

# Sirago Newsletter



Volume 10, Issue 2

May 2009

## Reunion '09 Info.

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Shipmates,

I want to draw everyone's attention again to the Reunion Signup Sheet included in this newsletter. Due to the time delay in getting out newsletters (hard copy) this may be the LAST newsletter that has a signup sheet in it for the 2009 reunion, so PLEASE send in your signup sheet per the instructions if you are intending to attend. The signup deadline is August 31<sup>st</sup> so our August newsletter will be a bit too late to wait until then. As of this writing we have 39 crew members plus their guests confirming that they will be there. We are a bit less than 5 months away so let's get those crew member numbers up to at least 75 for a good party. I think we can do it.

Remember please that people are expiring at a rather rapid pace. So please join in. A listing of folks intending to attend follows.

Regards – **Joe Roche**

## Intending to Attend

39 Crewmembers by Duty Section

**DS4548 (3): Frank Alexander, Jim McCullough, James Wood**

**DS4952 (3): Duane Gow, Bob Kaufman, Dan Reilly**

**DS5356 (2): Buddy Shumake, John Tumilty**

**DS5760 (3): George Goodwin, Mel Laubach, Buddy Tolbert**

**DS6164 (7): George Booth, Dale Craig, Dennis Larson, David McCallum, Fred McGuire, Joe Roche, Ralph Wiggins**

**DS6568 (12): Bill Bailey, Virgil Clemmer, Pat Conroy, David Glaser, Garry Goetschius, Ray Harrison, Dan Kozlowski, Burtis Loftin, Rich McCamant, Willy Ramos, Bob Rosen, Chuck Veir**

**DS6972 (9): Mark Adler, Fred Baker, Frank Berlingeri, Mike Bickel, Frank Campbell, Frank George, John Lee, Ira Nerzig, "Tex" Ritter**

## Battery Flashback

Matt Stokes (EM2, 57-59)

My wife and I were at a yard-sale a few days ago and I saw a large wooden-handled soldering iron. That caused a flash-back, so I thought I'd share it with you.

It was sometime in the 1957/58 timeframe. We were in the north Atlantic and we were being tossed around like a ...well, like a little submarine

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in a terrible storm. We had the snorkel mast up and the head-valve was cycling. As you may remember, that causes part of your gray matter to be sucked out through your ears. I was always prone to seasickness, so I was not in very good shape. Sometimes it seemed that we were taking 90° rolls. I was afraid that the air would spill out of the floods and sink us, but then again, as sick as I was that would have been a relief (the Sirago did take a 72° roll a few years later).

A submarine battery cell is made by making heavy lead plates and connectors into an “element” and placing it into a big rubber jar. This leaves a gap around the element between the element and the jar. This gap is sealed with pitch (this was way before NiCads) to keep the electrolyte and Hydrogen inside.

On this patrol, the beating we took caused the jars in the Forward battery to shift. The elements couldn't shift as much because they were all connected together by the bus-bars. This caused the pitch seal to break. Acid was spilling everywhere.

“Someone” (who had some of his gray matter sucked out) thought it would be a good idea for “someone else” to go into the well with a huge wooden-handled red-hot soldering iron and re-seal the elements by melting the pitch. Alex Ross EM1(SS) and I somehow got selected to be the lucky “someone elses”.

We would do this while rolling around in battery acid with a hot piece of metal in our hand trying not to puke. See...I knew that if I threw up, I would die a horrible death when the vomit hit the bus-bars and electrocuted me through my esophagus! I also knew that with the seal broken, the Hydrogen was not going through the flash arrestor but just coming out of the hole I was supposed to be sealing with the red-hot iron. It was just waiting for me to touch that iron to the connector!

Well Alex and I survived, even though I'm not sure if we ever got even one cell sealed that day.

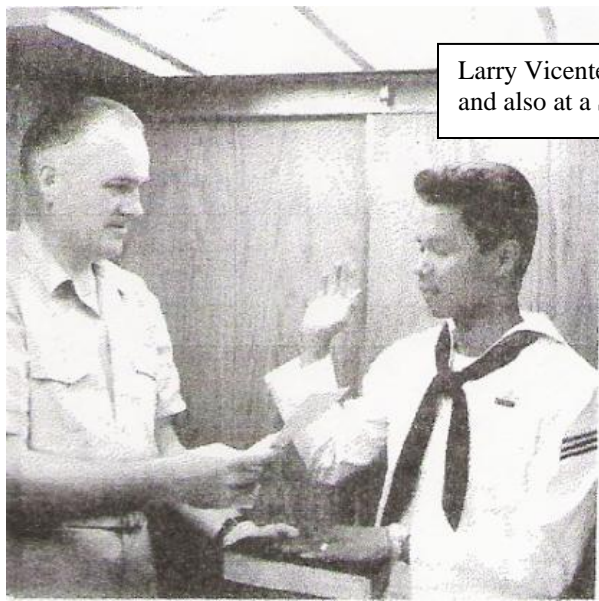
Ain't it amazing what a yard-sale will do for repressed memories!

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## DEPARTED SHIPMATES

It is with a heavy heart that we announce that we have noted the loss of 4 more shipmates since our last newsletter was published. We will dedicate the rest of our newsletter space to their remembrance. I am hoping that we all realize how important it is to renew old acquaintances before it is too late. Like all other crew members who have died since the last reunion, they will be remembered by solemn ceremony during Reunion 2009. “Larry” Vicente attended the Sirago 2001 and 2007 reunions. “Bud” Rodgers attended the Sirago 1994 reunion. Dick Underwood attended Sirago reunions 1998, 1999, 2001, and 2003. Robert Booth never attended a Sirago reunion that we know of, but he was an active member of the Groton USSVI (SubVets) and was a Holland Club member.

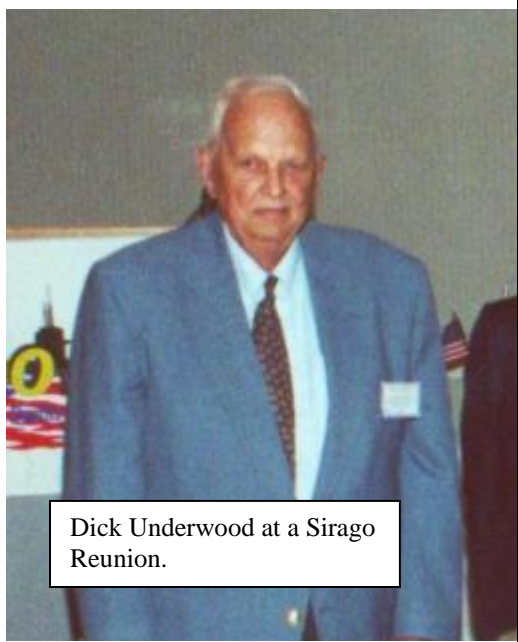
**“Larry” Vicente – CS2 – 1968 to 1971 – (Died 6 March 2009)**  
**“Bud” Rodgers – EN1 – 1948 to 1956 – (Died 21 February 2009)**  
**Dick Underwood – LT – 1949 to 1952 – (Died 5 April 2009)**  
**Robert Booth – ENFN – 1952 to 1954 – (Died 6 April 2009)**



Larry Vicente early in his Navy career and also at a Sirago Reunion (2001)



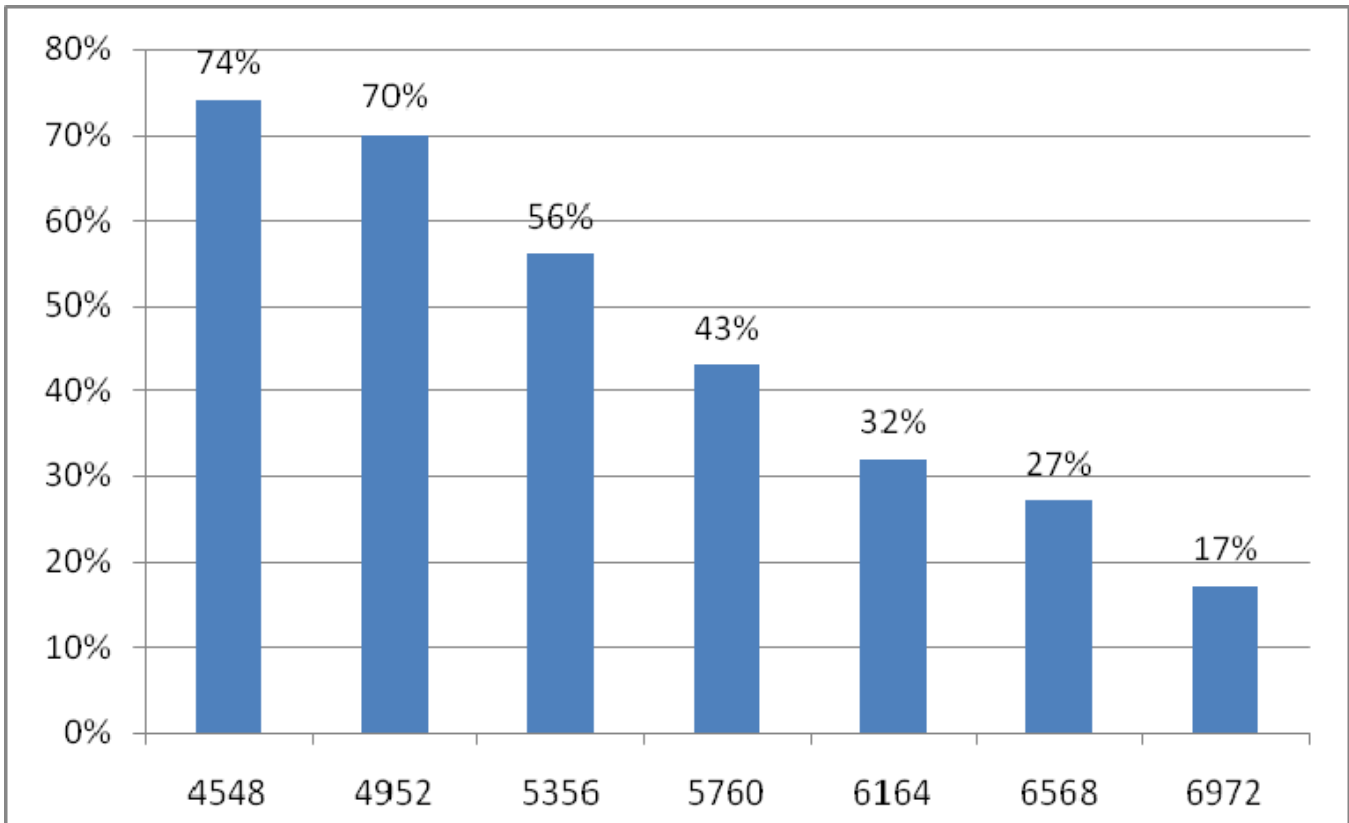
Bud Rodgers early years aboard Sirago and also a retirement photo.



Dick Underwood at a Sirago Reunion.



Robert Booth at a Sirago holiday party in the early 50's.



**Above Depressing Graph Shows % Deceased by Duty Section as of March 2009.**

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