



# USS Cusk Newsletter

## 2016 Reunion Cruise Edition

*...underway together just one more time.*



Such a wonderful time we had...



*On land...*

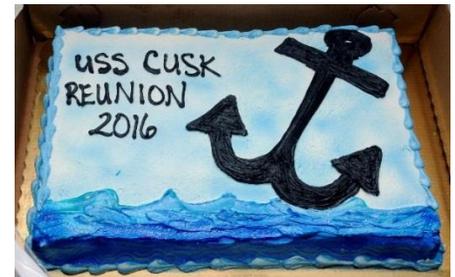
Group picture at the Brevard Veteran's Memorial and Museum, Sunday, 24 April 2016



*And at sea.*

Last night at sea aboard Royal Caribbean's "Enchantment of the Seas"

The 2016 Cusk Reunion was, like our past reunions, a great renewing of friendships, making new ones, a time for sharing memories, lots of laughter, and occasionally, a sea story or two. It began on Saturday afternoon, April 23 with our welcome reception at the Best Western in Cocoa Beach.



Sunday was free time in the morning followed by a tour and a banquet at the Veteran's Museum. On Monday we got underway for four days at sea on a great cruise. To say a good time was had by all would not do it justice.

Pictured Top Row: Jim & Diana Branske, Sandra & Gary Wood, Joan & Jim Hughes; 2<sup>nd</sup> Row: Alan Kallas & Yvette Weight, Roberta & Paul Clark, Joni & Lee Krabill, Becky & Don Birch; 3<sup>rd</sup> Row: Mary & Mike Halsey, Ron Gile, Chuck Harner, Roger & Nancy Gile, Richard & Joann Specht, Gino & Editha Rillamas. Darlene & Larry Wood; Bottom Row: Dave Duerr & Mabel Bradley, Mary & Richard Baylon, Paula & Sandy Whitaker, Patrice & Tom Roseland, Bill & Mary Hrbacek, John Troutman & Susan Heilman, Chris & Dennis Schultz, Suzanne & Jim Mallery.





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**2016 Cusk Reunion (cont.):** The welcome reception at the Best Western in Cocoa Beach was a great starting point after everyone checked into their rooms.



Larry Wood & Gino Rillamas



L to R - Alan Kallas, Sandy Whitaker, Don Birch, Jim Branske, Paula Whitaker & Yvette Weight



The Gile brothers & Bill Hrbacek



Jim Branske



Suzanne Mallery & Chris Schultz



Sunday brunch at Bonefish Restaurant on Merritt Island. L to R around the table - Sandy & Paula Whitaker, Sandra & Gary Wood, Mike & Mary Halsey, Becky & Don Birch, Patrice & Tom Roseland (hiding), Joni & Lee Krabill, Susan Heilman & John Troutman





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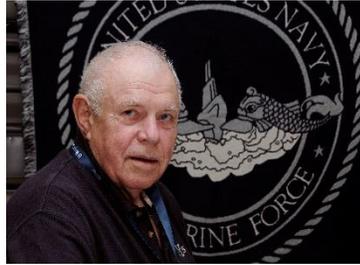
*...underway together just one more time.*



**2016 Reunion (cont.):** Many of us met for a Sunday brunch and then in the afternoon, took a tour of the Brevard Veteran's Memorial Center where the Cusk display is housed. The next afternoon we set the maneuvering watch and went to sea from Monday to Friday, 25 to 29 April 2016. First was an overnight cruise to Coco Cay, Bahamas where we spent all day Tuesday. Then another short cruise to Nassau for another day of fun in the sun. Finally, a full day at sea on Thursday before returning to Port Canaveral early on Friday Morning.



Jim Hughes, Alan Kallas, Jim Mallery, Bob Duncan, Jim Branske, Paul Clark & Ron Shook at the Museum



John Troutman at the Sunday dinner



The Halseys near the stern of the Enchantment of the Seas



Touring the ship's galley



Whooping it up during first call to the evening meal aboard ship



Family Picture - Halseys & Roselands



Getting ready for Sunday dinner at the Brevard Veteran's Center



A view of Nassau Bay & the Atlantis Resort





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**From the Cusk's Deck Log:** More excerpts randomly selected from the Cusk's Deck Log as found in our National Archives. This first entry is from Wednesday afternoon, 6 February 1946 while moored in New London. The Captain is CDR Paul Summers and the XO is LCDR Eugene Wilkinson. It is less than six months after VJ Day and this entry provides an interesting look at the standard munitions that were loaded aboard.

*"...Moored as before. 1315 Commenced loading ammunition. Safety precautions being observed. 1500 Secured from loading ammunition after having received the following amounts on board from Naval Ammunition Depot, Hingham, Mass.: 70 rounds 5"/25 Cal. H.C. flashless; 70 point detonating fuses, Mk. 29-3; 3 rounds 5"/25 Cal. H.C. flashless; 70 point detonating fuses, Mk. 29-3; 3 rounds 5"/25 Cal. Flashless clearing charges; 10 rounds 5"/25 Cal. BL & T drill for structural firing; 120 primers, Mk. 15-1, lock combination; 480 rounds HEIT 40mm; 80 rounds 40mm APT; 64 rounds .45 Cal. Ball; 200 rounds .50 Cal. Tracer; 50 rounds 12 gauge shotgun shells; 25 grenades, hand, 700 rounds .50 Cal tracer; 50 rounds 12 gauge shotgun shells; 25 grenades, hand, fragmentation, Mk. 2A1 with fuse Mk. 10A3; 2500 rounds .22 Cal. Ball, long rifle.*

*(signed) F. I. Thomas, Lieut. USN."*

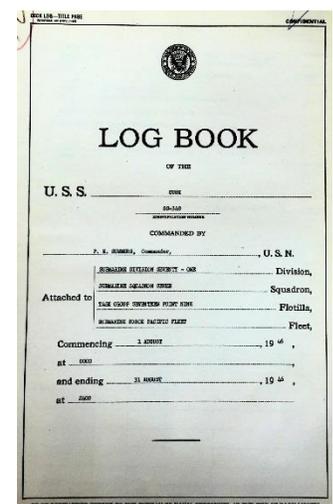
The next entry is from Monday morning, 26 September 1966. Having just completed an overhaul in the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard in Bremerton, Washington, the Cusk is ordered out into Puget Sound for sea trials. The Maneuvering Watch is secured and the regular Underway Watch has been set. The Captain is LCDR Don Killian and the XO is LCDR Denny West. It's looking to be a nice fall day for sea trials, when suddenly, the General Alarm begins clanging and over the 1MC come the words, "Fire in Maneuvering, Fire in Maneuvering!"

*"...0615 Held quarters for muster and inspection. Absentees: None. Stationed the Maneuvering Watch, made all preparations for getting underway. 0630 Completed a normal plus one (+1) battery charge. 0710 Underway in accordance with CTF31 message 25050 2 September 1966. Steering various courses at various speeds to conform to the channel. Captain on the bridge, Navigator in the Conning Tower. OOD at the Conn. 0741 Secured the Maneuvering Watch. Set the regular Underway Watch. 0745 Fire in the number one (1) main motor. Number one (1) main motor out of commission. No personnel casualties. Lying to in the channel. 0750 steering various courses at various speeds to maintain steerage way in the channel.*

*(signed) L. J. Farkas, LT USN"*

Back in Bremerton it was determined that the main motor had been damaged by an internal fire. A few days later, repairs began. A 12' section of the superstructure and an 8' section of the pressure hull over Maneuvering were removed. Then most of the internal Maneuvering compartment and equipment was removed and the #1 main motor was decoupled. A crane lifted it out onto the dock and it was taken to a shop in the shipyard for repair. About two months later, the motor was reinstalled and the Cusk was put back together and made ready for sea trials. This time they were successful. Upon completion, she returned to San Diego for R&R and normal duty. By late, summer she was preparing for her next WestPac.

**Eternal Patrol:** ([www.usscusk.com/Eternal.htm](http://www.usscusk.com/Eternal.htm)) – The sad news below is of our shipmates who have recently gotten underway for the last time. Most were regular reunion attendees. All will be sorely missed.



Name & Rank	Departed	Served aboard Cusk
Harold William Haynes, Jr., QM2(SS), Plankowner	26 August 2016	1946 to 1948
Art Thomsen, QM3(SS)	13 July 2016	1955 to 1957
Bill Vincent, EN2(SS)	27 June 2016	1945 to 1946
Les Atchison, RM2(SS)	2 July 2015	1960 to 1962
Maurice "Dusty" Knight, SA(SS)	1 April 2016	1948 to 1950
Carl Bud Berg, ET1(SS)	19 March 2016	1956 to 1957
Gerald "Jerry" Spielman, EN1(SS)	30 December 2015	1960 to 1966

### SAILORS! REST YOU OARS!

**Cusk Memorabilia for Sale:** Not exactly a Ship's Store, but a fund raiser for the Cusk Newsletter and webpage. Funds are getting a bit low so the items below are being offered at cost, plus \$1.00, plus a flat \$12.00 shipping fee. (Sorry, I had no





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idea that shipping costs would be so high!) Please use the form below to purchase any of these items. All proceeds and donations will be used for the newsletter and Cusk webpage. Items will be available only as long as the current supply lasts.



Brushed cotton twill Hat with adjustable Velcro strap on back \$8.00



Collapsible Neoprene "Koozie" with Cusk Patch on both sides \$3.00  
(Drink not included)



Shoulder Tote Bag w/24" straps, snap close, 2 side pockets & 1 front pocket \$9.00



16 Oz. "Bistro Mug" Navy Blue & White with Cusk Patch on one side \$6.00



Cusk Lanyard with rotating alligator clip \$2.00

Order/Donation Form			
Quantity	Item	Price Each	Totals
_____	Cusk "Vanguard" Hat	\$8.00	_____
_____	Koozie Can Cooler	\$3.00	_____
_____	Tote Bag	\$9.00	_____
_____	Cusk Bistro Mug	\$6.00	_____
_____	Iron/Sew On Patch	\$3.00	_____
_____	Lanyard	\$2.00	_____
	Shipping Cost:	\$12.00	_____
	Merchandise Total:	\$ _____	_____
	Optional Newsletter & Webpage Donation:	\$ _____	_____
	Total Enclosed:	\$ _____	_____



3 1/2" x 4 1/2" Cusk Patch Can be ironed on or sewn \$3.00

Please make checks payable to "Tom Roseland" and mail to 1635 Sea Shell Drive, Merritt Island, FL 32952

**Cusk Trivia:** Like several other Balao Class Fleet Boats, the Cusk has a unique feature that readily identified the fact that it was built at Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut. What is that feature that makes an EB boat different? And a second one, being the Navy's first missile submarine was not the only "first" for the Cusk. What was another one? (Answers on page 6)

**The Saga of Admiral Poresport...the Rest of the Story:** In the previous newsletter was the story of Admiral Poresport and the Navy exercise where the Cusk successfully penetrated a huge protective screen and simulated sinking the battleship USS New Jersey (BB-62). ("Tubes Aft, Conn, release a black smoke!") This was a true story about the Cusk and the New Jersey as the battleship was being readied for shore bombardment in Vietnam. Only the Admiral's name was fictitious.

However, there is a little more to that story that was left untold. "Little more", because it turned out to be a harmless incident. But it came very, very close to being the demise of the Cusk and her crew.

Early that morning of 10 June 1969, the Cusk was in her assigned area waiting for the scheduled COMEX and the expected emergence of the New Jersey's armada from Long Beach Harbor. We were part of a three diesel-submarine wolf pack, all with the same objective of sinking the New Jersey. It was about 0700 and the Cusk was at periscope depth just off the southern coast of Long Beach, approximately 30,000 yards from shore. All was eerily quiet on the sonar with the exception of the occasional whine of the planes' hydraulics, the occasional squeal of a porpoise, and the distant crackling of shrimp on the ocean bottom. Sonar was passively sweeping in the normal 360 degree circle, pausing occasionally for extra listening in the direction of the Long Beach Harbor entrance. Continuing on around, Sonar picked up what sounded like a





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small motorboat due east of our position and toward the shore. "Conn, Sonar, I have a contact at 085 with a zero angle on the bow and closing. Estimate its range to be about 20,000 yards. Sounds like a small craft."

After a minute or so, the Conn responded. "Sonar, Conn, you might want to recheck your contact for a reciprocal bearing. I just looked through the scope and there's nothing between us and the shore but a few sea gulls."

"Conn, Sonar, negative, Sir, not a reciprocal. Better bearing is 086 and still closing with zero angle on the bow. Whatever it is, it's closing at a high rate of speed! Possible nuclear submarine, Sir."

Tensions began to escalate rapidly from that point on. The noise from the contact grew increasingly louder as Sonar continued feeding reports to the Conn. "This is definitely nuke sub, Sir," Sonar reported, "and it still has a zero angle on the bow. Estimate range at 10,000 yards and closing." At this point, the operator turned on the sonar recorders and activated the ATC (Automatic Tracking Control) on the BQR-2B sonar. A minute or so later, he called the Conn again, "Range is now about 8,000 yards, Conn. Still closing." More time passed as the contact kept getting closer.

"Keep feeding us bearings, Sonar!" came the Captain's voice from the Conn. Obviously, the sudden involvement of the Captain emphasized the urgency of the situation. More time passed and the whine from the other sub's screw was becoming so loud that the sonar operator had to frequently turn the volume down on his headset.

"Sonar Aye. Contact has drawn right very slightly, now at 087, still closing, range about 4,000 yards." Another tense moment passed. The scream from the contact was now deafening! Then, just as the Sonar operator grabbed the mike to send another report, the unmistakable squeal of the Cusk's UQC (underwater telephone) carrier frequency could be heard through the pressure hull as the Captain's voice boomed out into the depths, "ATTENTION ALL SHIPS! THIS IS THE UNITED STATES SUBMARINE CUSK! I AM AT PERISCOPE DEPTH! UNIDENTIFIED CRAFT SHOULD ALTER COURSE IMMEDIATELY!"

Again and again he repeated this warning as the noise from the contact continued getting louder. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, the contact suddenly veered hard right and passed by close to the Cusk's bow. How close, we could not know, but there is little doubt that it was less than 1,000 yards, and it was moving at a very high rate of speed.

A minute or two later, we started breathing again as the contact's noise faded and disappeared, somewhere west of our position. The danger had passed, and not since the time when we tried to sink ourselves with our own torpedo off the coast of North Vietnam had we known such excitement. It was definitely single-screw nuclear submarine, but whose, we do not know. Speculation was that it was a Russian nuke sent here to spy on the New Jersey, but we never found out for sure. In retrospect, it didn't matter to us who it was. It didn't hit us. Any other information would simply be nice to know.

**Sea Stories:** A short excerpt from a story by Nelson Kirsch, one that really stirs some vivid memories of life on an angry sea.

*"...Then I see THE WAVE! It's a monster! A huge black wall high as a skyscraper towers above us blocking out any vestige of sky. Streaks of foam explode off its crest which curls downward like a massive malevolent frown. We are heading directly into its trough.*

*"Hang on, this is a big one!", I hear the OD shout, his words ripped apart by the wind. Our bow plunges into it. We tip steeply downward, nearly vertical like a car on the first hill of a roller coaster. The wave breaks directly on top of us. A thousand tons of sea water try to push us to the bottom. Briny water inundates the deck, floods the bridge, then blasts up the conning tower superstructure. It rises to my waist, then my chest. I strain to make myself taller, but I'm chained to the steel stanchion, locked in tight. My face and head go under. This is it, I'm going to drown! I hold my breath.*

*Then, almost out of air, I feel the boat shudder, struggling to escape Neptune's grasp. I'm sure we're going to break apart. But like a prize fighter on an eight-count comeback, the bow begins to rise. Shaking and rolling, the sub breaks the wave's lethal grasp, and punches clear in an avalanche of spray, foam and green water. Slowly, inexorably the boat plows through the sea, then levels out. I take in huge breaths of air while watching the flood subside beneath me."*

**Cusk Trivia answers:** The Cusk's unique feature was her anchor location. Electric Boat placed the anchor on the starboard side of the bow as opposed to all other Balao Class boat shipyards which mounted their anchor on the port side.

Another Cusk First...A time honored Navy tradition was to have a "Ship's Sponsor" to christen the ship when it is launched and bestow the name chosen by the Secretary of the Navy. The Cusk was the first U.S. Navy ship to have two sponsors, Mrs. Walter G Reed and Mrs. Claude S Gillette. It was Mrs. Gillette who did the actual christening with the champagne bottle. Pictures of the event may be found on the Cusk's webpage at: [www.usscusk.com/1945.htm](http://www.usscusk.com/1945.htm).

**Cusk 2018 Reunion Update:** No firm dates yet, but the next Cusk Reunion is tentatively planned for fall of 2018 in the Seattle, Washington area. Details will be posted on the Cusk Webpage and in the next newsletter as they become available.

