

USS ALBACORE (AGSS 569)  
NEWSLETTER # 44  
January 2013

Dear Shipmate,

The saga of the replacement of the downtown (Memorial) and middle (Sarah Mildred Long) bridges continues. A section of the replacement Memorial Bridge is being assembled on a barge on the river in front of the park. When completed, the section will be floated down river and placed on the upgraded piers of the old bridge. This section building process will be repeated two more times to complete the three span bridge.

Soon after a 12 July meeting at NHDOT headquarters, PPMMA submitted a letter setting forth their position regarding the DOT's recommended course of action on the Albacore Connector Road. PPMMA's letter also set forth their belief that the road impacts on the historic integrity of the property as the 1986 National Historic Landmark application indicates integrity of setting as a contributing element. The integrity of setting in question is access to water from which the connector road will effectively isolate the boat. It is PPMMA's position that they (PPMMA) should receive compensation for the loss of the integrity of the setting. NHDOT's position is that there is no compromise of integrity of setting as Albacore is not waterborne and hence never should have been designated as an historic landmark to begin with. Putting that issue aside for the moment, NHDOT and PPMMA have tentatively reached an agreement on the value of the property to be taken by the State. The property includes the land under the connector road, the road itself, the bridge over the tidal flat connecting to Market Street and the parcel of land between the connector road and the Route 1 By-Pass. To reach a successful conclusion, NHDOT must be a *satisfied buyer* and PPMMA must be a *satisfied seller*. One major remaining sticking point is that NHDOT wants PPMMA to waive any further pursuit of compensation for the loss of integrity of setting. PPMMA does not want to yield on this issue. Meanwhile, there is a possibility the new middle bridge will be oriented to be more perpendicular to the ship channel. If this is the case, a realigned by-pass road could run through the Park's existing parking lot! Were this true, negotiations for a connector road would have to start all over again. The ME DOT is responsible for the design of the middle bridge and thus far, neither ME nor NH DOTs have responded to PPMMA's request for information on the possible realigned bridge.

As part of the land acquisition process, the NHDOT had a wetlands survey done on the park property. Two areas were identified as wetlands, one sitting just forward of the bow of Albacore on the basin side of the connector road and the other across the connector road between the connector and the By-Pass. PPMMA questions whether these two areas were wetlands prior to Albacore being located in its basin. The survey report alludes to the possibility that a portion of the basin in which Albacore resides may be considered as a wetland. PPMMA continues to try to get clarification of the possible impact of the wetland designations, but NHDOT has not been responsive. Meanwhile, NH DOT's lease on the connector road expired on 31 October.

The Park's new shed was installed after Hurricane Sandy blew through the area. The wooden shed is 8-foot wide, 16-foot deep and 10-foot high. It is situated between the museum building and the Route 1 By-Pass road. Electricity will be run into the shed for illumination purposes. FOA contributed about a third of the cost of the shed. The process of moving items out of the museum building and into the shed is well underway. At our November meeting, the FOA committee voted to purchase \$200 worth of new garden tools to replace those worn out during the past several years. These tools will be stored in the shed. COB Norm Bower wielded a mean paintbrush and roller and laid down a solid coat of paint on the shed deck.

Back in September of 2010, the Friends of Albacore Committee decided to take advantage of a PPMMA request to join them in financing a new printing of 500 copies of the soft-back version of the Robert Largess and James Mandelblatt book "U.S.S. Albacore, Forerunner Of The Future". The book sells well at the museum store and supplies were running low. Our loan to PPMMA has been repaid with interest and sales of this popular book continue to be a revenue producer for the museum.

At the November PPMMA Board meeting, Executive Director John Maier raised the idea of having different levels (and rates) of Park membership. Suggested were having different rates for adults, children,

family, military, groups, and a new lifetime membership. However, for the 2013 year, the membership rate will remain at \$50 while the Board considers whether or not it wants to adopt other options.

Late in November, a local Portsmouth TV station (PPMTV) carried through on making a documentary on the history of the Thresher. They used Albacore's after battery space as the locale for interviewing and filming. External shots of the boat and the Park were included. Selected shipyard personnel, former Thresher crew and family members participated in this effort. Others participating in the documentary were Russ Van Billiard, former PNS employee and PPMMA board member emeritus, and Phil Munck and Norm Bower (current PPMMA Board and FOA Committee members). The resulting documentary will be shown on local TV early this year. At our January meeting, FOA voted to contribute \$400 to have two large banners made for display on Albacore during the 50th observance of Thresher's loss.

On December 7th, a group of NJROTC students and their instructors from Dover High School arrived to give the Park a final clean up for the year. Lead by Captain John Dal Santo, USN (Ret) and Chief Petty Officer Tom Kunz, USN (Ret), the group started out with the self-guided tour of the boat and watching the video showing how Albacore got to where she is today. The group then turned to and attacked the leaves in the Memorial Garden and Park grounds. PPMMA provided everyone with a Moes sandwich for lunch and, at the end of the day, gave everyone an Albacore decal and a free holiday pass for their families.

The winter shutdown period of the Park will begin on January 20 and run through February 15. This shutdown will allow the Park staff to take some well deserved time off and to do some interior work in the museum area. Display cabinets will be rearranged; a large screen TV and a more capable DVD system will be installed.

Shipmate George Fiegehen has surfaced and can be found at 7835 Ritz Street, Westland, MI 48185. George was an EN2(SS) on board from '58-'60. Floyd Sharp has moved to 978 Macco Road, Port St. John, FL 32927-5051. His phone (321) 638-4828 is unchanged. John Reimenschneider has a new email of "[jbriemen@metrocast.net](mailto:jbriemen@metrocast.net)". Peter Adams has a new email of "[papapeter@regean.com](mailto:papapeter@regean.com)".

I regret to report that David Fahrney departed on Eternal Patrol on 4 December and that former Chief of the Boat Robert Coy also did so on September 4. COB Coy was buried at sea. "Sailor, Rest Your Oar. We Have The Watch".

I also regret to report that Jean Sawtelle, wife of Joe Sawtelle, passed away on 20 December.

Shipmate Peter Magg stopped in during our November FOA meeting and took an active part in our discussions. Thanks and good to see you, Peter. Our next Friends meeting will be at 1100, Saturday, 2 March at the museum. All are welcome.

If you are receiving this newsletter via Uncle Sam's postal service, it is because we do not have an e-mail address for you. In addition to the 195 copies sent out electronically, there are 62 more that go out as a hard copy. We would prefer to be totally GREEN and deliver the newsletters electronically to save on paper and stamps. So, if you have recently gotten on-line, or had a change of address, telephone number, e-mail provider or if you just have something you would like to submit for posting on the website, please pass that information along to Jack Hunter at one of the below addresses.

Until next time, shipmate.

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