



#### 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.

## SUBVETS Wants You, Horsefly by Bob 'Dex' Armstrong

For years I had my old Silver Dolphins tucked away in my cufflink box... Every now and then when I was looking for a tie clip or a shirt stud, I would come across my old Dolphins and for a moment, a smile would be triggered by raw pride.

I had no one to share those memories with... No one would understand much less care. It was all so long ago, and geography and years had separated me from both my boat and shipmates... I thought I had lost my grip on the magic that you feel when you are a part of the U.S. Submarine community.

The United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. and the dedicated men who stoke the fires that keep it going strong have given the magic back to us. They have done something that force leadership failed to do...They have provided a platform where lads who rode piston-powered boats could drain beer glasses with lads who rode protonpowered boats, share the comradeship we should have shared a long time ago and trade bullshit by the forklift load.

Submarine sailors are notorious for failing to say thank you... We were so damn close that 'Thank you's' were simply understood... The unsaid stuff was a large part of the brotherhood of the undersea service.

But as you grow older, your sense of appreciation matures and you recognize that the road has an end and that you had better toss your 'Thank you's' on the messdeck table for your mates to sift through because your I.O.U.s will expire when the bastards nail the lid on your box.

Subvets has given us all a late in life, 'After the ball is over' rerun... Whoever thought it up and those who are devoting time to keep it 'Full on four', deserve our sincere thanks... A sort of mass invisible handshake from all of us who have benefited from the restoration of our wonderful boatservice memories. Subvets lets an old coot run barefoot over the bare titties of the *Goddess* 

*of the Main Induction*, to tap dance with the devil and howl at the moon. That is no small gift.

If you rode the boats... Qualified, and remember how damn special it all was, and you haven't linked up with Subvets, dig in your mattress money and mail in for your membership. We were an elite service... That's not bogus bragging, it's a damn fact. When you take the totality of American service veterans, there aren't a helluva lot of us. Having said that, it is important for those of us our country pinned Dolphins on, to support the guys who are keeping us together. Look on it as a kind of alumni obligation. Hell, all of us blow more than Subvets dues on a lot of stuff we don't really need.

Hey, it's the right thing to do if you ever stowed your entire inventory of earthy belongings inside the pressure hull of a U.S. submarine. No one suggested this, promoted it or even knew I was doing it. It is just an old E-3 long overdue 'Thank you' to the great guys who run the 'All-Comers Clubhouse', for guys who made a living poking invisible holes in saltwater.

If you want to know how to join, click on the below link.

And tell 'em, DEX promised you an alley rack.

#### https://www.ussvi.org/home.asp



USSVI Groton Base Commander, John Carcioppolo organized Piper shipmate Mike Lally's memorial service. See the story on page 5.

## Commander's Column

#### Shipmates:

This year's get together in Groton exceeded my expectations. As the date drew closer, Mike Hubbard and I were concerned that too few would be on board, and it wouldn't be as much fun or as rewarding as past reunions. I was mistaken!

The welcome aboard party in the Pump Room at Groton base HQ on School Street was a good choice. Smaller room and Joe Negri was there as always keeping an eye on all of us. That kick-off event well attended, but the takers on the keg we put on weren't up for the challenge. I guess we slow down with age. There were the usual Sea Stories, and to my amazement, a few that weren't "repeats, rehashes, or regurgitations." Hubbard sold some memorabilia, and he even enlisted a new Piper Association life member. Without his help, this reunion wouldn't have happened, so kudos to him as always.

Saturday's Burial at Sea ceremony at the Nautilus Museum was solemn yet awesome. Mike Lally's family, although saddened by reliving his passing once again, were very impressed with the honors we observed. John Carcioppolo, Groton base Commander, and the base ceremonial unit and other base members insured a dignified and solemn service. The Navy and the Museum both provided great support and participation. The singing of the Navy Hymn had many of us wiping the corners of our eyes. Outside museum visitors were impressed to see this ceremony first hand, and many stood by and looked on, mostly with due respect, as it progressed. A large contingent of Long Island base members traveled over on the ferry to join with us and express their respect for Mike, who was an active member for many years. Mike was awarded his Holland Club membership by Lenny Sinacore, LI Base Commander, while in hospice care, and Mike truly was happy despite his grueling illness.

Saturday night, Flanders delivered their signature Lobster Bake meal to the club. Obviously, it was not our usual picnic event at Adm. Fyfe Park, but we enjoyed the same great food. There were even some "fireworks" that night, which made it more interesting and eventful. Many attendees had gotten underway by Sunday morning, but those who remained enjoyed a great breakfast buffet at the host hotel.

The future? I was ready to cash it in and let this be the last Piper Reunion. But my great joy in seeing shipmates and their guests have such a rewarding get together caused me to reconsider. My plan is to host a Piper Reunion in conjunction with a future USSVI National Convention. It will be a simpler program to be sure, which would include a hospitality room and a dinner for Piper sailors and their guests. More on that later.

Stay well, stay alive, stay the course, and stay away from those bars and broads on Bank Street. ;)

Regards,

Frank



Piper Reunion 2011 - Radisson Hotel, New London, CT



Piper Reunion 2011 - Mike Lally Memorial Service - Historic Ship Nautilus

## Obituaries

Adolph H. Dombrowski, Jr.

DOMBROWSKI, ADOLF H. JR. "SKI" or "RUDY" Feb. 15, 1940 to July 19, 2011 He was born in Neptune, NJ to Dorothy and Adolf Dombrowski Sr.

He enlisted in the Navy in 1960 and served his country for 20 years on various ships and submarines. He was also a recruiter and instructor and retired as a Chief Petty Officer.

At the time of his passing, he was employed by Solar Turbines, a Caterpillar Co., San Diego. He enjoyed boating, off-roading, and was a member of the MANX Buggy Club.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Dottie and their son Jeffrey and four grandchildren. Also a brother, Michael in Texas.

A memorial service will be held at Community Mortuary, Broadway, Chula Vista, on August 6 at 12 noon and a Military Burial Service at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery, San Diego on August 11 at 2 p.m.

Published in San Diego Union-Tribune on July 31, 2011

#### **Guestbook comments:**

August 12, 2011 I served with "Ski" on two submarines; Piper (SS409) & Corporal (SS346) diesel enginerooms. He was one of the finest men I've ever known. He helped turn me from a know-it-all teenager into an engineman submariner worthy of even his respect.

Tom Bartlett, Springfield, Illinois

#### August 14, 2011

I was 18 and green as I could be when I walked through the engine room of a submarine and started what would be an almost 50 year friendship with one of the finest men I have ever met. I consider Ski to be one of my mentors and one of the most influential people to have touched my life. I've thanked him a thousand times. With tears I say goodbye! Rest easy Bud you will be missed.

Chris Haley En4 SS, Wilmington, North Carolina

#### Robert A. Smith

Robert A. Smith, Sr., age 77, of Wildwood Road in East Wakefield, died March 15, 2011, at home.

Born June 8, 1933 in Boston, MA, the son of Arthur E. and Verna (MacDonald) Smith, he resided the past 4 years in East Wakefield, having previously resided in Sanbornville for over 15 years and also in Union.

A veteran of the United States Navy, he served for 11 years, having served on U.S.S. Piper 409. He was a life member of V.F.W. Post #7663 in Union, a life member of the Disabled American Veterans and a life member of American Legion Post #19 in Sanford, Maine.

Bob was the former owner and operator of Longmeadow Farm and Home Supplies, coowner of Sunnyside Restaurant, Union Meadows Restaurant and The Hen House Restaurant.

He enjoyed old military movies, gardening, farming and raising chickens.

"It is a poor day when I can't find someone to aggravate".

Survivors include his wife of 28 years Cecile "CeCe" (Dion) Smith, of E. Wakefield, his 4 sons: Robert Andrew Smith, Jr. "Andy", Thomas Smith, Russell Smith and Timothy Smith, all of Sanbornville, 2 step daughters: Christina M. Cloutier of Sanbornville and Bobbie Jean Mercer of Kennebunk, Maine, several Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren, 3 brothers: James Smith of Rochester, Carl Smith of Washington state and Arthur Smith of Texas, a sister Carol "Sissy" Manley of NC, also several Nieces and Nephews. He was predeceased by his son William Smith.

A Memorial Service will be celebrated on Saturday, May 14, 2011 at 10:00 at the United Methodist Church on Meadow Street in Sanbornville, NH with Rev. Lee Elliott, pastor, officiating. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made in his memory to Hospice of Southern Carroll County and Vicinity, PO Box 1620, Wolfeboro, NH 03894. Arrangements are in the care of Peaslee Funeral Home, 2079 Wakefield Road in Sanbornville (Wakefield), NH. To express condolences, please visit: www.peasleefuneralhome.com

#### Eternal Patrol

Adolph Dombrowski passed away on July 19, 2011. He served on Piper from 1964 to 1967.

Robert Smith passed away on March 15, 2011. He was a life member of the USS Piper Veterans Association.

Sincere condolences go to family and friends.

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

#### New Address?

To ensure that you continue to receive this newsletter and information about upcoming reunions, etc., please notify Bill Fuchs of any change of mailing address, email address, or telephone number.

William Fuchs 533 North Kings Ave. Lindenhurst, NY 11757 <u>billss582@hotmail.com</u> Phone: 631-884-5664

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

#### **USS PIPER Reunion**

#### July 29, 30, 31 2011

#### Shipmates:

Your fellow shipmates, numbering 19, along with their guests met in Groton, CT Friday 29 July for a welcome aboard party at the SubVets club at 40 School St. After hoisting a few and swapping hellos and more than a few sea stories, we enjoyed a catered Barbeque buffet. From all reports, the meal was satisfying to all. Then on to the serious business of more lies/sea stories about our fearless youth and feats of daring do. Shipmates from Florida, Ohio, New York, Maine, Mass, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New Hampshire representing crew from the 1950s through decommissioning in1967.

On Saturday we mustered at the Historic Ship Nautilus for an 11:00 AM memorial service and burial at sea for our departed shipmate Mike Lally. As many of you know Mike was a long-time supporter of the Piper Association, contributing not only his time but also designing and supplying many of the mementos for the reunions. When we held our first Piper Reunion at the USSVI National Convention in Portsmouth, NH in 1994, Mike was a charter member. The four others were Frank Whitty, Al Dube, Steve Bernath, and Mother Burke. We've certainly grown, despite our aging membership.

The memorial service was a co-ordination by many. I am copying the thank you sent by USSVI Groton Base Commander, John Carcioppolo, who organized the event, assuring its success:

Many thanks to all those in the Honors Detail, and others who participated in the Burial at Sea for Long Island SUBVET Member Mike Lally at the HISTORIC SHIP NAUTILUS yesterday morning.

The weather was perfect, and counting the Honors Detail, Mike Lally's Family, Members of SUBVETS Long Island Base, and members of the USS PIPER Reunion Association there were easily over 100 people in attendance. Despite problems with the PA system that the operator struggled to overcome, Mike was buried with dignity and honor and most importantly surrounded by family and Submariners and SUBVETS that he cared a great deal about. Special thanks to Tom Russell, Ed Childs, and Bud Atkins who helped in the planning and preparations for this event. Also many thanks to the OIC of the HIS-TORIC SHIP NAUTILUS, the Submarine Force Museum and Library Association, NSSC Ceremonies team, the NSSF Rifle Team for their support and to Jen Emerson for singing for us, and Bob Scent for playing the bagpipes.

I received many favorable comments from many attendees, and Pat Lally and her family were very pleased and moved. Many comments were about how so many people who did not know Mike Lally and how many members of Groton Base showed up to support him in his final ride. That doesn't surprise me at all with the SUBVETS at Groton Base. You guys truly show that you are "Brothers of the Phin". And whether you know the individual or not is irrelevant. It's paying the final honors to a Submarine Shipmate that is important to you.

Again from myself and on behalf of Pat Lally and her family many thanks to all for your time in making this happen. You always make me proud.

Sincerely,

John Carcioppolo Base Commander SUBVETS Groton Base First and Finest

After Mike's service, your Piper shipmates joined Pat, her family, and members of the Long Island SUBVETS Base, where Mike was a long time member, for a luncheon at the former Radisson Hotel in New London, now the Plaza.

After the luncheon everyone went their separate ways with Pat and her family returning to Long Island to allow her to get her out of town guests to the airport early Sunday morning. Attendees had the afternoon to themselves, and I know of a few who made a donation to the Mohegan Sun Casino. I won't name names but TK & FW are still running together. The rest of the Piper Crew and guests took a short respite prior to regrouping at the SUBVETS Club on School St to enjoy a catered lobster/ clambake from Flanders Fish Market. Then a few hours more visiting and catching up with the doings of our shipmates.

Sunday morning we again mustered at the hotel for an excellent breakfast buffet. It seems there just wasn't enough time to get all said before it was time to depart. I for one enjoyed the entire weekend.

In closing I wish to Thank Frank Whitty for all his efforts in putting the weekend together.

Mike Hubbard TM3(SS) after torpedo room 1962-1964



Bill Fuchs and Scotty Hendry - Groton Clubhouse

## The Old Coot contributed by shipmate Charlie Patch

An old prospector named Ralph, shuffled into town leading an old tired mule. Old Ralph headed straight for the only saloon to clear his parched throat.

He walked up and tied his old mule to the hitch rail. As he stood there, brushing some of the dust from his face and clothes, a young gunslinger stepped out of the saloon with a gun in one hand and a bottle of whiskey in the other.

The young gunslinger looked at the old man and laughed, saying, "Hey old man, have you ever danced?"

Ralph looked up at the gunslinger and said, "No, I never did dance.. never really wanted to.."

A crowd had gathered as the gunslinger grinned and said, "Well, you old fool, you're gonna dance now," and started shooting at the old man's feet.

The old prospector Ralph- not wanting to get a toe blown off started hopping around like a flea on a hot skillet. Everybody was laughing, fit to be tied.

When his last bullet had been fired, the young gunslinger, still laughing, holstered his gun and turned around to go back into the saloon.

Old Ralph turned to his pack mule, pulled out a doublebarreled shotgun, and cocked both hammers.

The loud clicks carried clearly through the desert air.

The crowd stopped laughing immediately.

The young gunslinger heard the sounds too, and he turned around very slowly. The silence was almost deafening.

The crowd watched as the young gunman stared at the old timer and the large gaping holes of those twin barrels.

The barrels of the shotgun never wavered in Old Ralph's hands, as he quietly said, "Son, have you ever licked a mule's ass?"

The gunslinger swallowed hard and said, "No sir..... but... I've always wanted to."

There are a few lessons for us all here:

Never be arrogant.

Don't waste ammunition.

Whiskey makes you think you're smarter than you are. Always, always make sure you know who has the power. Don't mess with old people; they didn't get old by being stupid.

I just love a story with a happy ending, don't you?

## Navy Chief VS Marine Gunny

An old Navy Chief and an old Marine Gunny were sitting at the VFW arguing about who had the tougher career.

"I did 30 years in the Corps," the Marine declared proudly, "and fought in three of my country's wars. Fresh out of boot camp I hit the beach at Okinawa, clawed my way up the blood-soaked sand, and eventually took out an entire enemy machine gun nest with a single grenade. As a sergeant, I fought in Korea alongside General MacArthur. We pushed the enemy inch by bloody inch all the way up to the Chinese border, always under a barrage of artillery and small arms fire. Finally, as a gunny sergeant, I did three consecutive combat tours in Vietnam . We humped through the mud and elephant grass for 14 hours a day, plagued by rain and mosquitoes, ducking under sniper fire by day and mortar fire all night. In a firefight, we'd fire until our arms ached and our guns were empty, then we charged the enemy with bayonets."

"Ah, you lucky bastard!" said the Sailor with envy. "All shore duty, huh?"

Contributed by shipmate Charlie Patch



Aurelie and Scotty Hendry Mike Lally's Memorial Service Piper Reunion 2011

The Piper Report



Piper Reunion 2011 - Groton Clubhouse

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Phone:						
<u>QTY</u>	<u>ITEM</u> Piper Pin (\$1.00 postage) 2007 Groton Reunion Button (Ship Key Chain—One Sided Key Chain—Two Sided Soft Ball Cap	<u>SIZE</u> ping Included)	@ \$5.00 \$2.00 \$6.00 \$10.00 \$15.00	<u>TOTAL</u>		
	Traditional Hard Ball Cap		\$15.00			
	2007 Groton Reunion T-Shirt		\$20.00			
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	Long Sleeve Denim Shirt Size: M(1), L(10), XL(3) Short Sleeve Cotton Golf Shirt		\$32.00		USS PIPER MICIA (CA) 7 August 9 - 25 - 25	(SS409)
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	White: L, XL					
	Navy Blue: L, XL		\$25.00			
	Forest Green: L, XL		\$25.00		A	-
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	WWII Jap Flag		\$6.00			
	White Hat Design		\$6.00			
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Piper pi	in - \$1.00					
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Please make check payable to Piper Association Mail to Mike Hubbard at the address above					A DETEXT	
Items may also be seen in the Piper Stuff Catalog, which can be accessed from a link on the "Piper Store" page of the Piper Association website:					WS-S- Pinga	(155)
http://webpages.charter.net/usspiper/index.html					55-403	PRER

Α	Note	About	Mem	bershi	n
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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 <u>paying</u> members.

The dues money goes for paper, ink, postage, etc. <u>This is</u> <u>a considerable expense.</u> 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 <u>paid</u> member of the Piper Association.

USS Piper (SS409) Veteran's Association Membership/Renewal Form
Send form and payment to:
William Fuchs 533 North Kings Ave. Lindenhurst, NY 11757 billss582@hotmail.com
Name:       Address:       City State Zip:
City, State, Zip: Email Address: Phone:
Year reported aboard Piper: Year departed Piper: Highest rank/rating while aboard Piper:
<ul> <li>Enclosed is my \$10.00 for the year beginning July</li> <li>Here's another \$10.00 for next year</li> <li>Enclosed is my \$100.00 for Life Membership!</li> </ul>
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 2011-2012 WERE 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://webpages.charter.net/usspiper/index.html

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

## Life Members

William Bailey Bob Baker Paul Barlow Robert Batscher Tom Black Michael Bray Jim Burdett Jim Burke Thomas Calabrese **Richard Caldwell** Aldo Cecchi Howard Clark Ralph Clark Willis Clifford **Richard Collins** William Cotter Edward Cushman James Delaney Don Del Core John Donkus Preston Douthitt Al Dube **Richard Fohn** William Fuchs

Chester Fuller Chic Gilgore Charles Halbing, Jr Gerald Harring John Hendry Obie Hill Jerry Holland George Holst Michael Hubbard Charles Jones Edmund Lee Joyner Ernie Kertzscher James King Thomas Kucharski Robert Lloyd David Mogil Noah Monsour James Morris Ross Morrison Robert Neidlinger Morris Newkirk Austin Nickerson Ralph Norman Mike Paquette

**Charles Patch** Joe Pow Frank Reinhold Michael Remington **Benjamin Rollonston** George Sanderson C. Miles Schmidt Ralph Schmidt Charles Schwartz David Shoaff **Clarence Spencer** Thomas J Stanton **Bob Staufenberg** Gilles St. George R Calvin Sutliff Gordon Threlfall Joseph Vanderbosch Douglas Ward Terry Welsh Frank Whitty Hank Wiley David Winnington Eugene Zakutansky

## 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!



#### The Piper Report

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

We are always looking for photos, <u>sea stories</u> 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: <u>mikebray@chartermi.net</u>

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

http://webpages.charter.net/usspiper/index.html

#### Piper Association Officers and Staff

#### **President:**

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

Secretary: Jim Burke 78 Eagle Drive Whiting, NJ 08759 jamescburke@verizon.net Phone: 732-849-0471

Treasurer: Michael Hubbard 271 Elm Street New London, CT 06320 <u>bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org</u> Phone: 860-444-7649

#### Membership Chairperson:

William Fuchs 533 North Kings Ave. Lindenhurst, NY 11757 <u>billss582@hotmail.com</u> Phone: 631-884-5664

#### Store Keeper:

Michael Hubbard 271 Elm Street New London, CT 06320 <u>bldgmaint@subvetsgroton.org</u> Phone: 860-444-7649

Newsletter Editor & Webmaster: Michael Bray W3821 Waucedah Road Vulcan, MI 49892 <u>mikebray@chartermi.net</u> Phone: 906-221-1550