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# BOTTOM TIMES

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## *Bottom Times Editor*

*ISG Ray Ramirez*

The Bottom Times is back! Again, we have a place to showcase our skills and tell our stories. The 21D organization is undertaking a huge transformation and until we have a designated position responsible for the newsletter, I will publish the Bottom Times quarterly.

I would like to thank everyone for their article submissions. The one thing I ask is to please send pictures with your submissions. I know many of our readers intend on reading the newsletter, but can't find the time, so I am trying to add pictures since they say a thousand words.

In addition, if there is anyone that did not receive this via email and would like to, send your contact information and I will add you to our distribution list: [raymond.j.ramirez@us.army.mil](mailto:raymond.j.ramirez@us.army.mil)

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## *Chief Diving Supervisor Notes*

*MSG Marlo Mendoza*

Greetings to all. My family and I are enjoying our second year in FLW and couldn't be happier at our current station. If everything works out as planned, our retirement transition should work out smoothly. I'll be in VA for the entire month of June to finish planned projects at the house in Gloucester in preparation to sell.

As far as the Diving Community; moves is a major issue for all TOE or TDA units. I'm fully aware of the shortages of qualified ranks and diving rates required to maintain operational capacity. I ask everyone to be patient and keep doing whatever it takes to conduct safe diving operations while accomplishing the mission.

The next team will be fully manned prior to their deployment and the manning focus will shift to the remaining teams. I have attempted to accommodate everyone in their preferences of duty location and will continue to do so to the best of my abilities. In all fairness, people should be willing to move when it is required of them (Remember, you're still in the Army).

**Doctrine** – We are in the process of rewriting/revising our FM 3-34.280 and AR 611-75 to accurately reflect our capabilities within our newly restructured teams. This was discussed as one of the major topics during our diving conference 11-22 January 2010. Changes are being made to the final draft.

**Organization** – Our newly restructured teams may be re-stationed apart from one another. Tentative plan to be implemented approximately FY12 to the West Coast to a receptive Battalion/Brigade. This concept is finally coming into fruition after hearing this since I was an E4 (some of you weren't even born yet).

**Training** – Please take the time and complete any survey sent down to units. The data collected is crucial for implementing future training emphasis relative to our combat mission. Additional survey will be sent out targeting newly arrived divers six to twelve months after arriving into units. Also targeted are supervisors, please ensure accurate data is entered into the survey.

**Materiel** – Thank MSG Adams (TACOM) for assuming the responsibilities of the Combat Developer until SFC Chebahtah arrives in August 2010.

**Leadership and Education** – We conducted the scheduled Marine Engineer Diving Officer selection in July to fill the teams and another in November to fill the Executive Officer position at the dive school. We conducted the MDV Certification Board in October '09 and April '10 to max capacity of five candidates per and it wasn't as difficult as I thought it would be considering the number of candidates. Congratulations to Master Diver Green, Master Diver Flack, and Master Diver Bower, Master Diver Prater, Master Diver Christesen, Master Diver Langley, and Master Diver Larrew.

**Personnel** – We are seeing a steady influx of Second Class Divers entering the dive field (that's a good thing). We are at or above 100% for



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E4s and below, that means Engineer Personnel Proponency Office (EPPO) is not allowing as many waivers for reclass Soldiers wanting to come into the dive field as before. SSG Wulczynski arrived on station and is quickly thrown into the mix of Phase 1 business. SFC(P) Vance has packed up his family and belongings and should be in FEVA by June '10, as Phase 1 awaits the arrival of SSG Gills in July '10. SSG(P) Shults is now in the driver seat as the Phase 1 Course Manager, and I'm sure he'll maintain the standards in producing caliber divers. I have to thank newly arrived SSG Wieder for stepping up to the plate and kept things going during my emergency leave, considering he had no idea where anything was kept. He has done exceptional work with the STP, Lesson Plans, and the Critical Task List.

**Facility** – According to the last After Action Review (AAR) of the October MDV evals; the current school facilities catering to the needs of the dive field, met with high praises from the board members. However, I would like to hear some of the AAR comments from the students from all levels of training concerning the school house facilities. Future facilities for departing teams will have to be manifested within the practical imagination of the requesting commander or whatever is made available by the receiving unit station.



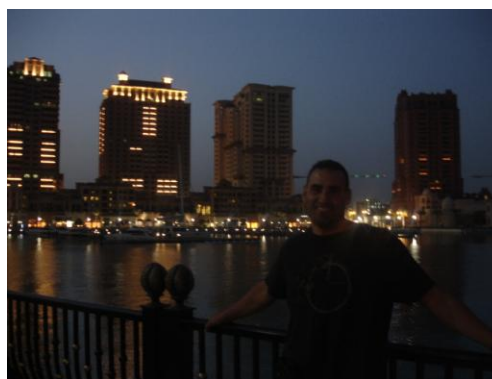
## 511<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachment

*Supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom*

Greetings from the sand storm capital of Kuwait! Let me start off by thanking the 86<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachment for providing us with an outstanding RIP/TOA and to SSG Jakovenko who extended his tour by two months. We appreciate everyone's support.

Since our arrival on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, we have hit the ground running and have completed 8 force protection security swims in Qatar and Oman, 17 local dive missions in Kuwait, and 1 mission in Iraq. These missions have cumulated over 4000 minutes of bottom time and over 3100 minutes of supervisor time.

Our most frequent mission has been force protection security swims in Qatar and Oman. The work is pretty repetitious, but is a nice stress reliever for our guys. Our mission is to ensure the safe transport of cargo on military vessels through foreign ports. We ensure there are no obstructions or hazards on the pier or the pilot boats. Although the dives are short, these missions let our guys go out on the town, see the sights and eat some non-chow hall food! These missions are expected to continue and will probably pick up throughout the rest of our deployment.



Our next most frequent mission has been local dive missions in Kuwait. A primary function of the Detachment is to inspect and clean U.S. vessels at Kuwait Naval Base. Vessels from the Army, Navy, and Coast Guard pull in to KNB and call upon the 511<sup>th</sup> to conduct dives on their boats if they suspect any kind of issue.

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Many of the dives have been as simple as un-fouling fishing line in propellers, while others have been as complex as a three-day cleaning of the entire hull of an LSV using a pressure washer. This ongoing mission has benefits for all members of the 511<sup>th</sup>; supervisors get opportunities to supervise dives, while second class and salvage divers stay sharp on their ship husbandry skills.



A majority of the vessels that require these inspections are only in KNB for a short time; this requires that the 511<sup>th</sup> be ready at all times to react to a dive request. For this reason, ready dive sides are always set-up and personnel are always ready to dive within one hour of receiving a request. This quick reaction set-up has been beneficial to all members of the team and it ensures a constant operational mindset regardless of concurrent operations.

The 511<sup>th</sup> hasn't had much luck conducting operations in Iraq, but we continue to stage a dive team located on Joint Base Balad to provide engineer dive support to the theater engineer brigade and to United States Forces-Iraq. The team is comprised of one Dive Supervisor and three Divers capable of conducting SCUBA, hydrographic survey, side scan sonar, and remote operated vehicle operations. Our guys stand ready to execute any mission that comes their way and they continue to provide hyperbaric recompression support for Air Force pararescuemen, Navy SEALs, and US Army Special Forces Divers.



With the downsizing of troops in Iraq, the main focus has shifted from conducting operational missions to responsible withdrawal. One mission did come down and a team went to Mosul to conduct a remains recovery mission for an Iraqi boy. Unfortunately, the weather took over and the mission was canceled.

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With all of these missions, we still find time to conduct training on the Muwafi tug. The Muwafi tug boat has been a thorn in the side of Army Divers in KNB since 2004. The 86<sup>th</sup> first salvaged the boat, which was then used as a missile target. The 511<sup>th</sup> salvaged it yet again and started to remove the drive system. The 544<sup>th</sup> finished cutting out the drive system and kept the boat afloat. The 7<sup>th</sup> towed the boat to the beach where it was cut into large pieces. The 74<sup>th</sup> continued to cut the vessel into large pieces. The 86<sup>th</sup> finished the large cuts with demo and drug the boat further up the beach for easier access. The 511<sup>th</sup> used surface cutting tools to cut the remains of the boat into two smaller pieces and burned holes in the keel for rigging.

The Muwafi is finally out of our hands, as it waits for the Kuwaitis to remove it for good.

On a personal note, the 511<sup>th</sup> had the opportunity to promote several Soldiers. Sky Schofield and Timothy Vandebos were promoted from Private First Class to Specialist, Tyler Dodd and Tom Kneipp were both selected for Sergeant First Class, and Edouard de Courge was promoted to Captain. All five are great Soldiers and their promotions are well deserved. In addition, SSG Kneipp completed his supervisor check-offs, earning him the Unlimited Diving Supervisor Qualification, while SGT Wallace and SGT Broughton completed their Salvage Diver check-offs, earning them the Salvage Diver rating. SSG Tomlin submitted a dive tracker computer program to an Army-wide software application competition, so we hope to see him win. SPC O'Donoghue, won the 53<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team Soldier of the Year competition, beating out Soldiers from over twenty other companies and earning several awards. Each of these Soldiers have worked hard and have made the Detachment proud.

In closing, the 511<sup>th</sup> would like to thank everyone for their support. Every package, letter, and gift keeps us focused and means a lot. We miss everyone and hope all is well on the homefront. Hooyah...DeepSea!



## **569<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachment-*The Hydra (Patent Pending)***

*CPT Mike Hallman- Hydra 6 (Maybe)*

Greetings one and all from the 569<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachments! It has been a very long time since the last Bottom Times and much has transpired since. The face and form of the Army Engineer Dive community has continued to morph even since I took command in December of last year. So, I will begin this commentary by stating (for those of you who don't know) the provisional company configuration so many of you were used to at Fort Eustis is no more. All teams from October 2011 forward until otherwise changed will be standalone Dive Detachments, each led by a CPT and MSG/ISG. In fact, as of the date of this Bottom Times all detachments except for the 74<sup>th</sup> (who still fall under the 569<sup>th</sup> for command and control) are currently configured as standalone teams. Couple this with the fact we as a community have recently had selected 5 new Master Sergeants and 13 new Sergeants First Class, leaving a leadership vacuum at the Staff Sergeant level, and we have a recipe for mass promotion opportunities and many vacancies throughout the community. The times ahead are truly exciting and somewhat worrisome to say the least. In my opinion, we will struggle to balance the teams and coordinate training events and TDY missions for several years into the future. I am not overly concerned however, because as you all know we have the best and brightest serving in our community who never cease to dazzle and amaze me at what they can accomplish with small numbers and courageous diligence in performing their duties to meet mission requirements!

Recently (this past quarter) focus has been on maintenance and recovery after several years of TDY without time to stand down and repair equipment. Funding and establishing a better relationship with the 20<sup>th</sup> Engineer BDE and 30<sup>th</sup> Engineer BN (Prov.) at FT. Bragg have also been key areas we have focused on over the past 6 months. If you don't already know we now fall under the folks at FT Bragg now for Training and Readiness. The Army continues to become more and more modular as time progresses. We like many other units are changing with the Army as we are changing as a community.

As you could imagine, focus on training for some time will be geared toward getting divers salvage and diving supervisor qualified. We have several training events planned for the last quarter of this FY. These include a situational training exercise (STX), Caven Point Pier rehabilitation in NJ, a salvage exercise (SALVEX), and Deep Blue, our annual diving supervisor training event.

We will continue to change with the coming of this next FY when we stand up the 74<sup>th</sup> under the command of their very own CPT and MSG, and the 569<sup>th</sup> will finally be a real team. We are not sure what we will call our element yet but we are leaning toward The Hydra (mythical 7 headed sea beast from Greek mythology). That's all for now, I look forward to our next update!

**HOOYAH!!! DEEP SEA!!!**

## 7<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachment

*CPT Adrian Biggerstaff*

ALOHA from the Divers in the Pacific! 7<sup>th</sup> Dive kicked off this quarter with a change of command between CPT Tom Darrow and CPT Adrian Biggerstaff on 31 March 2010. Other than the brief pause to switch out commanders, the team has been hard at work in preparing for its upcoming deployment.

**Announcements:** We are happy to announce that SFC Prater earned his Master Diver Pin during April's Senior Leader Course. His hard work over the past few years finally paid off, and he is going to be a great asset to the team when we're deployed. We are all looking forward to the celebration when he returns after his well deserved month of leave.

7<sup>th</sup> Dive would like to recognize: SSG(P) Harrison, SSG(P) West and SSG(P) Woodcox on making the E-7 list this year. SGT Hoover, SPC Wilson and SPC Morales on their recent promotions. CPT Navarro for pinning on his captain rank this month.

7<sup>th</sup> Dive has gained a new medic and soon to be Dive Medical Technician, SPC Aaron Panneton. However, we are sad to see two great divers leave. SGT David Neary and SGT Christopher Floto have been great assets to the team since February 2008, and they will be deeply missed. We wish them the best of luck in the next chapter of their lives as civilians. Thanks for all of the hard work Mr. Floto and Mr. Neary.

While Tom Darrow is no longer an active member of the 7<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Team, he will always be part of the family, and we would like to recognize all of his accomplishments over the past few months. In March 2010, Tom and April had their first child, Aden, and a few weeks later, Tom received notice that he was selected for Major, DOUBLE BELOW THE ZONE! Tom is now a Team Leader at JPAC assisting 7<sup>th</sup> Dive in their upcoming search mission in Corsica, France.

**Current Training:** In April, we completed a well executed Situational Training Exercise (STX) at the squad level in order to refresh the Troop Leading Procedures and some of the more technical tasks the divers must perform: hydrographic survey, side-scan sonar, and remote operated vehicle searches. The training was organized and ran by 1LT JP Navarro and SFC Prater.



In addition to the STX and other basic Soldier skills training, 7<sup>th</sup> Dive has also embarked upon a local Salvage Exercise (SALVEX) in Hawaiian waters. The project is a 50 foot sailboat sitting at the bottom of Keehi Harbor, on Sand Island. If all environmental permits are approved, the project will give the divers the salvage training they require prior to deployment, save the government a good deal of money, and also help Hawaii's Southern District Harbor Master clear a navigation hazard out of his channel.

**Upcoming Events:** This summer, 7<sup>th</sup> Dive plans to conduct Swift Water Training at the Special Forces' Dive Training Center in Key West, Florida from 26 June – 2 July 2010 in order to exercise all applicable tasks required for conducting potential swift water operations in South West Asia.

7<sup>th</sup> Dive is also trying to accomplish Deep Water Dive Training this summer, somewhere in Hawaii. We have faced more challenges than you can shake a stick at in trying to arrange for vessel support for a Deep Blue. Our plans may shift to pier-side diving, but we are keeping our fingers crossed.

The last diver exercise planned for 7<sup>th</sup> Dive prior to deployment is a Joint Personnel and Accountability (JPAC) mission in Corsica, France. The mission will include searching for Service Member remains from a World War II plane crash site in the Mediterranean Sea. The operation is expected to last 45 days.

DEEP SEA!



## 544<sup>th</sup> Engineer Dive Detachment

*1LT Tim O'Hara*

The 544<sup>th</sup> has seen some major changes in the last 6 months. Effective 11 December 2009 the 544<sup>th</sup> transformed into the new 25-man dive detachment configuration commanded by CPT Scott Sann. Shortly after the transformation, the 544<sup>th</sup> deployed to Belize in support of SOUTHCOM to train foreign divers SCUBA operations. After one day in Belize, the unit was diverted to Haiti to perform disaster relief efforts following the devastating 7.0 earthquake. The Soldiers of the 544<sup>th</sup> Dive Detachment took part in one of the largest military dive construction projects in recent history. The unit inspected and assessed six different waterfront facilities. It surveyed over 10 square miles for Joint Logistics Over the Shore (JLOTS) operations enabling humanitarian aid to be immediately delivered to the people of Haiti. Each diver also logged over 350 man hours in the water repairing the South Pier in Port-au-Prince. Their efforts will have long lasting positive implications to the country of Haiti and the Army Dive community. Due to their enormous effort, the members of the 544<sup>th</sup> were rewarded with two Navy Commendation Medals, four Navy Achievement Medals, five Army Commendation Medals, and six Army Achievement Medals. Each member of the unit also received the Humanitarian Service Medal.

Upon redeployment the unit performed a Change of Command ceremony where we said good-bye to CPT Scott Sann and welcomed the new commander of the 544<sup>th</sup> EN Dive Team, CPT Trent Geisler. The unit gained SGT Sotello a very competent and outstanding supply NCO.

Unfortunately, the unit lost a few members to re-structuring efforts within the Fort Eustis dive community. The 544<sup>th</sup> had to say good-bye to SSG Micah Sherrod, SGT Andrew Miltenburger, and PFC Leslie Schiltz. They have been a true asset to the detachment and will be greatly missed. SSG Sherrod also had the misfortune to lose his father during the last month. Please keep him and his family in your prayers, and offer your condolences as appropriate.



**(Before Repair)** 80% of all support piles were damaged this badly or worse



**(During Repair)** All piles were cleaned, chipped, drilled, and re-forcing rebar was emplaced

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Due to the restructuring we also gained a Soldier back into the Kraken family. We would like to welcome SPC Kirby back to the 544<sup>th</sup> Dive Team as well as two new divers from dive school PFC Sandell, and PV2 Holdner.

For the next few months, the 544<sup>th</sup> can expect to get back to training and refitting all its equipment from Haiti. The detachment has three major exercises planned over the next few months. The unit will perform surface supplied diving operations at the Yorktown Coast Guard Station pier; Salvage operations at 3<sup>rd</sup> Port; Demolition operations at Fort Pickett; and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deployment to Kansas City.

In closing, thank you to all of the spouses, family, and friends of the 544<sup>th</sup>. The 544<sup>th</sup> could not accomplish its mission without your support. Please have a safe and exciting summer and always remember to unleash the Kraken! God bless and DEEP SEA!



(After Repairs) Forms were placed around each pile and concrete was poured



Unleash the Kraken!

## *U.S. Army Engineer Dive School*

*1SG Lou Rivera / CPT Tim Mitroka*

For the six month update from the Dive School, we are doing all right down here. We have plenty of openings for E6 Instructor/Writers, which is a great assignment to help anyone prepare for Master Diver Evaluations, quickly complete your command qualified supervisor check-off, become a subject matter expert in the latest dive doctrine and equipment, increase your chances for early promotion, be a part of the team that trains and molds the newest deep sea divers that may one day be your go-to dive supervisors, build strong ties with your brethren divers from the Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force and Marines, and of course get plenty of non-deployable family time to enjoy all that Panama City Beach, Florida and the surrounding area has to offer. The only catch is learning the TRADOC and Navy systems in place; but don't you worry, your chain of command will run interference as much as possible so you only have to focus on instructing your students.

The training team has been busy since the last Bottom Times issue back in November 2009. First off, a big congratulations goes out to our four new Master Divers: SFC Prater, SFC Langley, SFC Christesen and SSG(P) Larrew. Job well done to all four! You earned it. A big thank you to SFC(P) VonKeyserling for teaching the class again on top of performing your Center for EOD and Diving duties. Likewise, the efforts of SFC(P) Green should not go unrecognized in that he orchestrated recurrent study sessions to help prepare the candidates for their impending attendance of Evals. In light of the large number of selections from the last SFC/E7 board



**New Master Divers: SFC Prater, SFC Christesen, SFC Langley, and SSG(P) Larrew**

(congratulations to all!), we are working to schedule an additional Master Diver Evaluation class in the October/November timeframe this year. We look forward to it and will let everyone know when the dates are locked in. In the mean time, the rest of you MDV/C's need to hit the books hard and hit every dive side around because your opportunity is coming soon.

The new group of soon-to-be 1<sup>st</sup> Class Divers just started up with their class with SFC Langley and SSG(P) Parmenter proctoring. These two have diligently worked on updating course material for the last several months to ensure our divers are receiving the best training available. They make a great training team and look forward to delivering the best 1<sup>st</sup> Class Divers possible to the field. The dive school recently received a Standard Navy Double Lock (SNDL) to use for training the Chamber Sup's and Inside Tender duties. It is still going through the Navy's system certification process before it can be used for training. There is also a hard piping modification planned for the existing schoolhouse air supply

system to allow for continuous air supply to the SNDL. This will allow the 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Divers to conduct numerous runs to depth, alleviating interruptions during the Outside Tender training, eliminate both the constant recharges of the ASRA to get the whole class through and the loud compressor operations. We are really looking forward to full implementation in to training, once it is all completed.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Diver team is continuing to do great things with SFC(P) Green in the lead. SFC Kaufman has done an outstanding job with redeveloping and executing the new “technically oriented” FTX. SSG(P) Larrew and SSG(P) Woodcox also proved to be instrumental assets by fabricating three FTX mission projects (salvage, pipeline and airplane cockpit) and mentoring the students during the pilot executions of the FTXs. SSGs Forkhamer and Rowley have performed very well as class proctors and are working with the new staff on board, SSG Knoop and SGT Kuhn, to get them qualified, ready to take charge, and lead future classes. Other news within the 2C team: SSG Rowley completed Ranger school back in December as a re-enlistment incentive. SFC(P) Green was awarded with the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for his selfless service to help the military and local community here. The new ROVs and photo sets are on hand and already being trained to the 2Cs.

Our AIT Platoon Sergeants, SSG(P) Cleveland and SSG Tyler, stay hard at work making sure your future 2Cs are indoctrinated into the Army and well disciplined to join the ranks of the divers.

SFC Mark Lubin retired from the Army on 31 March 2010 after nearly 21 years of loyal and committed service. Everyone who has worked with Mark would agree the leadership and instruction he provided to prepare our diving supervisors for the mission throughout the years was remarkable. His commitment to mentoring Soldiers was beyond reproach and he leaves behind a lasting impression for



**Class 09-30-A2C FTX: Emergency extraction of a dive casualty; SFC Kaufman and SSG(P) Larrew look on as 1LT Weller directs the class on pulling up the stricken diver**



**Class 10-10-A2C FTX: Student, Private Booyesen works on rigging the salvage project for towing to the shore while it finishes dewatering**

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others to emulate. SSG Tony Lopez just retired from the Army as well on 31 May 2010 after 17 dedicated years of service. Tony was a great mentor and friend to a lot of us. He made significant contributions to the training of divers for all to benefit. The Army Deep Sea Divers are truly going to miss both Mark and Tony in their ranks. We wish you two the best of luck. Fair Winds and Following Seas!

The future is looking great for better training projects. The Navy is bringing on board multi-panel projects for uses in the 40 foot pool and a new salvage project called the "HULK". These two projects are going to be incorporated into the 2C curriculum and will start being used very soon, and will eventually be available to outside commands for use when not scheduled for use by the school house; the 7<sup>th</sup> Dive has already been eye-balling the opportunity. Hoo-Yah Deep Sea!

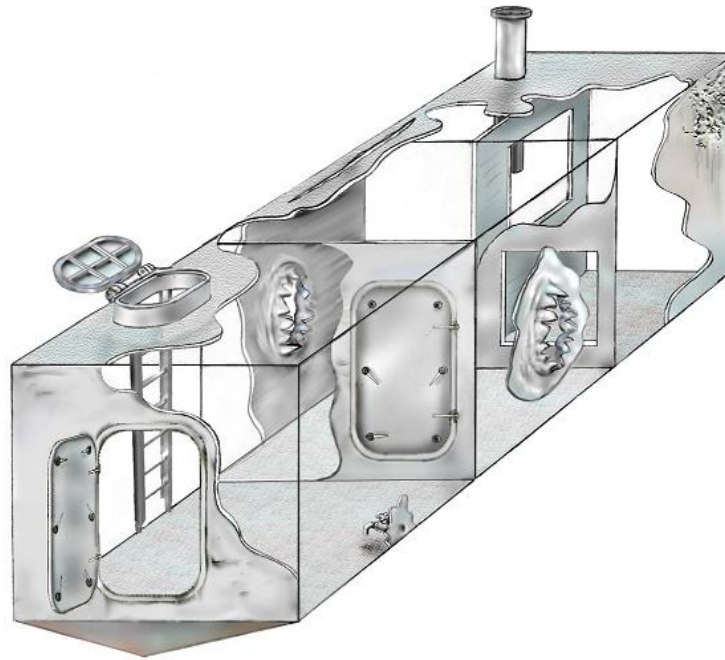


**The Multi-Panel Project Platforms: Pipeline Project Showing**

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**The HULK Salvage Project**

## ***U.S. Army Divers' Association***

*David A. Farber- USADA Membership Secretary*

Hello All,

Army Divers' Reunion 2011 will be held in Newport News, VA on June 9-12, 2011, for more information please visit the USADA website <http://www.usarmydeepseadivers.com/> and click on the link Reunion 2011.

Please complete our short questionnaire so we can make this reunion as memorable as possible.

Also if you are a member, we have recently updated our by-laws and need your vote of approval to implement them. We have simplified our operations, membership types, and requirements and you can review these revised by-laws on our website by clicking on the by-laws link on the home page, and then complete a short survey for your responses.

As always, if you have any questions or comments about our Association please don't hesitate to contact one of the Association Officers at <http://www.usarmydeepseadivers.com/Contacts.htm>

May all of your assignments be memorable and for all of our sakes, please dive safe.

Take Care,

Dave