance is widely underestimated. It is the epitome of asymmetric warfare; a small investment in mines can deny a vastly superior force a critical objective. Today, as adversary mines become ever more complex, inexpensive, and readily available, the Navy faces the threat with aging mine countermeasures (MCM) assets that have no adequate next-generation replacements. Therefore, innovative solutions need to be found in existing fleet capabilities.

Any understanding of current threats must be founded on mine warfare's history. Historically, the most prolific and effective user of defensive naval mines has been Russia. In his book, *North Korean Protective Mine Warfare: An Analysis of the Naval Minefields at Wonsan, Chinnampo and Hungnam during the Korean War*, Lieutenant Commander Jason D. Menarchik demonstrates how Russian mine warfare innovation influenced the strategy of North Korea in the early 1950s and Iraq in the 1991 Gulf War. Clear implications for future mine warfare were evident in both conflicts.

The North Koreans used minefields to channel naval forces into areas advantageous to their shore batteries, denying freedom of movement in constrained waters. By forcing U.S. naval gun support outside 12 nautical miles, the mines severely limited the Navy's ability to cover its MCM forces or accurately target the shore batteries and denied access to the sheltered areas behind the harbor islands. Furthermore, the shore batteries were sited to cover the minefields, allowing areas already swept to be reseeded without U.S. intervention. The Navy's MCM operations were time-consuming processes that placed mine clearance units under constant threat.¹

In the 1991 Gulf War, Iraq used Russian mines and Chinese missiles to create a naval barrier 50 nm off the coast of Kuwait, proving that mines can be strategically integrated into a multilayered, technologically sophisticated defense.² For today's U.S. helicopters and other air mine countermeasures (AMCM) assets, such integration means an increased likelihood of encountering an anti-air threat. Furthermore, traditional U.S. MCM surface units now face the risk of being overwhelmed while on task by the swarm tactics of groups such as the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy.

These immediate challenges must be met before expensive, time-consuming research can produce new MCM systems. In the interim, the Navy can field a more capable MCM force by repurposing and investing in the upkeep of current fleet assets. Amphibious ships, small-boat delivery systems, and surface and expeditionary assets are proven Navy assets that sailors already have experience operating.

Use Patrol Boats and Amphibs

The MCM operations of the future have to be more flexible and mobile. The Navy's legacy surface assets



The amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD-5) conducting well-deck operations. Acting as a mine countermeasures command-and-control ship, an LHD could carry six to eight Mk VI patrol boats.

are limited to specific home ports with limited areas of operation, and the explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) community requires its personnel and equipment to be airlifted to the region before they can set up and deploy. A mobile force comprising surface, underwater, and air MCM assets is a better option. Existing well-deck amphibious ships are capable of becoming mobile MCM delivery platforms and would only require minor changes in a few existing equipment systems to radically increase the Navy's ability to mobilize MCM forces.

Any landing helicopter dock, amphibious transport dock, or dock landing ship (LHD, LPD, or LSD) could deploy versatile MCM units into minefields and act as the command-and-control station for the assets working inside the mine threat area (MTA). Instead of *Avenger*-class minesweepers or littoral combat ships carrying mine-hunting and neutralization equipment, amphibious ships could carry and deploy the Mk VI patrol boats. With a range of approximately 700 nm, a maximum speed of 35 knots, and a suite of weapons and communication equipment for self-defense, the Mk VI is an ideal delivery vehicle for mine-hunting assets in a contested MTA. An amphibious ship with multiple MCM-configured Mk VI patrol boats in its well deck, as well as MCM-configured helicopters and drones operating from its flight deck, is a self-contained, mobile MCM force able to operate anywhere in the world on short notice.

For example, the USS *Makin Island* (LHD-8) could carry up to eight Mk VI patrol boats, each with multiple mine-hunting unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs), that would cover a large MTA in a fraction of the time and using fewer resources than traditional surface MCM assets. The Mk VI already is configured to carry EOD personnel and deploy the Mk 18 Mod 1 Swordfish and Mod 2 Kingfish UUVs. The Swordfish and Kingfish are the primary mine-hunting UUVs used by Navy expeditionary forces. They are autonomous assets that operate on a preprogrammed route once deployed. After retrieval, the data collected is downloaded and analyzed. If used effectively, this operational pause would allow MCM planners to coordinate the available neutralization options, reducing the time it takes for individual elements to find and prosecute each contact. MCM ships would no longer have to operate for long periods of time in areas vulnerable to enemy missiles, shore batteries, and surface and air units. Operating small, inexpensive, mobile craft with limited crews reduces the threat from defenses designed to target larger ships and limits the loss of equipment and personnel if a boat is destroyed.

Innovations to Counter the Mine Threat Continued

Another advantage of using a ship such as an LHD, LPD, or LSD as a mobile MCM force is the ability to share combat information with supporting elements, such as surface combatants and carrier air wings. Currently, MCM ships do not have high-end data sharing and communication abilities compatible with supporting units outside the MTA. With a better support network, the Navy could effectively respond to multiple different threats, allowing Mk VI boat crews the necessary time to deploy divers or other neutralization assets.



The Constraints Are Minimal

The Mk VI patrol boat is not designed to operate in heavy seas or open water, but that limitation may not be important because adversaries cannot lay most types of mines effectively in water deeper than 300 feet. With few exceptions, mines are designed to be used in littoral waters to control access to important passageways such as the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca, to blockade ports, or to deny access to amphibious landing zones. The primary areas of operation for MCM forces are within the Mk VI's operating parameters.

Another limitation of the Mk VI is that currently it cannot operate a mine neutralization system (MNS). As an alternative, it can carry an EOD dive team, but a better solution would be a few adaptations and a variable-depth sonar to vector an MNS to contacts for identification and prosecution. In that case, the most suitable MNS would be the AN/SLQ-60 Seafox UUV. Operating the Seafox from the Mk VI patrol boat would require at least two investigative rounds for contact identification and a magazine of combat rounds for mine neutralization. Currently, the Seafox is restricted to waters with a current of less than five knots and is difficult to maneuver in more than three knots of current.

Tactics and technology guarantee that any mines the Navy encounters in the future will be in areas with a multitude of threats. Finding innovative tactics and diversifying the assets responding to these threats will enhance fleet capabilities while minimizing risk to both personnel and objectives. This is the Navy's best approach to providing immediate MCM security and laying the foundation for the next generation of MCM tools.

1. Jason D. Menarchik, *North Korean Protective Mine Warfare: An Analysis of the Naval Minefields at Wonsan, Chinnampo and Hungnam during the Korean War* (Washington, DC: War College Studies, 2015), 70.
2. Menarchik, *North Korean Protective Mine Warfare*, 76–78.

MN2 (SW) Howland was born and raised in Boston, MA and recently completed a tour on board the Avenger-class mine countermeasures ship USS Sentry (MCM-3) in Bahrain.

He currently is transitioning to the littoral combat ship training program as part of the mine countermeasures package for the Freedom-class LCS variant USS Wichita.

NAVAL WARFARE, THREATS PRC, Russian Subs May Soon Face UUV- Launched US Sea Mines

Head of the Unmanned and Small Combatants office, Rear Adm. Casey Moton, said the industry day was meant to, “stress the importance of the program to the fleet – they want it today, they need it today.”

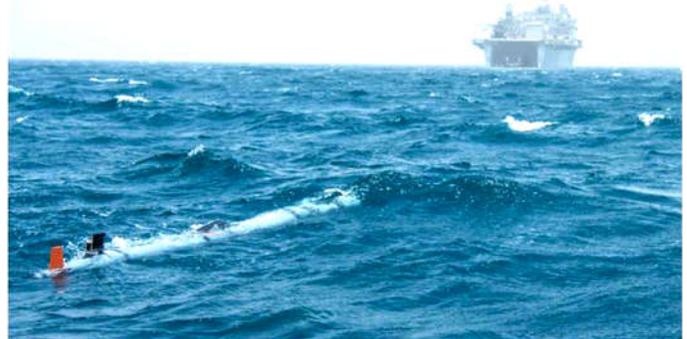
By [PAUL MCLEARY](#) on April 13, 2020 at 3:12 PM

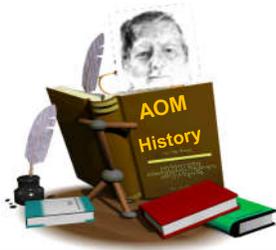
WASHINGTON: Unmanned underwater vehicles will scatter anti-submarine mines as a new way to protect US Navy ships at sea, part of a larger push to screen the fleet from increasingly sophisticated Chinese and Russian subs prowling the seas. This marks an important shift in US naval warfare, as the head of the Navy's mine warfare division, Capt. Chris Merwin, outlined at a conference last year. “Basically we have Quickstrike mines, air-delivered dumb bombs, and we have a few submarine-launchable mines. That is what we have now,” but “that is changing big time.” The future “of mining,” Merwin said, will be [unmanned underwater vehicle] clandestinely-launched mines.” Earlier this month, the service held a virtual industry day to discover what technologies companies might be able to deliver for its Hammerhead program which, if successful, would deploy UUVs to spread canisters containing Mk46 anti-submarine torpedoes to critical areas to screen American submarines and ships. Head of the Unmanned and Small Combatants office, Rear Adm. Casey Moton, said in a release today the industry day was meant to “stress the importance of the program to the fleet – they want it today, they need it today.”

But they won't have it today... or tomorrow.

The plan calls for up to 30 prototypes to be delivered in fiscal 2021, with delivery of what the Navy calls “operationally relevant prototypes” by the end of fiscal 2023. The industry day was attended by 16 companies. That's a bit of a wait for a program which kicked off in 2018 and has been classified a Middle Tier Acquisition Rapid Prototyping Program and a Navy Maritime Accelerated Acquisition, meaning the Navy wanted to develop the capability quickly. Anti-submarine warfare (and mine warfare) was relegated to the back burner after the fall of the Soviet Union, a time when the rise of China was barely a consideration and the need to defend against hostile submarines seemed less and less likely. But Russia's modernization of its submarine fleet, along with the growing Chinese capability overall, has led to scrambling inside the Navy to rebuild those once formidable defenses and countermeasures.

The push has also been spurred by the flameout of the anti-sub capabilities of the Littoral Combat Ship, which never delivered as promised. The need was underscored in the service's 2020 unfunded priorities list, which included \$71 million for the Quickstrike JDAM-ER, an underwater mine dropped from an aircraft.





AOM Historian Don Moody



The Washington Post

CIA Helped To Mine Ports In Nicaragua

By Fred Hiatt & Joanne Omang, Washington Post Staff Writers;
Staff writers Michael Getler and Don Oberdorfer contributed to this report.
April 7, 1984

Nicaragua and more highly rained Latin American employes of the CIA operating from CIA-owned speedboats have laid the crude bottom-lying mines in Corinto and other ports, according to the sources. They said that the mining operation is part of a CIA effort that began late last year to redirect the "contras," as the anti-Sandinista guerrillas are known, away from futile attempts to seize territory and toward hit-and-run economic sabotage. The handmade acoustic mines, which explode noisily but are unlikely to sink a ship, reportedly are intended to harass and discourage shipping rather than blockade the harbors. Officials said that they are having the intended effect, with Nicaraguan coffee and other exports beginning to pile up on piers and imported oil running short. The harbor mining began about two months ago without advance notification of congressional intelligence committees but probably with the general knowledge of President Reagan, according to sources close to the intelligence community. At the same time, the sources said, the CIA began to assume a more direct role in training and guiding the anti-Sandinista rebels, shouldering aside the Argentinians and Hondurans who had been playing a middleman role. The increased activity coincided with a growth in the strength of the contras from about 15,000 to closer to 18,000. The increase in strength, which one knowledgeable source said was carried out without congressional notification, came particularly among the forces of Eden Pastora in Costa Rica, to which an entire Sandinista battalion of about 250 men reportedly defected. News of the more direct CIA involvement in the "covert" war against Nicaragua came as the Senate approved an additional \$21 million in CIA support for the contras. The administration says the funds are intended to discourage Nicaragua from supporting leftist rebels in El Salvador. The appropriation faces a stiff fight in the Democratic-controlled House, which last year twice rejected the request. The \$21 million appropriation is attached to legislation that includes \$61.7 million in military aid for the government of El Salvador to fight

leftist insurgents there. Rep. Dante B. Fascell (D-Fla.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said yesterday that he believes the House will be inclined to approve the El Salvador aid, but that the attached money for the contras "may make it very difficult to pass it in the House." Some officials indicated that there is concern within the administration that the mining, which Nicaragua has attacked as state-sponsored "terrorism," will alienate U.S. allies and be seen as contrary to international principles of open seas. There is also concern that sabotaging the Nicaraguan economy may alienate Nicaraguans whom the CIA hopes the contras will win over. "There is always a delicate balance that any insurgent movement has to strike," one senior official said. There is evidence that U.S. allies in Europe have become increasingly unhappy about the mining and the reported U.S. role in it. It was disclosed Thursday that the French government offered to help Nicaragua, which has no mine-sweeping equipment, to clear its harbors if other European nations join in. Diplomatic sources confirmed yesterday that the British government, in informal but regular contacts with the State Department, has made clear that it, too, deplores the threat to international shipping that mining harbors represents. The British did not claim that the CIA is involved and did not offer to help remove the mines. But British officials, stressing that they are a seafaring nation, said they communicated their concern as a matter of principle. State Department spokesman John Hughes said yesterday that Washington has "raised our concerns" diplomatically with the French government about the reports that France has offered to help the Nicaraguan government clear away the mines. He said that the United States was not notified in advance of the French offer. "We have all along been concerned with the large Soviet and Cuban military relationship with Nicaragua. And we would not favor any nations contributing to Nicaragua's ability to export revolution," Hughes said. Hughes suggested that there is some doubt about the French intention to aid Nicaragua, despite the

offer contained in a letter from Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson to Colombian President Belisario Betancur. The letter was made public Thursday in the Nicaraguan newspaper Barricada, the voice of the Sandinista National Liberation Front. Secretary of State George P. Shultz was questioned about the mining of Nicaraguan harbors during a luncheon meeting Thursday with reporters and editors of The Washington Post. Asked whether Washington has any control over the mining operations, Shultz said, "I don't have any comment to make about that." Asked what the purpose of the mining is, he said, "You have to ask the contras about that. It looks like the purpose must be somehow to interrupt the commerce of the country." Although the official purpose of the CIA-supported war is to discourage Nicaraguan support for the leftist rebels in El Salvador, administration officials have suggested from time to time that they also are interested in making the Sandinista government in Nicaragua more "democratic" and less tied to Cuba and the Soviet Union.

Critics have charged that the administration is aiming to overthrow the Sandinista government, which replaced a right-wing dictator in 1979. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) called the administration's aid bill "shameful and dangerous." Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr. (D-Del.), a member of the Senate Intelligence Committee, told his colleagues that they would vote against the bill "if you knew what I know." "You are right in opposing this money going for the purposes allegedly stated here because they ain't the real reasons," Biden said. Nicaraguan officials have said that ships from the Netherlands, Japan, the Soviet Union, Britain and elsewhere have been damaged by mines in ports on both the Caribbean and Pacific coasts in recent months. Nicaraguan radio said that the mines are "highly sophisticated and manufactured by the arsenals of the U.S. armed forces." But sources here said that they are simple devices that can be manufactured from easily obtained, "off-the-shelf" materials. The mines are triggered by the sound of a ship on the surface and explode with a loud bang that can cause extensive damage but--unlike a floating mine--is unlikely to sink a ship. Although Miskito Indians and both major contra groups have been involved in mining and attacking Nicaraguan ports, Latin American contract agents of the CIA with skills in fusing weapons and piloting boats also have been involved, sources said. The sources said that the mines can be heaved over the side of speedboats. One congressional source close to the intelligence community said that Reagan probably gave the mining "a broad-brush kind of approval . . . with no concern with the details." Another said, "If the president didn't approve it, then you'd have a real story, and I don't think you have a real story there." One official said the



mining has caused concern among Reagan supporters in Congress as well as the administration, but added, "The goal of this has been to put as much pressure on them the Sandinistas as possible." The CIA became concerned late last year, in part due to congressional pressure, that "very basically the progress wasn't going forward at a rate that was going to give us any chance of success," one official said. At that time, the Argentinians, who were pulling out anyway, and Hondurans increasingly were supplanted by CIA employees in training and directing the contras. In particular, the U.S. urged the rebels to stop massing in large groups to strike from Honduras and capture territory, a tactic that gave the Nicaraguans inviting targets for retaliation. The rebels were encouraged to have small sabotage operations instead.

Fred Hiatt is the editorial page editor of The Post. He writes editorials for the newspaper and a biweekly column that appears on Mondays. Previously he was a local reporter in Virginia, a national reporter covering national security and a foreign correspondent based in Tokyo and Moscow.

From the Editor: The news that the CIA was using mines in Nicaragua was very interesting to many of us in the community at that time, as it seemed unlikely that they had developed their own mines. Where did these mines come from and what mines were they? Ed Simmons was the COMINWARCOM Mine Readiness Officer during this period and recalls... **"Yes, I remember the mine inventory board in our office that we kept updated. I noticed during my weekly update on service mines inventory, we were suddenly missing DST kits. I had to do some research on CAIMS to see why and where the loss occurred. I don't recall if they were missing from a CVN or if it was from Hawthorne, but this event may have been detailed in the classified mine warfare summary back then. I definitely recall this."**



WAS IT THE DESTRUCTOR MINE?

International Court of Justice (ICJ) Military and Paramilitary Activities in and against Nicaragua (Nicaragua v. United States of America)

OVERVIEW OF THE CASE

On 9 April 1984 Nicaragua filed an Application instituting proceedings against the United States of America, together with a request for the indication of provisional measures concerning a dispute relating to responsibility for military and paramilitary activities in and against Nicaragua. On 10 May 1984 the Court made an Order indicating provisional measures. One of these measures required the United States immediately to cease and refrain from any action restricting access to Nicaraguan ports, and, **in particular, the laying of mines**. The Court also indicated that the right to sovereignty and to political independence possessed by Nicaragua, like any other State, should be fully respected and should not be jeopardized by activities contrary to the principle prohibiting the threat or use of force and to the principle of non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of a State. The Court also decided in the aforementioned Order that the proceedings would first be addressed to the questions of the jurisdiction of the Court and of the admissibility of the Nicaraguan Application. Just before the closure of the written proceedings in this phase, El Salvador filed a declaration of intervention in the case under Article 63 of the Statute, requesting permission to claim that the Court lacked jurisdiction to entertain Nicaragua's Application. In its Order dated 4 October 1984, the Court decided that El Salvador's declaration of intervention was inadmissible inasmuch as it related to the jurisdictional phase of the proceedings.

After hearing argument from both Parties in the course of public hearings held from 8 to 18 October 1984, on 26 November 1984 the Court delivered a Judgment stating that it possessed jurisdiction to deal with the case and that Nicaragua's Application was admissible. In particular, it held that the Nicaraguan declaration of 1929 was valid and that Nicaragua was therefore entitled to invoke the United States declaration of 1946 as a basis of the Court's jurisdiction (Article 36, paragraphs 2 and 5, of the Statute). The subsequent proceedings took place in the absence of the United States, which announced on 18 January 1985 that it "intends not to participate in any further proceedings in connection with this case". From 12 to 20 September 1985, the Court heard oral argument by Nicaragua and the testimony of the five witnesses it had called. On 27 June 1986, the Court delivered its Judgment on the merits. The findings included a rejection of the justification of collective self-defence advanced by the United States concerning the military or paramilitary activities in or against Nicaragua, and a statement that the United States had violated the obligations imposed by customary international law not to intervene in the affairs of another State, not to use force against another State, not to infringe the sovereignty of another State, and not to interrupt peaceful maritime commerce. The Court also found that the United States had violated certain obligations arising from a bilateral Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation of 1956, and that it had committed acts such to deprive that treaty of its object and purpose. It decided that the United States was under a duty immediately to cease and to refrain from all acts constituting breaches of its legal obligations, and that it must make reparation for all injury caused to Nicaragua by the breaches of obligations under customary international law and the 1956 Treaty, the amount of that reparation to be fixed in subsequent proceedings if the Parties were unable to reach agreement. The Court subsequently fixed, by an Order, time-limits for the filing of written pleadings by the Parties on the matter of the form and amount of reparation, and the Memorial of Nicaragua was filed on 29 March 1988, while the United States maintained its refusal to take part in the case. In September 1991, Nicaragua informed the Court, inter alia, that it did not wish to continue the proceedings. The United States told the Court that it welcomed the discontinuance and, by an Order of the President dated 26 September 1991, the case was removed from the Court's List.

CIA Mining of Nicaraguan Harbors

Contributed by: MNM Don Jones, (USN Ret.)

From January to March 1984 three harbors in Nicaragua were mined by the CIA: Corinto, Puerto Sandino, and El Bluff. The mining was carried out by CIA operatives on speedboats, operating from larger "mother ships." The mining operations had been approved by President Ronald Reagan under the advice of his National Security Adviser Robert McFarlane.

The mines were acoustic mines designed, allegedly to frighten merchant sailors, rather than to harm them. The mines had the effect of disrupting Nicaraguan shipping and economic activities by damaging at least seven vessels, including blowing up numerous fishing boats and damaging several foreign merchant ships, including a Soviet freighter and a Dutch dredger.

The mining operation resulted in a political outcry in the United States with Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), the Chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee declaring, "I am pissed off." Several Democrats called for a Special Prosecutor to determine if Reagan had broken federal law in ordering the mining and the New York Times called it "illegal, deceptive, and dumb" and compared it to German U-boats attacking neutral merchant shipping in World War I.

Reference 38: United Press International (UPI) 6 Apr. 1984, "CIA Reported Directing Mine-Laying in Nicaraguan Waters" Washington - The CIA is actively directing the laying of mines that Nicaragua says have hit at least seven ships in its harbors since February, it was reported Friday.

CBS News and the Wall Street Journal reported the U. S. involvement. A CIA spokesman said the agency had 'no comment whatsoever' on either of the reports.

In 1987, U. S. Navy SEAL's Took on Iran's Mines...

Who Won?

by **Sebastien Roblin**

Key point: Iran and America have come to blows before. History shows that the U.S. navy vastly out-classes its Iranian counterparts. On July 21, 1987, a gigantic 414,000-ton supertanker entered the Persian Gulf with an unusually prominent escort—a U.S. Navy missile cruiser and three frigates. The narrow straits of the Persian Gulf had become a shooting gallery due to the Iran-Iraq War, still raging seven years after Iraq's surprise invasion of Iran in 1980. As Iran counterattacked into Iraqi territory, Baghdad—supplied and armed by the Soviet Union, France, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia—began blasting Iranian oil tankers with missiles, often with assistance from U.S. surveillance assets. Iran retaliated by targeting Kuwaiti tankers with imported Chinese Silkworm missiles. Though terrifying, both side's anti-ship missiles inflicted relatively little damage as the tankers were simply too bulky to be easily sunk. The same was not true for the frigate USS *Stark*, struck accidentally by an Iraqi Exocet missile in May 1987 that killed thirty-seven crew. But Washington had an axe to grind with Tehran, not Baghdad—and decided to respond to pleas for military escort from Kuwait. This led to the controversial policy of reflagging Kuwaiti tankers so they could be escorted by U.S. warships in Operation Earnest Will. The supertanker *Bridgeton*—formerly the Kuwaiti

tanker *al-Rekkah*—was the first ship to receive a U.S. escort. Upon entering the narrow Straits of Hormuz, a flight of four Iranian Phantom jets swooped towards the Bridgeton convoy, but turned away at the last minute. On July 23, Tehran rumbled that tanker was carrying "prohibited goods" but made no obvious moves. U.S. intelligence had learned of Iranian plans to attack the convoy with motorboats operated by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy. Indeed, the head of the IRGC had lobbied for such an attack but was vetoed by Supreme Leader Ruhollah Khomeini. He had a subtler approach in mind. As the *Bridgeton* cruised eighteen miles west of Iran's Farsi Island on the morning of July 24, she abruptly struck what resembled a spiked-ball chained to the sea floor—a variant of an old Soviet M-08 mine built by North Korea and exported to Iran. An explosion ripped a large hole the tanker's port cargo tank, flooding five of her thirty-one compartments but not injuring any crew. The night before, IRGCN motorboats had lain three chains totaling sixty mines spaced a half-kilometer part along the convoy's well-known path. Ironically, the *Bridgeton*, limping along at just six knots, effectively escorted the U.S. warships back to port, because the huge tanker was the only vessel likely to survive hitting another mine. The "Bridgeton incident" was an inauspicious start for Operation Earnest Will—highlighting the Navy's failure to plan for mines.

Iranian Mir-Hossein Prime Minister Mousavi gloated it had dealt "an irreparable blow on America's political and military prestige." Cunningly, the minelaying was both clearly Iranian in origin, while being technically deniable. However, the tactic inspired France and the UK, and later Italy and the Netherlands, to deploy their own warships to the Gulf, including seven mine-sweepers. The U.S. Navy had few assets immediately at hand to deal with mines. Then, as today, mine warfare was a neglected branch. Weeks later, the Navy deployed the amphibious carrier USS *Guadalcanal* with RH-53D Sea Stallion minesweeping helicopters aboard. Eventually six ocean-going and five-riverine minesweepers joined Earnest Will, which at its peak involved as many as thirty U.S. Navy ships including carriers and the huge battleship USS *Missouri*.

SEALs, Little Birds and Swift Boats

As deploying U.S. mine-sweeping units ashore in Saudi Arabia or Kuwait proved politically prohibitive, Kuwait instead furnished two barges, *Hercules* and *Wimbrown* that the Pentagon promptly converted into mobile sea bases, complete with their own extensive self-defense weapons. The floating bases also hosted assets vital to a covert U.S. counter-offensive called Operation Prime Chance to catch the Iranians red-handed in the act. These included two Navy SEAL teams, six 64-foot-long Mark III "Swift Boats" and six tiny egg-shaped "Little Bird" helicopters from the Army's elite 160th Special Operations Aviation regiment.

On September 21, a trio of Little Bird choppers flying off the frigate *Jarrett* were assigned to shadow the Iranian tank landing ship *Iran Ajr*, suspected to have been converted for minelaying. An MH-6 helicopter equipped with a forward-looking infrared (FLIR) sensor and night-vision goggles led the way, escorted by two AH-6 gunships loaded with 7.62-millimeter miniguns and 2.75" rocket pods. Hovering stealthily 500 meters away, the helicopter crews recorded footage of the *Iran Ajr's* crew deploying

In 1987, U. S. Navy SEAL's , Iran's Mines... (Continued)

mines next to the Middle Shoals navigational buoy used by tankers. The Little Birds were ordered to open fire, and they raked the 614-ton vessel with their miniguns, causing the crew to take cover. However, Iranian sailors resumed deploying the mines a half-hour later. This time the night-vision-aided helicopter pilots unleashed a sustained barrage including rockets, killing three crew—and causing the remaining twenty-six to abandon ship. The following morning, Navy SEALs on Mark III boats rescued all but two of the Iranian sailors and boarded *Iran Ajr*. They found nine mines onboard and seized a logbook recording past minelaying activity, including maps showing the locations of those mines. Then the Navy towed *Iran Ajr* to deep water and blew her up.



A trio of minigun-armed MH-6 helicopters tangled again with four Iranian ships approaching the sea base *Hercules* on October 8, including a corvette, a Swedish-built Boghammar and two Boston whaler type boats. The Boghammar's crew fired Stinger missiles at the scout helicopters before being sunk by return fire. Eight Iranian crew were killed, and six more rescued from the water. When an Iranian missile struck the U.S.-flagged *Sea Island City* on October 16, injuring eighteen crew, Washington authorized a counterattack three days later called Operation Nimble Archer, resulting in the destruction of two Iranian oil platforms used to host IRGCN boats. But

Iranian minelaying continued. On April 14, 1988, the crew of the frigate *Samuel B. Roberts* spotted three Iranian mines and realized she had unwittingly cruised into a minefield. While attempting to back out of danger, *Roberts* struck a mine which nearly split her in two and injured ten sailors. A heroic damage control effort saved the ship and her crew. Navy divers later identified additional mines in the area—with serial numbers identical to those on the *Iran Ajr*. Four days later, the U.S. launched a second retaliatory strike targeting two more Iranian oil platforms called Operation Praying Mantis. This time frigates and gunboats of the regular Iranian Navy counter attacked, resulting in the U.S. Navy's largest foray since World War II, in which half of Iran's surface combatants were sunk or crippled.

This subdued Iranian naval operations thereafter. The Iran-Iraq war ended four months later—but sadly, not before one final tragic incident. On July 3, the U.S. Aegis missile cruiser *Vincennes* was skirmishing with Iranian fast boats, having unknowingly entered Iranian territorial waters, when her radar reported she was being approached by an Iranian F-14 Tomcat fighter. The cruiser fired two radar-guided SM-2 missiles at the contact—bringing down Iranian A300 airliner Flight 655, killing all 290 civilians aboard.

Operation Earnest Will concluded September 26 when the USS *Vandergrift* escorted a final tanker into the Persian Gulf. The operatives involved in Prime Chance remained active, however, until June 1990. The Tanker War demonstrated how Iran could retaliate against foreign pressure through calibrated, and semi-deniable attacks on the valuable shipping passing through the narrow waters of the Gulf—even though the campaign failed to inflict substantial economic damage, or indeed sink many large ships. A less violent variant of this strategy has evidently been implemented by Tehran today in its harassment and sabotage of shipping in the Gulf. However, experience from the Tanker War suggested that even controlled, asymmetric harassment attacks may risk provoking a more destructive retaliation.

Sébastien Roblin holds a master's degree in conflict resolution from Georgetown University and served as a university instructor for the Peace Corps in China. He has also worked in education, editing, and refugee resettlement in France and the United States. He currently writes on security and military history for War Is Boring. This first appeared in 2019.



Tails from the Poopdeck...

Mineman Stories ...

MY MINE MK 6 MAILBOX PROJECT

by MNMCM Bruce Chapman (Ret.)

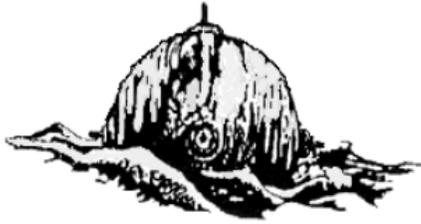


A few years back, Gary Cleland and I got word from Jim Mathews, MNC (Ret.) that there were some old MK 6 mine cases in a Long Beach salvage yard. As it turned out, there were hundreds of MK 6 anchors and only a few mine cases. Understanding that an opportunity to own a little bit of mine history, we bought 2 of each and loaded them into my truck. You should have seen the looks we got driving down the freeway! One made its way to my house in Riverside CA and the other to Gary's house in Poway, CA.

My goal from the start was to use the mine as a base for my mailbox. As you can see from the photos, the project was completed and then most recently refurbished. But not before spending about 5 years undisturbed! During those years, I had it in the backyard, then I took it with me when I moved. Finally making its way to the slab I poured at the curb! If you look closely, you will see that not all the parts are authentic! I used some PVC fitting pieces to make a mock-up extender and firing mechanism. And threaded rods for the H-4 devices (horns).

While the outcome was successful, it did not come easy! One of my biggest challenges was getting the wife to buy into the idea of using it as a mailbox! So, one day when the mailman was out front, my wife asked him if there are reservation from USPS about using the mine as a mailbox, in the hopes that he would object! He said, "so long as it does not make any noise, it would be OK." Well that blow my idea of making an explosive sound when they open the box to deposit mail! With no other objections, I proceeded with the project. Once completed, and to this day, we have had many people stop by and ask, "what is it" questions! We even had the local Fire Department stop by to investigate! As for Gunner Gary's mine, he donated it for the purpose of making its way to a Mine Maritime Museum. All in all, I guess I can safely say that not too many Minemen, if any, have a MK 6 as a mailbox in their front yard!





**ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN
46th ANNUAL REUNION & MEETING
OCT. 15-18 CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA
REGISTRATION FORM**

Date

First Name

Last Name

AOM #

If Known

Phone Number

Area Code

Phone Number

Email Address

DINNER BUFFET \$56.00 ea. Sat. Oct. 17th. (Includes tax and gratuity)

LOW COUNTRY BOIL AND BACK YARD BBQ

Mixed Greens, Crisp Vegetables and Assorted Dressings

Tomato and Cucumber Salad

Pulled Pork

Low Country Shrimp Boil *(Polish Sausage, Jumbo Shrimp and New Potatoes)*

Burgers with Traditional Garnish, Grilled Chicken 1/4

Hoppin John, Macaroni and Cheese, Squash Casserole, Collard Greens

Sour Cream Pound Cake with Bananas Foster Sauce,

Coconut Cake and Peach Crisp

Auction Picnic Luncheon, Oct. 18th

The Picnic will be held at Wannamaker Park.

MENU

2 Hamburgers, 2 Hot Dogs per person

(Buns, Mayo, Ketchup, Mustard, Lettuce & Tomatoes)

Tea, Lemonade & Water

BYOB your favorite Adult Beverages!

Tickets: Adults-\$18.00 ea. Kids 12 and Under-\$5.00 ea.



SpiriLine Cruises & Fort Sumter Tours

“Live & Local” Dinner Cruise

Join other AOM members on this Special Dinner & Cruise Outing

The cruise is on Friday, Oct. 16th from 7pm to 9:30 pm

To learn more about this activity, go to; <https://spiritlinecruises.com/dinner-cruises/>

In order to qualify for the Special Group Rate, we need at least 15 tickets sold. The cutoff date for this activity is July. 15, 2020. If we do not get the required tickets sold, you will be reimbursed!

Tickets-\$73.00 (Includes tax and gratuity)

MEMBERSHIP SECTION

There is a \$5.00 Fee for New or 3 Years Past Dues Members.

The Annual Dues are \$15.00. You can Pay Up to 5 Years in Advance.

Reunion Fee of \$10.00 will be applied to the total.

(Member Approved for Incidental Reunion Cost)

AOM SCHOLARSHIP FUND

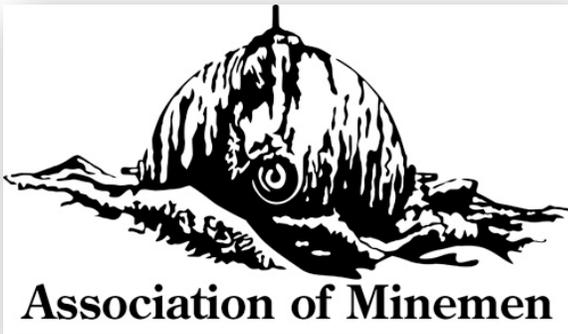
You donations to this fund is Tax deductible!

	QTY.	AMOUNT
Dinner Buffet \$56.00 ea.		
Auction Picnic		
Adults \$18.00 ea.		
Kids \$5.00 ea.		
Dinner Cruise \$73.00 ea.		
Membership		
Application Fee \$5.00		
Dues \$15.00 per yr.		
Reunion Fee \$10.00		\$10.00
Scholarship Donation		
TOTAL DUE TO AOM		

If you wish to use the PayPal option, go to <https://www.jotform.com/90268038916160>

Or...Attach this form with your check payable to:

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



Association of Minemen



REUNION 2020 UPDATE



AOM Reunion 2020 Chairman Charles Humbard reports that although the **COVID19** outbreak has introduced uncertainty on whether or not we can pull off our planned October reunion, he encourages all of us to get our reservation forms **in the mail or via PayPal** <https://www.jotform.com/90268038916160> before the deadline in September 2020 in the event we can safely gather together once again. We will keep everyone updated.

Note: Dinner Cruise reservations need to be made by July 15th. Fifteen or more are required. If we fall short of that number for the dinner cruise, your money will be reimbursed.

50 Years

Celebrating the Closing of
Azuma Island Japan
Mine Shop
Reunion 2020
Charleston, SC



The 50th 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 and/or

Bill Holloway at: william.holloway1010@gmail.com

The **AOM Reunion Coordinator** for 2020 is **Charles Humbard** at charleshumbard@gmail.com

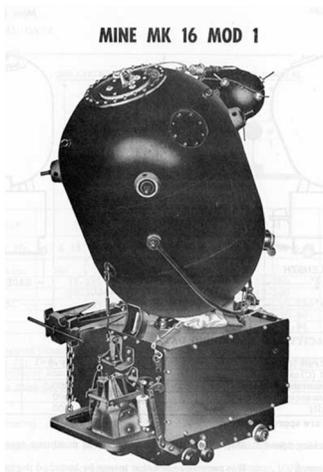
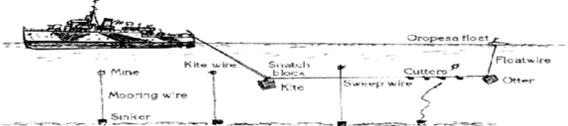
Minemen Faces & Places



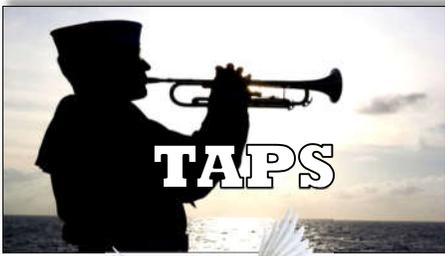
**Mine Warfare School, Yorktown, VA
A. B. Hinman, left, Jim Dodd, center and Joe Gallagher on the right. Circa 1954**



**Mineman Class 'A' School Class 9-57, April 1957
L-R: Bob Stancik, Tom Hoffman, Curtis Christen, Bo Bellamy, Phil Dechene & Ron Glasen**



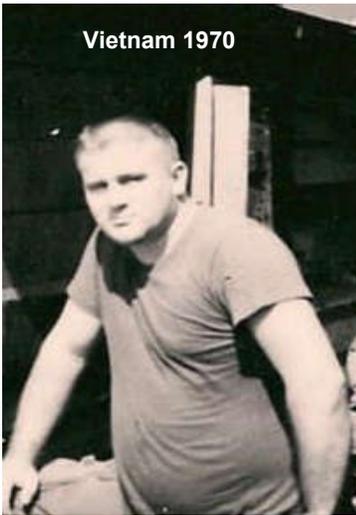
- COMOMAG CPO MESS
- MNC(SW) Jonathan Wampler
 - MNCS Chris Alford
 - MNCM(SW) Favian Garcia
 - MNCS(SW/AW) Keith Roers
 - MNC(SW) Duncan Ellson
 - MNC(SW) Ryan McReynolds



Shamokin, PA



Vietnam 1970



Joseph Michael Vargo,
DOB: 24 Dec 1950
DOD: 14 Mar 2020



Joseph Michael Vargo, age 69 of Goose Creek, SC passed away peacefully at home surrounded by his loved ones on March 14th, 2020.

Mr. Vargo is survived by his wife of 49 years Rosalia Vargo and 3 surviving daughters Gina Plummer, Patricia Vargo and Kimberly Vargo, his sister Pat Vargo, Brothers Tim, Todd and Tommy Vargo.

Michael was born December 24, 1950 in Williamson West Virginia to the late Joseph and Okey Vargo. He was the eldest of 5 children. Michael graduated from Defiance High School after which he joined the US Navy as a Minemen. He was a retired military Veteran that served over 20 years and who was acknowledged for his Mine Site Excellence, Sharp Shooting Skills as well as his Humanitarian Services and Good Conduct. He was a jack of all trades and a master of some, who loved working with his hands. He loved cooking, painting and tinkering around the house.

He was his family's anchor and will deeply miss, and remembered with love..



Robert Gormley
DOB: 5 Feb 1953
DOD: 9 Mar 2020
Panama City, FI



George A. Monk
DOB: 16 Jun 1953
DOD: 7 Jan 2019
Elizabethtown, NC



Virginia (Vergie) Burton
DOB 25 Sep 1953
DOD 27 Oct 2015
Corpus Christi, TX
Wife of MNCJay Burton, USN Ret.





MNC Jack P. Womack, (U.S.N, Ret)
Austin, TX

June 26 1918 - April 28, 1997

A Chief Petty Officer, he was career Navy, working as a deep sea diver with the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit during post WWII clearance efforts, Korea and Vietnam.

(Note the Right Arm MNC Rating Badge...Ed.)

After retiring from the Navy in 1969, he was employed by Bland Construction for many years. Burial, was with full military honors, was held at Cook-Walden Memorial Hill, Austin, TX.



The Binnacle List



Miguel "Mike" Medrano is currently waiting on God to handle the COVID19 outbreak so that the VA can get his prosthetic leg... please keep him in your prayers.



When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theatre
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.

When this ends,
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way--better
for each other
because of the worst.

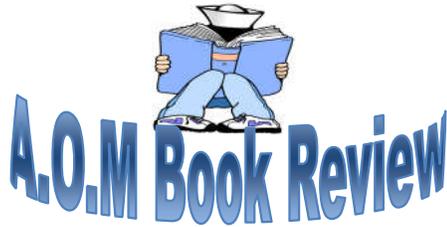
- Laura Kelley Fanucci

Loving God, Your desire is for our wholeness and well being. ♦We hold in tenderness and prayer the collective suffering of our world at this time. ♦We grieve precious lives lost and vulnerable lives threatened. ♦We ache for ourselves and our neighbors, standing before an uncertain future.
♦We pray: may love, not fear, go viral. ♦Inspire our leaders to discern and choose wisely, aligned with the common good.
♦Help us to practice social distancing and reveal to us new and creative ways to come together in spirit and in solidarity.
♦Call us to profound trust in your faithful presence...
You, the God who does not abandon. †

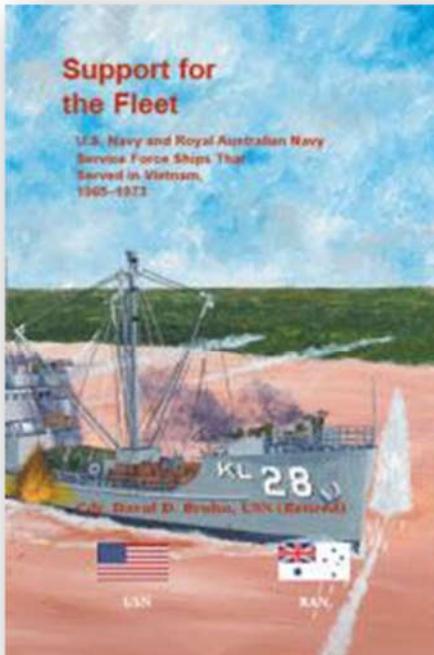


Mineman Miscellany

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.



A.O.M Book Review



By Cdr. David D. Bruhn, USN (Retired)

During the Vietnam War, 136 U.S. Navy and three Royal Australian Navy Service Force ships served in Vietnam. It was not glamorous duty, and the men who toiled aboard the ships received little recognition. It wouldn't make good reading in Des Moines that the warships on the gunline could not fire their guns, or that carriers on Yankee and Dixie stations could not fly airstrikes against the enemy. Were it not for the sweat, heat, fatigue, and bore-

dom endured by sailors serving in mostly old ships from World War II, that would have been the headline. These ships delivered food, fuel, ammunition, and critical supplies to the destroyers on the gunline, riverine craft patrolling inland waterways, and aircraft carriers, as well as ferrying troops in and out of the war zone, and those needing medical attention to the care of Navy Nurses on hospital ships. These brave men and their ships were often targeted by the Viet Cong specifically because they enabled the Allied forces to hold off the enemy and defend the freedom of the South Vietnamese people. In every war and military engagement, the front lines depend on replenishment. These are the people responsible for maintaining those in harm's way, putting themselves in danger to do so. This book, a companion to *On the Gunline* and *Gators Offshore and Upriver*, highlights the herculean efforts of the Service Force, whose vital contributions "on the line" have been largely overlooked by historians. Two hundred fifty-two photographs; maps and diagrams; appendices; a bibliography; and an index to full-

Heritage Books, at: <https://heritagebooks.com/collections/recent-publications/products/support-for-the-fleet-u-s-navy-and-royal-australian-navy-service-force-ships-that-served-in-vietnam-1965-1973>



AOM Members can purchase streamers to commemorate their service and we'll attach them to the AOM Bravo flag. We've got 20 or so on the flag now. You can purchase a streamer from:

Carolina Flag and Banner
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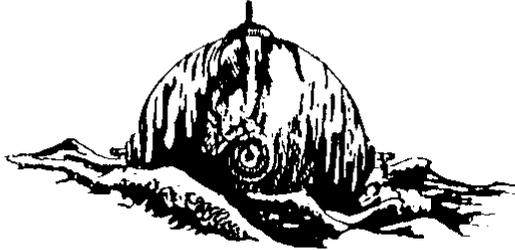
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Application Fee: \$5.00 - Annual Dues: \$15.00 - NOTICE: To maintain membership, dues must be paid annually by the month of October. The dues expiration date is printed on the mailing label above your name. Mail checks to the Association of Minemen, 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.