

1943



1972

# THE BANG GANG NEWSLETTER

Published to perpetuate the memory of USS BANG (SS-385) and her Crew

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ISSUE-42





# LOST AND FOUND



**This column is dedicated to informing you of any additions, deletions, or corrections to our active roster.**  
It has been brought to our attention that the following shipmates have passed away and will be placed on Eternal Patrol.



**Stephen C. Russo, QM3 (55-57)**  
**Albert E. Arnold, EN2 (53-57)**  
**Clair R. Leonard, TM1 (59-60)**  
**Daniel G. Catozella, EN (58)**



**SHIPMATES, REST YOUR OARS!**

**The following shipmates have changed their mailing address.**

**Please let us know when your address has changed or you may not receive the next Newsletter.**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIPCODE	PHONE	Y-O-B
Barringer	Richard C	5641 Grizzly Rd	Portola	CA	96122-5313	(585) 732-3100	52-55
Herzog	Wilhelm A	646 W Main Blvd	Church Hill	TN	37642-3951		62-65
Keane	Michael E	964 Birch Creek Dr	Wilmington	NC	28403-4200	(910) 612-7327	58-59
Lagestee	Gerald A	46601 Arabia St Apt C5	Indio	CA	92201-5820	(760) 775-9761	61-62
Smith	George W	1292 LCR 800	Groesbeck	TX	76642-2272		56-59
Smith	William H	425 W Astruc Dr	Green Valley	AZ	85614-5269	(520)625-4688	57-61
Wilkins	Harold F	2514 Lookout Rd	Haymarket	VA	20169-1554		69-72

**The following shipmates are new (found) additions to our roster. Your committee is thankful for all your help in locating them and we will continue our search until we have attempted to locate everyone.**

LASTNAME	FIRSTNAME	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIPCODE	PHONE	Y-O-B
Tierney	Cornelius E	19360 Magnolia Grove #416 Lansdowne		VA	20176-6897		54-56



## THANK YOU!

**Since our last publication, the following shipmates have generously donated to our slush fund.**



**Bill Asteriades**  
**Viola Carlson**

**“Sarge” Gardinier**  
**Rose Jarvies**

**Dale Larson**  
**Rita Legere**

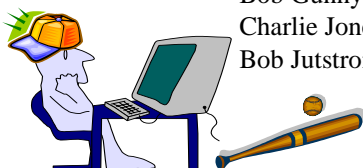
**“Rosie” Rosenfeld**

**Stu Savage**

### THE INTERNET CONNECTION CHANGES SINCE LAST PUBLICATION

Bob Gunny ..... [rob385@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rob385@sbcglobal.net)  
Charlie Jones ..... [ccjones1@nethere.com](mailto:ccjones1@nethere.com)  
Bob Jutstrom ..... [rjuts385@comcast.net](mailto:rjuts385@comcast.net)

R. Scott Rodgers ..... [russell.rodgers@wpafb.af.mil](mailto:russell.rodgers@wpafb.af.mil)  
Harry Ross ..... [harryross@gmail.com](mailto:harryross@gmail.com)  
Neil Tierney ..... [CTie340400@aol.com](mailto:CTie340400@aol.com)  
Harold Wilkins ..... [hwilkins.032349@comcast.net](mailto:hwilkins.032349@comcast.net)







## MAIL CALL

# FPO



**This column is dedicated to all the letters we receive from you. Any info about yourself or others you want to share with your shipmates will be published here. Think of this as a combination of the bulletin board in the Crew's Mess and the 1MC.**

**Editor's Notes and Ramble:** Hi Shipmates! **If you are planning to attend this year's Reunion, please read the Reunion Page for some important changes that have been made to the agenda.**

The sadness continues for me as more of the shipmates that I served with aboard BANG receive their Final Orders for Eternal Patrol.

**Al Arnold** was one of my mentors when I boarded BANG and assisted me in earning my dolphins. He was in the Auxiliary Gang and stood his watches in the Control Room. Because I stood lookout and planes watches, I quickly got to know him and his practical jokes and tomfoolery. The one thing I never did find out was why he was nicknamed 'Blackie'. I tried calling him last year during our Charleston reunion, as he resided locally, but never made connection. I now wish I tried harder.

Al's widow **Lillie** mailed the following to me:

I regret to inform you that Al passed away on 3/13/2006. He died of complications from COPD.

He enjoyed the BANG Newsletter so much and was forever telling stories about the "Bang Gang".

As Al would say – "Keep up the good work".

**Joe Leonardi** sent me an e-mail about Dan Catozella's death. Dan had a very delicate operation on June 6. He was not expected to make it out of the operating room but he did. About 2 weeks ago he had a massive heart attack and died. Dan last attended our Reunion in Taunton, MA 2004.



**Daniel George Catozella**, age 67, was born March 21, 1939 in Brooklyn, New York, and died June 25, 2006. He is preceded in death by his parents and daughter Danielle. He is survived by his beloved wife Jean, and five children: Jennifer Lewis, husband Jamie, children Hadyn and Harrison; Rebecca Morgan and daughter Madeline; only son

Stephan; Tara Fehlall and family; Lisa Ingram; sister Ida Joyce Green. Private committal at the VA Houston National Cemetery at a later date. In lieu of flowers, send memorials to the American Heart Association.

**Bob Jutstrom's** e-mail was the bearer of the shocking news about Steve Russo.

Steve was a good shipmate and friend and I will miss his smiling face and camaraderie at our Reunions. Even though he was greatly involved with the SubVets organization, holding many offices including National Commander, he and Ruth still found the time to attend most of our Reunions – including last year. During each reunion he would ask me if I had located **Neil Tierney**, a fellow Quartermaster he served with, and I would always have to reply in the negative.

Well, about a week after hearing of Steve's passing I received an e-mail from Neil requesting he be added to our mailing list. Now, a lot of you may think this was just coincidence but, I like to think that Steve was behind the force that sent Neil to our web site and e-mail me. I can see him now with that gratifying look on his face – "**Hey, Phil! I found Neil**". Thanks Steve! We'll miss you....



**Stephen C. Russo** Of Medford, died June 16, 70 years of age. Beloved husband of Ruth A. (Gedies) Russo of Medford. Devoted father of Stephen Russo and his wife Patricia of NH, Charles Russo and his wife Maryellen of Wakefield, James Russo and his wife Deborah of Danvers and Patricia Gibbs

and her husband John of Wilmington. Cherished brother of Stephanie Dow of Belmont. Loving grandfather of six granddaughters. Retired Medford High School Teacher. Retired U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer, Past National Commander of the United States Submarine Veterans. Member of the St. Pius X Assembly of 4th Degree Knights. Deputy Grand Knight of the North Reading Knights of Columbus. Interment in Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford. Donations may be made in Stephen's memory to the American Heart Assoc., 20 Speen St, Framingham, MA 01701.

While browsing through the latest issue of American Submariner, I came across **Clair Leonard's** name listed on the Obituary Page. Lately, it seems that's all I do is read Obituaries. I did not know Clair very well as he arrived aboard BANG about a month before I departed but I'm sure many of you knew him well.

**Clair Lenny Leonard**, 81, U.S. Navy, Retired, passed away on Monday, April 3, 2006. He was born in Green Bay, Wisconsin, and was a member of the Merritt Island Moose Lodge, the V.F.W., Merritt Island Elks, SubVets, and many other organizations. Mr. Leonard was a veteran of World War II and the Korean War. Mr. Leonard is survived by his six children, Patricia, Michael, Laura, Jack, Thomas, and Timothy; three grandchildren, Steven, Shane, and Shannon; and two sisters, Joyce Strand and Sally Hall. He was preceded in death by Mary C. Leonard, his wife of 45 years. Entombment will take place at Brevard Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Mr. Leonard's memory to the American Lung Cancer Society.

*Along the shore I spy a ship  
As she sets out to sea;  
She spreads her sails and sniffs the breeze  
And slips away from me.*

*I watch her fading image shrink,  
As she moves on and on,  
Until at last she's but a speck,  
Then someone says, "She's gone."*

*Gone where? Gone only from our sight  
And from our farewell cries;  
That ship will somewhere reappear  
To other eager eyes.*

*Beyond the dim horizon's rim  
Resound the welcome drums,  
And while we're crying, "There she goes!"  
They're shouting, "Here she comes!"*

*We're built to cruise for but a while  
Upon this trackless sea  
Until one day we sail away  
Into infinity.*

**TILL WE MEET AGAIN SHIPMATES!!!**

Sad news continues from the distaff side.



**Bill VonDerLieth** informed me that his beloved wife, **Margie**, "passed to the next level of our beliefs". This was brought on by a massive stroke she experienced at the end of July. Bill and Margie were welcome sites at our Reunions until they had to slow down their traveling. They last attended in Virginia Beach 2003.

Our deepest sympathy to you and your family, Bill.

Also, **Gene Lockwood** informed me that **Ronnie** is currently recovering slowly from a serious operation that had her hospitalized for a while. Lets all pray to help speed her recovery.

**The writings and material within this Newsletter are the sole responsibility of its Editor and in no way reflect the opinion of its readers, the Bang Gang. ....Phil Beals**

**Rita Legere**, widow of **Paul Legere**, a Fireman (52-54 and member of the 3rd Commissioning Crew), "Thank you for the Newsletter. Paul enjoyed it being that BANG was his favorite sub. He wished we could have attended a lot more of the Reunions. Due to his disability, we were only able to attend the 50th at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, his only place of employment, with the assistance of the kids.

Paul loved submarines and worked on them for 29 years until his injury at the Yard forced him to take disability. A stroke at age 54 cost him his ability to speak. But, that didn't stop him from joining SubVets in FL and attend meetings where he sat and listened to the sea stories of his shipmates. I have his BANG patch, which he refused to sell many times, the car plate, and many of his hats – our son has his favorite.

My memories of him are happy ones as he died happy, at home, with all of his family." ....*Thank you Rita for sharing some of Paul's life with us. We too wish the both of you could have attended more of the Reunions after the 50th and now understand the reason why you didn't. Though his disabilities were frustrating, he was rewarded with a loving wife and family to console him.*

**Daniel "Rosie" Rosenfeld**, a MotorMachinistMate (43-46, WP1,2,3,4,5,6), "I hope this letter finds all in the best of health as Goldie and I are like wise except I still have no sight in my left eye.

Sorry to read about the death of my shipmates, **Joe Hutchins** and **Ralph Folger**. I will sure miss them. Ralph always attended the Memorial Services at Kings Bay, GA.

Goldie and I will be going to the SubVets WWII national convention this September in Laughlin, NV. I hope to see some of my shipmates there. We also will be attending the Memorial Services this November in Kings Bay.

Give my best regards to all my shipmates at this year's BANG Reunion and maybe I will be able to attend our 2007 Reunion.

You do a fantastic job on the BANG Newsletter."....*Rosie, I am happy to hear that both you and Goldie are hanging in there. As I stated in the last Newsletter, there are only three of you left on the mailing list that made all of BANG's patrols. Continue to take care of yourself and I hope we see each other again soon..*

**Rose Jarvies**, widow of **Jack Jarvies**, an Officer (56-57), "Just a short note to keep 'in touch' and

thank you for the bang up job you do on the Newsletter. It is the best!

Volunteer activities and those with friends and family keep my days filled. SubVettes, USSVI national ladies organization, keeps me in contact with submarine veterans activities.

Enclosed is a donation for the Slush Fund in memory of Jack. Hello to all." .... *Thank you for the donation, Rose. Happy to hear that your days are filled with activity. I am a firm believer that the more active you are the less time you have for getting old..*

**Gerald Lagestee**, an ElectriciansMate (61-62), "I served aboard BANG, my first Boat, from 1/61 to 1/62. BANG was leaving for the Med and I was scheduled to start Nuc school in April so I was transferred to Seawolf (SSN575). I completed the first 6 months of schooling and was then sent to Idaho Falls, ID. I finished 3 more months of training there before I was dropped from the school because I had an automobile accident while driving at a high rate of speed. I was sent to Vallejo, CA where I went through a submarine qualitative screening and was returned to submarine duty.

I was assigned to Bream (SS243) where I 'Qualified In Submarines'. When Bream got transferred from Pearl Harbor to San Diego, I put in for, and received orders to, Archerfish (AGSS311). I later got engaged to be married and, since Archerfish had an all bachelor crew, I was transferred to Catfish (SS339) in San Diego. I also served aboard Harder (SS565), Salmon (SS572), and Pickerel (SS524). During my enlistment I never had shore duty. I was a 'Boat Hopper' to avoid it. Served aboard Catfish and Archerfish 3 times each. My favorite Boat was Archerfish and 3 months aboard Seawolf was 6 months too long.

I was recommended for promotion to Warrant Officer and to get a line commission but retired from the Navy instead 6/1980 as an EMC(ss).

My current address is temporary until I can shed this walker then, I am off to Reno. Will let you know the new address when that time comes." ....*Jerry, thanks for updating your mailing address and also for giving us a synopsis of your life after BANG.*

**Lloyd Hutchins**, son of **Joe Hutchins**, "Thank you for forwarding the Bang Newsletter with the nice tributes to my Dad.

He kept up with the news of his shipmates in the newsletters. I regret that we didn't try harder to get him to the 2001 reunion in nearby Mystic, but he was already averse to traveling long distances then. He was the typical "Greatest Generation" type of veteran. They sacrificed and did their duty but didn't brag about it. He said the real heroes didn't make it

home. When they returned home, they worked hard to build a better life for their families and for a strong and prosperous America. You had to press him to recall the old war stories, but when he did open up, they were fascinating tales."

**Mike Keane**, an Electronics Tech (58-59), "Many thanks for the newsletter and the update on Chief Hobbes. I too remember asking him back in the maneuvering room why he didn't quit when he was always suffering from seasickness and got the same answer, "**can't afford to.**".... *Yeah, John Hobbes was one tough cookie to stand 20 years of being seasick. Thanks for your address update, Mike.*

**Jean Catozella**, recent widow of **Dan Catozella**, "I am sending you the things I found in Dan's possession that pertain to BANG. As I told you, Dan was a collector. I have a Christmas menu from 1957, his requirements for submarine qualification, an intricate hand-drawing of a submarine, his submarine lookout book, and a ship's history of the Bang. I don't know if you use things like this at the reunion, but I thought they would be better served there than in a drawer at my home.

I am also sending a picture of our "Bangmobile". Dan started putting Bang decals and Bang license plate holder on the car and we would tease him about it. We started calling it "The Bang" and it caught on. Everyone from grandkids to friends would say "Are we riding in the BANG?" .... *Thank you, Jean for the fine contribution to our memorabilia library and the photo..*





**Richard Barringer**, a SONarman (52-55), "I won't be able to make the reunion this year. There is just too much going on. I am in the process (slow) of moving out to California permanently, my granddaughter is getting married, and I'm being pulled in a million different directions. The bad news is that Sierra has advanced bone cancer in her right foreleg and shoulder. The vet says she could have 2 weeks to a year, so I am concentrating on making our time left together as great as I possibly can. We have been together, thru everything for the past 12 1/2 years. I don't know what I will do without her. I hope I can make it next year. I really wanted to be there this year for the Balloon Festival and the Bang Gang. I have always wanted to visit Albuquerque.

We tried to get up to the Lake last Sunday and ended up with the front wheel of the truck hanging over a 75' drop off into a ravine of rocks and rushing snow-melt. We just slid off the road and while trying to get back, we got into this predicament. My granddaughter (13) and I had to walk up the mountain thru 8-10' drifts for two miles, with only sandals on our feet, shorts & tee-shirts, to get high enough to get a cell signal, so we could call for help. By the time we got back to the truck, I could no longer feel my feet. I think we were too close to frostbite. My toes still hurt. We didn't get back on the road and off the mountain till six hours later - 11:30 PM. We were very lucky to get help at that time of night.

Well, I finally made it to the Lake and it didn't take me long to pull a good one!!!!!! I fell off a ladder this past Sunday while knocking down dead limbs for firewood. I dropped about four feet or so, and shattered my heel bone into four pieces and a few splinters. From the looks of the x-rays and cat scan, I have no doubt that surgery will be in the very near future. It is very painful and I have fallen twice while trying to master these damn crutches. I'm not sure if I will be able to continue at the lake or not, but I am going to try. Will keep you informed as developments arise.

Went to the Specialist this morning. Will be having surgery done in next week or so. Heading back up to Meadow Lake tomorrow morning. Will stay there till day before surgery. Have crutches and a wheelchair, so I should be able to function for myself, hopefully. Doctor says that I'll only be in hospital overnight for pain monitoring, then about a week later I should be getting a boot so that I will be able to put a little weight on my right foot. With any luck I should be able to hang on as Camp Host till it is time to head home for granddaughter's wedding!"  
....Richard, your saga continues. I think if we put this whole year together you could sell the movie rights for lots of money and retire to a nice island where you won't have to worry about snow any more.

**Owen O'neil**, An Electronics Tech (59-61), "The way I remember it is:

Harder, Darter, Trigger, and Trout,  
They never come in 'cause they never go out.!" ....  
*I'm sure there were many versions to that ditty, Owen. But was there a second or third verse????*

**Bob Cellupica**, a MotorMachinistMate (44-46, WP5,6), "I'm with you on the subject of losing so many good shipmates.....it is a downer. A great bunch of guys resting their oars until we meet again. I can only parrot what so many of the Bang Gang has been saying. You are doing a terrific job with the Newsletter.

Will soon have an operation on my back. Some time ago when undergoing a Carpal Tunnel procedure I asked the local Orthopedic Association to take X-rays of my hips as they were really giving me a hard time. The upshot was that there was nothing wrong with my hips and that the problem was with my back. Hence, the upcoming operation which will take place in Concord.

Because I don't know how that will pan out, I do not expect to be going to Albuquerque this Fall. I could change my mind as my youngest son is in Arizona and I might spend a few days with him but, that is not likely." ....*Bob, the first order of business is a speedy recovery from the operation and then we will think about Reunions. We pray that your operation is successful.*



**The following two articles were recent news clips from local newspapers. To locate the resting place of genuine heroes you would think would warrant some heralded fanfare. But no, our news media today thinks differently (or just doesn't think or care) as both clippings were extracted from a double digit page number embedded in a sea of advertisement. The only reason the second one received more write-up than the first is because it involved a billionaire. In case you missed it, a couple of months ago USS Lagarto (SS371) was also located. The media may have covered that 'find' a little better but NO FRONT PAGE.....**

## **Russian divers find U.S. sub sunk in 1943**

*Associated Press – 08/18/2006*

MOSCOW- Russian divers have spotted the wreckage of a legendary U.S. submarine that was

sunk by the Japanese Navy in the Pacific in 1943, a Russian news agency reported yesterday.

The ITAR-Tass said that a diving team from the Far Eastern State Technological University in Vladivostok found the submarine **USS Wahoo (SS238)** in La Perouse Strait and took pictures of it during a recent expedition. No further details were given.

Under the command of Dudley "Mush" Morton, the Wahoo became one of the most famous submarines of World War II. With 19 Japanese ships sunk, Morton was ranked as one of the top three sub skippers.

The Wahoo was sunk by the Japanese Navy as it returned from its seventh patrol on October 11, 1943. All 79 crewmen died.



## After six decades, a submarine's fate may surface

*By Ralph Ranalli, Globe Staff - August 17, 2006*

There was no distress call, no indication of enemy depth charges exploding or bulkheads breached, just a dead silence that stretched from a few days into 60 years.

The **USS Grunion (SS216)** disappeared in July 1942, leaving 70 American families grieving and the three sons of skipper Mannert L. "Jim" Abele, without a father. Abele's boys -- ages 5, 9, and 12 and living in Newton when their father disappeared -- grew up and built their own lives. But, they dwelt on the fate of their father. At 2 a.m. yesterday, a grainy sonar picture e-mailed via satellite appeared in Bruce Abele's inbox, appearing to finally show what they had been searching for much of their adult lives: the outline of an oblong object believed to be the Grunion deep in frigid Alaskan waters.

If the discovery is confirmed, it would signify a triumph of luck and perseverance and put to rest a quest for clues, financed by the personal fortune of one of the Abele sons, that has spanned decades.

"It's big, very big," 76-year-old Bruce Abele, the eldest of the three sons, said yesterday. "This mystery has been a part of my consciousness for as long as I can remember."

The Grunion, one of the Gato-class attack submarines commissioned in the early part of World War II, was on its maiden operational voyage when it disappeared while patrolling the seas between Alaska's tip and Japan, according to a Navy website. The submarine made several transmissions in July

1942, reporting it had sunk three Japanese destroyers. On July 30, it reported heavy antisubmarine activity nearby and said it had 10 remaining torpedoes. It was never heard from again. Warplanes searching for wreckage never found any evidence of the sub's fate.

For years, the sons -- Bruce, Brad, and John, who is founder of Boston Scientific Corp. -- have pored over Navy documents, any shipping records of the area they could locate, and contacted others interested in the Grunion's fate. John Abele, a billionaire, has paid for much of the search. He declined to say how much he's spent.

The effort wasn't made any easier by the brutal seas around the Aleutian Islands, widely considered some of the most dangerous in the world, with winds that can howl at 100 miles per hour, waves taller than a house, and ocean depths of 1,800 feet and greater. Any search mission would have to know where to look, since a long scouting voyage would be dangerous and expensive.

A break came in 2002, when a Japanese man, Yutaka Iwasaki, posted a translation of an article in an obscure Japanese shipping journal on one of several websites dedicated to the Grunion. The article, written by a military officer on board an armed Japanese merchant ship, the Kano Maru, described an exchange of cannon fire and torpedoes with an American submarine in an area where the Grunion would have been patrolling.

Iwasaki's involvement changed everything, John Abele said yesterday. Not only did the brothers have a place to look for their father's submarine, but they also had new found friends from the other side of the war. They were so inspired by the cooperation they received from Iwasaki and others in Japan that they decided to expand the search to find two Japanese sub-chasers, SC-25 and SC-27, that were sunk by the Grunion and to find the Arare, a Japanese destroyer that went down in the same area. "This has been a very emotional thing for a lot of us," John Abele said.

After four years of research, the brothers finally decided they could make a good enough guess at probable locations to start looking, with John Abele deciding to fund the search himself.

After a discussion with renowned Titanic explorer Robert Ballard, who declined to take on the exploration, the brothers hired a Seattle ocean surveying firm, Williams and Associates. They also chartered a crab fishing boat, the Aquila, skippered by a seasoned veteran of the dangerous waters, Kale Garcia. The family is represented on the boat by Peter Lowney, a former Newton resident and crab boat crewman who is chronicling the search with a pair of high-resolution video cameras and sending back frequent updates.

The search, with sonar equipment capable of returning high-quality images, began two weeks ago. The boat traversed a grid, seeing nothing but sonar images of the ocean floor.

Then they saw on the screen a smooth, oblong object with features that could be a tower and periscope mast.

With no other submarines they know of reported sunk in the area, they concluded it must be the Grunion.

John Abele said that the brothers will fly to Alaska next week on his private jet to tour the area and meet with the survey crew. They said they will probably return to the site next year and send an unmanned, remote-control device beneath the waves to get a closer look at the object and take pictures.

Jack Green, a historian at the Naval Historical Center in Washington, D.C., said yesterday the Navy has been aware of the Abeles' quest for the Grunion. Green said the Navy rarely helps with such searches and is unlikely to aid in theirs unless the brothers provide more proof than a sonar image. "But this is very, very exciting," he said. "We'll be very excited to see what they come up with."

While photographs could finally solve the puzzle of what actually happened to the Grunion, John Abele said the brothers' motivations are much more personal.

"We're doing this as much from a desire for connection with my father as to learn the answer to a mystery," he said.



## USS Dolphin Decommissioning

Gentlemen, Some of you may have already received word and some may not. After 38 years of service USS Dolphin (AGSS-555) will be decommissioned at Submarine Base Pt. Loma, San Diego, CA. I obtained each of your emails from submarinesailor.com as members of USS Dolphin's crew over the past 40 years. My purpose in writing is twofold. First, it is to invite each of you to the decommissioning ceremony on 22 September 2006. Some of you may have received invitations already. If you have not, please accept my apologies, but it is because I do not have a current address for you. Since the ceremony will be held at Pt. Loma SUBBASE an invitation will be required. Please contact me at the email below so that I can send out an invitation as quickly as possible. The second reason I have written is to solicit from you points of contact for

other crew members of USS Dolphin. As you can imagine, tracking down the crew for a 38-year old submarine is a daunting task and whatever assistance that you can provide in this respect would be welcome.

Additionally, the ship intends to hold a USS Dolphin crewmember reunion the afternoon/evening before the inactivation ceremony. Again you are all invited to attend. My POC is listed below.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or would like to pass on any information.

**V/R LCDR John Vlattas XO**

USS DOLPHIN (AGSS-555)

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john.vlattas@agss555.spawar.navy.mil

### Inactivation Ceremony Invitation

Commanding Officer USS DOLPHIN (AGSS-555) requests the pleasure of your company at the ship's Inactivation Ceremony on Friday, the Twenty-Second day of September Two thousand and six at ten o' clock North Pier Naval Submarine Base Point Loma San Diego, California.

Participants: Full Dress White R. S. V. P.

Military Guests: Summer White Card Enclosed

Civilians: Appropriate Attire



"The following is a reprint of an article posted in the USSVI Bremerton Base Newsletter."

### LCDR Irwin "Bruce" Pierson

an Autobiography

USS SEA DEVIL (SS400) Silver Dolphins 1947

USS BANG (SS385) Gold Dolphins 1962

Fifty years ago Bruce was in Groton, a plankowner, commissioning USS Nautilus (SSN571), the 'First and Finest'. Bruce was a true mustang, first qualified enlisted, became 'acquainted' with Admiral Rickover, then qualified as an officer. Bruce can best be described in the words of a BANG shipmate, **Dick Barbieri**, author of "Smoke Boat Sailor", who writes, "Why Mr Pierson remains in my mind (today) is that he was a fine naval officer who was held in high esteem, and was by far, the most liked and respected officer on BANG. He cared about the crew." Today, Bruce is retired and lives in Bremerton, WA with Marilyn, his bride of 55 years. He golfs as often as possible, is active in SubVets - Bremerton Base, and still 'cares about the crew'.



Born 8 Mar 1928 in La Grande, OR, I am the oldest of six kids, five boys and one girl. My Dad was a mechanic and truck driver in logging and road construction, We lived in Goldendale, WA; Boise, ID; Umatilla, Wallowa, Starkey and Perry, OR. I attended a one-room schoolhouse in Perry for all of my secondary education, graduating from the eighth grade.

When I was 12 and 13 I worked during haying season driving a derrick horse. I led an old mare back and forth to raise a big fork full of hay from the wagon to the top of a haystack. At 14 I pitched hay onto the wagons and slips, drove the teams of horses, and I took care of them.

I moved to La Grande, OR to go to High School and lived with an Uncle and his family. We were very poor and I worked as a janitor in a beer hall owned by my Uncle. I would get up at 4AM, sweep and swab out Herman's Lunch (the beer hall) then go home, shower, eat breakfast and go to school. I played right tackle on the junior varsity football team as a freshman. About Christmas time I had enough of both getting up early and my cousins, so I quit and found a janitors job after school in a machine shop/parts store and moved into a one-room basement apartment for the rest of the year.

That summer I worked as a forest fire fighter. Five of us high school kids were in the crew plus a very experienced foreman. We only fought three small fires but did a lot of wood cutting, phone line repair, and road repair. We stayed busy. One lucky thing happened to me. All the other boys smoked so my first payday I bought two cartons of cigarettes and smoked five packs. That was enough! I gave the rest away and never smoked again.

Then I drove a pickup truck, delivering fresh fruit and vegetables to many mom and pop stores in town. I kept this job through the next summer and moved up to the big truck, delivering produce to branch routes and small towns, full time.

When school started the Dean of Boys recommended me to the local theater owner as a projectionist in three theaters. All his projection operators had been drafted. Two wives had taken their husbands jobs but he hired me for relief and vacations. I kept that job until I went in the Navy.

I might mention that to supplement my income I did a little bootlegging. Back at the beer hall I met all the winos in town and since Oregon controlled the hard liquor, I would have one of them buy me a bunch of pints and cases of beer and I stored them in my basement apartment. Then I sold them to my high school friends for a significant profit. I had three different apartments while going to high school.

In Mar 1946 I received a letter to report to the draft board for my physical. Instead, I talked to the Dean of Boys and after quick review he told me I would graduate if I

enlisted in the Navy, which I wanted to do. So I enlisted, took my physical in Portland and went to San Diego for boot camp. I was the biggest of seven of us going to San Diego and I was put in charge for train trip. I learned my serial number real quick, as I had to sign every food voucher.

In boot camp, I was one of seven who ranked highest in the Mech-Elect aptitude tests. We were separated from the rest of the Company after the first two weeks--except for marching and calisthenics. We were made Firemen instead of Seamen and had one Cinderella Liberty while in boot camp. The only place we could drink beer was at Navy Field (32nd St) so all us Firemen mustered there. A submarine sailor bought us a couple of beers and talked up the Sub service. The next day all seven of us put in for Submarine School and got it.

The first night on Sub Base I went to the movie. The projectionist didn't show up. Cdr McCluskey asked if anyone could show the movie. I volunteered and after 15 minutes I got things going. The projectionist that didn't show up was fired and I was hired. In Sub School my only duty was the Projection Booth and showing the movies.

After Sub School I was sent to Pearl Harbor via an APA. That was my first time at sea. In Pearl, Oct 1946, I went to the Sea Devil (SS400). The EMC and ENC met me topside when I reported and asked what I was striking for. I had no idea but liked the looks of the EMC best, so I said Electrician. I qualified in early 1947 on Sea Devil and made EM3 (SS).

As a former projectionist I was put in charge of the boat's movies and projector. I would take coffee and horsecock to the movie distribution center in order to get good movies quickly. One day ET3 Brit had the duty and picked up, 'Unfinished Dance' starring Margaret O'Brien. It was one of the first technicolor available. He dropped the last reel overboard while showing the movie. Although divers recovered the reel I sure went through a lot of 'guff' because the Admiral hadn't seen it yet.

Sea Devil made a West Pac cruise and we visited Tsintoa, China and Hong Kong. Then I put Sea Devil and Entemedor out of commission and re-commissioned Guavina (SS0-362), the first and only submarine tanker. They added fuel oil tanks outboard the ballast tanks.

On 1 Jun 1949, I married Marilyn Lorraine Miller a girl I met in La Grande, OR in 1948. We celebrated our 55th wedding anniversary in June. She attended college at EOC in town, but was from North Powder, about 35 miles from La Grande. In 1948 I had applied for and was accepted in the NAVCAD training program. In 1950, after 17 months orders came through to report to Pensacola. I was aboard Cusk. The XO informed me that since I was now married the orders had to be cancelled.

I had traded with EM3 Donofrio, in 1950, from the Guavina to the Cusk (SSG-348). The Cusk was stationed in San Diego. It was the first guided missile boat and fired the LOON Missile. She had a tank mounted on the main deck. We had to surface, open the tank door, install railroad tracks to the permanently mounted launch ramp, then haul the LOON out, dismantle the temp railroad tracks, close the tank door and go below before we fired the missile.

In May 1952, I was ordered to Pittsburgh, PA for the first Atomic Submarine, USS Nautilus (SSN571). Both Marilyn and I had to be at least 3rd generation Americans and cleared by the FBI. Marilyn and I had a good laugh at being ordered to Pittsburgh. The previous year while driving through Pittsburgh on Route 30 heading to gyrocompass school in Washington, DC (my first school after Sub School) we were halted at a stop light for 5 or 6 light changes and the smoke from the steel mills was very dirty. We said we were glad there was no Navy in Pittsburgh. One year later, there we were!

While in DC, our Daughter Adwena Yvette was born, 4 Jun 1951, at Bethesda Naval Hospital and I was promoted to EM2(SS) while still on Cusk.

There were 28 enlisted and two officers in our class. Five Nuclear Gang Nautilus plank owners came from Cusk. We attended school in an old farmhouse at the Betties Airport that was converted into a nuclear design & manufacturing facility by Westinghouse. We went six days and two nights a week at Duquesne University to study and train in practical steam generators and turbines. We had lots of homework. To help, six of us rotated apartments. The wives and kids would visit, vacating an apartment, so the men would have peace, quiet and help in studying. This was hard on families but continued from Jun 1952 to Mar 1953 when we were transferred to the Nautilus prototype at Arco, ID. There, many of us lived in Idaho Falls and traveled by bus 54 miles each way to the site. During special test periods we stayed on the site in Quonset huts. We continued academic training, regular type of submarine qualifying notebooks, and system schematics along with actual experience operating the first power-producing reactor.

In Oct 1952 the Canadians melted down a reactor inside an airtight building at Chalk River, Ontario. Canada requested help to decontaminate the area. They didn't have enough nuclear cleared or trained people. So, in Feb 1953 us Nautilus Nuc's went to help--and to get training in actual high level decontamination. The quarterly dose at that time was 3900 milirem per quarter; it is now 1500 per year. Most of us received over 3000 for the week that we were there. I received 4100 milirem, most of it in about 45 seconds, while working on a cutting machine on top of the reactor. I can tell a few tales about that trip but will save them for a future issue.

Now I was an EM1(SS), assigned to the Reactor Control Gang. I went to the Bailey Meters Plant in Cleveland, OH to learn the pneumatic control system which was part of the automatic reactor rod control. It also controlled the hot well levels of the reactor coolant pumps, ships service, and main propulsion turbines. In Jan 1954, while in Idaho, the Navy flew most of us back East to participate in the launching of Nautilus, but adverse weather grounded us in Chicago so we watched it on TV.

The leading ETC was promoted to Ensign so they needed another reactor operator and I trained as an RO. I was the 7th man in the Navy to qualify as RO and 9th to qualify in Nuclear Submarines. We made history there with a full power simulated run to London using the water brake as a screw. Really the first power producing reactor.

In 1954 we transferred to Nautilus during her final stages of construction and assisted in the final testing of all systems, mechanical, electrical, pneumatics and rod control, etc. The boat was commissioned in Sep 1954 and we finally went sea in Jan 1955. In Nov of 1955 I was ordered to the first Navy Nuclear Power School at Groton which I helped set up as an Instructor. We developed all of our own lesson plans. I made EMCA(SS) in Feb 1955. Our son Leslie Bruce was born 16 Feb 1955 at the SUB Base Dispensary.

In May 1957 I was selected for LDO (Electronics) Ensign. I specifically selected electronics in order to get a 42-week electronic course at Great Lakes and a 90 day OCS. The Friday afternoon that I received word that I was selected, my CO said to report to Adm Rickover in DC for an interview on Monday. Ten of us selected for officer were competing for five jobs as AEC Reps at the first Civilian Nuclear Power Plant. I was one of the five selected. Westinghouse was Prime Contractor and Duquesne Light was the operator. I was told that we would be there until three months after start up, or about six to nine months and Adm Rickover said I would get a Submarine to qualify as an officer after my tour as an AEC Rep, so I volunteered.

We had ten days to sell our house and report to Shippingport, PA. We lived in East Liverpool, OH for two months then moved to Shippingport. It was a very small town. I was the first of us five to qualify on the plant, and even had to go to DC for the final exam. Without any close military facilities it was hard getting by on military pay. We had to wear civilian clothes (no clothing allowance) and shop at civilian stores 20 miles away. After a year we all put in for transfer. Adm Rickover interviewed us individually and said afterward that Jim Flow was the most technically competent and I smoothed Duquesne Light's ruffled feathers best--so we were staying. The others were transferred and new guys arrived. Adm Rickover also told me I would not be going to OCS or Electronics school and it would not hinder my

chances for promotion. We stayed there through the first cycle of operation and refueling, 37 1/2 months. Our daughter Meri Taunya was born 17 May 1959 in a civilian hospital in Rochester, PA and I was promoted to LTJG without ever wearing my officers uniform.

In Jun 1960 I transferred to SUBRON 14 as Assistant Material Officer. One of the hardest things I had to learn after becoming an officer was to call LCDR Buzz Cobean by his first name. We went through NUC School together and he had been my Division Officer on Nautilus. SUBRON 14 had just been set up as the first FBM Submarine Squadron located in Norfolk. We transferred to Groton then to Holy Lock, Scotland. The first five FBM's, George Washington, Patrick Henry, Robert E. Lee, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt were assigned to SUBRON 14. Either my boss LCDR Buzz Cobean or I had to ride them on their yard sea trials. I rode all of them during their yard trials except the Lincoln. I also had the pleasure of being in the blockhouse at Cape Canaveral when the George Washington fired the first Polaris missile while submerged and while on Staff I was promoted to LT.

In Aug 1961 Adm Rickover kept his promise to let me qualify as an Officer and I reported to USS Bang (SS-385). I was ordered to Bang simply because the Skipper was the only Diesel Boat CO older than me. After a year, and during the Cuban Missile crisis, I qualified. It was hard for me, because I didn't have officer sub school or any experience in ship handling, tactics, weapons or communications. I couldn't type so I hand printed my qualification notebook. The CO of Tusk gave my in port portion of the exam, and stated that it was the first note book he had seen that he knew hadn't been copied from some one else. All the others had been typed.

The 3rd Officer made out the watch list. He had a nasty habit of changing the watch bill when any JO's came in early and he had the duty he would simply give it to one of the JO's. He tried to pull that stunt on me after I had qualified as OOD - Underway. I told him the XO would have to approve it, and he might be the 3rd Officer but I drew second pay. A half-hour later he told me he had the duty on arrival in port.

We made a MED Patrol on Bang during the Russian blockade of Berlin. Then left the MED to present a show of force and visited Lisbon, Portugal; Holy Lock, Scotland; Antwerp, Belgium; and Rotterdam, Holland then home to New London. With a new CO, **Alex Sinclair**, Bang made a North Atlantic patrol and it was during this time Tresher sank. We were on radio silence and the wives only knew that there was a submarine sunk in the Atlantic. For a couple of days they were very worried not knowing whether we were the one down.

Captain Charles Styer, PCO of USS Holland (AS32), and former COS of SUBRON 14, came to our house and

asked me to come to Holland as Production Officer, one of two Assistant Repair Officers. I accepted and in Aug 1963, I reported aboard Holland in the final stage of construction in Pasgagoula, MS. As the 21st senior officer but one of only three officers qualified as OD's, I was assigned as a Command Duty Officer and Officer of the Deck during our shakedown cruise to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and deployment to Rota, Spain. While in Rota our youngest daughter became allergic to the area and required shots, so I volunteered to be short toured so that we would not all be eligible for transfer at the same time.

In Nov 1964 we were ordered to PSNS Bremerton. I originally was to be assigned as Nuclear Ship Supt but the first NUC was delayed. Since I was the only qualified submarine officer in the yard and Blueback was coming in for PSNS's first subsafe overhaul, Adm Rickover said "OK" for me to do a non nuc. I enjoyed the job as Ship Supt for Blueback more than any job I ever had. While at PSNS I was promoted to LCDR. The people at PSNS and Bremerton made our whole family feel welcome and that's one of the reasons we retired here.

In Jun 1967 I transferred to COMSUBPAC as Assistant Material Officer for Diesel Subs, ASR's and AS's. I retired in Aug 1969 from COMSUBPAC Staff, as a LCDR.

While stationed at PSNS we bought our house--the one we still live in. And, prior to retirement I was offered a job at PSNS which I accepted. However, upon arrival, the Yard told me since the job offer, the rules had changed, and they could not hire me until 6 months after retirement. Since we owned the house, and our oldest daughter was going to the UPS in Tacoma, and all our furniture had been shipped, we decided to stick it out. Marilyn went to work at Penney's and I worked in the Christmas trees to supplement our income. I went to work at PSNS in Feb 1970 as a Nuclear Technician in Code 2307. I worked there until I was assigned as Nuclear Repair Supt for the Truxton nuclear overhaul and reactor core replacement. After about 18 months of only a couple of weekends off I transferred to the Nuclear Type Desk Code 218. I was an assistant and Acting code 218 until I permanently retired in 1989.

Since retiring from PSNS we have been just enjoying life here in Bremerton. We travel, square dance, go to submarine reunions, visit our three kids and seven grandchildren. I golf as much as I can, two to three time a week weather permitting, and Marilyn works in her flower gardens.





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**SCHULTZ AND HAZEN**



## USS BANG (SS385) MEMORIAL SITES

"Keeping The Memory Alive"

### **Albacore Park - Portsmouth, NH**

Tree and Engraved Ground Marker

### **Battleship Park - Mobile, AL**

Engraved Walkway Brick

### **Mathis Plaza Waterfront Park - S. Toms River, NJ**

Engraved Walkway Brick

### **Deterrent Park - Silverdale, WA**

Engraved Walkway Brick

### **Veterans Memorial Park - Pensacola, FL**

Submarine Lifeguard League Memorial Stone

### **Idaho Science Center - Arco, ID**

Engraved Bronze Plaque @ Hawkbill Memorial

### **Veterans Freedom Memorial - Tampa, FL**

Engraved Walkway Brick

### **USS Lapon Memorial Sail - Springfield, MO**

Engraved Walkway Brick

### **Clarion Hotel - Charleston, SC**

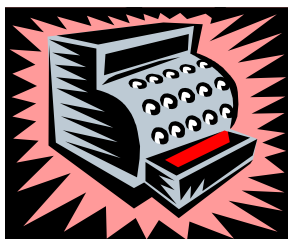
Framed Trilogy Drawing on Lobby Wall.



**CHIEF SIMPSON**



**????? & ?????  
THE FROZEN TUNDRA OF THE MED???**



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GIVEAWAY**

LIKE THE LEAVES - OUR PRICES ARE FALLING!  
**Prices will never be lower!** And, there is NO Sales Tax!!! These items may be purchased by mail or at the Reunion. Send your order to **Phil Beals**.

Make your check payable to USS BANG and be sure to add a few bucks extra to cover the postage. All proceeds from these sales are deposited directly into our Slush Fund.

Navy Blue Ballcap - USS BANG SS385 embroidered in gold with silver dolphins and solid or mesh top.

**Please state your choice.....\$8.00**

BANG Photos - 40's, 50's, 60's 8x10 black & white as shown on back page.

**Please state your choice.....\$3.00**

Jacket Patches - 40's, 50's, 60's 5 inch in full color as shown on back page.

**Please state your choice.....\$5.00**

WWII Battle Flag Patch - 3x5 inch full color....\$5.00

1" Lapel/Hat pins - depicting above jacket patches & battle flag. **Please state your choice.....\$4.00**



# REUNION UPDATE



## ALBUQUERQUE, NM 2006 (What Time Does The Balloon Go Up???)



### **Shipmates! Please take note of the immediate change in the schedule of our Reunion.**

Last year I signed a contract with our host hotel to hold our Reunion on **October 6th thru October 9th**. Last Spring I sat down with the transportation company to schedule the bus tours that I planned to have on the 7th and 8th of October. At that time the transportation company informed me that no buses were available on October 7th but they were available on October 6th.

Scheduling the Santa Fe tour to occur on the same day as check-in at the hotel would obviously make it impossible for anyone to attend it. So, I went to the National Sales Manager at the Nativo and asked him if we could move the start date for our reunion from the 6th to the 5th of October.

The salesman I spoke with, Gary Perez, said he would have to check his schedule and, after doing so, told me that there would be no problem with moving the beginning date from the 6th to the 5th. I thanked him profusely and left the hotel.

I then notified Phil Beals of my action, and told him to change the starting date in the newsletter, which he did, and then went back to the transportation company and signed contracts for Oct 6th and 8th.

A few days ago, one of our shipmates called to inform me that he had tried to make reservations at Nativo Lodge from the 5th through the 10th of October, and was told that all of the hotel's rooms were already booked for October 5th.

I immediately called the hotel and inquired why rooms were unavailable. After a bit of checking, they explained to me that the schedule did get changed to the 5th but no one changed the "block on rooms" in the computer and they remain the same – October 6th thru October 9th. They were very apologetic for the mix-up but, due to the great demand for rooms during the Balloon Fiesta, there was absolutely nothing they could do to correct the discrepancy.

Legally, there is nothing I can do at this time as the agreement to change the dates was a "gentlemen's agreement" and the dates on the contract remained the same – October 6th thru October 9th.

I was able to secure another bus company to provide us with transportation, so the Santa Fe trip originally scheduled for Friday, October 6th is changed to Saturday, October 7th. Everything else on the schedule will remain the same except it will be one day less. The revised schedule is as follows:

**Friday, 10/6:** Hospitality room opens @ noon.

**Saturday, 10/7:** Santa Fe Tour **Noon – 5:00pm**.

**Sunday, 10/8:** Balloon Fiesta Tour **6am – 9:30am**.

**Monday, 10/9:** **9am** Business Meeting.

**5pm** Photos – **6pm** Banquet.

As of this writing, the following shipmates have mailed me their Registration Form:

Archer, Charles and Patricia  
Beals, Phil and Dot  
Cadenhead, Al  
Christenson, Marv and JoAnn  
Daigle, Roland and Audrey  
Dannenbaum, Gary and Karen  
Fenton, Bill and Joan  
Fitzsimmons, John and Rita  
Gahan, Richard  
Gunny, Bob and Betty  
Kozloski, Henry and Teresa  
Kraft, John and Darlene  
Lockwood, Gene and Ronnie  
Regish, John  
Ross, Harry and Jo Ann  
Savage, Stu and Sidney  
Sivil, Lee and Alida

**Remember, You have until September 5th to make your room reservations at Nativo Lodge for \$99.00 per night. After that date there are no guarantees you will even find a room. So, don't hesitate, MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW!!! You can always cancel them without penalty up to 72 hours prior to arrival.**

Also, if you require shuttle service from the airport, request it when you make your room reservation.

I am very, very sorry for this mix-up and hope it doesn't discourage you in any way from attending this Reunion. I will do my best to make this reunion as enjoyable as those in the past.

Your Hosts – **Gary and Karen Dannenbaum**



U. S. S. BANG (SS - 385)  
 63rd Anniversary Reunion  
 Albuquerque, NM  
**FRIDAY - October 6th 2006**  
 through  
 Monday - October 9th 2006

# HEADQUARTERS



6000 Pan American Freeway NE  
 Albuquerque, NM 87109

For Reservations Call 1-(888) 628-4861  
 USS BANG Rate - \$99.00 + Tax / Night

**Room Registration must be made  
 by September 5, 2006**

Check-In: 3:00 p.m. – Check-Out: 12:00 noon  
 Website - [www.nativolodge.com](http://www.nativolodge.com)

accommodation questions?

Call Gary Perez at **Nativo Lodge**  
**505-798-4310 or 505-321-4776**

Your Host



Phone: (505) 823-2814  
 E-mail: [sheandee@gary.net](mailto:sheandee@gary.net)

Gary Dannenbaum

- ☛ → FRIDAY OCT 6th – Check In – Hospitality Room opens at 12:00 noon.
- ☛ → SATURDAY OCT 7th – 12:00 noon – Santa Fe Tour – Return 5:00 p.m.
- ☛ → SUNDAY OCT 8th – 6:15 a.m. – Balloon Fiesta Tour – Return 9:30 a.m.
- ☛ → MONDAY OCT 9th – 9:00 a.m. – Business Meeting.  
 6:00 p.m. – Banquet – Cash Bar – Casual Dress

✂ ————— Clip & Mail to ————— ✂

Gary Dannenbaum  
 7508 Burke St NE  
 Albuquerque, NM 87109-5432

Yes, I/we plan to attend the reunion.

RATE/RANK: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ YEARS ABOARD BANG: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE NO: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ ST: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE'S / GUEST'S NAME(S): \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ DEPART DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ E-ADDR: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER TAKING SANTA FE TOUR: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40.00 per person. = \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER TAKING BALLOON FIESTA TOUR: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$40.00 per person. = \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER ATTENDING BANQUET: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$32.00 per person. = \_\_\_\_\_

Please specify entrée choice(s): \_\_\_\_\_ - Chicken  
 (Indicate how many) \_\_\_\_\_ - Beef

HOSPITALITY ROOM STIPEND PER SHIPMATE + 10.00

Make check payable to Gary Dannenbaum

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

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