USS Theodore Roosevelt
(1st Polaris Submarine)

Underwater Table Shuffleboard Tournament - Late 1950's

We (Tom & Lynda French, The Board Talk Editors/Publishers) were again blessed with the opportunity during the Houston Holiday Open 2003 tournament to sit with Sol Lipkin (now 97 years young!) and acquire more shuffleboard historical data that we wish to share with our subscribers/advertisers in this February 2004 The Board Talk issue. This year, Sol Lipkin brought us some copies of photos of one of the most historical shuffleboard tournaments -- being that of a 60 day underwater tournament (circa 1959) on the USS Theodore Roosevelt (the 1st Polaris submarine built).

As Sol describes this historical event... In the late 1950's, Sol Lipkin was called upon by the US Navy Officer and Chaplain of the USS Theodore Roosevelt (the 1st Polaris Submarine built) to help get a table shuffleboard installed to give the crew something competitive to do while spending days and months on underwater missions, including an upcoming "shakedown" mission... something more competitive than watching movies was their goal. The submarine was about to be sent from Gorton, CT to Charleston, SC to be "outfitted" and the shuffleboard installation became part of the outfitting to-do list. It was installed on the topedo rack's steel structure that lifts up/down and the legs on the shuffleboard cradle had to be drastically shortened to accommodate to the correct height needed for play from the shuffleboard's cradle.

The tournament was MC'd by the Navy Commander (who was also a surgeon/doctor by trade). Sol Lipkin has a reel-to-reel tape of this tournament that he is trying to locate so that it can be reproduced and preserved on more durable media. Sol does not recall the names of the Commander and Lieutenant (Sr. Grade Officer) that ended up as partners against two other crew members in the final match of the tournament, but does vividly recall the final shots of the tournament. The score was 20-20 (21 point game format) and the Captain had the last weight (hammer). His opponent threw a short weight, so it seemed almost definitely that the Captain would have no problem outpassing his opponent's short weight to capture the one point needed to win the tournament. However, it appears that someone tipped off the helmsman and with perfect timing, as the Captain threw his hammer to pass the short weight, the submarine took a tilt that placed the Captain's hammer into the "rough" (which was the Navy crew's term for when a weight went into the gutter)... so the two opposing crew members won without the hammer and with only a short weight on the board and were officially the tournament Champions!

When Sol Lipkin finds the reel-to-reel tape of the tournament, we volunteered to help him get it produced on a more reliable/preservable media so that we all may have the opportunity to view this historical tournament in full. Thank you Sol for sharing this story and tournament photos with our subscriber/advertiser base. (Note: We have also included non-tournament photos and additional history from internet sources such as: navsource.org and torsey.homestead.com websites)

The following column and pages includes photos of the USS Theodore Roosevelt tournament and some history of this 1st Polaris submarine. -- Tom & Lynda French, Board Talk Editors

NOTE: Laid down as Scamp (SSN-600), 20 May 1958, at Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, CA. (in photo above); Renamed and redesignated Theodore Roosevelt (SSBN-600), 6 November 1958; Launched, 3 October 1959; Commissioned, USS Theodore Roosevelt (SSBN-600), 13 February 1961; Decommissioned and simultaneously struck from the Naval Register, 1 December 1982; Final Disposition, disposed of through NPSSRP (Nuclear Powered Ship and Submarine Recycling Program) at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, WA., 24 March 1995.

[Editors’ Note: We (Board Talk Editors/Publishers) have not yet ascertained when and where the actual shuffleboard was laid to rest or disposed of, but above is the history/summary of the USS Theodore Roosevelt’s life.]

(USS Theodore Roosevelt... Continued on Next Page)
Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth after launching on Theodore Roosevelt (SSBN-600) at Mare Island. Here is the story of this picture from the shipyard newspaper. "She didn't do it, but she was supposed to -- break the champagne bottle on the bow of the Theodore Roosevelt (SSBN-600), first Polaris submarine built on the West Coast, and launched at Mare Island on October 3, 1959. Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth, daughter of the late President for whom the ship was named, was the sponsor. She was also the first, and last, Mare Island sponsor who declined a dress rehearsal for the launching ceremony. She missed the ship when she swung the bottle, and in desperation threw the bottle at the ship and missed again. Fortunately, a member of the crew on the ship pulled the bottle up by the attached cable, and quickly smashed the bottle on the bow before the ship hit the water. He did a fine job as evidence by the broken bottle held by the tearful sponsor."

(U.S. Navy photo courtesy of Darryl Baker from the navsource.org archives)
(Above Photo from Sol Lipkin: USS Theodore Roosevelt (ca 1959) Shuffleboard Tournament)
(USS Theodore Roosevelt... Continued on Page 25)
(Above Photo from Sol Lipkin: USS Theodore Roosevelt (ca 1959) Shuffleboard Tournament)

(USS Theodore Roosevelt... Continued on Page 26)
Republican split gave victory to the Democrats, and Woodrow Wilson became president in March 1913.

When Taft won the Grand Old Party's banner, Roosevelt led his followers out of the party and formed the Progressive Party. The States in 1910, he became disillusioned by Taft's conservatism. In 1912, he tried to win the Republican presidential nomination.

Howard Taft, and left the country on a schedule of safaris, hunts, and tours. However, soon after his triumphal return to the United

Over the earth and then abolished the stations. He then divided the Navy into three fleets: the Atlantic Fleet (including all battleships),

Modernized its ships, increased both its officer corps and enlisted complement, and improved efficiency through better training.

To Roosevelt the aggressive diplomat, a large and efficient navy constituted a primary tool for the conduct of foreign policy. Hence

He asked Congress for little legislation but used executive power to the hilt to achieve reform.

In 1904, Theodore Roosevelt was reelected overwhelmingly. That popular mandate allowed him to push the reform legislation through Congress.

The Elkins law and the Hepburn Act prevented railroads from charging exorbitant rates and from giving large rebates to preferred customers. The Expedition Act established special three-judge courts to expedite the trial of antitrust suits.

The Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act protected consumers from the evil practices carried out by the food and meatpacking industries. Roosevelt also dusted off old laws which provided for the establishment of federal parks, national forests, and national preserves of coal, mineral, and petroleum-producing lands to save much of America's natural bounty for succeeding generations.

Roosevelt conducted a vigorous foreign policy. When the Colombian senate refused to ratify the Hay-Herran Treaty—which provided for American construction of and control over an isthmian canal across the Colombian province of Panama—Roosevelt countered by supporting Panamanian insurgents who staged a bloodless coup and immediately agreed to the treaty in their own right. After that, he personally superintended every step of canal construction.

His policy toward other Latin American nations was directed toward protecting them from European intervention. The crowning feat to his diplomacy came in 1905, when Roosevelt played the major role in bringing about the negotiations in Portsmouth harbor which ended the Russo-Japanese War. This contribution to world peace won him the Nobel Peace Prize.

To Roosevelt the aggressive diplomat, a large and efficient navy constituted a primary tool for the conduct of foreign policy. Hence he launched a program to raise the United States Navy up to a high standard of efficiency and strength. He enlarged the fleet, modernized its ships, increased both its officer corps and enlisted complement, and improved efficiency through better training.

Roosevelt reorganized the Navy's operating forces along more rational lines. He called home its ships from stations scattered over the earth and then abolished the stations. He then divided the Navy into three fleets: the Atlantic Fleet (including all battleships), the Pacific Fleet, and the Asiatic Fleet. This change and the increase in personnel allowed the Navy to improve efficiency and to adopt a more realistic training program. The cruise of the Great White Fleet around the world between late 1907 and 1909 might be considered the triumph of his naval policies and the culmination of his efforts to wed military strength to diplomatic endeavor.

In February 1909, the battleships of the Atlantic Fleet returned to Hampton Roads and filed past their benefactor in a huge naval review. Early the following month, Theodore Roosevelt passed the reins of government to his hand-picked successor, William Howard Taft, and left the country on a schedule of safaris, hunts, and tours. However, soon after his triumphal return to the United States in 1910, he became disillusioned by Taft's conservatism. In 1912, he tried to win the Republican presidential nomination. When Taft won the Grand Old Party's banner, Roosevelt led his followers out of the party and formed the Progressive Party. The Republican split gave victory to the Democrats, and Woodrow Wilson became president in March 1913.
Roosevelt returned to retirement and resumed writing and traveling. Although neutral at the outbreak of World War I, he quickly became pro-Allied. His outspoken criticism of Wilson's neutrality sought to arouse the country to what he saw as a struggle between benevolent democracy and rapacious, Pan-German imperialism. When the country did enter the war, Roosevelt applied to Wilson for a military command, but the latter ignored him. He hoped to run again for the presidency in 1920, but that last dream was denied him as well for he died peacefully in his sleep on 6 January 1919 at Sagamore Hill, his home at Oyster Bay, N.Y.

Using components initially assembled for the Skipjack-class nuclear attack submarine Scamp (SSN-588), SSGN-600 was laid down on 20 May 1958 by the Mare Island Naval Shipyard, named Theodore Roosevelt and redesignated SSGN-600 on 6 November 1958, launched on 3 October 1959; sponsored by Mrs. Alice Roosevelt Longworth; and commissioned on 13 February 1961, Comdr. William E. Sims (blue crew) and Comdr. Oliver H. Perry, Jr. (gold crew) in command.

Five days after commissioning, Theodore Roosevelt departed Mare Island, bound for the east coast. On 7 March, she became the first fleet ballistic missile submarine (FBM) to transit the Panama Canal. Four days later, she arrived at Cape Canaveral, Fla. After successfully firing her first Polaris A1 missile on 20 March and completing her shakedown training, the submarine arrived in Groton, Conn., on 1 May for post-shakedown availability at the Electric Boat Co. yard. She completed those repairs on 24 June and departed Groton, bound for Charleston, S.C. Theodore Roosevelt stopped at Norfolk, Va., along the way and arrived at Charleston on 7 July. Between 7 and 19 July, she loaded Polaris missiles at the Naval Ammunition Depot, Charleston, and made all other preparations for her first deployment. On the 19th, she stood out of Charleston on her first deterrent patrol. She concluded that patrol on 23 September at the FBM base at Holy Loch, Scotland.

Over the next three and one-half years, the submarine made 15 more deterrent patrols departing from and returning to the Holy Loch base in each instance. Late in the spring of 1965, she departed Holy Loch on her 17th and final patrol of the deployment. She concluded that patrol and the deployment when she arrived in Charleston on 15 June. She unloaded her 16 Polaris missiles and then departed Charleston for New London Conn., where she arrived on 26 June.

At New London, Theodore Roosevelt entered the yard of the Electric Boat Division for an extensive overhaul. Between July 1965 and January 1967, she had her nuclear reactor "refueled" and her Polaris weapon system modified to accept the more advanced Polaris A3 missile. The FBM submarine completed overhaul on 14 January 1967 and launched into sea trials and refresher training, all of which culminated in the successful firing of a Polaris A3 missile at the Cape Kennedy (Cape Canaveral) missile range late in April. At the end of the training period, she returned to Charleston to load missiles and to prepare for another series of deterrent patrols out of Holy Loch. She embarked upon her 18th patrol on 1 June and completed that cruise at the Holy Loch base.

Theodore Roosevelt's second tour of duty operating from the Scotland base proved to be very brief in comparison to her first. Between mid-June of 1967 and February of 1968, she completed her 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st patrols. On 20 March 1968 while returning to Holy Loch from her 21st patrol, the submarine ran aground off the western coast of Scotland. After drydocking for temporary correction of the damage, she departed Holy Loch on 5 April to return to the United States for permanent repairs. Between 18 and 20 April she unloaded her missiles at Charleston and then headed north to New London. On the 23rd, she arrived in the yard of the Electric Boat Division and commenced an extended repair period. Labor disputes caused delays, and Theodore Roosevelt did not complete her repairs until mid-October. She spent the latter part of that month in sea trials and then departed New London on 2 November on her post-repair shakedown cruise. She visited Norfolk, Puerto Rico, and St. Croix before concluding the cruise at Charleston on 27 November. She conducted training operations out of Charleston before deploying to Holy Loch again early in 1969.

That tour of duty lasted until May 1971. During the interim, she conducted nine more deterrent patrols, returning to Holy Loch for refit after each. On 12 May 1971, she stood out of Holy Loch on the 31st patrol of her career. On 20 July, Theodore Roosevelt arrived in New London completing both the patrol and the deployment. She remained in New London for three weeks, during which time members of her blue crew and her gold crew were brought together into a single overhaul crew while other members of both crews moved on to other assignments. On 10 August, the FBM submarine headed south to Charleston where she arrived on the 13th. Over the next month, she underwent refit and then departed Charleston on 11 September for special operations. Theodore Roosevelt returned to Charleston on the 30th and remained there a week and a day before returning to sea for another three weeks of special operations. The ballistic missile submarine reentered Charleston on 1 November and began a preoverhaul restricted availability. Three weeks later, she officially began her refueling overhaul, which lasted for more than two years.

Theodore Roosevelt completed her overhaul in January 1974. During the following two months, she conducted sea trials out of Charleston. In April and May shakedown training and nuclear weapons certification preparations occupied her time. In June, she conducted a one-week midshipman familiarization cruise out of New London, then underwent nuclear propulsion safety training before departing for Norfolk. In mid-June, she received word of her reassignment to the Pacific Fleet with her new home port to be Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Between July and September, Theodore Roosevelt conducted another midshipman training cruise; then settled into predeployment training and preparations. The submarine departed Charleston on 20 September, transited the Panama Canal on 5 October, and, after a nine-day stop for missile loadout at Bangor, Wash., continued on to Pearl Harbor, where she arrived on 4 November. Six days later, she departed Pearl Harbor, bound for the Marianas. She entered port at Guam two weeks later, underwent refit at her new advanced base there, and began her first deterrent patrol in the Pacific Ocean on 31 December. Theodore Roosevelt conducted patrols out of Guam until 16 December 1977 at which time she departed on her 43rd deterrent patrol.

(USS Theodore Roosevelt... Continued on Page 29)
This is the Submarine Graveyard and other ships since 1990. Disposal and Recycle Program

Note: Theodore Roosevelt was commissioned February 1961 and hull recycled March 1995 (per this chart to the right which was found on the: trujillo.homestead.com website)

US Naval Nuclear Powered Submarine/Cruiser Inactivation, Disposal and Recycle Program

Hulls Recycled by the Men and Women of Puget Sound Naval Shipyards 1990 - 2001