

White Oak Laboratory Alumni Association, Inc.



The Leaf



VOLUME XV ISSUE II

KEEPING MEMORIES ALIVE

Spring 2013

- **Events** *
 - *WOLAA Annual Luncheon @ Argyle CC on Wed 15 May 2013.
 - *WOLAA Holiday Luncheon @ Argyle CC in Dec 2013
 - *Garden Visits in Spring 2013 TBD

11 September 2001.....GOD BLESS AMERICA!

WOLAA Web Site: www.wolaa.org

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News from WOLAA

Mark Your Calendars Now! Wednesday, 15 May 2013

******Annual WOLAA Luncheon******

Argyle Country Club, 14600 Argyle Club Rd. SS, MD

Starts at 1130 with Cash Bar and Social Time

Lunch at Noon with choice of three entrée:

***Crab Cake**Chicken Marsla**Petite Filet**

We were able to keep the cost \$29 per person. Dee will have the WOLAA store open and she would love to hear from alumni who want to hold a table for Group or Branch Reunions. You will receive the RSVP flyer before mid-April. Please return your RSVP by Friday, 10 May 2013.

Florida WOLAA Reunion. We did hold a Florida reunion this year. In fact, we decided to hold two reunions with the hope of getting more alumni to attend. The first was on 5 March in Dade City with Ken and Jurel Caudle hosting. Ten alumni enjoyed a great lunch and much fellowship. The second reunion was scheduled for Orlando but was canceled as planned attendees had family concerns that prevented attendance. Several people have suggested holding the 2014 reunion at The Villages in Florida.

Historical Preservation. We still plan to purchase the plaque for the WOL at the Navy Memorial in DC and are now arranging the first meeting. More in the Summer LEAF

USS Thresher (SSN-593).

Photo # NH 97549 USS Thresher underway, April 1961



John Sery called me in mid-March 2013 to inform me that 10 April 2013 will be 50 years since the loss of the USS Thresher. The SSN-593 is very significant to the WOL family. She was the first of her class. NOL had development systems for PUFFS (passive ranging sonar); Mk113 Fire Control System (the unique churn algorithm to define range from bearings only information) and the SUBROC missile system. Many NOL engineers traveled to Portsmouth, ME to conduct tests shore-side and at-sea. For example, Bob Flack (SUBROC Project Office) and I had been on the Thresher just several weeks before her loss to access an alarm system needed in the torpedo room when SUBROC with its nuclear warhead would be present.

Don Kuester, EE and project engineer for PUFFS was on-board when the Thresher was lost at sea. A tragedy felt at NOL forever. I am not sure the actual cause of the loss was ever known; but it was thought that Thresher was deep and a serious failure occurred to flood and sink the Thresher. **(Note: if anyone knows more about the cause of the Thresher's loss, please inform The LEAF.)**

There is a significant connection between the WOL Kuester and Sery families. Bob Sery worked at the WOL and was on one of the ships searching for the Thresher using magnetic sensors developed at NOL. Bruce Kuester, son of Don, is an EE and worked at the WOL in U Department; John Sery and he are good friends. Their sons---Tim Kuester and Steven Sery ---attend the U of Maryland and are friends.

John Sery and Bob Flack were in a train club together. Bob's wife gave John film of various trains which Bob took---trains were his hobby and passion. She also gave John the film Bob shot of the dedication of the USS Thresher. In memory of the Thresher, John is getting the film converted to a DVD. He is also hoping to have Fox run a segment about the 50 year anniversary of the loss of the Thresher. It is hoped to show the Garden at FDA and the U/W plaque which shows the SUBROC history. He also plans to film

to show the Garden at FDA and the U/W plaque which shows the SUBROC history. He also plans to film the sign in the back area of FDA and Kuester Road----named in memory of Don. The filming would include family members.

This will come to pass after the Spring LEAF is published; so WOLAA will update you at the May Luncheon; web site; and Summer LEAF

John Scarzello. John wrote: "John Sery, Bob Sery's son, called me to ask about information concerning the USS Thresher and the part NOL played in finding the wreckage, for an article on the subject. Bob was involved with the magnetometer search for the Thresher.

The Thresher search was before my time, but I am aware of what Bob Sery, Al Krall, Bill Hubbard, Dr. Robert Brown and many others from the NOL White Oak's Magnetism and Metallurgy Division (Building 24) did, and some of the specifics associated with this high priority sea search effort to find the lost submarine hull.

The Magnetism and Metallurgy Division were developing magnetic material alloys for sea mine influence sensors, and were call upon by the Navy to field a detector suitable for use in the deep depths where the submarine bottomed. In talking with Dick Lundsten, Dick Cunningham and others (now deceased), the Naval Ordnance Laboratory developed a gimbal mounted single axis fluxgate used in the search for the lost submarine. It was housed in a non-magnetic ceramic housing (built at NOL) suitable for 20,000 foot depths, and was similar to the housings used in the Deep Dip sensor program (Dick Cunningham and Paul Wessel). I believe NSWC EM Sensors group had saved the housing and magnetometer, and I will attempt to dig it out of storage. I spoke to Dr. Dan Jablonski and he recalled being in Al Krall's office which had recordings of the magnetometer output voltage with respect to time as it went over the submarine hull on his laboratory wall. He will provide contact information. Dan also recalled a National Geographic Magazine article on the subject, including a visit to the sight many years later.

John J. Holmes. John wrote: "When I was at White Oak I asked for a 4 drawer safe. I was given one that was stored in another Branch's spaces. However, it was full of classified documents. So that Branch's secretary had to get the combination from security to open it to clean it out. It turned out that it was the safe used by the White Oak researcher that was on the boat when it sank. It was the first time the safe had been opened since he locked it before leaving for his fateful trip."

Robert E Brown. Bob wrote: "Al Krall probably remembers more about the details of the Thresher operation than I do. He was more directly involved. I had been at NOL only about two years at the time and was working on materials rather than devices. I was mostly an observer of what was going on.

Ed Hooper and Bill Hubbard were the primary organizers of Bldg 24's efforts. Hooper and Al Krall were working on the theory and application of magnetic amplifiers at the time. Dr. Geyger was one of the world's leading experts in mag amps. His work in Bldg 24 was based on the use of bobbin cores developed by Gordon and Helms. The cores were relatively massive since power amplification and transfer were primary advantages of mag amps. Geyger developed a fluxgate magnetometer based on one of his mag amp circuits that generated a square wave. Together with its windings it was about two inches in diameter and consumed lots of power. I believe there is a description of the magnetometer in Geyger's book, if anyone can find a copy. Hooper and Hubbard were reasoning from the use of a tri-axial fluxgate that had been developed for airborne sub detection in the early days of NOL during and shortly after WWII. I don't recall the details of the Thresher device, except it contained a single Geyger magnetometer that was gimbal mounted. I believe that Hooper (perhaps with Al Krall along) was the only one who deployed the magnetometer from the search vessel. One of the principal investigators on the boat was (as I recall) named Robert Ballard. Hooper reported that he was hard to get along with, and NOL didn't get a lot of support. They had a proton precession magnetometer from Varian, along with video cameras and sonar, and seemed to regard NOL's effort with some scorn. Hubbard borrowed a fancy short wave receiver from some contractor so he could listen to messages from the search vessel.

Rambling of a Senior

mjt

Spring! So, lets have a baseball theme both to the Ramblings and Book Review. My boyhood was in the late 40's so no TV. My Dad introduced me to baseball and would play catch with me in the back yard. My friends and I played base ball every day in the Summer; alas, this left hander couldn't throw or hit. So, I could only dream of being a big league player. My team was and is the Pirates---no joy recently. My hero was Ralph Kiner who led the league his rookie year with 23 home runs. (He was also the announcer for the Mets in the 70's so is part of the Calico Joe book.) Now many years later, I get my Spring baseball fix by going to a Spring training game in FL. This year I get to see my two favorite teams the Bucs (Pittsburgh) and the O's. High hopes for the O's this year so anxious to see their young players.

At the Florida WOLAA Reunion, Bill Pickler attended. We had a conversation about baseball. It turns out that Bill managed a American Legion team in DC for many years. One of his team went to the Nationals and came in second (over 14000 teams participate in legion ball) Bill told me one of his players made it to the majors, pitching no less than for the Mets (Another tie to the Calico Joe book.). He said at least a half dozen of his players made it to the high minors and one as a minor league coach/manager. Bill then told me of his hobby of collecting baseball items. He has several autographed bats of players like Jeter and A-rod. His hero is Ted Williams and has several autographed pictures of Ted. Before coming to the reunion, he had stopped and purchased a picture of Ted and the Babe, signed by Ted. What a great picture. He also had a Cal Ripken shirt signed by Cal. He noted that most of Cal's autographs don't have a completed last name; this one did, making it special.

So, I am now ready for Spring and baseball. By the way, as I type this, I am looking at a wonderful lake on a sunny day in Orlando as DC is digging out from a foot of snow.

Book Review

mjt

***Calico Joe by John Grisham (2012).** Ah Spring! Spring training! So, why not a baseball book. Grisham wrote a novel and sprinkled in many of my favorite ball players from the 70's and real National League teams in a strange pennant race. The Cubs are at 500 as are most of the other teams in their Division when they have a series of injuries that force them to call up Joe Castle to play first base. He is our hero and goes on a tear. Fifteen straight hits, rookie record; many homeruns; stolen bases and stretching lazy singles into doubles. Being from Calico Arkansas, his knick-name is Calico Joe. Enter the villain. Warren Tracey is a 34 year old starting pitcher who is nearing the end of his career. But he has been pitching well when the Cubs come to town. Now Tracey is not a nice man: he berates his son as a boy and ball player (His son narrates the story); hits his wife; drinks; has many girl friends; and blames everyone for his lack luster ball career. He also believes in putting batters in their place with a brush back pitch that can be a "bean" ball. Yes, you are right; he beans Calico Joe and ends his career. The son was a typical boy in the 70's as he listened to every game he could; attended as many games as his Dad will let him; keeps score of each game knowing the stats of all the players; and has a scrap book of many stars, including Calico Joe. Tracey now has cancer with weeks to live. The son decides his Father must meet Calico Joe and apologize. Can the villain do this? Will Calico Joe and his family allow this? Worth a read to find out. Great baseball book.

Deceased Alumni

Please inform Houston Cole of any information about deceased alumni. Phone (410) 489-2977. Or please email or write WOLAA. The LEAF is pleased to print a tribute to our deceased alumni. Prepare and email/write to WOLAA.

Irving Silver. Irving died at age 95 on March 12, 2012. He was a retired chemist with the Navy, who later served as a consultant and instructor at George Washington University. Irving died at the Vantage House Retirement Center in Columbia, MD. He was born in New York City's Lower East Side, His wife

who later served as a consultant and instructor at George Washington University. Irving died at the Vantage House Retirement Center in Columbia, MD. He was born in New York City's Lower East Side, His wife was the late Beatrice Shapiro Silver, whom he married in 1945. He was also the father of Jane Silver, Takoma Park, MD; Dr. Kenneth Silver, Pikesville, MD; and Dr. Richard Silver, Columbia, MD; and devoted grandfather of Ari, Brianna, and Renee Vlanton, and Jessica, Jeremy, Shana, Arianna, and Miriam Silver.

James Feller Pestaner. James died on August 5, 2012. He was born in NY. In WW II, he serves as a navigator in the 8th US Army Air Corps, and he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross achieving the rank of Major. He received a BS in Chemistry and a Masters in Computer Science. Jim worked at NOL in Code 106, Management Data Processing. Jim had 16 professional publications, one patent, and five copyrights before retiring in 1979. His passion was duplicate bridge, winning the Nationals Men's Pair in 1959. Jim was life master in the American Contract Bridge League. He is survived by his wife of 54 years, Lucy; four children; five grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Memorial services were held at Arlington National Cemetery. Mildred Graham wrote WOLAA, "I learned recently of Jim's passing. He was my instructor when the Personnel Department converted to automation. I never knew he was so talented."

George Walter Peet. George died on February 4, 2013. He had been confined to a wheelchair from Parkinson Disease. George worked at the WOL his entire career as a ME in Code 411, Mechanical Systems Material Division. He is survived by his wife, Mary Carol; children: Ellen Hoffmaster, Joseph, Gerard, Steven, David, Timothy and Andrew; grandchildren: Tyler, Nicholas, Rachel, Olivia, and Jacob.

Walter "Walt" Dooley. Walt died on 8 February 2013. Walt's wife, Pat, wrote to Houston Cole: "Walter left us for a better place this weekend! He has been in pretty bad shape for the past month and had lost his zest for life as he was confined to a wheelchair. Who could believe such a thing could happen to such a great guy. We will really miss him and our house will probably fall down and cars won't run without his expertise." Houston Cole wrote: "Walt was one WWII pilot and one of my first supervisors at NOL. I will miss him." John Tino wrote: "Pat and I met Walt and Pat Dooley in the early 1960's when we were on a SUBROC field test at Ft. Lauderdale. Almost everyone had taken their families to FL for the test. We all stayed at a small motel where the units were like a mini-condo. Pat and I were very young, and Pat and Walt took us under their wings so to speak. We have never forgotten their kindness and friendship. Walt was a great engineer who just had this great knack for solving problems." Walt is survived by his wife, Patricia; children, Michael, Barbara McCabe, Brian, and Kathleen Dooley. Walt and Pat have nine Grandchildren.

Marcel J. Aucremanne. Marc died on Saturday, 16 February 2013 at age 89. He was born in Clarksburg, West Virginia. He was a graduate of the University of Notre Dame in 1944 and served in the Navy in the Pacific during WW II. He was married to Marcelline Coyne in 1945, who died in 2006 after 63 years of marriage. They had three daughters: Jeanne Washburn, Marcella Hickey, and Marie Valentine and seven grandchildren. Marc was very active in St. Mary's Catholic Church and Knight of Columbus. He worked at the WOL in the Underwater Mechanical Evaluation Division. He moved to the Office of Space Science at NASA in 1959 and worked there until his retirement in 1980.