

Sirago Newsletter



Volume 10, Issue 4

November 2009

Reunion '09

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Shipmates,

The reunion was a great success, the weather was great, the beach was wonderful, and the banquet and memorial – memorable.

For more information and some photos of this reunion, see the Sirago Reunion 2009 insert.

As many of you know, Joe Roche (our CO) suffered a stroke during the months leading up to the reunion. He elected to step down which sort of started a Chinese fire drill exercise on how to best reorganize the association officers for success into the future. An election was held on Saturday morning during the reunion and the following officers were elected to head up the organization:

Rich McCamant (Commanding Officer)

David Glaser (Executive Officer)

Frank George (Disbursing Officer)

Mike Bickel (Administrative Officer)

Pat Conroy (Supply Officer)

During the reunion banquet many kind words were said about the dedicated service that both Joe Roche and Garry Goetschius exhibited during their terms of duty. As is the case for all past association officers, they stand by to advise as needed and help newer officers learn the skills of actually steering the organization through the next reunion.

Joe Roche will continue to serve as the Sirago's Archivist and historian. He has already done much to lead this organization to account for all crew members and document the boat's history over time (see past 7 issues on Duty Section Reviews).

Rich McCamant – new CO for the organization – was commended for his work as Administrative Officer over the past years and especially his success in accounting for all but about 45 of the 1600+ crew members who were ever aboard the USS Sirago for active duty. BZ Rich!

But our most sincere praise is reserved for those who showed up at this past reunion and helped to make it a great success. To all who chipped in to help offset costs, to John Tumilty who played the bagpipes at our memorial service, to Chuck Veir who spent countless hours helping at the ship's store, and to Dex Armstrong, Chuck Veir, and others who donated precious memorabilia for our archives into the future.

Our NEXT reunion will be 28 April – 1 May 2011 at the SAME HOTEL that provided services this past 2009 reunion. Please refer to the SSSBS Insert inside this newsletter for more information about the SubRon Six Smoke Boat Sisters (SSSBS) organization that will be running reunion 2011. It will be a reunion that invites ALL the Squadron Six diesel boats and we expect a record turnout.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Reunion 09 Recap
- 2 Joe Roche Update
- 2 Eternal Patrol Update
- 3-4 Communication Notices

UPDATE on JOE ROCHE

Joe Roche

Hi guys,

I wanted to update you guys on my health status. A little good news for a change, (I think) It's still only a procedure that's 3 years old, while still experimental it has a few legs.

I just returned home from Jefferson Memorial Hospital in Philly, where I had a stent inserted in the basilar artery in the rear/base of the brain. After viewing the area via an angiogram, I have a severe stenosis of 75%, up from a level of 60% which the MRI showed, (nothing like the real thing HUH?) which meant that it was a certainty for another stroke within a year or less. The severity of the second stroke with this size blockage would have been pretty bad if I survived. Actually, the stroke I had was in this area and the thing that kept me alive was the Coumadin I take, probably saved me. See "Circle of Willis" in Google to view the area in question.

This is a fairly new procedure done exclusively by this guy on the east coast, he does nothing else, so I was just behind the guinea pigs, which I really didn't care for but the alternative was not good at all.

Good to be home, albeit a little slow moving and tired.

Joe

ETERNAL PATROL UPDATE

Once again we must document the loss of more shipmates from the USS Sirago. Robert Sollars and Richard Saunders below were included in our tolling ceremony at the reunion. Gary Shaw will be officially remembered in the 2011 reunion memorial.

Robert Sollars	RM1	68-69	Died 25 March 2006
Richard Saunders	FCS2	45-48(Plank)	Died 9 September 2009
Gary Shaw	SOS3	63-64	Died 13 October 2007

Richard Saunders is shown with his eyes closed in this photo. From left to right these crew members are: TM1 Beaver, Rick Saunders, Harry & Willie Baird, and Charles Riley Johnson. Rick Saunders was the last of these fellows to die.



Newsletter Communication Changes

Rich McCamant (ss485sirago@yahoo.com)

As you all know, Sirago Veterans Association produces a quarterly newsletter. The newsletter, which is produced mainly through the efforts of Mike Bickel (69-72) with input from any crew member who cares to submit something, is distributed to all Association members and other interested parties two ways. It is posted on our website www.sirago.com and it is mailed. Those of you who have access to email are notified by email when the newsletter has been posted on the site. By going to the site and clicking on the newsletter tab you can view and print the current and all previous newsletters. Those for whom we have no email address receive the newsletter in the mail. There are, however, many of you who do have email who also receive a mailed copy. Printing and mailing the newsletter is a big expense and is putting a strain on our budget, so at the recent meeting of your Association Officers (held at the Reunion in Virginia Beach) we decided that the following action needed to be taken. The newsletter will no longer be mailed to those members who have email and have not contributed any financial support to the Association for the past three years in the form of dues or booster donations. We regret if this affects anyone adversely, but we have to cut our expenses. We estimate that this move will save the Association about \$3000 a year. This will be effective immediately with the November newsletter which will be out shortly. If you fall into this category and still need to get a copy of the newsletter in the mail in addition to reading it on-line, all is not lost. You can send the Association some money and ask to be reinserted on the mailing list. If you are not sure of when you last contributed, you can look at the last newsletter you received in the mail. We keep track of contributions mainly with what we call a dues marker which appears after your name on the address label. This is the year for which we last have you credited as contributing. No one is earlier than 2003, as that is the year we "grandfathered" everyone in. Otherwise the date is the year we "found" you and you became a member, the last year you contributed, or the year through which you have paid the \$5 dues. In some cases this is as far in the future as 2025. Even if you have contributed large sums of money to the Association recently, you could still help us out by telling us that it's OK for us to stop mailing you the newsletter. If you have any questions or comments, or want to know your status, feel free to respond to this notification by email or by mail. If you desire to contribute to our Association, send a check made out to USS Sirago Veterans Association to our Treasurer:
Frank George
3095 Branch Dr.
Clearwater, FL 33760-1741
Thanks,
Rich McCamant

SIRAGO COMMUNICATES in FACEBOOK

Mike Bickel (bickel485@aol.com)

While this may sound ridiculous, I wanted to point out that there is a serious “Geezer Pile-on” going on with Facebook. I know you guys have heard of this stuff. Now, I’m not a “twitter” person as I really don’t think anyone cares what I had for breakfast today. But I have gotten quite fond of the social networking site called Facebook. If you are an emailer and use a web browser, I can almost guarantee you that you will learn to love this site. Just go to www.facebook.com and register (it’s free). Just use your email address and make up a password you won’t forget.

At first it’s a little bit hard to figure out, but what the heck... if you can qualify in submarines I just KNOW you can do Facebook. If you tell your kids or grandkids that you are thinking about using it, they will likely encourage you to get on it. You can FRIEND me on Facebook by using my email address (shown above). You just go to the Friends / Find Friends part and then near the bottom you can put in a person’s name or their email address. If they are there, you will find them. If you friend me, I will suggest any other Sirago guys that you might know that are already out on Facebook.

BUT... the really cool thing is that you will be able to get in contact with your high school friends, your church friends, your submarine friends, etc. and be able to see what they are up to regularly. Try it – you’ll like it! Your family will especially be happy you did.

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