

The MidWatch



THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER, Perch Base, USSVI Phoenix, Arizona

May 2013
Volume 19 - Issue 5



Visit our web site at:
www.perch-base.org

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."



2013 Perch Base Foundation Supporters

These are the Base members and friends who donate monies or efforts 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 2013 Foundation Donors



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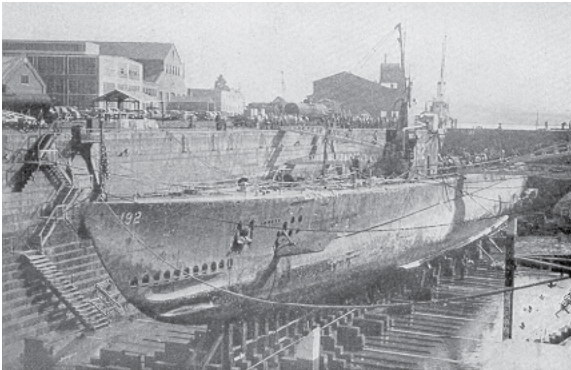
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LEST WE FORGET THOSE STILL ON PATROL

MAY ETERNAL PATROLS

May 23, 1939 USS Squalus (SS-162) 26 men lost



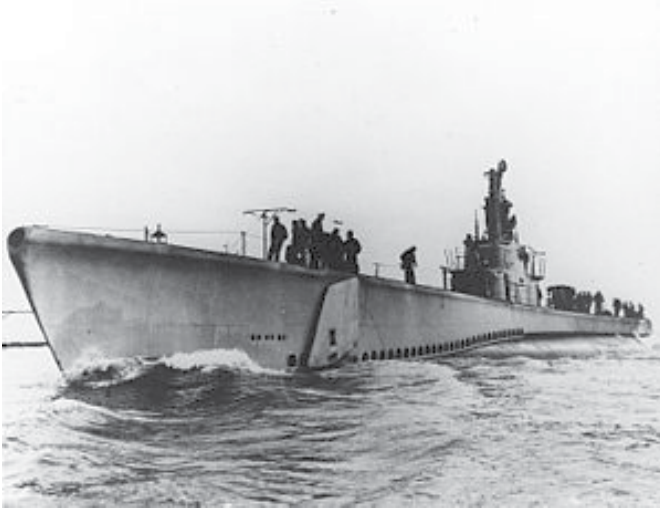
During test dives off Portsmouth, NH, the main engine air induction failed with resultant flooding. After the much-reported rescue and recovery of the ship, she was re-commissioned as the USS Sailfish.

May 28, 1943 USS Runner (SS-275) 78 men lost

She had departed Midway, headed for the Kuril Islands and was never heard from again. Japanese records do not shed any further information on her loss.



May 3, 1945 USS Lagarto (SS-371) 86 men lost



Lagarto, along with the submarine Baya were engage in heavy contact with enemy ships near the outer waters of the Gulf of Siam. At 15:00 on 3 May 1945, Baya sent the first "of numerous contact reports to Lagarto." By 23:47, "having sent Lagarto contact reports almost half hourly with no receipt," Baya decided to go it alone. Again, however, the Japanese escorts drove off Baya when she attacked during the mid watch on 4 May, again saving their charges from destruction. Post-war examination of Japanese records revealed the most likely reason for Lagarto's silence. One of the two escorts made an attack on 3 May against a submerged submarine in 30 fathoms of water at Lagarto's probable position.

May 30, 1958 USS Stickleback (SS-415) no loss of life

On 28 May 1958, Stickleback was participating in an antisubmarine warfare exercise with a destroyer escort and torpedo retriever boat in the Hawaiian area. The exercises continued into the afternoon of the next day when the submarine completed a simulated torpedo run on the DE. As Stickleback was going to a safe depth, she lost power and broached approximately 200 yards ahead of the destroyer escort. Silverstein backed full and put her rudder hard left in an effort to avoid a collision but holed the submarine on her port side. Stickleback's crew was removed by the retriever boat and combined efforts were made by the destroyer escort, Silverstein along with the soon-arriving ships Sabalo (SS-302), Sturtevant (DE-239), and Greenlet (ASR-10), to save the stricken submarine. The rescue ships put lines around her, but compartment after compartment flooded and, at 18:57 on 29 May 1958, Stickleback sank in 1,800 fathoms of water.



May 22, 1968 USS Scorpion (SSN-589) 99 men lost

Photo # NH 70305 USS Scorpion comes alongside USS Tallahatchie County, April 1968



At the time of her sinking, there were 99 crewmen aboard Scorpion. The best available evidence indicates that Scorpion sank in the Atlantic Ocean on 22 May 1968 at approximately 1844Z after an explosion of some type, while in transit across the Atlantic Ocean from Gibraltar to her home port at Norfolk, Virginia.

Lost Harbor

by Leslie Nelson Jennings

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.

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PAST-COMMANDER
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Sailing Orders



May 11

Base Annual Picnic

White Tanks Regional Park

Again, we will do our own cooking and preparation rather than have it catered. We are also going to invite other Arizona Bases. As

*always **FlashTraffic** will be sent later.*

THIS TAKES THE PLACE OF THE MONTHLY MEETING.

EXTRA!
SEE NEXT PAGE

EXTRA!
SEE NEXT PAGE

May 18

Armed Forces Day Parade

Flagstaff, AZ

This is one of the most appreciated events we attend every year -- and one at which we have a lot of fun.

*More details will be later in a **FlashTraffic**.*

May 27

Memorial Day Services

Phoenix National Cemetery

One of our two major events of the year, this is when we truly honor those who gave their lives in the service of their country. Details, of course, in a

FlashTraffic



PERCH BASE'S ANNUAL PICNIC

(AND ALL OTHER BASES ARE INVITED!)

Saturday, May 11, 2013
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.



TO GET TO THE WHITE TANKS REGIONAL PARK, TAKE OLIVE AVENUE AS FAR WEST AS YOU CAN FROM THE LOOP 101. OUR LOCATION IS RAMADA (SITE) #4. JUST FOLLOW THE MAIN ROAD WITHIN THE PARK.

YOU MAY BRING YOUR OWN BEER, BUT NO GLASS CONTAINERS

IT'S FREE!!
(but we'll take donations!)

YOU MAY BRING YOUR OWN BEER, BUT NO GLASS CONTAINERS

- Menu
Hamburgers
Hot dogs
Potato Salad
Beans
Fixin's
Soft Drinks

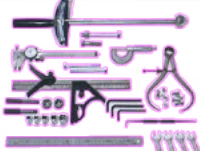
ARIZONA SUBMARINERS LOST IN WW II

RATE	NAME	CITY	BOAT
TM2	Perry A. Collum	Sommerton	Albacore (SS 218)
MM1	James T. Porter	Litchfield Pk.	Albacore (SS 218)
Sn	Walter F. Miller	Tucson	Argonaut (SS 166)
RM2	Walter Bishop	Globe	Lost on S-4 in 1927
Sa	Buford Arney	Florence	Capeline (SS 298)
CS3	Hermينو Gonzales	Winslow	Grampus (SS 207)
CS1	Lewis R. Orth	Douglas	Growler (SS 215)
LTjg	Addison Pinkley	Tucson	Gudgeon (SS 211)
MM2	Lynwood Scults	Morecini	Gudgeon (SS 211)
Sn	Mervin M. Rogers	Central AZ	Harder (SS 257)
EM3	Robert R. Mills	Show Low	Harder (SS 257)
LCDR (XO)	Thomas McGrath	Tucson	Pompano (SS 181)
TM2	John Bailey	Bisbee	Robalo (SS 273)
EMC	Ira Gregg	Phoenix	Runner (SS 275)
RM2	Basil Abad	Tucson	Scamp (SS 277)
Sn	Frank Rodriguez	Morenci	Scamp (SS 277)
GM3	Eugene Fausset	Peoria	Swordfish (SS 193)




Reports from the Base Officers





The “Snipes Castle”

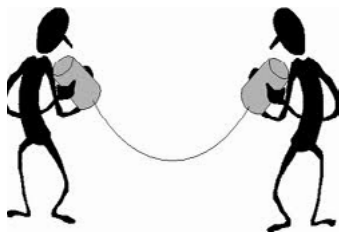
Comments of the Base Commander
Howard Doyle



This past week Perch Base went to the National Cemetery to conduct the internment service for a submarine veteran of 28 years, even though he was neither a member of Perch Base or USSVI. Joseph Vincent Popp’s family and neighbors who attended the service were most appreciative of our service. Bravo Zulu to the chaplain for preparing the eulogy, the COB, Tim Moore and Herb Herman for also being there to assist me with the service. Hopefully the Parade in Tolleson went as well as the other parades we take part in on the 20th. Upcoming events include the base picnic on May 11th, the Armed Forces Day parade in Flagstaff on the 18th, and the services and tolling at the National Cemetery on the 27th.

This last week has caused me much concern and brought back to mind the events of Oklahoma City and Timothy McVey, 9/11, and now the events in Boston. I used to think these events were limited to Dublin, London, and places in the Middle East; but it seems we as a nation are being visited by more and more of those who do not share our values or beliefs. I am not sure of just how to handle the situations, but a solution must be found!

I am looking forward to seeing each and every one of you at the May events!



“Soundings”

vice-Commander/Communications Officer
Chuck Emmett

(My thoughts while wearing two hats!)

How much does the USSVI mean to us? Actually, the question should probably be more on how much this Perch Base mean to us. Whenever we asked for volunteers for even the smallest task or assistance, you would think that every member had both arms drop off! Let’s face it shipmates, there aren’t any jobs in the Base that require eight hours a day five days a week 365 days a year (with the possible exception of the Communications Officer!) to be a successful volunteer for the base. We seem to have, with a few exceptions, the same people running the same Base Offices time after time after time. Not only is this not fair to those who do serve, but it keeps us from getting new blood and fresh ideas to make the Base stronger. I know I know this is a sad same old song that’s been told again and again but I for one think it needs to be repeated at every opportunity.

Now, on a slightly related note it brings me to the Eternal Patrol service we conducted for the non-Base and USSVI member but still sub vet, Joe Popp. Here was an honorable, long-serving submarine shipmate, living in our midst, which had not only never heard of USSVI but had never had the opportunity to participate in the fellowship that we offer to “Brothers of the Phin.” It makes me wonder how many others, like Joe, are out there that we don’t know about. Every now and then, one of our Base members (usually Tim Moore) runs across a submarine or who’s never heard of our organization. But what have we been doing to attract people who served but remain innocent of Sub

(continued on next page)

Vets? Are we wearing a submariner vet hat when we go out? That one act alone probably has brought more attention than anything else we do with the possible exception of showing the float in parades.

But, I'm open to suggestions. When a brother like Joe goes on Eternal Patrol never having known the fellowship of an organization like USSVI and Perch Base it makes me sad. If you have any ideas on what we can do to increase our awareness to the public, please send me an e-mail or give me a phone call. I'm open to all suggestions.



"Member Mogul"
Membership Chairman's Message

Rick Simmons - Membership

This month we have again added to our ranks with two new members.

The new members are:

- John C. Mosher, who qualified in 1973 on the USS Flasher (SSN 613.) John lives in Phoenix with his wife Mary.
- John (Jack) L. O'Connor who qualified in 1961 on the USS Trigger (SS 564.) Jack lives in Phoenix with his wife Anna.

Welcome aboard shipmates, we look forward to seeing you at all our meetings and events. Please remember that spouses, significant others and family members are always welcome at our meetings and events.

Speaking of events, this month is our Perch Base picnic out at White Tanks Regional Park. This would be a good time to bring any friends or acquaintances that are current or former submariners and introduce them to Perch Base. I will have an ample supply of applications on hand.

Several of you have asked why I stress getting a login to the USSVI website so you can update your on-line profile. Your profile is a snapshot of your military history. It is a place where you can list your duty assignments and your accomplishments. The information allows USSVI to provide information to boat associations. It is also a very useful resource that can be used by your family and the National and Base Chaplains to create your eulogy. Too often, families don't really know what you did while you were in the service. This is especially true of members who have lost their spouse to natural causes or divorce and started a new family. The process is relatively easy so get in there and get it done.



We participated in an Eternal Patrol Ceremony at the Phoenix Memorial National Cemetery for a Submariner that passed away, but was not a member of USSVI on April 15th. At the conclusion of the ceremony everyone attending the service came up to each of us shaking our hand and thanking us for our being there. It was a very somber and emotional experience.

I hope you will be at the picnic and, if able, to participate in the Armed Forces Day Parade in Flagstaff May 18th. Please plan on being at the Memorial Day Celebration at the National Cemetery Monday May 27. Be sure to get there early so you will be able to have a seat during the program, and attend the Tolling of the Boats Ceremony right afterwards at the Circle of Remembrance performed by Perch Base.

Richard Kunze, Chief of the Boat



Arizona Silent Service Memorial
Perch Base's Efforts to Recognize Those Gallant Sailors Who Won the Cold War by Their Eternal Vigilant Beneath the World's Oceans.
Committee Co-Chair Dan Moss

It was agreed to present the designer of the ASSM logo a monetary award not to exceed \$200. Payment will be at a later date.

All previous Save-Our-Sail materials and net SOS monies will be returned to the newly formed SOS group which seeks to bring the Phoenix sail to Steel Indian School Park. Jim Denzien will finalize all transfers to this new group and the actual transfer date will be determined.

There was a meeting April 15th with a local Arizonan, Renee Palmer-Jones. Renee presented her vision of the ASSM memorial and it was well received by those committee members in attendance. Once approved by the full committee Renee will give a presentation to the base membership. It is anticipated this will be at the June meeting. We hope to have maximum attendance for this important meeting.

Although there are other artists competing for the honor of designing the memorial, two have recently dropped from contention. One other artist remains. In addition to Renee, we tentatively have on board a structural engineer and a draftsman ready to assist us in our ASSM project.

A preliminary meeting with our legislative sponsor, Senator Al Melvin has been "penciled in" for the fall.

The next major hurdle for Perch Base will be fund raising. It is anticipated that this will be an ongoing project for the remainder of this year and next. The committee is open to any and all fund raising suggestions. If you have and ideas which will further our goals, please do not hesitate to contact one of the committee members who are Dan Moss, Layne Moss, Howard Doyle, Chuck Emmett, Bob Warner, Jim Denzien, Don Demarte, Rick Simmons, Tim Moore and the Perch Base COB, Richard Kunze.



Event Coordinator's Message
Event Coordinator - Walt Blomgren

Three events are in our immediate future. The first is the Annual Picnic on May 11 followed by our annual trip up the hill to Flagstaff on May 18 for the Armed Forces Day event. Closing the month is the Memorial Day ceremony at the Phoenix National Memorial Cemetery on Monday, May 27. This last event — a solemn and significant honoring — includes our annual Tolling for the Boats ceremony.

Our Communications Officer, Chuck Emmett, will send details for all the events in **Flash Traffic** messages.

I am still looking for additional volunteers to tow the USS Phoenix model float. This is a great way to support the Base and have a heck of a lot of fun in the doing. Requirements? Personal auto insurance that allows this, a 2" ball hitch and the ability to tow about 2,000 pounds. Contact me if you can help us out at <mailto:events@perch-base.org>.



CHAPLAIN'S COLUMN



Base Chaplain - Steve Leon

Greetings

As we conduct our personal and professional business, may we always consider the power, both good and bad, of criticism. When used in a good way, it serves as a valuable tool in helping a person shape his/her character in order to “constructively” adapt to life’s circumstances.

Criticism must be accompanied by a genuine concern to assist the recipient in changing his/her behavior in a positive manner. Absent of that, bad criticism serves a singular purpose of damaging a person’s self esteem – a NO WIN situation.

In closing, I ask you to consider the wisdom of President Abraham Lincoln: “He has a right to criticize, who has a heart to help.”

Ave Deus,

Steve Leon

Binnacle List

On 04/08/2013, MSCS(SS) Joseph Popp embarked on eternal patrol. Although he was not a member of USSVI, the Perch Base assisted with the National Cemetery service, at the request of his family.

Please keep the following crew members in your thought and prayers:

DeWayne Lober- recovering from multiple broken bones, which resulted from a hard fall.

Milton McNeill- undergoing chemotherapy for abdominal cancer.

Reflections on Life

CRITICISM, A SHARP INSTRUMENT

Criticism is a sharp instrument. It can cut us as deeply as a surgeon’s scalpel. A medical student must undergo many years of training before he or she can become a surgeon and make an incision, which will lead to the improvement of someone’s health. Even the most carefully calculated and well-performed surgical incision is a painful wound, and if the surgeon cannot apply himself to alleviating the patient’s suffering and restoring his health, he has no right to make a cut.

Before we criticize someone, even if we have the finest intentions for that person’s betterment, we should give serious thought to what we are doing. We must be aware that our remarks will inevitably cause emotional pain, and unless we are ready to assume responsibility for helping the person cope with the pain and assist him or her in making the changes we recommend, we should refrain from criticizing.

By Rabbi Abraham J. Twerski (www.appleseeds.org)

REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVED



ALL GAVE SOME, SOME GAVE ALL



The regular Perch Base meeting was called to order at 1200 hours on April 13 by the base commander, Howard Doyle. The meeting was held at its usual location, Dillon's restaurant at 59th Ave. and the 101.

The invocation was given by the Base Chaplain followed by the pledge of allegiance and the Purpose of the USSVI. The Tolling for the Boats ceremony was conducted for those submarines lost during the month of April.

Howard acknowledged guest Henry Fernandez Jr. and the new members, John Mosher and Jack O'Conner. Raul Galvan was in attendance as a prospective member.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the March Base minutes as published in the MidWatch. It was approved by voice vote.

Rick Simmons read the Treasurers' report for March. A motion was made and seconded to approve the report. Motion was approved by voice vote.

BASE COMMANDER'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD) REPORT

The Commander reported on upcoming events:

- Tolleson's Whoopee Daze parade will be April 20 and we will enter the float. There will be a boat cleaning detail on the Friday before at noon. Members interested in helping should contact the COB for storage gate code.
- The Annual Base Picnic will be on May 11 at the White Tank Mountain Regional Park. The site is the same as last year's event.
- Armed Forces Day celebration parade on Saturday, May 18 in Flagstaff. Howard will make overnight reservations for those who wish to go up the day before and spend the night.
- Memorial Day. May 27 at the National Cemetery. Get there early. Parking and sitting space is at a premium.
- USSVI Convention will be in Rochester MN. The COB, Richard Kunz, will be the Base representative and 3 or 4 others will be in attendance. The 50year USSVI anniversary convention will be in San Mateo, Ca.
- ISA/USSVI convention, Tim Moore will be attending in Italy.

On the topic of the Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV), the Base endorsed a letter to the governor supporting Col. J. Strickland (attached to the end of these minutes.) A motion was made and seconded to endorse this letter. On a show-of-hands vote, it was passed with one dissenting vote. **(EDITOR: A COPY OF THIS LETTER BEGINS ON PAGE 16 OF THIS NEWSLETTER.)**

BOARD OFFICER REPORTS

MEMBERSHIP: Rick Simmons said we have three new members and one prospective member. The base total is now 152.

VICE COMMANDER: Chuck Emmett presented slides depicting a special sub sailor T-shirt suggested by Tim Moore. A show of hands was requested to indicate interest. Members were requested to indicate the size needed after the meeting.

COMMUNICATION OFFICER: In this role, Chuck had nothing additional.

TREASURER: Bob Warner was not present.

SECRETARY: Herb Herman said that he was returning to the Northwest in May. A volunteer Secretary was requested until his return in the fall. Tim Moore volunteered.

EVENT COORDINATOR: Walt Blomgren said we need additional volunteers to tow the Base float. Qualifications are that the person must have insurance to cover towing, have a 2" ball and be able to tow 2,500 to 3,000 pounds.

CHIEF OF BOAT (COB): The Saturday morning parade (Tolleson Whoopee Daze) will have shuttle buses and staging is at 0830. A Flash Traffic will be issued with additional information.

STOREKEEPER: DeWayne Lober was not present.

OLD BUSINESS

Bill Woolcott expressed Paradise Valley's appreciation for bringing the boat and participating in their event.

NEW BUSINESS

- The UAV nomination to the hall of Fame closing date is April 30th. See web site for qualifications.
- Bob Frank from Arizona Department of Veterans services, made a 30-45 minute presentation to the members on VA rights, and entitlements. This included a Q and A session.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

BINNACLE LIST

- Billy Grieves, Tim Moore and Milton McNeil, are off the Binnacle List.
- DeWayne Lober suffered a fall and was severely injured. He is recovering at the Capri Care Center, 1501 E. Orangewood Ave., Phoenix, Room 223.

50/50 DRAWING

Winner was Don Unser and the winnings were donated to the Base foundation. There were three additional drawings for a laminated letter explaining the origination/definition of our dolphin symbol.

ADJOURN

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. Motion was passed by voice vote, the closing benediction was given by Chaplain Steve Leon, and the meeting adjourned at 1330 hours.

SAILING LIST APRIL 13, 2013

W.H. Doyle Jr	Rick Simmons	Bill Malda
Bill & Sherry Woolcott	Walter Bloomgren	Chuck Emmett
Robert Frank(Speaker)	Steven Stanger	Herb Coulter
Jack O'Conner(New)	John Mosher(new)	Emil Schoonejans
Robert Wright	George Woods	Don Unser
Jim Denzien	Peter Tardiff	John Zachkin
Douglas LaRock	Henry Fernandez	Fernandez ,JR. (New)
Richard Womack	Tim Moore	Ted Hunt
Herb Herman	Mike Hinderliter	Davy Jones
Steve Leon	David Highway	Dan Moss
Bernie Fromm	Roel Galvan(guest)	Chris Urness
Kelly Grissom	Royce Pettit	Dick Bernier

(continued, with the letter to the Governor, on the next page)



UNIFIED ARIZONA VETERANS

- *The Voice of Arizona's Veterans*

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Telephone (602) 943-7834

Bob Madden, Chairman
Terry Araman, Vice-Chairman
Carol Culbertson, Secretary
John Burden, Treasurer

April 9, 2013

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer
Governor of the State of Arizona
1700 W. Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Brewer:

On behalf of the Unified Arizona Veterans (UAV) organization, a coalition of 45 veteran services organizations in the state of Arizona, we respectfully request that you reinstate Colonel Joey Strickland as Director of Arizona Department of Veteran Services. The Board of Directors of UAV and the membership of UAV are solidly in agreement in regards to this request.

Governor Brewer, Colonel Strickland has provided outstanding leadership to our veteran community in Arizona in all areas. Our state plan to end veteran homelessness is considered a successful model by the Veterans Administration and other states addressing the serious issue of veteran homelessness. Our Native American tribes in Arizona praise Colonel Strickland for opening the door to effective service and support for the veterans residing on their lands. The State Veteran Home in Phoenix is currently well managed and on a sound financial footing, providing a quality living environment for disabled and elderly veterans. The new State Veteran Home in Tucson opened last year, offering a quality living environment for veterans in the southern part of our state. Our annual Arizona Women's Military Veterans Conference sends a strong message to our women veterans in Arizona that we value and honor them for their contribution to the safety and security of our nation.

Due in large part to the leadership of Colonel Strickland, the state of Arizona is recognized nationally as one of the most veteran supportive states in this great country. Within the next few years, Arizona will experience an influx of veterans leaving military service and establishing employment, education, homes and family in the state, as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down. Colonel Strickland's deep understanding of the issues and concerns of veterans, from his 29 years of military service, including two tours in Vietnam, has helped to build a strong foundation to welcome and integrate all veterans into our state.

Governor Brewer, in order to continue the progress we have made in our goal of establishing

Arizona as the best supportive state in the nation for veterans, and to prepare for the impact of substantial increases in our veteran population in coming years, the Unified Arizona Veterans believes it is in the best interest of the state of Arizona for Colonel Strickland to continue his excellent leadership of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services. We urge you to reinforce your commitment to the veteran community in Arizona by reappointing Colonel Joey Strickland as Director. The entire veteran community salutes Col. Joey Strickland and extends to him our unqualified support.

Respectfully,

Terry Araman, Vice-Chair, Unified Arizona Veterans, Inc. (UAV)
for Bob Madden, Chair, Unified Arizona Veterans, Inc., away in Kansas due to the passing of his mother on April 5th
Telephone (602)525-4456

Veterans Service Organizations which support this Letter:

American Legion, Dept of Arizona
American Legion Auxiliary
Arizona StandDown
ASU Alumni, Veterans Chapter
Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society (AVHOFS)
Association of the US Army (AUSA)
Cactus WAVES, WAVES National/Women of the Sea Services
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
Forty and Eight
In-Country Vietnam Veterans
Jerry Ambrose Veterans Council, Mohave County
Jewish War Veterans (JWV)
Korean War Veterans (KWV)
Madison Street Veterans Association (MSVA)
Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)
Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH)
Military Order of the World Wars
National Association for Uniformed Services (NAUS)
Northwest Valley Veterans
173rd Airborne Brigade Association
Reserve Officers Association (ROA)
Scottish-American Military Society (SAMS)
Special Forces Association Chapter 22
Third Marine Division
United States Submarine Veterans Perch Base
US Vets Initiative
Veterans Affairs Committee, City of Tucson

Veterans for Veterans
Vietnam Veterans of American (VVA)
Women's Army Corps Veterans Association (WACVA)

Eternal Patrol

May 22, 1968

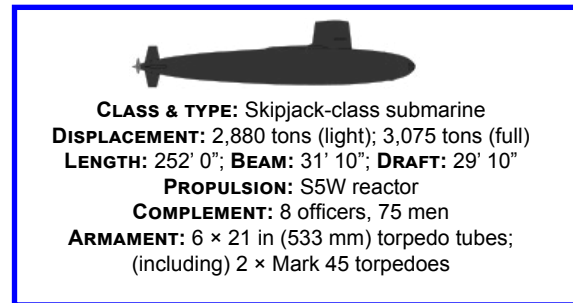
Editors Note: Less we forget, each month, one boat on eternal patrol will be highlighted in this newsletter. Sailors, rest your oars.

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 Scorpion (SSN-589) **May 22, 1968** **99 men lost**



CLASS & TYPE: Skipjack-class submarine
DISPLACEMENT: 2,880 tons (light); 3,075 tons (full)
LENGTH: 252' 0"; **BEAM:** 31' 10"; **DRAFT:** 29' 10"
PROPULSION: S5W reactor
COMPLEMENT: 8 officers, 75 men
ARMAMENT: 6 × 21 in (533 mm) torpedo tubes;
(including) 2 × Mark 45 torpedoes

FROM WIKIPEDIA, THE FREE ENCYCLOPEDIA

USS Scorpion (SSN-589) was a Skipjack-class nuclear submarine of the United States Navy, and the sixth vessel of the U.S. Navy to carry that name. Scorpion was declared lost on 5 June 1968 with 99 crewmen dying in the incident. The USS Scorpion is one of two nuclear submarines the U.S. Navy has lost, the other being USS Thresher (SSN-593). In November 2012, USSVI, with over 13,800 members at that time asked the US Navy to reopen the investigation on the sinking of USS Scorpion.

SERVICE HISTORY

Scorpion's keel was laid down on 20 August 1958 by the Electric Boat Division of the General Dynamics Corporation in Groton, Connecticut. She was launched on 19 December 1959, sponsored by Mrs. Elizabeth S. Morrison (daughter of the last commander of the World War II-era USS Scorpion, which had been lost with all hands in 1944), and commissioned on 29 July 1960, Commander Norman B. Bessac in command.

1960–1967

Assigned to Submarine Squadron 6, Division 62, Scorpion departed New London, Connecticut, on Aug. 24 for a two-month deployment in European waters. During that period, she participated in exercises with units of the 6th Fleet and of other NATO navies. After returning to New England in late October, she trained along the eastern seaboard until May 1961, and then crossed the Atlantic again for operations which took her into the summer. On 9 August 1961 she returned to New London, a month later, shifted to Norfolk, Virginia. In 1962, she earned the Navy Unit Commendation.

With Norfolk her home port for the remainder of her career, Scorpion specialized in the development of nuclear submarine warfare tactics. Varying her role from hunter to hunted, she participated in exercises which ranged along the Atlantic coast and in the Bermuda and Puerto Rico operating areas; then, from June 1963 – May 1964, she interrupted her operations for an overhaul at Charleston, South Carolina. Resuming duty off the eastern seaboard in late spring, she again interrupted that duty from 4 August – 8 October to make a transatlantic patrol. In the spring of 1965, she conducted a similar patrol in European waters.

During the late winter and early spring of 1966, and again in the autumn, she was deployed for special operations. Following the completion of those assignments, her commanding officer received the Navy Commendation Medal for outstanding leadership, foresight, and professional skill. Other Scorpion officers and crewmen were cited for

meritorious achievement. Scorpion is reputed to have entered an inland Russian sea during a “Northern Run” in 1966 where it successfully filmed a Soviet missile launch through its periscope before being forced to use its high speed to flee from Soviet Navy ships. Scorpion had a reputation for excellence and as a fast attack submarine it was a plum assignment for officers seeking to move up in a Navy in which submarine officers were gaining increasing clout.

OVERHAUL

On 1 February 1967 Scorpion entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for another extended overhaul. However, instead of the much-needed complete overhaul, she received only emergency repairs to get her back on duty as soon as possible. Operational pressures and complex and unforeseen problems created by the Submarine Safety Program (SUBSAFE) that was initiated after the 1963 loss of Thresher, meant that submarine overhauls went from nine months in length to 36 months. Intensive vetting of submarine component quality required by the SUBSAFE program coupled with various improvements and intensified structural inspections—particularly hull welding inspections using ultrasonic testing—were issues that reduced the availability of critical parts such as seawater piping. Cold War pressures prompted U.S. Submarine Fleet Atlantic (SUBLANT) officers to hunt for ways to reduce overhaul durations. The cost of that last overhaul was nearly one-seventh of those given other nuclear submarines at the same time. This was the result of concerns about the “high percentage of time offline” of nuclear attack submarines which was estimated to be at about 40% of total available duty time.

As Scorpion’s original “full overhaul” was whittled down in scope, it was decided it would not receive long-overdue SUBSAFE work. Scorpion would not receive a new, central valve control system; in the event of an emergency, her crew would have to scramble around the engine room to find and manually operate large valves. Crucially, Scorpion would not receive a fix for the same emergency system that did not work on Thresher, the submarine whose loss was the reason for the existence of the SUBSAFE program. On that sub a pipe leak at depth prompted an emergency shutdown of the submarine’s nuclear reactor; powerless, Thresher could still have surfaced if the Emergency Main Ballast Tank blow system worked. It did not. (Later, dockside tests on Thresher’s sister sub Tinosa proved that the EMBT system did not work at test depth; moisture in the high-pressure air flasks froze in in-line strainers as the ballast tanks were blown.) Following a dispute between Charleston Naval Ship Yard, which claimed the EMBT system worked as-is, and SUBLANT, which claimed it did not, the EMBT was “tagged out” or listed as unusable. The aforementioned problems with overhaul duration, that saw Scorpion selected for a reduced experimental overhaul program, also caused all SUBSAFE work to be delayed as well during 1967.

The reduced overhaul concept Scorpion went through had been approved by Admiral David Lamar McDonald, the Chief of Naval Operations on 17 June 1966. On 20 July, McDonald also allowed deferral of the SUBSAFE extensions, which had otherwise been deemed essential since 1963.

During Scorpion’s last six months of operational life, at least two sailors, Electrician’s Mate Second Class Daniel Rogers and Radioman Chief Daniel Pettey, struggled to be released from duty aboard Scorpion due to the bad morale problems they witnessed. Rogers sought disqualification from submarine duty—which was then allowed—while Pettey attempted to transfer to the U.S. Army only to be released from Scorpion while in the Mediterranean just months before it was lost.



TALLAHATCHIE COUNTY WITH SCORPION ALONGSIDE, OUTSIDE CLAYWALL HARBOR, NAPLES, ITALY, IN APRIL 1968 (SHORTLY BEFORE SCORPION DEPARTED ON HER LAST VOYAGE). THIS IS BELIEVED TO BE ONE OF THE LAST PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN OF SCORPION.

DISAPPEARANCE

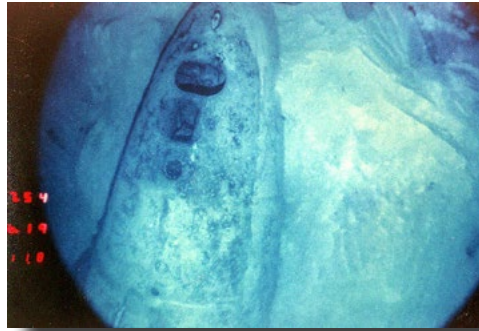
In late October 1967, Scorpion started refresher training and weapons system acceptance tests, and was given a new Commanding Officer, Francis Slattery. Following type training out of Norfolk, Virginia, she got underway on 15 February 1968 for a Mediterranean Sea deployment. She operated with the 6th Fleet into May and then headed west for home. Scorpion suffered several mechanical malfunctions including a chronic problem with Freon leakage from refrigeration systems. An electrical fire occurred in an escape trunk when a water leak shorted out a shore power connection.

Upon departing the Mediterranean on 16 May, two men departed Scorpion at Rota, Spain. One man left due to a family emergency, while the other, PO1 Joseph Underwood, departed for health reasons. Scorpion was then detailed to

observe Soviet naval activities in the Atlantic in the vicinity of the Azores. With this completed, Scorpion prepared to head back to Naval Station Norfolk.

For an unusually long period of time, beginning shortly before midnight on 20 May and ending after midnight 21 May, Scorpion was attempting to send radio traffic to Naval Station Rota in Spain but was only able to reach a Navy communications station in Nea Makri, Greece, which forwarded Scorpion's messages to SUBLANT. Six days later, she was reported overdue at Norfolk. Navy personnel suspected possible failure and launched a search.

THE SEARCH



**US NAVY PHOTO 1968 OF THE BOW SECTION OF SCORPION,
BY THE CREW OF BATHYSCAPHE TRIESTE II**

A public search was initiated, but without immediate success and on 5 June, Scorpion and her crew were declared “presumed lost.” Her name was struck from the Naval Vessel Register on 30 June. Some reports indicate that a large and secret search was launched three days before Scorpion was expected back from patrol; this, combined with other declassified information leads to speculation that the US Navy knew of the Scorpion's destruction before the public search was launched.[5]

The public search continued with a team of mathematical consultants led by Dr. John Craven, the Chief Scientist of the U.S. Navy's Special Projects Division. They employed the methods of Bayesian search theory, initially developed during the search for a hydrogen bomb lost off the coast of Palomares, Spain, in January 1966 in the Palomares B-52 crash. At the end of October, the Navy's oceanographic research ship, Mizar, located sections of the hull of Scorpion in more than 3,000 m (9,800 ft) of water about 740 km (400 nmi; 460 mi) southwest of the Azores.[6] This was after the Navy had released sound tapes from its underwater “SOSUS” listening system which contained the sounds of the destruction of Scorpion. Subsequently, the Court of Inquiry was reconvened, and other vessels, including the bathyscaphe Trieste II, were dispatched to the scene, collecting many pictures and other data.

Although Dr. Craven received much credit for locating the wreckage of Scorpion, Gordon Hamilton—an acoustics expert who pioneered the use of hydroacoustics to pinpoint Polaris missile splashdown locations—was instrumental not only in acquiring the acoustic signals that were used in locating the vessel, but also in analyzing those signals to provide a compact “search box” wherein the wreck of Scorpion was finally located. Hamilton had established a listening station in the Canary Islands, which obtained a clear signal of what some scientists believe was the noise of the vessel's pressure hull imploding as she passed below crush depth. A little-known Naval Research Laboratory scientist named Chester “Buck” Buchanan, using a towed camera sled of his own design aboard Mizar, finally located Scorpion after nearly six months of searching. The towed camera sled, which was fabricated by J.L. “Jac” Hamm of Naval Research Laboratory's Engineering Services Division, is currently housed in the U.S. Navy Museum, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, DC. (Buchanan had located the wrecked hull of Thresher in 1964 using this same technique.)

WRECKAGE

It would appear that the bow of Scorpion skidded upon impact with the globigerina ooze on the seafloor, digging a sizable trench which created a significant hazard for the Trieste II crews attempting to maneuver close to acquire photographs and assess the wreckage with their own eyes. Much of the operations compartment had disappeared, and most of the debris field was identified as coming from the operations compartment. The sail had been dislodged as the hull of the operations compartment upon which it perched disintegrated, and was lying on its port side. One of Scorpion's running lights was in the open position as if it had been on the surface at the time of the mishap, although it may have been left in the open position during the vessel's recent nighttime stop at Rota. One Trieste II pilot who dived on Scorpion said the shock of the implosion may have knocked the light into the open position.



THE AFT SECTION OF THE ENGINE ROOM HAD TELESCOPED FORWARD INTO THE LARGER-DIAMETER HULL SECTION.

OBSERVED DAMAGE

The secondary Navy investigation – using extensive photographic, video, and eyewitness inspections of the wreckage in 1969 – offered the opinion that Scorpion’s hull was crushed by implosion forces as it sank below crush depth. The Structural Analysis Group, which included Naval Ships Systems Command’s Submarine Structures director Peter Palermo, plainly saw that the torpedo room was intact, though it had been pinched from the operations compartment by massive hydrostatic pressure. The operations compartment itself was largely obliterated by sea pressure and the engine room had telescoped 50 ft (15 m) forward into the hull by collapse pressure, when the cone-to-cylinder transition junction failed between the auxiliary machine space and the engine room.

Palermo could not rule out sabotage or collision as “plausible” causes of destruction. Palermo writes that the position of the masts and other evidence possibly indicate Scorpion was near the surface “just prior to sinking.” However, other analysis in the COI concludes the damage to masts, antennas, and hoists is mere consequential damage from detachment of the sail and parting of the hydraulic piping. Palermo admits that a precursor signal that occurred some 22 minutes prior to the acoustic train left by the sinking “could have been the results of an internal explosion.” He further states that “some of the remaining 14 acoustic events do have some of the characteristics of explosions,” though he qualifies this by writing that such characteristics “may” also be attributed to other sources.

The only damage to the torpedo room compartment appeared to be a hatch missing from the forward escape trunk; Palermo pointed out that this would have occurred when water pressure entered the torpedo room at the moment of implosion. He also pointed out that the aft escape trunk hatch was open and the fairing was slightly dislodged, though it was still on its hinges. This conclusion was drawn by Palermo eighteen years after Scorpion was lost, when he reviewed new and extremely clear images taken by Jason Junior and Alvin as part of a Navy-Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution survey of Scorpion’s wreck site.

The submersible Alvin did take pictures of the inboard end of the propulsion shaft in 1986. However, the Navy kept this classified for many years and only recently revealed its existence. The picture shows that the locking lip has is gone. This lip was required to keep the shaft connected to the drive train in the bolted coupling. Cracking or shear of this lip is the root cause of the detachment of the shaft.

ACOUSTIC EVIDENCE

An extensive, year-long analysis of Gordon Hamilton’s hydroacoustic signals of the submarine’s demise was conducted by Robert Price, Ermine (Meri) Christian and Peter Sherman of the Naval Ordnance Laboratory. All three physicists were experts on undersea explosions, their sound signatures and destructive effects. Price was also an open critic of Dr. Craven. Their opinion, presented to the Navy as part of the Phase II investigation, was that the death noises likely occurred at 2,000 ft (610 m) when the hull failed. Fragments then continued in a free fall for another 9,000 ft (2,700 m). This appears to differ from conclusions drawn by Dr. Craven and Hamilton, who pursued an independent set of experiments as part of the same Phase II probe, demonstrating that alternate interpretations of the hydroacoustic signals were possibly based on the submarine’s depth at the time it was stricken and other operational conditions. The Structural Analysis Group (SAG) findings argue an explosive event is unlikely, and are highly dismissive of Craven and Hamilton’s tests. The SAG physicists argued that the absence of a bubble pulse, which invariably occurs in an underwater explosion, is absolute evidence that no torpedo explosion occurred outside or inside the hull of the Scorpion. It should also be pointed out that the massive hull of the Russian submarine Kursk emitted a huge bubble pulse when its torpedoes detonated at the time of its loss on 12 Aug 2000. Craven had attempted to prove Scorpion’s hull could “swallow” the bubble pulse of a torpedo detonation by having Gordon Hamilton detonate small charges next to steel, air-filled containers. The real-world example of the Kursk which was ripped open by hydrogen peroxide-fueled torpedoes, had a pressure hull twice the size of Scorpion’s, handily indicating even its massive and strong hull could not absorb the bubble pulse since its own bubble pulse signal exited its hull and was transmitted to geophones across Europe.

The 1970 Naval Ordnance “Letter”, the intensive acoustics study of Scorpion destruction sounds by Price and

Christian, was a supporting study within the SAG report. In its Conclusions and Recommendations section, the NOL acoustic study states:

The first SCORPION acoustic event was not caused by a large explosion, either internal or external to the hull. The probable depth of occurrence...and the spectral characteristics of the signal support this. In fact, it is unlikely that any of the Scorpion acoustic events were caused by explosions.

The Naval Ordnance Laboratory based much of its findings on an extensive acoustic analysis of the torpedoing and sinking of Sterlet in the Pacific in early 1969, seeking to compare its acoustic signals to those generated by Scorpion. Price, a critic of Craven and Hamilton's analysis of the sounds emitted by Scorpion, found the Navy's scheduled sinking of Sterlet fortuitous. Nonetheless, Sterlet was a small World War II-era diesel-electric submarine of a vastly different design and construction from Scorpion with regard to its pressure hull and other characteristics. Its sinking resulted in three identifiable acoustic signals as compared to Scorpion's 15, something Price could not adequately explain. The mathematical calculations Price used to arrive at his analysis—and dispute some of Craven and Hamilton's conclusions—remain unknown to the public.

When completed, the NOL acoustics study of Sterlet and Scorpion sinking sounds provided a highly debated explanation as to how Scorpion may have reached its crush depth by anecdotally referring to the uncontrolled and nearly fatal dive of the diesel submarine Chopper in January 1969:

Piecing together all the information (or suggestions) we can glean from the analysis of the hydroacoustic data, the photographs of the wreckage of SCORPION and THRESHER, and the results of the STERLET acoustic measurements, we believe the sequence of occurrences outlined below is a plausible description of what might have happened when Scorpion sank. 6.1 (Redacted) SOME UNKNOWN INCIDENT OR CHAIN OF INCIDENTS CAUSED THE SCORPION TO SINK OUT OF CONTROL. The February 1969 USS Chopper (SS-342) mishap is an example of loss of electrical power in a submarine. It was followed by corrective action, initiation of which was delayed almost to the fatal limit by a combination of failures. Fortunately the plunge of the ship towards the bottom was halted (redacted) just before the hull reached collapse depth and the ship was able to surface, though not under control and with some damage caused by excessive pressure.

In the same May 2003 N77 letter excerpted above (see 1. with regard to the Navy's view of a forward explosion), however, the following statement appears to dismiss the NOL theory, and again unequivocally point the finger toward an explosion forward:

The Navy has extensively investigated the loss of Scorpion through the initial court of inquiry and the 1970 and 1987 reviews by the Structural Analysis Group. Nothing in those investigations caused the Navy to change its conclusion that an unexplained catastrophic event occurred.

SECRECY

At the time of her sinking, there were 99 crewmen aboard Scorpion. The boat contained highly sophisticated spy gear and spy manuals, two nuclear-tipped torpedoes, and a nuclear propulsion system. The best available evidence indicates that Scorpion sank in the Atlantic Ocean on 22 May 1968 at approximately 1844Z (Zulu time; see UTC) while in transit across the Atlantic Ocean from Gibraltar to her home port at Norfolk, Virginia.

Several hypotheses about the cause of the loss have been advanced. Some have suggested that hostile action by a Soviet submarine caused Scorpion's loss. Shortly after her sinking, the Navy assembled a Court of Inquiry to investigate the incident and to publish a report about the likely causes for the sinking. The court was presided over by Vice Admiral Bernard Austin, who had presided over the inquiry into the loss of Thresher. The panel's conclusions, first printed in 1968, were largely classified. At the time, the Navy quoted frequently from a portion of the 1968 report that said no one is likely ever to "conclusively" determine the cause of the loss. The Clinton administration declassified most of this report in 1993, and it was then that the public first learned that the panel considered that a possible cause was the malfunction of one of Scorpion's own torpedoes. (The panel qualified its opinion, saying the evidence it had available could not lead to a conclusive finding about the cause of her sinking.) However, the Court of Inquiry did not reconvene after the 1969 Phase II investigation, and did not take testimony from a group of submarine designers, engineers and physicists who spent nearly a year evaluating the data.[citation needed]

PRESENT LOCATION

Today, the wreck of Scorpion is reported to be resting on a sandy seabed at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean in approximately 3,000 m (9,800 ft) of water. The site is reported to be approximately 400 nmi (740 km) southwest of the Azores Islands, on the eastern edge of the Sargasso Sea. The actual position is 32°54.9'N, 33°08.89'W.

[7] The U.S. Navy has acknowledged that it periodically visits the site to conduct testing for the release of nuclear materials from the nuclear reactor or the two nuclear weapons aboard her, and to determine whether the wreckage has been disturbed. The Navy has not released any information about the status of the wreckage, except for a few photographs taken of the wreckage in 1968, and again in 1985 by deep water submersibles.

The Navy has also released information about the nuclear testing performed in and around the Scorpion site. The Navy reports no significant release of nuclear material from the sub. The 1985 photos were taken by a team of oceanographers working for the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Woods Hole, Massachusetts.

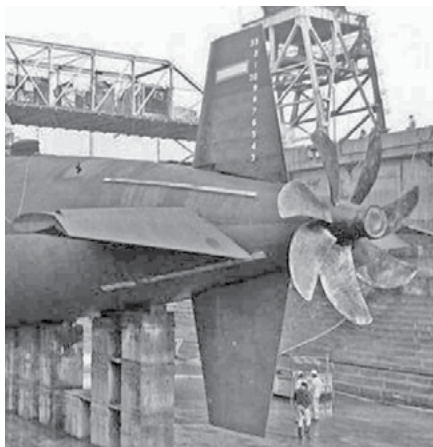
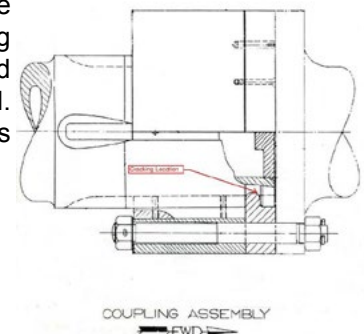
ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The U.S. Navy has periodically monitored the environmental conditions of the site since the sinking and has reported the results in an annual public report on environmental monitoring for U.S. nuclear-powered ships and boats. The reports provide specifics on the environmental sampling of sediment, water, and marine life that is done to ascertain whether the submarine has significantly affected the deep-ocean environment. The reports also explain the methodology for conducting this deep sea monitoring from both surface vessels and submersibles. The monitoring data confirm that there has been no significant effect on the environment. The nuclear fuel aboard the submarine remains intact and no uranium in excess of levels expected from the fallout from past atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons has been detected by the Navy's inspections. In addition, Scorpion carried two nuclear-tipped Mark 45 anti-submarine torpedoes (ASTOR) when she was lost. The warheads of these torpedoes are part of the environmental concern. The most likely scenario is that the plutonium and uranium cores of these weapons corroded to a heavy, insoluble material soon after the sinking, and they remain at or close to their original location inside the torpedo room of the boat. If the corroded materials were released outside the submarine, their large specific gravity and insolubility would cause them to settle down into the sediment.

SHAFT DETACHMENT

Very little has ever been documented on why the propulsion shaft is out of the boat. The 29 foot long shaft and its attached propeller lie in the debris field.[8]

There is a mechanical hub and bolt coupling arrangement that holds the shaft in place and connects it to the drive flange of the ship's propulsion system. This coupling is of rigid design and does not tolerate flexing forces. The picture of the shaft end clearly shows that the locking lip is gone from the major diameter of the shaft end. This ligament is very susceptible to fatigue failure and crack propagation along its root. Such a structural failure will release the shaft from the coupling.



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO OUR FLEET ADMIRALS?

Many volumes have been written about the exploits of our Fleet Admirals during World War II, but little about their post-war accomplishments.

Congress approved the rank of Fleet Admiral on December 14, 1944 but authorized the grade for only four officers of each service, i.e., four for the Army and four for the Navy. Their primary requirement was that the new rank be junior to Dewey's rank of "ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET" which he received for his 1898 victory in Manila Bay. Congress further provided the ranks would terminate six months after the secession of hostilities, however, Congress eventually ruled the rank to be a lifetime appointment with full pay and allowances. Terms such as "Arch Admiral" were rejected because they sounded too much like a religious designation.



The first to receive five stars on December 15, 1944 was Admiral William Leahy (1875-1959), FDR's Military Advisor and Chief of Staff. Leahy first retired in 1937 and served a Governor of Puerto Rico and Vichy France. He was recalled by Roosevelt in 1942 and served as White House, Chief of Staff. In 1949 Truman asked Admiral Leahy to resign. Upon his second retirement he served in a naval advisory capacity and wrote his memoirs "I Was There." Leahy died in July 1959 at the age of 84 and is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Next to advance to Fleet Admiral was Admiral Earnest King (1878-1956) on December 17, 1944. He is remembered by the submarine community as having designed the submarine dolphin insignia. After writing his memoirs in 1952 his life came to a painful and pathetic end on June 25, 1956. He chose internment not at Arlington National Cemetery, but the U.S. Naval Academy Cemetery. His wife Mattie would join him in 1969.



Next to "Fleet Up" was Admiral Chester Nimitz on December 19, 1944. Upon retirement in 1947 he settled in Berkley, Ca. He became a roving Ambassador, a Regent at the University of California and a member of the Bohemian Club. He was offered the UCLA presidency and Director of American President Lines but declined both. He founded the National Museum of the Pacific in Texas. In 1964 he suffered a serious fall and moved to the naval facilities at Yerba Buena in San Francisco bay. He was our last surviving Fleet Admiral. When he passed away on Feb. 20, 1966 there was a 100-car motorcade, a 70-plane fly over and a 19 gun salute. He and his wife would be buried in the Golden Gate Cemetery beside his longtime shipmates Spruance, Turner and Lockwood and their wives.



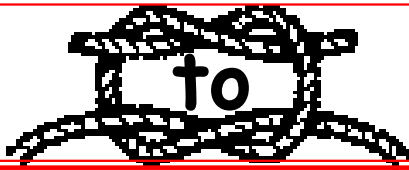
Last to receive five stars was Admiral William "Bull" Halsey on December 11, 1945 a year after the end of World War II. His appointment came from President Truman who recalled him to active duty to promote him. At the end of the war, Halsey requested immediate retirement. He settled in New York and served on the Boards of ITT and American Cable and Radio Corp. through 1957.

On August 15, 1959 while vacationing on Fishers Island off Mystic Connecticut he suffered a fatal heart attack, He was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors.

The five Army generals to be advanced in order were George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, Dwight Eisenhower and Hap Arnold. Additionally, Hap was the only five star Air Force General and the only General to hold the rank in two branches of the service, Army and Air Force.



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
or
7011 West Risner Road
Glendale, AZ 85308.



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

A FADING MEMORY OF MY YOUTHFUL NAVY DAYS

Cold War Submariner memories by an old salt wearing dolphins.

I had a pair of working Khakis with acid holes in the legs. As "George" the junior officer on the Carp, I had a bunk right under the battery blowers, and they dripped sulfuric acid, especially during battery charges on the finishing rate. You could always tell when the charge was over, the blowers would slow down real fast. Ah, the good old days. Now I remember how I lost my sense of smell.

One of the benefits of growing old is the gift of time . . . time to look back and revisit your collective 'Life Experiences.' For old smokeboat sailors, that means time to shuffle through memories of pissing against the wind in faded soft dungarees, frayed rag hats and zinc chromate-spattered brogans.

You can close your eyes and be transported back to a time when men wore acid-eaten uniforms, breathed air worse than the primate house at a poorly managed zoo, whittled mold and rot off food of advanced age being reclaimed by the gods of purification, and surgically carving off the stuff and eating it. You survived and built up an immunity that could handle leprosy, lockjaw and cobra bites.

We survived! Submarine duty was rough! Many of us "hot bunked." For those of you who missed that life experience, hot bunking was sharing sleeping arrangements (to put it in easily understood terms). A system that required lads at the entry level of the undersea service profession, to crawl on top of a sweat-soaked Flash Covered bunk just vacated by another bottom-feeding shipmate. Lads of today's modern technically advanced undersea service would find it damn near impossible to imagine a day when lads who hadn't showered in weeks, climbed a tier of racks sharing with his bunkmates sock aroma on par with three-day old road kill.

A time when rag hats communally shared blankets that looked like hobo camp hand-me-downs. It was a time when the common denominator of the naval supply system was the cockroach, with the longevity of Jack LaLanne. Cockroaches that could deflect claw-hammered blows and could reach rodeo entry size.

In the late 50's, the submarines built in the years of World War II were rapidly approaching an advanced age of a near comatose state. The navy quit making many of the replacement parts for these seagoing antiques, so we cannibalized the boats in line heading to the scrap yard. It was like harvesting organs from a dead Rockette to keep the chorus line going. After decommissioning, the old boats would have electricians and enginemen crawling all over them with shopping lists and wrenches.

Memory is a wonderful God-given gift. There were sunrises and sunsets, rolling seas, visits to exotic places, and ladies with loose panty elastic and no AIDS. There were consumable combustibles on par with the liquids that propel hardware to outer space. It was a time when the world's population loved the American submariner. Boat sailors in port meant good times, hell-raising and calling in the night shift at the local brewery. It was a time when the United States Navy had no recruitment problems, paid no incentive money and had to kiss no butts to entice grown men into accepting their manly obligation to their nation.

Men signed up for undersea service, motivated by patriotic obligation, a sense of history and adventure, and to follow the gallant submariners who rode the boats against the Japanese empire. We wanted to wear the distinctive insignia universally recognized as the symbol of the most successful and demanding submarine service on earth. We were proud. We had a right to be. We were accepted as the down line fraternity brothers of the courageous men who put Hirohito's monkey band all over the floor of the Pacific.

We rode their boats, ate at their mess tables, slept in their bunks and plugged the ever-increasing leaks in the hulls they left us. We patted the same barmaid butts they had patted when they were far younger and half as wide. We carved our boats names and hull numbers on gin mill tables in places that would give Methodist ministers cardiac arrest. We danced with the devil's mistress and all her naughty daughters. We were young, testosterone-driven American bluejackets and let's face it. Every girl in every port establishment around the globe both recognized and appreciated the meaning of a pair of Dolphins over a jumper pocket. Many of these ladies were willing to share smiles and body warmth with the members of America's undersea service.

It was a time when the snapping of American colors in the ports of the world stood for liberation from tyranny and the American sailor in his distinctive uniform and happy-go-lucky manner, stood for John Wayne principles and a universally recognized sense of decency, high ideals and uncompromised values. It was in every sense of the term, "A great time to be an American sailor." There were few prohibitions. They were looked upon as simply unnecessary. It was a time when 'family values' were taught at family dinner tables, at schools, the nation's playing fields, scout troops, Sunday school or other institutions of worship. We were a good people and we knew it. We plowed the world's oceans guarding her sea lanes and making her secure for the traffic of international commerce. But at eighteen, let's face it, we never thought much about the noble aspect of what we were doing. Crews looked forward to the next liberty port, the next run, home port visits, what the boat was having for evening chow, the evening movie after chow, or which barmaids were working at Bell's that evening.

We were young, invincible and had our whole lives ahead of us. Without being aware of it, we were learning leadership, acceptance of responsibility and teamwork in the finest classroom in the world: a United States submarine. It was a simpler time. Lack of complexity left us with clear-cut objectives and the "bad guys" were clearly defined. We knew who they were, where they were and that we had the means, will and ability to send them all off to hell in a fiery package deal. We were the "good guys" and literally wore "white hats."

What we lacked in crew comfort, technological advancements and publicity, we made up for in continuity, stability and love of our boats and squadrons. We were a band of brothers and have remained so for over half a century. Since we were not riding what the present day submariner would call "true submersibles," we got sunrises and sunsets at sea; the sting of wind-blown saltwater on our faces; the roll and pitch of heavy weather swells and the screech of seabirds.

I can't imagine sea duty devoid of contact with these wonders. To me, they are a very real part of being a true mariner. I'm glad I served in an era of signal lights, flag messaging, navigation calculation, Marines manning the gates, locker clubs, working girls, hitchhiking in uniform, quartermasters, torpedomen and gunner's mates. Sea store smokes, hot bunking, hydraulic oil-laced coffee, lousy mid rats, jackassing fish from the skids to the tubes, one and two way trash dumping, plywood dog shacks and messy piers. A time when the Chief of the Boat could turn up at morning quarters wearing a Mexican sombrero and Jeezus sandals. When every E-3 in the sub force knew what paint scrapers, chipping hammers and wire brushes were for.

When jg's with a pencil were the most dangerous things in the navy. When the navy mobile canteen truck was called the 'roach coach' and sold geedunk and pogeys. When the breakfast of champions was a pitcher of Blue Ribbon, four Slim Jims, a pack of Beer Nuts, a hard-boiled egg, and a game of Eight Ball. It was a time when, if you saw a boatsailor with more than four ship's patches on his foul weather jacket, he was at least fifty

years old and a lifer. A time when skippers wore hydraulic oil-stained steaming hats and carried a wad of binocular wipes in their shirt pockets.

In those days, old barnacle-encrusted chiefs had more body fat than a Hell's Angel, smoked big, fat, lousy smelling cigars or 'chawed plug', and came with a sewer digger's vocabulary. It was a time where heterosexuals got married to members of the opposite sex or patronized 'working girls', and non-heterosexuals joined the Peace Corps. It was a good time. For some of us, the best time we would ever have. There was a certain satisfaction to be found in serving one's country without the nation you so dearly loved having to promise you enlistment bonuses, big whopping education benefits, feather bed shore duty, or an 'A' school with a sauna and color TV. It was a time when if you told a cook you didn't eat Spam or creamed chipped beef, everybody laughed and you went away hungry... And if you cussed a messcook, you could find toenail clippings in your salad.

Our generation visited cemeteries where legends of World War II undersea service were issued their grass blankets, after receiving their pine peacoats and orders to some old hull number moored at the big silver pier in the sky. We were family. Our common heritage made us brothers. There came a point where we drew a line through our names on the Watch, Quarter and Station Bill, told our shipmates we see them in hell, shook hands with the COB, paid back the slush fund, told the skipper 'goodbye', and picked up a disbursing chit and your DD-214. We went up on Hampton Boulevard, bought a couple of rounds at Bells, kissed the barmaids, gave Thelma a hug, then went out to spend the rest of our lives wishing we could hear, "Single up all lines...", just one more time.

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NEXT BASE MEETING
is not until June!
May 11 is the Base Picnic
White Tanks Regional Park