

Sirago Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 1

May 2000

Over 300 "Aboard" - Need Your Help

Sirago Crew Organizing by Duty Section

Mike Bickel
Duty Section 6972

The 100th Birthday of the Submarine Force this past April was not the only exciting submarine related event. Over the past six months the Sirago "crew" has more than doubled to more than 300. While enthusiasm over the 100th anniversary can explain part of this fantastic growth in our ranks, the biggest factor is the enthusiasm that you have all shown in finding your lost crewmates.

Which "Duty Section" are YOU in?

In order to manage the communication more effectively over the next year leading up to the reunion (**See Calendar - Reunion 2001**) we have decided to assign crew members to "Duty Sections" with the objective of dividing into smaller communities of people who worked closely together. These duty sections are defined as four year periods starting with 1945 and ending with 1972. Thus, if you were a "Plank Owner"

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Photopoint Site Features over 275 Photos of Crew and Sirago

New Web Site Generating Enthusiasm

Ed Monroe-Jones
Duty Section 5760

There is nothing that gets the old brain cells stimulated faster than looking at photos of the crew from 30 years ago. Aaahh... to be young again (and maybe a bit stupid). When I found out that the "Decomm Crew" (Duty Section 6972) was putting together a web site with photos, I quickly went out there to look. Who were those guys on MY boat!?! And the Sirago didn't look the same – high north Atlantic sail versus the step sail we were used to. So I decided to go to my Sirago Shrine where I had numerous framed photos and one by one, pull them out of their frames so they could be scanned and sent to the web site. I can guarantee that if you haven't reviewed the site yet, you have a wonderful surprise in store for you.

How to View the Photographs

To view the web site, go to www.photopoint.com and look on the left side for a place that says "VISIT ALBUM". Put the email address rmbickel@stupp.com into this block and hit the VISIT button. You will have access to all albums EXCEPT for the "At Play" albums which have a lock. When going to a locked album it will ask for a User Name and Password. Use the same email address above for a User Name and the Password is ss485. There is a particular "swim call" photo in the DS6972 "At Play" section that might get the wives "brain cells" stimulated (among other things).

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you belong to Duty Section 4548 and if you were on the "Decommissioning Crew" you are in Duty Section 6972. While many crew members span Duty Sections, it has been a good way to "group" people into logical communities who share a common "history" on the boat.

Such groupings allow for special customized mailings to different "Duty Sections" sharing stories which would most be appreciated by that group. It also allows for cutting costs on mailings by limiting the size of database printing (lists of people's addresses, phone numbers, email, etc.) to just that which applies to that particular section.

But, in order to accomplish this, we need to know what years you served on the Sirago. I am the keeper of the databases, and I would say that I have a pretty good handle on about 70% of the crew, but there are many of you that I haven't a clue on dates, rates, ranks, email addresses, etc. Therefore, I am asking everyone to either mail or email me information about yourself using the format below. Just cut this out (or copy it) and mail **or** email me the information and I will be able to update our databases. My mailing and email addresses are:

Mike Bickel

1125 Villaview Dr.

Manchester, MO 63021

rmbickel@stupp.com

Duty Section Information Needed

Full Name:

Rank/Rate upon Leaving:

Years Aboard (YY-YY):

Address:

Phone Number:

Email Address:

Wife's First Name:

Duty Section News

"Who ya' gonna Call?"

Duty Section Chiefs

All Duty Sections

Since we are dividing into "Duty Sections" each of which span 4 years, each crew member will receive a full address listing for all members of his duty section under separate cover. It is hoped that we may expand this to include stories and tales written by the duty section FOR the duty section to be mailed out TO that duty section. This will keep the mailings more intimate and less costly. The directories (for each Duty Section) will be mailed out over the next 2 months. If you want to have a listing for another Duty Section, just let your Duty Section Chief (see below) know and he will coordinate getting you what you need. At the next Reunion (see Calendar) there will be FULL database copies (all Duty Sections) for everyone in attendance. So, it is very important that we get information on what dates you were aboard, if we don't already have it (see article to left).

The Duty Section Chiefs are:

DS 4548: Bill Abbruzzese – (252) 728-3848. Email: Sirago@nternet.net

DS 4952: D.T. (Dick) Amos – (903) 626-4250. Email: dtamos@risecom.net

DS 5356: "Wally" Walraven – (757) 420-4946. Email: wallsis@erols.com

DS 5760: Ed Monroe Jones – (949) 581-6602. Email: HisResCen@home.com

DS 6164: Joe Roche – (914) 735-9020. Email: ROCHE@mbusa.com

DS 6568: Dave Glaser – (601) 729-4039. Email: dggpegg@c-gate.net

DS 6972: Mike Bickel – (636) 225-7528. Email: rmbickel@stupp.com

Each "Chief" above is developing a list of people to find. We have employed the skills of certain other crew members to scan on line phone books, submarine web sites, and use other means at their disposal to get our crewmates out of the bars and back aboard our "virtual boat" to cruise till we drop. ❖

CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

REUNION 2001

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

MAY 2ND – MAY 6TH 2001

Sirago Reunion – Lake Wright Resort

Please keep your calendars open for this event! It's never too early to announce the plans. We are expecting about 125 crew members plus guests so it should be quite a blowout. Could be even more there. More on this later.

REPORT ON LAST EVENT

MINI SIRAGO REUNION HELD IN MOBILE, AL

On April 7-9, 2000, there was a "mini-Sirago Reunion" held at Mobile Bay Base USSVI during the 100th Birthday Celebration of the Submarine Force. A dozen of us from the Decommissioning Crew were there plus David Glaser, Duty Section Chief for DS6568. We toured the USS Drum (SS-228) and had a great B-Day party thanks to Paul York (Base Commander and Sirago Decomm-Crew member.)

This reunion was not generally "announced". I was having so much fun finding members of my Duty Section (6972) which we had built up from about 15 to over 50 by April, that Paul (a member of this Section) invited us to join him in his B-Day Celebration activities. The group just couldn't wait until 2001 to get together.

It's quite amazing – the power of email and seeing photos on the web (See Photopoint Article – Page 1) – it almost brings back the diesel fumes.

We put these reunion photos on the web so now you can see what people look like 30 years later.

Mike Bickel

FROM THE WIVES / SIGNIFICANT OTHERS:

A number of months ago, some wives / girlfriends were asked questions about their mate's behavior and how such behavior might be traced to their roots as a submariner. Here are some of their comments:

Question 1: If you knew this crew member when he was in subs – what was your fondest memory?

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This is me on the dive w/ Mrs. Packer on Bowplanes

The photos in the site are "grouped" roughly by Duty Section (See Article on first page about Sections) so that you don't have to bother wading through lots of photos of people you didn't know (although I found it very interesting to look at the different "crews" and what they found interesting to photograph.)

We currently have photos back to the mid-50's although there is one 1945 photo of the Sirago. If you can provide such photos to share with the rest of us, we would greatly appreciate it. Currently Mike Bickel of DS6972 is scanning hardcopy photos but you can email him a scanned photo if you have one also. His email is rmbickel@stupp.com and his address is:

1125 Villaview Dr. / Manchester, MO 63021.

SIRAGO – 1945

The USS Sirago was commissioned during the last few weeks of World War II and looked like the photograph below when she first went out for sea trials. She underwent a number of conversions to a "Guppy" style superstructure and the sail was at first a "step" design which later was converted to the high north Atlantic sail shown on the decommissioning pamphlet.



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Linda: Having Thanksgiving Dinner with the crew in the After Battery. We watched Operation Petticoat.

Judy: My fondest memories were in just getting to know him. We met at the end of his sub service, leaving the Houston and going to the Sirago. No outrageous incidents - except pictures he sent me while on the Sirago where he was wearing a wig!

Question 2: Do his clothes still smell like diesel fuel?

Elaine: When Ken would come home after an extended cruise, he smelled like he slept under the hood of a mack truck. I would draw him a tub full hot water with half a bottle of bubble bath added. When he would get in the tub, the diesel fuel in the pores of his skin would make the bubbles slowly disappear. We would get a good laugh from that. Thought I never would get the diesel fuel smell out of his clothes, but, after 29 years of washing, they're not unbearable now.

Star: 5 years ago I finally got the last of the stench out of his pea coat. He still has a dungaree shirt in plastic

from the base laundry and it still stinks. He says it doesn't but he is WAY wrong.

Question 3: What do you admire most about your "sewer pipe sailor"? Is there any skill that he now has that can be directly traced to his "roots" in submarines?

Linda: Mike can carry a cup of coffee anywhere – up and down stairs – in a moving vehicle, etc. without ever spilling a drop – AMAZING!

Robin: He can sleep anywhere, especially sitting up in church.

Beth: The ability to get along with people.

Question 4: What bad habits would you say that he "picked up" by having been a submariner?

Beth: He says that he never picked up any bad habits (he already had them).

Ann: An overwhelming obsession with putting as much as is possible in as small a space as possible in as orderly a fashion as possible!

Mike Bickel
1125 Villaview Dr.
Manchester, MO 63021

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