



SPECIAL ISSUE— The planned April Issue did not happen because our editor, Ron Gorence succumbed to his long battle with cancer on 20 April. He sent me a draft near the end of March that contained the event details he was in final stages of planning for the November reunion, and most of his other regular columns. The final chapter of one of tales appears in this issue, and the remainder will be in the next, so the last of his original stories can be published as one more contribution to the Sabalo fraternity. His diligence and desire to serve his fellow sub vets will be sorely missed.

IN MEMORIAM

RONALD DAVID GORENCE, QMC(SS), Ret.

Born 6 July 1939 Leadville, CO—Died 20 April 2018 San Diego, CA



Ron & Maryann at 2009 Sabalo Reunion

He had been battling cancer the last few years, first colon, then lung. His last report was that these both were not detected at his last exam. The final report received from his family is that the ultimate problem was metastasis to the brain. He had been incommunicado starting late March, and on a hunch, I searched the internet and found his obituary one week after he died.

SAILOR, REST YOUR OAR

Obituary at : <http://www.clairemontmortuary.com/obituaries/Ronald-Gorence/>

Video tribute (18 min): <https://www.tributeslides.com/tributes/show/N24H49FBXSZR42RZ>

OUT OF THE TOMATO BASKET

Ron's newsletter format consisted

of 12 pages, with usually at least 4 in color. For the most recent issues, he used a printing and mailing service to which he just had to supply the mailing list for the hard copies. In this issue, the color and number of pages are limited to six to keep the cost down, and because there have been other things to attend to regarding the reunion planning.

Ron had produced a draft issue, to be distributed in April. It had a lot about the upcoming reunion plans for 11-14 November. These have been reduced to one page in this issue. If you are considering attending, the details will be on the web site, or call me and I'll send the full 8 pages of details. Hurry, because deadlines are coming soon.

Full notice has been delayed because I have basically had to redo all plans and make many contacts to re-establish things because Ron had done all of the arrangements in San Diego himself. My duty was only to keep track of people and collect money.

In addition to holding some of Ron's articles from his draft, eliminated are all but one color page, and the regular columns of: "Thru the TBT"; "Mailbag"; "Lost Rooster" of unfound shipmates, and the "Eternal Patrol Roster". As a point of reference, here's the rough stats as of today: 1,441 men listed as serving aboard SS-302; 701 are known deceased, 304 have never been located. Of the remainder about 5% have not kept their contact information current and are not on either an email or postage list. A few of them are suspected deceased, but positive information has not been verified. Of the 304 never located up to half of those are suspected deceased based on when they served and what age they would likely be. The search continues, and with a great deal of attention over the past three months, the figure for known deceased changed from 640 to 701. A few men were found still kicking and added to the mailing list and rosters of our web site and DeckLog.com.

WILL THERE BE A CLEVER BOY NEWSLETTER IN THE FUTURE ??

The Sabalo reunion in November has an almost certainty to be the last one of any size. A few men will still attend USSVI conventions, national, or otherwise, but a boat reunion after the one in November is now improbable. As an example, there are 1,441 men listed on the sailing list that's been one of my hobbies to assemble with probably thousands of man hours of time expended to search out men and maintain contact. As of today, there are 700 known deceased. About 450 are living that have been contacted at some point, about half remain unaccounted for as of today. Of the men never located, there are probably 150 likely deceased. Of those located, many are short timers and have no interest in a Sabalo reunion. The ranks are depleting fast. As an example of aging statistics, if a guy was 30 years old in 1960 he would be 88 today. I was 25 when I left Sabalo and the Navy in 1965, and 74 today. I sampled the Sabalo roster a couple weeks ago, and there are only about 100 men that are my age or younger. Many of those located are shorttimers on 302, and most have little interest in Sabalo doings, along with some others likewise.

Aging and health situations are affecting us all. Most of those on the hard copy mailing list are among the oldest, or just some don't use email. I sent a postcard to all of the postal addresses in that category. Of 103 men, only 17 responded asking for continuing to receive hard copy. In the other group with an email address (about 360), I made three attempts to get a response indicating they wish continue receiving the newsletter, including 175 followup post cards. A number of addresses are defunct and a few men were found to be deceased from both groups. About 43% did not respond to either email or post card.

Post reunion there will be a newsletter composed and issued. The future of Sabalo news thereafter will be a different format and modality to be determined.

The USS Sabalo Association

has no dues, and exists to preserve the history of the submarine, and to promote communication & comradery of all those who served aboard her during her commission between 1945-1971.

Sabalo web site:

<http://ussabalo.org>

Editor of this issue:

Jeffrey S. Owens

(ETN2(SS) abd '67-69)

273 Pratt Hollow Rd

Nicholson, PA 18446-7866

570-942-4622

owensj@epix.net

USSVI NATIONAL CONVENTION

OCTOBER 21-28, 2018

WESTERN CARIBBEAN CRUISE

FROM FORT LAUDERDALE ABOARD

HOLLAND AMERICA LINE'S

ABOARD THE NS NIEUW AMSTER-

DAM WITH PORT CALLS IN HALF

MOON CAY, BAHAMAS, OCHO

RIOS, JAMACIA GRAND CAYMAN

ISLAND AND COZUMEL, MEXICO

FOR MORE COMPLETE INFOR-

MATION, VISIT

[HTTP://WWW.USSVICRUISE.COM/](http://www.ussvicruise.com/)

Ron's three part series—The initial draft Ron sent me included the conclusion of his story about riding out a typhoon during his early days on the Razorback while he was a deck gang seaman. The first two segments can be found in the Aug 2017 and the Dec-Jan 2017 issues of *Clever Boy* on the web site in case you missed them.

NTINBS **Typhoon** by Ron Gorence **"Getting *IN* was easy."** Part 3 of 3, cont. From Part 2 (Dec/Jan 2017):

The deck gang appraised topside storm damage while chained from safety belts to C-hooks which followed a Tshaped track running the full length of the deck. The hinged access door of a line-locker had been broken loose. It and the mooring lines it protected now belonged to Davy Jones, and #2 starboard fold-down cleat was completely gone. Two hundred pounds of cast iron, bolted down with half-inch studs, had been lifted by a storm wave and simply floated away. Seven or eight broken teak deck boards had to be removed and thrown over the side — loose gear floating around the Main Induction Valve or periscopes or propellers during a dive is dangerous. The major damage was to the doghouse. The forward part of the sail just below the bridge had been hammered in until it popped several ¼ inch rivets. The windows were missing Plexiglas and the doghouse door had to be welded shut. As the Leading Seaman, I grumbled it would be the deck gang's job to file, scrape, sandpaper, and repaint the mess they were making. "I don't *do* pretty," the safety-belted Auxiliaryman snarled, "I do *strong*." Case closed.

Everything else looked shipshape topside, so the working party was sent below and the OD turned the ship South-West, to course 225, and cranked up three engines at full speed. We were probably making over 21 knots now with Pearl Harbor 1500 miles astern and opening.

I was off the watch bill, standing by for another turn steering, but I couldn't sleep. I'd once slept sixteen hours a day on patrol, but now—wide awake, Wahoff's words haunted me: **"Getting *in* was easy."**

In the crew's mess we talked about submerging — to get under the storm — but the consensus pretty much went along with the Skipper's adamant refusal to even consider it. Below a hundred feet, there was no light and little turbulence; you could probably play ping-pong at that depth. Razorback could stay down on battery-power twenty-four hours easily making dead slow turns. There was not enough oxygen to keep a cigarette going after about twenty hours, but if CO2 absorbent was spread out on the bunks, we could probably stretch that out to thirty-six. The problem is, sooner or later the ship has to come up. Everyone nodded. Bringing a round-hulled sewer pipe up to periscope depth in the trough of a thirty- or forty-foot wave could certainly be, literally, the first step of our last dive. Boat sailors, tending to be contrary, believed that whatever goes *down* must come *up*. The ship might even survive sixty or seventy degrees, but there wouldn't be anyone left to care after a few drips of salt water mixed with a

battery's sulphuric acid began filling the ship with deadly chlorine gas. It could be that the surfacing bow would be lucky and penetrate a wave, but the odds are not acceptable with Uncle Sam's property, including the boat and everything inside her pressure hull — including us—we had service numbers in those days, just as our spare parts did.

John Thomas came into the crew's mess and we somberly shook our wise young heads when he said, "You ain't gonna believe this," he grabbed a cup of coffee and fell onto a bench seat. "Rainin' on the bridge, but there ain't no clouds!" The OD always counted bridge visitors in case we needed to dive in a hurry, so I had to wait till another kibitzer came down from the bridge, and Thomas was right. A nice warm drizzle — with blue sky above. From very low above the bow

and rising all around the starboard side there was a bank of dark cumulonimbus clouds rising to as much as ten degrees and then decreasing all around the port horizon. The raindrops made little concentric circles in the calm sea near the tank tops, and the pond-ducks were gone. Razorback's batteries were fully charged, so 1600 horsepower from each of the three Fairbanks/Morris engines was going directly to the main motors and the ship's screws.

"We gonna outrun the storm?" I asked the OD.

"The storm isn't behind us. The wall is three-hundred-and sixty degrees around us; we're just hoping to find the best place to break through."

The bow's bullnose was getting wet now, though no individual waves could discerned, but gigantic mile-long swells were building up ahead, so I said something vulgar and asked permission to lay below. I could sleep now. Dang sure *better* sleep now.

When I woke up, the ship was rigged for red, so I knew I'd had some shut-eye. I grabbed a sandwich, and covered myself head to toe in foul-weather gear.

"Permission to come on the bridge." I heard the wind topside; the blast coming through the bridge hatch was ice cold.

"That you Gorence? Come on up."

The OD and both lookouts were leaning over the starboard side of the bridge, looking aft.

"We got a line or something hanging over the After Torpedo Room hatch". He pushed me against the cowling, leaned against my back, as he shouted and pointed.

There were no stars in the sky, but I could see the wire rope (cable) snapping up and down on deck with one end
...cont. next pg.

disappearing over the side; the other end apparently still attached to the After Torpedo Room hatch wheel.

"Cap'n to the bridge," came through the hatch. No permission requested. Eighty men recognized his slightest whisper.

Within minutes, the Skipper had taken the conn, moved the OOD and lookout watch to the Conning Tower to preserve their night vision, and the signal searchlight was rigged.

"You Leading Seaman?" he didn't wait for my answer.

"Control, Bridge, send up a seaman with two life jackets and safety harnesses. We're going to put men on deck. The Leading Seaman is already on the bridge."

The Quartermaster of the watch reported that the cable (technically *wire rope*) was from the missing after Messenger Buoy. The Skipper shined the searchlight aft toward the cable. Salt spray and spume reflected the brilliant diamonds of light so that everything was alternately bright as day or mid-night dark depending on the wind's whims. He cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted toward us, "I want you to heave around on that cable 'till you get enough slack to bend a mooring line to it for hauling it aboard with the capstan. We'll get a couple more helpers."

By the time we got on deck, the ship was pitching and rolling enough that keeping a tight grip on the safety chain was about all we could do. Two of us heaved with all our strength, and couldn't get more than a couple of inches of slack. For half an hour three of us spent most of our energy pulling each other off the tank tops and back on deck by the safety chains. The ship was pitching wildly, with green water more problem now than our wavering sense of equilibrium. We'd lost bolt cutters over the side and everyone but Hammitt was just trying to keep upright waiting for a replacement. We'd frayed a few strands of cable with the bolt cutters but were a long way from cutting through the moving-target's one inch diameter. Hammitt was playing with a hacksaw — sort of like trying to empty bilges with a soup spoon — but with nothing else to do but hang on I decided to get a closer look at how he was doing. He was mostly cussing, and whenever he managed to lift the cable an inch, his fingers would get slammed against the teak deck.

I maneuvered myself behind him, put my arms around his waist and held up the cable in front of us with the slack in my chain. Hammitt unknowingly just floated back and forth, up and down, inside my arms. At times he was between my legs, and sometimes he sat on my knees. His safety chain banged on my left calf and right knee. Meanwhile, he ignored the blasts of sea water, the cold air, me, and rest of the world ...and he just sawed. His hands were getting chewed up. Every wire strand cut gave way with a viscous snap that cut scars in the teak deck, in the steel superstructure, and his fingers. Strips of knuckle-flesh were white washed clean of blood by saltwater. They rubbed against teak at every stroke; but he bounced back and forth and

sawed. He swore his feet had never touched the deck all the time he was in my lap.

Suddenly, the stern dropped and I turned to see a twenty-footer coming over the fantail. My mouth must have been open and the wind so strong it instantly filled my lungs and I panicked. Gasping for breath is a strange description for suffocation caused by lungs blown *too full*; but then, the next wave swept us up and slammed us against the tank tops ten feet away, aspirating the air in my lungs as I gulped for more. Aching and angry, I clambered back up on deck, and saw Hammitt still down on the tank tops, holding both hands on the outboard teak plank and looking unbelievably stupid.

"Come on, man!" I screamed through the wind and the thundering engines, though it was my gestures that really communicated,

"Let's get the goldurn thing cut, and go below."

The boat rolled, and an instant later Ralph was motioning toward my feet; having lost his grip and landing on his butt near where he'd just been pointing, he shouted, "Gone!" It was. And I looked down, with cheeks flapping in the wind. I grinned, and choked again, as the wind filled my lungs.

The bridge had tried to call us back many times for our safety, but the sound-powered headset was one of the first casualties, and the guy manning thm was so busy trying to keep Hammitt and me on deck, he'd forgotten everything else.

The Skipper gave us time to get into dry clothes, and then called us to his cabin. A shot of brandy all around!

"That cable could have dropped onto the screws," he explained, "Particularly if we'd slowed while you were on deck, or later on if we'd have had to slow because of the storm. It could have wrapped around the propeller shafts. Lost propulsion in heavy weather — no good. Well done men."

"One more thing ... Gorence," he called me back alone.

"Wahoff told the Executive Officer you're interested in on-the-job training as a Quartermaster." He didn't wait for me to answer, "He asked the XO to talk to you about your quals"

Oh oh, I thought ... "Should I go see him, sir?"

"No, I'll talk to him. But I'd like you to bring him a request chit when you're ready, and we'll see if we can get you a school or two."

I guess my eyes were lighting up too much, because he didn't stop there,

"I'd really like to see you go through your Final Qualifications before we get into port. If you can't make it by then, it might be a good idea if you just decided to stay aboard while we're in port, to study. The Executive Officer and I are both behind you. Oh, I also spoke to the Chief Of the Boat and he's going to help too. Good luck."

The Chief of the Boat, the XO, and the Skipper were all behind me. *Crap!* A month and a half at sea, two months' pay waiting for me and no liberty when we hit port! I was three quarters of the way through reviewing all the nasty language I could think of when the cool clean sheet under ...cont. next pg.

Typhoon cont. frpm col. 2 previous pg

under the flash cover and the gentle drumming of the diesels put me to sleep.

Later on, manning the bow planes on a short trim dive, I casually commented that the COB (Chief Of the Boat) would never put me on Mess Cooking 'cause I was the best Leading Seaman Razorback had ever known – the only one aboard who could tie a monkey fist. Dead silence filled the Control Room and, too late, I knew that I'd gone too far. Within five minutes Billie Joe Erie arrived to tap me on the shoulder, "I'm relieving you on watch; you're to report to the duty cook for immediate reassignment." I subsequently laid claim to being one of Razorback's most experienced Mess Cooks (I never did claim to be the *best* mess-cook even, ultimately, with three tours under my belt).

We ultimately learned this typhoon might have been one called *Vera*, which killed over four-thousand Japanese people. Razorback found a weak spot in its south-west wall where the waves were under ten feet high and choppy; they looked to be beating each other down into impotent confusion.

We were only five days late pulling into port, and just outside Pearl Harbor, while I was putting on dress blues for Maneuvering Watch, Hank grabbed my hand, pumped it twice and said, "Christ, it wasn't enough for you ta' plough Razu-Maru into every big wave in the Pacific ... now you're gonna be a Quartergasket aiming for sandbars, an' rocks and shoals ta' crash us into," as he gently brushed off a small piece of lint from my breast pocket below my new Silver Dolphins.

Later, I told Wahoff I wanted to become a QM but when he woke me up at 0200 my first time mess-cooking day to spend half of his mid-watch under instruction, I refused. I'd finished cleaning up from the evening meal just four hours earlier, and had no intention of trying to survive on just four hours of sleep. He calmly said, "OK," and walked away. Minutes later

he returned with a Report Chit for Disobedience of a Direct Order. I dragged myself up to Conn and I eventually learned that whining generates rolling eyeballs, not sympathy, and that sacrificing a little sleep can earn a nearly-perfect score on advancement tests for QM3 – which I managed to do a few months later. I went up on the bridge for some air after taking the exam, claiming I'd missed precisely two, of 200, questions!

NTINS, that was the last time I ever bragged.

THE END

I searched for Raymond Wahoff for years: Found many rumors of his death, but never any real info. RonG

After proof reading Ron's piece, I put my search efforts into locating Wahoff. As an irony, he died in San Diego in Aug, 1974, only 3 months after leaving Navy active duty. He was just 40 years old.. Ron got the word via an email. —Jeff

SHIP'S STORE

SABALO HISTORY POSTER—pic on page 1 (not so good)

This high quality, printed poster with semi-gloss finish measures 16 1/2" x 21" and is suitable for framing with a suitable border mat in a standard 18 x 24 frame which can be found inexpensively in many stores.

While they last—special reunion price \$25

which includes postage cost and mailing in a rigid shipping tube.

LAPEL PINS—Popular -141 sold, only 9 left—\$8

Detailed, seven color pin is a rendition of a version of the Sabalo patch. It has a standard, military-style clutch pin on the back. Pin's actual size is 1 1/2 inches ht.

SHIP'S PATCH— \$10 Design was revamped in 2012 using artwork from Howie Venezia, the designer of the original.

SABALO HATS—An order will be placed in August. Only available by advance order. Call or email.

Final price dependent on order quantity - last was \$16 + shipping. -with embroidered five color dolphins . Adjustable strap in back - not the cheap plastic snap type.

T-SHIRTS—A 2018 design is in the works. Art work will soon be posted on the web site, but please make your order early so quantity and lead time can be established. The shirts produced will only be by your advance order—no extras for stock. **SEND SIZE AND QUANTITY NOW.** A deadline date will be established for firm orders once art work is in the vendor's hands and price established.

SABALO CHALLENGE COINS—By bulk purchase, these are offered at \$15 plus shipping. That's \$5 cheaper than you can get them from the supplier. Pic on web site

WHEEL BOOKS AND LUGGAGE TAGS STILL AVAILABLE—
ck the web site or call.

**TAKE DELIVERY OF ANY ITEMS AT THE REUNION
AND AVOID THE HIGH COST OF USPS MAIL.**

(except posters which require the shipping tube to prevent damage).

The Ship's Store page on our web site will have some major revision shortly, and all graphics will be correctly appearing.— Please visit. The small profits go to the web site expense & future Sabalo communications.

When asked what you did to make your life worthwhile ... You can respond with a great deal of pride and satisfaction, "I served in the United States Navy."

Pride Runs Deep !!

SABALO REUNION— 11-14 NOV 2018 at the Holiday Inn—Bayside, San Diego, Calif.

Due to Ron's passing, the details of much of what he might have planned were not known, so most events except for the host hotel room reservations have been arranged beginning in May and there are still some details to be settled. The main schedule below. Is still tentative. Rules for visiting sub base have been changed and restricted since we were there in 2007. Plans for the daytime on the 14th may require last minute arrangements to have a different group event during that day. The Luau and Main Banquet will not be affected. Whatever happens, there will be much to enjoy from the comradery with fellow Sabalo vets.

- **TENTATIVE plan explained : The details, including menus and full event descriptions, will be listed on the web site as they are settled. A full , hard-copy package with complete details and instructions will mailed shortly via P.O. to those who have already expressed interest in attending.**
- **Anyone else that needs more info to aid the decision to come should call me ASAP. - Jeff**
- **570-942-4622 I'm in eastern time zone, pls call before 2100 EDT.**

REUNION PLAN OF THE DAY — Basic Schedule- pick and choose events to attend

Day - Date	Event	Cost
Sunday 11Nov	Check-in & Registration	\$35/man or \$65/couple
	Hospitality Suite open 1200-? + open each day ~0730-2200+? depending on if someone is there to man it. Stocked with beverages and snacks	n/c
Monday 12 Nov	S.D. Harbor Cruise w/Luncheon & Cabrillo Monument visit, inc. charter bus transportation ~0930-1430	\$59
	Golf Tournament on hotel mini 9 hole ~1500	
	Evening - Open for dining choice around S.D.	
Tuesday 13 Nov	Maritime Museum Tour with docents inc. charter bus transportation	TBD
	Lunch - TBD	
	USS Midway Tour	TBD
	Evening - Outdoor* Hawaiian Style Luau at the host hotel. Serving at 1600 (*weather permitting)	\$65
Wednesday	Possible Sub Base visit & in-port boat tour- timing and lunch - TBD	
	Evening - Main Banquet in the hospitality room Social hour 1700; Food Service 1800-1900; Closing 2200+?	\$65

- **HOTEL-The full room rate (inc tax, etc.) will be ~\$141/day, with free parking. The hotel is ready to accept reservations. Call (619) 224-8899; mention USS Sabalo Reunion.**
 - **No charge for room cancellation, except if you don't cancel 24 hours before arrival you will be charged for first night.**
 - **Check-in for the full reunion is on Sunday the 11th; check-out Thursday morning the 15th — but the special room rate applies 3 days before and/or after that period for those wishing to extend time in S.D. Stay one night or as many as you wish.**
 - **The on site restaurant, The Point Loma Cafe , has reasonable prices, & over 55, 10% discount if you ask for it.**
- Deposits- As in the past, if it involves no expense, your unused \$ will be returned — even if your cancellation is right before the event. Latecomers have always been accepted, but please respond ASAP to be sure you can be accommodated. and to allow for adequate transportation arrangements.