

USS ALBACORE (AGSS 569)
NEWSLETTER # 48
September 2013

Dear Shipmate,

The dedication of the "new" old downtown Memorial Bridge was held on Thursday, August 8th. With a lot of fanfare, former mayor Eileen Foley wielded a set of golden shears and cut the ribbon to officially open the bridge. Mayor Foley performed that same function 90 years ago at the age of five when she opened the original bridge in August of 1923. Work on the middle (Sarah Mildred Long) bridge is scheduled to begin sometime in 2014. Final decisions on bridge design and the bridge's orientation to the channel are slated for later this year.

Negotiations are on hold between PPMMA and NH DOT over the Purchase and Sale clauses concerning the State's purchasing of part of the Park's property. They will remain so until the claim that the Albacore Connector Road has an impact on the historic vessel is resolved. PPMMA agreed not to pursue the claim any further in order to start negotiations. However, the NH State Historic Preservation Office has decided to pursue the claim. Another oar in the water. Stay tuned.

John Maier's August 17th Submarine History Day celebration was centered on CDR Richard O'Kane, a Durham, NH native. CDR. O'Kane received the Medal of Honor for his service as Commanding Officer of the USS Tang (SS 306) during WWII. Small tents were set up on the Park grounds where crews from ships in overhaul at the yard were available to answer questions about life as a submariner. They also sold items to raise money for their ship's MWR programs. Other participants included: The Wright Museum of WWII History in Wolfeboro, NH had some military exhibits at the Park; the local 'ham' radio club set up a rig and provided demonstrations; and The Great Bay Sailors, a choral group, performed sea chanties and other nautical music. The Marblehead Base of USSVI had their cutaway model of the Thresher on display.

The United Way of the Greater Seacoast's Spring Day of Caring was held on Wednesday, September 11th. Our group consisted of two members of the Air National Guard from over at Pease and was joined by two independent ladies who just showed up to work. All gathered at 0900 and, after a tour of the boat, set about demolishing John Maier's work projects "wish list". The weather was abominable - temps in the 90s with very high humidity. At the end of the day, weeds had been removed from between the blocks in the Memorial Garden Walkway, bushes around the museum building were trimmed as were the bushes at the entry to the Memorial Garden, 200 children's Grab Bags had been assembled, brush had been cut back at the bow of the boat and along the Route 1 By-Pass and the trim along one side of the museum building had received a new coat of paint. Our thanks go to Dan Demers and Tom Vasile from the NH ANG and to Marilyn Johnson and Gale Turner for their time, energy and perspiration. Photos taken during the day can be seen on our Albacore website "ussalbacore.org" on the News & Events page.

George "Frenchy" Tranchemontagne and Bill Birtles joined our group as we went through our September FOA meeting Agenda. Topics, in addition to those above, discussed during this Friends of Albacore meeting included: 1) Ideas to recognize/publicize the 60th anniversary of Albacore's commissioning on 5 December; 2) The seal-coating of the rear section of the parking lot and the walkway around the boat; 3) Removal of brush from around the granite dolphin in the Memorial Garden and plans to install a fence around the dolphin to keep little climbers away; 4) Ken Herrick's completion of relocating and mounting ship's plaques in the rest room hallway; 5) Status of the new display in the museum's back room; 6) The positive publicity the Park received from presenting a tribute to Dick O'Kane and thoughts of having a similar function in September in future years; 7) Thoughts on replacing the three audio tour outdoor podiums which are showing a lot of wear and tear; 8) What to do about several torn bunk covers in the after battery crew's quarters (flip the covers to hide the rips); 9) Refining the cooperation between FOA and PPMMA in seeking additional grant money to complete the Oral

History project; 10) The donation box brought in over \$800 during the last two months, and as a result; 11) FOA will donate up to \$500 toward the fence and landscaping around the granite dolphin.

Following the FOA Meeting, there was a special reception at the Park in honor of QMC (SS) William "Greek" Apostolos. He was recognized for the many years he served on Albacore as a leader of the Quartermaster gang. Bill was accompanied by his daughter Sue and son-in-law Tony. Twenty former Albacore shipmates of Bill's gathered to exchange greetings, swap stories and celebrate Bill's 90 years. Once everyone was settled in the museum's back room, Norm Bower got the ceremony rolling by reviewing the boats that Bill served on during his 26 year Navy career: Flying Fish SS-229, Toro SS-422, Burrfish SS-312, Shad SS-235, Angler SS-240, Sea Dog SS-401, Haddock SS-231, Sea Lion SS-195, Conger SS-477, Albacore AGSS-569 and the tender Sperry AS-12. Bill also made five war patrols. Park Executive Director John Maier addressed some additional remarks to Bill before presenting him with a color picture of the landlocked Albacore sitting at the end of a rainbow. Bill Birtles and his banjo led the group in a sing-a-long as we tested our vocal chords (and memories) serenading Bill with "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" followed by "Anchors Aweigh" and "God Bless America". Pictures from this festive gathering have been posted on our Albacore website ""ussalbacore.org" and can be found both on the News & Events page and in the Photo Gallery.

The family of Clifford Priest, a long time employee of the shipyard and a good friend of Albacore, has donated a granite bench to Albacore Park in his memory. The new bench was placed along Albacore's port side toward the stern of the vessel. The bench is in the same general area as three previously donated benches and resides nestled in the shade of several trees. Photos are on the News & Events page of our website.

Bob Couchon has a new email address of "couchon69@comcast.net".

Shipmate Robert Ball has relocated to 72 High Street, Sanbornville, NH 03872-4395.

I regret to report that shipmate Calvin Greene departed on Eternal Patrol in June of last year. He was an EN3 and a Plank Owner on board from '53-'55. And shipmate Larry Costa's nephew reported that his uncle passed away in September of 2011 and was interred in the Forest Hill Cemetery in Derry, NH. Larry was a Radioman and a 35-year Navy veteran who served on 9 submarines including Albacore.

Two new "old" photos from the Shipyard publication "Periscope" have been added to our photo gallery page on our website "ussalbacore.org". My thanks to Chief "Greek" Apostolos' son-in-law Tony Bachta for providing the pictures.

Our next Friends meeting is scheduled for Saturday, 26 October. If you are in the area, plan to join us.

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 194 copies sent out electronically, there are 51 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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