

Swift Current

The official publication of the
Swift Boat Sailors Association

First Qtr 2013

Comments & suggestions to-
dc.current2@gmail.com



PCF-816/P-24

On the skids at Marine Group Boat Works, Chula Vista California. Engines, fuel, and water tanks on the ground. The hard work of stripping paint and barnacles is on-going. Mark Gallant is the Project Manager at the Maritime Museum for this restoration effort. And John Yeoman is heading up the fundraising activity.

Commentary by Virg Erwin

My arms are like rubber and fingers a bit scuffed up. PCF 816 is really looking better every day due to three tireless workers: Bob Brown, Ton Matyn and Don Farrell. Another Swift Boat Sailor from Monterey is on the job. I'm brain dead and didn't get his name, but the man was all work all day. These guys absolutely amaze me with their physical endurance and they act like they are actually enjoying the pain. And there is plenty of that.

If I had to go back to a war zone, I would want to be with these guys!

Today, 28 January, the hull is 25% cleaned and sanded.

Four 12V71s sit alongside. Two are in working condition, the other two will be delivered to a local college that teaches diesel mechanics and they will rebuild them.

Deck plates and bulkheads shine to bare aluminum, waiting for paint.

You would be astonished at the progress, and yet, there is so much more to do to be ready for the Reunion in May.

Soon we will install the engines and new wiring and electronics.

Please do not expect a pristine Swift Boat in May, as if just off the ways. There will be years of work long after the Reunion, and long before she turns 100 years old, she will look pristine and carry our history!

Notice to Reunion Attendees

First, the Holiday Inn on the Bay is our host hotel. Effective March it will be a Wyndham Hotel. This does not in any way affect our reunion. The hotel staff will remain at the hotel.

Hotel Reservations will continue as before: (888) 233 9527

We have 24 Rooms still available for the entire week of 5 to 14 May 2013 at \$119/per night.

Reunion Registration can be mailed to: Swift Boat Sailors Association, P. O. Box 232382, Encinitas, CA 92023-2382, Attn: Don Farrell

Second, our Memorial Service will be held on Saturday morning 11 May at the Naval Amphibious Base in Coronado.

NAB Security has notified us that we need to give them the list of all persons attending the Memorial on Saturday 11 May and that we need to provide either a drivers license number or a government issued ID for each attendee. No Social Security numbers.

We need this information by April 1, 2013 !!!

IF YOU HAVE NOT SENT IN YOUR REGISTRATION

List of all the members of your party and their drivers license number with the state that issued it or a government issued ID number on the bottom of the form.

IF YOU HAVE ALREADY SENT IN YOUR REGISTRATION

Just email a List of all the members of your party and their drivers license number with the state that issued it or a government issued ID number to Jim Deal

jamesd8860@aol.com with "ID" in the subject line.

If emailing the ID info make you uncomfortable snail mail it to

Jim Deal
1971 Castillo St SW
Los Lunas, NM 87031

President's Corner

Three months and a wake up, troops! Y'all best start getting your flight reservations done soon! Word has it that Team SDGO is hard at work to insure that our members and guests have a memorable reunion. Knowing their track record, I am certain that the gathering will certainly stand out among the best. Kudos to all the members of Team SDGO, with special appreciation to Virg Erwin and Chuck Rabel.

I encourage everyone that plans to attend the reunion to heed Virg's recommendation to send driver's license or military I.D. numbers to Jim Deal, as NAB Coronado requires this of everyone that plans to attend the Saturday Memorial Service. See Virg's article.

In addition to the hard work Team SDGO is carrying out in preparation for SBSA's 2013 Reunion, a number of SBSA hands are also contributing invaluable time to prepare PCF-816 for painting and complete re-wiring. BRAVO ZULU to SBSA members involved in this labor of love.

Our effort to re-establish our association's IRS not-for-profit status is still in progress. We had hoped that this process would have been behind us by the end of 2012, however, we are hoping that we receive word prior to tax return day.

During the business meeting at this year's reunion, five (5) Director positions will be filled. A call goes out to the membership to submit your name in the running for one of these five slots. The pay is beyond words and the notoriety is 'nationwide.' This organization's strength is based on its leadership. I'm certain that there are many of you out there who want to help continue the great work and take the SBSA into the future....pick up the torch and help lead us forward.

There are nine (9) Board Directors in our organization. The newly elected Board appoints Officers to manage daily affairs of the association - Board members can also be Officers. Two requirements of Board Directors are that they must be email accessible as well as active participants in email communication between Officers

and also participate in decision making correspondence in a timely fashion. In addition, Directors must be willing and able to attend off-year Board Director meetings (usually held at the following year's reunion city).

If you are interested in standing for election, please contact Mike Solhaug at solhaumj@evms.edu .

Don Farrell has sent out this year's dues notices. If you have not received your membership invoice within a week or two, please contact me. Along these lines, please be sure to remit your dues payment by check, as we no longer use an auto-pay type system, to Swift Boat Sailors Association; P.O. Box 232382; Encinitas, CA 92023-2382.

Dave Wallace addresses a search for a new Treasurer in this newsletter. I'd like to extend our leadership's sincere appreciation for the incredible work Don Farrell carried out in getting our financial house in order. Great job, Don, THANKS!!!

In brotherhood,

Raul Herrera

MMSD San Salvador Project Update January 2013 by Ray Ashley

As we enter the new year, I'm reminded that it's been quite some time since the last of my updates on progress with constructing the *San Salvador*. At present, the ship is a little more than 60% complete with top timbers in the waist and quarter in place, giving a better sense of what her final form will be, and with most of the remaining top timbers cut and ready for installation. The bronze diagonal strapping is in place as are the watertight bulkheads and "tonnage" bulkheads. Within the frame, the largest pigs of the internal lead ballast have been installed, along with engines, generator, tanks, and elements of the fuel system plumbing. Most of the materials we need to finish the ship are on site. We have been at it now for twenty months. Though in terms of deliberate planning and preparation, the Museum has really been at it for more than ten years, and Californians, in general, have been imagining this for more than a century.



As construction continues, the top-timbers of the sterncastle have redefined the ship's profile.

But Imagine for a Moment

What was Happening in the world When the Original *San Salvador* Sailed in 1542?

Most of the elements of progress referenced above would have posed no difficulty in 1539 during the construction of the original ship because things like engines, generators, lead ballast, plumbing, watertight bulkheads, diagonal strapping, and even the very idea of building a ship from plans would have seemed unimaginable. Yet it is precisely because of her ability to help us imagine that this ship, so unlike her predecessor beneath the surface, is being built. So, for a moment at the outset of our new year let us think about what the new year would have looked like in 1542.

In England, Henry VIII, long excommunicated from the Catholic church and five years away from the end of his reign, was just completing the liquidation and appropriation of assets belonging to the Catholic religious orders while attending to the executions of Catherine Howard, wife number five, and erstwhile trusted advisor, Thomas Cromwell. Yet another war with Scotland ended in 1542, with the battle of Solway Moss and the death of James V. Francis I of France, sometime ally and sometime adversary of Henry VIII, was also five years away from the end of his reign and embroiled in alternate wars against England and Spain. Three years later, one of the last of wars between Henry and Francis would see the proud English flagship *Mary Rose* enter battle against a French fleet attempting to force the Solent, capsize in a puff of wind, and sink in dramatic fashion. Spain, rising in power under Charles I (Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor) founder of the Hapsburg dynasty, and also alternating in war between England and France, was beginning to contest the power of the Ottoman Empire for control of the Mediterranean, finding the wherewithal to do so from a growing flood of wealth from the New World. The reformation in Germany had been underway for more than two decades, and in the year previous, John Calvin introduced the reformation in Geneva. Ivan IV (one day to be known as "The Terrible") was Tsar of Russia, but, as a twelve year old, his future terrible tendencies were yet held in check by his Boyar regents.

By 1542, the Ottoman Empire had been ascendant since the fall of Constantinople ninety years before and now sat astride the ancient trade routes from Asia to Europe and dominated the Mediterranean. Having just concluded a three-year naval war against Venice (which possessed the most advanced military-industrial complex on earth), Ottoman armies conquered most of Hungary and began to amass the military might that would descend on Malta two decades hence in the greatest naval siege of modern history and culminate with the total destruction of the Ottoman fleet at Lepanto in 1571.

In the New World in 1542, Pizarro—who had only seven years earlier conquered one of the greatest empires of history with 160 men—was himself only recently assassinated by a rival. Hernan Cortez, conqueror of Mexico and discoverer of Baja California, was in Europe attempting to prevail over numerous lawsuits and indictments brought against him, taking time out to join in a Spanish expedition lead by the Genoese Admiral Andrea Doria against the Ottoman fleet commanded by Barbarossa in an attack on Algiers. The attack failed as did Cortez' efforts to extricate himself from his legal problems, and he would die five years later in Seville, heavily in debt. In 1542 also, the historian and Dominican Friar Bartolomé de Las Casas, who devoted his life to documenting the atrocities committed by Europeans against Native Americans, scored a symbolic victory with the issuance by Charles V of the *Leyes Nuevas*, which though intended to minimize the exploitation of native populations, were never effectual in the implementation. In 1542, Hernando de Soto led

a Spanish army into Florida, moving north and east across what would one day be the American southeast and into Louisiana where he died on the banks of the Mississippi; while Francisco Coronado would lead another army against the Pueblo peoples of the American Southwest, word of which would reach the coastal tribes living in what would one day become California.

In the half of the world they regarded as theirs as a result of the Alexandrine Bull & Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494, and more recently the Treaty of Zaragoza of 1529, the Portuguese, in an enterprise that at no time numbered more than a few thousand sailors, soldiers, merchants, and administrators were consolidating a vast seaborne empire which stretched down the west coast of Africa into the Indian Ocean, and beyond to the western Pacific. In the year 1542, they reached Japan. Within three generations Japan would lead the world in firearms production and itself contemplate a Pacific empire, only to renounce the gunpowder revolution and withdraw into feudal isolationism by mid-seventeenth century. In 1542, China under the Ming Dynasty was the wealthiest and most powerful nation on earth, as it had been for the previous fifteen centuries. Massive Chinese fleets had roamed much of the South China Sea, Pacific, and Indian Oceans during the fifteenth century until this oceanic enterprise was discarded, the Chinese having concluded that the rest of the world had little to offer other than decadence by association. No one in China dreamed that other seafarers could possibly displace them from their natural place at the apogee of world power and wealth.

In 1542 the Polish Monk Nicolas Copernicus was completing his work postulating a solar system with the sun, rather than the Earth, at its center. The posthumous publication of his treatise the following year would ignite the scientific revolution. Concurrently, Andreas Vesalius was preparing the first modern systematic study of human anatomy, uniting renaissance artistic expertise with science in a book that would become a landmark in medicine. The principal of triangulation in surveying and cartography was just coming into vogue, but it would be twenty years before mariners would plot courses as straight lines between ports by use of the Mercator projection. Leonardo da Vinci had been dead for twenty years and Galileo wouldn't be born for another twenty. Printing with movable type had begun in Europe a hundred years previously, but it would be forty years hence before the first book, a bible, would be printed in the New World. The second would document the New World's earliest industrial activity: shipbuilding.

As 1542 drew to a close, the furthest projection of a world that now comprised the combined histories of Europe, Africa, Asia, and even much of the Americas took form in a squadron of three small ships probing northward and into waters unknown in any of those lands for the purposes of uniting all of them for the first time into a global trading system. The people they encountered in the lands they sailed past were the most ancient of all, having occupied and effectively managed the resources of that sparse region since the arrival of their seafaring ancestors more than ten thousand years before. As the year drew to a close, the expedition had failed thus far to crack the code of the winds and find a way to China, failed to discover a strait leading east into the Atlantic, and failed to encounter any societies distinguished by the kind of material wealth that the rest of the world coveted. The leader of the expedition was dying, the result of injury in a trivial altercation. He would have no reason whatsoever to think that anyone would ever remember his name (a name moreover he invented for himself), the people he encountered, the lands he described, or the ship he built. In a world full of monumental, bizarre, and unlikely occurrences, the outcome of such memory would have seemed most unimaginable of all.

Ships are what historians of technology call superartifacts. Because of their complexity and the sense of identity they inspire, they have the unique ability, perhaps beyond any other human creations, to evoke the entire worlds that once formed their context. Ironically, in a present age of instantaneous communication and 24-hour news cycles, it becomes ever more difficult to travel to the past for understanding about how our world emerged from the outcomes, some incredibly unlikely, of past events. For that very reason it also becomes ever more difficult to plot a course forward into the future. Winston Churchill once said, when asked how far into the future it was possible to see, "that it depends entirely on how far back into the past you can look." With *San Salvador*, we will be able to look a long way back indeed. Thank you for helping to start the voyage.



The rising sterncastle, deck beams and stringers of the *San Salvador's* main deck.

**From Dave Wallace, Chairman, SBSA
So Where's the Ships Store?**

Many of you have wondered what the heck happened to the Ships Store, Ken Brigg's labor of love for the past several years or so... It's all boxed-up to be sent to San Diego where there will be a giant sale – to liquidate all merchandise.

Why? Along with our new incorporation came some disturbing news about record-keeping requirements for activities like the Ships Store. Unknown to any of us, there is a massive amount of paperwork required to be “legal” in all senses with such an operation. The scale to which Ken has built the store clearly placed us over the limit for a few items incidental to the mission of the organization. It could be done, but who would do it? See article on Treasurer.

The long and short of it is that the store has ceased to exist except for the blow-out in San Diego which is an all-cash deal and will last only until things are gone.

Jim Deal and his committee are working on sorting out what 10-12 items will be retained by some volunteer who will be charged with keeping the records and running things. Examples of the things we might see in the new store are the SBSA coffee mug (one size and style), the SBSA Challenge coin, 1-2 SBSA hats (one size), and so on. Nothing with many sizes lends itself to this reduced level. If you have a great idea, contact Jim Deal and explain it to him and he'll give all ideas fair consideration. Before concluding, I have to say that we all owe Ken Briggs a huge BZ for all his efforts and the creativity he's shown in getting great merchandise for us over the years. Thanks, Ken! Are you sure the creativity isn't Anita's balywick?

Announcement In Regard to the Treasurer

I have some news to share with all members about the Treasurer position that was recently filled by Don Farrell. All of us were very impressed with the tools Don brought to the job and how he was able to power the SBSA into the 21st Century bookkeeping-wise so quickly. Don's advice was invaluable in assisting us in making decisions in regard to the Ships Store and in many areas of our re-incorporation. Most of you know Don through the very professional-looking dues statements you received lately.

Don determined in the closing days of last year that he had some split loyalties that would interfere with his doing the best job possible for the SBSA. As a true professional, he advised me he had a problem, took several days to mull it over, and then announced to me that he would resign as Treasurer forthwith. So as not to leave us in the lurch, Don volunteered to stay on as our bookkeeper until we find a replacement.

Please contact me if you know of someone or if you would like to help us out either as bookkeeper or as Treasurer. I'll be glad to explain to you what the requirements are and what skills you will need to do either job.

As an interim measure Don is closing the books for 2012 and we will use an outside CPA to do the full deal with state and federal filings.

Legal Matters & Other Fun Stuff

As many of you are aware, we found it necessary to reincorporate the SBSA just after the last reunion. After consulting with a couple attorneys, a CPA or two, a legal advisor, and a reformed banker we decided the best way to get everything done without attracting too much attention would be to hire a law firm who specializes in this kind of thing to get it done. If we'd opted for reinstatement, it would involve recreating several years of records and tax filings and other unpleasant things. By using professionals who do this every day as a new legal entity, we'd know it was done correctly and was set up to last into the future.

So we submitted a small mountain of paperwork and hours of time by our specialists and got it submitted. Last April (2012) our incorporation in the Commonwealth of Virginia came through with no problems and we are now a fully functioning Virginia corporation.

Because we opted to close out the old SBSA and start anew, we also had to re-apply to the IRS for operating as what they call a “Veterans Organization” under section 501(c)(19) of the tax codes. That was done at about the same time as our filing to Virginia. It was not with the same result. It seems the IRS is backlogged up to a year in evaluating applications like ours (which includes all 501(c)(3) applications which include all of the tax-free organizations in the country). In short, we have not heard from the IRS yet and our status as a 501(c)(19) organization is not decided yet. Being naturally suspicious of government in almost any form not wearing dungarees or a combination cover, I took some time to check this “delay” out through a friend who actually works for the IRS (at least that's what he claims) and he confirmed that they are totally swamped with organizations re-applying or applying anew for tax-free status.

What's this mean to us? We can accept dues – which have never been tax deductible – from members as always. Our organization “bottom line” is a slight loss so we don't owe taxes to anyone anyway. The only hiccup is with several donors who have given money to the SBSA for a specific project or otherwise above and beyond the value they received in return. We're asking these kind souls to bear with us until April 15th of this year to see if our exemption comes through – then there's no problem. If the exemption does not come through by tax time, we have some decisions to make: do we return the money or file taxes as a provisional tax-free which means the deduction is OK for last year but will have to be altered if we are subsequently denied tax-free status by the IRS. Is everyone clear on this? There will be a test in San Diego before you are allowed to board PCF-816.....

The officers and directors are convinced we have the situation well under control given the constraints placed on us by the IRS. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact any of the officers or directors for answers.

Swift Boat Sailors Reunion

Keeping the Memories Alive

San Diego May 8 – 12, 2013

Holiday Inn On The Bay (new name—Wyndham Hotel)

1355 North Harbor Drive San Diego, CA 92101

Reservations: (888) 233 9527 (619) 232 3861

The **Wyndham Hotel** SBSA Room Rate is \$119. Be sure to ask for the Swift Boat Sailors Reunion price. Standard rate is \$220. Every room has a balcony.

Reservations at this rate until our rooms are gone. We have a limited number of rooms reserved for the Reunion. Two other conventions are being held this same week. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible.

Your credit card **will not be charged** until check-out. Hotel Cancellation Policy is 24 hours before arrival.

Airport Shuttle Pick-up is 10 & 40 minutes past the hour all day - *No Charge*

Reunion Registration and Tour information has been mailed to all members in May. Swift Boat rides on the San Diego Bay will depart from the Maritime Museum across the street from the Wyndham Hotel from Tuesday 7 May to Monday 13 May.

Deceased Swifties 2011 forward

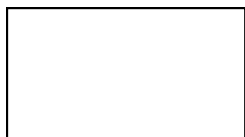
Kenneth F. Tryner	Virginia Beach, VA	2011
Gary Blinn	Norfolk, NE	2011
Franklin Henry Carpenter	Columbus, GA	2012
Clair "Pete" Schrod	Pocatella, ID	2012
Ronald L. Ashley	Searsport, ME	2012
Jessie Carmicheal	Orange Park, FL	2012

Change of Address? Need new membership card?

Stay in touch with your shipmates!

Membership card replacement fee \$5.00.

Contact DC Current, Secretary
Email– dc.current2@gmail.com



Swift Boat Sailors Association
3220 Estate Golden Rock#324
Christiansted, VI 00820

Don't Even Think of Moving Without Telling Us!

Email - Letter - Telephone - Just DO IT!

DC Current:(603) 918-0992:dc.current2@gmail.com: 3220 Estate Golden Rock, Christiansted, VI 00820