



USS HADDO NEWSLETTER



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From the Editor:

To all:

The last year has been pretty rough for most people. I have managed to avoid getting the Covid virus by following the CDC guide lines. As of now my wife and I are fully vaccinated via the Pfizer vaccine with no side effects. We will continue to follow proper guidelines.

Also it seems we are in battle with mother nature as well as man made disasters. We are on fire, hiding in a basement, buried in snow or swimming to higher ground. I hope everyone affected by weird weather came out ok.

Navy releases documents from Cold War loss of submarine

The Navy has begun releasing documents from the investigation into the deadliest submarine disaster in U.S. history

The Navy began releasing documents from the investigation into the deadliest submarine disaster in U.S. history on Wednesday, but the Navy said the documents released under a court order don't shed any new light on the cause of the sinking

The first of the documents released were 300 pages from the official inquiry into the sinking of the USS Thresher on April 10, 1963.

The loss of the nuclear-powered submarine and all 129 men aboard during a test dive in the Atlantic Ocean delivered a blow to national pride during the Cold War and became the impetus for safety improvements.

"The loss of Thresher was a defining event for the submarine service," said Rear Adm. William Houston, director of the undersea warfare division in the office of the chief of naval operations at the Pentagon.

The Thresher story was already well known. It had undergone sea trials and was back in the ocean for deep-dive testing about 220 miles off Massachusetts' Cape Cod.

The first sign of trouble was a garbled message about a "minor difficulty" after the 279-foot (85-meter) submarine descended to more than 800 feet.

The crew indicated it was attempting to empty ballast tanks in an effort to surface. The crew of an accompanying rescue ship heard something about the "test depth." Then the sailors listened as the sub disintegrated under the crushing pressure of the sea.

The Navy inquiry found weaknesses in the design and construction of the first-in-class nuclear-powered submarine, which had been built at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, and based in Groton, Connecticut.

The documents released Wednesday included the timeline of the sinking, evidence lists, reports, testimony and correspondence. But there were some redactions. Even more than 50 years later, technical details including the test depth were redacted.

In the documents, the Navy said it believes an interior pipe burst and caused electrical problems that caused an emergency shutdown of the nuclear reactor.

Resting on the ocean floor at a depth of 8,500 feet, the Thresher looks as though it went through a "shredding machine" and is spread out over a mile, Rhode Island oceanographer Robert Ballard told The Associated Press in 2013. Ballard used his 1985 discovery of RMS Titanic as a Cold War cover for surveying the Thresher.

Not everyone was satisfied with the Navy's conclusions.

Retired Capt. James Bryant, commander of a Thresher-class submarine, requested the documents under the federal Freedom of Information Act and ultimately went to court to demand the documents' release. He thinks there's more to be learned from the documents, most of them classified.

Michael Shafer, whose father and uncle both died on the Thresher, said some of the families need to review the documents to see for themselves and fully understand what happened. His suspicion is that the Navy was pushing the limits and placing personnel at risk during the Cold War.

"I want to know the truth, the whole truth. Not some smoke screen from the Navy," he said Wednesday from St. Petersburg, Florida.

A judge in February ordered the Navy to release the documents. The coronavirus pandemic delayed the review of the documents. Eventually, more than 1,000 pages of documents will be released.

If there was a silver lining, it was that the tragedy so shook the Navy that it accelerated safety improvements and created a program called SUBSAFE, an extensive series of design modifications, training and other improvements.

One submarine has sunk since then, the USS Scorpion in 1968, and it was not SUBSAFE-certified, the Navy said.

Some of the improvements included better welding techniques and changes to the ballast system that allows a submarine to surface.

Joy MacMillan, one of four siblings who lost their father, the submarine's chief radioman, said it's helpful to know the deaths spurred safety improvements. But it's still important for the families to have the documents, and some closure.

"After being 57 years in the dark, it's time for the families to know any and all information so that we can put it away. We can say, 'Mistakes were made. Let's move on,'" MacMillan, of Brentwood, New Hampshire, said Wednesday.

The sinking was the first of a string of calamities in 1963.

The March on Washington was a turning point in the Civil Rights movement, but the Vietnam conflict grew, white supremacists bombed the 16th Street Baptist

Church in Alabama and President John F. Kennedy was assassinated.

Haddo was originally a thresher class, however re designated Permit class for obvious reasons due to the loss of the thresher.

Eternal Patrol

3/1/2021

Obituary for D. Roger Ferguson | Beckman-Williamson Funeral Homes and Crematory

Provided by Beckman-Williamson Funeral Homes and Crematory

D. Roger Ferguson

June 14, 1941 ~ February 14, 2021 (age 79)

Ralph + Trudy, *I'm sorry,* *Adrienne Baughman*



Services

VISITATION

Thursday

March 11, 2021

5:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Beckman Williamson Funeral Home

Viera, FL

FUNERAL SERVICE

Friday

March 12, 2021

10:30 AM

Beckman Williamson Funeral Home

Viera, FL

GRAVESIDE SERVICE

Friday

March 12, 2021

2:00 PM

D. Roger Ferguson, 79, died February 14, 2021, at the Dr. P. Phillips Hospital in Orlando, FL, from non-COVID-19 complications following surgery.

Visitation will be at the Beckman-Williamson Funeral Home in Viera/Rockledge Florida March 11, 2021, at 5PM. A funeral will be conducted there the next day, March 12, 2021, at 10:30 AM. Burial will be at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery with full military honors at 2 PM.

Roger was born in North Syracuse, NY, 1941, to Scottish Canadian immigrants to the United States: Archibald James Ferguson, a bookkeeper, and Winifred (née Brown) Ferguson, a seamstress.

Roger graduated from North Syracuse, NY, public high school in 1958 and was recruited and accepted on the basis of exceptional academic merit to Harvard University where he studied physics and engineering (HR 1962). (Naval ROTC at Harvard). He volunteered for Admiral Hyman G. Rickover's nuclear navy which was in its nascent stages at that historical Cold War time. He graduated number one in his Nuclear Power School class. Roger served the United States of America on board the USS Haddo (SSN-604) as an operations officer and held the rank of Lieutenant. After his US naval service, Roger earned an MBA at the University of Chicago in Finance.

He met and married the erudite mathematician and college president, Pamela Anderson Ferguson, Phd. Their union was a happy one and bore two children.

Roger went on to become the Sr. VP of Engineering and Maintenance for Eastern Airlines in Miami, FL. Roger was confident enough to follow his wife's career as she became the first female President of Grinnell College in Grinnell, Iowa. Roger was the Founder and CEO of Access Airlines in Iowa. His first wife died in 2004.

In retirement, Roger consulted for various defense companies. He travelled to 95 countries including his favorite Antarctica & South Georgia twice.

His passion in retirement was founding the Foster Aunt & Uncle Project (IowaREADS) to help at-risk youth with literacy.

Roger is survived by his second wife, C. Adrienne Baughman of Melbourne, FL; adult children Amanda F. Wilson and her children, Adam F. Wilson and Emily A. Wilson; Keith A. Ferguson (Tracey Lewis) of Point Loma, CA., and their children Caroline A. Ferguson and Andrew L. Ferguson. Roger's brother Roy A. Ferguson of Columbia, MD, survives him as do many relatives, some still residing in Canada whom he loved.

To all Haddo shipmates:

This is likely the final Haddo newsletter. Many requests for information/articles have produced nothing for publication. All the stories must have been told once already and it has been a struggle to dig up information on submarine life in general these days, just for the purpose of producing this letter for our members. I would like to thank all Editors, current and previous – Mike Gann, Ray Butters and Edwin Hergert for their hard work and dedication to this over the last 30 years.

For those who wish to continue communication with fellow Haddo sailors, the www.usshaddo.com website will remain active for at least 2 more years. The crew list on the site continues to have the most current information on hundreds of Haddo crew members if they have provided their information to me.

In addition, for those who are on social media, there is a group for USS Haddo which is open to the public for anyone to join. Many members are also participating on this group site.

I will continue to maintain the website for at least the next two years, barring any unforeseen problems. It was a great honor to have served aboard the USS Haddo SSN 604. And it has been an honor and pleasure to serve as coordinator of reunions and this newsletter.

If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at rstroede@comcast.net.

Respectfully,

Ralph W. Stroede