



## **USS Piper (SS409)**

### **PIPER REPORT**

**FEBRUARY 2017**

13 February 2017

Dear Shipmates:

The 2015 Piper Reunion in Cleveland was awesome, considering all the activities we were able to enjoy at the USS Cod, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, a Cleveland Indians baseball game, and our authentic Polish Dinner and Polka party. All of this happened thanks to local planning and coordination by Shipmate Tom Kucharski and his wife Char.

What next? As long as I and Mike Hubbard are still above ground, why not keep it going as long as we can. There seems to be support for another reunion this year. As a reminder, 2017 is the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the decommissioning of Piper. That said, we will be hosting a reunion this summer.

I have arranged with Groton Base to host us again during the weekend of Friday 18 August through Sunday 20 August 2017. I will be contacting the Navy about the availability of Adm. Fife Park in Stonington to have another Piper Clambake, which has been a great event at past reunions.

As you'll note, the pricing and availability have yet to be determined. However, that element is listed but pending.

I know this seems early, but when planning an event like this, it is soon that we have to know how many of you and your family members and guests will attend. Please see the enclosed REGISTRATION FORM, and return it as soon as you can with a refundable deposit. Refundable, of course, if for whatever reason we are unable to go forward with the reunion.

Spring has got to break sometime soon, so stay well Shipmates.

Regards,

Frank

## Other News:

Sadly, we have lost a number of shipmates to eternal patrol.

Most recently, Charlie Schwartz, QM1 (SS), a dear friend, with whom I had the honor to serve, fought a year-long battle against cancer and succumbed in Florida on 19 January. His wife, Cathy brought his ashes home to Ipswich for burial. A similar service is planned in Florida, where Charlie maintained his love for the sea and his comradeship with other submarine veterans as Vice Commander of Sailfish Base. Charlie was a proud member of the Holland Club, Qualified for over 50 years.

Piper shipmate Mike Hubbard, and my wife Dee and I attended the graveside service. It was a poignant experience for me. Representing U.S. Subvets as PNC, I was honored to carry the folded colors to the gravesite during the opening. On the advice of John Carcioppolo from Groton Base, I contacted Northeast Region Commander, Peter Koester, to ask for assistance in honoring Charlie. Peter, a member of Marblehead Base, led a tolling of the bell ceremony accompanied by over a dozen submarine veterans. Sincere thanks to him and his crew. If you wish to see a brief video of part of the service, go to:

<http://www.facebook.com/ipswichPolice/videos>

## Charles Schwartz Funeral

From Mike Hubbard:

I find it difficult to put into words the feelings I have. Charlie and I were shipmates on the USS Piper (SS 409). He was aboard from 1962 until 1967 less a couple of TAD assignments to USS Jallao (SS 368) in 1964 and the USS Tench (SS 417) in 1965. After the Piper was decommissioned in 1967, he transferred to the USS Ethan Allen SSBN/SSN 608, he was a QM1 when he left the Navy.

The above paragraph gives the basic facts of Charlie's Navy service but does not touch on the man himself. Charlie was a Shipmate in the finest sense of the word, always upbeat with his outlook, always with an encouraging word, always smiling, always ready to lend a hand. Those of us that are older may remember the phrase "Good Time Charlie." This is the "Charlie" I remember, as I always had a good time with Charlie. I didn't see much of Charlie as a civilian, but at the Piper reunions, which he attended faithfully, the old camaraderie was there as if we were still aboard Piper. you will be missed Shipmate. "Sailor Rest Your Oars, Hand Salute"!



Soon after returning from Cleveland, my wife, Dee, got a call from Billy Jarrett's wife. Seems Billy, aka Bunkbag, had gone on eternal patrol in October of 2015. He was 82 years old, So, he was 10 years older than I when we served together. He was one of the "old guys" in his early thirties! Good grief, the perceptions we had of age when we were young. They had attended one of the Groton Piper reunions a number of years ago, and it was great for those of us who rode Piper with him to renew our friendships.

It is my sad duty to inform you of the passing of another Piper shipmate, Howard "Buddy" E. Clark Jr., of Old Saybrook, CT, who died peacefully at his home on June 14, 2016. He was born on November 25, 1935 in Old Saybrook, to his parents Howard and Marie Clark, who predeceased him. Buddy Qualified in Submarines on the USS Piper (SS-409). He left the navy as an QM2(SS). Buddy was extremely proud that he was a distinguished member of the USSVI Holland Club, an honor for those submariners that were "Qualified in Submarines" for 50 years or more, and a member of the Holland Club. Buddy was a senior CT Harbor Pilot who worked in the New Haven and Bridgeport harbors. He grew up with a love of the ocean and fishing. Buddy is survived by his long time partner Mitzi Cole; his daughters, Lydia Regan and Nina Johnston; and his sons, Scott and David Clark.

Adrien A. Paquette, 86, of The Villages, Florida, passed away on Monday, October 17, 2016. He was born March 17, 1930 in Cleveland, OH to Antonio and Ida Paquette. Mr. Paquette was a career serviceman in the U.S. Navy. He was a member of the American Legion Post 347, VFW of Plainfield, CT, and the Holland Club of the United States Submarine Veterans. Adrien aka "Mike" aka "Packrat" was COB at the time Piper was decommissioned.

I received another note in 2016 from Doris Maviglia. Her husband Frank, an officer who served on Piper and was very popular with the crew, passed away 11 March 2013. Rest in peace, Shipmate.

**2017 Piper Reunion**

**U.S. Subvets 40 School St. Groton, CT**

**Whitty409@aol.com**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest Name(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee: (#) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

(includes door prize ticket)

**Schedule and Deposit Pricing:**

**Friday 8-18-17:**

Welcome Aboard Party (#) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$25 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Saturday 8-19-17:**

Clambake at Adm. Fife Park (#) \_\_\_\_\_ **Need # of Attendees now** \$ TBD

**Sirloin Steak Option**

**Payable at Registration 8/18**

**Saturday 8-19-17:**

Reunion Dinner (#) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Sunday 8-20-17**

Breakfast/Brunch (#) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$20 = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Raffles: 50/50 Cash Saturday Night (#) \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$5 ea. or 3 for \$10 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Deposit Payment Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**(Deposit does not include clambake, which is payable on arrival)**

**Please respond as soon as possible as the number attending is critical to planning**

**Please make check payable to: USS Piper Association**

**Send the above form and payment to:**

**Michael Hubbard**

**271 Elm Street**

**New London, CT 06320**

### **Interesting Find**

**Niagara Falls| Divers from the U.S coast guard took part this morning, in a delicate wreck recovery operation to bring to the surface a Nazi submarine discovered two weeks ago at the bottom of Lake Ontario.**

The U-boat was spotted for the first time by amateur scuba divers in late January and they had contacted the authorities. Archaeologists associated with Niagara University of and master divers from the U.S Coast Guard were mobilized on site to determine what it was, and they soon realized that they were dealing with a German submarine that sank during World War II.

A wreck recovery vessel of the Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society was mandated to re float the ship and bring it back to Niagara Falls, where it must be restored before becoming a museum ship. The delicate recovery operation took nearly 30 hours to complete, but the submarine was finally brought down on the bank with relative ease.

The divers of the U.S. Coast guard braved the frigid water temperature to go attach cables to the wreck for the recovery operation.

The submarine was identified as the UX-791, a unique experimental German submarine, based on the U-1200 model, and known to have participated in the "Battle of the St.

Lawrence". It was reported missing in 1943 and was believed to have been sunk near the Canadian coast.

Professor Mark Carpenter, who leads the team of archaeologists, believes that the U-boat could have traveled up the St-Lawrence River, all the way to the Great Lakes, where it intended to disturb the American economy.

A report from the dated from February 1943 suggests, that the ship could have attacked and destroyed three cargo ships and two fishing vessels, even damaging the USS Sable (IX-81), an aircraft carrier of the U.S. navy that was used for training in the Great Lakes, before finally being sunk by anti-sub grenades launched by a Canadian frigate.

*"We have known for a long time that the Nazis had sent some of their U-boats in the St-Lawrence River, but this is the first proof that they actually reached the Great Lakes," Professor Carpenter told reporters. "This could explain the mysterious ship disappearances that took place in the region in 1943, and the reported "Battle of Niagara Falls" which had always been dismissed as a collective hallucination caused by fear."*

The restoration of the submarine could take more than two years, but once completed, the museum ship is expected to become one of the major tourist attractions of the region.



# Why are submarines an unpopular choice for US Naval Academy graduates?

First, consider that the target demographic within those aspiring to Naval service are the more academically gifted. These people in engineering, math, or science related majors in college are typically drawn towards either submarines or airplanes due to their strong academic background. So the "choice" every midshipman in this demographic gets to make is be a "pilot" or a "submariner".

## **Glamour:**

Lets face it, pilots get all the glory. This may be warranted as well. It is naturally much more exciting and glamorous to be a fly-boy. Tell somebody that you are a "pilot" and you get a much different reaction than if you said you are a "submariner". Civilians typically know what a pilot does, but have very little concept what a submarine officer does (I have yet to meet a single civilian that understands what a submarine officer does before I explain it to them).

## **Work hours:**

### **In Port:**

Submarine officers typically work between 100-130 hour work weeks while in port. Integrated into this time are "duty days", or days where your workday continues into the night and into the next day, and when this "duty day" ends and you are relieved after 24 hours, you still have a full 14-18 work day ahead of you with little to no sleep from your duty night. Heaped on top of this are the requirements for maintaining qualifications and training as a nuclear operator, wildly erratic schedule, and the multiple collateral duties that submarine officers are required to fulfill, can lead to very poor working conditions overall, and it is the submarine officers job to endure this work environment, put a smile on his face, and convince those around him to "keep on truckin' cause the job has gotta get done." Oh, and those duty days? They happen once every 3 days, and one of them always falls on one of the weekend days so you never have a weekend to yourself.

Compare this with the other communities (surface) where the duty rotation can be as good as 7 section (duty once a week), significantly less work hours (less if no nuclear training to maintain, and even less on a larger ship with more officer to share the many responsibilities with). Or pilots, who just do training when not underway. This makes being a submarine officer a hard sell.

Underway the work day is spastic at best, one day you might work 34 straight hours and you can then grab 2 hours of sleep before waking up to do it all over again. Sleep deprivation is the norm, and you are asked to perform at a very high level on this very low amount of sleep. Also, underway on a submarine is drastically different than on any other vessel, as you are cut off from the outside world for what can be several months at a time. Cut off means you don't get to talk to loved ones and they don't get to talk to you. Very little news filters in from the outside world either. Imagine, if you will, locking yourself in your house with 100 friends you love to hate, with no TVs, radios, telephones...nothing. The isolation is what usually affects people most dramatically when underway.

Contrast this with pilots who are mandated 8 hours a sleep before flying a mission, who have significantly fewer collateral duties to fulfill, and are almost in no way affiliated with the day to day operations of the ships they're on. Also consider that these ship's have satellite internet, and as such pilots and surface officers have email, facebook, internet...you name it.

### **The Stakes:**

You take a little steel tube, pack a nuclear reactor and high power steam propulsion plant with high pressure and temperature steam. You also use the steam power plant to produce high voltage un-grounded electricity which you route throughout the boat in exposed cable bundles. You pack in 24 intercontinental ballistic missiles and the rockets that propel them out of the submarine (just 1 stage of 1 of these rockets is enough to liquify the submarine internals) that can each potentially be armed with up to 8 ballistic nuclear re-entry bodies that each by themselves can potentially be 20 times as powerful as those dropped on Japan in WW2. You route high pressure air and hydraulics throughout this tube to operate all this large machinery required to move the tube around. You pack in up to 40 ADCAP Mk 48 torpedoes who have an auto-catalytic fuel that could utterly destroy your tube (see Russian submarine Kursk) and pack it full of high explosives. You pack all of these extremely dangerous things into that small metal tube, climb inside it with 120 people you love to hate (the feeling is mutual too), seal it up, drive it out thousands of miles into the middle of the ocean, and sink it.

If a fire burns for longer than 15 seconds without an extinguisher on it, it begins to grow rapidly and in as little as 2 minutes can render the entire space untenable. The loss of any 1 space on a submarine is likely a loss of the ship. There are a lot of things on a submarine that want to burn or start a fire. And a lot of things on a submarine like to explode when exposed to high heat. As such, every single person on a submarine has to know how to combat a fire by himself and call for assistance. On no other platform in the military is the success and survival of the whole ship dependent on the individual performance of each sailor as it is on a submarine.

This is all backdrop to some of the nation's most vital clandestine operations (just 1 of the large number of missions a submarine can perform) which you never read about due to the nature of the missions. The stakes are high, and there is no room for error. It is a lot of stress. It is also a lot of pride.

### **Conclusion:**

So you have to ask, why would anybody do this job?

Other than Seals, no other community asks more of its men and women than the submarine service. And as such, being a submariner is a certain badge of honor that is respected by the other communities and services. It is an arduous, thankless, and dangerous job. To offset these drawbacks, submarine officers are the highest paid operators in the military. Period.

But its not the pay that brings new people into our community, nor is it some evil sadistic urge for self flagellation. It is far and away the people. The shared responsibility for each other and the shared experience forges an extremely tight bond between the crew of a submarine, one that can only be rivaled by marine/army combat units, and even then it is still a different type of bond as



each man is just as important as the one next to him. It is less steeped in the rigid structure of the rest of the military, and lines of rank are blurred more in submarines than anywhere else. This appeals to certain types of people and not to others.

So when you ask a submariner what it is he misses about submarining once he's gone, he will always respond "I miss the people."

#### About the Author



### Russell Canty

Engineer, Military Officer  
Works at United States Navy



Here we are kicking back for some great local cooking in Newland during the 2013 Piper Reunion at the Grandfather Mountain Highland Games in North Carolina. We were hosted at the event by Piper Shipmate Ross Morrison who was the GFMHG president. Great time.



Charlie Schwartz, Mike Hubbard,  
and Ralph "Zoomy" Norman at  
2015 Piper Reunion Cleveland,  
Ohio at USS Cod



The Piper Crew  
at the USS Cod  
(SS224)  
2015 Piper  
Reunion in  
Cleveland. Ohio