



# The DASHPOT



The Official Newsletter of the Association of Minemen

## From The President

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



My sincerest condolences to the families of recently departed shipmates and family members; two of which were Past Presidents Dick Schommer and Jim Coffman Sr. I'm sure that their loss leaves a void in each of you. If you are on the Binnacle List or suffering from medical issues, know that your shipmates are wishing you a full and speedy recovery. Each of you remain in our thoughts and prayers throughout your ordeal. Hopefully the worst is behind you concerning Covid-19 and you can return to normal, or the new normal as some have stated, very soon. I'm afraid our cases here in Washington State have started to spike upward over the past few weeks and it may take a while for us to level back out again. It's very important for each of us to stay healthy for ourselves, shipmates and loved ones. The 2021 Reunion plans are near complete. This Dashpot issue includes the Reunion dates, hotel accommodations and reservations number, and the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion registration form. The hotel notified us that due to state law, we are not allowed to provide our own alcoholic beverages for the hospitality suite. We have two options, 1) purchase from their bar (\$5 - \$6 for beer and \$6-\$8 for wine and mixed drinks) or 2) purchase wine and beer in advance from the hotel at a reduced rate (around \$40 per case of beer and \$12 per bottle of wine). The association will provide water, soda and snacks as usual, but the supply of beer and wine will be limited. As a member of the AOM, each of us are allowed to purchase beer and wine from the hotel at the case and bottle rate. The beer and wine selections and prices are listed on the Reunion registration form. I plan on purchasing a case or two for member consumption and hope other members will follow suit. I look forward to seeing many of you at the Reunion. Check out the Ships Store and purchase your memorabilia items before they sell out. Donations to the scholarship fund is always needed and gratefully accepted. I'd like to thank Vic Martin for making/selling items and donating their proceeds to the scholarship fund. Thanks for everyone's support. We need to replace the President, Vice President and two Board of Directors this year. So far, members Vic Martin and Noah Kalemkiewicz have volunteered for a position. We need to fill all the positions, so members, please consider volunteering your expertise. If you are interested in taking on any of the positions, please contact Charles Humbard. The Facebook page currently boasts 827 members. Welcome aboard Shipmates and spread the word so we can continue to grow. Your input and participation makes the page live on, just as your membership in the Association of Minemen makes our legacy live on! Thanks again to Don Moody for his management of the AOM Facebook page and Website.

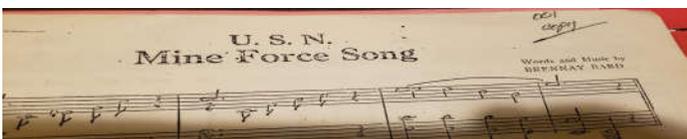
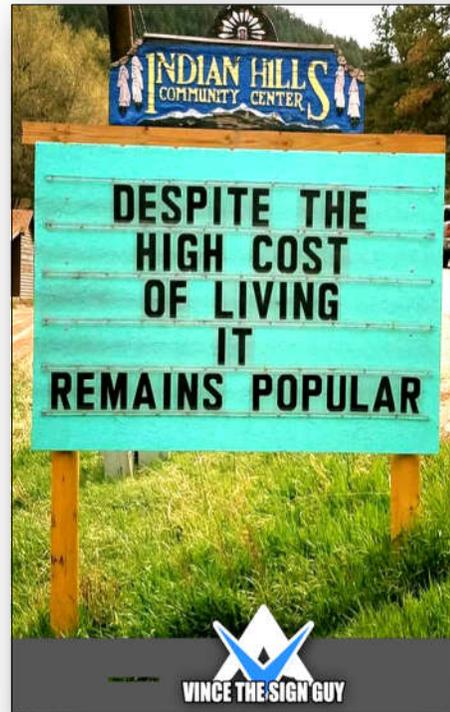
God bless our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines and God bless the USA!

*John*



## REMEMBERING OUR HEROES ON MEMORIAL DAY!

### NOTABLE QUOTABLE



82.7% of all statistics are made up on the spot.  
*Stephen Wright*



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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Input for Summer 2021
Dashpot #108 is due NLT:
July, 16, 2021

From the Editor...



Springtime greetings to all... This issue offers AOM Reunion news along with the usual fare. Historian Don Moody was gifted with a letter from a WWII vet that provides rare insight to the earliest days of the USN Mine-man Rate and a 'Mustang' commission.

Sadly, we have recently lost too many of our shipmates, including two former AOM Presidents. In this issue we also honor the passing of CDR 'Nobby' Hall, Royal Navy, who had a very impressive Mine Warfare career. We wish God's blessings upon all.

These days, my newsfeeds on Mine Warfare mostly feature efforts by our Allies (and those of our 'competitors'). The bulk of these efforts are MCM related...not to much news on mines and mining. Bear with me as I keep an eye out for releasable news on that front.

A shout out to Charles Humbarb who is coordinating our 47th AOM Reunion and to President John Epps, Sec/Treas Nate Miranda and to Don Moody for their efforts in this challenging economic environment. Thanks for your hard work!



All the best ... RON



### Secretary Treasurer Report Spring 2021

With the Charleston Reunion plans being finalized, and details with our host venue ironed out, we have created the registration form that is available in this issue of the Dashpot, on-line on our website and through a link on our AOM Facebook page. You can either mail in hard copy or register on line as in previous reunions.

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 Miranda  
*Nate*



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 also are thinking of green. Where can they find some green for next year's college expenses? It might be an AOM Scholarship!

Your Scholarship Committee is coming out of hibernation. We are sharpening our pencils, cleaning our bifocals, and getting ready for the new applications to arrive. If you know of any applicants, please let them that the rules for a **AOM SCHOLARSHIP AWARD** must be strictly adhered to. If anything is left off the application, the application will be considered incomplete and will not be considered for a scholarship award. The rules for an application can be found on the AOM web page. All candidates must:

- (1) complete the application forms S-land S-2.
- (2) provide a transcript of their earned credits from their applicable schools.
- (3) provide two letters of recommendation.
- (4) provide a synopsis of their field of interest / study, and
- (5) include any other pertinent information that the candidate feels might enhance their chances of receiving the scholarship award.

All applications must be received by the AOM Secretary by June 1st. Your scholarship committee is waiting to start working on all the new applications that we hope will be coming in. Thank you and Good Luck to all applicants!

Scholarship Chairman - Ronald Glasen

[searchcoil@hotmail.com](mailto:searchcoil@hotmail.com)



### Membership Committee Report for April 2021

This quarters membership stats are 8 new members and 1 reinstated member. Unfortunately, we dropped 4 members that were 3 years past in with their dues and 3 that have passed on. For those who have a date on their Dashpot mailing label of Oct. 2019 and 2020, please submit your dues as soon as possible to stay current! If you find that there might be an error with the date printed on the mailing label, let me know and we'll fix it. My contact information is on page 2 of this publication. Remember, there are two ways you can send in your dues. 1) You can mail your check to; Association of Minemen, P. O. Box 2180, Temple City CA, 91780 or 2) Electronic transaction by going to <https://form.jotform.com/90215855401148>

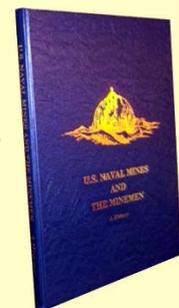
As always, thank you for your commitment to our Association!

Membership Chairman, Nate Miranda

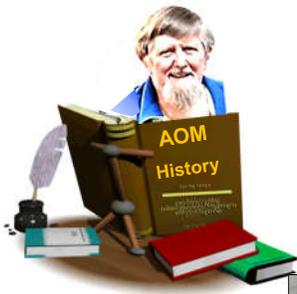
*Nate*



Visit the A.O.M. Ship's Store



<https://minemen.org/wp/memories/aom-ships-store/>



AOM Historian  
Don Moody



## FIRST GENERATION USN MINEMAN AT SEA

### PART I

This autobiographical letter submitted by former A.O.M. President G. Paul Santa Maria, captures the Author's experiences as an early MN and Mines Officer during World War II and after. LCDR Arthur W. Cook regales us with his duties from the Pacific Theater, to the Mediterranean and back to the Western Pacific. Unfortunately, the entire letter is too long for one issue of The Dashpot so the rest will appear in the Summer issue... enjoy!

Arthur W. Cook LCDR USN (Ret)  
51 Plymouth Lane, Bluffton  
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G. Paul Santa Maria  
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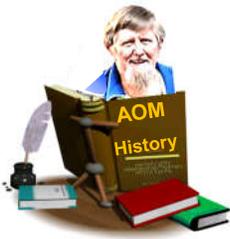
Hi:

This will likely be my last contact with you and the rest of the Men ( and Women ) of the Mine Forces. Both My Wife and I are 86 now, and are about to relocate to an Independent Living Facility in the North Chicago area. The overall health of the two of us is a long ways from being the best. This unit has a sister unit just across the driveway which is the Assisted Living Facility and has connections to the Chicago Hospitals.

I was a Gunner's Mate 3<sup>rd</sup> class, having been transferred from the USS Raleigh CL 7 as soon as I was promoted , on the Destroyer USS Dale DD 353. While on the ship a Mine Training Facility had been established in Pearl Harbor ( where the Supply Depot is or was thirty years ago ). A CPO by the name of De Forrest was the instructor for the Mark 5 and Mark 6 type mines. I understand that the man later became a Naval Captain and I heard that He was assigned to duty in the Southern parts of Thailand or/and Cambodia.

In the spring of 1941 the entire Pacific Fleet had been at sea for training exercises and was about to enter the Channel leading to Pearl Harbor. .

The USS Dale with Capt Womble and the Division Commander on board was the lead ship of the group of four Destroyers, and on the Honolulu side of the entire pacific Fleet. It was one of those days when you have intense rain squalls. We had received ordered to proceed through the fleet and assume Anti Submarine Detection positions to the South of the Fleet, using best 2 boiler speed. A Full Lt. was the Officer of the Deck and the Skipper and the Division Commander went to the rear of the bridge, to the Sea Cabin. We had proceeded pretty well into the heart of the fleet heading for the Pearl Harbor Channel. Where we entered a very heavy rain squall, the other three Ship of the Division were running a position Dog course 300 yards behind us. As we came out of one of these squalls I saw the USS Mississippi underway very close at a ninety degree angle to us. The Officer of the Deck froze ( issued no instructions ). I disobeyed all orders, grabbed the port engine control and ordered emergency astern, Spun the wheel all the way over to a port turn, asked the duty Quarter-Master to sound collision alarm, and notify the three ships on our stern as to what we were doing. We of course heeled way over and the Skipper and Div. Cmdr. came running onto the bridge. The Skipper quickly ordered the Officer of the Deck below and to start packing His gear. The Skipper and the Div. Cmdr. then stood directly behind me. I believe we were on an opposite course from the USS Mississippi , with maybe a six foot clearance between the two hulls. When we reached the stern of the Mississippi I resumed the stated course and placed the port engine control to full ahead again. When things got a bit quieter the Skipper asked with these words "



# FIRST GENERATION USN MINEMAN

## AT SEA

### PART I- CONTINUED

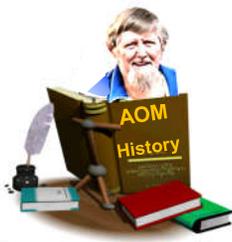
Now what in Hell Happened here" I told Cmdr. Womble about just as I have typed above, and He & the Div. Cmdr. thanked me.

I was on the Helm for the 2000 to 2400 watch on the night of December 5<sup>th</sup>, 1941. We had received a copy of a message from an Aussi. Submarine, to the effect that a large Japanese Fleet ( including about 5 Aircraft Carriers,) had been sighted by this Sub. The Japanese Fleet was about half way between Japan and Hawaii at this time. The Aussi. was very low on fuel and had to break off and head to Aussi. for refueling.

Shortly after the above event I was transferred to the USS Aylwin DD 355. Soon there after I was sent TAD to the Mine Warfare School, Yorktown Virginia to attend the third class there. I believe I did pretty well in this class. I returned to the USS Aylwin after I completed the course in this school

On December 7<sup>th</sup> 11941 I was in the Duty Section on board the USS Aylwin. The day before I had been to the Supply Depot and acquired three Thompson Sub-Machine guns for the ship. I had placed them in the Armory planning to get them ready for use the next day, Sunday, being that I was in the duty section for that day. After breakfast I picked up these guns and was walking to the stern of the Ship. I was right by the Starboard 50 Cal. Machine gun, and could see between the two sets of torpedo tubes. I heard a load noise and look between the tubes towards the USS Utah. I saw a spout of something black rising from the Ship and also saw a Japanese plane flying low towards our Destroyer nest. The USS Monohan was providing steam, power and so on to the USS Farragut, Dale and Aylwin. The USS Aylwin was moored by cable to the after buoy and by anchor chain to the forward buoy, with the other three ships moored to us in the nest. I quickly ripped the canvas off of the machine gun and started shooting at every aircraft I saw. The sky was full of low flying Japanese aircraft. We got strafed a couple of times. The Monohan quickly cut free and headed for sea, as per the flag hoist on the signal tower " Emergency Sail " She found a midget Japanese Submarine in the Harbor, rammed same to sink it, and then ran aground Herself, but was able to back off and proceed to sea. The Dale and the Farragut soon got underway and head out. Our only Officers on board were two very young Ensigns, with little to no sea training. When we had steam we slipped the anchor chain and used an axe to cut the stern mooring wire. The Ensigns drove the ship forward. over the forward buoy, ran aground, backed off again running over the forward buoy and for good measure the after buoy also. We had a lot of vibration in the fantail, but went to sea anyhow. The fleet was miles ahead of us on a westerly, or south westerly course. When they zigzagged we zigzagged in the opposite direction. Several days later when we got back into the Harbor we were put in the floating dry dock. They did some repair work but sent us back to Mare Island for major repairs. We were, in company with a four stack Destroyer as Submarine protection for about a dozen merchant ships. One fault with this was that neither the four stacker nor us had any usable submarine detection equipment that would work. We zigged and zagged as though we had and everyone was happy with the display.

A few months later I was transferred back to the Mine Warfare School at Yorktown, Va. as an instructor. I remained here for several months or so. While here I took the Exam for



# FIRST GENERATION USN MINEMAN

## AT SEA

### PART 1- CONTINUED

Chief Petty Officer and also, at the same time Warrant Officer. I knew that I had creamed both of the exams, but got a surprise when the Skipper called me into His Office and told me I was then a CPO, thankfully I bought only one new uniform, for a week later I was called to His office again and was told that I was then an Warrant Gunner, Mines. I was too bust to go buy uniforms and or to move out of the enlisted quarters. Another week passed and again I was called into the Skipper's office and was told that I could be a CPO, a Warrant Officer, or an Ensign. I selected the Ensign. The Skipper then told me, after I had asked for the rest of the afternoon off, that I had one hour to get all my gear out of the enlisted quarters and into the Officers Qtrs. ( I had a room assigned to me also, and hence forwards I have all my meals in the Wardroom. About a month later I was transferred, along with a Warrant Gunner, and four mine men to the USS Salem CM 11, based at the Yorktown Mine Depot. I quickly found out that we were not welcome on board this vessel. he Skipper was a peg leg man and the entire crew was from one Reserve outfit someplace down in Texas. Shortly thereafter we got underway for the Med. We could make 8 knots if the wind was with us. Had about three feet freeboard, had railroad tracks( from the day that this ship and at least one other, were train ferries from Key West to Cuba, which ended when the hurricane washed out miles of the train tracks, and these ships, with old steam reciprocating engines and the ships had been laid up, with no maintenance accomplished for a number of years. When the work was accomplished in North Africa we received orders to carry a load of mines to the Pacific. We were moored at the Ammo. Depot West Locke when the five LST' caught fire, with our engines completed disabled, and lucky for us a tug go a line onto one of the LSTs that was on fire and drifting down towards us..

While at West Locke I was assigned to the Mine Assembly area, where a Warrant Officer, who had been my boss at the mine school, prior to my becoming an Ensign had later been promoter to Lt JG and was now my boss once again, until I reported back to the USS Salem and we departed for Kwajalein Atoll. After a few days stey here, and due to our slow speed, we departed Kwajalein Atoll heading for Saipan, which was about to be invaded. The harbor was full of Japanese ships of all types that our planes had sunk in preparation for our attack.

While here I along with a Doctor and six mine-men received orders to proceed back to the States for a months leave and recreation. We had to wait on a semi sunken LST for a merchant ship for passage to Pearl Harbor. When I reported in at Pearl Harbor I was given instructions to take the group to a merchant passenger ship, ten at the dock, to pick cabins on the upper decks plus an envelope to be opened when we were at sea, off Diamond Head that night. Mrs. Roosevelt was in Hawaii and She had ordered the local police, the Shore Patrol & etc. to gather all the Girls of Ill Repute up, after five PM, after the banks were all closed, allowing them one small suitcase each put them on busses and take them to the same ship we were on. There they were to be allowed to pick one cabin, on the lower decks for each two girls. When we were off Diamond Head about 0100 I did open the letter I had been given. It said, you nor any of the men with you will have anything to do with the females, and you will station your enlisted men so as to prevent any ships crew to get on the same deck as the women are located on, except when really necessary for the ships operation. Now had been a cruise ship in the Med. and there were



# AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

## REPORT FROM NMC COMOMAG

by MN1 (EXW/SW) Dwight D. Moore II

Greetings from Commanding Officer, Mobile Mine Assembly Group (COMOMAG). We hope all is well during these uncertain times and with warmer weather and COVID-19 vaccinations on the horizon we're all hoping for a return to normalcy and for the COMOMAG family in particular, a return to productivity and doing what we do best: Certifications and inspections. The N31 Service Mines Division Team led by **Mr. David M. Epton** will be traveling to Navy Munitions Command Okinawa (NMC) and Seal Beach for Mine Readiness Assist Visits (MRAV). MRAV's are an integral part of the mine readiness certification process ensuring all NMC's are compliant with current publications and instructions. While the MRAV's are not the actual inspections, it provides valuable feedback to the NMC's to identify areas of improvement prior to the certifying inspection.



The COMOMAG family would like to bid farewell to **LCDR Brent E. Ricker**. He served as COMOMAG's Executive Officer from May 2019 to March 2021. Fair winds and following seas in your new role as the Electronics Material Officer aboard USS TRIPOLI (LHA-7). LCDR Ricker stood properly relieved by **LCDR Antonio Barcelos Jr.**, a California native who previously served as the Combat Systems Maintenance Officer aboard USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN-71). Also, we welcome onboard **MNC (SW) Kelly B. Vosika** from Japan based MCM USS PIONEER (MCM-9), and **MN3 Cassidy L. Hannan** from Training Support Center San Diego.



MK 67

**YN2 (SW/AW) Mercedes L. Payne** served as COMOMAG's Admin LPO from Jan 2017 to Dec 2020. She was an invaluable asset who contributed greatly to the high standard that COMOMAG maintains. She was invited to attend our Women's History Month training where, unbeknownst to her, we celebrated her contribution by meritoriously advancing her to the rank of Yeoman First Class!

**Congratulations YN1 Payne**, your advancement is well deserved!





# AROUND THE MINE WARFARE FLEET

Navy Munitions Command Pacific, CONUS West Division Unit Seal Beach  
 By MN2 (SW) Colton Cook

## ~MISSION UPDATES~

Operations continue at NMC Seal Beach as the Sailors provide ET assets across the fleet. We recently supported a 340<sup>th</sup> mine recovery in North Island, CA and have increased OPTEMPO for exercise mining with the new P-8/MINEX integration.



Support from two COMOMAG Sailors support 340<sup>th</sup> mine recovery. MN2(SW)Cook, MN2 Daniels, and MN2(SW) Brown from NMC Seal Beach.



Construction has been completed on our new auto reclaiming abrasive blast booth system. This state of the art booth greatly increases our refurbishment output and fleet support capability .

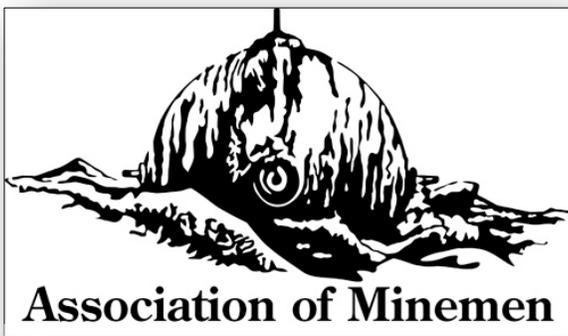


The Mine Assembly Team (MAT) conducting training build, left to right personnel listed as follows: MN2(SW) Price, MN2(SW) Rigor, and MN2(SW) Valenzuela.

Seal Beach continues to prepare for MRCI and satisfy mine upgrade requirements, conducting hands- on buildup training twice a week to ensure proficiency is above the standard!



MNC (ret.) Frank Strunk displaying his AOM Flag and Deployment Streamers...NICE!



# REUNION 2021 - IT'S ON!



After the unfortunate, but necessary cancellation of the 46th AOM Reunion in 2020, we are happy to announce that the location and dates have been nailed down for the 47th AOM Reunion.

WHEN: 14-17 OCT 21

WHERE: HILTON GARDEN INN, CHARLESTON, 5265 International Blvd, North Charleston, SC 29418

- Reservation Phone Number (24/7) – 843-308-9330
- Group Name – Minemen Reunion (14 – 17 Oct)
- Room Rate, taxes & fees and breakfast included for 2 - \$143.85
- (Reunion pricing available 3 days pre and 3 days post reunion date)
- Free Airport Shuttle and hotel parking
- Reservations must be made by 24 Sep 21



## 51 Years

**Celebrating the Closing of  
Azuma Island Japan  
Mine Shop  
Reunion 2021  
Charleston, SC**

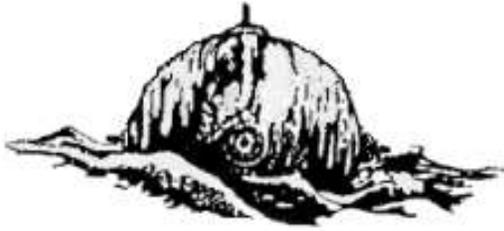


The 51st anniversary of the closing of the Naval Ordnance Facility on Azuma Island in Yokosuka Japan will be held in conjunction with the 2021 AOM East Coast Reunion to be held in Charleston, SC. All former Minemen and Shipmates in other ratings who served there, are invited... AOM members or not!

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)



**ASSOCIATION OF MINEMEN  
47th ANNUAL REUNION &  
MEETING - OCT. 14-17, 2021  
CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
REGISTRATION FORM**

DATE

NAME

FIRST

LAST

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

AREA CODE

***PLATED DINNER - Sat. Oct. 16th (Includes tax and gratuity)***

**12 oz. RIBEYE STEAK - \$52.00**

Served with a Shallot Reduction, Fingerling Potatoes and Green Beans

**12 oz. BONE IN AIRLINE CHICKEN - \$40.00**

Served with Pan Fried Garlic Potatoes, Balsamic Glazed Brussel Sprouts,  
Topped with a Portabella Mushroom Cream Sauce

**Each Entree is served with:**

Fresh Baked Rolls and Butter, Choice of Salad, Freshly Brewed Coffee and Ice Tea and Dessert

**Salad Choices are: (Select One)**

House Salad with Balsamic and Ranch Dressings or Caesar Salad

**Desserts Choices are: (Select One)**

Key Lime Pie, New York Style Cheesecake, Chocolate Tier Cake or Pecan Pie

**Enhancements:** Add on She Crab Soup for an additional charge of \$4.00

**Auction Picnic Box Luncheon on Site - Sunday, Oct. 17th**

**MENU CHOICES - \$25.00**

**Club Sandwich**-Ham, Turkey, Roast Beef and Bacon, Swiss Cheese, Lettuce, Tomato and  
Onion. Served on a Ciabatta Roll

**Grilled Chicken Caesar Wrap**-Grilled Chicken, Chopped Romaine, Creamy Caesar Dressing  
and Parmesan Cheese, Wrapped in a Flour Tortilla

All Lunches are served with Potato Chips, an Apple, a Fresh Cookie and a choice of a  
Coca-Cola product.



## *SpiritLine Cruises & Fort Sumter Tours*

### "Live & Local" Dinner Cruise

Join other AOM members on this Special Dinner & Cruise Outing  
 The cruise is on Friday, Oct. 15th from 7 pm 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 is August 1, 2021.  
 So reserve your place now!  
 if we do not get the required tickets sold by then, you will get a refund!***

Tickets - \$73.00 (Includes tax and gratuity)

	COST EA.	QTY.	AMOUNT
Rib Eye Dinner	\$52.00		
Chicken Dinner	\$40.00		
She Crab Soup	\$4.00		
Picnic Lunch	\$25.00		
Dinner Cruise	\$73.00		
Membership			
Fee	\$5.00		
Annual Dues	\$15.00		
Reunion Fee	\$10.00	1	\$10.00
Scholarship Donation			
Beers Each Case			
Budweiser	\$39.00		
Bud Light	\$39.00		
Michelob Ultra	\$42.00		
Coors Light	\$39.00		
Miller Lite	\$39.00		
Heineken	\$43.00		
Yuengling Lager	\$39.00		
Wine Each Bottle			
Trinity Oaks Cabernet	\$14.00		
Trinity Oaks Merlot	\$14.00		
Trinity Oaks Chardonnay	\$14.00		
Trinity Oaks Pinot Grigio	\$14.00		
Sutter Home Zinfandel	\$14.00		
Seaglass Pinot Nior	\$18.00		
TOTAL DUE TO AOM			

### MEMBERSHIP SECTION

There is a \$5.00 fee for new or 3 years dues member.  
 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)*

Attach this form with your check payable to:  
 Association of Minemen  
 P. O. Box 2180 Temple City, CA 91780  
 Or if you prefer to submit your registration  
 form on line, go to this secure site;  
<https://www.jotform.com/90268038916160>  
 You do not need to have a PayPal account to  
 utilize this method.



# Naval History and Heritage Command

## U.S. Mining and Mine Clearance in North Vietnam

By Edward J. Marolda

During the Rolling Thunder bombing campaign (1965-1968), the U.S. Navy's carrier air squadrons released thousands of mines along the enemy's key supply routes in the "panhandle" area of North Vietnam. The object of the operation was to make vehicular and other movement around ferry crossing sites, railway and highway bridges, storage areas, truck parks, and fuel dumps difficult if not prohibitive for the enemy. Carrier attack aircraft also "seeded" inland waterways and roads used by the Communists to transport munitions into Laos and South Vietnam. The weapons used were Mark 36 Destructors, which contained 500 pounds of explosives and detonated when trucks, tanks, or other metal objects disturbed their magnetic fields. Neither the Navy's mining effort nor the overall bombing campaign stopped the flow of munitions to the fighting front but they forced the enemy to devote scarce resources to defense of his supply line.

Another mining operation, which the Navy carried out during 1972 and early 1973, had an even greater impact on the war. Early on the morning of 8 May 1972, aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* (CVA 43) launched three Marine A-6 Intruders and six Navy A-7 Corsair attack planes toward the coast of North Vietnam. Shortly afterward, the naval aircraft laid strings of thirty-six 1,000-pound Mark 52 mines in the water approaches to Haiphong, through which most of North Vietnam's imported war material and all of its fuel supply passed. During succeeding months, other carrier aircraft dropped thousands of mines and 500-pound, Mark 36 Destructors in the seaways of North Vietnam's secondary ports and "reseeded" the Haiphong approaches.

For the remainder of 1972, twenty-seven Sino-Soviet bloc merchant ships chose to remain immobile in Haiphong rather than risk a transit of the mined waters. The mining campaign, along with U.S. air attacks on North Vietnam's supply lines ashore, helped cut short the enemy's "Easter Offensive" in South Vietnam. Eventually, the mining operation and the Linebacker bombing campaign induced the North Vietnamese to negotiate an end to the war.

On 27 January 1973, American and North Vietnamese officials signed a protocol to the Paris agreement that called for the United States to neutralize the mines that the Navy had dropped in North Vietnam's coastal and inland waterways.

On 28 January, following months of preparation, Rear Admiral Brian McCauley's Mine Countermeasures Force (Task Force 78), of the Seventh Fleet, deployed from Subic Bay in the Philippines to Haiphong. To coordinate actions, on 5 February Commander Task Force 78 met in the city with his North Vietnamese opposite, Colonel Hoang Huu Thai. Operation End Sweep began the next day, when ocean minesweepers Engage (MSO-433), Force (MSO-445, Fortify (MSO 446), and Impervious (MSO-449) swept waters off the coast near Haiphong. Guided missile frigate *Worden* (DLG



18) and destroyer *Epperson* (DD 719) stood by in case the North Vietnamese tried to interfere with the effort. Later that month, amphibious ships *New Orleans* (LPH 11, *Dubuque* (LPD 8), *Ogden* (LPD 5), *Cleveland* (LPD 7), and *Inchon* (LPH 12) joined the task force. On board the newly arriving ships were 31 CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters from the Navy's Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 12 and from Marine helicopter squadrons HMM-165 and HMH-463. The Sea Stallions towed minesweeping sleds and other devices. During the six months of Operation End Sweep, 10 ocean minesweepers, 9 amphibious ships, 6 fleet tugs, 3 salvage ships, and 19 destroyer types operated in Task Force 78.

The helicopters swept the main shipping channel to Haiphong on 27 February and the ports of Hon Gai and Cam Pha on 17 March. In early April, Commander Task Force 78 deployed to the formerly mined waters MSS 2, a decommissioned LST filled with buffer material and crewed by volunteers. The ship carried out eight passages of the Haiphong channel to make sure no mines remained active in the vital waterway. Elsewhere in North Vietnam, U.S. Navy technical personnel prepared 50 North Vietnamese sailors to conduct their own minesweeping operations. While this was taking place, a number of U.S. C-130 transport aircraft delivered minesweeping gear to Cat Bi Airfield outside the city. Until 17 April, the Navy task force continued its mission. Then, because Hanoi failed to carry out its obligations under the Paris agreement, Washington ordered a suspension of minesweeping operations. End Sweep resumed on 18 June when American leaders were persuaded that the North Vietnamese would once again act in good faith. Shortly afterward, Admiral McCauley notified the North Vietnamese that the ports of Haiphong, Hon Gai, and Cam Pha were free from the threat of American-laid mines. Next, Task Force 78 concentrated on the coastal areas off Vinh. Finally, on 18 July 1973, McCauley led his flotilla out to sea, officially ending Operation End Sweep.

Reproduced with permission from: Tucker, Spencer C., ed. *Encyclopedia of the Vietnam War: A Political, Social, and Military History*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1998.



Sailors from the aircraft carrier *Coral Sea* load Mk 52 mines on an A-7E Corsair II assigned to the Mighty Shrikes of Attack Squadron VA-94. (National Archives)

# MINE WARFARE IN THE NEWS



## General Dynamics Delivers First Knifefish Surface MCM UUV to U.S. Navy

Posted on [March 19, 2021](#) by [Seapower Staff](#)

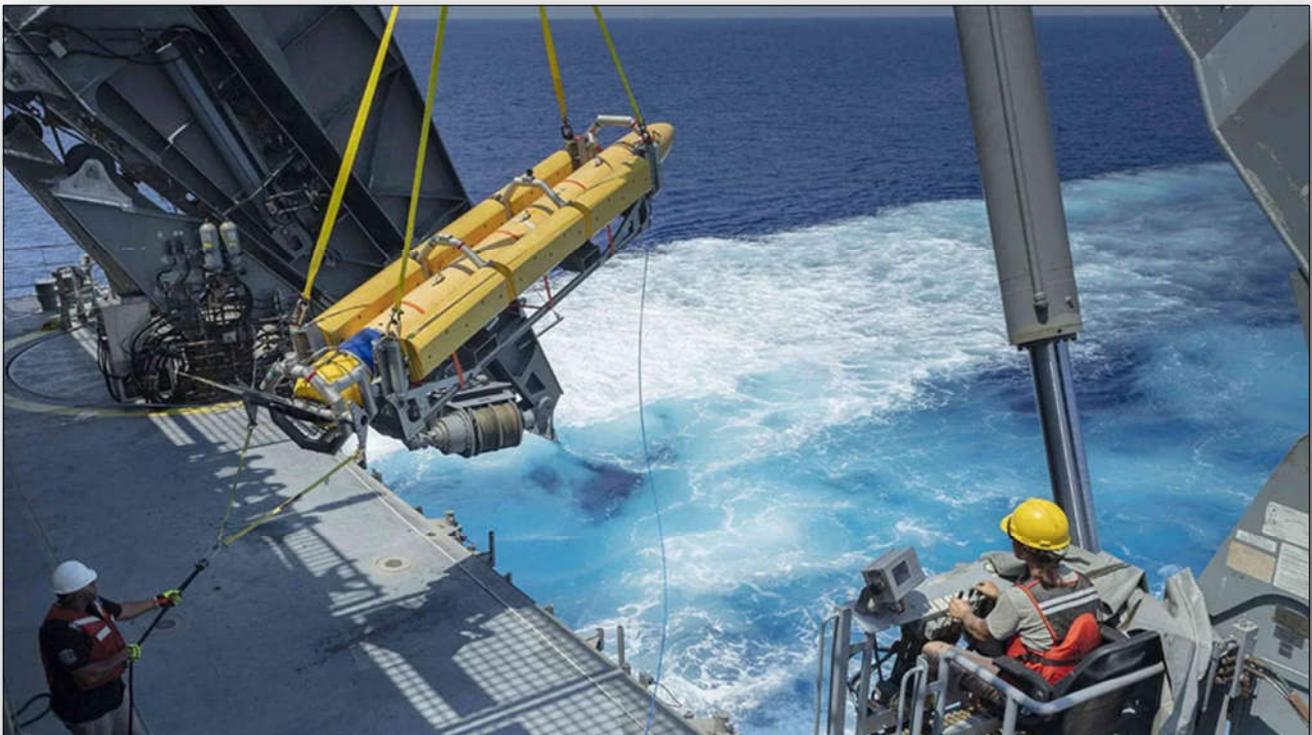
QUINCY, Mass. – General Dynamics Mission Systems recently delivered the first Knifefish surface mine countermeasure unmanned underwater vehicle (UUV) system under a contract awarded by the U.S. Navy on Aug. 26, 2019, the company said in a March 18 release.

The contract, awarded immediately after a successful Milestone C decision and approval to enter low-rate initial production, calls for the procurement of five Knifefish systems (10 total UUVs) and support equipment.

Knifefish is a medium class mine countermeasure UUV intended for deployment from the Navy's littoral combat ship and other Navy vessels of opportunity. Knifefish will reduce risk to personnel by operating within minefields as an off-board sensor while the host ship stays outside the minefield boundaries.

"Together with the U.S. Navy's Program Executive Office for Unmanned and Small Combatants, our Knifefish team has worked to deliver critical mine countermeasure mission capabilities to protect our Sailors," said Carlo Zaffanella, vice president and general manager at General Dynamics Mission Systems. "We designed Knifefish using an open architecture concept that can be quickly and efficiently modified to accommodate a wide range of missions."

General Dynamics Mission Systems is the prime contractor for the Knifefish program. The company designed the tactical UUV using an open architecture concept that can be quickly and efficiently modified to accommodate a wide range of missions. The Knifefish SMCM UUV is based on the General Dynamics Bluefin Robotics Bluefin-21 deep-water autonomous undersea vehicle.



***The first Knifefish surface mine countermeasure UUV system has been delivered to U.S. Navy six months after final acceptance tests were completed.***

# MINE WARFARE IN THE NEWS



## Hydroid wins contract with US Navy for MK 18 Mod 2

**Naval News April 2021 Navy Forces Maritime Defense Industry**

POSTED ON WEDNESDAY, 14 APRIL 2021 16:06

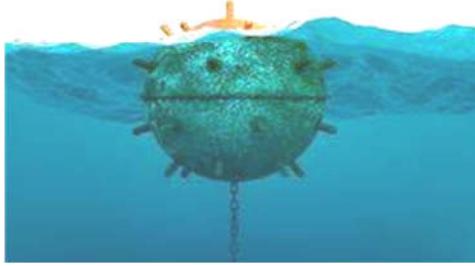
According to information published by US Department of Defense on April 13, 2021, Hydroid Inc., Pocasset, Massachusetts, is awarded a \$74,700,000 indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity contract, containing firm-fixed-price provisions. This contract is for the procurement of MK 18 Mod 2 Unmanned Underwater Vehicle (UUV) Increment II Payload Upgrade hardware, in support of the existing MK 18 Mod 2 UUV program. Work will be performed in Pocasset, Massachusetts, and is expected to be completed in April 2026. Fiscal 2021 other procurement (Navy) funds in the amount of \$2,112,827 will be obligated at time of award on the first delivery order and will not expire at the end of the current fiscal year.

MK 18 Mod 2 Kingfish UUV is based on the REMUS 600 and has increased area coverage rate (ACR), increased endurance, and will serve as a platform for advanced sensors. The Kingfish Small Synthetic Aperture Sonar Module (SSAM) configuration provides wider swath, higher resolution imagery, and buried target detection.

The REMUS Autonomous Undersea Vehicle (AUV) was first developed in the late 1990s for the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute by Hydroid, a subsidiary of Kongsberg Maritime. The man-portable class 36 kg REMUS 100 AUV is used by the U.S. Navy for shallow water mine countermeasures (MCM) and hydrographic reconnaissance. The Japanese Defense Ministry operates four of the REMUS 600 meter variants and one REMUS 100 for seafloor mapping and MCM.



# MINE WARFARE AT SEA - The Battle for Norway



## March 28th 1940 – Operation Wilfred – The mining of Norwegian Coastal Waters.

The Anglo-French Supreme War Council met in London and agreed that neither Britain nor France would make a separate peace with Germany. The Council also agreed upon Operation Wilfred, a plan to lay mines in Norwegian coastal waters in the hopes of provoking a German response that would legitimize Allied "assistance" to Norway.

Operation Wilfred involved the mining of the channel between Norway and her offshore islands to prevent the transport of Swedish iron ore through neutral Norwegian waters to be used to sustain the German war effort. The Allies assumed that Wilfred would provoke a German response in Norway and prepared a separate operation known as Plan R 4 to occupy Narvik and other important locations.

On 8 April 1940, the operation was partly carried out, but was overtaken by events as a result of the following day's German invasion of Norway and Denmark (Operation Weserübung), which began the Norwegian Campaign. In the early morning of 9 April 1940 (*Wesertag*, "Weser Day"), Germany occupied Denmark and invaded Norway, ostensibly as a preventive maneuver against a planned, and openly discussed, French-British occupation of Norway (Plan R 4 was actually developed as a response to any German aggression against Norway). After the occupation of Denmark (the Danish military was ordered to stand down, as Denmark did not declare war with Germany), envoys of the Germans informed the governments of Denmark and Norway that the Wehrmacht had come to protect the countries' neutrality against Franco-British aggression.





**James Richard Coffman Sr. (MN1)**  
**August 17, 1931 to February 20, 2020**  
**Past AOM President 89-92**

Born to Raymond S. Coffman and Olive E. Quick. He was the youngest of six children. He grew up in Bloomsburg, Pa. and graduated from high school in 1948. His dream was to become a Navy Sailor and he attended Naval Basic Training in Great Lakes, Illinois beginning his Navy career. In 1952 he met his future Wife, Anita. They married and this glorious relationship lasted just a few months short of sixty (60) years. On active duty, he traveled with his new wife to various duty stations, including Sicily, mainland Italy, Germany, and France. Wherever Jim was stationed they were by each other's side always making friends and keeping to the highest standards. Jim's Naval career as a Mineman, meant working on mines and torpedoes, which he found very rewarding. He retired from the Navy in 1968 and he entered into Law Enforcement Training with the Hampton Virginia Police Department. He remained on the Police Force until 1974, then began civil service work as a Security Officer and a Technical Rep for mines and torpedoes. He retired from Civil Service in 1989. In 1990, Jim and Anita relocated to Zellwood Station, FL then eventually to Tangerine, FL where he established a new group of friends. His hobbies included Bowling, NASCAR Racing, Karaoke, RV'ing around the country, and a love for Poodles. He loved camping and visited over 95% of the United States. He was a member of the VFW, American Legion, Association of Minemen and the Moose Lodge. He is the father of three sons and the grandfather of four grandchildren and a great grandfather of seven. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife, Anita in 2012



**Richard D. Schommer, MNCM**  
**(Retired)**  
**DOB 1942 - DOD April 11, 2021**  
**Past AOM President 83-89**



**Russell W. Schreurs, MNCS**  
**(Retired)**  
**Fair Winds and Following Seas**  
**DOB 1 November 1945**  
**DOD 8 March 2021, Ladson, SC**

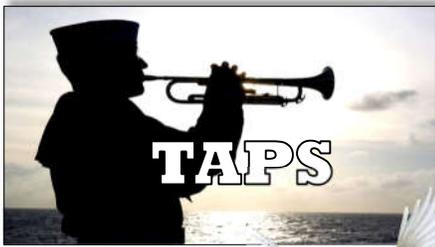


**Chief Warrant Officer W-4**  
**James Francis McDonough, 84,** of Moncks Corner entered into eternal rest on March 10, 2021, surrounded by his children and loved ones. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Eva Eleanor Yearwood McDonough. James is survived by his children, Elizabeth Ann McDonough, Susan Bernice McDonough Hatch, Timothy Michael McDonough and John Francis McDonough, eight grandchildren, six great-grandchildren and extended family in New York. Mr. McDonough retired from the U.S. Navy as a Chief Warrant Officer after 27 years of service to our country. He was a devoted and faithful Catholic. James was well loved and will be greatly missed.



**Francis Paul La Fleur,** age 86, of Phoenix, passed away on Sunday, March 28, 2021 in Phoenix, Arizona. He was born on September 7, 1934 to the late Arthur and Mary (Kitzenberger) La Fleur in Queens, NY. Frank attended New York School of Printing in Manhattan graduating class of 1952; then furthered his education at Glendale Community College obtaining an Associate's degree in Computer Science. On September 15, 1956, he married Helen Podhirny in Brooklyn, NY. Frank was a proud member of the United States Navy serving as a Mineman for 22 years obtaining the rank of Chief Warrant Officer W-2. He worked as a Quality Assurance Manager for the Department of Defense until his retirement in 1996. Frank enjoyed golf, boating, fishing, gardening, and spending time with his family. Frank is survived by his loving spouse of 64 years, Helen; two children, Denise (Lyndon) Edmonson and Chris (Tammy) La Fleur; three grandchildren, Caden, Adison, Amelya La Fleur; and many other loving family and friends. He was preceded in death by his son, Michael La Fleur; grandson, Kenneth Vance; and three brothers, Edward, Paul, and Ernest La Fleur.



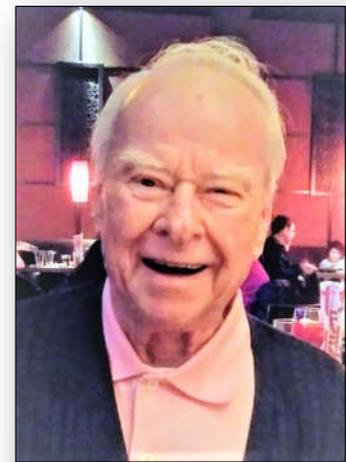


**Command Master Chief (Retired) Thomas Leonard Meglen Jr., 59**, passed away on February 16th, at his home in Portland, Texas after a seven-year battle with Multiple System Atrophy. Thomas was born on May 20, 1961, in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania to Thomas L. Meglen Sr. and Gwen Meglen. He is survived by his wife of 34 years, Suzanne Meglen; their children Shaun Meglen, Lindsay Woodruff, Kurtis Meglen, Kelly Curran (Cameron), Ryan Meglen; and his grandchildren. Tom retired as a Command Master Chief after serving proudly for 27 years in the United States Navy. Tom was a great asset to our degaussing and magnetic control team and he will be missed. Tom was in the minesweeping business for over 30 years. Some of his active duty stations were: Minesweeping Boatswains Mate (BM) on multiple MSO-421 Class ships (Minesweeping Ocean) ships. Mine man (MN) aboard multiple MCM-1 class ships. Command Master Chief at Mine Division 31 in Bahrain Command Master Chief at Command Mine Warfare Command (CMWC) Corpus Christi Texas. Command Master Chief on USS San Antonio LPD-17. Tom made Master Chief in 16 years in the Navy changing from Boatswains Mate (BM) to Mineman (MN). On his leave time he went to sonar and MNV (mine neutralization vehicle) school to make sure he could do his new combat responsibilities.

His favorite things were his three grandchildren, the Pittsburgh Steelers, powdered donuts, and mini-Starbursts (or any other candy he could get his hands on!!). He will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved him. A memorial service / celebration of life was held on March 20th in Rockport, Tx.



**Commander Neil (Nobby) Hall, Royal Navy**, Vice Chairman of the *Ton Class Association*, Crossed the Bar in hospital on Tuesday 20 April, having finally lost his battle with a re-surgent cancer. Like many of us, Nobby's introduction to the Royal Navy was via the Sea Cadets and he then graduated to the RNVR as a teenager, spending weekends afloat and venturing as far as Gibraltar on a ROCKHAUL exercise. Nobby joined the regular Royal Navy as a Junior Seaman (Mine Warfare) in 1975 and served in HM ships FITTLETON, ALFRISTON, KELLINGTON and WASPERTON. He was selected as an Upper Yardman and recategorized to Radar Plotter to gain Operations Room experience before he was commissioned as a Midshipman at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth in 1981. He subsequently served as a Watchkeeping Officer in HM Ships ANDROMEDA (1982/83), PHOEBE (1984/85), ARETHUSA (1986), BROADSWORD (1987/88) and BLACKWATER (1989). After qualifying as a Principal Warfare Officer (Air) at DRYAD in 1990, his appointments included BIRMINGHAM (1991/93), DRYAD (1994), ILLUSTRIOUS (1995/96), NEPTUNE (1997/98), OCEAN (1999/2000) and HQ British Forces Cyprus (2001/04). On retiring as a Lieutenant Commander in 2005, Nobby joined the RN Reserve and was attached to HMS KING ALFRED on Whale Island in Portsmouth from where he was promoted to Commander while working in Information Operations. His latest appointment was a NATO role at SHAPE in Mons, Belgium as Executive Officer for Information Operations. Over a 45 year career in the RN, Nobby Hall saw active service in the Falklands, Northern Ireland, Persian Gulf, Balkans, and Sierra Leone in HM Ships ranging from Patrol Craft to Aircraft Carrier. He was awarded the Continuous Campaign Service Medal for **having spent over 1000 days in combat zones**. Nobby made a mark as Vice Chairman of TCA and was actively involved with other ship Associations and Naval Charities. He will be greatly missed and stories of his exploits will be told for years to come.



**Gerald Allan "Chip" Chipman** was born on February 10, 1932 in Pleasantville, New York and passed January 31, 2021. The oldest son of Allan and Mary Chipman, Gerald, along with younger brother, Robert, grew up in Pleasantville and attended the local schools. After graduating from Pleasantville High School, Gerald entered the United States Navy and began his military career. Gerry "Chip" spent the next 20 years in the Navy, traveling the world and serving in both the Korean conflict and Vietnam War. He served with distinction and achieved the rank of Mine- man Chief Petty Officer. Gerry belonged to the Association of Mineman and kept in contact with his shipmates. When he retired from the Navy, Gerry settled down in San Diego, California. He joined the United Parcel Service (UPS), the Teamsters Union and began his second career. Gerry became quite popular at work and had many friends. After a brief first marriage ended, he met and married his second wife, Keiko in 1972. She had two young daughters from a previous marriage, Tina and Lucy. Together, they became an instant and loving family. Gerry and Keiko bought a new house, raised their daughters and built a happy life together. Gerry became the neighborhood "handyman" and was quite a familiar figure on their street, taking walks in the morning, a cup of coffee in hand. "Chip" could talk to anyone about anything, especially cars. After 37 years of marriage, Gerry's second wife, Keiko passed away in May of 2009. About a year later, Gerry met and married his current wife, Keiko. They spent ten years together, entertaining family, friends and traveling to their favorite places. On January 31st, at the age of 88, Gerry passed away peacefully at home, surrounded by his family. He is survived by his wife Keiko, stepdaughters Tina and Lucy, son-in-law Vince, Lucy's children and grandchildren. Gerry also has a large extended family in New York and Keiko's family in Japan. He will be greatly missed as a husband, stepfather, friend, neighbor and in his own words, "the last of the good guys".



**Thomas, J, Cloud, MN3** - January 6, 1946 - December 4, 2020, passed away on December 4th, 2020, after a short battle with COVID-19. Tom was born January 6th, 1946, in Jay, Oklahoma. He attended the University of Oklahoma for a short time before joining the Navy in 1967. He served as a Mineman in Japan before returning to OU, where he completed a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Design and a Master's degree in Architecture. Tom served as an architect for the United States Department of Treasury. Over the years, he taught English to Japanese students in Japan, architecture at Oklahoma State University, and math and technology to middle and high school students at Milwood, Jackson, and Lexington public schools. Despite his complicated medical history, Tom remained positive, upbeat, and passionate about life until the very end.



**Harris L. Crowley Jr. MN2 (USNR)**

**DOB 3/2/50 - DOD 6/28/20, Seward, AK**

Harris Crowley was born and raised in Charleston, SC. He joined the Navy in Jan 1971 and was stationed at Mobile Mine Assembly Unit Pacific (MOMAU PAC) in Long Beach, CA. He deployed as part of a four man team aboard USS Oriskany (CVA-34) and made one six month WestPac cruise. Harris was released from active duty in Dec 1972, and returned to South Carolina and earned his engineering degree at Clemson University. He went on to be the Executive Vice President of KMET Corporation. He retired in 2003.



**Silas J Wooten, MNC (Retired)**, Meridian, MS, DOB: 6 Jan 1934 - DOD: 10 Dec 2020. Mr. Wooten, 86, of Meridian, died Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020, at Anderson Regional Medical Center. He is survived by his wife, Gloria Wiley-Wooten; his son, Stephon Wooten; his grandchildren: Jerry and Anthony Wooten both of Calif.; brothers, Charles, and Jimmy Wooten both of Meridian, Robert Harris of Hoover, Ala., John Harris of Vallejo, Calif.; sisters, Ann Lawson of Birmingham, Ala., Ollie Thompson, Janice Hale, and Bernadine Moore all of Meridian, Helen Reed of Tustin, Calif., and Estella Solomon of San Diego, Calif. and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

**Gerald Allen Chipman MN3**, Bonita, CA, DOB: 10 Feb 1932 - DOD: 31 Jan 2021

**William Jennings Smith, MN**, High Point NC, DOB: 22 Jul 1947 - DOD: 8 Aug 2020,

**Edward P Grena MN**, Brownsville PA, DOB: 6 Jan 1928 - DOD: 24 Dec 2019,

**Marius J " Chip" Strybosch, MN**, Ocala, FL, DOB: ? - DOD: 26 Oct 2019

**Walter W "Buttsy" Petters, MN**, East McKeesport, PA, DOB: 16 Mar 1937 - DOD: 30 Aug 2018

**James B Hoffert, MN**, Salisbury, MD, DOB: 7 Aug 1938 - DOD: 8 Nov 2018

**Ronald J St Pierre, MN3 (R)**, Lynn, MA, DOB: ? - DOD Oct 2018

**Kevin D. Nuckel, MN2**, DOB: 1961 - DOD 2021



## The Binnacle List



Clare Balderrama reports that Joe has been hospitalized with a severe Urinary Tract Infection since April 16. He is feeling better now. However, he now needs dialysis. He won't be released until local dialysis arrangements can be made. Which she hopes will be soon. With this news she doubts they will be able to attend the reunion due to dialysis restrictions.



Allan Broyles underwent a procedure to place a heart stent after a close call. He is now discharged and at home with his beautiful wife Luz and faithful, protective pup "Angel".



Past AOM President G. Paul Santa Maria (01-04) is on the Binnacle List after suffering from a couple of bouts with Congestive Heart failure. He is on oxygen 24/7 and has a slight speech problem. He will be 99 this year. Paul sends his greetings to all.





# Mineman Miscellany

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



*L* Helen N. LaFleur  
16643 N. 19th St.  
Phoenix, AZ 85022

April 21-2021

To the Association:

It is with a sad heart I write to you about the passing of my husband, Francis B. LaFleur. He always looked forward to all the news each time he received one of the News-letters. He was proud of being in the Navy and serving his country. We all at home will miss him forever-

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Helen LaFleur

just to pass it on, I did get me a Harley trike and have made one 567 mile trip to Albertan, Ga to see the Georgia guidestones. getting ready for a ride to Lake Erie in June this year. everyone be safe and take care.



mike whitener



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**  
1375 Ashley River Rd  
Charleston, SC 29407  
843-544-8535



Please go to our AOM website and check to see if your information is correct, at:  
<https://minemen.org/wp/memories/address-info/minemen-list/>

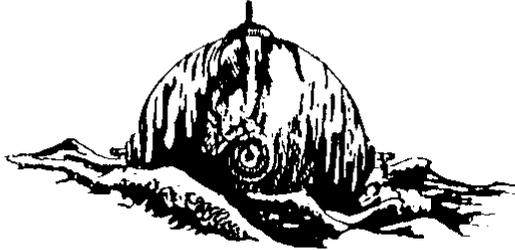
If corrections are needed, or if you are a paid member and not listed, please contact Don Moody at his email address listed on page 2.

Don't forget to pay your AOM dues.  
Only \$15 !! keep getting "The DASHPOT"

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1974 - 2021

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

TEL \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

-----  
ELEGIBILITY \_\_\_\_\_ APPROVED \_\_\_\_\_

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