



# THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF PERCH BASE, USSVI, PHOENIX, ARIZONA



**WWW.PERCH-BASE.ORG**

April 2011  
Volume 17 - Issue 4

**THE USSVI CREED GUIDES OUR EFFORTS AS PERCH BASE.  
SEE THE NEXT PAGE FOR THE FULL TEXT OF OUR CREED.**

What's "Below Decks" in the  
MidWatch

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## **LEST WE FORGET THOSE STILL ON PATROL APRIL ETERNAL PATROLS**

<b>USS PICKEREL (SS-177)</b>	<b>03 Apr 1943</b>	<b>74 Lost</b>
Japanese Surface Attack off Honshu, Japan		
<b>USS S49 (SS-160)</b>	<b>04 Apr 1926</b>	<b>4 Lost</b>
Battery Explosion, SubBase New London, Boat survived		
<b>USS SNOOK (SS-279)</b>	<b>08 Apr 1945</b>	<b>84 Lost</b>
Unknown causes off Formosa		
<b>USS THRESHER (SSN-593)</b>	<b>10 Apr 1963</b>	<b>129 Lost</b>
Operational flooding off New England Coast		
<b>USS BONEFISH (SS-582)</b>	<b>24 Apr 1988</b>	<b>3 Lost</b>
Fire and Explosion off Florida, Boat decommissioned		

**April 9  
Perch Base Annual Picnic  
White Tanks Regional Park**

**NO BASE MEETING IN APRIL  
Attend the Base Picnic  
White Tanks Regional Park  
12 noon, Saturday, April 9, 2010**

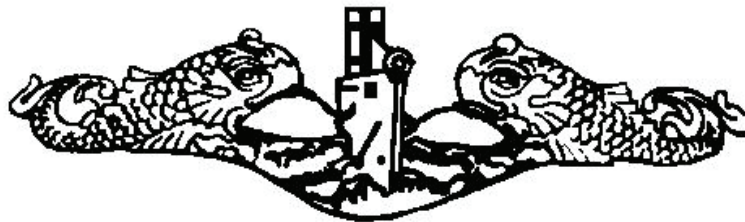
# USSVI CREED

**Our organization's purpose is . . .**

“To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.”



## **BASE OFFICERS**

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# Sailing Orders



## **ANNUAL PERCH BASE PICNIC**

White Tank Regional Park

11 a.m., Saturday, April 9, 2010

(Take Olive Ave. west to the park)

## Flagstaff, AZ Armed Forces Day Parade and Static Display May 21



## MAY 30 MEMORIAL DAY" PHOENIX NATIONAL CEMETARY



# 2011 Perch Base Foundation Supporters

These are the Base members and friends who donate monies to allow for Base operation while keeping our dues low and avoid raising money through member labor as most other organizations do.

**Remember, if you contribute by check, it must be made out to the "Perch Base Foundation."**

## These are the 2011 Foundation Donors



BEN ACOSTA  
JERRY N. ALLSTON  
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JAMES EVANS  
THOMAS E. FOOSHEE  
JOHN A. GRAVES  
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EDWARD J. HAWKINS  
HARRY HELLER  
GLENN A. HEROLD  
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GEORGE MARIONS  
RAYMOND MARSHALL  
SANDY MARTIN  
TERRY MARTIN  
ROBERT E. MAY  
DENNIS McCOMB  
ANGUS HOWARD McPHERSON  
ALLEN H. MILLER  
ROGER M. MILLER  
TIM MOORE  
DANNY R. MOSS  
JEFF A. NELSON  
JIM A. NELSON  
JAMES F. NEWMAN  
JAMES W. NEWMAN  
ROYCE E. PETTIT  
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LARRY M. RANKIN  
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BRUCE "ROBIE" ROBINSON  
PETE SATTIG  
FRED SAUNDERS  
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GARRY L. SHUMANN  
RICK SIMMONS  
WAYNE KIRK SMITH  
ADRIAN M. STUKE  
DONALD UNSER  
ROBERT WARNER  
JAMES WALL  
FORREST J. WATSON  
JOHN G. ZAICHKIN  
RONALD J. ZOMOK

## From the Wardroom Base Commander's Message

Shipmates:

We had a very successful event at Luke Days on the 19th and 20th. In addition to the Thunderbirds and all the rest putting on a great show, we made contact with a lot of potential new members and quite possibly brought some old members back in. We also did quite well with stores sales. We have the Military Transport Show at Falcon Field on the 26th and Military Appreciation Day at the Camelback Ranch Sports Complex on the 27th. Check the details on our website and come on out.

The picnic/our next meeting will be April 9th at the White Tank Mountains Park. If you are plan on coming, please let Rick Simmons know so that we can get a good head count. Check the website for details on this event also.

See you at the picnic!!

Fraternally,

Jim Denzien, Base Commander

## March 2011 Perch Base Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Arizona Submarine Veterans Perch Base was convened at Dillon's Restaurant at Arrowhead, in Glendale, AZ at 1208 hours, 12 March 2011. The meeting was called to order by Jim Denzien, Base Commander.

The "Call to Order" was led in a prayer of invocation by Walt Blomgren followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the standard ceremonial opening. The tolling ceremony was conducted for all boats lost in the month of March and a moment of silence was observed for our shipmates on eternal patrol.

A special tolling ceremony was conducted for our shipmate, Turk Turner who recently passed away. Marion "Turk" Turner departed on eternal patrol on 28 February 2011. Turk was a WWII survivor from the USS Perch (SS-176) which, after being severely damaged from a Japanese attack, could not be saved and was scuttled by the crew. He went on to spend over three years in a Japanese POW camp. There are two remaining Perch survivors: Robert Lents of Mountain Home, AR and Ernie Plantz of Gales Ferry, CT.

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes from the February 2011 regular meeting be approved as published in the MidWatch monthly newsletter. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

Bob Warner reported on the base's financial status as of 28 Feb 2011. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as read. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

According to the Sailing List there were 34 members and guests present. The complete sailing list included:

Jim Denzien	Tim Moore	Rick Simmons	Howard Doyle
Chuck Emmett	Ed Hawkins	Walt Blomgren	John Zaichkin
Raymond Marshall	Dewey Reed	Richard Bernier	Richard Kunze
John Schlag	DeWayne Lober	Jim Newman	Dan Moss
Mary Denzien	Jackie Hawkins	Dottie Reed	Jim Edwards
Don DeMarte	James F. Newman	Royce Pettit	Charles Hooper
Jack Kimball	Ron Zomok	Joe Varese	Herb Herman
Bob Warner	Billy Grieves	Davy Jones	Tom Clonts
Dick Sinclair	Matt Hayball		

### **Base Commander's Board of Directors Meeting Report**

Jim reported that the BOD is going to establish a Perch Base budget for continuing base operations. We are cur-

rently giving Bob Warner input to establish this budget.

It was the decision of the board to eliminate the use of Facebook as a forum for communications for the BOD. From this point forward, the board will use e-mail to communicate.

Jim announced that we have two volunteers to step up and consider filling the Secretary position. Also, Jack Moore found it necessary to resign as COB so we need to fill this position as well. We have given our two potential candidates job descriptions and will invite them to the next board meeting in April after which a final decision will be made on the selection process.

We also voted on making some changes to the Policies & Procedures Manual so that it is updated and in compliance with the current needs and requirements of the base.

Other items discussed were fund raising and the SOS Project. The SOS Project has been established as a specific goal in the Policies & Procedures Manual. We need to move this project forward and Jim announced that he has spoken with some members today to consider assisting with this effort.

We also discussed the possibility of uploading member's pictures to the national database. This would be an additional cost to the base and we will continue looking into this procedure.

There are a number of upcoming events and we need membership participation to assist with these projects. Please support **your** base and assist with these events.

Jim also announced that currently there are no members on the Binnacle List and he also mentioned that Howard Doyle had a birthday this past Wednesday.

### **Officers and Committee Chairmen**

**Vice-Commander** – Howard Doyle announced that Luke Days will be coming up this next weekend. We will stage on Friday and the event will run Saturday & Sunday, March 19th & 20th. On Saturday March 26th, we will be at the Military Transport Show at Falcon Field in Mesa for a static display. This will be followed by a Military appreciation day event on the 27th. This is at the Camelback Ranch Sports Complex located at 10710 W. Camelback Rd., Glendale, AZ 85307. Jim further reiterated that we will need assistance with these events.

**Secretary** – Tim Moore had nothing to report.

**Treasurer** – Bob Warner had nothing to report.

**Chaplain** – Walt Blomgren had nothing to report.

**Chief of the Boat** – TBA

**MidWatch Editor/Webmaster** – Chuck Emmett announced updates to the webpage and mentioned that the events calendar is now a two month calendar including events through May 2011. If anyone has missed a copy of the newsletter, Chuck has some extra copies available at all base meetings.

**Base Storekeeper** – DeWayne Lober announced that he some special signs as well as some reduced prices on some shirts.

**Membership Chairman** – Rick Simmons reported that we are collecting names for the Perch Base Picnic attendees on April 9th. We need a head count so we can properly plan for this event. He also asked everyone to go to the USSVI national data base to make sure you personal information is accurate and up to date.

**Events Coordinator** – Joe Varese announced that we will not be attending the Riverside event in April and that a letter has been sent to them with declining this year's Perch Base participation.

**Past Commander** – Stan Reinhold was not present.

**Historian** – Jim Newman had nothing to report.

In addition to the Base officers' reports, Billy Grieves reported that there are only a couple of the WWII members still with us and the WWII membership is discussing closure of their organization next year. When this occurs, all records and pertinent information will be passed on to the USSVI. They will probably not be collecting future dues from the membership.

### **Old Business**

Jim announced the only item of Old Business is the elections. Presently there is only one name of the candidate list for Base Commander and that is himself and there is one candidate for Vice Commander and that is Howard Doyle. He asked for other nominations from the floor and there were no respondents. It was moved and seconded that Jim and Howard be selected by a vote of acclamation. The election was approved by unanimous voice vote.

### **New Business**

Jim reiterated what Rick already mentioned and that is we need a head count for the April 9th picnic so we can properly plan. The base will pick up the cost of the picnic but there will be a \$6.00 per car fee to enter the White Tanks Regional. Park This year's picnic will be on the playground side of the parking area which will better accommodate kids and grandkids. Attendees will need to bring their own alcohol and make sure it is in cans, not bottles. We need the final head count as soon as possible so please get this information into Rick.

### **Special Presentation**

A presentation made on how the USS Lapon SSN-661 memorial was completed by the Ozark-Runner Base in Springfield, MO including the associated costs for doing the same. This memorial was erected on the grounds of the American Legion Post #639 in Springfield. This memorial was erected at a cost of between \$20,000.00 and \$25,000.00 with much of the labor and materials being donated. Some past projected costs for the Phoenix project were much higher. We hope to find a reasonable middle ground for projecting the costs of the SOS Project. Jim showed a video presentation depicting the various phases of construction of this project. The presentation went from site preparation all the way through to the finished memorial. In that this process was very similar to what we want to do with USS Phoenix SSN-702 monument, perhaps their experience can be a basis for what we want to accomplish. Our site will be in Phoenix at the Steele Indian School Park in the vicinity of Central Ave. & 7th St. which is in close proximity to the Veteran's Hospital and Veteran's Home.

### **Good of the Order**

Jim announced that someone donated tickets for a game at the Goodyear Ballpark for the 26th of March. We will conduct a separate raffle for these tickets for \$5.00 a ticket.

Jim announced that the U.S. will be honoring Army Corporal Frank Buckles with flags at half mast. Frank was the last living participant from WWI and recently passed away at age 110. Flags will remain at half mast until sunset on the day of his internment which will be on the 15th of March.

The USS Nevada SSBN-733 successfully launched a Trident II D5 state of the art ballistic test missile off the coast of Southern California on March 1st. This was the 135th successful submarine launched test flight since December 1989.

It was announced that the recent earthquake and resulting tsunami from Japan caused two of the submarines in Guam to break loose from their moorings. They were quickly corralled by tugs and brought back and secured.

The Navy announced the decommissioning of the USS Memphis SSN-691 after 33 years of service.

Tim announced that the air-conditioning company he represents will offer a \$100.00 donation for referrals that lead to air conditioning sales and installations by his company. If you have any friends, neighbors, family members and business associates that may be in need of a new system, let Tim know.

### **50/50 Drawing**

The baseball ticket raffle was held and the winner was Jim Denzien.

The 50/50 drawing was held and the winner was Bob Warner who won \$67.00 of the \$135.00 contributed for the drawing. He donated his winning share back to the Perch Base Foundation.

### **Adjournment**

All outstanding business having been concluded, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 1318 hours.

The benediction was offered by Walt Blomgren.

Tim Moore, Secretary, Perch Base USSVI





## CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN

### A Submariner's Prayer

"Eternal Father, strong to save  
 Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
 Who biddest the mighty ocean deep  
 Its own appointed limits keep.  
 O hear us when we cry to Thee  
 For those in peril on the sea.

Bless those who serve beneath the deep.  
 Through lonely hour their vigil keep.  
 May peace their mission ever be,  
 Protect each one we ask of Thee.  
 Bless those at home who wait and pray,  
 For their return by night or day."

### ETERNAL PATROL

Former Perch Base member Larry "Bubba" Loftus has departed on Eternal Patrol March 21, 2011. Shipmate Loftus qualified in 1961 on the USS Sea Owl (SS-405) in 1961 and was a YNCS(SS) when he retired.

### IMPORTANT

In the case of my death, please immediately notify the U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc., (USSVI) at 877-542-3483 or 360-337-2978 and give the person on duty the information regarding my death, funeral, and burial arrangements, plus who they can contact for follow-up and support.

Please ask them to contact my local chapter's Base Commander with this information as well (they can look it up in their membership records).

This information can alternatively be E-Mailed to the National Office at "[office@ussvi.org](mailto:office@ussvi.org)".



**Binnacle List**

## **SHIPMATES RUNNING ON LESS THAN A FULL BATTERY CHARGE**

**The Chaplain reports that no one has notified him of any shipmate on the Binnacle List. Let's continue to be safe out there!**







# HOLLAND CLUB MEMBERS

Holland Club members are USSVI members who qualified in submarines at least 50 years ago.

<u>FIRST NAME</u>	<u>LAST NAME</u>	<u>Qual Date</u>			
Kenneth R.	ANDERSON	1950	Dennis	KERTON	1954
Jerome F.	BECKER	1948	Jack S.	KIMBALL	1961
Knneth E.	BECKER	1947	Dewight F.	KRAMER Sr.	1942
Karl G.	BERGSTROM	1954	Richard F.	KUNZE	1961
Richard A.	BERNIER	1960	Robert A.	LANCENDORFER	1955
Ronald B.	BEYER	1958	Robert W.	LENTS	1940
Harold J.	BIDIGARE	1945	George	LONG	1958
Walter	BLOMGREN	1957	George	MARIONS	1960
Wayne A.	BRAASTAD	1943	Raymond	MARSHALL	1941
Charles J.	BRADY	1959	Alexander J.	MARTIN	1954
Edgar T.	BROOKS	1959	Raymond C.	McKINZIE	1953
Robert "Dick"	CARAKER	1945	Roger R.	MILLER	1958
James J.	COOPER	1957	Jack E.	MOORE	1960
Roger J.	COUSIN	1953	Danny R.	MOSS	1957
Eugene	CRABB	1956	James W.	NEWMAN	1950
Samuel M.	CRIDER	1944	Royce E.	PETTIT	1953
George L.	CRIDER	1960	Ernest V.	PLANTZ	1941
George	DEBO	1952	Daniel J.	REEL	1958
Ron	DUTCHER	1959	Jack	RICHARDSON	1943
Harry	ELLIS	1953	Stanley I.	RUD	1945
Howard M.	ENLOE	1956	Mel	RYCUS	1952
Douglas R.	EWEN	1961	Ramon	SAMSON	1956
James R.	FOOTE	1957	Fred D.	SAUNDERS	1960
Howard S.	GOLDMAN	1957	Emil	SCHOONEJANS	1944
Billy A.	GRIEVES	1939	Carl	SCOTT	1959
Robert G.	HANSON	1941	Adrian M.	STUKE	1960
Eldon L.	HARTMAN	1953	Marion M.	TURNER	1940
Edward J.	HAWKINS	1951	Eugene B.	VEEK	1960
Joseph J.	HAWKINS	1955	James L.	WALL	1961
Harold	HELLER	1958	Forrest J.	WATSON	1952
Glenn	HEROLD	1960	Richard P.	WEBER	1943
Lester R.	HILLMAN	1952	Edward J.	WOLF	1955
Theodore	HUNT	1954	John G.	ZAICHKIN	1960
Davy L.	JONES	1960	Ronald J.	ZOMOK	1960

**YOU, OUR SENIOR SUBMARINERS, LEAD US ON TO FULFILL OUR MISSION TO THE YOUNGER PEOPLE OF AMERICA TO NEVER FORGET, THOSE WHO WENT DOWN TO THE SEA IN BOATS AND NEVER RETURNED.**

# Perch Base April Birthdays



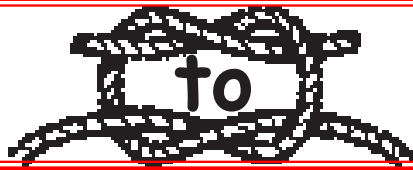
JEROME F. BECKER	APRIL 2
ROBERT "DICK" CARAKER	APRIL 3
ERNIE PLANTZ	APRIL 3
BARRY BOWERS	APRIL 5
JIM THOMSON	APRIL 7
GEORGE L. CRIDER	APRIL 12
JAMES L. WALL	APRIL 13
RICHARD H "RICK" SIMMONS	APRIL 14
RICHARD KUNZE	APRIL 16
JAMES N. EDWARDS	APRIL 16
DAVID CARPENTER	APRIL 20
TIM MOORE	APRIL 22
ADRIAN M. STUKE	APRIL 30
DAVY JONES	APRIL 30

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## *WHAT'S NEW ONLINE*

THE ONLINE CALENDAR NOW EXTENDS OUT TWO MONTHS AND WILL "ROLL OVER" EACH MONTH. THIS WILL GIVE A BETTER PICTURE OF THE BASE'S ACTIVITIES.

# Shipmate



# Shipmate

## Now, This Ain't No Sh\*t . . .

We're still looking for stories! All of us have heard the one about the difference between a fairy tale and a sea story. The fairy tale starts, "Once upon a time," and a sea story starts, "Now this ain't no sh\*t!"

Well, that's what we are looking for; sea stories. And they only need to be as true as a sea story ALWAYS is!  
So send something in. Here are the rules (or not, whatever):

1. We can use your name or not: your choice just let me know.
2. Grammar and spelling DO NOT COUNT. I will edit and change just enough to make it somewhat readable!
3. Remember, this is from "boat" sailors to "boat" sailors. BUT, since this publication may fall into skimmer hands (or worse, decent civilians!.) I may have to substitute punctuation marks in place of letters in certain words, as in the title.
4. There is absolutely no limit on how many you can send in. I will publish AT LEAST one each month as we get them.

So send them to:

Chuck Emmett  
[communications@perch-base.org](mailto:communications@perch-base.org)  
or  
7011 West Risner Road  
Glendale, AZ 85308.



**SHIPMATE TO SHIPMATE  
STORIES THAT ARE  
"ABSOLUTLY, POSITIVELY, THE TRUTH!"**

### Flossie the Aussie

Flossie was a barmaid way down south in Aussie land.

She had a face that was a picture and a figure that was grand. But her mind was like an angel, not a woman of the world.

For Flossie was no floosie but an earnest working girl.

Then she met a Yankee sailor who was cute as he could be. He was always out with Flossie 'cause he never did go to sea. He was working in a warehouse way down on Fremantle dock. He had time to see our Flossie and to woo her round the clock.

He brought her cigarettes, he brought her whisky, brought her gin.

He even brought her ration coupons when her little shoes were getting thin. And Flossie loved that seaman and the things that he would buy.

For that seaman was a demon in the service of supply.

Then she met another sailor from a Yankee submarine.

He was drunk and he was dirty. He was ugly. He was mean. But he wooed her and pursued her and he finally won the day. "I just love those big torpedoes." was what Flossie used to say.

Now Flossie was an Aussie and she knew her way around.

And she knew the paths of happiness and how those paths are found. So she took him to a churchyard and presently they were wed.

And retired from the service in a Flossie Aussie bed.

Now she wears no silken scanties. She has damn few cigarettes.

But when she awakes each morning, Flossie never, never has regrets. For she learned a simple moral, just the same as you and I,

That a good supply of service beats a service of supply.

Captain F. D. Walker USN (Ret.)

## WHAT We've BEEN UP TO ...

- March has been the full for the Base. We had our second meeting at our new location (Dillon's on 59th Ave.) with another good turnout -- we've picked a winner for meetings.
- March 4 was the first of our baseball spring training appearances; this one at the Peoria Sports Complex. Strong winds were an uninvited guest.
- Our most extensive outing was the three-day static display for Luke Days at the west side AFB. We found new members, made a lot of new friends and sold a record amount from our ship's store
- On deck as this issue goes to press is a static display at Falcon Field on Saturday, March 26 and another baseball game the next day, Sunday, March 27, at Camelback Ranch Sports Complex, Camelback and 101st Avenue.

## A VERY SPECIAL ADVERTISEMENT

Robin & Carol  
Schultz  
Managers

**GOODYEAR**  
**Self Storage & RV**

2121 S. Litchfield Road • Goodyear, AZ 85338

**623-535-1811**

**U-HAUL** [www.goodyearselfstorage.com](http://www.goodyearselfstorage.com) **U-HAUL**

*Shipmates, Goodyear Self Storage & RV has given Perch Base a very favorable rate for both our equipment storage locker and, now, (soon) covered storage of our USS Phoenix float.*

*This has solved a critical and important issue for the Base, Show that we appreciate their generosity, Please consider this ad partner for any of your storage needs and -- tell your friends.*



## Eternal Patrol April 3, 1943

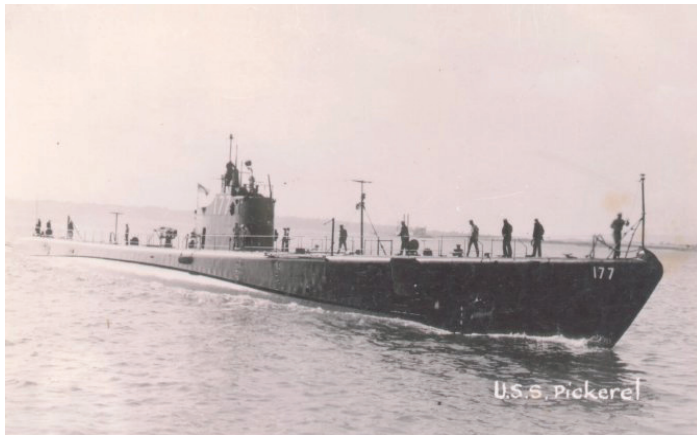
Editors Note: Less we forget, each month, one boat on eternal patrol will be highlighted in this newsletter. Sailors, rest your oars.

### The Final Patrol

Lord, this departed shipmate with dolphins on his chest  
Is part of an outfit known as the best.  
Make him welcome and take him by the hand.  
You'll find without a doubt he was the best in all the land.  
So, heavenly Father add his name to the roll  
Of our departed shipmates still on patrol  
Let them know that we who survive  
Will always keep their memories alive.



### USS Pickerel (SS-177) April 3, 1943 74 men lost



#### Porpoise-Class

Disp: 1,350 tons (surf), 2,029 tons (sub) ft 7/8 in, Draft: 15 ft  
Speed: 19.25 knots (surf), 8.75 knots (sub)  
Length: 298 ft, Beam: 25  
Range: 11,000 nautical miles (20,000 km) at 10 knots  
Test depth: 250 ft

#### Propulsion:

4 × Winton Model 16-201A 16-cylinder two-cycle diesel engines, 1,300 hp  
2 × 120-cell Gould AMTX33HB batteries  
8 × GE electric motors, 538 hp  
2 × General Motors six-cylinder four-cycle 6-241 auxiliary diesels

#### Complement:

(as built:) 5 officers, 45 enlisted; (1945) 8 officers, 65 enlisted

#### Armament:

6 × 21 in torpedo tubes (four forward, two aft; 16 torpedoes)  
Two external bow tubes added 1942  
1 × 4"/50 cal deck gun, 4 × 0.3 cal (7.62 mm) machine guns

USS Pickerel (SS-177), a Porpoise-class submarine, was the first ship of the United States Navy to be named for the pickerel, a young or small pike.

Her keel was laid on 25 March 1935 by the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. She was launched on 7 July 1936 sponsored by Miss Evelyn Standley, and commissioned on 26 January 1937, Lieutenant Leon J. Huffman in command.

### Inter-War Period

After shakedown, the new boat conducted training exercises out of New London, Connecticut until getting underway on 26 October 1937 and heading, via Guantánamo Bay, Cuba to transit the Panama Canal on 9 November. Joining the Pacific Fleet, Pickerel operated out of San Diego, California, along the West Coast, and in Hawaiian waters. Subsequently transferred to the Asiatic Fleet, she prepared for war with a vigorous training schedule in the Philippines.

### World War II

Upon receiving word of Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Pickerel - commanded by Lieutenant Commander Barton E. Bacon, Jr. - sped to the coast of Indo-China and conducted her first war patrol off Cam Ranh Bay and Tourane Harbor. She tracked a Japanese submarine and a destroyer but lost them in haze and rain squalls before they came in torpedo range. On 19 December, she also missed a small Japanese patrol craft with five torpedoes, before returning to Manila Bay on 29 December.

On her second patrol - from 31 December 1941-29 January 1942 - conducted between Manila and Surabaya, the submarine sank Kanko Maru on 10 January 1942. On her third war patrol - from 7 February-19 March - along the Malay Barrier and her fourth - from 15 April-6 June - in the Philippines, she failed to score.

Pickrel's fifth war patrol, from 10 July to 26 August, was a voyage from Brisbane, Australia, to Pearl Harbor for refit, with a short patrol in the Mariana Islands en route, during which she damaged a freighter.

On her sixth war patrol - from 22 January to 3 March 1943, she searched among the Kurile Islands on the Tokyo-Kiska traffic lanes. In sixteen attacks, she sank Tateyama Maru and two 35-ton sampans.

She departed Pearl Harbor on 18 March 1943 and, after topping off with fuel and provisions at Midway Island on 22 March, headed for the eastern coast of northern Honshū and was never heard from again. Pickrel was the first submarine to be lost in the Central Pacific area. She was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 19 August 1943.

Post-war analysis of Japanese records gave conflicting suggestions about Pickrel's fate. The Japanese officially credit her with sinking Submarine Chaser Number 13 on 3 April and Fukuei Maru on 7 April, and give no official report of her destruction. Those records also describe an action off Shiramuka Lighthouse on northern Honshū on 3 April 1943 in which naval aircraft first bombed an unidentified submarine, then directed Shiragami and Bunzan Maru to the spot, where they dropped twenty-six depth charges. A large quantity of oil floated to the surface, which was often enough for Japanese ASW ships to believe their target was sunk. It is likely Pickrel's fuel oil bunkers leaked. Since there were several other ASW operations in the area in that period,[11] and Pickrel was the only American submarine in that area; one of these other attacks, sometime after 7 April, probably claimed her.



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## DIESEL BOATS FOREVER - ORIGIN OF THE PIN



*EDITOR: The opinions and details of history in the following are those of the author. I have only edited for punctuation, some grammar and to remove extensive footnotes which, where appropriate, are included in the text. Some of the historical depictions may be at odds with the impartial facts.*

### Diesel Boats Forever

by Patrick Meagher TMC(SS) USN RET

Probably none of today's submariners know the origin or the significance of the Diesel Boats Forever (DBF) pin. Most former Diesel boat sailors are also ignorant of its origins, even though it is worn with pride on many SubVets vests.

The last diesel attack boat built for the US Navy was commissioned in October 1959. At that time there were five classes of nuke boats along with two "one off" designs in various stages of construction and pre commissioning trials along with USS Nautilus SSN-571, and the four Skate class boats in operational status.

The diesel boat force made up predominantly of modernized fleet boats (Fleet Snorkels, Guppy 1A's, Guppy 2's, Guppy 2A's, Radar picket, Regulus missile, troop carrier, and hunter-killer conversions), six Tang's plus Darter, Growler, Greyback, the two Salmon's and the three "B" girls had become the source of pre-commissioning crews for the nuke boats. There was a steady stream of 9901's passing through the diesel boat force, spending seven months onboard learning the boat and earning their dolphins before departing for nuke school. A smaller number of career enlisted electricians, machinist mates, enginemen, and electronic technicians also volunteered for the nuke program.

Admiral Hyman Rickover personally interviewed all officers applying for the nuclear power program as well as many of the senior enlisted submariners. Tales of Rickover's interviews consistently reported on his efforts to intimidate and discredit the accomplishments of the officer interviewee's, alienating many who interviewed with him. Disturbing

reports from senior enlisted veterans of the nuke boat navy in favorite submarine “watering holes” ashore indicated Rickover’s new operating philosophy was at work in the engineering spaces. “Don’t trust enlisted engineers.”

Nuke trained officers consistently checked, double checked, and triple checked the work and system lineups of the enlisted engineers, a major change to the long standing professional relationship between enlisted and officer submariners. In addition, “front-enders” the non-nukes, were reporting excessive wardroom focus on the engineering plant at the expense of the historic mission of the submarine.

They were also describing the “no-touch” rule from the reactor compartment aft. If you were not a nuke, you couldn’t touch any part of the engineering plant-period. You could learn it in theory, identify major components, valves and panels, but that was it. Gone was the traditional submarine qualification program that demanded standing all watches under instruction as well as rigging all compartments for all evolutions.

Lost on most submariners was the reason Rickover imposed the new operational Philosophy which is best summarized by Gary E. Weir in his book, *“FORGED IN WAR, The Naval-Industrial Complex and American Submarine Construction 1940-1961.”*

“The potential for major disaster in the nuclear propulsion program caused him (Rickover) to elevate professional competence, discipline, and responsibility to the rank of absolute virtues required of every naval and private participant. Unfortunately for a great many people, Rickover’s personal and professional manner made the lesson difficult to learn.” (pg. 168)

By early 1967 total nuclear submarine crews numbered in excess of one hundred counting blue and gold SSBN crews with sixty-four nuke boats (forty one of which were SSBN’s) in commission. The thirty-seven Sturgeon class nuke boats would start to commission with the lead ship in March of that year. The Diesel boat fleet in contrast numbered slightly over one hundred in commission with most of the modernized fleet type boats nearing the end of their useful lives. Former SSR’s, SSK’s, and Fleet Snorkels would start to decommission within eighteen months to be followed shortly by the guppy conversions.

More and more Rickover trained officers were appearing on squadron and force staffs bringing with them Rickover’s operational philosophy. It was apparent to all that the diesel boat navy were dinosaurs soon to be extinct along with their officer community who were either unwilling to become nukes or passed over by Rickover as unfit to become nuke boat engineers in order to ascend to command of a nuke boat.

Diesel boats were still conducting most of the non-deterrent submarine operations including “special missions.” Nuke attack boats were “wowing” many with their performance and potential along with occasional contributions such as, “a mission of great value to the government of the United States of America.” The nukes were not without their teething problems however. It was not uncommon for a nuke boat to be unable to get underway as scheduled due to an “engineering problem.” A refueling every three to four years also required a shipyard stay of eighteen months to two years again reducing the number of nuke boats available for operations.

So it was left to the diesel boats to pick up the slack. ‘Dex’ Armstrong (5) describes the thinking of the enlisted smokeboat sailor during these years.

“We were it. One crew. Nobody took over our boats when we came in. When the old girl went to sea, we were there: the same names, same faces and same officers forward. If someone failed to maintain a system or piece of equipment, the Chief of the Boat knew precisely what butt to put his boot into when ass-kicking time rolled around. Those were great days. We didn’t know it then; that came later. Much later! We knew nuclear boats represented progress but we didn’t think much about it. We could see the future of submarines floating in the after nest. The big, fat, black monsters that were getting all the attention. High speed, deep-diving ugliness rapidly sending our smokeboat fleet up the river to the scrap yard. To us nuke boats were like elephants. They were big as hell, uglier than sin and none of us had any idea what went on inside of the damn things. They were just there.”

This brings us to the DBF pin. In 1969 USS Barbel (SS-580,) the lead ship of the last class of diesel boats built for the US Navy was deployed to WesPac. While on a “special mission” in early 1970 the control room gang got into one of those nuke boat vs. diesel boat discussions.

It was pointed out during the discussion that on a number of occasions a diesel boat would have to get underway for a “broke-down” nuke boat again proving the superiority of smokeboats over unreliable nuke boats. Someone suggested there ought to be a pin for smokeboat sailors, something like the new Polaris Deterrent Patrol Pin for “boomer” sailors, for the times you had to take a nuke boat commitment because they were broke- down. A contest was commissioned to design the pin.

ETR3(SS) Leon Figurido's winning design was a broadside view of a guppy boat with SS superimposed on the North Atlantic sail. There were two bare breasted mermaids, one on the bow and one on the stern facing in with arms extended. Completing the design was a ribbon underneath the boat with holes for stars, and centered on the ribbon the letters "DBF". ETR3(SS) Figurido received appropriate recognition for his winning design along with a prize of some sort, now long forgotten.



This is the original DBF design that started the "Diesel Boats Forever" movement. Designed and drawn by Lee Figurido. West Pac 1970

Upon Barbel's return to Yokosuka the design of the DBF pin was hand carried to a local manufacturer of nautical gewgaws where a batch were cast and brought back to the ship and sold at cost to Barbel crewmembers that began to wear them ashore. As the DBF pin grew in popularity within the diesel boat community it continued to be cast and sold in shops around Yokosuka eventually making its way to Pearl Harbor, San Diego, and on to the east coast. Most "smokeboat" sailors assumed a gold star would be placed in the ribbon for each diesel boat served on. However, it was confirmed to the author years later by Capt. John Renard, USN RET. Skipper of Barbel at that time, a star was to be placed on the ribbon for each time a diesel boat you served on had to get underway for a broke-down nuke. The DBF pin continued to gain in popularity among current and former smokeboat sailors who wore them with pride as either a pin or on a belt buckle, all the while collecting the ire of the senior nuke officer community.

As the wholesale decommissioning of the fleet type boats occurred during the early 70's scores of career electricians and enginemen were forced to "surface" as there was no room for them on Rickover's boats. Their designation was changed by BUPERS from "SS" to "SQ" indicating they were excess to submarine force manning requirements although they were still allowed to wear their dolphins. Soon they too would be gone along with their collective histories.

In 1973 Rickover issued an edict that Midshipmen would no longer go on summer cruises on diesel boats. Rumor had it that too many were showing up at his interviews with "bad attitudes" about nuke boats picked up on their summer cruise on the smokeboats. It was reported in favorite submarine hangouts ashore that on more than one occasion nuke boat skippers banned the wearing of DBF pins by their crew members, typically "front enders" the non-nukes, implying that to do so would indicate disloyalty to the nuke submarine force.

In the mid 70's the DBF pin went into the display of submarine insignia maintained at the Pacific Submarine Museum then located at the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor. The caption alluded to an "unofficial" insignia worn by a disappearing breed of submariner nostalgic for the days of diesel boats.

In July 1975 the last guppy submarine in US service, USS Tiru (SS-416,) decommissioned in Charleston SC. A handful of the guppies sailed on in foreign service into the late 90's with two, ex-USS Cutlass (SS-478,) and ex-USS Tusk (SS-426) continuing to serve today in the Republic of China (Taiwan) navy as training boats. The last diesel attack boats in US service were USS Darter (SS-576,) USS Barbel (SS-580,) USS Blueback (SS-581,) and USS Bonefish (SS-582.) They decommissioned between 1988 and 1990. Two Tang class boats, ex-USS Tang (SS-563,) and ex-USS Gudgeon (SS-567,) recently decommissioned in the Turkish Navy with ex-Gudgeon slated to be Turkey's museum submarine.

The Turkish skipper of ex-Tang when asked about the difference between the German designed and built replacement boats for their retiring ex-US boats is reported to have said, "American submarines are built for war, German submarines are built for export."

It's ironic that 15 years after decommissioning of USS Blueback (SS-581) at the Submarine Base in San Diego, a Swedish Navy Type A-19 Gotland Class Air Independent Diesel Boat is conducting weekly ops there to "familiarize" US Navy ASW forces with the operating characteristics of advanced non-nuclear submarines. When the Swedish crew comes ashore on Friday after a week at sea they still look and smell like the smokeboat sailors of old. Our current crop of submariners avoids them. The DBF pin, originally designed by a USS Barbel (SS-580) crewmember as an unofficial insignia to recognize the diesel boats ability to fill-in on very short notice for broke-down nuke boats, now resides with pride on the blue vests of Submarine Veterans who qualified and served on smokeboats.

Today the DBF pin is the unique symbol of the professionalism, discipline, and camaraderie of American smokeboat sailors who sailed on, unloved, unwashed, and underpaid as their era was coming to a close. DBF!

About the Author:

Patrick Meagher, TMC(SS) USN RET. Qualified and served on USS Cusk (SS-348,) USS Andrew Jackson (SSBN-619) Blue, and USS Barbel (SS-580.) He served on active duty with the Submarine Force from 1960 through 1977. A life member of USSVI, and associate member of USSVWWII, he wears a DBF patch on his blue vest.



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