



# Hawgfish Scuttlebutt



Razorback Base  
United States Submarine Veterans



JUNE, 2021

## Sinking of USS Guitarro (SSN-665)



*(CONT PG 3)*

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**To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.**

### *COMMANDER'S CORNER*

**If we don't wash away things are starting to open up. Our meeting on May 15 had some new faces and shows new interest in Razorback Base. A welcome to Joe Pack who joined in January 2021. Hellos go out to Barbara and Ray Wewers, Connie and Bob Sykes, Ralph Slutts and Robert McCammon. Robert was received into the Holland Club after 50 years of qualified service. A hearty thank you and well done goes out to Wanda and Alan Malone, Camille Smith and myself for helping decorate the State Veterans' Cemetary in North Little Rock on Wednesday, May 26. For those who are interested, volunteers are needed to recover flags on June 3 at 0800 at the cemetary. John Barr has done a great job to secure tickets for the baseball game on Saturday July 9, Travelers versus the Tulsa Drillers. Contact John if you want to join us. I believe he still has tickets. Also, AIMM is hosting front row seating, convenient parking, food and drink for Pops on the River fireworks. Parking is \$10/car, admission is \$10/person and food and drink is cash. Give Greg Zonner or Camille Smith a call. I believe our next business meeting will be scheduled for August. I hope you all enjoy Memorial Day and July 4th. Be safe.**



Billy Holloway  
Base Commander

#### EDITOR NOTE

FLAG RETRIEVAL SET FOR FRIDAY, JUNE 4 AT 8 AM...HOPE TO SEE YOU AT VETERAN CEMETERY IN NLR.



(CONT FROM PG 1)

May 15, 1969 – At approximately 8:30 P.M. (Pacific Daylight Time), Thursday, May 15, 1969, the nuclear-powered attack submarine Guitarro (SSN-665) sank while tied up to the dock at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, California. The ship had been under construction since August 1965 and was due to be commissioned in January 1970. The sinking was caused by uncontrolled flooding within the forward part of the ship due to uncoordinated and unsafe shipyard practices. It was refloated at 11:18 A.M. (PDT), Sunday, May 18, and after inspection, damages were estimated at between \$15.2 million and \$21.85 million. The event delayed commissioning 32 months.

#### SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

During the afternoon and early evening of May 15, 1969, the following events occurred at the approximate times indicated:

4:00 P.M.: A civilian construction group (nuclear) began an instrument calibration assignment that required the filling of certain tanks, located aft of the ship's pivot point, with approximately five tons of water.

4:30 P.M.: A civilian construction group (nonnuclear) began an assignment to bring the ship within a half degree of trim. This entailed the adding of water to tanks forward of the ship's pivot point, to overcome a reported two-degree up-bow attitude.

4:30 to 7:50 P.M.: The nuclear group continued to add water aft.

4:30 to 7:45 P.M.: The nonnuclear group continued to add water forward.

7:00 P.M. and again at 7:30 P.M.: A security watch advised the nonnuclear group that by that time the Guitarro was riding so low forward that a one and a half foot wave action, stirred up by boats operating in the river, was causing water to enter an uncovered manhole in the most forward and lowest portion of the ship's deck. These warnings went unheeded.

7:45 P.M.: The nonnuclear group stopped adding water to the ballast tanks in preparation for their lunch break.

7:50 P.M.: The nuclear group completed their calibrating assignment and began to empty the tanks aft.

8:00 P.M.: The nonnuclear group left for lunch.

8:30 P.M.: The nuclear group emptying the water from the aft tanks and a member of the group noticed " sudden down angle being taken by the boat." At approximately the same time, the nonnuclear group and others, returning to the ship from lunch, observed down sharply at the bow with massive flooding taking place through several large open hatches.

8:30 to 8:45 P.M.: Efforts made to close watertight doors and hatches were unsuccessful due to lines and cables running through them.

8:55 P.M.: The Guitarro sank.

#### CAUSES

In an attempt to correct what they thought was an out-of-trim condition, the non-nuclear construction team in the forward part of the boat purposefully defeated safety measures preventing accidentally filling ballast tanks while the sub was under construction. During construction, steel plates are welded over the ballast tanks' flood ports to prevent water from getting into the tanks and putting the submarine in an unsafe condition. The construction crew put a fire hose down the tank's vent pipe and forced it past the check valve.

The Congressional report concluded that the sinking was caused in large part by "the action, or inaction, of certain construction workers who either failed to recognize an actual or potential threat to the ship's safety or assumed that it was not their responsibility." The report stated that the "lack of centralized control and responsibility for all construction" was the overriding cause.

One of the factors contributing to the ship's sinking was the open manhole used to access the bow structure sonar dome containing the boat's sonar sphere. The manhole has a bolted cover that had been removed for maintenance purposes. The opening was protected by a cofferdam approximately 3 feet (0.91 m) high. The cofferdam was intended to prevent water from accidentally entering the dome and contacting the exposed electronic gear.

To facilitate repair work, the cofferdam and the bolted manhole cover were removed in early March 1969 and neither the cofferdam nor the cover was ever replaced. When the construction crews added and then removed water from the ballast tanks, affecting the boat's trim, the manhole was exposed to waves caused by the wake of other vessels, causing the boat to sink at the bow, eventually filling the entire submarine.

#### REFLOATING

Guitarro was refloated three days later, on 18 May 1969. Damages to her were estimated at \$15.2 to \$21.85 million (equivalent to \$83 to \$119 million in 2019).

#### LESSONS LEARNED

Among other recommendations affecting communication, management, and supervision of ship construction, the report authors recommended that cables and lines running through watertight hatches and doors be equipped with quick disconnect fittings.

#### COMMISSIONING

Guitarro had been scheduled to be commissioned in January 1970, but repairs necessitated by her sinking dictated a 32-month delay. She finally was commissioned on 9 September 1972 with Commander Gordon Lange in command.

## NAVY CHIEFS!

- \* A Navy Chief and Superman once fought each other on a bet. The loser had to start wearing his underwear on the outside of his pants.
- \* Most Navy Chiefs have a grizzly bear carpet in their room...the bear isn't dead, it's afraid to move.
  - \* The Navy Chiefs have already been to Mars, that's why there is no sign of life.
    - \* Ghosts sit around the camp fire and tell Navy Chief stories.
      - \* Death once had a near Chief experience.
        - \* The Navy Chiefs are the reason why Waldo is hiding.
          - \* A Navy Chief can slam a revolving door.
  - \* When the boogeyman goes to sleep every night, he checks his closet for Navy Chiefs.
  - \* A Navy Chief once kicked a horse in the chin...its descendants are known today as Giraffes.
  - \* A Navy Chief once was bit by a rattle snake. After three days of pain and agony...the rattle snake died.



## ON ETERNAL PATROL

### USS R-12 (SS 89)

1	<a href="#"><u>Alberto Goncalves Rosau de Almeida</u></a> (Brazilian Navy)
2	<a href="#"><u>General William Bacon</u></a>
3	<a href="#"><u>Robert Burton Bronson</u></a>
4	<a href="#"><u>James Joseph Buckley</u></a>
5	<a href="#"><u>Fredrick Edward Cashell</u></a>
6	<a href="#"><u>Howard Livingston Clayton</u></a>
7	<a href="#"><u>Raymond Francis Flisher</u></a>
8	<a href="#"><u>Lenard Earl Garbulsky</u></a>
9	<a href="#"><u>Frederick Patrick Graziani, Jr.</u></a>
10	<a href="#"><u>Joseph Cyril Hall, Jr.</u></a>
11	<a href="#"><u>Elmer Larry Harman, Jr.</u></a>
12	<a href="#"><u>James Ulysses Horton</u></a>

13	<a href="#"><u>Joseph Stephen Horvath</u></a>
14	<a href="#"><u>Howard Herbert Knapp</u></a>
15	<a href="#"><u>Everett Samuel Krigbaum</u></a>
16	<a href="#"><u>Leland Van Kymer, Jr.</u></a>
17	<a href="#"><u>Charles Buddy LeVan</u></a>
18	<a href="#"><u>Henry Peter Lobeck</u></a>
19	<a href="#"><u>Curtis Virgle Mathis</u></a>
20	<a href="#"><u>Paul Ralph McKibben</u></a>
21	<a href="#"><u>Joseph Moncada</u></a>
22	<a href="#"><u>Julio Lima de Moura</u></a> (Brazilian Navy)
23	<a href="#"><u>Albert Jackson Mullis</u></a>
24	<a href="#"><u>George William Ness</u></a>
25	<a href="#"><u>Paul Louis Noonan</u></a>
26	<a href="#"><u>John Henry Rabbitt</u></a>
27	<a href="#"><u>Edward John Rafferty</u></a>
28	<a href="#"><u>Lyle Edmund Schnake</u></a>
29	<a href="#"><u>Craig R. Scott</u></a>

30	<a href="#"><u>Howard Russell Secor</u></a>
31	<a href="#"><u>Harry Henry Shellenberger</u></a>
32	<a href="#"><u>Granby Solomon Smith</u></a>
33	<a href="#"><u>Roger Norton Starks</u></a>
34	<a href="#"><u>Donald Charles Sullivan</u></a>
35	<a href="#"><u>Rudolph Albert Thompson, Jr.</u></a>
36	<a href="#"><u>James Donald Unger</u></a>
37	<a href="#"><u>Ernest William Vincent</u></a>
38	<a href="#"><u>Norman William Walker</u></a>
39	<a href="#"><u>Edwin Francis Walsh</u></a>
40	<a href="#"><u>Kenneth John Wheeler</u></a>
41	<a href="#"><u>Willie Daniel Young</u></a>
42	<a href="#"><u>George Arthur Zimmerman</u></a>

R-12 (LCDR Edward E. Shelby) was lost between 1220 and 1225 on 12 June 1943 at Latitude 24° 24' 30"N and Longitude 81° 38' 30"W in six hundred feet of water with the loss of forty-two lives. The personnel on the bridge, two officers including the Commanding Officer, and three enlisted men, were the only survivors. Those missing consisted of four U.S. Naval officers, two Brazilian Naval officers and thirty-six U.S. Naval enlisted men.

# Curtis Virgle Mathis



<b>Rank/Rate</b>	<b>Torpedoman's Mate, Third Class</b>
<b>Service Number</b>	<b>295 63 27</b>
<b>Birth Date</b>	<b>September 28, 1916</b>
<b>From</b>	<b>Dalton, Georgia</b>
<b>Decorations</b>	
<b>Submarine</b>	<b><a href="#">R-12 (SS-89)</a></b>
<b>Loss Date</b>	<b>June 12, 1943</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Off Key West, Florida</b>
<b>Circumstances</b>	<b>Foundered on a training mission</b>
<b>Remarks</b>	<b>Some sources list his birth date as September 29, 1917.</b>

## **NOTE FROM COMMANDER**

Talked with Jeff Baker earlier this evening and learned his father's cremains' interment is scheduled for 1100, Friday, 11 June 2021 at the Arkansas State Veterans' Cemetery in North Little Rock. You are all cordially invited and encouraged to attend. We will have no part in the burial but I discussed with Jeff that the Base would be honored to conduct an at sea interment should the family be agreeable. He was receptive to the idea and mentioned there were two urns as Jim had mentioned this possibility. Jim Barr, as M/C coordinator would you look at a suitable date the first week of July? I told Jeff we would discuss this on Friday the 11th after his father's service. In case you aren't able to attend and so I don't forget, Jeff's telephone number is 501-428-2412. Feel free to call after the 11th. I ask for a July date because of my vacation plans from 6/15 through 6/29. If you have questions feel free to contact me. Hope to see some or all of you on June 11.

Billy

## **NOTE ABOUT WEBSITE**

The Website is back up and working. Working to populate it with more data and it will grow. Bear with me as we get it up and running again.

Greg Zonner

## **BASEBALL GAME**

JULY 9<sup>TH</sup> VS TULSA DRILLERS  
CONTACT JOHN BARR FOR TICKETS



TREASURER'S REPORT		May-21
<b>TOTAL BASE FUNDS BEGINNING BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 14,112.50</b>
<u>General Fund Beginning Balance</u>		<b>\$ 4,185.79</b>
<u>Booster Club Richard McCammon</u>		<b>\$ 60.00</b>
<u>SK- Calendar Sales</u>		<b>\$ 190.00</b>
<u>Boat Sponsorships</u>		<b>\$ 210.00</b>
<u>General Fund Ending Balance</u>		<b>\$ 4,225.79</b>
<b>Designated Funds</b>		
<u>Maint. Fund Balance</u>		<b>\$ 2,652.66</b>
<u>Charity Fund Balance</u>		<b>\$ 372.00</b>
<u>Snook Memorial Fund Balance</u>		<b>\$ 1,386.86</b>
<u>Designated Fund Balance</u>		<b>\$ 4,411.52</b>
<b>Checking Balance (General + Designated Funds)</b>		<b>\$ 8,637.31</b>
<b>Other Funds</b>		
CD Balance		<b>\$ 5,368.19</b>
Cash on hand		<b>\$ 147.00</b>
<b>TOTAL BASE FUNDS ENDING BALANCE</b>		<b>\$ 14,152.50</b>

## Booster Club

Mark Taylor (2)  
 George Fore (2)  
 John Barr (3)  
 Mem. Of Lee Huss (3)

## Birthdays for May

John C. Barr	7
John Hertzberg	8
Ralph E. Slutts	8
Ronald W. Hines	9
David B. Boyer	12
James F. Murphree	13
Terence Michael Murphy	15
Clifford Thomas Swires	17
Curtis D. Borud	17
Calvin Moon	18
William N. Smith	20
Frederick 'Carl' Schmidt	21
Harold D. Butler	23
James F. Franks	30





**Base Officers**

<b>Base Commander Holland Club &amp; Storekeeper, Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Billy Hollaway</b>	<b>501-758-3266</b>	<b><a href="mailto:retldousn@earthlink.net">retldousn@earthlink.net</a></b>
<b>Base Vice Commander Past Base Commander</b>	<b>James Barnes</b>	<b>501-319-5888</b>	<b><a href="mailto:jimandsue59@sbcglobal.net">jimandsue59@sbcglobal.net</a></b>
<b>Base Treasurer</b>	<b>Mark Taylor</b>	<b>501-416-2488</b>	<b>empty704@aol.com</b>
<b>Chaplain, COB</b>	<b>Joe Manning</b>	<b>501-366-0331</b>	<b>apologeticpastor@gmail.com</b>
<b>Newsletter, Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Alan Malone</b>	<b>501-206-7248</b>	<b><a href="mailto:o5retired@yahoo.com">o5retired@yahoo.com</a></b>
<b>Base Yeoman</b>	<b>Myna Miller</b>	<b>215-360-5960</b>	<b>mynamiller63@hotmail.com</b>
<b>Mem. and Ceremonies</b>	<b>John Barr</b>	<b>501-663-6622</b>	<b>jbarr346@att.net</b>
<b>Base Historian National Archives Chairman</b>	<b>Joe Mathis</b>	<b>501-565-6021</b>	<b>rmc95ret05@gmail.com</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Johnnie Baker</b>	<b>607-426-6492</b>	<b>johnnie@smarhomeintegration.net</b>
<b>Base Webmaster Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Greg Zonner</b>	<b>501-307-5522</b>	<b>gzonner@aimmmuseum.org</b>
<b>Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Paul Honeck</b>	<b>501-580-4680</b>	<b>pneckerar@gmail.com</b>
<b>Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Carl Schmidt</b>	<b>501-778-6583</b>	<b>bonnyclyde@classicnet.net</b>
<b>Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Ray Wewers</b>	<b>501-843-7855</b>	<b><a href="mailto:raywewers@gmail.com">raywewers@gmail.com</a></b>
<b>Past Base Commander</b>	<b>Greg Schwerman</b>	<b>501-804-0386</b>	<b><a href="mailto:gschwerman@suddenlink.net">gschwerman@suddenlink.net</a></b>
<b>Past Base Commander</b>	<b>David Boyer</b>	<b>479-227-9633</b>	<b>chopper1267@yahoo.com</b>