

# The Piper Report

USS Piper (SS409) 1944 - 1967



May 2012



## USS Piper (SS409)

Keel laid by Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery Maine, 15 March 1944; launched 26 June 1944; commissioned 23 August 1944; decommissioned 16 June 1967.

Balao class; Length 311' 8"; Beam 27' 3"; Speed 20.25 knots surface, 8.75 knots submerged; Test depth 400 feet; Displacement 1526 tons (surface); 2401 tons (submerged); 21 inch torpedo tubes: 6 fwd, 4 aft; Propulsion: twin screw, diesel electric drive (Fairbanks Morse engines) with Guppy (snorkel) conversion in 1951. Design Complement: 6 officers, 60 enlisted men.

Although built late in World War II, Piper completed 3 successful war patrols in the Pacific, winning four battle stars before the end of hostilities. She was responsible for sinking more than 6000 tons of Japanese shipping.

After the war, Piper operated out of the U.S. Naval Submarine Base in Groton Connecticut until her decommissioning in 1967.

## USS Barb - The Sub That Sank a Train

Author Unknown

In 1973 an Italian submarine named Enrique Tazoli was sold for a paltry \$100,000 as scrap metal. The submarine, given to the Italian Navy in 1953, was originally the USS Barb, an incredible veteran of World War II service with a heritage that never should have passed so unnoticed into the graveyards of the metal recyclers.

The U.S.S. Barb was a pioneer, paving the way for the first submarine launched missiles and flying a battle flag unlike that of any other ship. In addition to the Medal of Honor ribbon at the top of the flag identifying the heroism of its captain, Commander Eugene "Lucky" Fluckey, the bottom border of the flag bore the image of a Japanese locomotive. The U.S.S. Barb was indeed, the submarine that "SANK A TRAIN".

July 18, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan): It was after 4 A.M. And Commander Fluckey rubbed his eyes as he peered over the map spread before him. It was the twelfth war patrol of the Barb, the fifth under Commander Fluckey. He should have turned command over to another skipper after four patrols, but had managed to strike a deal with Admiral Lockwood to make one more trip with the men he cared for like a father, should his fourth patrol be successful. Of course, no one suspected when he had struck that deal prior to his fourth and what should have been his final war patrol on the Barb, that Commander Fluckey's success would be so great he would be awarded the Medal of Honor.

Commander Fluckey smiled as he remembered that patrol. "Lucky" Fluckey they called him. On January 8th the Barb had emerged victorious from a running two-hour night battle after sinking a large enemy ammunition ship. Two weeks later in Mamkwan Harbor he found the "motherlode" ...more than 30 enemy ships. In only 5 fathoms (30 feet) of water his crew had unleashed the sub's forward torpedoes, then turned and fired

four from the stern. As he pushed the Barb to the full limit of its speed through the dangerous waters in a daring withdrawal to the open sea, he recorded eight direct hits on six enemy ships.

What could possibly be left for the Commander to accomplish who, just three months earlier had been in Washington, DC to receive the Medal of Honor? He smiled to himself as he looked again at the map showing the rail line that ran along the enemy coastline.

Now his crew was buzzing excitedly about bagging a train!

The rail line itself wouldn't be a problem. A shore patrol could go ashore under cover of darkness to plant the explosives...one of the sub's 55-pound scuttling charges. But this early morning Lucky Fluckey and his officers were puzzling over how they could blow not only the rails, but also one of the frequent trains that shuttled supplies to equip the Japanese war machine. But no matter how crazy the idea might have sounded, the Barb's skipper would not risk the lives of his men. Thus the problem... How to detonate the charge at the moment the train passed, without endangering the life of a shore party. **PROBLEM?**

Solutions! If you don't look for them, you'll never find them. And even then, sometimes they arrive in the most unusual fashion. Cruising slowly beneath the surface to evade the enemy plane now circling overhead, the monotony was broken with an exciting new idea: Instead of having a crewman on shore to trigger explosives to blow both rail and a passing train, why not let the train BLOW ITSELF up? Billy Hatfield was excitedly explaining how he had cracked nuts on the railroad tracks as a kid, placing the nuts between two ties so the sagging of the rail under the weight of a train would break them open. "Just like cracking walnuts," he explained. "To complete the circuit (detonating the

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## Commander's Column

Shipmates:

All lines secure. Nothing to report on this watch. Well, maybe a couple of items. Most recently, Mike Lally's wife, Patricia, sent me a magazine from St. Thomas, USVI, concerning the UDT and the SubBase. Wow, did that bring back some memories. I was usually in a gray-out or black-out, but I do recall some fisticuffs with some of those frogmen in a gin mill one night.

Those trips to the Caribbean were quite an adventure for a city kid from Boston, who'd never been any further away from home than the White Mountains in New Hampshire. There were times when we'd be the only boat tied up there, but on one occasion, there were at least half a dozen. I have a picture somewhere, but if you go onto the Piper website and scroll down towards the bottom, you'll see a similar picture that Jim King posted from Springboard 1961. I believe our runs were 1965 and 1966. I can't recall for sure, but we may have done one in March of 1967, the winter before the decom in May of that year.

The highlight for me, aside from that nasty incident in Old San Juan, was on our last run when they made me, Booze Petty Officer. Tough job, but someone had to do it. I negotiated with the two main sellers, and since I knew the non-drinkers, I had their chits for myself. And of course there were the bonus couple of cases to me as the rep. I ended up with half a tube full of booze in the ATR.

When we got back to New London, Kucharski and I packed it into his car and drove to my parents' apartment in Randolph, MA. I remember like it was yesterday. Ski and I were hauling case after case up the two flights of stairs and bringing them into my bedroom. My mother was wide eyed: "Francis, what are you going to do with all that liquor?" "Awe, come on, Ma. Drink it. What the hell do you think we're going to do with it?" (That's a funny memory of her for a Mothers' Day morning.) So, Ski and I started to do just that before we left for Boston's Combat Zone for a "quiet" night on the town, which I'm sure included a visit to the Hillbilly Ranch.

There's always the subject of a reunion to discuss. The 2013 USSVI Convention is being held in Rochester, MN, August 25<sup>th</sup> through September 2. I can't make Norfolk this year, but if any of you are attending, try to get together for an informal Piper reunion and take a few pictures. So, I was thinking of 2013. I'd appreciate feedback. Are we going to have another before we all take a dirt nap, or was last year the last one we're going to hold? Let me know. Hubbard and I will pull it together, but we need feedback.

I hope you all have a great summer.  
Regards,  
Frank

## We Have a New Website!!!

The USS Piper Veterans Association has a new website! It looks the same, but it has a much larger capacity. Enough to hold all of the photos and articles that we could ever come up with.

I decided that we needed a new website because, with the lack of capacity on the old one, any time I wanted to add new material I had to remove something from site first.

Listed below are some of the changes that have been made so far. You may have to use the "refresh" button on your web browser to see the new content.

The URL for the new website is: <http://usspiper.com>

All of the newsletters beginning with January 2006 to the present are now available for viewing by clicking on a link at the top of the News page.

Newspaper Clippings is now up to date with all obituaries and other items that have been sent to me.

New photos have been added to the Photo Gallery. One that would be of particular interest to shipmates of the decommissioning crew is a photo of the boat and crew complete with a listing of all crew members. This was contributed by E. J. "Wil" Wilcox. When looking for a particular photo on the web page, bear in mind that they are shown chronologically by the date they were taken.

We have a new Sea Story by Tom Taylor (also published in this issue.) Keep them coming, we have enough room for Sea Stories from all of our shipmates!

I am happy to contribute the website to the Piper Association.

Mike Bray

## Veterans Benefits

Hello all:

Are you guys aware that such an organization exists?

I had an interview yesterday with a Benefit Advocate here in Lake Forest, CA, and she informed me that I may qualify for a cash benefit of about \$2500/ month, TAX FREE.

You can get more info at: [WarEraVet.com](http://WarEraVet.com)

Check it out, what have you got to lose?

Have a fine day,  
BUBBLEHEAD BOB  
[Robert Marble \[robertmarble@ymail.com\]](mailto:RobertMarble@ymail.com)

## Blow Bow Buoyancy!

After the war wound down in 1945 the Piper was assigned to school boat duties at the sub base in New London. I had been aboard about six months, got a promotion to Fireman First Class and had received my dolphins which at that time were worn on the left sleeve of the blue and white jumper. I had been assigned to the Auxiliary Gang and my watch station and battle station at sea was the air manifold in the Control Room.

Early in 1946 a new officer reported aboard who had spent most of the war years in a Japanese prison camp. Because of the ravages of time my memory no longer allows me to come up with the name of his sub that was sunk off the coast of Japan in '42. Anyway, his rank was Ensign when he was picked out of the water by the Japanese. After the war and his release and through the magic of the pentagon and the US Senate he was awarded the rank of LtCdr. He was still slightly emaciated from his time in captivity. After about a week aboard the Piper he was assigned as diving officer during training exercises.

There was a time early one morning about 0600, the Officer Sub School class came aboard for a one day training cruise. During the time at sea the trainees were alternated between the various stations including steering bow and stern planes, Maneuvering Rom, Conning Tower TDC and both Torpedo Rooms. On this day our brand new LtCdr was diving officer and for the first few dives all went well. Targets were tracked and water slugs from both Torpedo Rooms were fired.

We were on our fifth dive when the conning Tower ordered the Forward Torpedo Room to make two tubes ready to fire water slugs. A routine order. Although no water had been shifted by the trim manifold, the boat suddenly took a down angle. I was on the air manifold and could see the bubble and depth gages from my station. Along with down angle the depth gage showed we were going past periscope depth. I looked at the Diving Officer anticipating an order to do something. In the sub navy no independent action is taken unless an order is given or there is extreme danger to the boat or crew. The diving officer had a death grip on the conning tower ladder hand rail and did not appear to comprehend what was happening. When we passed 250 feet I spoke up "request permission to put a bubble in bow buoyancy sir!" This seemed to have stirred something in him and he replied "permission granted". The skipper made it to the Control Room about the time I made my request to bubble bow buoyancy. He didn't say anything so I guess he wanted to see how this officer performed under pressure.

We finally got to a zero bubble attitude but we were still heavy and slowly increasing our depth. I asked permission to blow main ballast tanks and he again responded "permission granted". We surfaced without further incident. An investigation later found that the trainee officer in the torpedo room had flooded two tubes from sea instead of using water from the WRT tank. This had given us about 2000 pounds in the bow which created the problem. All's well that ends well.

Two weeks later the LtCdr was transferred. I never did find out where he went.

*Story by shipmate Tom Taylor Lt.(SS)(Ret) USN*

## Book Review

*Now Hear This! Book Review of A Measureless Peril: America in the Fight for the Atlantic, the Longest Battle of World War II, by Richard Snow*

For us ex-submariners this book is a fit to Paul Harvey's signature "rest of the story." It's the story of the politics, people, strategy, tactics, and inventions which allowed the Allies (chiefly the US and Britain) to overcome the U-boat peril to convoys crossing the Atlantic during World War II. Besides learning some important new (to me) facts – I had no idea so many ships were sunk by U-boats, in the early days of the war, in the shallow waters within sight of the US East Coast – I found Snow's book vastly entertaining.

It's not a history book in the ordinary sense of the word. For that, I'm grateful. By apparently having read every first-person account ever written about the Battle of the Atlantic, Snow is able to illustrate all his major points with interesting anecdotes and apt conversations between the participants in that struggle. For instance instead of giving us a table of dry facts about merchant tonnage sunk, during World War I, by U-boats each month, Snow recounts the initial conversation between Admiral Sims, in charge of U.S. Naval forces operating from Britain, with John Jellicoe, the British first sea lord:

'Jellicoe, quiet, cheerful, the least dramatizing of men, took a piece of paper from his desk and gave it to his new ally. Sims read it with growing astonishment. "It was a record of tonnage losses for the last few months," he [Sims] wrote. "This showed that the total sinkings, British and neutral, had reached 536,000 tons in February, and 603,000 in March; it further disclosed that sinkings were taking place in April which indicated the destruction of nearly 900,000 tons."

'Sims said, "I had never imagined anything so terrible."

"Yes." Speaking "as quietly," Sims remembered, "as though he were discussing the weather and not the future of the British Empire," Jellicoe said, "It is impossible for us to go on with the war if losses like this continue."

This is in a chapter called The Moving Square Mile: Learning the relearning the lessons of convoy, 1917-41.

Of course Snow's book is not always this placid. Often combat

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Obituaries



George "Sandy" Sanderson at his son Bruce's dolphin pinning ceremony - June 2011

### GEORGE HOWARD SANDERSON, JR.

"Skip" (Age 67)

Died [Friday, November 25, 2011], [found] Wednesday, November 30, 2011 at his residence. He was born August 14, 1944 in Kenton, Ohio to George Howard and Betty Lou (Kelly) Sanderson, Sr. His father survives in Kenton. Also surviving are three sons, Joseph Sanderson of Alexandria, VA, Bruce Sanderson of Pearl Harbor, HI and Michael Sanderson of California; one daughter, Kristina Sanderson of California; a sister, Joyce Heilshorn of Defiance, and two brothers, David Sanderson of [Cynet] [not - ] Sycamore, OH and Jeffrey Sanderson of [Columbus,] Dublin, OH. He was preceded in death by his mother. He spent 21 years in the Navy in submarine services retiring as a Naval Officer. He was a member of the Amvets Post 1994, VFW Post 3816, and a life member of the United States Submarine Veterans Incorporated [USSVI].

Graveside services for George Howard "Skip" Sanderson, Jr. will be at 1 p.m., Monday, December 5, 2011 at Grove Cemetery [Kenton, OH]. Military graveside rites by Amvets Post #1994. Price Funeral Home, Kenton, OH is handling arrangements.

### Eternal Patrol

George Sanderson, Jr. passed away on 25 November 2011. He was a life member of the USS Piper Veterans Association and served as a TM3(SS) from 1964 to 1965.

Ralph Henry (Hank) Wiley passed away on 2 February 2012. He was a life member of the USS Piper Veterans Association and served as a RMSN(SS) from 1966 to 1967.

Thomas John Calabrese passed away on 8 February 2012. He was a life member of the USS Piper Veterans Association and served as a IC1(SS) from 1963 to 1964.

Sincere condolences go to family and friends.

Please notify us of the illness or death of any association member.

### Newsletter Articles Needed

I would like to hear about experiences you've had while you served aboard Piper. Whether a long story, "Sea Story" or a short paragraph, anything that you'd think would bring a smile to a shipmate's face would be great.

Have you recently visited a shipmate? Do you have a photo of the visit? Send a paragraph or more about the visit, or just send a caption for the photo.

What sort of things do you like to read about in the newsletter? Chances are your shipmates enjoy the same thing and they'd like to hear about it from you. So, take a little time to jot something down and send it to me:

Mike Bray  
W3821 Waucedah Road  
Vulcan, MI 49892

[mikebray@chartermi.net](mailto:mikebray@chartermi.net)

## Obituaries

### Ralph Henry (Hank) Wiley

Ralph Henry Wiley, 69, of Santa Maria, CA departed on Eternal Patrol on February 2, 2012 after a courageous battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease).



Hank was born to the late Joseph and Marian Wiley on January 4, 1943 in San Bernardino, CA. He attended many grade schools while his father was in the U.S. Air Force. He graduated from Rubidoux High School in Riverside, CA. Hank joined the U.S. Navy in 1965 and served his country for five years in the submarine service aboard the USS Piper and the USS Hardhead. As a Submarine Veteran he was a member of the San Diego SubVets Base, a Charter Member/Plankowner and Treasurer of the SLO Subvets Base – Central Coast of California, and a Life Member of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. He was also a member of the American Legion Post 56. Hank was a hardwood flooring contractor for over 30 years in Connecticut and San Diego, CA. "The Sandman" was well known for his skill, reputation and friendliness.

He moved to the Central Coast in 2001 for his retirement years, but in 2009 he was diagnosed with ALS. The computer became his friend with lots of e-mails and Facebook to keep in touch with family and friends. Before the disease he enjoyed traveling and finding new places to eat, especially if they had rare prime rib. Friends and family were his pride and joy. Hank is survived by his wife Nancy of Santa Maria, his daughters, Ellen, Linda (Joseph), Lori, Jodee, Tammy, Darcie, Shannon (Jim), and Erin (Paul), his sons, Corey, Steven (Suzy) and Dean (Jo Ann), 25 grandchildren and 9 great-grandchildren. He is survived by his sister Sandy (Paul), his brothers Bill (Barbara) and Joel (Mary), and many nieces, nephews and cousins. He was preceded in death by his son-in-law Jack Bolding, and granddaughter Delaney Starcher.

A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations be made to the MDA (Muscular Dystrophy Association) at Santa Barbara District of MDA, 402 East Carillo Street, #C, Santa Barbara, CA 93101. Please specify for ALS Research. Published in Santa Maria Times on February 8, 2012

### Thomas John Calabrese

Thomas John Calabrese, of Hilo, Hawaii, passed away February 8, 2012 after a lengthy battle with cancer. Born in Pittston [PA], on October 28, 1938, he was the son of the late Michael and Pauline Falzone Calabrese, of Kingston.

He attended Pittston High School until his enlistment in the Navy. He graduated from Great Lakes Naval Training Center in Illinois and served aboard the USS FORESTAL CVA59. He

had the honor of service next on the naval cruiser, the USS NORTHAMPTON CC1, which was the flagship of the entire Atlantic Fleet at the time. He continued his career in the Navy by attending school at "the world's first and finest submarine base" in Groton, Connecticut. On completion of his studies, he was stationed aboard the USS PIPER SS409. His next assignment was aboard the nuclear powered submarine the USS GRANT SSBN631 as a plank owner. He concluded his naval career as an interior communications specialist aboard the destroyer the USS MADDOX DD731. Upon his honorable discharge from the Navy, he continued his education at Cerritos College in California, obtaining a degree in business administration. He went on to California State College in Long Beach, where he was awarded a BA in Political Science. Throughout his civilian career in California, he held many positions in local government as city manager in Arista, Willets City, Patterson and Colton City. Besides being a member of the Western Government Research Association, he was also employed by the General Telephone Company of Pomona.

Tom spent his retirement near the ocean in Hawaii with his wife, the former Sharon Nishimoto. He is survived by his sons, Thomas, Michael and Nicholas; his nine grandchildren; his one great-grandchild and stepchildren, Stephen, Harry and Jan. He is also survived by his brothers, Charles, who resides in Arizona; John Michael, of Swoyersville; and Anthony, of Hughestown. A memorial service was held in Hilo and at his request, he was cremated and his ashes were returned to the sea he loved so much.

Published in Times Leader on February 19, 2012

### Frances Lee Hubbard

Beloved wife of Shipmate Michael Hubbard

New London - Frances Lee Hubbard, 69, of New London, entered eternal life on Dec. 28, 2011 at home in the comfort of her loving family.

She was born Nov. 6, 1942, in New London, the daughter of the late Anthony and Mary (Ferri) Syracuse. A lifelong resident of New London, she graduated from New London High School, class of 1960, and later from the former New London Business School.

She was united in marriage to Michael Hubbard on July 25, 1964, in Huntington Street Baptist Church; her beloved husband survives her.

Besides her husband of 47 years of marriage, she is survived by two devoted daughters, Deborah Price of New London and Veronica and husband, William Costello Jr., of Ledyard; a sister, Veronica Wilson of New London; her pride and joy, two granddaughters, Britany and Heather Price; and a great-granddaughter, Caidence Hatfield.

## The Expensive Hotel

An older lady decided to give herself a big treat for her significant 70th birthday by staying overnight in an expensive hotel.

When she checked out next morning, the desk clerk handed her a bill for \$250.00.

She exploded and demanded to know why the charge was so high.

"It's a nice hotel but the rooms certainly aren't worth \$250.00 for just an overnight stay! I didn't even have breakfast."

The clerk told her that \$250.00 is the 'standard rate', so she insisted on speaking to the Manager.

The Manager appeared and, forewarned by the desk clerk, announced:

"This hotel has an Olympic-sized pool and a huge conference centre which are available for use."

"But I didn't use them," she said.

"Well, they are here, and you could have," explained the Manager.

He went on to explain that she could also have seen one of the in-hotel shows for which the hotel is famous. "We have the best entertainers from the world over performing here," the Manager said.

"But I didn't go to any of those shows," she said.

"Well, we have them, and you could have," the Manager replied.

No matter what amenity the Manager mentioned, she replied, "But I didn't use it!" and the Manager countered with his standard response.

After several minutes discussion with the Manager unmoved, she decided to pay, wrote a check and gave it to him.

The Manager was surprised when he looked at the check. "But madam, this check is for only \$50.00."

"That's correct. I charged you \$200.00 for sleeping with me," she replied.

"But I didn't!" exclaims the very surprised Manager.

"Well, too bad, I was here, and you could have."

Don't mess with Senior Citizens!

*Contributed by Piper shipmate Charlie Patch*

## Book Review

*(Continued from page 3)*

action is called for and then is written of clearly and graphically.

Another aspect of the book is that Snow's father, Richard B. Snow, as a New York City architect in his late 30's, volunteered for sea duty and spent two years protecting Atlantic convoys as officer on a destroyer escort, the USS *Neunzer*, DE 150, named after a machinists mate killed in July 1942 while dive-bombing a Japanese submarine. Elder Snow's occasional letters home illuminate the human side of the Atlantic struggle. He has some unflattering things to say about his time spent in Orange and Beaumont, Texas, when the *Neunzer* was building. I read those passages to my wife Mary Ann this morning while she was putting on her makeup. She is from Beaumont. She agreed with Snow's dad. "The most beautiful view of Beaumont is when you see it in your rearview mirror," she said.

Some Amazon reviewers did *not* like the book. One thought it too anecdotal, not comprehensive enough. Another thought it slighted the contribution of the U.S. Merchant Marine to the conflict. I thought it did a masterful job balancing all the competing interesting aspects of the Battle of the Atlantic.

*A Measureless Peril* is now out in paperback, at \$16.00 list. Amazon is asking only \$6.40 for it; too many copies must have been printed. Moreover, third-party purveyors through Amazon have the book as a new hardback for only \$2.98 plus \$3.99 shipping, \$6.97 total. I asked about the book at my excellent local library, the Parmly Billings Library, named after a son of the founder of Billings, Montana. They didn't have it but offered to order it for me. So I've read it for free. What a deal! I think most of you will enjoy it, and learn something from it, even if your library is not so accommodating.

*Contributed by Piper shipmate John Lowry*

## Navy Admittance Test

One of the questions from the career placement test given applicants for a Navy technical school:

"Rearrange the letters ' P N E S I ' to spell out an important part of human body that is more useful when erect!"

Those who spelled 'spine' got the school of their choice. The rest of us went to submarine school.

*Contributed by my Seawolf (SSN575) shipmate and brother-in-law Galon Olson*

## USS Barb - The Sub That Sank a Train

*(Continued from page 1)*

55-pound charge) we hook in a micro switch ...between two ties. We don't set it off, the TRAIN does." Not only did Hatfield have the plan, he wanted to be part of the volunteer shore party.

The solution found, there was no shortage of volunteers; all that was needed was the proper weather...a little cloud cover to darken the moon for the mission ashore. Lucky Fluckey established his own criteria for the volunteer party:

...No married men would be included, except for Hatfield,

...The party would include members from each department,

...The opportunity would be split between regular Navy and Navy Reserve sailors,

...At least half of the men had to have been Boy Scouts, experienced in how to handle themselves in medical emergencies and in the woods.

FINALLY, "Lucky" Fluckey would lead the saboteurs himself.

When the names of the 8 selected sailors were announced it was greeted with a mixture of excitement and disappointment. Among the disappointed was Commander Fluckey who surrendered his opportunity at the insistence of his officers that "as commander he belonged with the Barb," coupled with the threat from one that "I swear I'll send a message to ComSub-Pac if you attempt this (joining the shore party himself)." Even a Japanese POW being held on the Barb wanted to go, promising not to try to escape!

In the meantime, there would be no more harassment of Japanese shipping or shore operations by the Barb until the train mission had been accomplished. The crew would "lay low", prepare their equipment, train, and wait for the weather.

July 22, 1945 (Patience Bay, Off the coast of Karafuto, Japan) Patience Bay was wearing thin the patience of Commander Fluckey and his innovative crew. Everything was ready. In the four days the saboteurs had anxiously watched the skies for cloud cover, the inventive crew of the Barb had built their micro switch. When the need was proposed for a pick and shovel to bury the explosive charge and batteries, the Barb's engineers had cut up steel plates in the lower flats of an engine room, then bent and welded them to create the needed tools. The only things beyond their control were the weather....and time. Only five days remained in the Barb's patrol.

Anxiously watching the skies, Commander Fluckey noticed plumes of cirrus clouds, then white stratus capping the mountain peaks ashore. A cloud cover was building to hide the three-quarters moon. This would be the night.

MIDNIGHT, July 23, 1945

The Barb had crept within 950 yards of the shoreline. If it was somehow seen from the shore it would probably be mistaken for a schooner or Japanese patrol boat. No one would suspect an American submarine so close to shore or in such shallow water. Slowly the small boats were lowered to the water and the 8 saboteurs began paddling toward the enemy beach. Twenty-five minutes later they pulled the boats ashore and walked on the surface of the Japanese homeland.

Stumbling through noisy waist-high grasses, crossing a highway and then into a 4-foot drainage ditch, the saboteurs made their way to the railroad tracks. Three men were posted as guards, Markuson was assigned to examine a nearby water tower. The Barb's auxiliary man climbed the ladder, then stopped in shock as he realized it was an enemy lookout tower....an OCCUPIED tower. Fortunately the Japanese sentry was peacefully sleeping and Markuson was able to quietly withdraw and warn his raiding party.

The news from Markuson caused the men digging the placement for the explosive charge to continue their work more slowly and quietly. Twenty minutes later the holes had been dug and the explosives and batteries hidden beneath fresh soil.

During planning for the mission the saboteurs had been told that, with the explosives in place, all would retreat a safe distance while Hatfield made the final connection. If the sailor who had once cracked walnuts on the railroad tracks slipped during this final, dangerous procedure, his would be the only life lost. On this night it was the only order the saboteurs refused to obey, all of them peering anxiously over Hatfield's shoulder to make sure he did it right. The men had come too far to be disappointed by a switch failure.

1:32 A.M.

Watching from the deck of the Barb, Commander Fluckey allowed himself a sigh of relief as he noticed the flashlight signal from the beach announcing the departure of the shore party. He had skillfully, and daringly, guided the Barb within 600 yards of the enemy beach. There was less than 6 feet of water beneath the sub's keel, but Fluckey wanted to be close in case trouble arose and a daring rescue of his saboteurs became necessary.

1:45 A.M.

The two boats carrying his saboteurs were only halfway back to the Barb when the sub's machine gunner yelled, "CAPTAIN! Another train coming up the tracks!" The Commander grabbed a megaphone and yelled through the night, "Paddle like the devil!", knowing full well that they wouldn't reach the Barb before the train hit the micro switch.

1:47 A.M.

The darkness was shattered by brilliant light and the roar of the explosion. The boilers of the locomotive blew, shattered pieces of the engine blowing 200 feet into the air. Behind it

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## USS Barb - The Sub That Sank a Train

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the cars began to accordion into each other, bursting into flame and adding to the magnificent fireworks display. Five minutes later the saboteurs were lifted to the deck by their exuberant comrades as the Barb turned to slip back to safer waters. Moving at only two knots, it would be a while before the Barb was into waters deep enough to allow it to submerge. It was a moment to savor, the culmination of teamwork, ingenuity and daring by the Commander and all his crew. "Lucky" Fluckey's voice came over the intercom. "All hands below deck not absolutely needed to maneuver the ship have permission to come topside." He didn't have to repeat the invitation. Hatches sprang open as the proud sailors of the Barb gathered on her decks to proudly watch the distant fireworks display. The Barb had "sunk" a Japanese TRAIN!

On August 2, 1945 the Barb arrived at Midway, her twelfth war patrol concluded. Meanwhile United States military commanders had pondered the prospect of an armed assault on the Japanese homeland. Military tacticians estimated such an invasion would cost more than a million American casualties. Instead of such a costly armed offensive to end the war, on August 6th the B-29 bomber Enola Gay dropped a single atomic bomb on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. A second such bomb, unleashed 4 days later on Nagasaki, Japan, caused Japan to agree to surrender terms on August 15th. On September 2, 1945 in Tokyo Harbor the documents ending the war in the Pacific were signed.

The story of the saboteurs of the U.S.S. Barb is one of those unique, little known stories of World War II. It becomes increasingly important when one realizes that the 8 sailors who blew up the train near Kashiho, Japan conducted the ONLY GROUND COMBAT OPERATION on the Japanese "homeland" of World War II. The eight saboteurs were: Paul Saunders, William Hatfield, Francis Sever, Lawrence Newland, Edward Klingsmith, James Richard, John Markuson, William Walker.

Footnote: Eugene Bennett Fluckey retired from the Navy as a Rear Admiral, and wears in addition to his Medal of Honor, FOUR Navy Crosses...a record of awards unmatched by any living American. In 1992 his own history of the U.S.S. Barb was published in the award winning book, THUNDER BELOW. Over the past several years proceeds from the sale of this exciting book have been used by Admiral Fluckey to provide free reunions for the men who served him aboard the Barb, and their wives.

PS: The Admiral had graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1935 and lived to age 93, passing on in 2007.

*Contributed by my USS Seawolf (SSN575) shipmate and brother-in-law Galon Olson*

## It's A Sh.. Job, But Somebody Has To Do It

A US Air Force C-130 was scheduled to leave Thule Air Base, Greenland at midnight during a winter month. During the pilot's pre-flight check, he discovers that the latrine holding tank is still full from the last flight. So a message is sent to the base, and an airman who was off duty is called out to take care of it.

The young man finally gets to the air base and makes his way to the aircraft only to find that the latrine pump-truck has been left outdoors and is frozen solid, so he must find another one in the hangar, which takes even more time. He returns to the aircraft and is less than enthusiastic about what he has to do. Nevertheless, he goes about the pumping job deliberately, carefully and slowly so as not to risk criticism later.

As he's leaving the plane, the pilot stops him and says, 'Son, your attitude and performance has caused this flight to be late, and I'm going to personally see to it that you are not just reprimanded, but punished.'

Shivering in the cold, his task finished, he takes a deep breath, stands tall and says, 'Sir, with all due respect, I'm not your son; I'm an Airman in the United States Air Force. I've been in Thule, Greenland for 11 months without any leave and reindeers' asses are beginning to look pretty good to me. I have one stripe; it's 2:30 in the morning; the temperature is 40 degrees below zero and my job here is to pump shit out of an aircraft. Now just exactly what form of punishment did you have in mind?'

The surprised pilot thought a long moment, grinned, and then threw the airman a salute.

*Contributed by shipmate Charlie Patch*

## Piper Website Guest Book Entries

7 March 2011

My name is Chet Fuller. I served on the USS Piper 1945-1946, the last two runs. I remember Pablo going overboard with a knife in his mouth searching for two Japs and also swimming in the Panama Canal on the way home.

Chet Fuller, [ohrum71@hotmail.com](mailto:ohrum71@hotmail.com)

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9 June 2011

Frank Tomazin  
ET1(SS), ETC(SS)  
USS Piper 1962-1964  
[Tommor\\_88@att.net](mailto:Tommor_88@att.net)

Piper has a lot of fond memories for me. It was my first assignment as an ET (formerly QM1(SS)). I also made chief while aboard. Great job on the Web page.



**A Note About Membership**

So that we can all be in touch with each other as friends and old shipmates, a Piper Association was formed some years ago by Frank Whitty . We have reunions and publish an occasional newsletter called the Piper Report. In order for the Association to exist we need to have paying members.

The dues money goes for paper, ink, postage, etc. This is a considerable expense. A newsletter, The Piper Report, is published once or twice a year (depending on health and work) to bring you up to date on what's happening about future reunions, picnics, etc. It isn't much for \$10.00, but think of how sweet it is.

It sure would be nice to see 100% signed up for the Association. To receive a copy of the newsletter or other correspondence (reunion news, etc. you must be a paid member of the Piper Association.

**USS Piper (SS409) Veteran's Association  
Membership/Renewal Form**

**Send form and payment to:**

William Fuchs  
82 South Millpage Drive  
Bethpage, NY 11714  
[billss582@hotmail.com](mailto:billss582@hotmail.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Year reported aboard Piper: \_\_\_\_\_ Year departed Piper: \_\_\_\_\_  
Highest rank/rating while aboard Piper: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my \$10.00 for the year beginning July \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Here's another \$10.00 for next year  
\_\_\_\_\_ Enclosed is my \$100.00 for Life Membership!

Make check payable to Piper Association

Total enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The dues are \$10.00 each year. A year is between 1 July to 30 June or any part of it. Sorry it has to be that way, as we are unable to take care of the books for "parts of a year".

**Please consider a Life Membership payment. This would eliminate paying each year and result in less paperwork for us. **DUES FOR 2012-2013 ARE DUE JULY 1st****

Shipmates on Eternal Patrol

Thanks to the work of shipmate Larry Boutelle, IC2(SS) who was aboard Piper from 1953 to 1956, we have a more complete listing of Shipmates on Eternal Patrol on our web site. Larry did research on the crew members that were on board Piper during his tour of duty.

Obituaries, where available, are included in Newspaper Clippings which can be accessed by a link on the News page of the website.

See <http://usspiper.com>

An updated list will be included in The Piper Report from time to time.

If you have information of the death of a shipmate that is not on the Eternal Patrol list, please send it to:

Mike Bray  
W3821 Waucedah Road  
Vulcan, MI 49892-8483  
Or via email to: [mikebray@chartermi.net](mailto:mikebray@chartermi.net)

Life Members

- |                  |                     |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| William Bailey   | Chic Gilgore        | Michael Remington   |
| Bob Baker        | Charles Halbing, Jr | Benjamin Rollonston |
| Paul Barlow      | Gerald Harring      | C. Miles Schmidt    |
| Robert Batscher  | John Hendry         | Ralph Schmidt       |
| Tom Black        | Obie Hill           | Charles Schwartz    |
| Michael Bray     | Michael Hubbard     | David Shoaff        |
| Jim Burdett      | Charles Jones       | Clarence Spencer    |
| Jim Burke        | Edmund Lee Joyner   | Thomas J Stanton    |
| Richard Caldwell | Ernie Kertzscher    | Bob Staufenberg     |
| Aldo Cecchi      | James King          | Gilles St. George   |
| Howard Clark     | Thomas Kucharski    | R Calvin Sutliff    |
| Ralph Clark      | Robert Lloyd        | Gordon Threlfall    |
| Willis Clifford  | David Mogil         | Joseph Vanderbosch  |
| Richard Collins  | Noah Monsour        | Douglas Ward        |
| William Cotter   | James Morris        | Terry Welsh         |
| Edward Cushman   | Ross Morrison       | Frank Whitty        |
| James Delaney    | Robert Neidlinger   | David Winnington    |
| Don Del Core     | Morris Newkirk      | Eugene Zakutansky   |
| John Donkus      | Austin Nickerson    |                     |
| Preston Douthitt | Ralph Norman        |                     |
| Al Dube          | Mike Paquette       |                     |
| Richard Fohn     | Charles Patch       |                     |
| William Fuchs    | Joe Pow             |                     |
| Chester Fuller   | Frank Reinhold      |                     |

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# The Piper Report

USS PIPER VETERAN'S ASSOCIATION  
c/o Michael F. Bray  
W3821 Waucedah Road  
Vulcan, MI 49892-8483



**USS Piper (SS409)**  
Great boat, great crew!



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## The Piper Report

### Material for The Piper Report & Piper Veteran's Assoc. Website

We are always looking for photos, [sea stories](#) and memorabilia to print in the newsletter and put on our website.

Email attachments are welcome, you can send scanned photos and material formatted with software in the Microsoft Office suite. Please provide as much information about the photos as you can.

If you have anything, please send it to me:

Mike Bray  
W3821 Waucedah Road  
Vulcan, MI 49892-8483  
Email: [mikebray@chartermi.net](mailto:mikebray@chartermi.net)

The URL for the USS Piper Veteran's Association website is:

<http://usspiper.com>

### Piper Association Officers and Staff

**President:**

Frank Whitty  
269 Plymouth Street  
Middleboro, MA 02346  
[whitty409@aol.com](mailto:whitty409@aol.com)  
Phone: 508-946-5274

**Secretary:**

Jim Burke  
78 Eagle Drive  
Whiting, NJ 08759  
[jamescburke@verizon.net](mailto:jamescburke@verizon.net)  
Phone: 732-849-0471

**Treasurer:**

Michael Hubbard  
271 Elm Street  
New London, CT 06320  
[bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org](mailto:bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org)  
Phone: 860-444-7649

**Membership Chairperson:**

William Fuchs  
82 South Millpage Drive  
Bethpage, NY 11714  
[billss582@hotmail.com](mailto:billss582@hotmail.com)  
Phone: 516-578-4182

**Store Keeper:**

Michael Hubbard  
271 Elm Street  
New London, CT 06320  
[bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org](mailto:bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org)  
Phone: 860-444-7649

**Newsletter Editor & Webmaster:**

Michael Bray  
W3821 Waucedah Road  
Vulcan, MI 49892  
[mikebray@chartermi.net](mailto:mikebray@chartermi.net)  
Phone: 906-221-1550