

# Sirago Newsletter



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## Crew Stories

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With the reunion just six months away, we thought it would be good to share some stories from Sea Leopard, Cutlass, and honorary members of the Sirago crew – just to pass the time while waiting for this joint operation.

### **Dan Laemont, ET2, 56-59 – USS Sea Leopard:**

Fresh out of New London and assigned to the Sea Leopard, this 18 year old kid, having completed 12 months of schooling and eager to ply his trade, was, of course, assigned to mess cooking. His partner, who tended to be sea sick at the dock, was of little value, as we headed out past Virginia Beach and into the ocean. The kid, having never been more than 90 miles from Chicago prior to joining this man's Navy, was in the ocean for the first time.

The old Leopard starting rolling about 20 degrees and this sailor was sent topside to dump the garbage. As he exited the conning tower hatch, he was a bit surprised to see green water 10 feet above him and coming right at

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him, to boot. Safety line be damned, that garbage got dumped quick and back he went to the safety and comfort of his mess partner's green gills, where it was time to prepare the salad for the evening meal, where Pudgy Farnell (our cook) had taken great delight in preparing pork and sauerkraut for our discerning gourmets.

As our boy mixed ketchup, mayo and relish for the delightful salad dressing, a QM1 began a critique of our sailor's efforts. This critique, in part, addressed the boot's lineage, not to mention his culinary skills. The boot, not fully understanding of what a first class was, reacted with his Chicago background rising to the fore. Needless to say, the boot lost the battle, but let it be known, that "first" never gave him any more trouble, and the boot may have won the war. At least, that's as close as he ever came during this Cold War period.

### **Tom Murray, FT3, 63-64 – USS Cutlass:**

I get sea sick... chronically seasick! This came as 'new news' to me and the Crew of the USS Cutlass SS478 out of NORVA (D&S piers) early in the 60's. She was my first boat after Sub school. This problem was the source of much amusement and great entertainment to the crew until they realized it was it was the source of endless discomfort to me. I learned to eat no matter what - not because I was hungry but because the dry heaves are HELL! Watching the swinging weight, eating greasy pork chops, blowing into a brow paper bag, and endless old sailor remedies didn't work. I never outgrew it - just lived with it. Someone, unfortunately I don't remember who, made me a barf bucket from a #10 can to hang around my neck and a very nice harness to hold it in place. I was the only one who could go from torpedo room to torpedo room at a dead run and have no one in his way. They even ordered extra boxes of crackers for me to relieve my dry heaves.

Depth was the only thing that helped. The deeper we got the better I felt. When the Sea and Anchor detail was set, in bad weather I was reassigned from #1 line to the QM as his phone talker and stood in control (out of the rain) next to him and he'd watch me. He said my ears turned red when we entered the Elizabeth River channel and I'd

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erp' when we hit the breakwater, turn bleach white in the bay and would throw up when we entered the ocean. He'd just note the time and make the proper entry in his log.

One time we were on the surface in a hurricane and couldn't dive. I was port lookout. That was when I learned to drink hot black coffee and quickly. Coffee was brought to the bridge by the off lookout who told me when I would complain that it wasn't a "sweet blond", that he wasn't a 'G D' chemist. All the green water in the world was about to come crashing down on me and I had only 3 seconds to drink my hot cup of coffee before it became a cup of salt water.

For reasons best known to the cook, he thought the crew would like chocolate pudding for desert while bouncing around on the surface, and attempted to make some. I don't know what went wrong - but the recipe wasn't quite right and instead of pudding he made chocolate epoxy. I kid you not! Chocolate Epoxy. Believing he had just discovered the only food in the world I couldn't throw up - he requested I come to the galley on next watch rotation. We had to cut the mixing spoon out of the pot he made it in and the only way you could eat it was with a knife and fork. It tasted like chocolate salt water taffy made of old truck tires. It was great! It settled my stomach and didn't come bounding out in to my #10 can. When I was finished I did my turn on the helm and didn't even feel queasy. On rotation to Lookout, near the end of the watch, I returned to the bridge for another soaking. I was ELATED! I was finally cured! Just as my relief came up I suddenly felt God Awful and was seized with stomach cramps that doubled me over the side of the sail and all Hell broke loose. I heaved so hard I thought I would turn inside out. After several minutes of gasping for breath I accepted my relief and went below to collapse on the bail of rags outside of #1 (NQP's weren't assigned racks). After a very short nap I returned to eating crackers and periodically emptying my bucket.

Several days later, when we got back to port the COB told my I couldn't go on liberty until I'd cleaned up my mess. I told him I didn't know what he was talking about and would cheerfully do so shortly after he pointed it out to me. I followed him through the dog shack topside. The COB walked about 1/2 way to the forward hatch, stopped, turned and pointed to the sail. It had the most gorgeous shiny chocolate brown stain on the port side. It looked like 1/2 an English saddle. On closer inspection it wasn't a stain over the paint. What I threw up had removed the paint and primer and adhered to the sail. I tried scrubbing and chipping it off to no avail. Finally at the COB's suggestion I just repainted the sail and went back to my rag bed as I was too tired to hit the beach.

### **Barbara Robertson, Honorary – USS Sirago:**

We came home to a message on our phone recorder that said "If you owned a 69 Buick Gran Sport please call this number" – so we did.

Turns out this retired navy guy bought the car to restore. He brought it by our house and took us for a ride. It was beautiful, even with a black top (original was white). He took us on the interstate and opened her up. As we were talking he mentioned he was on submarines. So was my step-dad... so we asked "Which ones?" When he said "Sirago" I asked "Did you go to the last reunion?" and he answered "Yes".

Bingo! The whole time I was trying to figure where I knew this face. I said "My mom is an Honorary Member and we attended the last two reunions".

So as Bob Flora drove off in our car with memories of dating, marriage, and a daughter that never got to drive it, I thought to myself with tears in my eyes... she has a good home.

*Barb Robertson is the Step Daughter of Lewis Boyer, QM1, 57-58, USS Sirago – Eternal Patrol.*

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## Reunion Bulletin!!

You will notice that included in this newsletter is a SIGNUP SHEET for Reunion 2007. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter in which this signup sheet is included. If you have not booked your room yet or if you have not sent in at least a "down payment" with this signup sheet yet, you had better get cracking. Rooms are filling up and you will definitely kick yourself later if you miss movement.

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## Sirago News & Notes

### **Newly Found Crew (found alive):**

John Donaldson, EN1, 52-53

Charles Britton, ICFN, 62-62

Bob Smith, HM1, 53-54

Tony Gilbert, EM2, 62-62

John Reid, ICFN, 67-68

Stephen Lewis, STS3, 69-70

Jack Mendenhall, EN3, 49-52

Charles Bowman, EM3, 55-58

Bob Brown, SA, 49-50

William Hyde, S2cBKR, 45-46

Ben Simmons, StM1c, 46-46

Joe Laudano, FN, 64-66  
William Hall, QM2, 48-52  
Earl White, MM1, 60-61  
Jim Graham, ET1, 69-70  
Robert Steele, TMT3, 50-51  
Carl Foster, MM1, 57-58  
James Smith, EMC, 56-57  
Robert Clark, ETR3, 61-61  
Stan Hammond, TM3, 69-69  
Robert Wilson, ETR3, 60-61  
David Frank, QM3c, 45-45 (Plank)

**Recently Deceased:**

Bill Cameron, LTJG, 64-65 (5 August 2006)  
Wilbur Sendoya, EN2, 61-61 (3 April 2006)  
Domingo Paguio, CS3, 62-64 (2 July 2006)

**LOOK AT YOUR ADDRESS LABEL:**

For Sirago Crew Members only – IF you are receiving this newsletter by “snail mail” (instead of via an email notice), then please look at the address label. You will notice that near your name you will see something that looks like: F2004 or H2006, or A2006. If you are an Honorary or Associate (ones beginning with “H” or “A”) you MUST pay \$5.00 per year to keep your subscription current. If you one of those (ie. H2006) then this means you are paid through the end of 2006 and should pay \$5.00 to pay for 2007. Crew Members (ones that begin with “F” such as F2003 or F2006) do NOT NEED TO PAY any dues... BUT... if a crew member wants to be a VOTING MEMBER, then such dues need to be kept current. If you are a crew member with a “F2003” (for example), it means you have not paid any dues since the end of 2003 and thus, to get current (if you want to be a voting member – your choice) you would need to pay \$20.00 which would advance your code to F2007. Again... no crew member has to pay anything, but you get voting privileges if you stay current. So.... if you are of a mind to “pay”, then every \$5.00 you pay advances your year marker by one year. Make checks payable to: USS SIRAGO and mark them “DUES” and mail to:  
Garry Goetschius, Treasurer  
3620 Locust Circle East  
Prospect, KY 40059-9020

**SPEAKING OF “SNAIL MAIL”:**

If you are a Sirago Crew Member or Honorary and are receiving this newsletter by “snail mail” – AND if you have an email address... we’d like to make a suggestion. To mail 4 newsletters per year costs very close to \$5.00 and certainly takes a lot of volunteer time to get them printed, fold and label and mail them, etc. In fact, this particular mailing had about 800 Sirago related folks plus another 200+ from Cutlass & Sea Leopard making the printing a volume of 1000+ newsletters which all had to be printed, folded, stamped, labeled, taped, and mailed. Here is our suggestion: Take a look at this SAME newsletter shown under the NEWSLETTER TAB at [www.sirago.com](http://www.sirago.com). If you have the Adobe Acrobat Reader, you can see this in color and high resolution and print it yourself at your leisure – and by doing so – save your organization \$5.00 per year in costs. We understand it you don’t want to do this as it is a bit of trouble on your part... but consider how much it helps our organization if you can be emailed a notice that a new newsletter has just been posted and then you can retrieve it yourself. If you are amenable to this, then send a quick email to Mike Bickel at: [RMBICKEL@STUPP.COM](mailto:RMBICKEL@STUPP.COM) and let him know that you are willing to be a WEB distribute and he will insure that you are notified whenever a new newsletter is posted to the web.

**REUNION ORGANIZERS NEEDED:**

We are not talking about THIS reunion – but we’ll take any help we can get (of course). In order to keep a vibrant Sirago organization, we need some new blood (fresh meat if you will) to get involved in future reunion activities – helping to organize them – assisting in the fun & games – assisting with Hotel Coordination and Contracting, etc. etc. IF you are one of our faithful guys that routinely attends our “every two year” reunions, then WE WANT YOU to consider being a key player in our organization. The pay sucks, but the benefits are plenty. Please consider this important function and if you are willing to “assist” in some reunion planning and coordination, please contact DAVID GLASER by phone or email:  
H: (601) 729-4039  
EMAIL: [DGLASER@PECOFOODS.COM](mailto:DGLASER@PECOFOODS.COM)

## DECKLOG POEM – 1948

There are probably many of you who don't know this, but it was the tradition aboard submarines for the Duty Officer who had the watch during midnight when a new year started to write a poem in the ship's Deck Log. Of course, this date (New Years Eve) usually found the Sirago in port somewhere, but occasionally this was not true.

The initial entry in Sirago's Deck Log for January 1, 1948:

From the mind and pen of Duty Officer John Duff, Jr.

*We find this ship at the start of the year*

*Moored to the south of the number eight pier.*

*At the Sub Base where nothing's left undone,*

*The state of Connecticut, the town of New London.*

*The ships that are present are varied and neat*

*And make up a portion of the United States Fleet.*

*The Flying Fish, number two twenty nine,*

*Is the flag of the Boss of the Force that is fine.*

John Duff, Jr. 1/1/48

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