



November 2006
Volume 12 - Issue 11



<http://perch-base.org>

**What's "Below Decks"
in the Midwatch**

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Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

NOVEMBER ETERNAL PATROLS

USS Albacore	SS218	Nov. 7, 1944	86 men
USS Growler	SS215	Nov. 8, 1944	85 men
USS Scamp	SS277	Nov. 9, 1944	84 men
USS Corvina	SS226	Nov. 16, 1943	82 men
USS Sculpin	SS191	Nov. 19, 1943	63 men
USS Capelin	SS289	Nov. 23, 1943	78 men

**Next Regular Meeting -
Nov. 18, 2006
American Legion Post #105
3534 W Calavar Rd.**

The Perch Base USSVI is not able to totally support itself financially on the dues collected from its members. There has, to date, been no successful and ongoing plan since the base was formed to produce any other steady and effective source of income. Therefore, the Base has relied on additional donations from members -- usually given at membership renewal -- for its survival. Listed below are those charitable givers, known as the Booster Club.



2006 Booster Club



A. H. "Bob" Nance	Adrian Stuke	Alan Miller	Billy Grieves
Bradley L. Butler	Bruce "Robie" Robinson	Butch DeShong	Charles Greene
Dave Harnish	David Carpenter	Doug LaRock	Edgar Brooks
Chuck Emmett	Joseph Hawkins	Edward J. Hawkins	Emil Schoonejans
F.J. "Ted" Asbell	Frank Rumbaugh	Gary Bartlett	George L. Crider
George Long	George Petrovitz	Glenn Herold	Harold C. Lister
Harry Heller	Jack R. McCarthy	James Denzien	James L. Wall
James W. Newman	Jerry N. Allston	Jim Nelson	John Cash
John Messersmith	John T. Hellem	John Zaichkin	Joseph Bernard
Kenneth Becker	Kenneth R. Anderson	L. A. "Mike" Keating	Lester Hillman
Mel Rycus	Paul V. Miller	Ray Samson	Raymond Marshall
Raymond Schaeffer	Reynaldo Atos	Richard Bernier	Richard Simmons
Robert A. Lancendorfer	Joe Oreteba	Robert Lents	Robert May
Roger Cousin	Roger M. Miller	Roger R. Miller	Ron Kloch
Ronald Beyer	Royce Pettitt	Stanley Rud	George Debo
Stephen Hough	Terry Martin	W. Scott Prothero	William L. McNay
Wayne K. Smith	Wayne Braastad	Walter Blomgren	Tim Moore
Thomas Moore	Stan Reinhold	Ronald Zomok	Robert Hanson
Ray Lee Graybeal	Milton Magart	Mike Simpson	Larry M. Rankin
Kenny Wayne	Ken Schonauer	Joseph R. Mullins	Jim Thomson
Jerry Yowell	James Edwards	Jack S. Kimball	Harry Ellis
Edward Wolf	Davy Jones	Darrell Lambert	Clair E. Prokupek
Buck Crouch	Joe Errante	Bob Gilmore	George Marions
Burtis Loftin	Layne Rumbaugh	Denny Kerton	Scott Fraser
Gerald Holloway	Nick Pappas	Wayne Pettes	John M. Welsh
Al Landeck			



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Sailing Orders



**Next Regular Meeting
Nov. 18, 2006**

**American Legion Post #105
3534 W Calavar Rd.
Phoenix, AZ**

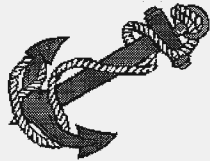
***Special Guest Speaker
See Page 5***

**PERCH BASE ANNUAL
AWARDS BANQUET**

**Dec. 9, 2006,
1730 hours to 2200 hours
LUKE AFB
"DESERT STAR"
ENLISTED CLUB
(see next page for details)**



Sailing Orders



(Continued)

PERCH BASE ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

DECEMBER 9, 2006, 1730 HOURS TO 2200 HOURS

LUKE AFB DESERT STAR ENLISTED CLUB

DRESS CODE CASUAL

COST PER PERSON \$20.00

(Note: this covers meal and door prices cost)

MENU

Tossed Greens, Tomatoes and Cucumbers with Ranch Dressing
Sliced London broil Au Jus with Roasted New Potatoes and Chef's Vegetables

OR

Roasted Stuffed Chicken Breast with Mushroom Gravy, Rice Pilaf and
Chef's Vegetables

Sensational Sweets Peanut Butter Pie, Freshly Baked Rolls with Butter
Coffee, Tea or Water

No Host Bar 1730 to 2200 with dinner served at 1900. There will be a Cheese and Cracker plate available during the cocktail hour 1730 to 1900.

ALL RESERVATIONS NAMES, ADDRESSES AS THEY APPEAR ON YOUR PHOTO ID, MUST BE INTO DAVE HARNISH NLT DECEMBER 1, 2006 WITH PAYMENT IN ORDER TO ENSURE YOU AND GUEST NAMES AND ADDRESSES ARE ON THE ENTERANCE LIST THAT HAS TO BE SUPPLIED TO THE BASE SECURITY.

Please make checks payable to PERCH BASE and send to Dave Harnish with your menu selection at:

Dave Harnish
6509 West Devonshire Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85033-3350
623-846-0367

Email reservations will be acceptable to daveharnish@cox.net. Payment must be made prior to December 2, 2006. Payments and reservations can be made by mail to the above address.

Reservations are limited so please make your reservations early. There will be dancing following the dinner and awards ceremony.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Shipmates:

I hope that you all can join us for the November meeting on Saturday, Nov. 18, 2006. We will be having a special presentation by LCDR Steve Smith, USN (Ret.), a gentleman I had the good fortune of meeting a couple of months ago. Steve will be making a PowerPoint presentation and discussing some of the highlights from his naval career. The following is a brief biography to introduce Steve to you. I hope to see you on the 18th.

Fraternally,

Tim Moore, Commander, Perch Base

LCDR STEVE SMITH, USN (Ret.) BIO

LCDR Smith (Steve) was born in East Islip, New York and enlisted in the Navy in 1980. During his twelve years of enlisted service, LCDR Smith served on at NPTU Idaho, and onboard USS Henry Clay (SSBN-625) and SUBMARINE NR-1 and earned the enlisted submarine warfare insignia, Fleet Ballistic Missile patrol pin (w/ 5 gold stars), silver deep submergence insignia, and Second class diver pin. On February 1, 1992, Chief Machinist mate Smith received his commission as an Ensign through the Limited Duty Officer (Mustang) program.

Upon receiving his commission, Ensign Smith reported to the Naval reactors Field Office at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard as a Technical Assistant. During his tour, he supervised the Shipyard's successful efforts in the first overhaul of USS OHIO (SSBN-726) and USS MICHIGAN (SSBN-727) and the shipyard repair periods of other ships and submarines, including the USS PARCHE (SSN-683).

Upon completion of his tour at the Naval Reactors Field Office in June 1996, LT Smith reported as the Assistant Radiological Controls Officer onboard USS MCKEE (AS-41) homeported in San Diego, CA. During his tour MCKEE successfully completed seven major inspections and assisted the standup of the new regional maintenance organization. While onboard, he qualified Surface Warfare Officer and was promoted to Lieutenant Commander.

In October 1999, LCDR Smith reported to Naval Submarine Support Facility, New London as the Radiological Controls Officer. While in New London he led the command through the integration of Electric Boat Corporation into the new Nuclear Regional Maintenance Department.

In January 2003, LCDR Smith reported to the staff of Submarine Development Squadron Five as the Material and Readiness Officer. During his tour he established Detachment San Diego, as part of the Squadron's relocation to Bangor, Washington.

In June 2004, LCDR Smith assumed command of DSRV-1 MYSTIC, the Navy's only submarine rescue vehicle, homeported at Naval Air Station North Island, in Coronado, California. While in command MYSTIC completed over 40 open water mating evolutions. She established logistical

(continued next page)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(continued)

support for the Swedish submarine HMwS Gotland as part of an international ASW support agreement, and participated in the US Navy's flyaway support of the successful rescue of the Russian submersible, PRIS, in August 2005.

LCDR Smith retired on October 1, 2005 and is authorized to wear the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Award (three awards), Navy Achievement Medal (two awards), and Command at Sea insignia. He is married to the former Diane Smith of Griswold, Iowa and resides in Chandler Arizona.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

This announcement is to pass along a special thank you and some much deserved *special recognition* to those of you who participated in "The Dust Bowl 2006" event. For those of you who attended, you know what I mean. The venue for the Goodyear Balloon & Air Classic left something to be desired to say the least. While the Blue Angels air show was awesome, our booths were in a dirt field with absolutely no dust control. We were successful in attracting several submarine veterans to our booth which will hopefully result in some new memberships. Those who volunteered and assisted are as follows:

JIM DENZIEN	STAN REINHOLD
DAVE ANDERSON	HIROMI POVIO
ED HAWKINS	JACKIE HAWKINS
JIM NELSON	NANCY NELSON
BEN ACOSTA	BOB GILMORE
WAYNE PETTES	GEORGE DEBO
DAVY JONES	CHUCK EMMETT
HOWARD DOYLE	



I want to add that there may have been a couple of spouses that were not on my final roster who showed up and assisted. If I have missed posting your names, or anyone else for that matter, please accept my most sincere apology for the oversight. Again my sincere gratitude and many thanks for your assistance.

Tim Moore, Commander, Perch Base, USSVI

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(continued)

Changes of Address

If you have had an address change, please make sure the information gets updated on the USSVI data base. If you do not have updated mailing information you will not receive future issues of the **American Submariner** and are at risk of not receiving other important USSVI and local base mailings. Currently it is costing the magazine over \$3000.00 a year for returned mail because members have not been submitting **Changes of Address** or making the magazine aware of **Snowbird Status**. Addresses from all returned mail will be removed from the mailing list. You can update your information through the USSVI website or ask for assistance from your base membership chair. Don't get dropped from the *American Submariner* mailing list... keep your personal mailing information up to date so you can keep current on all future mailings.

Perch Base Inducts New Holland Club Member



Don't miss the November Base meeting (Nov. 18) for a Holland Club induction ceremony

"The requirement's for membership in the Holland Club is determined by Section 5 of the USSVI Constitution. Basically a member must be qualified 50 or more years, and is either, a life member and a member in good standing for one year, or an annual member in good standing for 5 consecutive years."



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(continued)

*** MIDWATCH NEWSLETTER ***

Article Submission Deadlines

The deadlines for the next three Midwatch newsletters are as follows:

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
December 2006	Friday, Dec. 1st
January 2007	Friday, Jan. 5th
February 2007	Friday, Feb. 2nd

Please submit your articles by the deadlines indicated to make sure your articles are included and to assure the timely publication and distribution of the Midwatch. Thank you.

Fraternally,

Tim Moore, Commander, Perch Base USSVI



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, may I have your attention please.....

Your SubVettes organization is establishing a Kay E. Harnish Memorial Scholarship fund, to perpetuate her wonderful life and legacy to our local and national membership.

At this point we cannot offer a tax deduction, but hopefully we can at a later date.

Any donations will go toward any young ladies, deemed worthy of this award, so please be generous. Make any checks to the "SubVettes of Perch Base" and in the memo area, note that the funds are for Kay's Scholarship fund.

Please mail your heart-felt donations to:

Hiromi Povio, Treasurer
P.O. Box 815
Peoria, AZ 85380-0815

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS!

(continued)

Keeping your USSVI Membership Records up to date

Every member of USSVI with internet access has the opportunity to visit our all-new USSVI.ORG website and review their own personal information on file.

To do this:

1. Go to "ussvi.org"
2. Click on the LOG IN button on the left side of the page
3. Click on the button that says "Apply for your Login Password"
4. Answer the questions (so the system knows you are a current member) and you will receive your login and password immediately.
5. Then click on the "My Profile" button in the upper left corner and verify everything appearing there (Click on all seven tabs above the blue bar) is correct and complete.

If anything needs to be corrected, click on the UPDATE PROFILE button in the upper left corner. As you work through the "Tabs", be sure to click the "Save changes made to this page" button at the bottom.

Virtually every base has a membership chair webmaster for this system, so those without internet access should contact that person (ask your base commander who it is) and give them the info to update.

Special Note About "Boats and Crews": On the left side of the **USSVI.ORG** home page you will see a **BOATS AND CREWS** button. Every US Submarine ever built is listed here, along with all her crewmen that USSVI is aware of. Just click on the "Find a Boat" button and enter in its 3 digit hull number to find the boat. Everybody, even non USSVI member subvets, will find something of interest here and, who knows, maybe you'll find a long lost buddy!

Any problems or questions, contact NJVC Patrick Householder at householderp@comcast.net Your comments and suggestions are always welcome.



From the Wardroom

Happy Thanksgiving!

Dear Shipmates,

As we quickly approach the Holiday Season and the end of the year, let us not forget that this is the month of Thanksgiving and we have a great deal for which to be thankful. First, we are celebrating Veteran's Day which commemorates all who have served and that most certainly includes you. As always we need to be especially thankful for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and what they gave for us. And our heartfelt thanks go out to those who continue to serve in harms way today and preserve our way of life. We need to keep them in our prayers and wish them a quick and safe return home to be with their loved ones. The Holiday Season will be especially difficult for them as I am sure many of you remember having had to spend holidays away from families and loved ones.

As you know, we did not have a regular monthly meeting in October. Instead we participated in the Goodyear Balloon and Air Classic. I want to thank all of you who volunteered; your assistance is greatly appreciated. Please see the Special Recognition announcement on page 6 of this newsletter. Our goal was to get the attention of the public and hopefully attract some new members. We did generate some interest, attracted some submarine veterans and hopefully we will see some positive results soon by getting some new members.

I would be remiss if I didn't pass along my sincere thanks and gratitude to Ben Acosta and Howard Doyle for their dedication and organization in putting together this year's Veteran's Day Parade program. There is a great deal of planning and preparation that goes on behind the scenes to put this event together. A number of other shipmates have volunteered their time to work on the float as well as participating in the parade, driving vehicles and providing assistance to make this event a success. Also, our SubVettes organization who are always there supporting our activities, oftentimes without the appropriate recognition and thanks. Lastly, I want to recognize Sandy Headrick who is there for us every year for this event as well as many other Palo Verde volunteers who participate and support the Submarine Veterans and the Veteran's Day Parade. **Thank You All Very Much!**

I sincerely hope you all have a **Very Happy Thanksgiving!**

Fraternally,

Tim Moore, Commander, Perch Base USSVI



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Storekeeper:

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 Heber, AZ 85928
 (928) 535 3388

**White
 Mountain**



Base

OUR CREED:

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 Government.



**September
 2006**

Meeting Minutes - Sep. 2006

Members present for the August 2006 meeting were: Jim Clewett, Phil Caster, Armand DePrins, Frank Nagle, Charles Jones, Steve Day, Ken Shade, Richard Jarenski and Buck Biddle

The meeting was called to order at 1109 hours with a prayer, invocation, Tolling of the Bell, Pledge of Allegiance, and reading of Our Creed. There were no guests present. The August minutes were read and a motion was made, seconded and passed to accept. There is \$3,688.29 in the base treasury, most of which is for next year's Golf Tournament.

Ken Shade reported that there are two options for the Christmas party. The first option is at the Elk's Club where we can rent a separate room for \$300 or join the members for \$7 per person for a steak dinner. The second option is to hold the party at the Snowflake El Rancho Restaurant where we would have a choice of turkey, steak, or Mexican dinner (pricing would depend on the number of people attending). A motion was made, seconded, and passed to hold the Christmas Party at the El Rancho Restaurant in Snowflake. Let Jim know before the October meeting (October 21st - Heber American Legion) if you are interested and (approximately) how many people you will be bringing.

The snack bar at the Snowflake Golf Course will be closing for the winter. A motion was made, seconded, and passed to see if we can have a meeting there. The November meeting may be at the Show Low VFW. Ski proposed being a Gold Sponsor for the American Submariner magazine. This would mean that our base would pay \$100 per year to have 3 copies of the magazine sent to four different places. A motion was made, seconded and passed to be a Gold Sponsor and have our four places be: Navopache Electric Co-op, the USS Arizona Memorial, the S.A.F.E. House, and the Show Low VA Clinic.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to have the 2007 Golf Tournament at the Snowflake Golf Course on the second Saturday in June (June 9th), with the entrance fee at \$60 per person. Members were urged to start pursuing hole sponsors now (\$100 per hole) – many businesses will be finalizing their budgets by the end of the year and will need to have the money allocated for charitable donations by then.

Base and National dues are due by 1 January 2007 (\$20 National, \$10 Base). All officers were re-elected to their posts.

Put your 2007 Submarine calendars on order now – call Buck Biddle. Ski won the 50/50 drawing and donated the winnings to buy a flower for a drawing at the Christmas party for a female guest.

The meeting was adjourned at 1215 hours with a closing prayer.

USSVI National Scholarships

The USSVI National Scholarship Committee is now issuing the call for all high school seniors and current college students to apply to the USSVI Scholarship Program. We are proud to announce there will be a minimum of 18 scholarships of which two will be worth \$1500 each in memory of Past National Commanders John Fredericks and Steve Russo, six \$1,250 scholarships and 11 \$950 scholarships divided between the two groups. There will be additional scholarships, which will depend on the donations we receive through the next year.

To all our new Bases Commanders in the last year or so, our organization has a scholarship program that is design to give some help in paying the college fees, books, lab fees and board and room. We offer, as much scholarship money as there is money available from the shipmates and bases that do the donating. Last year we handed out ONE \$1,500 scholarship in memory of a Past National Commander and SIX \$1,250 scholarships in honor of three bases. The Bases donated the money (two bases are in memory of a base shipmate) and one from the Officer Wives' Club of Pearl Harbor, HI. In addition we also gave out twenty-two \$950 scholarships between the two groups. Scholarship recipients are selected on financial need, academic and extra-curricular achievement, recommendations and expression of a 400-word essay. All areas are scored by each of the USSVI Scholarship Board members. In case of ties the financial needs will be the tiebreaker.

Eligibility is as follows: the student's sponsor "Must be a member in Good Standing" at a base or a member-at-large (MAL). The sponsor must be "qualified in submarines" or been a "relief crew member" in USSV WWII group. The student can be the son or daughter, stepchildren, grand children, or a court appointed to a guardian of the sponsor.

The Sponsor must be a member of a base or "member at large" (MAL) in "good standing". Each sponsor's standing will be verified by the National office on or about 20 April 2007. Last year we had several sponsors who did not join and there child application was pulled while the board was in session. Also two sponsors were members but their base did not get the monthly report into the National office on time and were almost pulled.

The parent of the sponsor will supply a copy of the previous year (2006) 1040 tax form signed. If it is not signed, it will be returned for signature. The Scholarship Chairman is the only person who will see the tax form and a test your financial records. If the parent wants them returned please state that and it will be return gladly other wise the will be destroyed upon announcing the winners for the scholarship in August 2007.

Application request will be taken up till March 15, 2007 and must be returned to the scholarship chairman, postmarked by April 15, 2007.

The scholarship can be requested in two ways:

1. You can send me your address by email at hogan343@aol.com or by snail mail and tell me if you are a high school senior or a college student. This is important as I sent you a hint sheet, which directs you what we are looking for and filling out the application correctly the first time.
2. Down load from the web page at www.ussvi.org, then highlight scholarship and follow the instructions. You will need Adobe acrobat to download.

My address is:

Paul Orstad
30 Surrey Lane
Norwich, CT 06360-6541.

Any questions please feel free to call me at (860) 889-4750 or (860) 334-6457 and I will be happy to answer.


Individuals, bases or organizations can make donations (or sponsor fundraisers) to the scholarship fund in the memory of departed shipmates or family members or in honor of a shipmate or family member.

If an employer has a matching funds program like Pfizer does, matching funds are welcome.

Anyone making a donation of \$25 or more is given a tax deduction statement and we also include a Patch and letter of appreciation.

If you have any Questions contact any Regional Director, District Commander, E-Board member or myself.

Thank you.



Eternal Patrol Nov. 23, 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
Oof our departed shipmates still on patrol
Let them know that we who survive
Will always keep their memories alive.



U.S.S. Capelin (SS-289) 78 men lost



Launched: 1/20/43, Comm: 6/4/43
Fate: lost, to an unknow cause
General Characteristics
Length: 311' 9"; Beam: 27' 3"; Draft: 15' 3"
Speed: 20 knots, Displ.: 1,526 tons;
Complement: 66 officers and men
Armament: 1x4" gun, 10x21" tubes, 6 forward and 4 aft



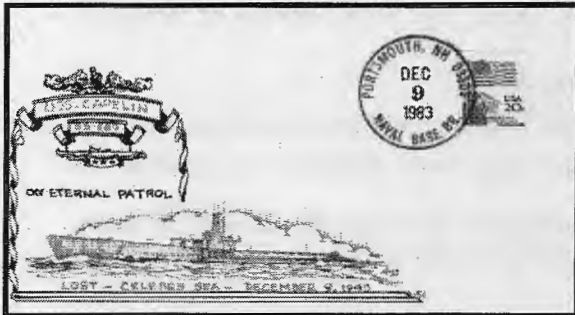
USS Capelin (SS-289), a Balao-class submarine, was the only ship of the United States Navy to be named for the capelin, a small fish of the smelt family. Her keel was laid down by Portsmouth Navy Yard. She was launched on 20 January 1943 sponsored by Mrs. I.C. Bogart, and commissioned on 4 June 1943, Lieutenant Commander E.E. Marshall in command.

Capelin sailed from New London, Connecticut, on 3 September 1943, bound for Brisbane, Australia, and duty with Submarine Force, Southwest Pacific. Her first war patrol, conducted in the Molucca Sea, Flores Sea, and Banda Sea between 30 October and 15 November, found her sinking a 3127-ton Japanese cargo ship on 11 November off Ambon Island.

Capelin returned to Darwin, Australia, with a defective conning tower hatch mechanism, excessively noisy bow planes, and a defective radar tube. These flaws were corrected, and Capelin put out on her second war patrol 17 November 1943, in the Molukka Sea and Celebes

Sea, and she was to pay particular attention to Kaoe Bay, Morotai Strait, Davao Gulf, and trade routes in the vicinity of Siao Island, Sangi Island, Talaud Islands and Sarangani Island. She was to leave her area at dark 6 December.

Capelin was never heard from again. Bonefish (SS-223) reported having seen an American submarine on 2 December 1943 in the area assigned to Capelin at that time. The Navy broke radio silence on 9 December, but without success.

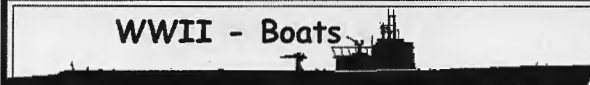


Japanese records studied after the war listed an attack on a supposed United States submarine on 23 November, off Kaoe Bay, Halmahera, but the evidence of an actual contact was slight, and the Japanese state that this attack was broken off. This is, however, the only reported attack in the appropriate area at that time. Enemy minefields are now known to have been placed in various positions along the north coast of Sulawesi (Celebes) in Capelin's area, and she may have been lost because of a mine explosion. Gone without a trace, with all her gallant crew, Capelin must remain in the list of ships lost without a known cause.

Capelin received one battle star for World War II service. Her single war patrol was "successful." She is credited with having sunk 3127 tons of shipping.



WWII - Boats



Short Facts

- The first Japanese casualty to American arms during WW-II was an aircraft shot down on Dec. 7th, 1941 by the Tautog.
- The first submarine force casualty suffered in WW-II was G. A. Myers, Seaman 2, shot through the right lung when Cachalot was strafed during the Pearl Harbor raid.
- The first "live" torpedoes to be fired by a Pearl Harbor submarine were fired by the Triton (Lent), 4 stern tubes fired on the night of Dec. 10, 1941.
- ~~The first Pearl Harbor boat to be depth charged was the Plunger (White) on Jan. 4, 1942, 24 charges.~~
- The first "down the throat" shot was fired by Pompano on Jan. 17, 1942.
- The first Japanese warship to be sunk was torpedoed by Gudgeon (Grenfell) at 9 AM on Jan. 27, 1942.
- The first major Japanese warship lost to submarines during WW-II was the heavy cruiser Kako which fell victim to S-44 Moore) on Aug. 10, 1942.
- The first submarine to fire on a battleship was Flying Fish (Donaho) Sept. 1942, damaging a Kongo class BB.
- The first submarine to fire on an aircraft carrier was Trout (Ramage), damaging Taiyo, August 28, 1942.
- The first Japanese ship to be sunk by gunfire was by Triton (Kirkpatrick), near Marcus Island on Feb. 17, 1942. At the time, Kirkpatrick was the youngest skipper to get command at Pearl.
- The first man to die in submarine gun action was Michael Harbin, on Silversides, May 1942.
- The first rest camp for submarine crews was established at a military encampment at Malang, in the mountains of Java, 89 miles from Surabaya. Three days were allotted to submarine crews there in January 1942.
- The first TDC (Mark 1) was installed in the Cachalot.
- The Plunger was the first boat to sustain an "arduous" depth charge attack and survive.
- In September 1936, Cdr. C. A. Lockwood Jr., assumed command of SubDiv 13 composed of the new boats Pike, Porpoise, Shark and Tarpon.
- On December 31, 1941, Captain Wilkes evacuated Corrigidor on board the Seawolf to establish a new base at Surabaya, Java. Simultaneously Capt. Fife boarded Swordfish and sailed to Darwin, Australia.

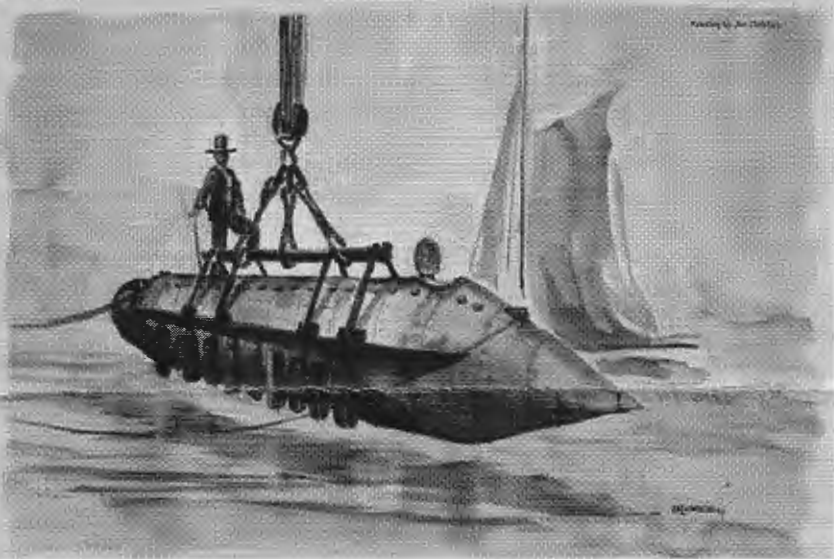


Submarines in History

What WAS the first submarine?

With his ship wallowing in a Nor'easter off the coast of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, J. F. Winchester, the captain of the wooden screw steamer USS Sumpter, was faced with a difficult decision "whether to continue on his mission to join the Union attack on Charleston, South Carolina, towing a revolutionary submersible whose likely foundering threatened to sink Sumpter herself – or to cut the towline and save his own ship. Shortly after noon on April 2, 1863, he made his decision, and his tow was set adrift, allowing Sumpter to fight another day. And with that

Alligator: The Forgotten Torchbearer of the U.S. Submarine Force



decision, Winchester sent the U.S. Navy's first submarine – Alligator – to its final resting place among thousands of other wrecks in the "Graveyard of the Atlantic" off Cape Hatteras and – unwittingly – removed Alligator from the annals of naval history for almost 140 years.

The story of the United States' first submarine does not begin with John Holland – commonly regarded as the father of the U.S. Submarine Force – but with an immigrant inventor from France named Brutus de Villeroi. Little is known about the oftentimes eccentric de Villeroi – why he was in the United States, what his profession was, or even what he looked like. (No photograph or painting of him remains today.) However, we do know that de Villeroi had been experimenting with submersible designs in France as far back as 1832 and that in the 1860 U.S. Census, he listed his occupation – correctly or not – as a "natural genius."

De Villeroi and his submarine first appeared in the United States on the Delaware River in May 1861. On May 18, The Philadelphia Inquirer ran a front-page article describing an "infernal machine" that had suddenly appeared in the waters off the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Alarmed, the harbor police, acting upon rumors that the 33-foot, cigar-shaped vessel was intent on sabotage, impounded the mysterious boat.¹ Moreover, unsure of de Villeroi's intentions and loyalty to the Union, the harbor police arrested him and his crew and turned the unusual vessel over to Navy officials for inspection. Philadelphia Navy Yard commandant Capt. Samuel F. DuPont appointed three officers to examine the vessel, question de Villeroi, and report their findings. The three officers chosen by Capt. DuPont were Cmdr. Henry Hoff, an expert in ship design; Cmdr. Charles Steedman, an expert in naval warfare; and Robert Danby, a naval engineer. The panel reported their findings on July 7, 1861 in what was dubbed the Hoff Report.

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The Hoff Report stated that de Villeroi's vessel was seaworthy and had shown four important features during their testing. These were the ability to surface and submerge, the capability to remain underwater for a substantial length of time without exposing anything on the surface, provision for a man to leave and return to the vessel while both remained submerged, and an exterior breathing tube connected to the vessel that allowed a diver to survive outside the submarine underwater. Apparently, de Villeroi's submersible was equipped with a diver lockout chamber, originally incorporated for salvage efforts. Confirming these successes, the Hoff Report slowly began making the rounds inside the Navy.

During this time, de Villeroi wrote letters to both the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, and President Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln's letter was forwarded to the Navy Department and Secretary Welles instructed Commodore Joseph Smith, Chief of the Bureau of Yards and Docks, to provide a response. Commodore Smith reported that it was too small to test as a weapon and recommended that a larger version be constructed on a "no-payment-for-failure" basis.

A contract for the construction of the submarine was signed on November 1, 1861 by Secretary Welles and one Martin Thomas – a contractor who acted on behalf of de Villeroi. The contract stipulated that "The party of the first part will construct and deliver to the party of the second part within forty (40) days from the date of this agreement, an Iron Submarine Propeller of the plan of M. de Villeroi, at least fifty-six inches (56") in width and sixty-six (66") inches in height and forty-five feet in length, for the sum of fourteen thousand dollars to be paid when completed and delivered, ready for use within ten days after delivery and certificate is in all respects ready for service."

Essentially, the Navy and de Villeroi had entered into a contract with a seemingly impossible schedule. De Villeroi was to deliver a submarine to the Navy a mere 40 days after the contract was signed.

Construction began without incident soon thereafter, and by December 7, de Villeroi reported – via letter – to Commodore Smith that the submarine was nearly completed. De Villeroi went on, however, to explain that the construction timeline would likely need to be extended, because parts of the interior were not yet complete. He attempted to justify the delay by stating that the contractor, Thomas, had not scheduled the construction properly and that the project was unlike any the shipyard had ever pursued before. Unfortunately, excuses were not what Commodore Smith wanted to hear as he grew increasingly frustrated with de Villeroi.

To mediate the growing dispute between de Villeroi and Thomas, William Hirst, a Philadelphia lawyer, was called in. Hirst helped to negotiate a 15-day extension beginning on December 10th. Even so, the situation began to spiral downward. Commodore Smith stood his ground on the delivery date and with good reason: Norfolk had fallen to the Confederates and the iron-clad CSS Virginia was finished and ready to enter service against the Union's blockading force. In several heated exchanges, Smith and de Villeroi bickered over the root cause of the problems: the lack of funds to work nights and weekends, the need for a larger construction crew, and more importantly, the contractor Thomas himself. De Villeroi ended his letter by requesting direct contact with Smith, and not through the contractor, so that they might more quickly and easily resolve remaining differences.

This request made an already angry Smith even more irate. In a letter dated January 3, 1862, Smith explained to de Villeroi that he could have no direct contact with him and that all correspondence must go through the contractor. Smith went on to explain that the government could only deal directly with the contractor himself, which was – and is still – standard procedure in most procurement matters.

The extension granted to de Villeroi in December 1861 came and went without the boat being delivered. De Villeroi blamed the delay on not having specific materials needed to produce certain "secrets" mentioned in the original contract and now in the possession of lawyer Hirst.

Although it is not entirely clear what these "secrets" were, they most likely included an air purification system, which would increase the amount of time the submarine could stay submerged, and a battery system to detonate mines remotely.

In a letter written to Smith on January 18th, de Villeroi stated that that once he received the lead and platina – a platinum alloy – he needed, the submarine would be completed. He further stated that because the original delivery date and extensions had passed, Thomas' services would no longer be necessary and that he and Smith could finally work together directly. Four days later on January 22nd, de Villeroi received Smith's reply. Smith declared that de Villeroi would receive no more funding for the submarine until it was delivered and tested, and he continued to stress the importance of retaining the contractor. Commodore Smith then wrote Thomas directly to note that if the submarine was not finished in three or four

days and ready to be shipped on the soon-to-depart USS Rhode Island, the submarine would no longer be useful to the Navy, because CSS Virginia – the ironclad the submarine was designed to counter – was out of dry dock and entering sea trials in Norfolk.

Brutus de Villeroi sent this cover letter to the Emperor of France, Napoleon III, to sell his proposal for a new and improved design for an oar-powered submarine. This cover letter accompanied the enclosure that described a new 125-foot long submarine that was far more ambitious than Alligator.

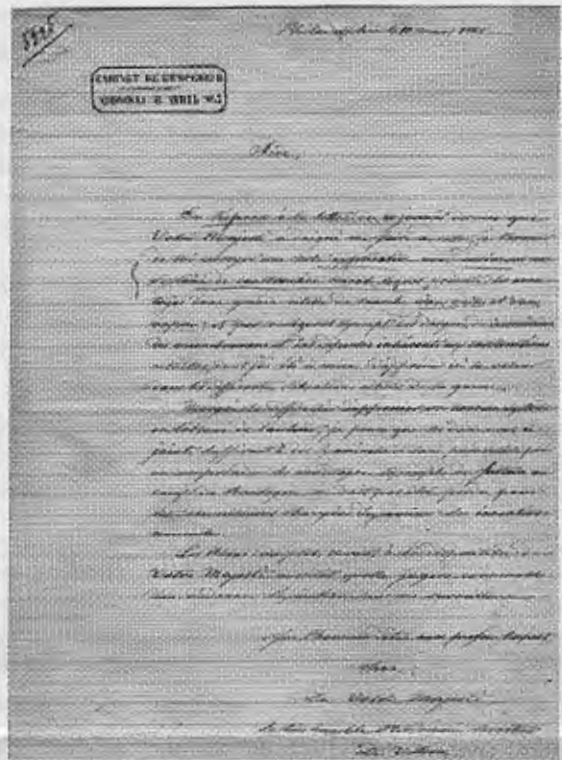
On January 29th, the submarine was reported ready for launching. However, according to a report from Thomas, the launch had to be delayed due to problems with the oars. A contradictory letter sent by de Villeroi stated that the delay resulted from ice on the river. During the interim, the submarine was painted dark green on the outside – a factor that would later contribute to Alligator's name – and white inside.

Two days later – faced by the imminence of the Virginia threat – Smith sent yet another letter to de Villeroi stating that although the submarine would no longer be useful to the war effort, the time and effort put into producing the boat made it worthwhile at least to put it through its paces in sea trials. In his letter, Commodore Smith also made a seemingly innocuous statement that markedly improved de Villeroi's legal position: He told de Villeroi that the contractor was to provide everything needed to finish the project. This essentially gave de Villeroi an "out," and he immediately responded with a veritable laundry list of items needed to complete construction – including explosives, hydraulic jacks, platina, a telescope, and a chest of tools. He also complained bitterly about Thomas, noting "unethical" discussions the latter had held with scientists, spending insufficient money to maintain the schedule, and the overall expense of the project, which de Villeroi claimed was far less than the award value of the original \$14,000 contract.

While de Villeroi's letter was on its way to Commodore Smith, the commodore informed Thomas formally that the contract was in default, and thus that the submarine would not be received by the Navy until "further opportunities avail themselves" "at which time the agreement would be renegotiated. When de Villeroi learned of this development, he immediately sent another letter to Smith saying that as he was still an employee of the government and therefore entitled to pay until such time as the Navy revoked his nomination as engineer of the project.

Continuing this seemingly endless string of letters, Smith then wrote de Villeroi explaining their unique situation and that the contract was forfeited because the delivery date had not been met. Smith closed his letter by stating that the project would be stopped and would remain so until de Villeroi and Thomas came to terms and delivered a boat and crew for testing. This letter caused an uproar, sending Hirst into a furious – but ultimately fruitless – letter-writing campaign to mediate the differences between Thomas and de Villeroi, while de Villeroi himself went into seclusion. In a last ditch attempt to salvage the work and his own pride, he wrote directly to President Lincoln, requesting that he be made "commander of the Propeller." Not surprisingly, the Frenchman never received a response.

On April 18, 1862, Commodore Smith was informed that the U.S. Navy's first submarine was finally ready. However, it took almost another two months before the Navy and Mr. Samuel Eakin – the submarine's first commander – took delivery of the boat on June 13th. She emerged as a truly unique vessel with a length of 47', a beam of 4'8", and a height of 5'6". The original propulsion system – oars – required 22 sailors, but later, when she was retrofitted with a screw propeller, this number dropped to eight. The boat was equipped with an innovative air purification system and a diver lockout chamber which allowed for a diver to leave the submarine and clear obstructions or plant mines; both features were part of de Villeroi's innovative original design.



Since Virginia had already been scuttled by her crew during the Confederate retreat from Norfolk, the Union submarine's original mission had been overtaken by events. However, it was given the task of clearing obstacles in the James River – to allow Union vessels to sail upriver and aid in the bombardment of Richmond – and destroying a railroad bridge at Petersburg. It was during this time that the submarine rather unceremoniously acquired the name, Alligator. From 1861 to 1862, she had been referred to by several other names, including Propeller, Submarine Propeller, and Submarine Boat. However, a newspaper report from the spring of 1862 had called the craft Alligator because of its green color and because it propelled itself through the water via two banks of oars; and the name stuck.

After further consideration, both the James River and Petersburg missions were cancelled. Because of the depth of the James and Appomattox rivers – less than seven feet at some points – Alligator would have been forced to operate semi-submerged, exposing it to attack from shore and possible capture by the Confederates, a risk no one was willing to take. On June 29, having spent a total of only eight days in a “combat zone” and with no new missions assigned, Alligator was transferred – under tow – to the Washington Navy Yard for further testing.

From August through December of 1862, Alligator was put through its paces in Washington. These tests resulted in the replacement of the oar propulsion system with a more conventional propeller, which doubled the top speed of Alligator from two to four knots. During this time, the civilian crew was replaced by one furnished by the Navy and command was given to Lt. Thomas Selfridge.

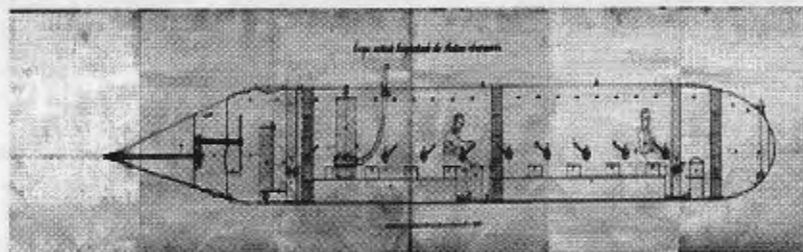
With the beginning of spring in 1863 came a new mission for Alligator and her crew: to clear obstacles around Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor and attack the ironclads CSS Chicora and CSS Palmetto State, which had been positioned by the Confederacy to escort supply ships into Charleston harbor and lift the blockade.

On March 31st, a crewless Alligator began her voyage to Charleston and Fort Sumter under tow from – fittingly – USS Sumpter.² During the voyage, the weather quickly worsened into a storm unlike any Sumpter's commander, J.F. Winchester, had ever seen. On April 2nd, the port towline parted. As a result, the submarine pitched and yawed violently and she began to take on water through broken portholes – recently added during her winter in Washington – and loosened plates in her hull. As Alligator continued to take on water and started to sink, she threatened to drag Sumpter down with her. The tow ship had no other option but to set Alligator adrift with the hope that she might stay afloat long enough to be recovered after the storm. Alligator was cut free shortly after noon on April 2nd, and as Sumpter steamed away – fighting against the storm – Alligator slipped over the horizon, never to be seen again.

The attack on Charleston and the two Confederate ironclads commenced three days later and – without Alligator – was a major failure. Three months later, the Confederates launched their own submarine of a design similar to Alligator, CSS H.L. Hunley, in Mobile, Ala. It would later become the first submersible to sink an enemy warship, when it destroyed USS Housatonic at Charleston on February 17, 1864.

While Alligator was never commissioned, she had the distinction of being “the first” in many areas for the U.S. Navy. She was the first submarine ordered and built by the Navy and the first to have a diver lockout chamber, to deploy to a combat zone, to be commanded by a U.S. naval officer, and to undergo an overhaul at a U.S. naval shipyard – just to name a few.

Following the war, the United States concluded that a submarine force was not needed to protect her territorial waters for the foreseeable future. This belief, along with de Villeroi's retreat to private life and subsequent death in 1874, helped to push the idea of establishing a submarine force to the back burner of the Navy's consciousness for another quarter century.



This original design sketch by de Villeroi is from his booklet of general plans and is one of few design sketches known to still exist. This sketch illustrates the layout and general size of the submarine.



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Return To:

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13210 N. Lake Forest Dr.
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<http://perch-base.org>



**NEXT REGULAR MEETING
Nov. 18, 2006
American Legion Post #105
3534 W Calavar Rd.
Phoenix, AZ**