

MILITARY SEA SERVICES MUSEUM, INC.



SEA SERVICES SCUTTLEBUTT

February 2013

A message from the President



Tony LaMorte

Greetings,

I hope everyone had a wonderful time over the holidays. Now we can go back to our normal routine.

Thanks to Museum members Nick and Tori-Lynn Saraniti, and Tori-Lynn's dad, Gene Kinney, we now have a 60 inch television in the Museum Library. Also, many thanks to Howard Fleetwood for his assistance in getting us hooked up to Comcast cable. This large screen definitely brings to life our many Sea Services CDs and VCRs for viewing by our visitors and volunteers.

In December, a surprise ceremony was held at the Museum's Memory Walk. An article and photos are included in this issue.

During the past month, several member applications have been sent out and hopefully, some new members will sign up.

Sunday dinners are still being scheduled monthly. Thinking about another garage sale, will keep you updated. Cool weather sure does feel good.

Tony

Museum Receives a New Model

In early February, the USS Worcester Association donated a model of the USS Worcester (CL-144). The beautifully detailed eight foot model was delivered to the Museum by Bob St Germain a plank owner of the ship and a Sebring resident. The model is displayed, but the final display is not complete. When it is completed, local newspapers will be invited to view the model. Additional information and photos will be included in the April Scuttlebutt.

Military Sea Services Museum
1402 Roseland Avenue, Sebring, Florida 33870 Phone: (863) 385-0992
E-Mail: navmargrd@gmail.com

Hours of Operation
Open: Wednesday through Saturday Noon to 4:00 p.m.
Web site: <http://milseasvcmuseum.org/>

The following is an excerpt from an article which includes some of the history of the Military Sea Service Museum included in "Terror Notes". That publication is written by Allie Ryan for his fellow USS Terror shipmates and we thought it would be of interest to other Museum members.

Most of the *Terror* folks involved here have been or are currently members of the Museum so little background is needed. However let me attempt to fill in any blank spots that might exist My only qualification is the fact that I did a four year hitch of duty days in the recent past and this may establish my bona fides as an observer.

During World War II virtually every community in the country contributed in some way to the war effort producing materiel and labor. The city of Sebring was desirous of cashing in but had little or nothing to offer. After a considerable scratching of heads someone, or a group, suggested that Sebring sell the government the only thing it had, namely land and blue skies year-round. In short, great flying weather. The US Army Air Force went for the deal and Hendricks Airfield was born. The Field took its name from First Lt. L. W. Hendricks, a B-17 pilot who transferred to England to train pilots and three days after his arrival was killed in a training accident.

With the departure of the B-17s and the war's end, the Field was abandoned by the U.S. Army. A survivor of the exodus was one of the administration buildings that currently is home to the Military Sea Services Museum. Once inside, the visitor finds a most impressive collection and display of artifacts and militaria exclusive to the Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. To get a glimpse of the Museum, simply fire up your computer and go to <http://www.milseasvcmuseum.org>

There you can check out the photo gallery and get a preview of what thousands of hours of volunteer labor and out of pocket expense coupled with vision can create.

Allie Ryan

Something to Hope For

In September 2013, the USS *TERROR* and the USS *RANDOLPH* will hold a joint reunion at Indian Rocks Beach, FL. If time permits and travel can be arranged, USS *TERROR* reunion attendees, many of whom are members of the Military Sea Services Museum, will visit the Museum. This will be an opportunity for our local members to meet a fantastic group of people. Tony LaMorte, Gene Kissner and their wives were privileged to attend a USS *TERROR* reunion two years ago. According to them, you will never meet a more modest, fun loving group than these WWII heroes and their wives. The comraderie that still exists in this group will be obvious. Here's hoping all works out and they can visit the Museum. Will keep you informed as info becomes available.

Welcome Aboard New Members

On 20 January 2013, Robert Polle, and Hedy Ryan became our first new members of 2013. Robert is a U.S. Navy Vet and retired New York State Employee. Hedy is a registered nurse. Robert and Hedy live in Sebring, Florida.

On 1 February, Gerald and Zelda Kimm signed on as 5 year members. Jerry is a retired Navy Chief, retired Navy Exchange Operations Manager, and a retired Realtor. Zelda is a retired Realtor. Jerry and Zelda live in Sebring, Florida.

Also on 1 February, Darryl Martin became a one year member. Darryl is a Solution Specialist at PixelTech in Sebring.

**USS Argonaut (SFS-1)
ex SM-1, ex SS-166, ex V-4
By Allie Ryan**

The years between the wars spawned an intense interest in navel mine warfare. While there was nothing really revolutionary about the moored contact mine, the method of planting the weapon left much to be desired. While large deepwater vessels were very efficient, they had liabilities that were not easily overcome. In short, they were obviously easy targets for any marauding aircraft.

Accordingly naval architects turned their attention to what seemed an obvious solution, mine laying submarines. In the decades preceding World War II, British, German and US Yards created submarines that would serve that purpose. The British produced but one boat, while the Germans pressed on and used mine laying subs throughout World War II. The only American mine laying submarine was *Argonaut* (SM-1)

The vessel was launched 10 November, 1927 at Portsmouth NH yard at Kittery, Maine. She was, at 381", the largest submarine ever built for the U.S. Navy. She carried this distinction until nuclear submarines made their debut after World War II. Commissioned on 2 April, 1928 she had by that time demonstrated some unfortunate characteristics that would stay with her throughout her naval career.

Continued on Page 5 of 6

Anniversaries

January 30, 1933. Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.

January 22, 1944. The Allies land at Anzio, Italy.

January 1, 1962. U.S. Navy Seal Teams established.

January 23, 1968. The USS PUEBLO captured in international waters by North Koreans.

January 27, 1973. Signing of Vietnam Peace Accord.

January 17, 1991. Persian Gulf War Begins.

February 15, 1898. USS MAINE sunk in Havana Harbor.

February 4, 1941. USO founded.

February 19, 1945. U.S. Marines land on Iwo Jima.

February 23, 1945. U.S. Marines take Mt. Suribachi on Iwo Jima.

Mail Recipients of Scuttlebutt

If you are receiving the Scuttlebutt by mail and have an email address, please provide us your email address. You will not only save the Museum postage, but you will be able to see any color photos in color. Unfortunately, the Museum cannot afford the printer ink required to print 40 some copies of the Scuttlebutt for mailing. We copy them on our copy machine which only reproduces in black and white. You can send your email address to any of the following: navmargrd@gmail.com , Lamorte@vistanet.net , lsuttlebut@att.net or genekissner@yahoo.com . Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

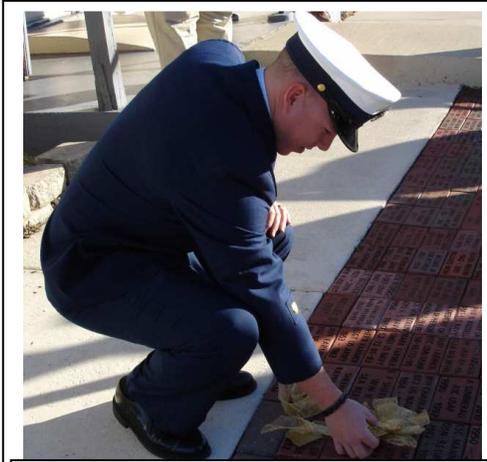
The current issue of Scuttlebutt will be posted on line at: <http://milseasvmuseum.org/>

Memory Walk Ceremony

On the 22nd of December 2012, Mr. Robert Mullins held a ceremony at the Museum's Memory Walk to commemorate the installation of two bricks, one in memory of his father, a WWII Navy Veteran, and one in honor of his son, BM2 Dylan Mullins, USCG. The ceremony was attended by at least 30 of Dylan's friends and relatives and several Museum members. Thank you to all that attended the ceremony from the Mullin's family and the Museum staff. A special thank you to Museum members retired Navy Commander Fred Carino and retired Coast Guard Master Chief John Gill who attended the ceremony in uniform. The extra effort by these two men made a great impression on Dylan and went a long way to letting him, and all who attended the ceremony, know that his service to our great country is appreciated. The ceremony and the bricks caught Dylan by surprise because his wife and Dad had him convinced he was on the way to having his picture taken at a photographer's shop.



Retired Navy Commander Fred Carino observes the brick presentation.



Coast Guard BM2 Dylan Mullins first look at his brick.



Coast Guard Master Chief John Gill visits with Dylan.



Dylan with his mom and dad.

GO SUMMERALL ENC(DV) USN 1958 - 1978	J SUMMERALL TSGT USAF 1989 - 2010	IN MEMORY OF RIVER V. MARTIN 1950 - 2012
JACK FARMER SIC USN 44-46 PCOF 860 WWII	A SUMMERALL A1C USAF 1990 - 1992	CSC MANNING USN-RETIRED 1942 - 1969
BUD FARMER ETC USN/USNR 58-65/72-90	WH CHATHAM BT2 US NAVY 1954 - 1964	CECIL "JIM" MULLINS USN 1942 - 1945
MARK FARMER GMG1 US NAVY 52-72 81-83	E F SHEEHAN WW II SEA BEES	DYLAN R. MULLINS BM2 - USCG
HERB FARMER SSGT US ARMY 1953 - 1963	SHEEHAN RAYMOND E. VIETNAM	IN MEMORY OF EDWARD BIMLER 1928 - 2012

A sampling of the newer bricks installed in the Memory Walk including ones for Dylan and his grandfather, Cecil Mullins.

It became clear, early on, that her two 1400 hp diesels left the boat terribly underpowered. This condition was never corrected. Additionally she had an extremely large turning radius, poor diving characteristics and performed poorly when submerged. With a pair of 6"/53 deck guns, one forward and one aft, *Argonaut* felt capable of coping with any surface difficulties she might encounter. Unfortunately any decision to engage an enemy warship on the surface would be a bad move as the lack of a centralized fire control system would make the encounter end up poorly for the submarine.

The boat was equipped with 4 torpedo tubes forward and 2 mine laying tubes aft. The mine carrying capacity was 60 mines and these were laid by expelling them through the tubes. The system for delivering these mines was unique to this boat and so sophisticated that (a) it could never be compressed in this limited space to enable you to understand it or (b) it is so complicated that I have no idea at all how it worked.



Through the peacetime years of the 1930's, life went on and the submarine pursued the usual Navy routine. Month after month, year after year *Argonaut* drilled, exercised and the crew honed their military skills. All went well until 7 December, 1941. With the creation of the new United States Navy, beginning in 1940, the Navy brass decided that the experiment with mine laying submarines was just that- an experiment.

In January 1942 the sub was sent to Mare Island to replace the troublesome diesels and change the mission of the boat. To accomplish this, the two aft compartments housing the mine equipment were gutted and the space was utilized for bunks, heads and mess area. All this was done to accommodate approximately 120 men as a troop transport. Her new role in this capacity would soon be tested.

A few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Japanese forces invaded Makin Island in the Gilberts. As with other similar adventures, the purpose of occupying these remote atolls was to establish seaplane and radio bases. These would then serve as eyes and ears for the Japanese forces. Makin Island also caught the attention of the US Navy. Perhaps a successful raid on this undermanned Island would provide prisoners for intelligence purposes, prove to be a distraction from Guadalcanal in the Solomon's and possibly a positive PR for a victory starved American public.

The Japanese garrison on Makin Island consisted of approximately 85 men. The personnel were largely aviation and communication types and were not, for the most part, combat trained. Their inventory of weaponry was extremely light and limited. The American raiding party consisted of 121 Marines on *Argonaut* while another submarine, *Nautilus* had temporary accommodations for another 90 men. These Marines were companies A and B of the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion.

On 8 August, 1942 the two submarines, with the Marine raiding parties on board, departed for Makin Island. Eight days later, with most of the troops seasick through the entire trip, the objective island was reached and the assault was launched. Two days later at the appointed time the submarines returned and recovered the Marines.

It could be reasoned that the operation was a success for the raiding party. The Japanese garrison was crushed although, unfortunately, no prisoners were taken. All of the equipment and Japanese military assets were destroyed. From a negative point the landing of the Marines on the island was a mess. The Marines were to have been landed at two points on the island utilizing rubber rafts powered by 6 hp outboard motors. The invaders found extremely high surf, the outboard motors did not work and the Marines slogged ashore, missing the two landing points. Retrieval of the Raiders was even more difficult. The high surf persisted and returning by their rubber boats was virtually impossible.

While the Japanese lost their entire garrison, radio station, fuel supplies and the entire infrastructure, the American forces were not without loss. During the raid 19 men were killed, with 2 MIA. An additional 17 were wounded and 9 men during the withdrawal had been left behind. These 9 were later taken by the Japanese and beheaded.



One benefit of the Makin Raid was its effect on the movie going public in the United States. In 1943 the film *Gung Ho* starring Randolph Scott glorified the raid and the role played by *Argonaut*. The film was a success and set standards for wartime film making in the US throughout the war. It must be noted here that this epic film was not *Argonaut's* first brush with Hollywood's film luminaries. During the peacetime years Shirley Temple tap danced her way about the boat. As one whose 1930's movie going experience was limited to 10 cent Saturday afternoon matinee's, starring such giants as Buck Jones, Ken Maynard, and Bob Steele this scribbler cannot verify her activities. Mickey Rooney also visited and John Ford used the boat in at least one of his action packed thrillers. That should be enough Hollywood for any Navy vessel.

On 10 January, 1943 *Argonaut* on patrol, spotted a convoy of five freighters escorted by three Japanese destroyers Maikaze, Isokaze and Hamakaze. Firing on the destroyers, *Argonaut* damaged Hamakaze. The attack was witnessed by a US Army bomber returning from a mission with all bombs expended. The two escorts immediately commenced a depth charge attack on the sub. The bomber overhead witnessed the bow of *Argonaut* break the surface at an unusual angle. It was evident that the sub had been damaged and forced to surface. The Japanese destroyers immediately opened fire on the crippled boat and sent her to the bottom.

All hands, 105 officers and men of *Argonaut* were lost.