

USSVI Bonefish Base

Mike "Willie" Williamson

Base POC

A couple of months ago I was at a seminar where I met another ex-sub sailor who happened to be a member of USSVI Groton Base (he noticed by ball cap). While speaking, another gentleman there exclaimed that his father had served on the USS Finback in WWII. In our ensuing conversation he told me his father served on the Finback when past President of the United States George Bush was rescued at sea after being shot down and was adrift. He also exclaimed that he had contacted him in regards to his granddaughter for a report for school. He said that he had sent him a picture, along with a letter and ships log of the USS Finback (SS230) of the event. I told him I was interested in this piece of history, and asked if he could send to me a copy so I could share with other submarine sailors in my organization.

Attached is what he sent me:



*To Emily Cameron
with best wishes,*

Co Bunk

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
February 19, 1992

Dear Emily:

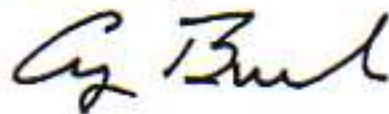
Your kind grandfather, Mr. Jack G. Cravens, wrote to me about your current school project.

Your great-grandfather, J. B. Cravens did indeed serve on the USS FINBACK (SS 230) in World War II. I am enclosing a war history of the FINBACK, and page four states that your great-grandfather won the Silver Star. The Silver Star is awarded to servicemen for gallantry in action against the enemy. He was a hero.

Also, enclosed is a duplicate page of the USS FINBACK's log for September 2, 1944. As you can see, the FINBACK rescued me at 11:56 a.m. on that date. I'll always be grateful to the men of the FINBACK for saving my life. That is why I invited the surviving crew members to attend the inauguration in 1989.

Good luck in school and in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "G. Bush", written in a cursive style.

Emily Cameron
4128 Arroyo Willow Lane
Agoura, California 91301

DECLASSIFIED

U.S.S. FINBACK (SS230)

C-O-N-F-I-D-E-N-T-I-A-L

0645 Two F6F's overhead as escort. Headed east for island. Closed to 9 miles and maintained this position.

0933 Received word of plane down 9 miles NE of MINAMI JIMA. Started around southern end of CHICHI JIMA, maintaining minimum range of 7½ miles to island.

1156 Picked up Lt. (jg) George H.W. BUSH, File No. 173464, USNR, pilot of plane T-3 of VT-51, U.S.S. SAN JACINTO, who stated that he failed to see his crew's parachutes and believed they had jumped when plane was still over CHICHI JIMA, or they had gone down with plane. Commenced search of area on chance they had jumped over water.

1236 Received word of rubber boat seen from air. Position given was in hills of HABA JIMA but started south anyway, asking for jigs, repetitions, and conformations, until we heard one plane state he was circling over the boat. An unknown plane on the circuit was heard to mention a spot "west of HABA". This was at least as good as any dope we had, so headed for a position about 9 miles west of HABA JIMA. This seemed to make our cover feel better, although they tried to con us through the island a few times. Plane reported that the raft, about 1½ miles from beach, was being shelled. Spirits of all hands went to 300 feet.

1505 Dived to 55 feet with planes in sight zooming a spot in water 1 mile WSW of MEGANE IWA.

1530 Sighted rubber boat.

1550 Roared by the rubber boat, backing full and still making 4 knots. We must have misjudged his mast-head height a bit. We twisted around and started stalking him.

1620 Pilot hooked on and we headed out away from beach. Tried to make two-thirds speed, but the pilot had one arm around the periscope and the other around the life raft with a bailing bucket bringing up the rear. Stopped to see if he would get in the boat. This took about 10 minutes, during which a discussion developed below concerning the precedence of simultaneous orders to blow, pump, and flood. Finally got way on towing pilot in his boat. Two-thirds speed filled the boat, and there he was in the water again. Finally came up to 38 feet to keep him out of the water until at range of 5 miles from beach, placed up and opened the hatch.