



# USS Cusk Newsletter Spring 2017



**2018 Cusk Reunion:** We're on! The Cusk 2018 Reunion will be in Richland, Washington during the second week of April next year. Specific dates, hotel information, activities, etc. will be announced as they become available. Many thanks to shipmate Steve "Willy" Wilson {EM1(SS), 1966 to 1969} who is leading the effort. He's already hard at work putting together lodging arrangements and activity plans. Willy is very experienced at organizing boat reunions and he's excited about putting one together on his home turf. Visit the Reunion section on the Cusk webpage ([www.usscusk.com/reunions.htm](http://www.usscusk.com/reunions.htm)) for additional information.



Columbia River Bridge



Grape fields in nearby Winery



River park in Richland

## Richland, Washington area, site of the 2018 Cusk Reunion

**USS Cusk Webpage Changes:** If you haven't visited lately, you'll be pleasantly surprised to see many improvements and additions to the Cusk webpage ([www.usscusk.com](http://www.usscusk.com)). Repairs have been made on several broken links, missing pictures, etc., and some new sections have been added. There's a new "Memory Lane" section which, thanks mostly to Neil Briggs' incredible collection of memorabilia, will take you back to some great memories of the Cusk's ports of call. The new "Life at Sea" section has various pictures of our time at sea. Everything from swim call to lookout duty to baking fresh bread to a Shellback initiation is displayed in this section. Overall, access to every subsection and service year on the webpage can be reached directly from the homepage instead of having to navigate down multiple levels. The "Sights and Sounds" section has been repaired and expanded to include more recordings of the Cusk in action. Most of these recordings are relatively brief, but the actual sounds are sure to remind you of life on the Cusk and what it was like to "pull the cork". The improved "Flying Missile" section has information, numerous pictures and promotional material from the movie that was made about the Cusk. There is also an improved "Loon Missile" section on the Loon/JB-2 missile launched by the Cusk including pictures, history and its technical capabilities.

Please take a look when you get a chance. More pictures and information will be added over time as I work my through my substantial backlog of Cusk material. As always, your comments and/or contributions are always greatly appreciated.

**Group Picture:** The picture below is of Submarine Squadron Five at the Ballast Point Submarine Base, San Diego, California. The date is 30 December 1949. Pictured (appropriately) in the center is the USS Cusk. Seated in front are the Squadron Five Commander and his staff, and the Captain and crew of the USS Cusk are seated and standing behind them. To the Cusk's left are the USS Pomodon, USS Volador and the USS Catfish. The upper left inset picture is the submarine rescue ship USS Florikan ASR-9. To the right of the Cusk are the USS Diodon, USS Carbonero and the USS Carp. The small inset picture on the right is the submarine tender USS Nereus AS-17. A much larger picture is available on the Cusk Webpage.

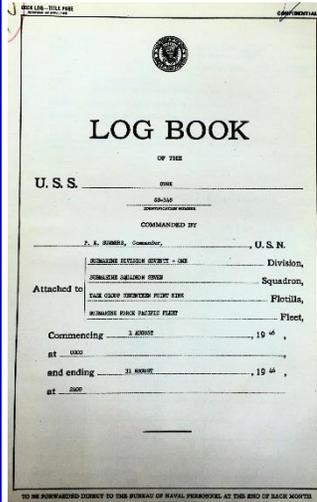




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**From the Cusk's Deck Log:** These are excerpts randomly selected from the Cusk's Deck Log as found in our National Archives. This first entry is from 58 years ago. The date is Monday, January 26, 1959 and the Cusk is departing southeast out of Pearl Harbor for torpedo firing exercises. The Captain is LCDR Frank Murphy, Jr. and the XO is LCDR William Surman, Jr. Note near the end of the first entry that there is a minor error where the OOD wrote down the time of 1033 as the course they had changed to. Looks like it was a pretty busy day for the Cusk crew, but the question remains, did they find that torpedo? Apparently they didn't given the different serial number of the replacement fish that is loaded back in Pearl. Note too that Hawaii was still a territory at the time "...Pearl Harbor, T. H." as it did not become a state until the following August 21<sup>st</sup>. Here are the log entries:



*"08-12 Moored as before. 0807 Underway in accordance with COMSUBGRU Pearl OP-Order 5-59. Maneuvering on various courses and at various speeds while standing out of the channel. 0852 Secured the Maneuvering Watch. Set the regular Underway Watch. Set course 165°. Set speed 12 Kts. 0900 c/c to 233°. 0957 c/s to 0 Kts. 1006 Submerged on course 221°. 1029 Surfaced on course 225°. 1030 Made daily inspection of magazine spaces. Conditions normal. 1033 c/c to 1033. c/s to 2 Kts. 1103 Submerged on course 180°. 1147 Surfaced on course 090°. Speed 3 Kts. 1123 c/c to 000°."*  
(signed) J. H. Carr, Lieut. USN

*"12-16 Underway as before. 1159 All Stop. Lying to on station. 1212 Submerged on course 201°T. 1213 Exercised the crew at Battle Stations Torpedo. 1233 fired MK 14-3A torpedo serial #64514. 1238 Surfaced on course 150°T. Set course 142°T. Speed 12 Kts. 1247 c/c to 000°T. 1304 All Stop. Lying to on station. 1311 Submerged on course 151°T. Exercised the crew at Battle Stations Torpedo. 1350 Surfaced on course 320°T. 1352 Set course 000°T, speed 12 Kts. 1417 All Stop. Lying to on station. 1422 Submerged on course 180°T. 1424 Exercised the crew at Battle Stations Torpedo. 1446 Fired MK 14-3A Torpedo serial #92173. 1451 Surfaced on course 022°T and commenced maneuvering on various courses at various speeds. Conducting search for torpedo."*  
(signed) P. K. Clark, LT, USN

*"16-20 Underway maneuvering as before. 1730 Stationed the Maneuvering Watch. Made all preparations for entering port. 1745 c/c to 329. Commenced maneuvering on various courses and at various speeds while standing in the channel. 1830 Moored starboard side to berth Sierra 9, U.S. Naval Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, T. H. Secured the Maneuvering Watch. Set the regular inport watch. 1925 Loaded one MK 14-3A Torpedo serial 92004."*  
(signed) J. H. Carr, LT, USN

The next entries describe the Cusk getting underway for the last time. Having been aboard for her last days in San Diego, I can vividly remember when she was re-designated "AGSS-348", which seemed more like a scarlet letter than an identification number. A few days later, we were unceremoniously moved 500 feet from the main Ballast Point Submarine Pier to the adjacent Deep Submergence Pier, almost as if we had been quarantined and were no longer worthy of nesting with the other submarines. Then all too soon, it was time for the Cusk to get underway for the last time. I was to be separated from active duty so I stayed behind and helped cast off the last line. The Cusk sounded her horn with one long blast and then three short ones as she backed out into the San Diego Harbor Channel. Once out in the channel, she finished her twist and then slowly started moving out to sea. At that moment, I took the picture you see below. It was eerily surreal and very sad to watch her leave, knowing that this was the last time that the USS Cusk would "put to sea".

*"08-16 Moored as before. 0800 Mustered the crew at stations, absentees, none. 1515 Mustered the crew at quarters, absentees, none. 1530 Stationed the Maneuvering Watch, made all preparations for getting underway. 16-20 Moored as before. 1606 underway in accordance with COMSUBFFLOT ONE weekly Op-Sked 37-69 enroute to Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, California. Steering various courses at various speeds to conform to the San Diego Channel. Captain on the Bridge, Navigator on the Conning Tower, OOD at the Conn. 1621 passed Ballast Point abeam to starboard, distance 200 Yds. 1644 with Buoy #1SD abeam to starboard, set course 270° at speed 12 kts.*



(signed) Robert L. Starkey, LT USN"





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**Cusk Memorabilia Sale:** It was a great success and thanks to your purchases and additional donations, over \$800 was received in support of the Cusk Newsletter and Webpage. That's enough to keep both going for over a year. Unfortunately, we ran out of hats very quickly (Sorry, bad planning), but there are still plenty of Cusk Coffee Mugs (\$6), Patches(\$3), Koozies(\$3) and Tote Bags(\$9) for anyone who still might be interested. No special form is needed. Just send me a list of what you want, add in \$5 or \$6 for shipping and send me a check. Additional donations are appreciated, but not necessary. I'll ask for help when the fund gets low again. Be sure your check is made out to "Tom Roseland" and mail it to me at 1635 Sea Shell Drive, Merritt Island, Florida 32852.

**Cusk Trivia:** (1) What was the name of the engine that propelled the Cusk's Loon Missile, and what type of fuel did it use? (2) Like her first missile year in 1947, 1954 was a year of change when the Cusk had a major capabilities added, and others removed while in the Mare Island Naval Shipyard. What were those changes and how long did they take to be completed? (Answers on page 4)

**"Risk is an Inspiration in Submarine Service":** You may have seen this before, but it's well worth reading again. It's an excerpt from an article written about submariners by Dr. Joyce Brothers in 1963. Enjoy, and be proud.

*"...Togetherness is an overworked term, but in no other branch of our military service is it given such full meaning as in the so-called "silent service."*

*In an under sea craft, each man is totally dependent upon the skill of every other man in the crew, not only for top performance but for actual survival. Each knows that his very life depends on the others and because this is so, there is a bond among them that both challenges and comforts them.*

*All of this gives the submariner a special feeling of pride, because he is indeed a member of an elite corps. The risks, then, are an inspiration, rather than a deterrent.*

*The challenge of masculinity is another factor, which attracts men to serve on submarines. It certainly is a test of man's prowess and power to know he can qualify for this highly selective service. However, it should be emphasized that this desire to prove masculinity is not pathological, as it might be in certain daredevil pursuits, such as driving a motorcycle through a flaming hoop.*

*There is nothing daredevilish about the motivations of the man who decides to dedicate his life to the submarine service. He does, indeed, take pride in demonstrating that he is quite a man, but he does not do so to practice a form of foolhardy brinkmanship, to see how close he can get to failure and still snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. On the contrary, the aim in the submarine service is to battle the danger, to minimize the risk, to take every measure to make certain that safety rather than danger, is maintained at all times.*

*Are the men in submarines braver than those in other pursuits where the possibility of sudden tragedy is not constant? The glib answer would be that they are. It is much more accurate, from a psychological point of view, to say they are not necessarily braver, but that they are who have a little more insight into themselves and their capabilities.*

*They know themselves a little better than the next man. This has to be so with men who have a healthy reason to volunteer for a risk. They are generally a cut healthier emotionally than others of similar age and background because of their willingness to push themselves a little bit farther and not settle for an easier kind of existence.*

*We all have tremendous capabilities, but are rarely straining at the upper level of what we can do; these men are. The country can be proud and grateful that so many of its sound, young, eager men care enough about their own status in life--and the welfare of their country--to pool their skills and match them collectively against the power of the sea."*

**Sea Stories:** A short story by Mike Van Hoy {EN2(SS), 1959 - 1960}, about some of his early days on the Cusk and his creative way of getting a job done quickly.

*"...His nickname was "Stratts" {Jerry Stratton, EN1(SS), 1958 to 1961}. I can still remember him assigning me to scrape out the air boxes in #3 main engine during an overhaul. I worked with another Engineman named Bradford {Richard, EN2(SS), 1959 to 1960} to clean it out. I think I still have some of the carbon grit in my pores. I also remember a time I was assigned some special duty to paint the deck one night of a work barge we were staying on during dry-dock. He gave me five gallons of green decking paint and a paint brush. I quickly determined it would take all night with the brush he gave me, so I found a broom and used it and was finished in no time. The next morning he asked me how I was able to finish so quickly. I never told him about the broom. He probably still thinks I'm the world's fastest painter."*





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**What's wrong with this picture?** The picture on the left shows the Cusk gently rolling on the Pacific with a slight breeze and a state-1 sea. What could be nicer? But something is wrong with this picture. Can you spot it? (Answer below)



Nothing wrong with this picture! Bobby Maddox is baking fresh bread in the Cusk's Galley as he gets ready for "Soup Down".

**Eternal Patrol:** The following is a list of our shipmates who departed on Eternal Patrol in 2016 but were not listed in our last newsletter. Each man was a fantastic shipmate and all will be sorely missed. Where available, pictures and obituaries may be found on the Cusk website on the Eternal Patrol pages at this link ([www.usscusk.com/Eternal.htm](http://www.usscusk.com/Eternal.htm)).

Name & Rank	Served aboard Cusk	Departed
Edward "Ed" Heral	1963 to 1964	January 20
William "Bill" Munson, EN3(SS)	1949	March 4
Alexander F Nieto, RM3(SS)	1953	March 26
Garold E Prawl, FTCM(SS)	Unknown	April 26
Joseph H Lowenhardt, EM2(SS)	1960 to 1963	August 7
David P Hirt, QM3(SS)	1951 to 1953	August 22
Arthur "Art" O'Meally, RM1(SS)	1964	October 5
William Hale Gignac, EN2(SS)	1958 to 1959	October 7
James F "Jim" Johnson, RMC(SS)	1967 to 1968	November 29
Roger Hathaway, EN3(SS)	1960 to 1961	December 11

**SAILORS! REST YOU OARS!**

**Cusk Trivia and Picture Answers:** (1) Once airborne, the Loon Missile was powered by a PJ 31-1 Pulse Jet engine which developed a gross thrust of 850 to 900 pounds at a specific impulse of about 1,100 pounds. It used a pressurized gasoline fuel for power. Although the Pulse Jet engine was started just prior to launch, it took the four JATO (Jet-assisted take off) bottles to launch the Loon and get it up to a speed and altitude where the Pulse Jet engine could maintain the flight.

(2) The Cusk entered the Mare Island Naval Shipyard on 15 February and departed on 12 July 1954. While there, she received a Guppy II Conversion and other modifications. "Guppy" was an acronym for Greater Underwater Propulsion Power Program (the 'y' was just editorial). These changes to the Cusk improved her battery capacity, streamlined her superstructure, added a snorkel mast and exhaust system, and improved her fire control system. Additionally, the Cusk's missile hanger, launch ramp and other launch equipment were removed. At the same time, special missile guidance equipment was added to enable the Cusk to support the new Regulus Missile Program, the next generation of submarine missiles. Although assigned to participate in the Regulus Missile Program, the Cusk could no longer launch missiles and she was subsequently re-designated from SSG-348 to SS-348 and she remained SS-348 until just prior to decommissioning.

(3) What's wrong with the picture? The Cusk was on its way to a very dangerous and highly classified mission. Our orders included doing nothing that might give away our identification or position. Hence, ship's name and hull number were ground off and painted over, and all active radio, sonar or radar equipment was disabled. Finally, to prevent the accidental or intentional release of the Cusk's distress buoy, you can see two metal straps welded over the buoy to prevent its release.

*"Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners." - Sir Winston Churchill*

