

Sirago Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 1

February 2002

September 11th - Revisited

Sirago Crew Members Involved in Aftermath

Mike Bickel (Editor)

Duty Section 6972

Crewmembers affected by 9/11 events:

Ken Koller (RM2 / DS6568): I have not been directly involved in assisting in the WTC rescue/recovery, but I have been involved in directing the use of technologies which were developed for the U. S. Dept. of Energy's environmental cleanup program, but are applicable to the recovery efforts. These technologies deployed at the WTC include personal ice cooling suits (personal cooling systems), oxy-gasoline cutting tools (for cutting quickly through steel), a universal demolition processor, and a blade plunging cutter (again, to cut through dense materials).

Bruce Larsen (RMSN / DS6972): I am part of the HAZ-MAT team at our small hospital in the Twin Cities. After 9/11 we have been having weekly briefings and meetings regarding the threat of bio-terrorism. I have been assigned a duty which is somewhat odd. When we have medevac choppers landing on our helipad, I

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 September 11th – Sirago Crew Remembers
- 1 Pinging for Crew Members – Standing Sonar Watch
- 3 Calendar of Future Events
- 3 Guess Who's Coming to VA Beach 2003!!
- 4 Sirago – Trivia
- 4 Prayer of an EM1

Pinging for Crew Members

Duty Section Personnel Stand Watches in "Sonar"

Mike Bickel

Duty Section 6972

One of the factors that differentiates the Sirago Reunited Crew from other boat crews is the active work being done to find lost crew members. In early 2000 there was a total of 161 crewmembers accounted for in some way. Now, two years later we have accounted for more than 700 of which about 550 are "found alive".

We have luckily had contributions from over 45 different crewmembers interested in funding microfilm research. At first, we didn't have access to these important records and were trying to find people just based on Xerox copies of Qual-Cards and other records that a crew member may have found in their attic. While these were "helpful" we've exhausted their use and needed to get a full listing of all who served on active duty aboard the Sirago.

I wanted to describe the process step by step, in case any other crewmembers might be interested in assisting in the effort. At this point, we are more in need of "workers" than we are of more microfilms as we have the names of most all of the crew members who served aboard Sirago. We know the full names of about 850 people who are presently in a "Seeking" status (not found yet). This means that there were probably about 1500-1600 people who ever served on the USS Sirago during its 27-year history.

The first step of the process is to take the microfilm to a reader and scan it for full names, dates, and rates or ranks. This is taken from what is referred to as "Muster Rolls" available from the National Archives near Washington, DC. Once these names are written down, they are then put into the master spreadsheet and coded as "S" for "Seeking". People involved in working with microfilm records and transcribing same into databases are primarily myself and David Glaser (6568).

continued on page 3

now have the duty of being part of the "ground crew". This was allegedly based on my "military experience". I tried to explain that submarines have no helicopters and that I have no relevant experience. So here I am now fully trained to land a half million-dollar aircraft with two \$2.39 flashlights.

Mick Finn (EN2 / DS6972): Although I was not involved in any rescue or direct aid efforts other than giving some blood and a small donation to a relief fund we set up locally, 9/11/01 will always be a special date to remember for me.

On that day I was making a delivery of chemicals to a customer about 75 miles SW of Pittsburgh, about 3 miles from the crash site as it happened. After seeing the HAZ-MAT placards on my trailer (I drive for the largest chemical distributor in the world now that we merged) the local and state authorities thought it best that I leave the area.

That was the beginning of a continuing run of looking over your shoulder at every stop, and endless checks and inspections every time you cross a scale or come near most rest areas. As it's illegal for commercial drivers to carry weapons in the truck it leaves you open to bouts of depression and some of our guys are showing the strain. It's like driving around with a target on your back. Not that I'm not used to that being your basic longhaired, tattooed, biker type. It's just not the same.

Robert Mazurek (EM3 / DS5356): I had been a firefighter thirty-four years with Ladder Company 105 in Brooklyn, N.Y.

I have been retired for almost five years but I have kept in contact with everyone there through reunions, golf or just a night out. Ladder 105 lost seven members on 9/11 all close friends of mine. There were also a number of men that I worked with over the years that were former members of Ladder 105 that are also lost. Many of our friends have lost their sons who were firefighters, police officers and workers in The World Trade Center. My wife and I have been to more funerals, memorials and vigils than I ever dreamed possible in one short period of time. Families are having memorials just to have some kind of closure. The devastation is so bad most people may never be found.

Through all this sadness and sorrow we can count our blessings that our own son and son-in-law are okay. They both live in New Jersey and work in the area around the World Trade Center. The last stop on their commute was the train station beneath the World Trade Center. My son went in early that day and missed the first plane hitting the first tower and my son-in-law's train was held up in the tunnel right after the first plane hit. Unfortunately they witnessed the whole thing.

Over the years we have lost a number of firefighters and friends in the line of duty but nothing has affected us so emotionally as 9/11/01 it's something we will relive the rest of our lives.

Pat Conroy (TM3 / DS6568): Regarding 9/11 and the aftermath, I guess I'd have to say that things have gotten a bit frustrating and a somewhat stupid around here. I work as a fireman / paramedic for the Macedonia Fire Department which is between Cleveland and Akron Ohio. One of the frustrating issues relates to New York not allowing the firemen and policemen to assist in the recovery efforts. As you probably know, they have restricted that involvement to 24 men per day helping them in the body recovery efforts. When they cut down to that number, we all knew what that meant... that they were going to just let the earth movers in there and "scoop" them up along with the trash and debris. I don't know if you can realize how upset a firefighter can get about this, but almost all of us feel the same way. In fact, there are many of us who are not going to attend the International Meeting of Fire Fighters to show our solidarity about this issue.

On another note... things have also gotten a bit stupid. Of course we've had lots of training on dealing with Anthrax but it amazes me the situations we get called on to investigate. One elderly lady called up to say that there was white powder in her basement and she was convinced that someone had broken in to her house in the middle of the night to spread it. Turned out to be OXY-Clean - an additive to her detergent - she had just done laundry the previous day. The one that takes the cake, however, is the woman who was practically screaming on the phone at 5:15AM that some sort of airplane must have sprayed Anthrax all over her lawn and on top of her car outside. You still have to be polite and go on site to calm the nerves of people afraid of Jack Frost. ♦♦♦

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

REUNION 2003 – “HIT THE BEACH” REUNION

VA BEACH, VIRGINIA

APR 30TH – MAY 4TH 2003 (PLEASE HOLD THIS DATE OPEN)

Sirago will hold its 7th Reunion at the Holiday Inn – Executive Center located in Virginia Beach. For those of you “on line” you can review their web site:

www.va-beach.com/hiexec/

We want to know if YOU are planning to come. We have received hundreds of responses already (See next article for those expected to come at this point.) If you haven't already done so, please contact Mike Bickel by mail or Email (RMBICKEL@STUPP.COM) to let him know.

GUESS WHO'S COMING – 2003!

CREW MEMBERS ARE TRYING TO COME (174)

DS4548: (10): John Arkfeld, “Bruce” Boutillette, “Jerry” Casey, Don Chase, Bill Donley, Leslie Jones, Frank Matuszek, Jim McCullough, Bob Mullhall, Charlie Woods.

DS4952: (10): Red Bracken, CUSH Cushing, Leonard Erb, Duane Gow, Ray Gundy, Bob Kaufman, Norm LeBlanc, Dan Reilly, “Buck” Steere, Dick Underwood

DS5356: (24): George Albert, Jeff Badgett, Charlie Balkcom, Leonard Bradshaw, Dick Clifford, Gary Feasel, Don Hall, “Hal” Hinds, Jack Liptrap, Robert Mazurek, Ed McDevitt, Joe Meyer, John Mylant, “Rawhide” Rainey, Harold Rosen, Mel Rycus, Ben Shepard, “Buddy” Shumake, Blair Smith, Carl Trost, John Tumilty, Ed Vallecorse, Wally Walraven, Dwight Williams.

DS5760: (25): Beecher Allen, Art Allum, Dick Andrews, Pat Ashton, Wayne Booton, Roger Dean, Richard DeVuyst, Bill Dort, Peter Eadie, Gary Farmer, George Goodwin, Don Gotta, Ron Hahn, Frank Hamaker, David Hauer, Ed Jones, Dick Kinne, Mel Laubach, George Reisner, Francis Rickel, Bill Shamphan, Lou Shepard, Dennis Strake, Charles Tolbert, Harold Webster.

DS6164: (30): Don Amorosi, Ted Anthony, Bob Boddiford, Bruce Boughton, Darryl Brunsvold, Charlie Bryant, Dale Craig, Kevin Dunne, David Furby, Hal Galloway, Bob Gross, Lonnie Haley, Tony Hastoglis, Joe Hoffmann, Jim Hughes, Jack Linevitch, Nick Lira, Larry McClintock, Fred McGuire, “Smokey” Owens, Joe Roche, Ken Savage, Ralph Schmidt, Art Scholz, Butch Sites, Al Standish, Richard Waite, Frank Weltner, Ralph Wiggins, Bob Zorn.

DS6568: (34): Ray Anderson, Rob Carey, Bill Clegg, Virgil Clemmer, Pat Conroy, Bob Cox, Jerry DeBoer, Bob Ewing, Ron Flint, David Glaser, Garry Goetschius, Nathan Isenhour, Bob Karge, Ken Koller, “Tex” Loftin, “TY” Lynch, JD Mayo, Richard McCamant, Art Michaelsen, Geof Morse, Carl Nardone, Joe Palermo, Doug Roberts, Bob Rosen, Rob Schutte, Dean Sedgwick, Nelson Shiver, Dennis Simoneau, Gary Thonn, Thom Warburton, Dominic Yacovone, Harry Yockey, Michael Young, “Zeke” Zimmerman.

DS6972: (41): David Ackerman, Tom Antos, Fred Baker, Herb Bauer, Pete Becker, Bob Bell, Frank Berlinger, Mike Bickel, Jeff Binford, Bobbie Jo Brown, Frank Campbell, Paul Dix, Jack Enos, Mick Finn, Tom Foglesong, Doug Fox, Ken Frazier, Jim Gach, Eddie Gee, Frank George, Robert Holt, Bill Huskey, Bob Ianucci, Al Inboden, David Keene, Bud Keidel, Ron Kennedy, Andy Knauer, Les Lammers, John Lee, Randy Morgan, Tom O'Brien, Keith Owens, Lanny Renken, George Self, Marty Valdez, Larry Vicente, Jim Ware, Thurman Webb, Carl Welch, Paul York. ♦♦♦

The next step is to do the research. This is done by utilizing the web and primarily using www.switchboard.com which allows you to sweep the entire country for listed phone numbers and addresses. While I have been doing the much of this work, Pat Conroy (6568) as also been working on research. This process yields a list of “potential” numbers to call and becomes a “hot call list”.

Last, of course, is the calling itself. David, Pat, and myself are the main ones doing “pinging”.

Pictured below are David Glaser doing microfilm research, Pat Conroy doing web research/calling, and me doing some calling while BBQ-ing chicken in the back yard. Anyone who would like to join our “sonar tracking team” would be welcome. ♦♦♦



SIRAGO - TRIVIA

Did you know that Sirago actually looked like the picture below in silhouette? In the yard period of Fall 1962 to early 1963 while Sirago was getting her high North Atlantic Sail, another construction was being made underneath her bow. This was a special sonar “**Chin Mount**” with which Sirago was outfitted. This special sonar equipment hydrophone array was added as part of Sirago’s part in the Cold War. The addition of the high sail in conjunction with the “chin mount” was thought to have no effect as far as trim angle, but after both were installed in 1963, Sirago’s neutral angle was thereafter 1 degree down bubble, so the sail still had more effect than this special mount.

Unfortunately, to use such special listening equipment also required Sirago to be quieter, so in late 1965 she was outfitted with the Prairie Masker (see last issue) to be able to sneak closer.



Mike Bickel
1125 Villaview Dr.
Manchester, MO 63021

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

PRAYER OF AN EM1(SS)

Oh Lord, if you would be so kind
Before this old Lifer trips off the line
Consider my plea, although it’s so late
Make me a Chief Electrician’s Mate.

To live like the fair haired children do
To retire to a bunk with these chosen few
A quiet place where no IMC’s sound
Would disturb my sweet slumber for a minor ground.

To go to the Chief’s Club and quaff down a beer
Dressed in pants creased both in front and in rear
Beautiful Uniforms... blue, white, and tan
Oh Lord let me into the “Chief’s Promised Land”

My brain’s almost fried and my fingers are burned
For all my hard work, only AMPS have I earned
So please Holy Father before it’s too late
Make me a Chief Electrician’s Mate.

Richard D. Barnette, EMC (6568)

(Prayer answered).

US POSTAGE
STAMP
HERE