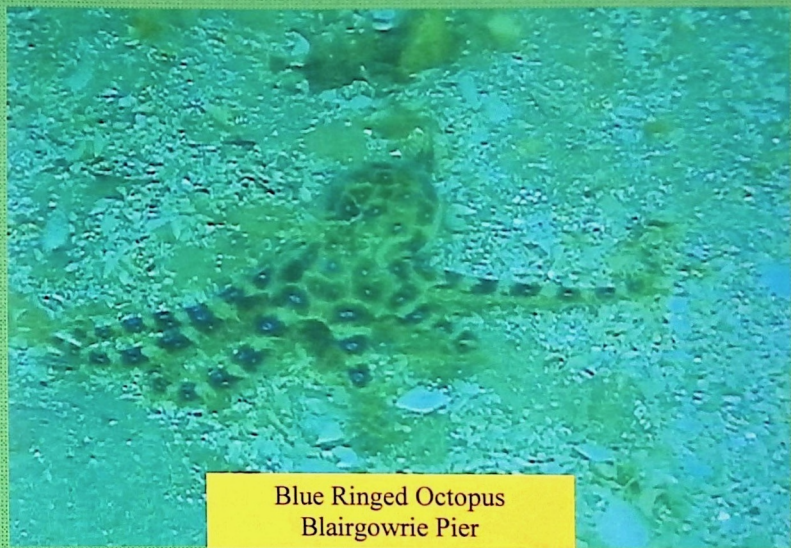


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APRIL — MAY 2008

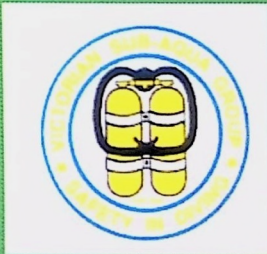
VICTORIAN SUB-AQUA GROUP



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www.vsag.org.au

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Camberwell VIC 3124





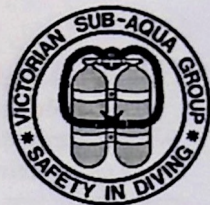
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FATHOMS



Official Journal of the Victorian Sub-Aqua Group

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VSAG General Meetings
3rd Thursday in the month

Editorial Submissions to:

Bell's Hotel
157 Moray Street (cnr Coventry Street)
South Melbourne, 8.00 pm
Alan Storen
15 Regal Court Vermont South Vic 3133
storens@bigpond.net.au

Editorial

What a hectic start to the year with many more activities to come. The river cruise was well attended and I am sure enjoyed by all who could make it. Diving has been good with few cancellations so far. The Saturday dives are proving popular and the night dives getting a few starters. The Anzac trip to Jervis Bay is happening soon and the Bali trip is taking shape. Most would have caught up with the 'Easter at the Prom' cancellation and the committee are looking at how this booking problem can be avoided in the future. I hope you had an enjoyable break anyway and managed to get in a dive or three.



We have had two great speakers at our general meetings so far this year with many more planned. If you hear of any speakers that would suit our discerning audience please let one of the committee know and we will see what we can arrange.

The dreaded dredging is going ahead as planned and its effect on the diving is already being felt in some areas. Please let one of the committee know if you notice a major problem and it will be forwarded to SDFV and the Port of Melbourne Corporation. (see SDFV minutes)

On the social scene we are currently planning a 'xmas in july' function and already many expressions of interest have been voiced. Come along and make it a success. Contact Bridey with any input.

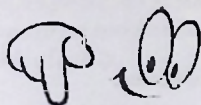
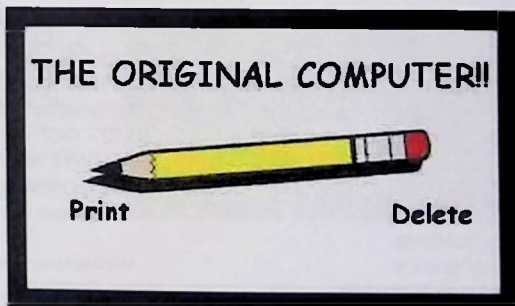
Mick Jeacle is starting to plan a liveaboard to PNG or similar area next year and if you have any thoughts please pass them on to Mick. May-June is the probable time.

We have three guest speakers at the April, May and June meetings – put the dates in your diary and come along and find out about the boating industry, sex in the sea and other fascinating topics. Guests are more than welcome.

Queens Birthday weekend at Boarfish Lodge is a sellout. If you want to go in the ballot then register your name(s) with John Lawler asap so that you do not miss out. Even if not attending for the full weekend you can still book for a dive on the Saturday, Sunday or Monday. Most will be departing from Queenscliff but there might be a Sorrento boat depending on the demand.

The now annual cray bash to Cape Jaffa again was very successful and is reported on in this edition. Well done Peter Briggs grabbing the heaviest cray at 5.1 kgs

Alan Storen



Reports on dives and other activities are urgently needed. Please submit to the editor. Photos also needed of club trips and social activities.

storens@bigpond.net.au

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Committee meets 2nd Thursday of the month
ALL MEMBERS WELCOME

Spectacular Reef : Saturday 26th January 2008

Australia Day

After meeting up at the Sorrento ramp at 9.00am three boatloads of VSAG divers headed for the Rip with a view to doing a quiet little dive outside the heads and then heading in for a slack water dive on Lonsdale wall. With the dredging due to start the next weekend and perfect weather, we weren't about to pass up the chance to see the area before the dredging started.

The Lawler and Mastrowicz boats opted to dive on the shallow reefs a kilometer or so from the heads and search for crays. I was aboard the SS Jeacle and we headed for the wreck of the Coogee.

The Coogee lies in 32m of water and as we descended onto her stern section we were spellbound by the massing fishlife that hung motionless around the 6m high wreckage. The vizability this day was very dark on the descent, but on the bottom it was probably around 10m. Chris Llewellyn and Mick Jeacle had an equally relaxing and enjoyable dive although a computer malfunction caused an early ending to err on the side of safety.



Over on the shallow reefs near Lonsdale the other 8 divers were enjoying a very clear splash in about 14-18m of deep rugged reef. Good cray territory they say, but I didn't see too many with any liberated crustacea. Environmentalists I say!

As the slack approached around 12.30 pm our boat made an impromptu decision to try for Spectacular Reef. Arriving at the site we threw our gear on and John Merlo and myself hurtled to the bottom to find the drop-off only metres away and the current completely still.

The drop off here is as good as a dive spot gets. Huge ledges and undercuts. Starting at about 55ft (16m) and dropping off quite sharply to well over 45m. The fish life was everywhere you looked and under every 2nd ledge was a blue devil fish or two. Every square inch of bottom is encrusted with an assortment of different coloured sponges and soft corals. Awesome stuff!

After swimming along the upper reaches of the drop-off for a while John decided to venture back onto the plateau to search for crays. Am I glad he did. We came across a series of canyons and undercuts that dropped down to 26m deep, that runs at a right angle to the main drop off. This was an unexpected delight. Fish life was probably even better there and although John never did find a cray, he wasn't complaining when he surfaced.

This had to be the most relaxing dive I could ever imagine having in this area. The dive was eerily calm, almost like diving in a pool. This reef system is not called Spectacular Reef for no reason. It is nothing short of Spectacular, and I can only hope that when I dive it again after the dredging takes place that the POMC hasn't ruined on of our Bays living treasures.

The other divers included, Storens (Alan and Jackie), Ken and Takai, Bridey Leggett and Peter Briggs. After retrieving the boats we all assembled at the Sorrento Pub for a half hour de-brief and it appears the dives on the Lonsdale wall area were equally as good.

This was a sensational day out and I can't think a better way to celebrate Australia Day 2008. Go diving with your mates and then throw a lamb chop on the Barbie. You know it makes sense, I'm Greg Richards.





ANZAC DAY (night) DIVE



I would like to look at doing a nite dive using Tom Wendt on Anzac Friday: Slack water Flood is at 6.30pm and Tom is OK to take 5-10 people at \$40 per head to say Portsea Hole (advanced divers only).



RING: Greg Richards on 0408 287 754



A SAFETY TIP

I have read several articles on the safety benefits of carrying a small CD (about 8cm diameter) in your pocket with your safety stop anchor or surface marker buoy (safety sausage). Simply hold the CD in one hand and point the other hand at the dive boat. Look through the hole in the CD and move it until it flashes on your outstretched hand (the direction of the boat!) Wait for the boat to pick you up!

Sound good to me and a definite safety advantage on many of the open water dives that we do.

I have several if you cannot source one.

Alan Storen

Maribyrnong River Cruise

It was forecast to be a wide brim hat and sunscreen day and the bureau did not let us down. Five boats and 25 VSAGers and friends met at the 'warmies' boatramp in Newport to begin a day of fun and adventure on the Maribyrnong River.



The participants were: John and Yvonne Lawler and friends, Mick and Annie Jeacle and friend, Alan and Jude Storen and grandson Liam, , Peter and Carol Briggs, John Mills and Priya, Charlie and Judy Brincat and family, David Geekie and Pamela and granddaughter, Herb Epstein and son. After a staggered launch – Mick had been delayed by traffic, we set off up the River past the Port of Melbourne and up the river. Pictures tell a thousand word so I will let the accompanying pictures give you a visual of the great day we had on the water. We stopped for lunch on the river which ranged from a BBQ to 'Chicken and Champagne depending on tastes.



Some of the more adventurous ended up in the water for a dip and from what I saw all participants had a most enjoyable day.



Many thanks to Bridey for her organisation, it was a pity she was not able to make it on the day. Already a trip to 'Herring Island has been suggested so if you missed this adventure watch this space for the next!

RIDE FOR YOUR LIFE

While talking to Barry Truscott some months ago, he casually mentioned that he, Bob Scott and Tony Tipping were enjoying a monthly bike ride. Apparently this was mooted over a few red wines at the annual VSAG life member's dinner. Bazza suggested that I might like to join them on the next ride.

A great idea, I thought, but immediately thought of a few obstacles:

- I don't have a bike
- I haven't ridden a bike for 30 years or more
- I would be too wary of riding on busy roads



None of these obstacles would be insurmountable. Obviously, the most important thing was to find a bike. To this end I looked at countless bikes on e-Bay, which was not the ideal way to purchase a bike. For one, I did not really know what to look for, and secondly, being such a Big Lloyd, how would I know that the bike I purchase would be large enough for me?

Well, eventually I settled on a mountain bike, but when I called to pick it up I could readily see that this would be an ideal bike for Annie. What the heck, I thought, as I proceeded to raise the handlebars and seat as high as they would go in an effort to at least be able to ride the damn thing.

Anyway, if I found that I did not like the caper, then I had only wasted \$102.50 and I figured that I should be able to re-sell it and get all or most of my money back.



So, at first chance I went on a short test ride. The walking track where I take the dog sometimes seemed an ideal place. No traffic to worry about and nobody to observe my meagre efforts after some 30 years. It was here I found out that you don't really notice steady, gradual inclines on a walking track, until you climb aboard a bike. After some

huffing and puffing I reached the top of a hill and then experienced a glorious free ride at almost 40 km/h for a kilometre or more, totally oblivious to the fact that I would have to climb the bastard on the way back. Ah well, I had survived the test and had ridden a whole 10 kilometres. I was quite proud of myself until I learned that Bazza and the boys ride 25/30 kms. Bugger.....how was I going to get up to that level before the next monthly ride?

*Well I had a couple more test runs before the next ride, which was hosted by Bob Scott. I was slowly getting the hang of it and easily covered the 20 kms on Scotty's ride. It was after this that word got out, and other old VSAG boys expressed an interest in joining the rides. They are John Goulding, Paul Tipping and Andy Mastrowicz. As well as these three, we have also been joined by my old mate of some 43 years' standing, Alan Higgs. Alan had casually mentioned over a beer that he had won a \$1,200 road bike a short time ago, and that he had swapped it for two mountain bikes for he and his wife Margaret. A line of communication has been set (email is fantastic isn't it?) and a name for the group agreed upon...the **OLD HOGS**. If you haven't seen the movie *Wild Hogs*, hire the DVD.*

Since my initial ride last September, I have enjoyed the rides hosted by Tony Tipping, myself, Paul Tipping and Andy Mastrowicz. A roster has been drawn up whereby the host is rotated, and it is his responsibility to choose the ride, and put on lunch afterwards for the hungry riders. I might add that this started off as sausages and onions in a bread roll, but Andy and Gail put on a right royal spread in January, which some think has raised the bar somewhat. Let's not get too carried away boys.



*On the Friday before leaving for the VSAG Christmas trip to Portland, I picked up my new **Large** GT hybrid bike. It is a 24 speed beauty that has made such a difference in my riding. The last straw was when on Tony Tipping's hosted ride a mere slip of a girl yelled from behind "passing" and as she flew past me she turned and cried out "**you need a bigger bike!**"*

Bazza and I, and Tony Tipping (on Annie's bike) enjoyed quite a few rides at Portland. On one occasion we were joined by Priya, and on another by John Mills. John must have hated stopping for the old guys so often, so much so that the next day he took off on a 168km round trip by himself. Wow!.....I don't think I will ever

achieve that sort of distance.

However, what I have convinced myself of is that this is a great way to improve one's fitness. Bazza and I now ride regularly together between the **Old Hogs** days, and Annie has now taken to riding the bike that I bought for her all along. Recently we booked into the Alpine Retreat in Warburton, and rode the Warburton Trail. Annie covered the distance from Warburton to Launching Place and return, and I rode the entire length to Lilydale station (40 kms). And only last Saturday we rode the Lower Dandenong Creek trail, a return distance of 27 kms. I look forward to many more bike/rail trails like this one, and we may even plan weekend trips away for the **Old Hogs** to experience some coun-



try trails, and the good company and good cheer that goes along with it. I am pleased to add that we have also been joined by former VSAG member Geoff Birtils. Unfortunately Geoff lost his wife and lifetime partner Isobel two years ago. At her funeral he told us that he was doing a lot of bike riding, so Annie recently mentioned to me that we should invite Geoff along as she was sure he would enjoy the company. I am happy to say that he has jumped right in and I am sure he is enjoying it immensely.

So, if any of you old blokes out there can spare one Monday per month, dust off the old bike in the shed (or be fitted for a new one) and come along and have some fun with the **Old Hogs**. You'll be glad that you did.



Enjoy fresh air - go bike riding!!





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SDFV Meeting Feb 2008

Please have a look at <http://www.sdfv.org.au>
and also at <http://www.sdfv.org.au/issues.html>

Port Phillip Bay Channel Deepening Project

Last tuesday we had a DILG (you did look at links above didn't you, so I don't need to type it out again) meeting and really the main outcomes are the links included now on the sdfv website that point you at the current dredging activities pages and a promise to see if they can provide any further more speedy info about dredging location and plume.

It was also clearly stated that there is only the 200m no-go zone around the dredge ship itself.

ONLY if the hydrohammer is being used in the Heads area will that be extended. The SDFV executive [during discussions about and for the DILG] would like to make the following recommendations (as opposed to creating a new code of practice which is felt to be unnecessary):

During port phillip bay dredging project

1. Dive elsewhere! [check daily activities dredging schedule and avoid the immediate area as required by law and dirty water]
2. Follow SDFV General Code of Practice as this covers all necessary requirements
3. Report anything bad to both email sdfv@sdfv.org.au and the projects environmental monitors [POMC to provide contact methods - phone, email or via their website]

Minutes of Feb 5th SDFV Meeting

Apologies: A. Beckhurst, A. Storen

Present: D. Grimm, R. Day, J. Lawler, T. vanDerBlink, J. Tagell, J. Hawkins

Meeting pretty much followed agenda, with most discussion about Codes of Practice and Channel Deepening Project.

ex-hmas canberra got an airing as well with a good update from J. Lawler - hopefully some real, good news soon from govt. depts.

Details:

Codes of Practice - needs reviewing regularly - please look at the getunder document and the codes from the sdfv website and discuss with your clubs about any changes you feel are required.

Code for Marine Parks - Dan Grimm suggested that one day we need to sit down

with parks vic and follow through on their promise to help us develop one. It is expected it should be a 3 paragraph environmentally friendly code with things like:

1. Follow SDFV General Code of Practice as this covers all necessary requirements
2. Avoid anchoring as it may damage reef etc
3. avoid shot lines as it may damage reef etc
4. minimise handling of marine life underwater
5. minimise impact on underwater environment [eg: don't drag weight belt across intertidal zone]

Sort of similar to their codes/guidelines for low impact educational experiences.

Dredging discussion - see stuff at top of page and on sdfv website. DILG is a conduit for communications (both ways) and not too much else. Des mentioned that he noticed newspaper articles from the 1840's to 1850's discussing the issue of what to do with yarra dredge spoil!

Ex-hmas Canberra - deed document finally submitted - maybe it will even get signed soon. J.Lawler gave a very good detailed update of meetings and progress to date.

J.Tagell gave a report on site management subcommittee and the need for a reasonably fast reply from SDFV for a VARS/DSE meeting later this month - see a discussion paper to be sent to sdfv's issues list - please reply back for your club to the issues list and that way all will be party to the discussions.

Fisheries matters - strangely not much discussion (where was priya?).

Subscriptions for your club!!!!

Yes it is the time of year we ask for money - Once again it is unchanged: \$50/club (with discount for small and/or inactive clubs).

We want to represent divers - so it is important that we represent as many divers as possible and as many clubs as possible.

If you know of any clubs not affiliated with the SDFV and not part of a shop - please let me know!!

See next email for the site management stuff - I still have to try and summarise the source doc to a useful discussion form.

Regards

Daniel Grimm

SDFV secretary

<http://www.sdfv.org.au>



What Do Retired People Do All Day?



Working people frequently ask retired people what they do to make their days interesting.



Well, for example, the other day the wife and I went into town and went into a shop.



We were only in there for about 5 minutes. When we came out, there was a cop writing out a parking ticket.



We went up to him and said, 'Come on man, how about giving a senior citizen a break?'



He ignored us and continued writing the ticket. I called him a Dumb-ass.



He glared at me and started writing another ticket for having worn tires. So the wife called him a shit-head.



He finished the second ticket and put it on the windshield with the first. Then he started writing a third ticket.



This went on for about 20 minutes. The more we abused him, the more tickets he wrote.



Personally, we didn't care. We came into town by bus.



We try to have a little fun each day now that we're retired. It's important at our age.



CAPE JAFFA

My second trip to Jaffa would see 4 boats and 17 divers trying to bag a few elusive crayfish. If you were to go to Cape Jaffa looking for night life or a Gold Coast type Marina, you would be very disappointed, but reasonable diving in cold water to a maximum depth of 15 metres with a good bunch of divers is still a very pleasant way to spend a weekend.

The weather this year on the surface would prove to be perfect, fine sunny days with winds below 10 knots. Under the water was very surgy with poor visibility. All boats managed to catch quite a few crays, with most bagging their limit of 8 per day.

The park is well set up to cater for divers and fisherman and many tall stories were swapped at night between camps and as the drinks flowed, the stories became wilder.

As a new member, some of the friendly banter between older members seemed a bit heated, I didn't witness any physical flair ups but they didn't seem far away (only joking really, many people would pay big money to witness the floor show between Lewy, Baz and Mick).

I had a great weekend, brought home a few crays and even caught a large one exceeding 5 kg. If you want a good fun weekend and don't mind a long drive, join us next year.





Jaffa 2008



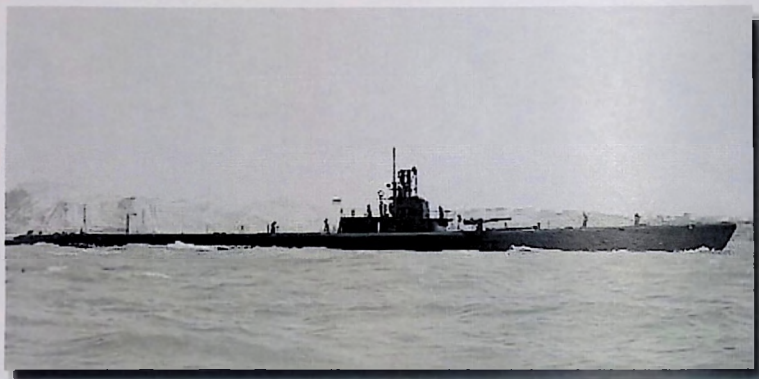
3 2008

One of the US Navy's top WW2 Submarines USS *Wahoo*, lost in October 1943, found 63 years on by Russian Dive Team.

By Mackenzie Gregory.

Introduction.

The US submarine *Wahoo* was amongst the top performing boats of WW2. In October 1943, in the Sea of Japan she went missing, to be declared lost with her 80 crew on the 9th. of November that year.



USS *Wahoo*

Length: 311 feet

Speed: Surfaced: 20.25 knots; submerged: 8.75 knots

Armament: One 3-inch cannon, two .30-caliber machine guns, two .50-caliber machine guns, 10 21-inch torpedo tubes

Crew: 79

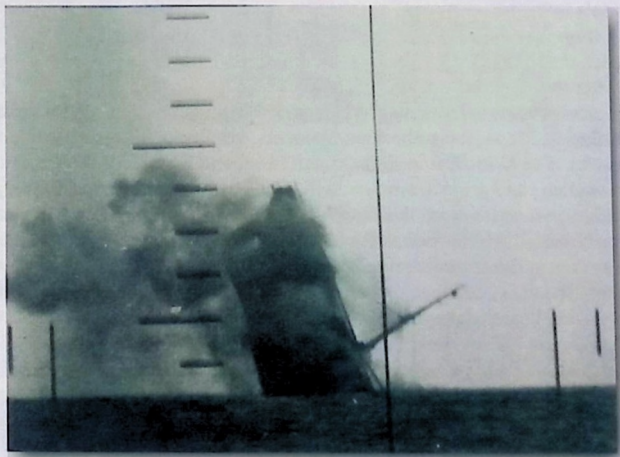
Class: Gato

It is interesting to note that it is usual when attacking a target for the submarine CO to man the periscope, in *Wahoo*, whilst Richard O'Kane was her executive officer in 1942, he always manned the periscope during an attacking run.



O'Kane and her CO Morton on *Wahoo's* bridge

The US *Wahoo* Group takes as its task to seek out the whereabouts of five lost WW2 US submarines, in June of 2006, USS *Lagarto* (SS-371) was identified in the Gulf of Siam, now the wreck of USS *Wahoo* is found by a Russian Dive Team at the end of July 2006.



The sinking of *Nitu Maru* by *Wahoo*

Russians find wreck of *Wahoo*.

In July 2006, the Russian sailboat *Iskra* looking in the Sea of Japan, for the last Russian submarine to go missing in WW2, has stumbled upon the wreck of missing US Submarine, the Gato Class USS *Wahoo*, lost back on the 11th. of October 1943, and listed as missing with all 80 crew members on the 9th. of November that year.

See <http://www.warfish.com/scrap-EP.html> for pictures of *Wahoo* on the bottom.

USS *Bowfin* Museum Press Release August 2006.

The Search for USS *Wahoo* (SS-238)

Energy Company confirms research team's position.

Russian Divers prove site as submarine.

The search project for the World War II United States submarine USS *Wahoo* (SS-238), taken to a new level with the assistance of major energy contractors and Russian Authorities, has confirmed what the USS *Wahoo* Project Group believes may be the final resting place of America's most famous WWII submarine.

(*Wahoo* actually comes in third, amongst the USN submarines for top tonnages sunk in WW2, note by Mackenzie Gregory.)

The Project Group was given a substantial lift when Sakhalin Energy Investment Company Ltd. provided immense support in the form of offshore electronic surveys of sites previously indicated to the Russian authorities by the USS *Wahoo* Project Group, headed by the MacKinnon Organization (Japan) and the Ocean Wilderness Group, (Australia). The surveys confirm a side scan anomaly, which may possibly be the submarine USS *Wahoo*. The energy company, aware of the historic and humanitarian operation, selflessly offered its support, which coincided with its own offshore surveys.

A sub-sea survey conducted by Russian divers out of Vladivostok, utilizing the Project Group's information, confirmed the findings as a submarine at the end of July. The USS *Wahoo* Project Group received U S Navy approval for their South China Sea Project, the search for five lost US WW II submarines and several other vessels in 2003 after their approach to the US Secretary of the Navy, following many years of development. The Project Group has received continual support and assistance from Russian and Japanese authorities, sponsors, veterans and researchers from several countries. The USS *Bowfin* Submarine Museum, the project's scrutineers, research custodians and project curators, will be the official recipient of the project on behalf of those who were lost, their families, and their comrades. The Museum will work closely with the USS *Wahoo* Project Group and US Navy, Russian, and Japanese authorities in the correct approach management of the confirmation identification project. Specialist Archaeologists and Anthropologists have been appointed to oversee the identification project, and work with Ocean Wilderness Group divers to document the site.

The project, which has been an epic of research and beauracratic negotiation, has brought together several nations, individuals, private organizations and companies in support of veterans and families of the lost from previously opposing nations. The

generation of goodwill and the prospect for closure, historic documentation of the site and the commemoration of the brave by the United States, Japanese and Russian governments is remarkable. The support of the Russian Federation Foreign Affairs Department, and the assistance provided to the Project Group by the Russian Federation Embassy to Australia has been exceptional.

Managed by Bryan MacKinnon, grandnephew of Wahoo Commander Dudley "Mush" Morton, the Project Group, now preparing a complete, non-intrusive sub-sea survey, has a thorough understanding of their responsibilities with regard to the USS *Wahoo* site and other sites. The group has no intention of either releasing the location of, or interfering in any way, with the site. Their primary aim is to verify, document, and to provide record of the USS *Wahoo* and her resting place as the tomb of eighty brave souls, entrusting all gathered materials to the USS *BoIwfin* Submarine Museum and the appropriate authorities for historic and commemorative purposes, and to close another mystery in the chapter of events known as World War II.

This effort follows up the June 2006 final identification of the USS *Lagarto* in the Gulf of Siam.



Sooya Strait, The scene of *Wahoo's* demise

Conclusion.

Discovery of lost WW2 merchant, surface warships, and submarines, sometimes is a matter of years of painstaking research, the use of modern diving techniques, and intrepid dive teams, and sometimes a matter of pure luck.

In this case, finding the wreck of *Wahoo*, seems a case of the latter, whilst searching for the last WW2 Russian submarine to go missing, they turn up the wreck of the USS *Wahoo*. One more example of a secret locked away for the past 63 years, at last solved, so that the relatives of all of *Wahoo's* crew may now know the final resting place of their loved ones who lay in peace at a depth of about 200 feet in the Sea of Japan.



U.S.S. *Wahoo* pictured in July 1943 off Mare Island Navy Yard.

Commanded by Dudley "Mush" Morton, *Wahoo* was one of the most successful American submarines of World War II.

Four months after this picture was taken she was lost with all hands while attempting to exit the Sea of Japan after sinking four ships for a total of 13,000 tons. Her wartime total was 60,038 tons.

Navy says wreck found off Japan is legendary sub USS *Wahoo*

From Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet Public Affairs PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (Oct 31, 2006) – For more than six decades her whereabouts have remained a mystery; her story one of submarine legend – her crew on "Eternal Patrol."

Yet, after an extensive review of evidence, the last chapters are being written as the Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet declared today that the sunken submarine recently discovered by divers in the Western Pacific is, indeed, the World War II submarine USS *Wahoo* (SS 238).

"After reviewing the records and information, we are certain USS *Wahoo* has been located," said Adm. Gary Roughead, the U.S. Pacific Fleet commander. "We are grateful for the support of the USS *Bowfin* Submarine Museum and Park and appreciate greatly the underwater video footage of the submarine provided by our Russian navy colleagues, which allowed us to make this determination. This brings closure to the families of the men of *Wahoo* - one of the greatest fighting submarines in the history of the U.S. Navy."

In July, the Russian dive team "Iskra" photographed wreckage lying in about 213 feet (65 meters) of water in the La Perouse (Soya) Strait between the Japanese island of