

Sirago Newsletter



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Amnesty Offered

Joe Roche (CO / Editor)
SS485@COMCAST.NET

With all the talk in the news about amnesty, I thought that Sirago ought to get into the fray and offer amnesty to any of our own crew members or honoraries who care to return any pieces, parts, gauges, hatch handles, klaxons, paperwork, photos, plaques or other Sirago memorabilia parts which may have been stolen, "borrowed", or legitimately received as a departing gift.

I say this in all sincerity because we have recently seen old Sirago XMAS cards signed by the CO and Commissioning launch tags offered on Ebay. What does this mean? It means that a crew member has died with some treasure in his possession and in spite of how much it may have meant to him, it no doubt meant much less to the family that survived him.

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I personally know that there are many of you who have such valued possessions and we want to preserve them as part of this Sirago Association... if, in fact, such artifacts were from the USS Sirago (SS485). We'd like to think that eventually, such a collection could be donated to a submarine museum since there is nothing left of Sirago herself to remember her by.... except for the remembrances documented in these newsletters, on our website, and in our own brains.

I'd whole lot rather see these items as part of our association that being bought and sold on Ebay. We have the actual original commissioning pennant which was sent to us by the son of the departed crew member who lifted it fair and square. We have located the ship's bell and got it safely returned to a Navy Museum from the "skimmer" who stole it (tried to hide that fact) – so what I'm saying is that we care about these things.

I am offering to have these items shipped to my own home where all the other Sirago archives are stored as passed down from Bill Gerber to Leroy Ippoliti to Mike Bickel and to me. Here is where you can send them:

Joe Roche / 16889 Jays Way / Milton, DE 19968.

Please consider doing this as a donation to our association – and rest assured, the items will be retained by our association until donated to a proper museum in years to come.

And now... how about a MYSTERY? At one point in time you may remember when we were wondering what ever happened to the Ship's

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bell? We eventually found and retrieved that – yours truly having to put on a bit of grease paint and spy on the Subvet base that knew where it was.... But that's water under the bridge. Let's talk about the **"Mystery of the Missing Bronze Seahorse"**.



Take a look at the photo above. This is Lanny Renken (IC3) in October 1969 looking off the top of the high sail in the port of Civitavecchia. To the right of his head, you might be able to see a shiny object sticking out on a pole – it is a bronze seahorse that was affixed in this place while in port. This is the **ONLY** photo we have of it.

This Seahorse was made first as a wooden pattern by Chief Chuck Veir and then he had the USS Orion cast it in bronze. Chief Veir had given the topside watches strict orders to guard it while in port. In fact, the Chief states that while in Savannah, Georgia in March 1968 the Seahorse was almost stolen but an alert topside watch chased off the intruders from the Argonaut with his 45 pistol.

Chief Veir was transferred off Sirago in December 1969 and the bronze seahorse was there when he left the boat. No questions will be asked if you return same or give us some info leading to its successful return.

Joe Roche

Show Me the Money!



Hey! This is your friendly storekeeper – Pat Conroy. We lost a little money this last reunion – about \$500 I think – and I'd like to see if you guys can help us out.

Of all the items in stores I received from off-going Mike Bickel, the item I am most concerned about trying to sell is the Sirago Playing Cards (see below).



This is a double bridge deck of cards – one set is green and shows a photo of the USS

Sirago at commissioning (13 August 1945) and the other deck is red showing a photo of Sirago in her high north Atlantic sail configuration very close to the date of decommissioning (1 June 1972).

We've been selling these cards for some time, and we bought them for the 60th anniversary of the commissioning when we had our August 2005 reunion. I personally think that Mike overbought – or maybe he had a minimum quantity to meet. Either way, we have 105 double decks of these cards. That's what we have, and when they're gone, they're gone.

I'd personally like to see these babies "sold out" because we are selling them at \$10.00 per deck (a double deck) which is the same price we sell them for at our reunions when there isn't any freight involved. You'd be doing your Sirago Association a big favor by ordering one or more decks of these cards at \$10.00 for each double deck.

Just think.... Christmas is coming up and there's those grandchildren to think about. Hey – when I was a kid we played "WAR" with a double deck of cards. Remember that silly game? Basically you have two young kids (or 3 or 4 – it doesn't matter). Each one has a deck of cards. They shuffle their own deck. Then they take the top card of their deck and all simultaneously lay them down on the rug (or table) and the highest card wins all the cards and you play again until one person has all the cards. OF COURSE there will come a time when the top card is the same for at least 2 players. At that point everyone declares "WAR!" and then (depending on your version of this) each of the warring parties lays down ONE card (each) FACE DOWN on top of (but only half obscuring) their "warring" original card and then proceeds to lay down another 3 cards FACE UP – each one slightly offset like above so that you have a chain of 5 cards (original face up, 2nd face down, 3rd, 4th, and 5th all face up). THEN the warring parties turn up their FACE DOWN card to see who won the war. The winner takes all the cards that are on the table or rug.

I know you love those grandchildren of yours – and I know you want to help your good old storekeeper to help offset some of those reunion losses.

So... if you're up to helping us out.... here is the EXACT procedure for you to use:

MAIL a check made out to USS SIRAGO with a memo saying "Playing Cards" – in the amount of \$10, \$20, \$30, or whatever number of double-decks you want – TO:

Garry Goetschius
3620 Locus Circle East
Prospect, KY 40059-9020

When he receives your check he will email me and let me know how many decks to ship to you. He will check your return address on your envelope as well as our database to let me know where to ship them, but if you want to include a note to that effect in your envelope, that's fine too.

Once I get his email I will SHIP them to you and will inform Garry that they are shipped so that he won't bug me to death about not getting your stuff to you.

These things are collector's items! Maybe some day old Joe Roche will be hunting them down to be part of his archives or something, but right now – "Show Me The Money"!

Pat

Decklog Poem

John Duff, Jr. - 1 January 1949

As most of you know, it was the duty officer's responsibility to write a poem in the ship's decklog when having the duty over New Year's Eve. The following was written by John Duff.

We are moored at Pier D, Philadelphia, "P" "A"
And it looks for the moment we're here for a
stay.
For the engines are dead and so are the
pumps
(Takes a rag and a bucket to dry up the
sumps)
Our torpedoes are gone and the tubes are
mere pipes,
And the pump room's the bane of the
machinists and snipes.

We are blind as a bat with our periscopes
gone,
There's no deck nor a bridge, nor a circuit
that's on.
There's nothing that works, not even a
head,
And the ship is a monster that's lifeless
and dead.
We are told, though, in time we will have
us a boat
That's as deadly and nimble as the cobra
and goat,
That will slide through the water with the
ease of the eel
And avoid detection by all with a keel.
If she's half what they claim when the
building is through
She will keep the States safe in the years
that ensue.

Rich McCamant
10225 Ocean Gateway
Easton, MD 21601

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