



► **CUSK PLANKHOLDERS**
WHAT A PRIVILEGE TO BE
ABLE TO HONOR OUR 3 CUSK
PLANKHOLDERS: LEO KUNKEL,
LES SHRUM AND VERN BAR-
LOW.....5



► **MEMOIRS OF A NON-QUAL**
NELSON KIRSCH TAKES US
BACK TO THOSE DAYS WHEN WE
WERE FRESH OUT OF SUB
SCHOOL AND THOSE MEMORA-
BLE FIRST DAYS ABOARD THE
CUSK3



► **2010 CUSK REUNION**
AN EXCITING TIME WAS HAD
BY ALL IN BEAUTIFUL COLO-
RADO SPRINGS.....2

2010 Reunion Edition

Standish times

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED STATES SHIP CUSK
SS-348 SSG-348 AGSS-348

The USS Cusk was the world's first missile submarine and with her historic first launch on February 12, 1947, the Cusk became the forerunner of today's fleet ballistic and cruise missile launching submarines. During the Cusk's 24 years of service she completed 100% of every mission assigned. She was a key player in the U.S. Navy's submarine missile development program (including Regulus), and served often in the Korean, Vietnam and Cold Wars. The USS Cusk was one of only four submarines to receive the "Vietnam Commendation for Meritorious Gallantry" award.



2010 Cusk Reunion Attendees, September 15 to 17, 2010 in Colorado Springs, Colorado

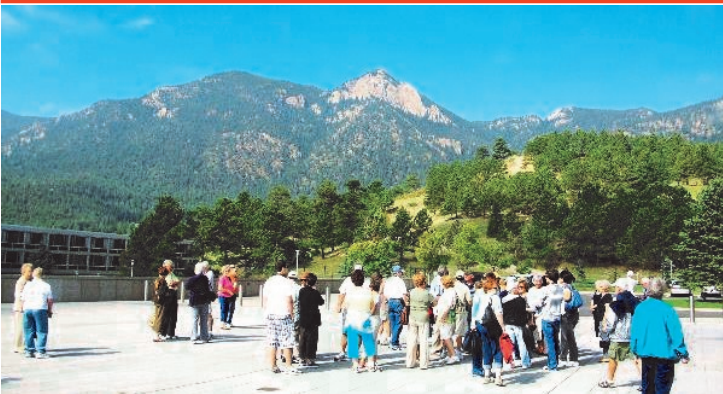
1-Robert "Rigger" Moritz, 2-Jim Hume, 3-Delmer Wetering, 4-Leo Kunkel, 5-Bill Vincent, 6-Ray Peckenpaugh, 7-Billy Nix, 8-Art Thompson, 9-Bob Dalton, 10-Wes Shrum, 11-Bill Munson, 12-Craig Pagden, 13-Dave Meyers, 14-George Harlow, 15-Robbie Robison, 16-Mark Markham, 17-Bill Weisensee, 18-Verne Barlow, 19-Jack Dunaway, 20-Don Birch, 21-Tom Roseland, 22-Sandy Whitaker, 23-Ron Shook, 24-Les Atchison, 25-Charlie Brown, 26-Richard Specht, 27-Bill O'Halloran, 28-Chuck Harner, 29-Steve "Willie" Wilson, 30-Bill Hrbacek

The 2010 Cusk Reunion was held in the shadow of Pikes Peak and the glorious Front Range of the Rockies in the city of Colorado Springs. Sixty six were in attendance at the reunion and the agenda included a tour of the US Air Force Academy, a visit to the Garden of the Gods, a ride to the top of Pikes Peak on the Cog Railway, and an evening of supper and western stage show at the Flying-W Ranch. On one afternoon we had lunch and did some shopping in up in Manitou Springs just above Colorado Springs, some visited the Broadmoor Hotel and Golden Bee, and of course there was the last night's banquet at the hotel. All in all, a great time and fellowship for the Cusk shipmates



2010 Cusk Reunion Ladies, September 15, 2010 in Colorado Springs, Colorado

1-Lin Ghiselin, 2 -Nancy Weisensee, 3-Shirley Wetering, 4-Patricia Shook, 5-Lu Vincent, 7-Karen Lyons, 8-Susan Munson, 9-Nancy Hume, 10-Terry Fallatt, 11-Mrs. Wilson, 12-Wanda Mortiz, 13-Joan Dalton, 14-Charlotte Kunkel, 15-Becky Birch, 16-Marie Pagden, 17-Yvonne Robison, 18-Patrice Roseland, 19-Louise Wilson, 20-Paula Whitaker, 21-Joanne Specht, 22-Mary Brown, 23-Kay Markham, 24-Carolyn Thompson, 25-Mary Jean Hrbacek, 26-Kay Atkinson, 27-Nancy Nix, 28-?, 29-?, 30-?



The Rockies make a great backdrop during a visit to the US Air Force Academy.



At the banquet, Don and Becky Birch, Patrice Roseland and Sandy and Paula Whitaker watch the ceremonies.



Karen Lyons and Shirley Wetering getting a laugh as Delmer Wetering shows off his door prize.



Terry Fallatt, Patricia and Ron Shook, Bill and Mary Jean Hrbacek, Chuck Harner and Karen Lyons share some good times.



Sea Stories—Life aboard the Cusk

Memoirs of a Non-Qual

By Nelson Kirsch, EM2(SS) , USS Cusk 1960-1962

I walk along the deck of the USS Cod (SS-224), a Gato Class World War II submarine permanently on display on the shores of Lake Erie in Cleveland, Ohio. After looking her over topsides, I squeeze into the forward torpedo room hatch and climb gingerly



down the ladder. At the bottom, I take a half step backward and breathe in deeply. *There's nothing like the smell inside a diesel submarine. It's not an odor. It's not a fragrance. It's a smell. Ode de #2 Fuel Oil. If they could bottle that smell, there would be a hell of a lot of ex-smoke boat sailors buying it by the gallon.*

As I walk aft a few paces, my hand caressing the smooth cool skin of a MK 37 torpedo, my thoughts drift back to an earlier time, now seemingly light years away. It was 1960. I'd just graduated from Sub School and been assigned to the USS Cusk, SS-348 stationed at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. But the Cusk wasn't in port, she was on operations out of Yokosuka Japan. That's where I'd be going to catch up with her.

The military flight from Travis Air Force Base to Tachikawa, Japan takes forever. Well at least thirty-six hours, and when you're sitting backward in a MATS four engine prop driven Wright Brothers whatever, it WAS forever. We land briefly in Hawaii for fuel. No one is permitted off the plane. Then later, again in need of gas, we touch down on Wake Island and disembark to have lunch, courtesy of the small Navy contingency there. We board a rickety gray bus for the trip to the chow hall and on the way pass by hulks of ships sunk in the harbor.

Probably Japs, someone says, but no one is sure. As we make our way to chow I swear I could see the other end of the island by standing on my tiptoes. The temperature is well over 100 degrees and since

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HEALTH TIPS - (By Patricia Strasser)

Being old does not mean one cannot enjoy the energy and vigor he or she had back when they were young. In fact, there are several ways to achieve this. Here are some healthy habits that seniors should follow:

Be sure to get enough sleep - Sleep allows your body to recover energy and is important for proper functioning. A good night's rest has many restorative benefits not only to one's physical health but to one's emotional and cognitive functions.

Engage in physical activities - Studies show that seniors who engage in regular exercise have a greater likelihood of being in good health, keeping healthy and of recovering better from illness. Regular exercise is good for losing weight and also for increasing energy and relieving stress. It will also enhance a senior's strength and flexibility and, as a result, allow him or her to enjoy life more.

Follow a healthy and nutritious diet plan - Following a healthy diet of foods that include fruits, vegetables, and foods low in fat is part of living a healthy lifestyle. A healthy and nutritious diet plan can help promote overall well-being and longevity.

Surround oneself with a positive social circle - A healthy social life is important to achieve a complete good quality of life. Supportive friends can do a lot for your emotional health and can help you endure difficulties that may come your way. Studies show that seniors who maintain a connection to a community have better odds of being in good health, and staying that way through the years.

Schedule visits to the doctor regularly - Older adults are in a stage where there are a lot of changes to be expected, most especially in their health. Being proactive with one's health can bring good benefits, and this can be possible by seeking help from a specialist. Making regular visits to a doctor will help you identify your health risks earlier and prevent these from becoming more serious. The specialist can also suggest the right health precautions that should be made.

Deal with life's stress in an appropriate way - Too much stress can cause a lot of negative side effects on your life. Stress causes anxiety and even sleeplessness. Aside from the emotional strain that stress can cause, it is also a contributing factor in several diseases. Stress-management is thus very important. You can try different stress-relieving activities such as breathing exercises, cognitive puzzles, engaging in a hobby you enjoy, or exercising.



"Memoirs of a Non-Qual" - Continued from Page 3

the official travel uniform is Dress Blues, I'm hotter than a two-dollar Yokosuka whore. Rolling up the sleeves on my jumper helps a bit, but also reveals the fire breathing dragon patches sewn on the inside. Definitely not regulation gear. My action garners a glare from a young and tender Ensign, but he doesn't say anything.

After lunch we're back in the air, traversing the vast blue emptiness of the Pacific. I try unsuccessfully to get some sleep, and just as I'm dozing off, we finally land in Japan. It's the middle of night. Great I think, I'll be in the rack in a few short minutes. Not so.

There's another bus ride. This time long and bumpy. It's cold in Japan this time of year and the bus doesn't have a heater. About an hour out, our driver stops. He gets out and engages in a shouting match with a truck driver coming from the other direction. There's a one lane bridge and neither of them wants to back down. They're getting really loud, and I imagine them drawing Samurai swords and slicing each other into sushi right there on the spot. I never did find out who won the argument, I finally crap out leaning against the window.

I sleep fitfully the rest of the way to Yoko and wake up when we stop at the main gate. We're greeted by a sullen "Jarhead" private, who acts as though we had personally gotten him out of bed right when he was dreaming of love and lust. After a perfunctory documents check and the obligatory derogatory comments about the Navy, he waves us through.

The bus drops me off at a foreboding warehouse-looking building. A sign reads, 'Barracks B'. I'm told by a pissed-off 2nd class Master at Arms to grab a mattress, pillow, blanket and sheets and carry them up to the third deck. "Just grab any rack," he says, then loses interest.

My task is made even more difficult considering I am also wrestling with an over stuffed sea bag containing all my worldly possessions. *Well, I think, at least it's a bunk.* I collapse onto the thin mattress and hard frame and fade into a fatigued and restless



sleep.

Next morning the lights come on about 0800 and everyone rolls out to take care of the necessary three S's. I really need a shave but the water is so cold I swear there's icicles in the spigot.

I check in with the MA. He looks at my orders and says to grab my gear and get my butt over to submarine base headquarters. About a half-hour later and another bus ride, I arrive at the sub base. Checking in with the Chief on duty I'm pleased to hear him say that I can take my gear, move into the submarine barracks and then take the rest of the day off. "Come back and check in tomorrow morning," he says, "and would you like an advance on your paycheck?" Man, I think, this Submarine Navy is all right.

I was curious about the boat, so I ask, "Ah, Chief, just where is the Cusk?"

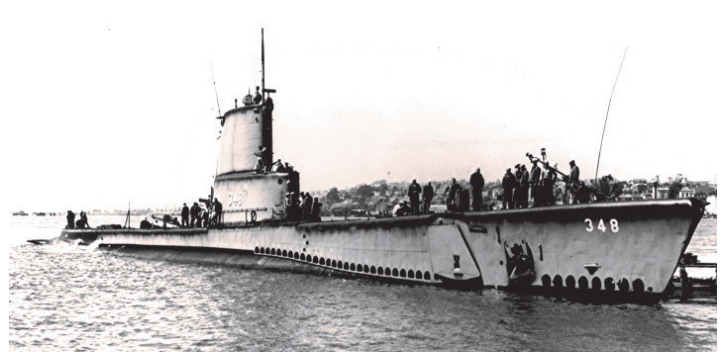
"Out to sea," he mutters, continuing his paperwork.

"Yeah but where?" As I said, I was curious.

The chief puts down his pen, squares his glasses, looks me in the eye and in one of the saltiest growls I had ever heard says, "Just out to sea, okay?"

I get the idea real quick and mumble, "Sure Chief", then pick up my sea bag and walk the short block over to the sub barracks. For the next several days and nights, I spend my time becoming acquainted with the slings, arrows, snares and pitfalls that make up the delights of Yokosuka, Japan but that's another story.

A week later the Cusk steams back into port. I'm ordered dockside to handle lines. *Man, I think, she looks like a tiger shark; can't wait to get on board.*



I report to the Chief of the Boat who assigns me to the deck gang, and for the next two weeks I develop an intimate knowledge of red lead and chipping hammers.

Finally we're ready to go to sea. We'll be heading back to Pearl Harbor, our home port. My

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Ship's Patches

This is the Cusk's last "WestPac" patch which was purchased and we assume designed in Yokosuka, Japan. The purpose of this patch is to brag about one's completion of a WestPac and to show the countries visited during that trip. This was not always exactly accurate because it is certain that the Cusk did not visit any Confederate states during this last cruise. The British flag represents Hong Kong, below that Japan with the Philippines and Vietnam represented on the right side. This patch is about 8" x 5" in size and typically sewn on to the back of a crewmember's "Foul Weather Jacket".



Richard Specht, Bill O'Halloran, Nancy Weisensee, Joe Tattersall, Bill Weisensee, Les Shrum and Ray Peckenpaugh attend ceremonies.

from the editor...

First and foremost, profound apologies to Barrie Bearse and Verne Barlow. Both are indeed alive and well, but somehow, were reported as being on Eternal Patrol. Welcome back, shipmates!

Both seemed to take the error in stride and Verne writes, "Like Mark Twain, I believe that my demise was prematurely reported, as I see I have been listed on that list. Although at 87, I do at times feel pretty stiff."

Along that same topic, I have created an "Eternal Patrol" section on the Cusk Webpage (www.usscusk.com) to honor our shipmates who have gone on before us. Where possible, I have added a picture of them from when they were on board the Cusk, and a copy of their obituary if it's available. As in all other areas, any additional information or pictures you can send will be appreciated.

Remember that all Cusk Newsletters are available for downloading and printing from the webpage. Printing your own copy saves us a lot of money on stamps, printing, etc. so please let me know.

Green Board and following seas to all.

Tom



USS Cusk Plankholders

We were honored to pay tribute to three of the original Cusk crew at our 2010 reunion:

Leo Kunkel, Les Shrum and Vern Barlow.



Lu and Bill Vincent, George Harlow, Carl and Kay Markham, and Leo and Charlotte Kunkel sit outside the Hospitality Suite enjoying the Colorado air

2012 Cusk Reunion - The next Cusk Reunion will be held September 9 to 13, 2012 at the Little Creek Resort and Casino in Shelton, Washington. Their website at www.little-creek.com if you would like see more about it. Shelton is located near Bremerton and Seattle. More information coming soon.





"Memoirs of a Non-Qual" - Continued from Page 5

maneuvering watch station is on the deck gang at the aft capstan. I can hear the main engines thrumming and see exhaust mixed with cooling water spewing from ports on either side of the boat.

Orders are given, lines thrown off, maneuvering bells answered. Slowly the boat frees herself from temporary attachment to terra firma and liberated, floats unshackled in her natural environment. We pick up speed and make our way out of the immense harbor, not that long ago used by the Imperial Japanese Navy to house its wartime fleet.

Once the maneuvering watch is secured, I scuttle below and begin my training as helmsman and look out. Everything is new, strange and mysterious, but I'm confident it will all come together given a little time and practice.

Steaming time to Pearl is about twelve days; mostly on the surface. Plenty long enough for me to get checked out on my watch-standing duties. In between standing watches I and the other newbies are expected to work on our 'quals'. Attempting to figure out the maze of pipes, cables, systems and compartments that make this sewer pipe with a superstructure dive, and more importantly, surface, is a daunting task. We have six months to qualify, to earn our dolphins, but in the beginning it seems to me that given six years, I would still not be finished.

Sleeping arrangements are another matter. 'Hot-bunking' is the order of the day for non-quals. I'll never forget the look on the COB's face when I ask him which bunk is mine. He shakes his head and laughs. "Anyone you want,-- as long as no one else is in it."

Two days later and six hundred miles out to sea, we're hit by a typhoon. "Time to get up for watch, time to get up for watch," that dreaded phrase bores its way into my sleep fogged brain. Someone with a bad attitude and a blinding red light, is shaking me. I want him to go away. My thoughts are muddled. *Maybe if I just ignore the sob he'll leave.* No good; he's there for the duration.

"Ok, ok, I'm up," I manage to mutter. He doesn't believe me.

"Let me see you on your feet," the voice with the attitude says.

Slowly, exhausted and sea sick, I stagger to a standing position only to be thrown against my antagonist by a sudden wrenching of the boat as another enormous wave has its way with us. "Get the hell off me and get dressed, then get some chow," the voice growls, "you're on watch in fifteen minutes."

The pitching and yawing of the boat coupled with

the mention of eating, sends my already much abused stomach into convulsions and I stagger aft as fast as I can to the head, where I make a very feeble but very long and agonizing contribution to the contents of number two sanitary tank. Ever since the storm hit us I'd been seasick. REALLY SEASICK. I hadn't eaten in three days and was lucky to keep a little water down.

Somehow, I manage to get dressed, willing myself to struggle into the heavy foul weather gear complete with safety harness. Looking like a poor excuse for a lobster fisherman, I hurry past the chow hall, holding my breath lest even the smell of food cause me to return to that great cavernous waste tank to once more heave and retch 'till exhaustion.

In Control, the Chief of the Watch has no sympathy. "Well, well, what do we have here. Stomach a little queasy? How about a nice salami and onion sandwich before you head topside?", he chuckles, enjoying himself at my obvious plight.

I struggle up the conning tower ladder and make my way to the bridge hatch. It was dogged

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A man had 50 yard line tickets for the Super Bowl. As he sat down, he noticed that the seat next to him was empty. He asked the man on the other side of the empty seat whether anyone was sitting there.

"No," the man replied, "The seat is empty."

"This is incredible," said the first man.

"Who in their right mind would have a seat like this for the Super Bowl, the biggest sporting event in the world and not use it?"

The second man replied, "Well, actually, the seat belongs to me. I was supposed to come with my wife, but she passed away."

This will be the first Super bowl we haven't been together since we got married in 1967."

"Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. That's terrible. But couldn't you find someone else -- a friend or relative, or even a neighbor to take the seat?"

The man shook his head. "Nope, they're all at the funeral."



"Memoirs of a Non-Qual" - Continued from Page 6

down tight. Nausea is fast overtaking me.

"When you open that hatch, get your butt out on deck then close it again," the Quartermaster on watch barks at me. "I don't want this place full of sea water and flying fish. Got it?"

I nod then spin the locking wheel and fling the hatch open. Immediately I'm deluged by a solid wall of ice cold salt water as the ship takes a wave. We roll over so far I'm ejected outward and flung onto the hard slippery deck banging my head on a stanchion. Quickly, I wrestle the steel hatch cover back down drowning out the Quartermaster's cursing.

After re-dogging the hatch and checking to make sure I'm not bleeding, I stay low, wrapping one arm around a stanchion while I clip my safety belt on with the other. The Officer of the Deck shouts at me to relieve the Starboard lookout.

The on-duty lookout and I exchange a brief report which consists mainly of him telling me how many times he almost drowned. Finally, he sputters, "No contacts," and heads below. That said, I take over.

It's 0400, and it will be hours before the sun begins its eternal struggle to overcome the darkness. In the blackness of night and the violence of the sea there's no horizon visible. The only evidence of a break between sea and sky is foaming white froth torn off the top of each wave by the howling storm.

Cold water and the shrieking wind clears my head. I'm feeling a bit better. At least I'm outside of that steel coffin below and able to breathe fresh air.

Then I see THE WAVE. It's a monster. A huge black wall high as a skyscraper towers above us blocking out any vestige of sky. Streaks of foam explode off its crest which curls downward like a massive malevolent frown. We are heading directly into its trough.

"Hang on, this is a big one," I hear the OD shout, his words ripped apart by the wind.

Our bow plunges into it. We tip steeply downward, nearly vertical like a car on the first hill of a roller coaster. The wave breaks directly on top of us. A thousand tons of sea water try to push us to the bottom. Briny water inundates the deck, floods the bridge, then blasts up the conning tower superstructure. It rises to my waist, then my chest. I strain to make myself taller, but I'm chained to the steel stanchion, locked in tight. My face and head go under. *This is it, I'm going to drown.* I hold my breath.

Then, almost out of air, I feel the boat shudder, struggling to escape Neptune's grasp. I'm sure we're going to break apart. But like a prize fighter on an

eight-count comeback, the bow begins to rise. Shaking and rolling, the sub breaks the wave's lethal grasp, and punches clear in an avalanche of spray, foam and green water. Slowly, inexorably the boat plows through the sea, then levels out. I take in huge breaths of air while watching the flood subside beneath me.

For some reason, after we took that wave I begin to feel better. Not as sick, hardly even queasy. I come down off watch and grinning, ask the Chief if he has any of those salami sandwiches left, and if so, can I have one with extra mustard. He just shakes his head as I stumble aft to peel off my soaked clothes.

I dry off, then find an open bunk. For the first time since we left Yoko, I sleep soundly. I wake up hungry, very hungry. It's breakfast time. Gingerly I nibble a couple of soda crackers. They stay down. My next move is to put in an order for a plate of SOS and a couple of eggs over easy.



Two days later the storm is spent. The sky is blue, the air warm and the wind fair. A radioman pipes in KPOI, a station broadcasting out of Waikiki. I pause for a moment, listening to the spell-binding sounds of Hawaii's island melodies.

Standing watch topside is glorious. As our bow cuts through the now benign sea, a pod of dolphins chase along on both sides, inviting us to join in their game. I take in a long deep breath, tasting the sweet fragrance of the sea. Right then and there, long before that beer company made it cliché, I experience the life defining meaning of the phrase, "It just doesn't get any better than this."



