

SEA STORIES



You can't make this up

by Terry Elmeier\TM1
USS Gato SSN 615

My Grandmother lived in Detroit, and we ALWAYS went there in August to visit. The year was 1963. I was 10 years old and my uncle, Jack Hart, a 22-year EM1/SS Navy veteran and "bubblehead," was serving aboard the USS Cero. One Saturday Uncle Jack came over to Grandma's and asked, "Hey Terry, want to spend the night on the boat with me"... of course I would ... that experience sold me on becoming a submarine sailor!

Fast forward to November 1970 when I was a senior in high school with my 18th birthday coming up in January. Mom woke me up one Saturday morning and said, "Come on Terry we are going to the police station!"

Now, what have I done?

When we got to the station, a detective took me into a room and said, "Okay young man, your Mom says either you straighten out and graduate, or you can join the Navy"... so I responded: "Okay, I will join the Navy."

He says, "just a minute," and leaves the room returning with my Mom who is now crying, "You can't join the Navy. You have to graduate." I said,

"Shit, Mom you know I want to join the Navy." My Mom's plans that day

didn't go exactly as she had expected.

So, one day in February (1971), I skipped school, visited the recruiter, and enlisted in the Navy, all

unbeknownst to Mom.

That summer, my Mom and my stepdad, Don, were going to Florida to see his parents, and Mom



Meet my Uncle Jack

asked me if I wanted to go. My response was: "No, I am just going to stay and see what my classmates are going to do for college in the Fall."

Summer breather

I had to report for Boot Camp the second week of August. I was afraid I would have to report without telling Mom where I was going, but fortunately Mom and Don got back the first week of August.

Upon their return, I told Mom that I had joined the Navy, and she said, "When did you do that?" I said, "In February." She said "When were you going to tell me?" I said "I am telling you now, because I have to leave next week!!"



Terry became a 'Bubblehead' just like his uncle.

The submarine USS Cero (SS-225) was assigned to Detroit as a training ship.

