

# AMERICAN SUBMARINER

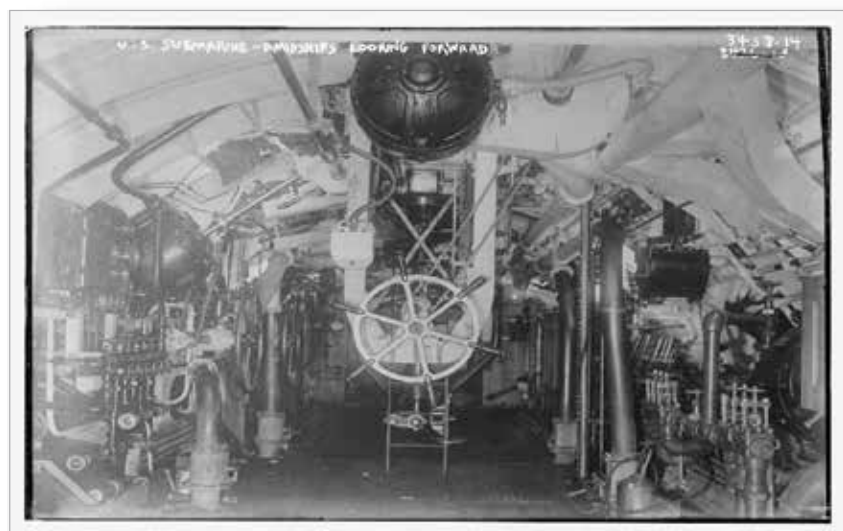
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EDITED BY  
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### On the Cover

Sailors utilize a simulator for refresher training at King's Bay's Trident Submarine Training Facility (TTF). The simulator provides a realistic environment where students can "drive" the boat through numerous drills and scenarios as the classroom dives and rolls on a hydraulic base. The TTF provides training solely for the Atlantic Fleet Trident Submarine Force in King's Bay, Georgia.

Navy photo by Chief Photographer's Mate Chris Desmond.

## THE VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE



**Wayne Standerfer**  
*National Commander*

Shipmates,

Welcome to 2021 and I feel I speak for all of us in saying that hopefully the next twelve months will be more enjoyable than what we have had to patiently (and I loosely use the word patiently) endure during most of 2020. As some of you may know, all of the articles contained in the AS Magazine have a submission deadline roughly 30 days before publication. So, taking into consideration the rapidly changing conditions we are subject to at the present time, please excuse any discrepancies between what is written and what is fact by the time you read this.

The year 2020 crept by and closed out under conditions that none of us have experienced before. We were subject to restrictions that prevented us from safely conducting what was ingrained in all of us from the moment we reported onboard our first boat, which is "Personal, Up-Close, and Protective Camaraderie." However, from the reports that I received throughout the year, a large majority of our membership stepped up and practiced some of the additional qualities that make us Submariners and those are the abilities to adapt, endure, and move on. Thank you, shipmates; you once again make me proud to hold my present position as your National Commander

2020 also ended with two very noticeable changes in the operational structure of USSVI: The first is the change of command in our USSVI National Office. Bremerton Base member and USSVI National Office Manager Frederick (Fred) Borgmann has retired after 19 years of continuous service that included not only supervising our National Office but also being the go-to shipmate for solutions to any and all administration problems our Bases and individual members encountered thru the years. One of the most prevalent phrases I have heard since my very first year as a USSVI member has been "Ask Fred." Fred, on behalf of our entire organization, a simple "Thank You" seems insufficient. Thankfully, Bremerton Base member Dennis Nardone, who has been working with Fred in the office for several years, has agreed to step up and assume the duties as our Office Manager. Dennis is a very competent, "Fred-trained" replacement, and I have no doubt we will continue to see the professionalism that has been the unwavering mainstay of our National Office.

The second change is that our *American Submariner* magazine editor Michael Bircumshaw has asked to step down after a total of eight years as editor. Michael will be succeeded by LA-Pasadena Base member Charles (Chuck) Senior. Chuck has been working with Michael as an associate editor, and considering his attention to detail, graphics skill, writing credentials, and empathy with our readers, this changeover should be problem-free. Trying to properly thank Michael for his contributions toward making our national publication a printed reflection of what USSVI is and represents is extremely difficult. Michael, as I stated previously to a departing shipmate, a simple "Thank You" seems inadequate.

In closing, I, along with our entire National Board of Directors, ask that all of you please comply with the requirements of your local area coupled with your "God Given" common sense in keeping yourself, your family, and your friends healthy and safe. Here's to a wonderful 2021!

All the best and take care,  
**Wayne Standerfer**  
USSVI National Commander



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# FROM THE WARDROOM



**Jon Jaques**  
*National Senior Vice Commander*

Shipmates,

This issue has arrived to you in a new and hopefully a better year. For all of us, 2020 was challenging and disruptive, and the nightmare that was 2020 is now over.

As the COVID-19 crisis escalated, your board of directors sprang into action working on contingency plans. We spoke frequently on appropriate courses of action and made the difficult decisions. I think we weathered the storm.

For this new year, I have set several goals for myself:

- Call two shipmates each month just to check in.
- I intend to financially support the Charitable Foundation and the Boat Sponsorship Program.
- I will try to bring five new members to USSVI.
- I am going to send a small gift to a random shipmate just to surprise them.

I am calling this the “Jaques Challenge” and I welcome you to join me in making 2021 our best year yet. Please send me an email if you will be part of the Jaques Challenge. I am sure you will be richly rewarded.

As always, let me know if I can be of service to you.

*Jon Jaques*



**Paul Hiser**  
*National Treasurer*

Shipmates,

Sorry to report I became infected with COVID just as I began my sixth year as your National Treasurer. I was hospitalized for twenty-two days but was fortunate enough to be released home while still remaining on oxygen. Full recovery is eventually expected, but not for several weeks. I thank you all for your support and prayers during this trying time.

Meanwhile, though I have now resumed my duties as National Treasurer, please remember to direct all membership issues and dues payments to the National Office—I handle no money here.

The 2020 End-of-Year form is now posted on the USSVI.org website. Go to “Documents,” then to “Forms,” then click to download the form for bases (it’s in Excel). Please complete and submit it to me at paulhiser664@yahoo.com ASAP. Thanks in advance for your timely response.

Fraternally,  
*Paul*



**Steve Bell**  
*National Junior Vice Commander*

Shipmates,

I hope each of you and your families has had a rewarding holiday season. It’s always an enjoyable time of the year for us.

As I write this (just prior to Thanksgiving), it appears a vaccine will be out soon to help us combat COVID-19. When you read this it may very well have been out for awhile. Let’s hope that it does the trick for us as a society. And assuming it does become a major part of the solution, it would mean our bases can start back up. I know some bases have already done so and others remain only virtual, but it is time to start thinking SubVets again. As your base lets you know of scheduled meetings, please seriously consider getting active again once it’s safe. We need our members to show they are submariners and get back in the groove. If you have not been very active in the past, consider jumping in and helping out—I’m sure such help is much needed. As bases begin to open up or just continue on with what they’ve already been doing, just be cautious and smart about how you meet. And while you’re at it, try to recruit a new member. We can always use more.

One of my side jobs within USSVI is overseeing the Public Relations and Future Planning Committee. As with any committee there has been considerable personnel turnover. We still have some of the same long-time members but have also enjoyed an influx of new blood. This is obviously a way to acquire new ideas. I do know a review of all PR-associated documents is planned, meaning most will likely be updated. These documents are meant to assist each base with producing newspaper articles, handling social media, and employing other means of getting our story out. I encourage both base leadership and members to start to put these written resources to use; informing your community about your base and its activities will serve to help recruit new members and gain local support for our organization and your base’s individual projects as well. Let’s not continue to be the “silent” service when it comes to blowing our own horn a bit in this way, hmm?

It’s certainly hard to believe it’s 2021 already, isn’t it? Where has the time gone?

Stay safe and recruit a member,  
**Steve**







**Carl Stigers**  
National Chaplain

Greetings to all my fellow USSVI shipmates, spouses, and associate members.

By the time you are reading this, the year will have drawn to a close. We will have had a national election and the holiday season will have come and gone. I hope that you had an opportunity to celebrate the holidays with family and friends and have many memories of those gatherings. My prayer for all of you has been for a safe and peaceful holiday season.

Our walks through life provide us with many ups and downs. We experience hurts at a level that we may think might not ever heal. We interact with many people daily and quite often those interactions bring about some of that hurt. And so, I broach a subject not often made part of the conversation. Forgiveness.

One of the greatest comments on forgiveness is that it does nothing for us personally but allows us to remove the hurt that another person has caused. We no longer allow them or their actions to affect us anymore. We can see numerous times in Scripture where that has happened. In fact, an entire book of the New Testament is dedicated to just this topic. I would encourage you to look at the Book of Philemon.

As we forgive others, we remove the ability of those individuals to hurt us anymore. But we are not called to do only that. We are encouraged to move on with our lives and take caution that we are not hurt that way again. The saying "fool me once shame on you, fool me twice shame on me" is based on Scripture. We do not continue to allow ourselves to be placed in those situations. We are encouraged to walk about but to be wise in our dealings with people.

As I write this column, we are seeing great battles around us over the results of our recent election. The basis for our stands on this issue must be consistent with the Constitution and the oath we took upon entering the Navy. Please pray for our brothers and sisters deployed in harm's way and for those other service members deployed overseas in combat or support areas. Pray for our country and leadership. Please know that I lift all of you up in prayer much every day.

In His Service,  
**Carl**

**Carl Stigers**  
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## THE PIG IN PEACE

Welcome aboard the USS Medregal (SS-480), circa 1967-1970. Read about the true adventures of Engineman Second Class (SS) Wayne Thomas Nelson during the Vietnam and Cold War years. For ordering information and a personally signed copy, contact the author at Nelson.submarines@gmail.com

## USSVI Charitable Foundation Quarterly Report

The 2020 Charitable Foundation's fiscal year began on February 1 and at the end of October the Foundation had received \$49,375 in donations. Donors include individuals, corporations, and other non-profit organizations. Within the same period in 2019 our donations totaled \$90,969; a year-over-year decrease of 45.7 percent. Of course, every year is different and in the previous year the Charitable Foundation was the recipient of a \$39,000 Legacy Donation from one of our departed members. Year-to-date we have a bottom-line loss of \$40,642. This compares to a loss in the prior year of \$10,277. In 2019 the CF awarded \$58,000 in scholarships and in 2020 we awarded \$101,000. We ended the nine months with a balance sheet that holds \$998,997 in assets compared to 2019 when we held \$993,441 in assets.

There is no question that the coronavirus pandemic has raised havoc with the economy and our individual lives. Your Brotherhood Fund has stepped up to support fellow shipmates. We have continued to support various bases with their Kaps 4 Kids program, and we have supported various monuments with maintenance. The USSV Charitable Foundation is alive and well and doing exactly what we were chartered to do. We continue to function based on your generosity and from the generosity of your friends, family, and associates. Please keep us in mind as you plan your 2021 charitable contributions. Visit [www.ussvcf.org](http://www.ussvcf.org) to make your donation.

If you are aware of an organization that is looking for a good charitable organization to support, please let them know about the Charitable Foundation and alert us so we can contact them.

I am always open to any questions or suggestions.

**Ken Earls**

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THE NAVAL SUBMARINE LEAGUE INVITES  
MEMBERS OF USSVI, THEIR FAMILIES, AND FRIENDS TO

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of the importance of submarines to national defense

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[www.navalsubleague.org](http://www.navalsubleague.org)

## PRIDE RUNS DEEP

*The NSL is a 501(c)3 educational and charitable organization.*







# Mail Buoy!

You have the Midwatch!

Michael,  
The *American Submariner* has published many great articles over the years but the “Appendicitis at Sea during WWII” was the best one yet. I was aware that operations had occurred at sea but didn’t know how dangerous they were. The risks that the corpsmen, patient and CO assumed were almost beyond belief. Vice Adm. Lockwood’s defense of Wheeler Lipes was an example of a truly great leader. Congratulations on the job you and your proofreaders are doing with the *American Submariner*. I am the national editor of our local Astronomy Society publication and know how much work is involved.

Cheers,  
Gary Kaiser, FTCS(SS), USN Retired

Michael,  
I read your “Plea from the Editor” in the recent *American Submariner* and just have one question. First of all, I am one of many CT’s who rode (and still ride) subs on Special Ops missions. In my case, I rode about eight during the ’60s and early ’70s including four or five diesel boats before my first nuke. As you know, the missions lasted typically sixty days although I had one for eighty-nine days on USS *Growler* (SSG-577). I am seventy-eight years old and do not have any problems that I suspect would be associated with mesothelioma. I have never smoked although I stood watch in the cramped radio shack with heavy-smoking shipmates.

With all that said, given my age, what would you advise?

One problem, however, is that during the period in the ’60s, our orders never assigned us to a specific submarine. Upon completion of the mission they usually just stated that we “served aboard a vessel of the U.S. Pacific Fleet,” or words to that effect. I was aboard *Growler* when she qualified for the Ballistic Missile Patrol Pin. I contacted SubPac to confirm my eligibility and after numerous calls/emails, etc., with SubPac and NavPers they indicated there was nothing in my service record to prove that I was actually

aboard *Growler*. I spoke with the SubPac Force Master Chief and based on the conversation he had with his boss he just said “wear ‘em,” which I proudly do.

Sorry for the lengthy email. I look forward to attending our local Tri-State Base meetings when they are in my area and I also enjoy reading the *American Submariner*. Great job.

Thanks in advance,  
Dick Williams, CTICM(A/C)/CWO,  
USN Retired

**Dick,**  
**See a civilian pulmonologist and get a no contrast, high-resolution CAT scan. Tell the doctor that you served in the Navy when asbestos was commonly found aboard ships. You are looking for any lung abnormalities, particularly pleural plaques and interstitial scarring. Hopefully, your scan will not reveal any issues, however, should it come back positive for either condition, contact me at (951) 775-4549 to discuss your options. Be forewarned, when you call, I will bore you with a sea story about my first asbestos exposure aboard the USS *Aucilla* (AO-56) in the Brooklyn Navy Yard back in 1957!**

**Best, Michael**

Hello, Michael,

Dr. Charles Hood should be congratulated for his outstanding review of surgical emergencies at sea aboard three submarines during WWII. Truly a magnificent summary of the events and the consequences of appendicitis; it amazes me that Naval brass and physicians at that time would ignore the likely demise of the sailors if not surgically treated under such difficult circumstances. From this USS *Halibut* sailor during the Cold War, who has seen superb crew corpsman activities during our challenging times at sea, thank you for publishing this piece.

Roger C. Dunham, M.D., former ET1(SS)  
USS *Halibut* (SSN-587)

Michael,

Well done to you and Dr. Hood for the outstanding article about U.S. Navy Pharmacist Mates. My Dad was a Pharmacist Mate 3c in WWII. He was not a bubblehead like us, but served aboard the attack transport USS *Okanogen* (APA-220). Dad was in the

South Pacific and did many landings with the Marines in places like Iwo Jima and Okinawa.

He spoke of the many challenges landing on the landing craft and caring for the injured marines trying to get them back to the ship where operating rooms and doctors were waiting to care for the wounded. Pharmacist Mates/Corpsman are a special breed! All of us owe them special thanks and gratitude!

Bill O'Connor, former EM1(SS)  
USS *Toledo* Base

Michael,

Just received the fourth quarter issue of the *American Submariner*.

Thanks for the article about forgotten submariner Gene Rice on page 33. You did a great job with the pictures and write up. I hope it inspires other submariners to remember our fellow submarine sailors.

Be well and keep safe.

Sincerely,  
Bill Mattoon

Michael,

I am a Life Member of USSVI and a charter member of the Grand Strand Base in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

I served as a nuke Machinist’s Mate on USS *Lafayette* (SSBN-616) from November 1965 until June 1970, making seven patrols and a two-year overhaul in Newport News.

My understanding is that *Lafayette* did use asbestos lagging during my time onboard.

I have made four applications to the VA for health evaluations but have been denied all four times because I was a non-combatant or because of income. My last denial occurred after I retired and went on social security and pension.

All the mesothelioma websites are run by lawyers and will only accept cases of active cancer.

Any help you can offer would be appreciated.

Bob Ciminell, former MM1(SS)

**Bob,**  
**My above reply to Dick Williams would apply to you as well.**

**Best, Michael**

## USSVI Academic Scholarships Now Open for Application

For more than fifty years since its inception, USSVI—most recently through its Charitable Foundation—has led a successful effort to recognize U.S. Submariners of all eras by providing charitable assistance in various forms for SubVets and their families. Perhaps the best-known version of this assistance is USSVI’s Academic Scholarship Program, which has continued to become better funded over the years, providing educational opportunities for more and more qualified applicants.

The next academic scholarship cycle will be August 2021 to August 2022, so it’s already time to submit applications to participate in the program.

To apply, simply visit...

<http://subforcescholarships.smapply.io>

...no later than May 15, 2021.

USSVI members in good standing may sponsor a child or grandchild (including stepchildren of legal custody) for the application process.

Note: the online application will require students to register only with their own personal email address and related information. Submitting a different e-address will result in disqualification. Automated verification will then take place. Once verified, the student may complete the application process. Current multi-year scholarship awardees must also use this web-based application for renewal of their ongoing award.

Completed applications will be evaluated and scored by the USSV-CF Academic Scholarship Committee, and scholarships will be competitively awarded based on academic performance, financial need, letters of recommendation and completion of an essay. Each applicant must show proof of enrollment or acceptance at an institution of higher learning or technical pursuit.

Automated emails will inform applicants when they have successfully completed their applications. Awards and rejections will be announced via emailed personal letters—likely on or before June 15, 2021. Scholarship winners will later have their awarded funds deposited directly into individual accounts set up with their chosen (and pre-certified) institutions of higher learning. Such funds will be instructed to be applied directly to tuition, room, board and associated costs transacted through the given school’s administrative office. If for some reason a scholarship awardee is unable to attend that year, the unused funds will be returned to the USSV-CF Treasury.

A bonus for students this year is that they may also concurrently apply for the USSVI Dolphin Scholarship Program; it’s located on the same application website: <http://subforcescholarships.smapply.io>.

For further information, please feel free to contact me.

**Robert E. Frick, Rear Adm. USN Retired**

Holland Chairman  
USSV-CF Academic Scholarship Program  
[Refrickussvcf@gmail.com](mailto:Refrickussvcf@gmail.com)

## Clarifying Confusion Over Our Charitable Foundation

In the twenty years since the USSVI Charitable Foundation was officially recognized as a 501(c)(3) charity under IRS regulations, it’s become evident there remains considerable misunderstanding among USSVI members over exactly what it does. Apparently many believe our Foundation is exclusively a scholarship fund, and I’ve seen it misnamed or misdescribed in that fashion many times. Indeed, our Foundation does include a Scholarship Fund, and arguably it is the most significant of our charitable efforts. But your United States Submarine Veterans Charitable Foundation, Inc. also consists of many other important elements. Below is a breakdown of our various financial efforts and their worth as of November 2020:

Brotherhood Fund	\$77,971
Building Fund	\$12,300
General Fund	\$177,740
Kaps 4 Kids Fund	\$8,904
Legacy Fund (Endowment)	\$430,430
Library Fund	\$7,440
Memorial Fund	\$87,843
Museum Boats Fund	\$11,437
Scholarship Fund	\$232,240
<b>Total of all Funds</b>	<b>\$1,046,305</b>

We have a long history of activity in each of these funds and, frankly, much of it is pretty remarkable; we can certainly be proud of what we’ve accomplished over the past few decades. In the next few issues of *American Submariner*, I plan to cast some light on each of these charitable reserves and hope to have their individual Managers check in with specific details of their uses and successes.

**Ken Earls**

Executive Director & Treasurer







# Lost But Not Forgotten

by Charles G. Hood, MD

USS *Cutlass* (SS-478) underway prior to her 1948 GUPPY II conversion. In 1957 *Cutlass* underwent an overhaul and was fitted with a fiberglass high sail (referred to as a North Atlantic sail).

## Preface

The details of what happened on board the USS *Cutlass* (SS-478) in April 1958 have been closely guarded for many years. The reasons are multiple. The Silent Service does not readily part with information for obvious reasons of national security, and the *Cutlass* was indeed engaged in a secret mission at the time of the incident. Deference to the family of the victim is another legitimate reason for the natural reluctance to delve into any individual’s story. While those reasons are valid, they also unintentionally serve to deny a full appraisal of the man behind the statistic, and the valor of those who attempted rescue. Since more than sixty years have passed since these events transpired, a thorough telling of the story—without any covert elements—is warranted.

This narrative is dedicated to not only William Thompson but also his *Cutlass* shipmates who have carried the burden of his loss for many years. We must remember that as professionals entrusted with the defense of our country, these men were not given any latitude or respite to take their focus off appointed duties to process their loss or to grieve. As time has elapsed, the reflexive need for secrecy has softened, and some of those who bore witness to what happened in 1958 have seen the wisdom of sharing their recollections. I am particularly indebted to retired Captain Douglas Simon for his willingness to entrust his detailed memories with me. He expressly participated so that history does not forget the story of Lieutenant Thompson, how his life was cut short in the line of duty, and how his shipmates did their best to cope with his demise. We should never forget such sacrifices.

## Loppy

If you drive seventy-five miles northwest of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, you will enter the Shenango Valley and the city of Sharon, with a population of about 14,000. One of Sharon’s claims to fame is the Buhl Farm Golf Course, known as the only free public course in America—no greens fees or cart fees. The nine-hole course was the brainchild of industrialist Frank Buhl (1848-1918), who earned his considerable wealth as the founder and president of Buhl Steel. Buhl and his wife were childless, and they dedicated themselves to a variety of philanthropic projects to benefit the entire Shenango Valley, including the creation of a

300-acre recreational complex called the Buhl Farm. Opened in 1914 and operating continuously ever since, the park includes an artificial lake with a sandy beach, picnic groves, playgrounds, tennis courts, and a nine-hole golf course. The Buhls stipulated that all of these attractions be kept free to the public in perpetuity.

Nearly a hundred years later, on Thursday, 19 September 2013, approximately forty people came together quietly at a beautiful spot on the Buhl Farm Golf Course to commemorate the erection of a granite bench. It was a bright and clear day, and the fairways were bathed in the rich green colors of the sun, but the reason for the small gathering was a solemn one. The men and women assembled there had come to pay their respects to a family member, friend, colleague, or shipmate: William Thompson, a Navy officer who died in a tragic submarine accident during the early years of the Cold War. The occasion was the formal dedication of the Lt. William M. Thompson Memorial Bench.

At the brief morning ceremony for the bench dedication, several of Thompson’s family members and fellow shipmates spoke in his honor. Afterward, a luncheon at the clubhouse was served, and condolences and well-wishes were exchanged between Bill Thompson’s relatives and the *Cutlass* family. It was a very moving and meaningful day for all who attended, and an opportunity to pay their respects to a man long gone but never far from thought.

William Morgan Thompson was born on 23 March 1930 to parents Sarah and William Thompson in Sharon, Pennsylvania. The youngest of four siblings, he had three elder sisters and earned the nickname “Loppy” as a child. Most folks outside the family just called him Bill. He developed an interest in golf very early in life, no doubt honing his skills in part as a result of the free access available at the “Dum Dum,” the colloquial term coined by the locals for the Buhl Farm golf course. Bill attended public schools in Sharon, and he played on the varsity golf team at Sharon High School for four years, serving as team captain in 1947 and 1948. He graduated in 1948; his senior portrait in the high school yearbook is accompanied by the quote, “The phantom of his personality is mischief and fun.”

An interesting historical note occurred during his days as a competitive golfer for Sharon High School. Among the other

western Pennsylvania high schools that Sharon played was Latrobe, whose team featured a young phenom by the name of Arnold Palmer (1929-2016). While Palmer earned a golfing scholarship to Wake Forest University, Thompson decided to attend Westminster College, a small liberal arts school about twenty miles southeast of Sharon. He joined the Sigma Nu fraternity there. Bill Thompson stayed only for the freshman year, however; he had bigger aspirations.

Thompson applied for and was successfully enrolled at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis for the 1949-50 school year. He played for the Navy golf team (again becoming team captain) and rose to battalion commander during his senior year. His entry in the 1953 Lucky Bag yearbook reads (in part) as follows:

*“Loppy” was an easy-going guy who had but one eccentricity: singing in his sleep. He played golf on the Navy’s varsity team and did his share of par shooting. Bill didn’t study much because he was one of those naturally savvy persons...One thing about Bill, he was always happy and got a box of chow from home every other Thursday.*

On graduation day, 6 June 1953, Thompson and his fellow midshipmen tossed their caps in the air and celebrated their commissions into the U.S. Navy. Most of the details of his subsequent pathway over the following eighteen months are not known, but we know from existing military records that he was promoted from ensign to lieutenant (junior grade) on 12 May 1954. Thompson passed the necessary aptitude and psychological testing to attend Sub School, and after completion he was assigned as a junior officer aboard the USS *Cutlass*.

## Green Water

The *Cutlass* was a *Tench*-class fleet boat, built and launched at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, shortly before the conclusion of the Second World War. She was commissioned in March 1945 and sent immediately to Pearl Harbor. At the start of her first war patrol in the Pacific, she entered the seas around the Kurile Islands one day after the announced Japanese surrender. Post-war duty was initially centered in the Caribbean Sea, and later she operated for about four years out of Key West. In 1952 her homeport changed to Norfolk, and that is where Bill Thompson first came aboard sometime around 1955.

Lt. Thompson was a quick learner and exhibited a natural aptitude for the many areas of expertise required of all budding submarine officers. He became the Chief Engineer in 1957. In the winter of 1958, *Cutlass* again sailed for ASW (anti-submarine warfare) exercises in the Caribbean during “Operation Spring-board”, returning to Norfolk on 31 March. Sometime during this period, Thompson submitted testimony to a congressional panel convened to study the issue of declining morale in the Armed Forces. One of Thompson’s quotes about the state of manpower in the Navy was picked up by several newspapers covering the hearings: “We’re not replacing the talent. One day soon the whole bottom is going to drop out.”

Thompson had become disillusioned with the Navy, perhaps in large part because of the morale issue that he felt so strongly about, and he resigned his commission around the beginning of 1958. However, because he was a very competent Chief Engineer with a skill set that was in high demand, his commanding officer (CO) delayed his separation from the boat until the next important mission had been completed—an extended multi-vessel exercise at the GIUK gap, an area in the North Atlantic Ocean representing a geographic chokepoint for marine traffic between the Atlantic and the Norwegian Sea. During the Cold War, the GIUK gap (an acronym named for Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom representing the flanking landmasses) was an important strategic “narrowing” that enabled the U.S. to closely monitor the comings and goings of the Soviet fleet. Bill Thompson was understandably disappointed with the news of having to extend his service by

another two or three months, but he accepted the decision and continued to perform at a high level of competency.

Crew members of the *Cutlass* said goodbye to their families in the early spring of 1958 as they prepared to depart Norfolk for the North Atlantic mission. Bill Thompson and his wife Ginny were already parents of one young son, and she was pregnant with their second child. The *Cutlass* left the pier and headed up the Eastern Seaboard, past Newfoundland and the southern tip of Greenland. She made an unscheduled stop in Iceland overnight for some needed repair parts for the snorkel mast. Shortly after that, while transiting between Iceland and Greenland, her fortunes changed abruptly for the worse.

The weather in this part of the globe is notoriously unpredictable and occasionally violent. During the overnight hours, early on Tuesday, 22 April 1958, the *Cutlass* encountered very heavy seas as she entered a band of snow squalls. Judgment at that time was a severe state five sea, featuring waves greater than twenty-five feet. As a fleet boat, the 478 remained surfaced during inclement weather for safety reasons—submerging could imperil the stability of the boat if and when she was forced to return to the surface for battery recharging and air exchange. Hence, diesel boats always rode out storms while surfaced, meaning that men standing topside watch often had their hands full.

The Conn (meaning the control of the boat’s speed and heading, not to be confused with the conning tower, mentioned later) was held by the Officer of the Deck (OOD) topside on the bridge, the small exterior well or cockpit at the top of the tall sail above the conning tower. The *Cutlass* featured a fiberglass North American sail that had only been installed the previous year. The fiberglass was far lighter than steel, of course, helping theoretically to keep the boat from becoming too top-heavy, but that advantage was offset by the susceptibility of fiberglass to repeatedly crack during the beatings that the sail routinely took during severe storms. Accompanying the OOD for topside watch were two lookouts—port and starboard—positioned in small wells or “holes” just behind the OOD’s stance in the bridge on either side. The side panels of the twin wells were tall enough for the lookouts to perch their elbows upon, thereby helping to stabilize their binoculars while scanning each half of the ocean horizon for potential hazards.

The OOD for the 0400-0800 watch that morning was Lt. Bill Thompson. He and the two lookouts were dressed appropriately for the elements; the garb for each man included a heavy set of coveralls, a foul-weather jacket, and a large parka on top. The OOD also wore a tall set of waterproof boots that were normally clipped at the ankle to keep the feet from becoming soaking wet. However, Thompson like many others did not always tighten the clips because they were uncomfortable. Thompson also donned his trademark red leather baseball cap; he was seldom seen not wearing it. It was still the dead of night, and the frozen precipitation pelted the threesome in near-complete darkness. The seas were roiling with waves of twenty to twenty-five feet breaking over the hull and the bottom half of the sail, and there was a brisk wind. Four hours is a long time to withstand such harsh weather conditions at the top of a moving submarine.

Each man wore a webbed belt about three inches in width, cinched tightly around the waist and attached by heavy-duty hemp rope with a snap-lock to any one of the multiple welded rings on the bridge and lookout wells. Apart from those standing watch, most everyone on board, including the CO, was asleep. The conning tower immediately below the bridge was occupied by the navigation expert—the quartermaster (QM), who stood the overnight watch alone there. The upper conning tower hatch was shut and dogged, a standard practice in heavy seas to prevent water intrusion. The three men topside were in their own isolated world.

Lt. Doug Simon had joined the crew as a junior officer four months earlier. He was one of the few men awake at the time that



the watch commenced. As a relatively new submarine officer still under instruction, he had originally planned to stand the 0400-0800 OOD watch occupied by Thompson. However, the CO had excused him from the watch shortly beforehand to assign him to other duties, including navigation, to help him move closer to completing his submarine qualifications.

One of Simon’s duties during that watch was to fix the position of the boat. He climbed up to the conning tower to join the QM, intending to practice “shooting some stars” with the sextant—an instrument built into the periscope—for estimating location coordinates. The inclement weather shot that possibility down entirely, however. About a third of the way through the watch, around 0515, after Simon had returned to the Control Room, the squawk box came alive with the word of a possible contact.

Up on the bridge, Thompson had spied the lights of what he thought was a commercial fishing trawler peeking out of the mist at some distance ahead on the port bow. The very first glimpses of dawn light were appearing at the eastern horizon, but it was still more than a half-hour before sunrise. The snow was falling steadily. The contact appeared to be a long way off, so collision was not considered an imminent threat. Rather, Thompson was concerned about the men on the trawler detecting his submarine and revealing her location. The *Cutlass* had strict orders to remain undetected by other marine craft while transiting on the surface, and submerging was the best option to comply with that expectation whenever circumstances such as this arose. Thompson called down from the bridge and awoke the CO, Lt. Cmdr. Charles “Chick” Bowling, in his stateroom, to describe the situation. Bowling told him to dive.

Thompson and the port lookout, John Garoncey, quickly disengaged their safety tethers as they prepared to descend the sail ladder and reenter the submarine via the conning tower hatch; the starboard lookout, Ralph Keyes, had not yet disconnected, but at that moment Thompson paused to again survey the forward port horizon. The craft that he had faintly seen in the murky distance was gone. All three men trained their binoculars in that general direction for a few more seconds without any sign of the contact. Reporting back to the CO, the initial decision to dive was aborted, and the topside personnel remained at their duty stations to continue the watch. In a terrible oversight, neither man topside who had disengaged safety tethers remembered to again secure them.

The men on the bridge of *Cutlass* remained vigilant for any signs of the trawler reappearing as the North Atlantic Ocean grew increasingly angry. Visibility remained poor as wave after powerful wave broke across the port quarter. The unpredictable episodes of shallow rolling of the boat to starboard became more noticeable for those resting sailors trying to remain secure in their racks. The fact that the heeling repeatedly occurred toward starboard told those awake in the berthing areas that the violent wave action was striking the boat from the port side. Navigation under these circumstances proved challenging; the standard of seamanship in heavy seas was to avoid taking a direct hit from a large wave from the bow or stern by establishing a heading that would allow the wave energy to dissipate across the hull at a forty-five degree angle (diagonally, or “on the quarter”).

Suddenly the lookouts felt the wind pick up considerably. They later recalled seeing an ominously dense white froth develop at the ocean surface as the waves intensified. And then, less than ten minutes after the brief sighting of the fishing trawler, the unthinkable happened. The port lookout, Garoncey, had his binoculars trained on what appeared to be a monster wave approaching the boat from the port rear quarter. He was standing more than thirty feet above the sea from his perch, but this rogue wave looked even higher. For a moment, he froze.

Lt. Simon was in the process of departing the Control Room on his way to his rack in the Forward Battery Compartment to get

some shuteye. He was still in Control when the wave struck. In mere moments, his frame of reference shifted by nearly ninety degrees: Simon found himself standing on the bulkhead looking at the IC Switchboard on its side. The boat had gone into an extreme roll towards starboard. The pendulum inclinometer—a simple means of ascertaining the number of degrees of departure from even keel in either direction—had markings from zero to seventy-three. The inclinometer “pegged out”, meaning that the roll had exceeded seventy-three degrees. Later estimates among crew members ranged from seventy-five to eighty-five degrees. Down in the crew’s mess, Simon could hear the sound of all the coffee mugs sliding out of their normally-secure slotted shelves and smashing to the deck.

The situation topside was chaotic. As the wave was about to strike, Garoncey, the port lookout, yelled, “This is a big one!” With his safety tether still unattached to the boat, he quickly ducked down in his hole and held onto the horizontal lip of the side panel enclosing him with both hands, just as the wave pummeled the port side of the boat and cloaked the entire sail in a mountain of water—a mammoth version of what sailors call “taking on green water.” The starboard lookout, Keyes, was surveying the sea in the opposite direction with his binoculars when he heard Garoncey yell. He had no time to react as the rogue wave passed over the bridge. The immense volume of water moving at a high rate of speed literally sucked Garoncey out of the sail. The only reason that he was not carried away into the sea was because his safety line was still firmly attached to the bridge. Lt. Thompson, standing at the front of the bridge and without a secure safety line, was pulled off the sail as well. He managed to somehow turn and grab onto the outer edge of the waist-high side panel.

These movements occurred in a split second as the sheer force of the wave striking from the port side, combined with extreme flooding of the sail itself, caused the top-heavy boat to list nearly completely to her starboard side. Garoncey was temporarily submerged in the frigid sea; he held his breath and held onto the lip of his lookout well for dear life. Keyes was also thrust in the water as the sail lay down horizontally on the roiling ocean surface with his safety line still tied to it. Thompson, too, was lowered feet-first into the water, where he struggled to maintain his tenuous grip on the side lip of the bridge.

The boat remained turned sharply to starboard as the excess water taken on by the bridge drained very slowly from the base of the sail. The exact duration of the extreme roll is not recalled with certainty; as Doug Simon recalled later, “Time became an irrelevant commodity.” However, after what he estimated as one or two minutes, the boat began to slowly return upright. As the sail came back out of the water, the three men were still clinging to life in different predicaments. Garoncey came up for air after a prolonged breath-holding effort in the ice-cold water and pulled himself up from the lookout well back into the bridge, where the Conn had been temporarily abandoned. He was gasping for breath. As the boat continued to return to an even keel, Keyes was pulled out of the sea by his tether, which remained attached. In moments he was dangling freely over the side of the sail and above the angry sea, saved only by his tether. Keyes tried frantically to pull himself up on the hemp line, but his hands were so cold that he couldn’t do it. In the process, he stripped the skin off the tips of his fingers.

Lt. Thompson had initially clung to the side of the bridge while the sail lay in the water, but as it righted itself, he struggled mightily to hold on. The unclipped knee-high boots that he wore had filled with many pounds of cold water, further weighing him down and forcibly working against his efforts to hang on. Garoncey, who was the first to regain a safe foothold, saw his shipmate in peril and implored him to not let go. Unfortunately, Thompson was so bottom-heavy that he simply could not keep his grip; as another wave struck, he lost his hold and slipped beneath the

surface of the sea.

When the extreme roll had first occurred, and after ensuring that no one was acutely injured inside the boat, attention turned immediately to the status of the three shipmates on the bridge. Attempts were made to contact the bridge on the 7MC, 21MC, and other channels, but there was no reply at first. After Thompson disappeared and while Keyes was still dangling from the sail, Garoncey was finally able to get on the horn. In a panicked voice, he yelled into the squawk box the same four-word phrase over and over again:

The OD is overboard—the OD is overboard—the OD is overboard—the OD is overboard!

Back in the Engine Room, someone temporarily killed the throttle. Doug Simon regained his balance in Control and ran the low-pressure blowers on the main ballast tanks to shed some retained water and regain some buoyancy. The QM stationed in the conning tower struggled for a minute or two to open the conning tower hatch to reach the bridge; the hatch was nearly impossible for one man to open because of the standing water above it. Finally, he managed to open it and scramble up the ladder. The QM and Garoncey together were able to pull Keyes up his tether and back to safety on the bridge.

During this terrifying sequence, another large wave struck the port quarter, and the boat again heeled sharply to starboard. The roll was about half as extreme as the first one, though, and the boat slowly returned to near even keel. The two battered lookouts were helped down the ladder and carried to tables in the crew’s mess, where the corpsman attended to them. Bruised and hypothermic, they were quickly revived. The tips of Keyes’ fingers were raw to the bone, as the flesh was torn free during his futile attempts to climb his own tether rope.

Meanwhile, after the boat had returned to near normal trim, Lt. Simon climbed into the conning tower to begin a desperate search for Lt. Thompson. He quickly brought the periscope up and swung it aft to look first in the boat’s wake. The sun was just coming up, so the colors of the sea and sky remained muted. Just then, though, Simon saw something that stopped him in his tracks, a sight that would haunt him forever. It was Thompson’s red baseball cap, floating on the waves. He managed to see it for a fleeting few seconds before it disappeared from view, but there was no sign of Thompson. He was gone.

The reference books state that a man washed overboard in sea temperatures just above freezing could remain alive for up to twenty minutes maximum. Every sailor on the *Cutlass* knew this fact, and the frenzied search during the immediate aftermath of the accident was informed by this inescapable truth. The engines were cranked up and a full rudder applied to circle the area of the incident for any sign of Lt. Thompson. Even well after the critical twenty-minute window had passed, the men of the *Cutlass* did not give up searching for hours. Finally, shortly before 0900, the skipper called off the search, in part because the boat had sustained some significant damage during the roll. The command in Norfolk was notified of the tragic news. The body of Lt. Thompson would never be recovered.

### Aftermath

In the Control Room, the gyrocompass had fallen to the floor within its binnacle, and the spilled mercury from its float tank was scattered all over the deck. The crew’s mess took a major hit—besides the breakage of every single ceramic mug, there was cookware, dinnerware, food preparation equipment, and food strewn everywhere. The men of the *Cutlass* were disconsolate and speechless, but they had no time for respite.

Later that day, the CO ordered Lt. Simon to survey Thompson’s few belongings and compile a list. Simon completed this request with a sense of great personal sadness. He knew that, had his

senior officer not insisted on taking his watch, it could have just as easily been Thompson inventorying his meager possessions. More than sixty years later, Doug Simon was overcome as he recalled for me his overwhelming sense of numbness while performing that difficult task: “That was extraordinarily difficult for me to do... because it should have been me on that damned bridge.”

The following day, the Navy announced the tragic loss. A spokesman for Squadron Six at Norfolk revealed that Lt. Thompson had been lost at sea after being swept off the bridge by a large wave in heavy seas. For his parents, the news was devastating; his father passed away the following year. For his shipmates, the loss was especially difficult, because they were there when it happened, and they were powerless to save him. Moreover, after his sudden demise, they still had a submarine mission to complete. The only reprieve given to the crew to assimilate and process their grief was a two-week unscheduled diversion to a British base in Rosyth, Scotland, so that necessary repairs to the boat could be made. Many deck plates had been damaged or lost in the storm, and some of the sensitive equipment on board required servicing. The *Cutlass* returned to sea immediately following her servicing, and the original mission was completed successfully. Only then did the submarine return to her homeport in Norfolk near the end of May 1958.

Once the boat was back in Norfolk, engineers scrutinized the existing sail design. In the wake of the *Cutlass* incident, how could it be improved? Emphasis was placed on any modifications that would permit the sail to drain floodwater faster, should another rogue wave strike the boat. Investigators pinpointed the slow release of large volumes of seawater from the base of the sail of the *Cutlass* as a contributor factor to the extreme roll. By retaining so much water topside, the center of gravity of the boat effectively moved up, and the center of buoyancy moved down—a most



As part of a 1957 overhaul, *Cutlass* was fitted with a new fiberglass high sail, also known as a North Atlantic sail.

undesirable combination with regard to stability.

The issue was alleviated to a significant degree by simplifying the design of the base of the sail, where it was attached to the hull. Specifically, much of the supporting planking that inadvertently hindered water runoff was removed. (A simple analogy is a drinking cup filled at a soda fountain. An intact cup will fill quickly and spill over the sides if the flow of soda is not stopped. On the other hand, if the bottom of the cup is removed, it becomes practically impossible to overflow the cup.) Also, the importance of regularly blowing the ballast tanks at low pressure while surfaced in rough seas was reemphasized. This standard practice helped to maintain positive buoyancy by maximizing freeboard—a crucial factor in maintaining transverse stability. Both of these steps were instrumental in minimizing the risk of a similar extreme heeling event in other submarines.

### Coming to Terms

The crew members of the 1958 *Cutlass* eventually scattered as the peripatetic nature of Navy life found them filling billets around





**Captain Doug Simon (far left) and Jim Granger (beside him) listen as *Cutlass* shipmates share memories of Lieutenant Thompson.**

the globe. Lt. Simon remained on board for a total of three years, becoming Chief Engineer and even serving as XO (executive officer) for a short time. He went on to serve on USS *Ethan Allen* (SSBN-608), the first boomer built from the keel up, from 1960-63 as a navigation officer on the Gold Crew. Then-Lt. Cmdr. Simon subsequently headed the FBM Weapons Systems Division at Submarine School in New London for two years before returning to the sea as the XO aboard the USS *Cobbler* (SS-344). Two years later, he accepted command of the USS *Halfbeak* (SS-352), serving as her CO from 1967-69. Cmdr. Simon then joined the training staff at BUPERS (Bureau of Naval Personnel) and subsequently assumed command of oceanographic systems for the entire Atlantic Fleet. Doug Simon's stellar career in the U.S. Navy concluded as chief of staff for the Navy Safety Center. Despite his many professional successes, though, he wrestled with the painful memories of that morning off the coast of Iceland for many years.

Over the ensuing years the alumni sailors of the *Cutlass*—encompassing all those who served before, during, and after Bill Thompson's service—banded together to create a fraternal group called the *Cutlass* Association. During their reunions, the topic of Thompson's death came up often. The idea for the bench arose from those get-togethers, and the ensuing fundraising effort and construction process were spearheaded by Jim Granger and Fred Manglesdorf. Many *Cutlass* veterans spanning her nearly thirty years of service to the U.S. Navy chipped in to make the bench a reality. The Lt. William M. Thompson Memorial Bench was placed on the grounds of the very golf course in Sharon where Bill Thompson had first developed his love for the game.

For the surviving *Cutlass* veterans who attended the commemoration service, it proved difficult to come to terms with the enormity of their personal loss, even though more than fifty-five years had transpired since that fateful day when everyone seemed so young and full of life and promise. Doug Simon, who by divine providence had not stood the OOD watch that fateful morning, recalled his reluctance to attend the memorial ceremony. On several occasions earlier in 2013, Doug had politely refused the emphatic pleadings of his fellow *Cutlass* veterans to make the trip to Sharon; the idea of doing so was just too emotional. A part of him desperately wanted to come, but another part was equally stubborn in the opposite direction—maintaining the status quo, and keeping his considerable grief bottled up inside as it had been for decades.

Fortunately, Doug's friends wouldn't take "no" for an answer. Fred Manglesdorf got Doug on the phone and bluntly informed him that he was coming. Doug again declined, but Fred countered: "Then I'm coming to get your ass!" Finally, Doug relented. Fred and Jim Granger picked him up at the airport, and together they

drove to Sharon. On the morning of the September 2013 dedication at the golf course, Doug rehearsed his written speech one more time. He had spent many hours deciding what to say, and he wanted to make certain that he could deliver his remarks without losing his composure.

When it came time for Doug to speak, he stood before the small crowd and reached inside his suit pocket to retrieve his speech. He looked out in the audience and made eye contact with Bill Thompson's wife and their two sons. The younger son, now in his fifties, had never seen his father. Doug looked down at his speech as his eyes welled with tears. I can't read this. He paused, collected himself, and put down his prepared remarks. Instead, he spoke off the cuff, and he found the words that he had longed to utter. Doug wasn't aware at the time, but he had been rehearsing for this moment for decades. To this day, he doesn't remember precisely what he said, but his impromptu remarks had an immediate cathartic effect on his spirit. He had finally come to terms with the loss.

There wasn't a dry eye among those gathered to reminisce about Bill Thompson that day. In the wardroom, Bill had been genuinely liked and greatly respected for his seamanship and overall fund of knowledge. As Doug recalled during one of our conversations, "Bill was the friendliest person you ever wanted to see. He was extremely competent...I learned so much from him, that I qualified in submarines in only nine months instead of twelve. He taught me many things, and later on, when I became Chief Engineer, I was glad that Bill had taught me."

Doug did recall one passage of his remarks. He paid Bill Thompson the seaman's highest compliment: "Bill was a damned good sailor." The other half-dozen or so *Cutlass* veterans in attendance who had served alongside him nodded in agreement. To those outside the Silent Service looking on that day, the submariners' bond—that powerful and undying loyalty to one another in or out of uniform—was on full display. Thompson's nephew, Bill Dunsmore, who attended the ceremony, said, "I was just amazed at the depth of friendship of the people who served on the ship."

And so, the many longstanding memories of a tragic morning at sea in April 1958 were assuaged by the creation and dedication of a lasting tribute to Bill Thompson. The bench, positioned along the first hole of the golf course, is a constant reminder to all who freely walk past that a hometown serviceman lost his life while serving his country. It also tells passersby that such a man is never forgotten by his brothers-in-arms.

Today, as these words are written in April 2020, the dawn of spring means that the leaves are returning to the trees, and the fairway grasses are thickening at Buhl Farm. Bill Thompson would have turned ninety years old this year. The polished gray granite surface of the memorial bench erected in his honor gleams in the sun and offers a quiet place to sit and reflect—both on the beauty of the natural surroundings and the sadness of losing someone dear. The inscription on the front face of the bench simply reads,

**IN MEMORY OF LT WILLIAM M. THOMPSON USN  
22 APRIL 1958 LOST AT SEA BUT NOT FORGOTTEN**



## Submarine Memorial at USS *Parche* Park Marks 60th Anniversary



October 2020 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the Submarine Memorial at USS *Parche* Submarine Memorial Park at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam.

The memorial had its beginnings in December 1958 when TMC(SS) Robert J. Cornelius discovered thirty-six bronze plaques in a Pearl Harbor salvage yard. Each plaque had the name of a submarine lost during World War II, with a listing of the crew at the time of the loss. He managed to obtain these plaques and had them delivered to the Submarine Base. He then wrote a letter to Captain W. B. Parham, commanding officer of the Submarine Base, recommending that a suitable memorial be erected on the base in honor of the submarines and their crews lost during World War II. This recommendation was then made to Rear Admiral W. E. Ferrall, Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet, who on October 20, 1959, directed Captain Parham to execute the raising of \$10,000, submit a design for approval, and finally to begin construction.

By March 1960 \$12,810.86 had been raised and the contract awarded with construction commencing July 20, 1960. The Memorial is constructed of lava rock with polished concrete. A thirty-four-foot column adorned with diving dolphins stands directly in front. There are forty-seven bronze plaques mounted on the wall; forty-five containing the names of the submarines lost and each crew member while the other two have the names of additional submarine personnel lost, together with the names of their ships. Originally there were forty-seven bronze plaques mounted on the wall—the thirty-six original plaques and nine that were fabricated by submarine tenders. Two additional plaques contained the names of personnel who died as a result of enemy action, accidents, and submarine losses due to stranding on reefs or being scuttled because of heavy enemy damage.

On October 27, 1960, with several hundred guests attending, Pearl Harbor's Submarine Memorial was dedicated in a colorful ceremony that included retired TMC(SS) Robert J. Cornelius as the guest of honor. The principal speaker was Rear Admiral Roy S. Benson, COMSUBPAC who was joined by former COMSUBPAC retired Rear Admiral Leon J. Huffman in the unveiling ceremony.

Two separate and distinct ceremonies then followed; one by the U.S. Submarine Veterans of WWII and the other by the Navy League. In the former, retired Vice Admiral R. W. Christie placed a lei over one of the plaques adorning the wall of the Memorial. As retired Rear Admiral W. F. Weiss read the names of the submarines and their loss dates, WWII SubVet members draped a lei over each of the remaining plaques.

The Navy League ceremony consisted of the placing of a floral lei at the foot of the dedication plaque by H. C. Burgess, President of the Honolulu Council of the Navy League.

A firing team from the Submarine Base fired three volleys as Taps were sounded to conclude the ceremony.

For many years, the Hawaii Chapter of U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II, Relief Crew One, and Bowfin Pearl Harbor Base conducted annual Memorial Day and Veterans Day ceremonies at the Memorial.

Today, sixty years later, Bowfin Pearl Harbor Base continues the tradition with little deviation from the original ceremony.





### Three Zoomed Kaps(SS) 4 Kids(SS) Visits for Groton Base

Groton Base was honored to participate in no less than three successful Kaps 4 Kids visits via Zoom over the fall.

Back on November 19, our crew—Bob Dulin, Bob Sharpe and John Riley, who’ve participated in all our recent K4K efforts—dropped our virtual anchor at Yale-New Haven Children’s Hospital (YNHCH), where we made Honorary Submariners of six children. We have been visiting this site with hats and certificates for kids there for over eleven years, but this was our first using the Zoom meeting platform. The kids connected to Zoom via iPads in their individual rooms—all the K4K gifts had been delivered prior to our online sessions.

One seven-year-old girl had plenty of questions, many related to one of the videos presented featuring a submarine surfacing through the ice near the North Pole. She of course had to know if any submariners had ever encountered Santa Claus at his home. We let her know that, yes, some submariners had seen Santa, and had delivered letters to him from their own kids. She also wanted to know if Santa ever became ill, so we told her Santa had good doctors and nurses at the North Pole to take care of him if he ever got sick—just like the ones taking care of her now at the hospital. But who made all those toys, she wondered, if he did get sick? We informed her about Santa’s Helpers, of course. She expressed hope she would receive the Christmas gift she had asked for, and we certainly told her we thought she would. She also had many questions about submarines, and was disappointed to learn they had no windows, but understood when we explained why not. The questions just kept coming—all were happily answered.

While still there we were told one child was too sick to participate. We immediately informed the staff we would visit any child via Zoom on any day at any time, and that bringing joy to even one sick child represents a home run for us. We hope to hear back from them so we can visit this patient too.

On November 18 we made fourteen more children Honorary Submariners at the same hospital’s Inpatient Child Psychiatric Unit for 4- to 12-year-olds. After completing our slide and video presentation and answering all questions, we called the children up one at a time to receive their certificates and Challenge Coins. They then received their other K4K gifts and we welcomed them into our submariner family! This was our second Zoom visit to this unit and we agreed to come back every two months.

Finally, back on October 21, we met with fifteen patients in the hospital’s Inpatient Child Psychiatric Unit for Teenagers, welcoming these teens to our submarine family just as we’d done the others. Once the kids had left the room, staffers informed us they’d really missed our visits (we had joined them in person several times each year over the last ten years). We assured them the feeling was quite mutual. The hospital also informed us they would like us to conduct these Zoom visits every two months, similar to the arrangement we’d had with the Psych Unit for the younger children.

After our visit we received the following email:

*Hi John, thanks again so much for providing this presentation for our kids. I think it speaks volumes that we had 15 out of 19 patients for the entire presentation; I haven’t seen that amount of group attendance in awhile. Your group’s ability to educate kids on submarines and the service you all provided to our country is so unique and it clearly catches their attention.*

**Sarah Kowalski**

Assistant Patient Services Manager LV2 & WS3

It’s always such a rewarding experience for Groton Base to bring some submarine fun to Yale Hospital’s Psych Unit for kids in the form of our Kaps 4 Kids program.



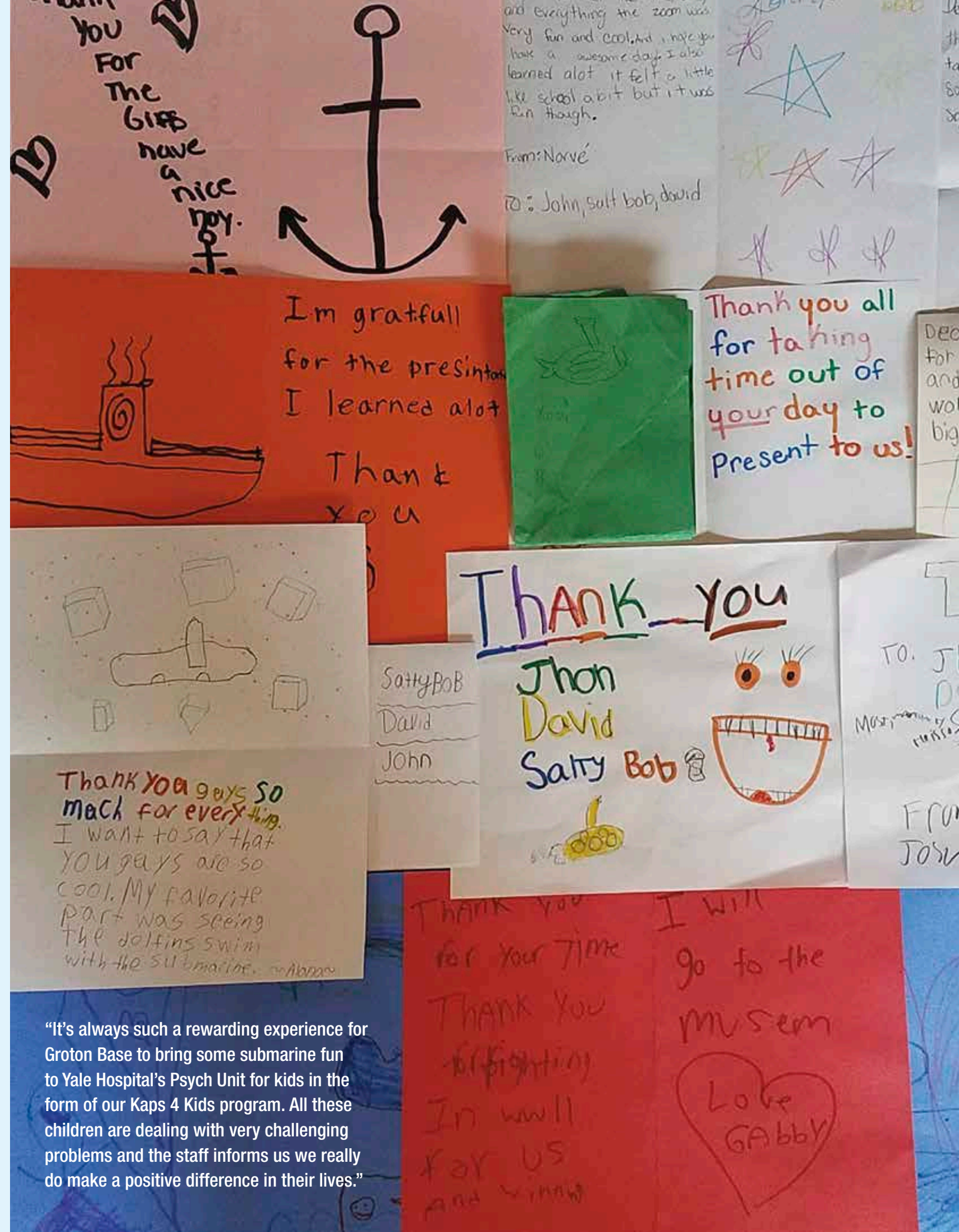
Groton Base members hang ten on a boat instead of a surfboard—a fun way to introduce subs and deliver Kaps(SS) to captivated kids in the opening screen of their virtual hospital presentation.

### Kaps(SS) 4 Kids(SS) Support ‘Granted’ for Albany-Saratoga Base

The town of Clifton Park, New York has charitably awarded the Albany-Saratoga Base a grant of \$250 in support of their ongoing Kaps 4 Kids program. Base Commander Jerry Whitehead and base member Jim Irwin were happily on hand at the town’s Board Meeting back in early November to accept the generous check from Town Supervisor Phil Barrett—an offering from the Town’s Community Action Fund. This fund has now presented awards totaling almost \$16,000 to worthy local charitable organizations. Such grants are funded by can and bottle returns donated by the community. Keep up the exemplary work, Clifton Park and Albany-Saratoga Base!



Well done! Albany-Saratoga Base member Jim Irwin (left) and Base Commander Jerry Whitehead gratefully accept a \$250 grant from the town of Clifton Park in support of the base’s K4K program.



“It’s always such a rewarding experience for Groton Base to bring some submarine fun to Yale Hospital’s Psych Unit for kids in the form of our Kaps 4 Kids program. All these children are dealing with very challenging problems and the staff informs us we really do make a positive difference in their lives.”



### SAILOR BOY IN A SEA OF ESTROGEN

**This ain't no sh\*t:** Just after we had commissioned the *Tennessee*, we were temporarily attached to the base at Cape Canaveral, Florida (Cocoa Beach, really) for missile testing on the new bird we were putting through its paces—the Trident D-5. Well, we would load a test missile and go out and pretend to shoot it or actually make a launch attempt. To my recollection, there were three live tests and myriad simulations at sea. After one of these evolutions, we pulled back into the sea side of the base, and my section had the duty for the rest of the day—which wasn't bad actually, because even though there was no liberty, there were fewer watches to stand because of our half-day at sea. Well, I got tagged for “duty driver,” which was the “watch” where you had to wear your dress uniform and go around to all the bars and clubs and malls and whatnot, picking up sailors and driving them around to their next stop or back to the boat. It was good duty since it was terminated at midnight and I could look forward to a relatively decent night's sleep before reveille.

So anyhow, I get a call that someone wants a lift from this fairly nice hotel bar to another joint in town, so off I go. It's, like, a Thursday night, and when I get there the place is jammin', but I park the “Official Navy Vehicle” (an Econoline) right up front and head over to the bar entrance. Form this mental picture: a naive Nebraska kid in his dress summer whites—complete with sailor hat and neckerchief flapping about. A strapping young lad, of course, or at least that's the image I'm trying to project. There's a bouncer at the foyer and a loud musical beat emanating from behind the inner bar entrance, which for some odd reason remains closed. I state my business, and with what I now remember to be an evil grin, the guy tells me to head on in, mentioning also that any sailors will be in the small bar off to the left side of the main floor. For some reason, though, he neglects to tell me why this is so.

About this time the music stops and a loud DJ's voice excitedly spouts something unintelligible from behind the twin doors I'm about to push open. I figure it'll be pretty cool to just walk in on whatever's going on like Shore Patrol—all official-like—and maybe check out some bar babes on my way through. So I confidently proceed right on into the strange fate awaiting me....

Beyond these doors turns out to be a room packed to the rafters with a couple of hundred screaming, drunken women! Just wrapping up on-stage is a “Policeman” or “Fireman” or “Construction Worker” or some such other character who is picking up tossed money and all of his clothes off the floor before heading to his dressing room after just having finished his act: I have come in smack dab between sets of a Chippendales-type male strip show!

With the crowd now turning back to their drinks or beginning to seek fresh ones, at first I go unnoticed as I turn toward the side bar. But of course it had to happen: I'm suddenly spotted looking all costumed-up like “Sailor Boy.” I see my across-the-room destination in the distance; but it may as well have been a mile away given the seething obstacle ahead. Suddenly I find myself trapped between the happy revelers already at the bar and the horny ones now headed there from the stage area. Fortunately, the more sober of them recognize the official nature of my “costume” and the decidedly non-Chippendale physique beneath it. Others, however, are not so discerning. At various points during my slow progress toward that distant doorway I am set upon and, in no particular order, repeatedly fondled, made the de-hatted victim of “keep away,” danced with, pinched, kissed, and group-groped. They are all pretty fired up and I am simply—literally— in the wrong place at the wrong time. Oh, it may sound like fun to you, but it was actually

kind of harrowing to be thrust into a female maelstrom like this one without any prior warning. Today, of course, I remember the episode fondly—and in a manly manner, mind you—but at the time and in the moment I was in deep over my head.

One of the on-duty bartenders finally gets the drift of my real purpose there and helps Part the Red Sea so I can make better progress toward those beckoning doors across the room—a destination promising safe haven to a sailor lost to the estrogen-charged madness all about him. As I clear the last of the feminine hurdles a couple of catcalls come my way—and then the DJ finally fires up the proceedings again with his intro of the next oiled-up costumed performer.

Well, I straighten up, de-Gilliganize my hat, turn my kerchief back to a front-facing aspect, and survey these side premises for any sign of my shipmates. None are in sight. Instead, the bartender watches me in near-hysterics, having witnessed the whole sorry spectacle. Two other guys are nearby, both obviously civilians—one playing video poker, the other nursing a beer at the bar. Nope, definitely no one from the boat is anywhere around, so not only has my effort been pointless, but no one will ever believe me about it later. “They left a while ago,” confirms the guy behind the counter. The throbbing music behind me picks up steam again as the “Cowboy” now warms up his routine. Finally taking mercy on me, the barkeep shows me to the employee side entrance so I can escape to my parked van with maybe one last treasured shred of dignity. But of course, get this, at said point I finally become aware of a growing sense of...wow, that was awesome! It was, after all. No doubt about it.

And that, my friend, is a no-sh\*tter.

**Tom Kisler**  
USS *Tennessee* (SSBN-734) 1986-1989

### TUNA FISH

**I was extremely lucky** to have had the privilege of befriending the late Forest J. Sterling, Yeoman aboard the mighty *Wahoo* (SS-238), in the last years of his long life. He shared with me this simple sea story—perhaps my favorite, and recounted in his book, *Wake of the Wahoo*:

Hungry one day after watch, he went into the galley and foraged for mayonnaise and some cans of tuna. Taking them into the messroom with a large metal bowl, he sat down at a table among shipmates already lounging there and set himself about the task of opening the cans and mixing himself up a big batch of tuna salad. Realizing he'd forgotten an important ingredient—bread for his intended sandwich—he slipped quickly back into the galley to rustle up some slices.

By the time he returned, of course, his buddies had scooped out and consumed the bowl's entire contents with their fingers!

**Jeff Porteous**  
L.A.-Pasadena Base

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Have your own submarine saga? *American Submariner* is looking for well-written, non-fiction sea stories about submarines and submariners by the men who lived them. Email your story to [AmericanSubmariner@gmail.com](mailto:AmericanSubmariner@gmail.com), and put “This ain't no Sh\*t!” in the subject line.

### BALLAST TANK ‘CLOTHES-OUT’

**In June of 1972, I arrived as a** brand new nuke j.g. with the *Thomas Edison* Blue Crew in Rota, Spain for her refit prior to patrol. Due to a family illness in the officer group, we were short a weapons department officer, and so I was designated “First Lieutenant for Refit,” for which I was eminently unqualified. Luckily I had a good first-class petty officer to keep me out of too much trouble.

At that time, all *Ethan Allen*-class boats were being checked for “hull weld anomalies” as part of their refits. We entered Rota's floating dry-dock and the hull paint was removed in the appropriate area inside the ballast tank and the testing was performed. The tank was then closed out and, as the newest officer and First Lieutenant, there was no way I was going to get out of conducting the ballast tank closeout inspection.

One of the deck gang seamen was finishing painting the last of the welds when I bravely climbed through the flood port into the bottom of the ballast tank. I then began the long climb in the pitch-black darkness between the main hull and ballast tank outer wall up around the 30-foot diameter hull to the top of the ballast tank. When I reached the top, I remember subconsciously looking at the open vent valve and making a mental note that, if anything went wrong, there was no way that I could squeeze through that vent valve to get out (claustrophobia setting in?).

All was in order so I headed downward with the seaman carrying his paint can just ahead of and below me. We hadn't gone but a few steps when he suddenly slipped and grabbed for a strut to catch himself. He managed to catch himself, but, in so doing, he lost his grip on the paint can. In the light of my flashlight, I watched as the paint can, seemingly in slow motion, bounced once against the hull, popping the lid off, and depositing a large swath of heavy, pink-orange paint down the side of the hull. In addition, the paint completely covered the narrow gap of the ballast tank structure which was the only way out of the ballast tank.

The tank immediately filled a heavy, suffocating odor and I quickly realized that there would soon be very little breathable air left inside the ballast tank. I took a deep breath and started downward as quickly as I could. I recall squeezing through the narrow, paint-covered area and feeling the paint soaking through my poopie suit and my underwear.

When I emerged from the bottom of the ballast tank, I was quite a sight. My left side and back were covered from head to toe with the thick, pinkish-colored paint (a little in my hair too).

While taking deep gulps of air I looked around at the paint crew. What I saw was compressed lips on faces trying to show something like sympathy, contrasted with the shaking sides of mirth all around the group. I realized then that I had been duly “christened.”

Since the poopie suit was going to be sh\*t-canned, I was allowed to keep it. I still have that poopie suit and it still (pretty much) fits. For close to 50 years it has been perfect for those painting jobs around the house.

**Bob King**, Lt. j.g.  
USS *Thomas A. Edison* (SSBN-610) 1972-1974

### TOPSIDE WATCH TALE

**It's May of 1962 on my first boat** the *Rasher* (AGSS-269), in the deck gang, stationed at Ballast Point in San Diego.

Life was good. I was single, just made E-3, just qualified in subs, and now allowed to watch movies. I was dragging down about \$200 a month and I was standing the morning topside watch, doing my best to look “professional” with a .45 ACP on my hip. Most guys would opt for the cowboy fast-draw look, wearing the pistol really low, but I always took the time to adjust the web belt for a higher, more snug fit. I never played with the magazine like some guys, who occasionally dropped bullets in the super-structure. There had to be a lot of live rounds mixed in with the tender *Nereus*' coffee grounds. I always wondered about the practice of giving a pistol and live ammunition to a teenager, with little or no training that I can recall. It was a different time then, and I suppose the thinking was that it represented a minimal risk or that somehow the watch could actually protect the boat from external threats. It wasn't until some years later at Pearl Harbor that I became somewhat proficient with a pistol, but of course by that time I wasn't standing topside watches.

Anyway, I was ready for anything. We were the outboard boat of a three-boat nest alongside the tender. A large sportfishing boat that was passing by suddenly came about and approached the outside of the nest. At first, I couldn't figure out what he was doing. Maybe it was time to figure out how to put the magazine in the pistol. He came very close—well within hailing distance—and asked if we had any loaves of bread we could spare. (I later learned that they had a new cook on board and got underway



with no bread for lunch.) So I hollered the query down the after battery hatch. The cook was working on breakfast, and the mess cook passed up three loaves. I tossed them over to the official-looking person in the bow of the sportfisher.

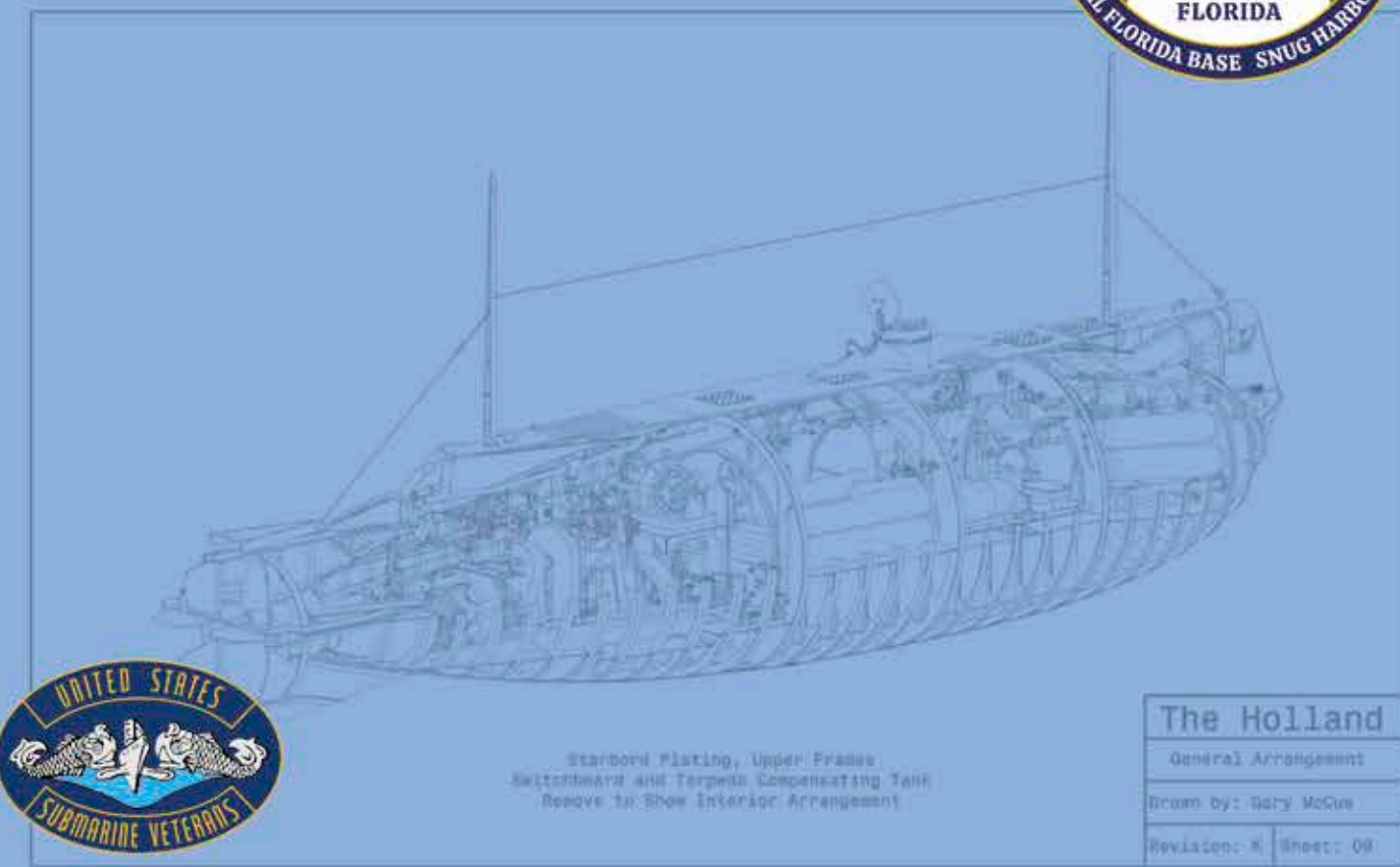
They then backed down, turned about, and went on their way. It was all quick enough, and I hoped the OOD or the COB didn't find out how close I had allowed a civilian boat to approach us.

Nothing was said when I got off watch, so I figured I was home free. That was until the next day when the *San Diego Union* newspaper came out. There, on the front page of the outdoor section, was a large picture of me tossing the bread over to the sportfisher. With *Rasher*'s hull number readily visible, and the caption identifying us, I figured I was really “dead-meat” now. But again no one said a word. They must have chalked it up to good public relations. The sportfisher said they would pay us back, but I hoped it didn't happen on my watch.

**Dave Aunkst**, ET1(SS)  
Corvina Base

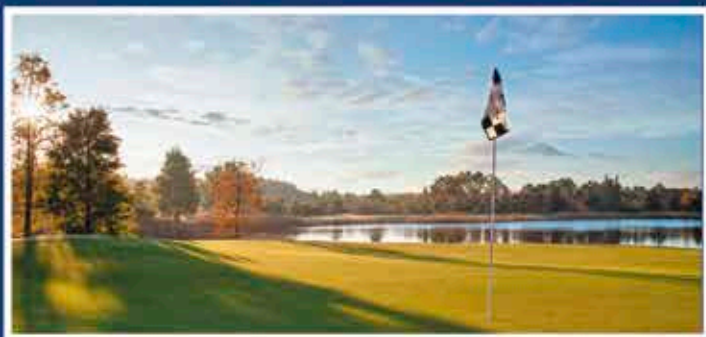


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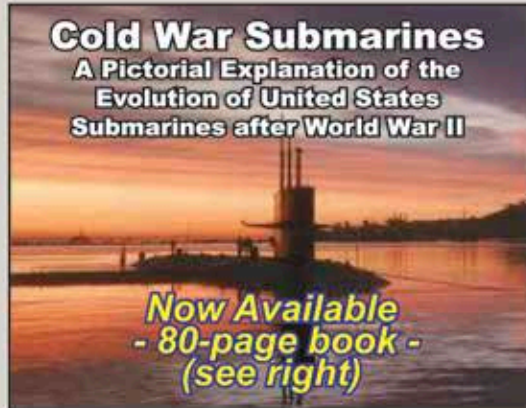
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## Questions?

Jack Messersmith

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# The A-Boats: A Legend is Born

by Jim Christley

The Navy accepted and commissioned the USS *Holland* in October of 1900. It was the first of an unbroken line of commissioned submarines in the United States Navy. John Holland had already built a follow-on design, the *Fulton*, and presented it to naval officials. The Navy wanted more boats and put in an order for seven to be built along the lines of the *Fulton*. The first was laid down in New Jersey the following month. By the spring of 1901, all seven were well in hand in two shipyards. On the West Coast were the A-3 and the A-5 at the Union Iron Works in San Francisco. In Elizabethport, New Jersey, the A-1, A-2, A-4, A-6 and A-7 sat side-by-side in the Crescent Shipyard.

Their construction technique was quite different by the standards of anything we know today. Welding was non-existent. Everything needed to be either cast into the desired shape or fabricated from rolled steel and then either bolted or riveted together. Welding angle or channel iron to build foundations and brackets could be engineered though. Frames of rolled T-stock or Z-stock were erected about eighteen inches apart. These frames had pre-drilled three-quarter inch holes around their periphery. Rolled and hammered one-half inch oil-tempered plates some seventy feet long and eight feet wide with tapered ends were laid against the frames and holes marked. The plates were then drilled with more three-quarter inch holes to match those in the frames. These plates were re-laid along the frames with rivets inserted red-hot from the inside, then backed up by a hefty man with a backing piece. On the outside, the hammer man—with either an air or hand hammer—peened the protruding end of the rivet into the countersunk hole in the plate. The plate above was overlapped by nearly a foot and a double row of rivets spaced about two inches apart were properly pounded in to assure a pressure-tight seal. Burrs and rivet heads protruding too proud of the surface were filed off by hand. The work was brutal. These things were started and finished in the winter—in New Jersey—outdoors!

Tank plates assembled at the same time as the hull and its frames were fabricated the same way. Ballast tanks were in the center of the boat and in a saddle shape, the bottom becoming the pressure hull. They carried well past the horizontal centerline on the sides and formed enclosing wings. The tank top was flat and created a floor for the battery cells. Forward, under the torpedo tube, was the gasoline tank. The forward trim tank wrapped around the tube. The after trim tank was situated underneath as part of the foundation for the thrust bearing on the main shaft.

Atop the center of the pressure hull, a large cylindrical casting was



USS *Grampus* (SS-4)—later renamed A-3.

Photo courtesy of PigBoats.COM

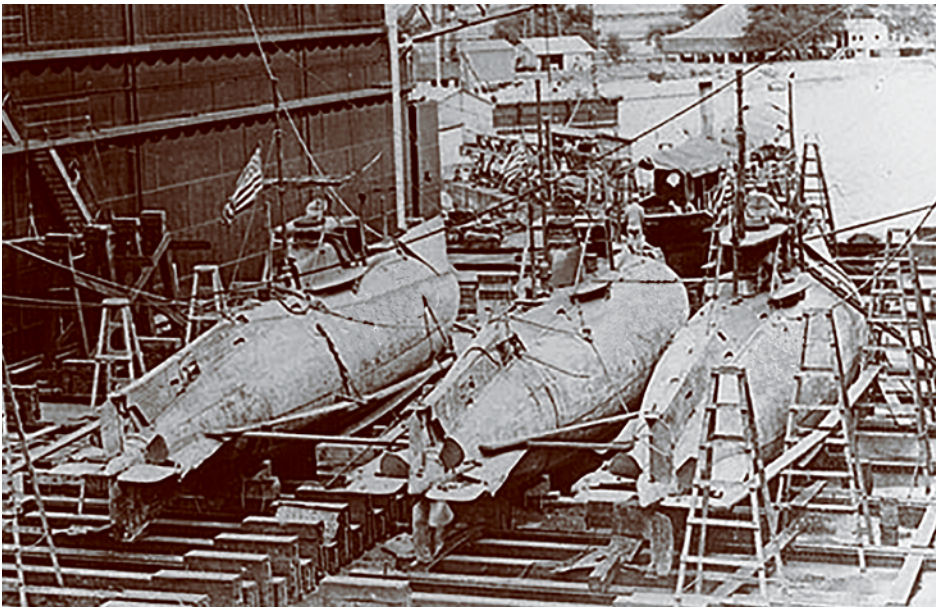


inserted. Merely thirty-six inches in diameter, the cylinder was closed at the top by a hatch twenty-four inches in diameter. This was the conning tower with one of only two hatches in the whole boat. The other was over the engine.

The engine was gasoline-fueled, four-cycle, and featured four cylinders. But that is where any resemblance to a modern automobile engine ended. The cylinders were about seven inches in diameter and had a stroke of nearly a foot. The engine could be turned over by hand, or with the electric motor, or even air-started. It was started on one cylinder only, then, as it began turning over, the other cylinders were cut-in by adjusting the fuel and spark. The thing had to be tweaked constantly. It ran in only one direction, so backing down was out of the question. There was also only limited speed adjustment. Half-speed of about four knots and full speed of about 8.5 knots were the skipper's only choices. The engine would develop about 180 horsepower when running properly. Flanged fittings bolted with no lock washers or lockwire, pipe thread with only lead paste to form a gasket, no swage fittings or compression joints—the piping system was a nightmare.

Being gasoline-fueled, there was the problem of leaks and fumes. Vapors could build up and cause two problems: First was the obvious potential for fire—such combustion would be sudden and disastrous. The second was the effect on the crew. Gasoline fumes tended to accumulate low in the ship, causing displacement of oxygen and creating slow asphyxia, which seriously affects the human brain. The medical symptom is a dangerous euphoria, which can overcome crew members and seriously impair judgment—the next step being a fire or death by suffocation. Also, the bearings required lubricating oil be splashed onto them in their semi-open crankcase; oil cups were gravity-fed and had to be refilled from a can. The term “oiler” had real meaning then. Working around this engine with all its open, moving cams, crankshafts and rods made it a dangerous time to be a machinist.

On 24 July 1917, the USS *Shark* suffered a fire and explosion while patrolling in the bay. The fire was caused by gasoline leaks—their fumes igniting around the engine. The crew tried to fight the blaze, but it proved too much for them. Lt. j.g. Arnold Marcus, the captain of the *Shark*, ordered all hands to lay to topside. All the crewmen suffered burns and the effects of inhaling hot smoke and fumes. Tragically, each of the six men died within



(l-r): Submarines A-6 (SS-7), A-4 (SS-5) and A-2 (SS-3) in the Dewey Drydock, Olongapo Naval Station, Philippines, circa 1912. The boats show standard features: a single tall periscope abaft the conning tower; a conning tower fairing; and a bridge structure atop the conning tower, with the surface wheel atop it.

hours; Captain Marcus died the following day. *Shark* was never returned to service.

Aft of the engine on the main shaft in the A-boats was a hand-operated band clutch. Next in line was the 70-horsepower open-winding DC motor. Powered by the battery, it drove the shaft at some 400 rpm. It was reversible and offered some speed control, so it was used for maneuvering near the dock. Through a set of friction clutches, the shaft also drove the air compressor and ballast pump. Full-speed submerged was seven knots and could be sustained for about four hours.

Nestled inside the wings of the main ballast tanks was the battery. Here was a monster. Admiral Lockwood had called it the “Fiery Devil and Green Death.” It was a lead-acid battery—that is, lead plates with sulfuric acid as electrolyte. It was the same general type as used today. There were some significant differences, however. Today's batteries are enclosed in a hard rubber and plastic cell jar which holds the electrolyte and plates; the electrolyte is stirred by an airlift pump similar to an aquarium pump. The plates today are specially designed to minimize gassing, and there is good ventilation with accurate hydrogen detectors.

None of this was present in the old A-boats. The battery cells were steel boxes lined with separate layers of rubber and lead held in place by waxed maple wedges. The boxes were open-topped and the plates were hung by extenders atop each plate, reaching the tops of the cell jars. The positive plates were connected via a soldered bus bar of lead-coated copper. The negative plates were hung and connected in a similar manner. The cells were then connected in series with intercell connector bars, just as our batteries are today. The cells themselves were wedged in place inside the steel box, which in turn was bounded by the ballast tanks and the fore and aft half-bulkheads. This box was lined with lead, with the top of the battery well covered by shellacked oak planks about three inches thick and sixteen inches wide. These stretched side-to-side across the well and rested on a lip at each edge. The planks, when in place, were covered by a rubber sheet, then a shellacked canvas walking cover. If any maintenance or monitoring of the battery gravity or temperature was required, the planks were pulled up and later replaced after such readings were taken. The cells could be cut out of the circuit and repaired by replacing acid and plates. The space above the cells was ventilated by air leaking down around the planks and

drawn off to be exhausted over the side by battery blowers. There were sixty cells in ten rows of six cells each, and they could develop an 1840 ampere-hour discharge rate for four hours.

Being a lead-acid battery using a chemical reaction to provide electrical power, the battery also presented other chemical reactions requiring consideration. First, while charging (and to a lesser extent, also while being discharged at a high rate), the battery generated hydrogen gas. This gas was highly flammable at a four percent air concentration and actually explosive at seven percent. Should the battery be improperly charged or ineffectively ventilated, that concentration would build in a hurry. The results were lethal. This was the Fiery Death to which Lockwood, a veteran of the A-boats, referred. Another gas generated by the battery was hydrogen sulfide; the rotten egg smell of this gas permeated everything. Then there was chlorine. The battery resided in the center of the boat, covered by a deck of loose planks, rubber sheet and canvas, with the conning tower and main hatch into the

boat immediately above. The top of this main hatch was three feet above the waterline in the original design, and five feet in the later-version conning tower. Any seawater coming down the hatch fell directly onto the battery deck. If any leaked into the cells, sulfuric acid combined with the sodium chloride in the seawater and liberated a pea green, heavier than air, oxygen-displacing, toxic gas—the Green Devil: chlorine. If cells became salted, they were charged and discharged while ventilating the boat to get rid of the chlorine, then the acid was spiked as necessary.

The battery was connected to a master switchboard—not at all what we're used to now, and perhaps better found in our worst nightmares. A single three-foot-wide by four-foot-high slab of two-inch-thick marble, supported by steel angle and channel bracing, was mounted vertically on the starboard (port on some) side of the boat. On this slab were positioned two double-pole, single-throw knife switches: the battery breakers—one for each half of the battery. Above them was a double-pole, double-throw knife switch that could hook the battery halves in series or parallel. Then there were separate single- and double-throw knife switches for the battery blowers, auxiliaries and lights. A large double-throw knife switch was the ahead-and-reverse lever for the main motor. Seven single-pole knife switches in a row were the starting resistance cutout switches. These were of German silver and mounted either in a separate box or on the back of the marble slab. A motor field switch and motor field rheostat rounded out the roster of items on the switchboard. There were no other switchboards or distribution boxes. This was it. The system consisted of all open switches, open wiring. Battery voltage varied from 70 to 160 volts DC. Does being an onboard electrician at this time sound safe to you?

Up front was a single eighteen-inch diameter torpedo tube. The submarine could carry one torpedo in the tube and two in the boat—one on each side of the middle space (the battery well location). The torpedoman in charge of the fish was a real craftsman. Each torpedo was run by high-pressure air—powering a four-cylinder air motor—and was a straight runner only with merely rudimentary (and unreliable) depth control. Each fish required its own gyro setup in the shop and needed tweaking prior to loading. Taking a torpedo onboard was also interesting, since it had to be loaded into the boat through the torpedo tube! After firing, each torpedo was recovered even if it meant dragging the bottom and then having a diver hook a line to it. Then it was reloaded, dismantled, and prepared for another launch. Another torpedo-related curiosity occurred on 15 April 1909, when Ensign Whiting of the USS *Porpoise* actually made a lockout through the torpedo tube and lived. Consider for a moment crawling through an eighteen-inch diameter tube about fifteen feet long. Now think about doing it while it is flooding.

The crew of a typical A-boat consisted of one officer—normally an ensign—and six enlisted men. There would be two chiefs: one electrician and one machinist. A couple of enlisted machinists,

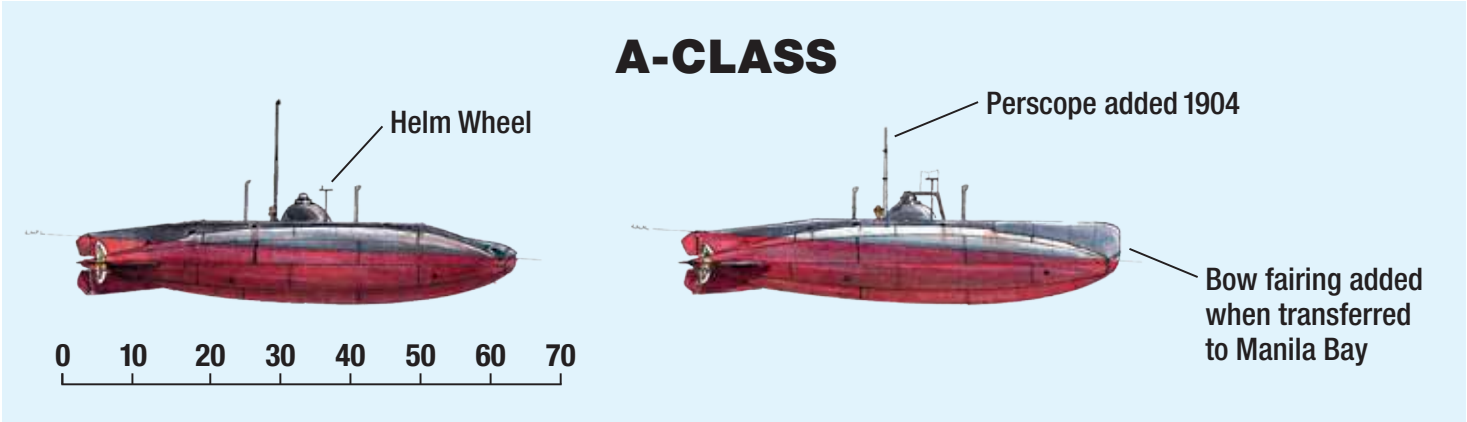
another electrician, and a torpedoman would round out the crew. The watches were non-rotating. Two men tended the engine, another handled the motor and switchboard, a fourth was on the helm, the fifth on deck with the CO, and number six cooked, cleaned, and generally hung loose. The steering gear was hand-powered only, as were the stern planes. There were no bow planes. (Note: A-7 employed hand hydraulic steering and diving; the operator turned a gear pump which pushed oil to rams attached by linkage to the planes and rudder.)

To submerge your A-boat is quite an evolution. Let's assume you have just transited to your operating area and your CO has decided to dive. First, he rings up ALL STOP—the engine gets shut down and the clutch between the engine and motor is disengaged. A couple of men unship the two ventilation pipes and strike them below. The masts, if raised, are taken down (although this is not specifically required). The crew heads below, shutting and clamping the conning tower hatch. Still stopped, the safety tank is flooded, then the ballast tanks. These tanks featured valves that vented the air into the interior of the boat. Said vents are opened, then large Kingston valves (lever-operated valves which shut with sea pressure) are opened, admitting water into the tanks. If the ship has been properly ballasted, she should submerge until the conning tower's upper end is just at the surface.

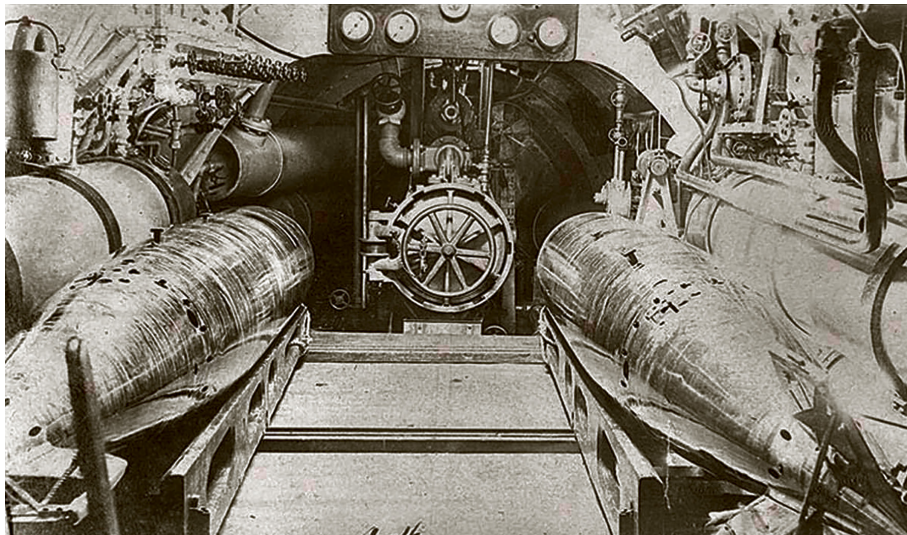
The CO now orders half-speed ahead. The electrician at the switchboard makes sure all the switches for the main motor-starting resistance are open, checks the field rheostat at minimum, smartly shuts the motor field switch, then puts the motor-reverser switch in the ahead position. Reaching up, he now closes each of the starting resistance switches in turn. After the motor comes up to minimum running speed, the electrician then adjusts the motor field rheostat to the correct speed for the ordered shaft turns. The planesman cranks some up angle into the stern planes to give a down angle to the boat. To do this, he must turn the handwheel connected to linkage spanning from the middle of the boat to the aft end of the main motor. The affected gears are attached to a quadrant gear driving the linkage to the planes and rudder—there is no power assist. With a little down angle, the boat finally starts down. Normally, these boats will run at either a sixteen-foot depth (measured at about the mid-level to the hull) or at sixty feet.

It was not an easy life, but the hardship definitely bonded A-boat crews. It was imperative each man be adept at all operations and could therefore lend a hand when required on any job.

Ensign Charles Lockwood, when about to be checked out for final qualification to command the A-2, was suddenly and unpleasantly introduced to what would become a new training concept. The crew had been secretly briefed by the old CO and the Division Commander ahead of time, and as Lockwood took the boat down for his qualification dive, all hell broke loose. The boat seemed heavy and there was the sound of rushing water aft. Someone yelled that they were leaking through the engine exhaust and the bilges were filling up. Then someone else shouted that







The interior of the USS Moccasin (A-4) showing her torpedo tube and two reload torpedoes. What look to be torpedoes outboard on each side are actually air flasks.

Photo courtesy of PigBoats.COM

they smelled chlorine. The boat lurched with a strong up angle and the lights went out. Lockwood ordered the boat to the surface. After leveling out on the surface, and with the lights back on, the tested skipper noticed the entire crew sporting grins—and that somehow the flooding and chlorine problems had vanished. The Division CO and the crew had coordinated a convincing drill. It had been realistic, well-rehearsed and a complete surprise. Lockwood had handled his boat well but remained upset by what he felt was a trick played on him by his crew. When it was explained that this was an effective way to demonstrate his true ability and that he had certainly succeeded—earning the respect and trust of the crew—he felt differently. The tradition of casualty drills has now been an integral part of our submarine force since these earliest boats.

The A-class was built from plans by the Electric Boat Company, plans representing John Holland’s seventh iteration, the sixth being *Holland* herself. The first of any ship class is usually the one with the lowest class number and the first to be laid down. Not so with the A-class. The A-1 was the USS *Plunger*. But she was constructed somewhat differently from her sisters. The first true A-boat laid down was therefore actually the A-2, USS *Adder*—so the class became known as the *Adders*. There was also a class prototype built, the *Fulton*. She was tested by EB and then, when the Navy didn’t buy her, EB sold her to Russia to compete with Simon Lake, who had already sent over his submarine, *Protector* and was now looking for contracts to produce more. He indeed scored a contract and built five boats at Newport News Shipbuilding.

*Adder* and her sisters were laid down and constructed, and from their commissioning, until 1908 taught the Navy much about the submarine and its capabilities. Formed into an operational flotilla in Newport, Rhode Island in April of 1904, *Adder*, *Moccasin*, *Porpoise* and *Shark* operated out of Newport, and Suffolk, Long Island. *Grampus* and *Pike* were run out of San Francisco and San Pedro, California. Then in 1908, most were put out of commission. There were two new submarine classes in the water by then and the *Adders* were needed no longer—here in the States, that is. They were, it was decided, still needed to help defend Manila Bay. Admiral Dewey had said that if the Spanish had possessed one submarine in the bay in 1898, he would never have attacked.

The A-boats were soon stripped down and loaded aboard colliers to make the trip. *Porpoise* and *Shark* were first. They went aboard the USS *Caesar* (AC-16). Loading in Newport, *Caesar* made the trip across the Atlantic, through the Mediterranean, down through the Suez Canal, and across the Indian Ocean to

Manila from April to August of 1908. Once the ship made port in Cavite, she off-loaded the boats by pushing them over the side on skids. Thus the *Porpoise* and *Shark* were the first U.S. submarines through the Suez Canal and the first to be launched twice. (*Holland* was actually launched twice too, but only once as an official Navy ship.)

The following year, *Caesar* made another trip, this time hauling *Adder* and *Moccasin*. In late 1912, the USS *Ajax* (AC-15) carried two of the B-class boats (*B-2* and *B-3*) to Manila. In 1915, USS *Hector* (AC-7) took the two West Coast boats, *Grampus* and *Pike*, plus the *B-1*, to Manila. Thus, by the end of 1915, the Manila Bay flotilla consisted of six A-class boats and three B-class boats: the first advanced submarine base—also technically the first WestPacs and the opening of Olongapo (Subic Bay).

These boats escorted ships into and out of Manila during WWI and performed the tasks of a “Fleet in Being”—that is, one whose presence

deters an opponent even if it makes no outright patrols and sinks no foes. Worn out and used up, after the war, the *Adders* were put out of commission for the last time; the S-boats were already being built by 1918. Otherwise useless, the decommissioned A-boats stayed at anchor and were employed as oil tanks and water tanks until 1922. The Navy then designated them targets and towed them to a position (probably somewhere north of Corregidor) to be sunk over time by destroyer weapons training. As near as can be found out at present, all are still there.

What follows is a specific rundown on how the A-boats were expended as targets in firing exercises by the destroyers stationed at Manila and Olongapo. The original records are a bit muddled, but dedicated research by Mr. Christopher Wright has uncovered these details. (Note that information regarding which particular boat was sunk by which ship is in some cases confusing and may be in error.)

On 18 December 1921, ships of Destroyer Division 37, the USS *Southard*, USS *Hovey*, USS *Broome*, and USS *Alden* sank ex-USS A-4, ex-USS A-6 and ex-USS B-2. On 19 December 1921, the ex-USS B-1 and ex-USS B-3 were sunk by elements of Destroyer Division 37. On 20 December 1921, the USS *Talbot* of Destroyer Division 12 opened fire on the ex-USS A-5 on the firing range west of Corregidor just outside the entrance to Manila Bay. She made three hits at a range of about 3000 yards and the old submarine sank in just four minutes after her first hit. The total firing exercise took five minutes and twenty-two seconds with eighteen rounds expended. Ex-USS A-2, ex-USS A-7 and ex-USS A-3 were sunk by USS *Talbot*, USS *Zane*, USS *Roper*, USS *Waters* and USS *Dorsey* of Destroyer Division 12, most likely later in the day during a second exercise. As an interesting note, the ex-USS A-1 was sold while embarked on the deck of the ex-USS *Puritan* (a monitor), and moved from a berth in the Norfolk Navy Yard on 28 May 1922, to be scrapped by the firm of Joseph G. Hitner and W. F. Cutler.

The A-boats brought many firsts and showed the way the submarine force was destined to develop. A-boat Ensign (later Admiral) Lockwood—disappointed to be assigned to the USS *Monterey* for duty in submarines—was told by submarine officers already on hand at the time that the submarine would get into his blood and he would soon either not be around anymore or find he’d never trade duty on the boat for duty on anything else. He discovered within six months they were quite right. The man who would become Commander, Submarine Force Pacific during the last three years of World War II would never be the same.



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Pass Down the Line—  
USS Chicago Base Member Creates COB PDL Pin Program

The Pass Down the Line, PDL idea started in November of 2018 when USS *Chicago* Base member Rick Riessen, former IC1(SS) on USS *Henry Clay* (SSBN-625), had a casual discussion with retired TMCM(SS) and USSVI Holland Club Chairman Edwin “Bud” Atkins about his proposed Pass Down the Line COB Pin and Dolphins initiative. The goal of this initiative would be to build a legacy insignia bridge between our current active-duty undersea warriors and their submarine service veteran counterparts.

Bud was interested and volunteered his personal COB pin which he had worn on three boomer submarines: USS *Kamehameha*, *Michigan*, and *Alabama*. The pin was engraved to denote this information. Rick then designed and made a plaque for the USS *Colorado* (SSN-788). On the plaque was the history of Bud’s COB pin and a way to mount the pin.

In August of 2019 Rick, on behalf of the USS *Colorado* Submarine Association and Bud Atkins met with Commander Jason Geddes, the commanding officer of *Colorado*. They then held a formal presentation of Bud’s COB pin and the plaque at a ship’s picnic in Groton, Connecticut. Bud’s COB pin, sometimes referred to as COB Cookie, was removed from the plaque and pinned on ETRCM(SS) Chip Alger, the *Colorado* COB, and was worn during his tour. The plaque was then mounted on the bulkhead in the Chief’s Quarters. It is intended that the pin be passed on to future COB’s throughout the life of the boat. It is anticipated that upon the decommissioning of the *Colorado*, this plaque, with Bud’s COB pin attached, will be formally passed to the USS *Nautilus* Museum for posterity.

Rick has since expanded the program and created a similar plaque for USS *Illinois* (SSN-786) with a COB pin donated by retired ETCM(SS) Dennis “Pete” LaPierre, a USSVI Member at Large. Pete served on seven boats and was COB on USS *Casimir Pulaski* (SSBN-633). This COB pin and plaque were formally presented by Rick along with Commander Neil Steinhagen, the *Illinois* commanding officer, to EMNCM(SS) Chris Bean in October 2019 with the same anticipated process of passing the COB pin down the line.

Rick’s goal is to expand and continue the PDL program and is currently working to make presentations to USS *New Jersey* (SSN-796) now under construction in Newport News, USS *Oregon* (SSN-793) to be commissioned mid-next year, and USS *Hyman G. Rickover* (SSN-795) under construction in Groton.



*l-r:* Rick Riessen, USS *Chicago* Base member and PDL program creator, Bud Atkins, former chief-of-the-boat on *Kamehameha*, *Michigan* and *Alabama*, and USS *Colorado* chief-of-the-boat ETRCM(SS) Chip Alger.

COVID Restrictions Bring Guest Speaker Opportunity

All of our lives have had to change in ways we never imagined. For our Tarheel Base, as with so many others, this has meant the need to forego in-person meetings at the American Legion and move to an all-online presence. But it has also suddenly meant an exciting new approach to our regular guest speaker program. Formerly when hosting personal appearances, we were limited to candidates residing within a reasonable driving range. Now, with potentially interesting speakers delivered to us virtually from anywhere, the world is our oyster! Our base simply hadn’t anticipated such a wonderful side effect to such an awful set of societal circumstances.

Shipmate Steve Gillespie actually helped determine our first such outside-the-box guest speaker. We had both served on the USS *Louisville* (SSN-724), but Steve had actually been on hand when a change of command brought Frank Stewart aboard as commanding officer. Steve spoke very highly of Captain Stewart and I had always wanted to meet him. My opportunity came later during Steve’s retirement ceremony in Kings Bay, where the good captain was an honored guest. Having gotten to know Frank now over the last couple of years, it occurred to me that I actually possessed contact information for the first “shooter” submarine captain in modern history; Frank had been in command of *Louisville* when she became the initial boat to fire Tomahawk missiles during the first Gulf War. What a fascinating live topic this would make for our meeting!

I reached out to Frank and was thrilled when he accepted our

invitation. And so, on Saturday, October 3, 2020, Tarheel Base played host to a presentation by retired Navy Captain Frank Stewart—and he did not disappoint. His detailed talk gave us all the feeling of actually being aboard *Louisville* during her moment of truth. Most interesting was his coverage of all the behind-the-scenes activity leading up to, during, and after this historic deployment—including how the captain had prepared his ship while having no idea how long he’d be at sea. The idea of loading stores for six months of submerged operations was mind-boggling!

Also talked about were the many special challenges faced by the crew, including significant engineering repairs accomplished while underway. Communication issues between the boat operating as a Pacific fleet element within an Atlantic fleet surface operation were also covered, as was Frank’s experience having to personally debrief the CNO and other high-ranking military and Pentagon officials after it was all over. Changes made to fleet operating procedures as a result of lessons learned from the mission were discussed at the meeting as well.

In fact, the content of Frank’s entire presentation was exceptional. But the notion that he was sitting comfortably in his home in Louisville the whole time made the experience magical and certainly opened our eyes to future possibilities.

Gauntlet-tossing guest speaker challenges have now started to come in from base members: “How are you gonna top this one?” I surely don’t know, but I do know we’re no longer limited by geography!

Purple Hearts Held Dear  
Deep in the Heart of Texas

Central Texas Base has always warmly supported worthy charitable organizations of all kinds, including boat memorials and local non-profits engaged in various veterans’ and children’s causes—all in our effort to honor our USSVI creed by bringing more local awareness of who we are, what we do, and why.

For 2020, we decided to support the Purple Heart Integration Project (PHIP) here in Georgetown, Texas. Back in February, Conley Giles and retired Army Major General Michael J. Terry joined our monthly meeting to present and explain the case for their Project. With Georgetown already having been designated the first Purple Heart City in the state back in 2014, what better municipality to further develop as “America’s Purple Heart City”?

The Project’s overall goal is to aid seriously disabled veterans suffering from any number of debilitating conditions—including severe burns, loss of limbs, or loss of vision or hearing—to become more self-sufficient, and ideally regain their ability to live independently and see to their own needs. The vets in question have been discharged from the local VA hospital, so are already transitioning from being cared for by others to taking care of themselves.

The PHIP facility will offer these vets an opportunity to reside on their own or with others in living areas adapted to their specific needs. The grounds will even provide resident-tended vegetable gardens and a state-of-the-art pool and fitness facility. Best of all, PHIP’s corporate partners—including some of the largest tech companies in the world—will offer disabled vets a variety of on-site career and life skills training, matching opportunities to best-suited individuals. Tutors from the Georgetown community will also be available. And the Event Center will provide participation in the operation and production of hosted events, generating further revenue for the program as well. Men and women in the PHIP will spend six to eighteen months in the Project preparing to become newly productive members of the community.

The Central Texas Base strongly supports this initiative and looks forward to seeing the Project get underway. We’re very excited to again be involved in a local veterans’ cause. For more information, you can find the Purple Heart Integration Project on Facebook or the web.



*l-r:* Central Texas Base Vice Commander Gene Hall, Conley Giles, Ted Acheson (Military Order of the Purple Heart), and Base Commander Rick Mitchell, take a picture following donation to the Purple Heart Integration Project.

Charleston Base Rummage Sale  
Raises Over \$2,400 for Base  
Scholarship Program

The United States Submarine Veterans, Charleston Base held their first annual rummage sale in support of the Charleston Base Admiral James Osborn Scholarship Fund, named in honor of Rear Admiral James B. Osborn. Admiral Osborn was the first captain of the Blue Crew of USS *George Washington* (SSBN-598) and a longtime Charleston-area resident prior to his passing in March 2004.

The sale was held on November 14 at the Halloween Express in Summerville, South Carolina. The event was planned and managed by Carl Chinn, Rick Sparger, and Marty Sessler and was a huge success. Through the efforts of Connie Chin, items were also offered for sale on Craigslist and Facebook Marketplace and contributed to the more than \$2,400 that was raised for the Scholarship Fund.

Base members working the sale arrived around five a.m. to set up tables and chairs and post signs. The sale items were donated by Charleston Base members and everything one could reasonably imagine was available, including household goods, tools, toys, and sports items. Shoppers arrived early to cash in on the bargains.

Through their hard work and innovative ideas, the members of the Scholarship Committee have made 2020 the most successful year in the history of the Charleston Base Scholarship Program. The current Scholarship fund has more than \$5000 available for awards.



Volunteers relax following rummage sale in support of the Charleston Base Scholarship Program. (*l-r*): Larry Knutson, Marty Sessler, Carl Chinn, Ken Hutchinson, Ricky Collins, Rick Sparger, and Glen Little.

WANTED

All early pre-1975 issues of *American Submariner* or *Submarine National Review* as it was then known, to complete my collection and more accurately document the history of the early years of USSVI. I will pay postage.

Contact Ron Martini at (307) 678-9847 or email [rontini@gmail.com](mailto:rontini@gmail.com).



## MILESTONE SUBMARINERS

Not that Holland Club membership at the celebrated fifty-year level is anything to blow out the GDU, but passing the seventy-five year mark as a qualified submariner is admittedly even more of a grand achievement. *American Submariner* is gratified to honor these truly outstanding Holland Club members as they reach this amazing milestone. Below, broken down by base, are the latest proud inductees at the three-quarter-century mark. We recognize and salute your remarkable accomplishment, gentlemen.



### HUDSON VALLEY BASE

**JOHN POTANOVIC** enlisted in the Navy in August 1942 and served briefly on USS R-5 (SS-82), R-6 (SS-83), and R-16 (SS-93) before reporting aboard USS *Archer-Fish* (SS-311) in November 1943. He qualified in 1944 and made all seven *Archer-Fish* war patrols. On her fifth patrol, *Archer-Fish* sank the 72,000-ton Japanese aircraft carrier *Shinano*. To this day, *Shinano* is the largest warship to be sunk by a submarine. John left the Navy as a First Class Motor Machinist's Mate in 1946. He often shares some of his WWII experiences, and states: "I went into the Navy as a kid and they made me a man."



### HUDSON VALLEY BASE

**SANDY OLSON** joined the Navy in February 1943 when he was twenty-years-old. He qualified on USS *Spadefish* (SS-411) in 1944. Sandy made three war patrols aboard *Spadefish*. Two were in the Pacific and the last one was in the Sea of Japan where *Spadefish* was a member of a nine-boat wolfpack called "Hydeman's Hellcats." Armed with a newly-developed mine detecting device, they penetrated the minefields of Tsushima Strait and entered the Sea of Japan. Over the next three weeks, *Spadefish* sank four passenger-cargo ships, a mine-layer, and several smaller vessels before departing the area and returning to Pearl Harbor. Sandy said "I enjoyed my time in the Navy and I miss my old buddies. They were a bunch of swell guys."



### PEORIA BASE

**JAMES TOWN MOOREHEAD** qualified in 1945 while aboard USS *Bluefish* (SS-222) and made one war patrol before the war ended. He left the Navy as a Second Class Motor Machinist's Mate in February 1946. On September 11, 2020 James observed another milestone when he celebrated his 100th birthday.



### TOPEKA-JEFFERSON CITY BASE

**DAVID HUTCHISON** entered the Navy in 1943 at the age of seventeen. His wartime experience began as a mess cook and later a bridge lookout aboard USS *Guardfish* (SS-217). On his second patrol, he became an oiler in the after engine room. Dave recalls one patrol where they attacked a Japanese convoy, sinking four vessels. The enemy responded by pounding *Guardfish* with 127 depth charges, keeping her down for thirty-six hours. By war's end *Guardfish* had sunk nineteen ships for a total of 72,424 tons, and along with USS *Tang* (SS-306), were the only two submarines awarded two Presidential Unit Citations. Dave left the Navy in 1946 as a Second Class Motor Machinist's Mate and has spent his life serving God, country, and family. Topeka-Jefferson City (TJC) Base is honored to have Dave as a member. His commitment to the base and his fellow shipmates makes us especially proud of him. The TJC Base sixteen-foot float is a replica of Dave's WWII *Guardfish*.

## Departed a Boy, Returned a Man

by Kate Ramsay and Jeff Porteous



"I went into the service...a boy and came out a man," proclaims submarine sailor Bob Dickinson, GMC(SS), beginning his story to be recounted here. Deeply principled in solid work ethics and duty to country, submarine sailors like Bob truly find solace and great pride in their unique underwater service. But as with

many WWII vets, this man, now ninety-six, has lived the silent part of the Silent Service story for most of his life: he served gallantly, but nonetheless never spoke to family or friends about the perils he faced during his wartime experience. Until now.

Bob's story technically begins in Brooklyn, New York, on September 4, 1924. But at the tender age of four or so, he accompanied his folks and older sister in their move to Long Island, which Bob calls home to this day. This new locale soon encouraged young Master Dickinson to get used to hard work; at ten he was already toiling beside his father, an electrician/contractor in New York City. "This was all we knew," he explains about growing up during the Depression. "Hard work was a way of life."

When WWII broke out for the U.S. in 1941, Bob was only seventeen and still attending high school. During his final two years there, while also working long hours for his father, Dickinson was a local volunteer fireman as well, filling the void left by firefighters who had already gone off to war. But once graduated in 1942, "I knew I would have to get involved in the war effort sooner or later," he says.

So, he and a group of buddies traveled to New York to the Marine recruiting office. Told there that no more recruits were necessary at the time, Bob returned home, perplexed and frustrated, yet retaining his will to enlist. With a laugh, he explains today that much of this goal was due simply to being tired of his working life. He knew he would eventually be drafted, but wanted to exert his independence, to have at least some say in his future.

And so, a couple of weeks later, he and his friends headed once again for New York—this time to the Navy recruitment office. Happily, here the boys were warmly welcomed and soon found themselves on the way to Newport, Rhode Island, to enter that storied branch's Recruit Training Center.

### The Early Days

Like many, Bob more-or-less sailed through basic training, made good numbers, and now truly felt on his way. But his recent background was not ready to leave him just yet: his firefighting experience brought swift assignment to the local fire department serving the Newport News Naval Base in Virginia. The war had left the base short-handed, so Dickinson was needed as an instructor for naval personnel and recruits heading out to sea. "I found myself younger than most of the trainees they sent me," he smiles.

But running in and out of multiple fires every day took a toll on the young sailor: he was experiencing significant health issues in the form of troubling weight loss.

"I thought the only way I was going to get out [of the fire assignment] was to volunteer for submarine service," he says. So he did—and it became his ticket. Once making the exclusive cut for sub school, he was bound for training in New London, Connecticut. His most memorable experience there? Meeting

and playing ball with Yogi Berra. The eventual All-Star and Hall of Famer—himself a Navy Gunner's Mate during the war—used to join the young sailors on the field, tossing around footballs. "My only regret," Dickinson says, "was never seeing Berra play baseball after the war."

From sub school Bob was sent on to Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to help put the USS *Queenfish* (SS-393) into commission. "I knew almost everything on that boat," he says with pride. But it was still much different from his sub school training. "The only equipment we trained on...was from German subs. *Queenfish* amazed us all."

The sleek new submarine was commissioned on March 11, 1944, then headed out on a shakedown cruise from Portsmouth to Key West, Florida, into the Caribbean, and finally back up to New London to load up on stores and ordnance.

As a seaman new to submarines, Dickinson enjoyed diving beneath the ocean. "Some guys who were scared didn't make it," he notes. "I thought it was great!"

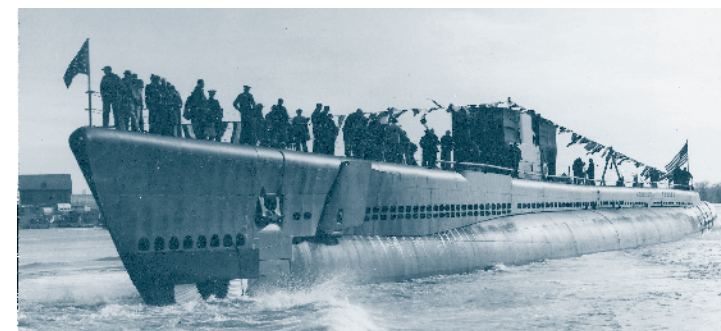
*Queenfish's* next trip would involve a Panama Canal transit while sailing out to Hawaii to prepare for her first war patrol. Shortly after getting underway, an important onboard culinary problem cropped up: only cold cuts had been stored in the boat's meat locker! Bob explains that the skipper, Commander Charles Loughlin, saved the day by calling ahead to make sure a truck loaded with Argentine beef would be on the pier at the Canal, waiting for them when they arrived. As sub sailors are proud of bragging, "The best food in the Navy was on submarines," Bob confirms.

### Life Aboard the *Queenfish*

Dickinson describes life on the *Queenfish* as "just like home." Everyone got to know everyone "like a brother." In fact, living on one of the newest modern fleet submarines was not unlike staying at a fine hotel compared to the conditions on some of the earlier, obsolete boats. Bob's bunk was located in the middle of the Forward Torpedo Room, above the sleek torpedoes—a spot he felt very lucky to have.

During their long voyages, there could be stretches of boredom for sub sailors between watches, and many ways existed to pass the time. Poker was one popular diversion. Dickinson knew how to play, but had never actually played for money...until the Torpedo and Engine Room crews invited the newbie to join in a friendly game. A little nervous, he was dealt in—and eventually wound up winning a \$1,000 jackpot! "I was so scared when I won," he recalls, "I was shaking. I never went back to play again." And, of course, he was never invited to either.

As a seaman, his regular duty stations included lookout,



USS *Queenfish* (SS-393) glides down the ways on 30 November 1943.



steering, helm, and bow planes. One of his onboard memories involved washing the boat’s bulkheads once a month. “Believe it or not, we washed the stainless-steel bulkheads with a little diesel fuel on a rag. We [all] began to smell like diesel,” he laughs.

**The Making of a Man**

Dickinson was aboard *Queenfish* for four very distinct and memorable war patrols. The boat left Pearl Harbor for her first on August 4, 1944, headed for the China Sea—known to be extensively mined and thus considered very dangerous waters at the time.

Their first convoy was spotted about a month into the patrol, and on August 31 *Queenfish* sank her first ship: the 4,700-ton tanker *Chiyoda Maru*. Things heated up fast, though, during the attack—three ships broke formation and bore down on the inexperienced submarine.

Their first depth charge really scared me,” Bob recalls. “I was concerned, but when the noise stopped, I felt better and was relieved.” Now he would know what to expect from future attacks. “I got used to it,” he said. The whole crew eventually did.

Dickinson explained that luck would continue to follow him on the patrol. A cash pool betting on the lookout who’d spot the most targets brought him three wins out of four, for instance. “Good eyesight,” he modestly posits.

*Queenfish*’s first patrol was a big success; three Japanese ships had been sent to the bottom. But there had also been ongoing issues with fuel for the torpedoes, and *Queenfish* was running critically low on the weapons anyway, so the decision was made to return to Pearl. Before exiting the area, however, a message was received from USS *Barb* (SS-220) requesting assistance in picking up shipwrecked survivors from a sunken POW transport.

“We didn’t know who the survivors were before we got on-site,” Bob remembers, but it was easy for him to see they’d been in the water for days and were in very poor shape. It turned out they were British and Australian POWs from an overcrowded Japanese prison ship. Dickinson was quick to jump in the water to assist, becoming one of the sailors helping pull these stricken POWs to safety.

“We brought nineteen aboard *Queenfish*, but one of them died. This was the first time I saw a burial at sea,” he solemnly recalls.

Everyone tried their utmost to make these waterlogged, starved and injured survivors comfortable: they shared clothes, sleeping quarters, food, medical support—and unlimited friendship. What historians can never successfully convey in their listings of wartime facts and figures is just how deeply camaraderie grows between military men sharing adversity, no matter their cultural or ethnic differences.

Bob discovered much later that the sister of one of the British POWs he had personally saved had written Dickinson’s own



**Saved! British and Australian survivors of Japanese prison ship *Rakuyo Maru*, torpedoed by *Sealion* (SS-315). Rescue was by *Sealion*, *Growler* (SS-215), *Queenfish* (SS-393), & *Barb* (SS-220).**

mother to tell her of her son’s heroic act. “My mother didn’t even know I was in the Pacific,” he remembers. “She just knew I was on a submarine.”

Years later at future *Queenfish* reunions, one of the Australians saved that day would regularly join the crew to share memories with his now-longtime friends.

**Severe Depth Charging**

During her second war patrol at the northern end of the East China Sea, *Queenfish* sank an aircraft carrier, then high-tailed it out of the area. “It sounded like the whole Japanese Fleet was after us when the carrier went down,” Bob relates. Enemy depth charges dropped on *Queenfish* from ships and aircraft were intense, and the boat took a heavy beating. Bob describes the sounds as deafening. “A year after the war, my hearing was gone...” he says, “and I have [now] been on hearing aids since I was twenty-two.”

*Queenfish* was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for her first two war patrols, but the crew didn’t find out about it until her third. “No ceremonies,” Dickerson states. The crew later received a mailed letter informing them of the citation.

While most of *Queenfish*’s big action took place underwater, there were still moments when Gunner’s Mates, like Bob, were put to the test on the surface. He recalls his first time manning guns during battle stations when a Japanese seaplane had landed nearby. *Queenfish* gunners were about to open fire when a lookout sang out that an incoming torpedo was in the water. The boat turned quickly in time to avoid, but it was a close shave—the crew deciding the plane had hung around purposely to distract them while another vessel within range mounted the attack.

**Moment of Sorrow**

“Our fourth war patrol was a sad story for me,” Bob remembers. COMSUBPAC had sent a message to the submarine fleet ordering that the *Awa Maru*, a Red Cross relief ship, if sighted, was to be granted safe passage. The *Awa Maru* had reportedly been carrying vital supplies to American and Allied prisoners in Japanese custody.

On April 1, 1945, Dickinson was on lookout during a thick fog, one unlike any he’d encountered before. He could barely see his hand in front of his face. *Queenfish*’s radar picked up a zigzagging ship running with no lights or horns, so the submarine went to battle stations as a precaution. The captain became convinced it was a destroyer or other small warship, so torpedoes were fired. “One fish blew it apart,” Bob recalls.

The next morning, *Queenfish* returned to the area to check on what had become of her target. One Japanese survivor was found—the captain’s steward—and it was learned the sunken ship had indeed been the *Awa Maru*, even though it had never been scheduled to transit that area. Also discovered were items not hospital-related—contraband war materiel, according to Dickinson.

**Winding Down**

As the days passed, little did Bob know his time aboard *Queenfish*, “his home,” was coming to an end. “Due to this [Awa Maru] incident, the boat was ordered back to Guam, where our captain was to face a court-martial,” he explains. “A couple of us, including myself, were told we had to go to the court-martial as witnesses. Fortunately, I was not called in.”

Before the trial, Dickinson received a Letter of Commendation. To this day he remains puzzled by the letter since he was the only member of *Queenfish*’s crew to receive one, and it was never made clear why. During the trial, he received orders to a new construction submarine—USS *Remora* (SS-487).

*Queenfish* was scheduled to depart Guam as the court-martial got underway, so Bob was forced to leave the boat he loved so

dearly. His only means back to the States after the proceedings was via a Navy reconnaissance flight to Hawaii. Joining him on the flight was Captain Loughlin himself, who Bob says was “just like my dad. He was a wonderful person.”

Commander Charles E. Loughlin ultimately received a Letter of Admonishment from the court, and never again commanded a submarine. He did, however, continue to commendably serve for many years, becoming the commanding officer of the oiler USS *Mississinewa* (AO-144), and later the cruiser USS *Toledo* (CA-133). While still in command of *Queenfish*, he had been awarded two Navy Crosses and a Silver Star. He also received two Legion of Merit awards for his post-war service. Loughlin, ultimately a Rear Admiral, retired in 1968.

**Shore Leave at Last**

Receiving thirty days’ leave before reporting to the Office of New Construction, Bob stopped at Mare Island to visit his cousin, stationed on a destroyer there. He’d hoped he could borrow money from him to get back home—his first return since his enlistment. It was actually the chaplain aboard his cousin’s ship who wound up supplying the loan, however—which Bob made sure to repay the moment he arrived at Long Island.

With only a week-and-a-half of leave time remaining, Bob finally made it home. His mother told him about the letter she had received describing his POW rescue effort. “I became somewhat of a local hero,” Bob relates. Most importantly though, “while I was there the war ended.”

His leave now up, he had orders to report to the USS *Remora* at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard as a Second Class Gunner’s Mate. He describes the submarine as almost complete and ready for her shakedown cruise. Bob’s recent war service encouraged *Remora*’s new skipper to ask if he would like to come along with all the new recruits on the boat’s maiden run.

“It was like a pleasure cruise on the *Remora*,” Bob smiles. “We got down to the Panama Canal and went swimming in the lake.” Quite unlike a war patrol, he found duty on *Remora* almost like a “holiday in uniform.” Being the only rated Gunner’s Mate aboard *Remora*, at times he even served as her COB. “There were no Boatswain’s Mates on the boat,” he adds, “so I found out I was also in charge of maintenance.”

Three months later, Dickinson sadly bid submarines goodbye. He wanted to stay in the Navy, but his father had been ill. “I didn’t want to go back to work,” he said, “but I had no choice.” He was officially discharged on June 15, 1946, but went into the inactive Reserves for four years. Bob ultimately left the Navy as a Chief Gunner’s Mate.

When asked about his most memorable experiences of the war, Bob recalls good times, bad times, and sad times. Being involved in a rescue mission had been heartwarming, but also brought to mind the number of people losing their lives from *Queenfish*’s torpedoes and those of others. These were tragic losses—human lives regardless of national boundaries.

After the war, Dickinson got right back to work and kept at it for many years, noting that folks rarely came up to shake veterans’ hands for their service until the last twenty-five years or so. “Children never knew what WWII was. We never spoke about it,” he adds. And he rarely ran into other submarine sailors in daily life. “Thank goodness for boat reunions, because this is where we can go to talk about it.” Submariners comprise a very small percentage of the Navy and realize they are the only ones to really understand each other.

The people shaking Bob’s hand and thanking him for his service nowadays are those who had parents in the war, or who have family members now in the service. “No one knows what we...did,” he concludes.

## Attention Storekeepers

Barry Commons is your National Storekeeper.  
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# Arizona Memorial Pays Tribute to Lost Submariners

DEDICATION CEREMONIES SLATED FOR SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021



ASSM Foundation Committee Co-Chair Marcus Hensley stands ready to welcome visitors to the Arizona Silent Service Memorial at the Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza on Dedication Day, September 28, 2020.

On September 28, 2020, and after six years of design, construction and fundraising the long-awaited Arizona Silent Service Memorial (ASSM) held the traditional ribbon, or shall we say Lei-cutting ceremony. Committee co-chairman and USSVI *Perch* Base member Marcus Hensley explained, "As is the tradition of greeting a submarine returning home to Pearl Harbor from a successful Western Pacific Deployment, a Hawaiian Lei was cut in lieu of a normal ribbon. We felt that this was an appropriate acknowledgment of our submarine heritage."

The ASSM project was created by United States Submarine Veterans who are members of *Perch* Base, located in Phoenix, Arizona. ASSM Foundation Committee members included base members and Co-Chair Marcus Hensley, Chris Urness and Joe Trotter along with member-at-large Ray Olszewski and associate

## New Sign Dedicated at Medal of Honor Submariner Memorial

On Saturday, November 21, 2020, six Peoria Base members steamed thirty-four miles northeast to Henry, Illinois for the unveiling of a new sign at the Captain John P. Cromwell Medal of Honor Memorial.

The modest and simple memorial is located in the city's Central Park and was dedicated on July 4, 1974. The site includes a torpedo and two bronze plaques. The Medal of Honor citation is inscribed on one of the plaques below the torpedo. The other pays homage to the 374 officers and 3,131 men lost on 52 submarines during World War II.

Captain Cromwell was born in Henry, and each year the city celebrates the anniversary of his birth to honor their local hero.

Cromwell was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for actions "above and beyond the call of duty" when he sacrificed his life to safeguard the lives of others in combat that took place in November 1943.

In addition to the memorial, Henry's river front drive is named Cromwell Drive in honor of their native son.

member Marion Cartland along with many others of the 186 member-strong *Perch* Base.

Because of current COVID-19 restrictions, it was necessary to delay the Dedication Ceremonies until April 17, 2021, the birthday month of the U.S. Submarine Force. The ASSM Committee is already hard at work making the necessary preparations for the ceremony. Information will be posted on the ASSM Website and in future email updates as details of the ceremony evolve.

The evolution of the Arizona Silent Service Memorial began with the SOS (Save Our Sail) project. The SOS Project's intent was to acquire the sail and rudder from the USS *Phoenix* (SSN-702) and bring it back and erect it as a permanent memorial. *Perch* Base abandoned the SOS Project because of the uncertainty of the availability of the sail, the projected cost estimates related to completing and maintaining the memorial site, and other considerations.

The demise of the SOS project led to the conception and birth of the ASSM and on April 23, 2014, the Arizona Silent Service Memorial was passed by Senate Bill 1401 authorizing the memorial to be erected in Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza. The approved site is in an open area, adjacent to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and near the entrance to the Arizona State Capitol Complex.

The fourteen-foot-long and eleven-foot-tall memorial incorporates concrete, steel, copper, and other materials and depicts a submarine bursting out of the water during an emergency ascent. The original design was changed over the years to include the use of copper to reflect Arizona's copper legacy. The copper was heated, hammered, and then sculpted to form the waves. It was then painted to create the texture and color you see as the finish. The walls are faced with copper and sulfuric acid and ammonia were used to paint it which creates the blue representation of the ocean. The copper work took more than 800 hours.

The Arizona Silent Service Memorial pays tribute to the more than 3,950 submariners who gave their lives in service to our country.

For more information and the latest Dedication Ceremony updates, visit [www.arizonasilentservicememorial.org](http://www.arizonasilentservicememorial.org).



(l-r): American Legion Post 323 members Bill Heath, Roger Harbison and Rex Hewett, Peoria submariners Greg Lux, James Hafele, Thomas Woodhouse, Hiram Brownell (back), James Dyson, and Sam Eddy.

## Betty Whale—Submarine Mascot

I served on USS *Whale* (SS-239) for several patrols towards the end of WWII.

Betty was a miniature poodle and though not a plankowner, was a senior member of the crew. She had her personal head, a box underneath the emergency steering station in the control room which she always used, except when we were depth-charged. At those times, she would run to the skipper's cabin and wet his bunk. I guess she figured he got us into the problem. Whenever the captain proposed some rash move the word went out—"careful, you'll get a wet bunk!"

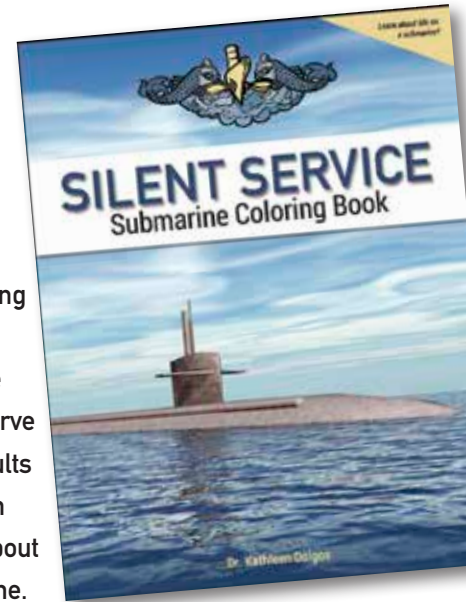
Betty would ride up to the conning tower on anyone's shoulders who was going up. She would patiently wait on the plotting board for a lift up. To come down, she would wait by the hatch and jump aboard as her ride went down. In friendly waters, Betty would also go to the bridge in the same manner. She could clear the bridge with the best of the lookouts.

Betty also enjoyed R&R at the Royal Hawaiian. She would wander up and down the halls from room to room cadging a sip of beer until she could barely navigate without leaning against the wall to steady herself. Like all good Sailors, the following morning would find her very grumpy. She also enjoyed shore leave where she could meet other four-legged friends, but she never missed movement.

I don't know what happened to Betty. Some time amidst the confusion at the end of the war, she disappeared. I received orders to the *Greenling* (SS-213). *Whale* was mothballed at New London and underwent several activation/deactivations before being decommissioned for the last time in September 1957.

## A Great Children's Resource to Learn About Submarine Life

Follow the crew as they set up the ship and go about their daily lives including: eating, sleeping and communicating with loved ones. Child-appropriate definitions will serve as a guide for adults who wish to teach young children about life on a submarine.



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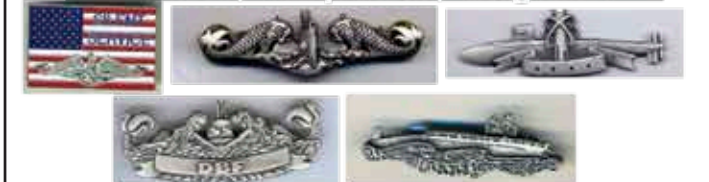
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*“I can assure you that they went down fighting and that their brothers who survived them took a grim toll of our savage enemy to avenge their deaths.”*

Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, USN



**USS F4 SKATE (SS-23)**  
21 men on board.  
Lost on 25 March 1915 when it foundered off Honolulu Harbor.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS H-1 SEAWOLF (SS-28)**  
25 men on board.  
Lost on 12 March 1920 when it sank after being grounded off Santa Margarita Island, Baja California, Mexico.  
*4 men lost, including the C.O. while attempting to swim ashore.*

**USS S-36 (SS-141)**  
43 men on board.  
Lost on 20 January 1942 when she was destroyed after running aground on Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, near Makassar City. The crew was rescued.  
*No loss of life.*

**USS S-26 (SS-131)**  
46 men on board.  
Lost on 24 January 1942 in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light when she was rammed by USS PC-460. Three men survived.  
*43 men lost.*

**USS SHARK (SS-174)**  
58 men on board.  
Lost on 11 February 1942 when she was sunk by Japanese warships east of Manado in the Celebes Islands.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS PERCH (SS-176)**  
60 men on board.  
Scuttled on 3 March 1942 after suffering a heavy depth charge attack by Japanese warhips 30 miles NW of Surabaya, Java. Sixty men were taken prisoner, 52 survived the war.  
*8 men died as POWs.*

**USS ARGONAUT (SS-166)**  
105 men on board.  
Lost on 10 January 1943 in the Java Sea by Japanese surface attack.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS AMBERJACK (SS-219)**  
74 men on board.  
Lost on 16 February 1943 off Rabaul in the Solomon Sea as a result of Japanese aerial bombs and surface craft.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)**  
71 men on board.  
Lost due to Japanese surface attack in the Balabac Straits near the Solomon Islands, probably on 5 March 1943.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS TRITON (SS-201)**  
74 men on board.  
Lost to Japanese destroyers off New Guinea on 15 March 1943.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS SCORPION (SS-278)**  
76 men on board.  
Lost on 5 January 1944 by possible Japanese mine in the Yellow Sea off China.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS GRAYBACK (SS-208)**  
80 men on board.  
Lost on 27 February 1944 during a Japanese air and surface attack off Okinawa.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS TROUT (SS-202)**  
81 men on board.  
Lost on 29 February 1944 during a Japanese surface attack in the Philippine Sea.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS TULLIBEE (SS-284)**  
80 men on board.  
Lost 26 March 1944 north of Palau. Sunk by her own torpedo. One man (Cliff Kuykendal), survived and was taken prisoner.  
*79 men lost.*

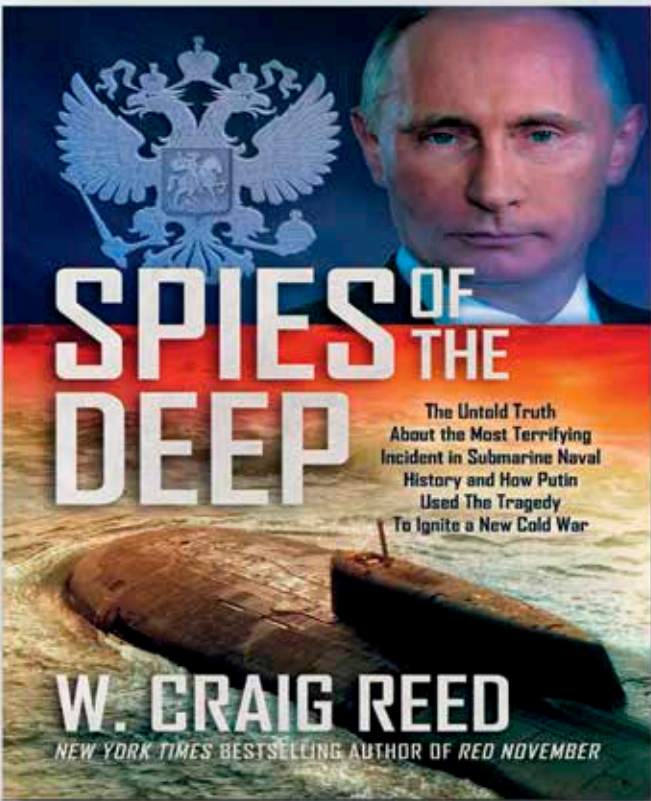
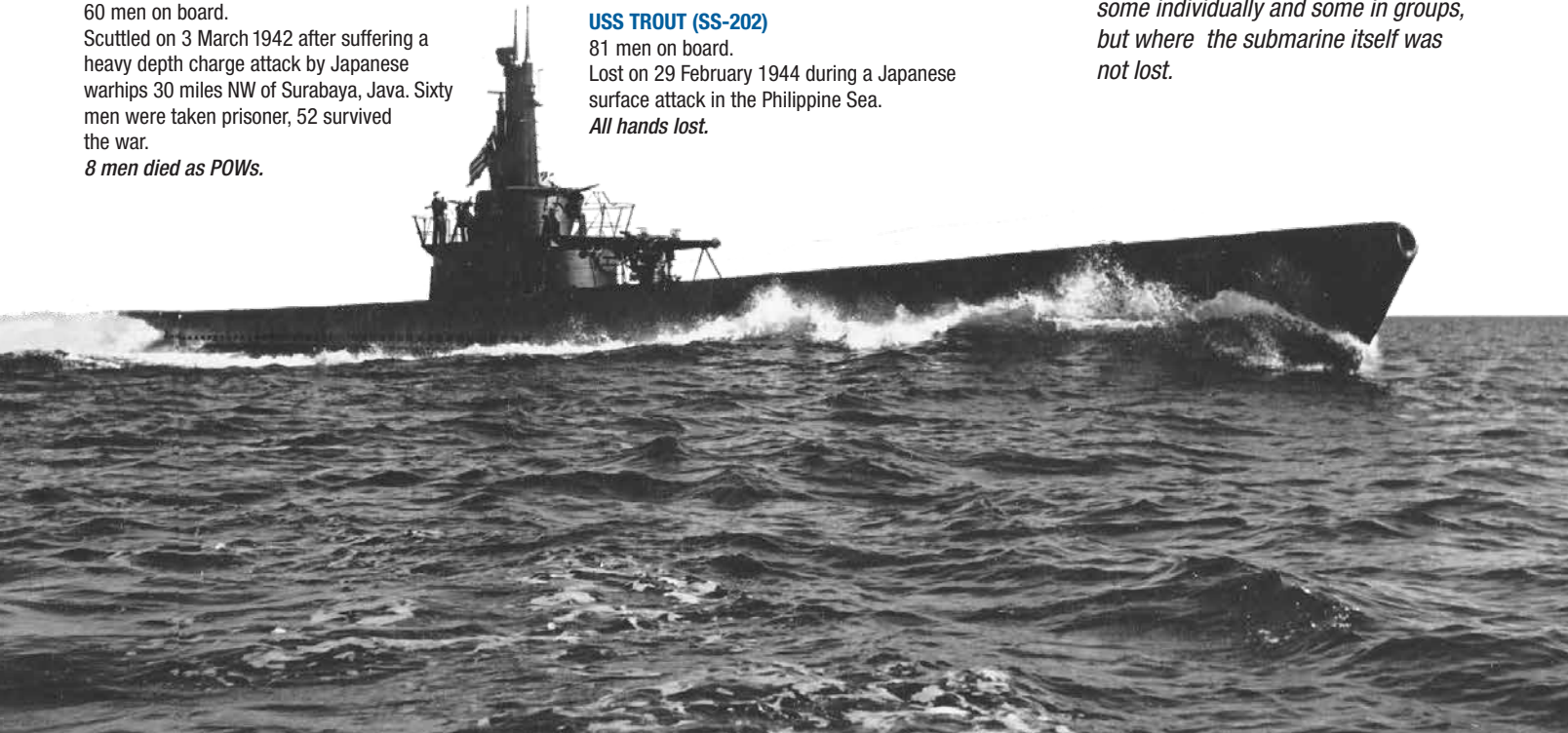
**USS SWORDFISH (SS-193)**  
89 men on board.  
Lost by a possible Japanese surface attack or mine on 12 January 1945 off Okinawa.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS BARBEL (SS-316)**  
81 men on board.  
Lost on 4 February 1945 during a Japanese air attack off the entrance to Palawan Passage.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS TRIGGER (SS-237)**  
89 men on board.  
Lost in the East China Sea on 28 March 1945 during a Japanese air and surface attack.  
*All hands lost.*

**USS KETE (SS-369)**  
87 men on board.  
Lost in March 1945 between Okinawa and Midway to unknown causes.  
*All hands lost.*

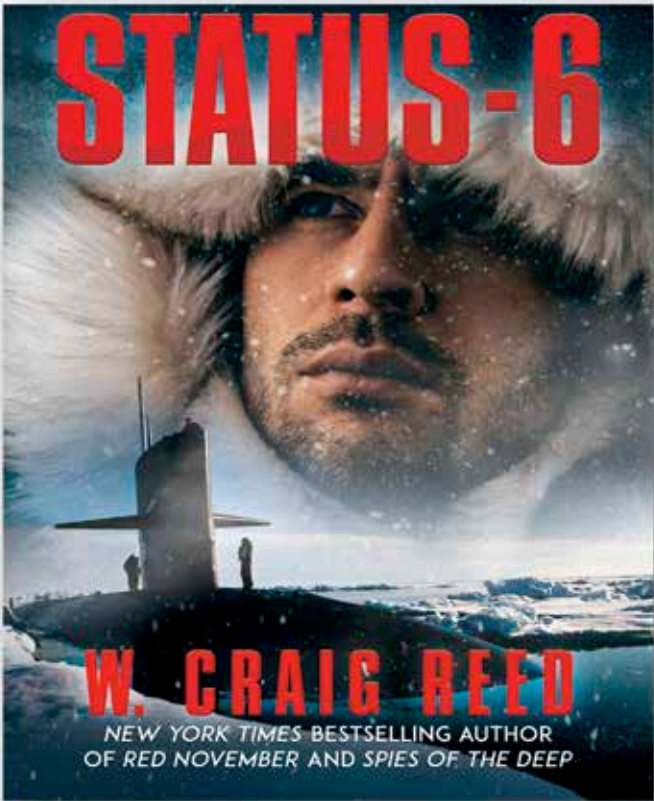
*Finally, we remember all the brave submariners who died in the course of their duties aboard submarines, some individually and some in groups, but where the submarine itself was not lost.*



*“This book is riveting!” —T. Michael Bircumshaw, American Submariner*



*“Thriller of the Year!” — Grant Blackwood, #1 NYTBS Tom Clancy Author*





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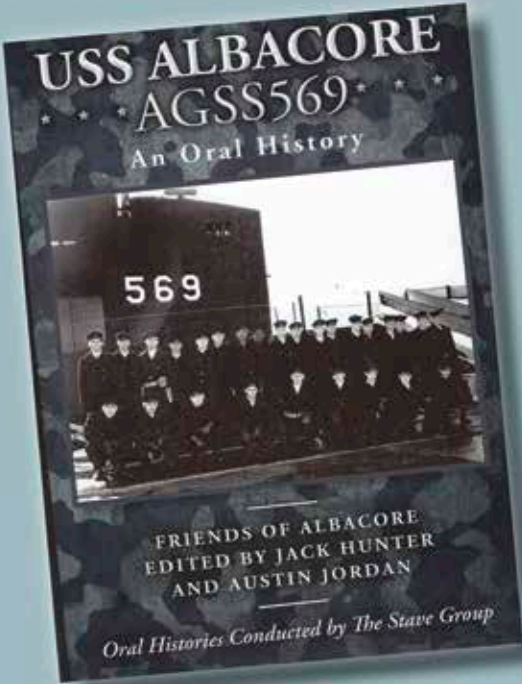
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Last Name	First Name	Qual.	Boat	Last Name	First Name	Qual.	Boat
Hess	John F.	1969	Abraham Lincoln	Chayer	Robert L.	1962	Picuda
Jordan	Austin Thomas	1967	Albacore	Fumich	James	1987	Plunger
Kern	John	1994	Albany	Sattison	Martin	1980	Plunger
Bonfili	David	2000	Annapolis	Weber	Timothy J.	1973	Pogy
Cushing	Harold W.	1977	Benjamin Franklin	Burr	Wyatt	1995	Portsmouth
Blom	Erik M.	1978	Billfish	Woodsmall III	William A.	1975	Queenfish
Murphy	Brian Thomas	2005	Boise	Meadows	Donald Clayton	1983	Ray
Breece Jr.	Ellwood J.	1967	Bream	Sweeting	John	1988	Ray
Hankin	Sean F.	1980	Bremerton	Ramstad	Lawrence Melvin	1961	Redfish
Miller	Michael L.	1993	Bremerton	Malkemes	Thomas Andrew	1969	Robert E. Lee
Goad	Justin	2005	Chicago	Meyers	Patrick E.	1980	Sam Rayburn
Pryde	Evan M.	2012	Columbus	Suitter	Richard B.	1980	Sam Rayburn
Fordyce	John W.	1960	Cubera	Wagner	Robert	1978	Sam Rayburn
Campbell	Randy	1971	Cutlass	Prather	David	1997	Santa Fe
Moser	William M.	1981	Daniel Webster	Stockinger	Paul M.	1962	Sargo
Reser	Raymond	1970	Darter	Dame	Alvin L.	1970	Sculpin
Lee	Gary J.	1974	Ethan Allen	Gahan	Christopher P.	1974	Sculpin
Pinsonneault	John	1984	Finback	Pasciuto	Robert	1962	Sea Cat
Kushins	Ed	1970	Flasher	Burk	James Alfred	1946	Sea Fox
Eichelberger	Robert MacNeill	1978	Flying Fish	Benefield	Rodney D.	1962	Sea Poacher
Marczak	Steven	1982	Flying Fish	Vaughn	David H.	1973	Seahorse
Garza	Carlos	1981	Francis Scott Key	Wharton	Charlie P.	1972	Seahorse
Lesser	Steve	1977	George C. Marshall	Ruchalski	Robert	2005	Seawolf
Glennon	Patrick J.	2015	Georgia	Hellstrom	Wayne T.	1970	Segundo
Greene	Robert	1995	Groton	Schutte	Rob L.	1967	Sirago
Levine	Robert E.	1972	Guardfish	Simon	Gregory John	1993	Spadefish
Weyrauch	Michael	1972	Gudgeon	Larsen	Ronald J.	1978	Tang
Dickinson	John M.	1979	Haddo	Dye	Anthony Keith	1983	Tecumseh
Black	Adam	1982	Haddo	Eek	Dan	1969	Tecumseh
Carlyle	Robert B.	1962	Hardhead	Ingersoll	LaDorr E.	1971	Tecumseh
Shankland	K. C.	1996	Hawkbill	O'Brien	James	1975	Tecumseh
Jurgensmeier	Richard A.	1985	Henry M. Jackson	Scott	Henry L.	1971	Tecumseh
Eberle	Robert O.	1984	James Monroe	Nichols	David	1971	Theodore Roosevelt
Milczarski	Edward	1964	James Monroe	Hotstream	Ray	1964	Thomas Jefferson
Brooks	Allen	1986	John C. Calhoun	Derr	Edwin C.	1963	Tigrone
Hodge	Harry John	1974	L. Mendel Rivers	Goettlicher	Mark S.	1967	Tinosa
Davis	Bradley A.	2011	Louisiana	Huskens	Ray Allen	1977	Trepang
Jadick	Harry	1999	Maryland	Bawden	Scott Brian	1984	Ulysses S. Grant
Mason	Lawrence J.	2014	Montpelier	Davis	Arthur		Associate
Ermis	Daniel Craig	1975	Nathanael Greene	Ferland	Colby		Associate
Panek	David A.	1970	Nathanael Greene	Jordan	Lon R		Associate
Byford	David Saxon	1997	Nebraska	Mosebey	Dennis		Associate
Onderdonk IV	Garret D.	2004	Newport News	Moses	Colleen		Associate
Seif	Richard E.	1994	Newport News	Sefried	Barbara		Associate
Keeney	Brian	1986	Ohio	Shaw	Robert C.		Associate
Samuelson	Jerry O.	1982	Ohio	Staab	Lynda		Associate
Proctor	Frank C.	1989	Oklahoma City				
Hainsworth	Shawn	1994	Pargo				



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patiopapa37@yahoo.com

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jwittenstrom@nc.rr.com

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**Charles Louis McAleer**  
chickmacsr@gmail.com

**USS Diablo (SS-479)**  
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**David Matthes • (617) 721-4128**  
dmatthes479@gmail.com

**USS Dogfish (SS-350)**  
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**John Cronenberg**  
DogfishReunion2020@gmail.com

**USS Henry L. Stimson (SSBN-655)**  
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**Dick Young • (513) 353-4992**  
stimson655reunion2020@aol.com

**USS Jallao (SS-368)**  
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**Anthony C. Basilio • (610) 565-4243**  
tony@acbasilio.com

**USS John Marshall (SSBN-611)**  
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subdude.dave@gmail.com

**USS Lapon (SS-260)/SSN-661)**  
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**Raymond Zieverink • (803) 322-6722**  
Lapon.reunion@yahoo.com

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July 14-18, 2021  
Silverdale, WA  
**Tom O'Donnell • (515) 779-1930**  
jthomasodonnell@hotmail.com

**USS Raton (SS-270)**  
September 9-October 3, 2021  
North Little Rock, AR  
**Larry D. Kramer • (360) 697-2842**  
ldkramer43@hotmail.com

**USS Robert E. Lee (SSBN-601)**  
November 3-7, 2021  
Kings Bay, GA  
**Joe White • (405) 410-9206**  
joewhite727@gmail.com

**USS Scamp (SSN-588)**  
May 17-21, 2021  
Rapid City, SD  
**Rodney Stark • (702) 582-1424**  
scampreunion2021@virtualmemorypix.net

**USS Sculpin (SSN-590)**  
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**Jim Conte**  
(717) 940-4156

**USS Sea Devil (SSN-664)**  
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Williamsburg, VA  
**Nathaniel Short • (253) 670-5718**  
sethhead@comcast.net

**USS Sea Leopard (SS-483)**  
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tcusheng@gmail.com

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z71toy@aol.com

**USS Stonewall Jackson (SSBN-634)**  
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**Dave Fernandez • (530) 567-5192**  
daf360hd@att.net

**USS Tinosa (SSN-606)**  
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**Gene E. Kellar • 303-988-7661**  
tinosacrew@gmail.com

**USS Wahoo (SS-565)**  
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**Carol Ploeckelmann • (651) 429-6354**  
ploecks@gmail.com

**USS Wyoming (SSBN-742)**  
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There is a port of no return, where ships  
May ride at anchor for a little space  
And then, some starless night the cable slips,  
Leaving an eddy at the mooring place...  
Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor rest your oar.  
No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.

<b>Frederick L. Allen</b> Groton, CT Qualified USS Brill 1947 Eternal Patrol 9/6/2020	<b>Eric T. Clauson Jr.</b> Rolling Meadows, IL Qualified USS Sea Robin 1964 Eternal Patrol 10/13/2020
<b>Steven R. Bernath</b> Bordentown, NJ Qualified USS Corporal 1965 Eternal Patrol 9/9/2020	<b>Richard W. Cleeve Jr.</b> Baldwin, MO Qualified USS Entemedor 1957 Eternal Patrol 11/28/2020
<b>Charles L. Bollen</b> Martinez Lake, AZ Qualified USS Catfish 1959 Eternal Patrol 6/10/2020	<b>Donald Joseph Daly</b> Staten Island, NY Qualified USS Torsk 1952 Eternal Patrol 10/14/2020
<b>Glenn Leonard Boom</b> Montrose, AL Qualified USS Pickerel 1952 Eternal Patrol 9/30/2020	<b>Kato Lee Davenport</b> Bossier City, LA Qualified USS Quillback 1953 Eternal Patrol 10/2/2020
<b>Peter W. Borwegen Jr.</b> Point Pleasant, NJ Qualified USS Blackfin 1947 Eternal Patrol 10/5/2020	<b>Robert Alexander Dewar</b> New Smyrna Beach, FL Qualified USS Clamagore 1969 Eternal Patrol 7/27/2020
<b>Raymond D. Brennan Jr.</b> Merritt Island, FL Qualified USS Grenadier 1957 Eternal Patrol 9/19/2020	<b>Robert Joseph Draeger</b> Indian Harbor Beach, FL Qualified USS Casimir Pulaski 1969 Eternal Patrol 2/8/2020
<b>Coe Neil Cabe</b> Ravenna, OH Qualified USS Chopper 1968 Eternal Patrol 10/7/2020	<b>Jon P. Duckworth</b> Punta Gorda, FL Qualified USS Simon Bolivar 1973 Eternal Patrol 10/8/2020
<b>Miles L. Cain</b> Bartlesville, OK Qualified USS Redfish 1958 Eternal Patrol 10/10/2020	<b>Reginald E. Dumont</b> Waterville, ME Qualified USS Sea Leopard 1949 Eternal Patrol 10/26/2020
<b>Leonard G. Cardwell</b> Lebanon, OR Qualified USS Gudgeon 1956 Eternal Patrol 10/24/2020	<b>Larry Durham</b> Andersonville, TN Qualified USS Thornback 1963 Eternal Patrol 11/22/2020
<b>Edward Alan Caudill</b> Yulee, FL Qualified USS Silversides 1979 Eternal Patrol 11/15/2020	<b>Donald W. Eggleston</b> Jenkinsville, SC Qualified USS Segundo 1956 Eternal Patrol 10/30/2020
<b>Robert B. Clark</b> Yakima, WA Qualified USS G. W. Carver 1966 Eternal Patrol 9/2/2020	<b>Jack C. Ely</b> Silver Springs, NV Qualified USS Archerfish 1966 Eternal Patrol 10/3/2020

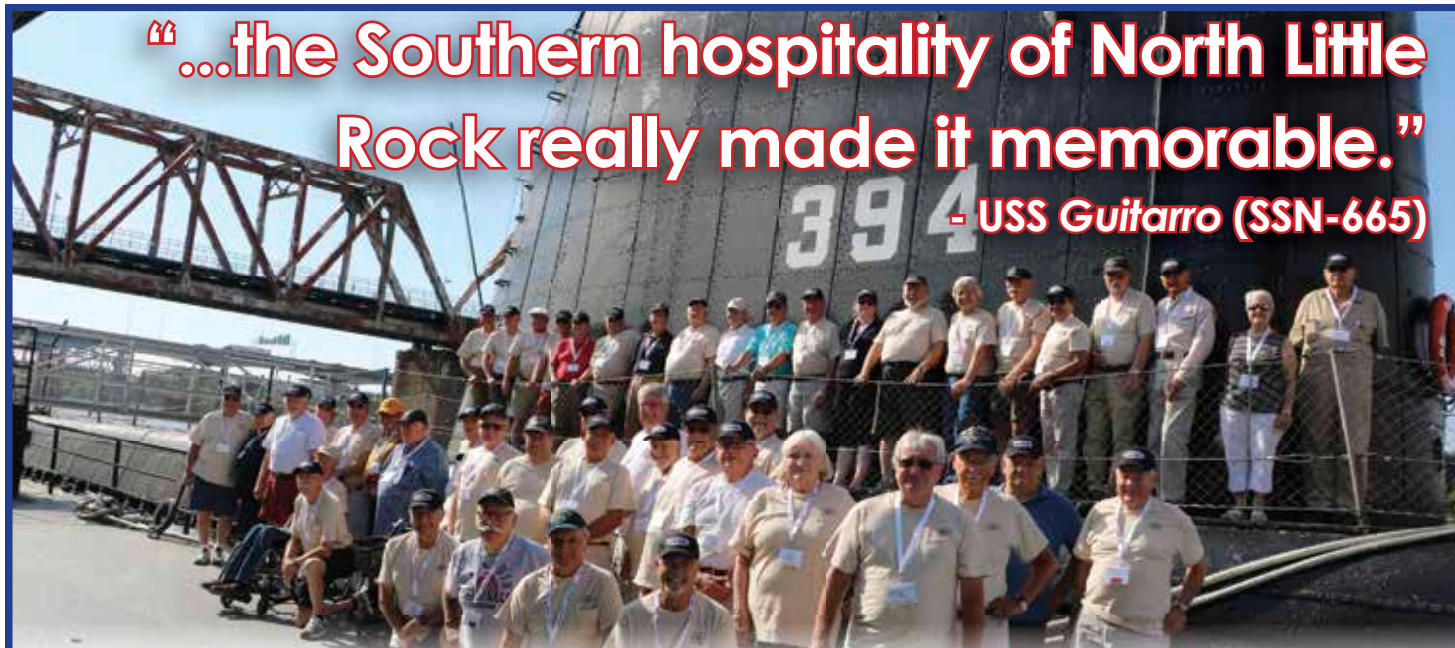
<b>Charles Edward Fink</b> Superior, WI Qualified USS Carp 1951 Eternal Patrol 9/15/2020	<b>Henry J. Hernandez</b> Redding, CA Qualified USS Menhaden 1965 Eternal Patrol 11/19/2020
<b>Dean Ralph Flage</b> Sturgis, SD Qualified USS Pomfret 1968 Eternal Patrol 5/28/2020	<b>William W. Hill</b> Slidell, LA Qualified USS Sealion 1955 Eternal Patrol 11/20/2020
<b>Hugh Michael Flanagan</b> Atwater, CA Qualified USS Tench 1964 Eternal Patrol 11/24/2020	<b>David W. Holland</b> Bennington, VT Qualified USS Conger 1961 Eternal Patrol 10/5/2020
<b>Vernon Noble Fraser</b> Clinton, WA Qualified USS Threadfin 1946 Eternal Patrol 5/3/2015	<b>David Joseph Hossler</b> Yuma, AZ Qualified USS Shark 1963 Eternal Patrol 9/18/2020
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<b>Sergio M. Frost</b> San Diego, CA Qualified USS Pomfret 1963 Eternal Patrol 10/31/2020	<b>Charlie Dwight Ketner</b> Quaker Hill, CT Qualified USS Sand Lance 1945 Eternal Patrol 11/7/2020
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<b>Dennis B. Halstead</b> Chesterfield Township, MI Qualified USS Nautilus 1966 Eternal Patrol 11/27/2020	<b>George Daniel Laemont</b> Eustis, FL Qualified USS Sea Leopard 1956 Eternal Patrol 9/15/2020
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<b>Irwin Moiseff</b> Pittsfield, MA Qualified USS James Monroe 1964 Eternal Patrol 11/16/2020	<b>Linn R. Rogers Sr.</b> Goose Creek, SC Qualified USS Conger 1953 Eternal Patrol 9/15/2020

<b>George Paul Roushar</b> Cedar Rapids, IA Qualified USS Cochino 1946 Eternal Patrol 9/28/2020	<b>John H. Tregoning</b> Ishpeming, MI Qualified USS Bream 1958 Eternal Patrol 11/22/2020
<b>James Cowell Russell</b> Great Mills, MD Qualified USS Nathanael Greene 1964 Eternal Patrol 10/11/2020	<b>Paul E. Trejo</b> Newburgh, IN Qualified USS Blenny 1952 Eternal Patrol 9/15/2020
<b>James J. Schmidt</b> Largo, FL Qualified USS Thomas Jefferson 1971 Eternal Patrol 9/11/2020	<b>Carlisle A. H. Trost</b> Annapolis, MD Qualified USS Sirago 1956 Eternal Patrol 9/29/2020
<b>Donald Edward Schoolcraft</b> Groton, CT Qualified USS Diablo 1947 Eternal Patrol 10/1/2020	<b>William W. Truitt Jr.</b> Packwood, WA Qualified USS Grenadier 1952 Eternal Patrol 11/20/2019
<b>James W. Shindel</b> Jonestown, PA Qualified USS Cobbler 1949 Eternal Patrol 11/20/2020	<b>Calvin Underwood</b> Decatur, AL Qualified USS Growler 1963 Eternal Patrol 11/8/2020
<b>Donald E. Smith</b> Sarasota, FL Qualified USS Trumpetfish 1947 Eternal Patrol 11/22/2020	<b>Gordon John Van Wylen</b> Holland, MI Qualified USS Hardhead 1944 Eternal Patrol 11/5/2020
<b>William Dee Smith</b> Springfield, VA Qualified USS Hardhead 1959 Eternal Patrol 9/9/2020	<b>Roy Melvin Voelker</b> San Diego, CA Qualified USS Seal 1944 Eternal Patrol 4/8/2016
<b>Frank William Snyder</b> Virginia Beach, VA Qualified USS Croaker 1957 Eternal Patrol 8/18/2020	<b>Carl Lee Walker</b> Winston-Salem, NC Qualified USS Irex 1945 Eternal Patrol 9/27/2020
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<b>Andrew Steiner</b> Fort Mohave, AZ Qualified USS Volador 1963 Eternal Patrol 7/20/2020	<b>Paul William Wittmer</b> Manchester, MO Qualified USS Tinosa 1943 Eternal Patrol 11/12/2020
<b>Gerald H. Striegel</b> Kohler, WI Qualified USS Sealion 1952 Eternal Patrol 9/30/2020	<b>Loran C. Wren</b> Fair Grove, MO Qualified USS Amberjack 1957 Eternal Patrol 10/26/2020
<b>Charles E. Sutton Jr.</b> Milford, CT Qualified USS Torsk 1950 Eternal Patrol 7/21/2018	<b>Judith Behnke</b> Sierra Vista, AZ Associate Passed 9/18/2020
<b>Thomas Raymond Thompson</b> Plantation, FL Qualified USS Sea Poacher 1956 Eternal Patrol 10/7/2020	<b>Ronald G. Davis</b> Mystic, CT Associate Passed 10/19/2020



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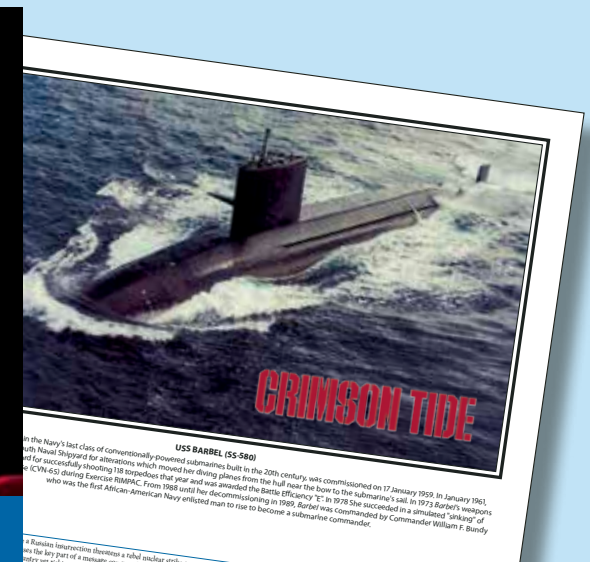
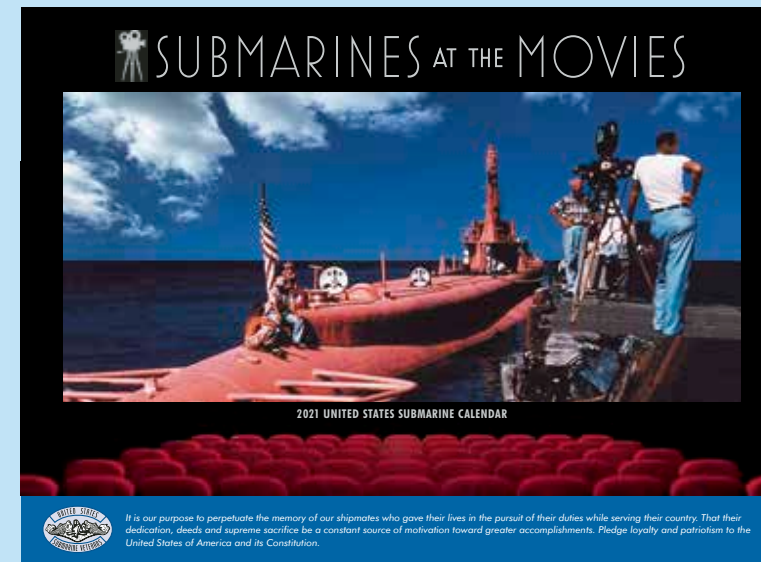
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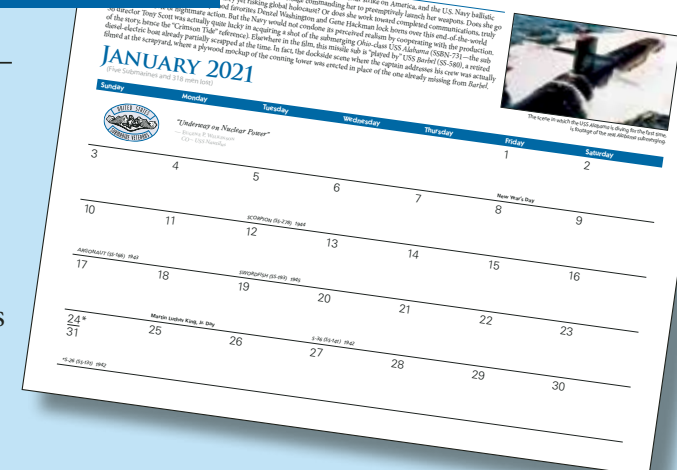
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