

USS ALBACORE (AGSS 569)
NEWSLETTER # 46
May 2013

Dear Shipmate,

The National Park Service (NPS) has dipped its oar into the Albacore Connector Road and Sarah Mildred Long (SML) Bridge replacement projects. They advised the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that both projects have the *potential* for having an adverse effect on Albacore as a National Historic Landmark and thus they (NPS) wish to become consultants, as is FOA. As of this writing, everyone is still waiting for a definitive response from the NPS as to whether or not there is an adverse effect in their eyes. Locally, however, there is a negative feeling that the NPS will be supportive of PPMMA's claim and that the FHWA's opinion of no impact will stand.

Because there has not been a resolution on PPMMA's adverse effects claim, there has been no progress on the land sale of that portion of the Park's property that contains the Albacore Connector Road. The lease agreement between NH DOT and PPMMA for the Connector Road expired the end of April and likely will be extended for another six-month period. The State has the funding and has promised to pay the arrears rent for the previous lease extension.

And to make life more interesting, a tanker broke loose from its mooring upstream of the SML Bridge and came to rest on the Kittery side of the span. The lift span was not damaged, but several beams supporting the bridge roadway were damaged. The bridge has been closed to vehicular traffic but remains open to river traffic. Estimates have the bridge closed at least through the end of May. This incident occurred just before the weekend of the 50th anniversary observance of Thresher's loss, leaving just the I-95 Bridge as the only one open for crossing over the river.

The original plan for observing the 50th anniversary of Thresher's loss, worked out by the Navy and USSVI Thresher Base, had all Thresher related activities centered on the shipyard. Sequestration forced the observances to be moved away from the yard. With the main service being held at Portsmouth High School and wreathes being sent to sea in Kittery, the closure of the SML Bridge made for messy traveling. Photos have been posted on the News & Events page on our website "ussalbacore.org".

Closure of the SML Bridge has had an adverse effect on Park attendance. The number of weekend visitors was well below normal for this time of year. The shipping company involved has agreed to pay for all damages but the bridge closure has adversely impacted businesses on both sides of the river. There is even discussion of a group lawsuit to be filed against the tanker's shipping company over their losses.

Albacore Park was open during the 6-7 April weekend observance of Thresher's loss. A reunion group from the USS WILL ROGERS (SSBN 659) toured the boat on a chilly Saturday morning before attending the ceremony at Portsmouth High School. The banners proclaiming "Honor USS Thresher (SSN 593)", jointly purchased by PPMMA and the Friends, were displayed on both sides of Albacore's sail. They will be taken down and stored for reuse in the coming years.

The annual visit by Berwick Academy students for their Day of Service was scheduled for Friday, 12 April. Rainy, blustery weather force us to cancel our participation as most of our needed help centered on the Park grounds. The school promised we would be on their schedule for next year.

The United Way of the Greater Seacoast's Day of Caring will be Thursday, May 16th. During April and May, the United Way sponsors a Day of Caring whereby local businesses give their employees an opportunity to work for non-profit agencies. In years past, Albacore Park has been the recipient of hundreds of hours of free labor in performing tasks such as raking leaves, pruning trees

and bushes, picking up trash, pulling weeds, polishing brass, cleaning windows and painting the museum building. For the cost of submarine sandwiches and bottled water, the Park has reaped benefits that otherwise would have cost thousands of dollars. If you are in the neighborhood, plan to join us and we will buy you a sandwich.

The next significant event at the Park will be the annual Memorial Day observance. Although sequestration has forced the shipyard (and the Navy) to forgo participating in many activities, this year's ceremony will proceed as usual. If you are in the area on Monday, May 27th, please stop in.

Park Executive Director John Maier is working on an August 17th Submarine History Day celebration to be centered on Cdr Richard O'Kane, a Durham, NH native. Cdr. O'Kane was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service as a submarine CO during WWII. The town of Durham has been contacted and will be participating. Plans call for small tents to be set up on the Park grounds where crews from ships in overhaul at the yard will be available to answer questions about life as a submariner. They will also have available items for sale to raise money for their ship's MWR programs. Free admission for all shipyard personnel will be offered. The Marblehead Base of USSVI may have their cutaway model of the Thresher on display.

Owing to several instances of people overnighing in the Park and late night parties that left the grounds and trash bins overflowing with cans and bottles, PPMMA, on the advice of the Portsmouth Police Department, has posted a sign at the Park entrance that states the Park closes at dusk. Prior to this posting, there was nothing the police could do to evict after hours visitors. This sign now empowers the PPD to remove unwanted guests.

Shipmate Ron Dobransky has surfaced at 22564 Sheridan Drive, Novi, MI 48375 "ronnglo1@sbcglobal.com". Jerry Sliss has a new email of "jsliss@atmc.net". Buzz Henifin has a new email of "buzbet1@comcast.net". Ron Ripley has moved to 11 Smithfield Lane, Bedford, NH 03110. New phone is (603) 488-1842.

I regret to announce that shipmate Dick Aroner passed away last September and was buried at Arlington. His daughter Irene would like to hear from any of his former shipmates. She can be reached by e-mail at "Irene@TropicalVillaVacations.com".

Our next Friends meeting is scheduled for Saturday, 22 June at 1100 at the museum. If you are in the area, please 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 195 copies sent out electronically, there are 58 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.

Jack Hunter
37 Namquid Drive
Middletown, RI 02842-4569
(401) 849-7282
Jhunter2007@cox.net