

LOST BOATS TOLLING CEREMONY

We recommend you begin the ceremony by reading the “Preamble” either short or long depending on the time you have allocated for the ceremony, so all who are attending will understand its full meaning.

THE SHORT VERSION: PREAMBLE TO THE TOLLING THE BOATS

Honoring our fallen submarine heroes is fundamental to our creed as members of U.S. Submarine Veterans (USSVI), which is “To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in pursuit of their duties while serving their country.”

In our participation we remember those gallant submariners who made the supreme sacrifice while performing their duties with honor, integrity and courage and we demonstrate to our families and to our youth by our deeds that we honor them, we pay tribute to them, we salute them, as should all citizens of our great nation.

The “Tolling the Boats” ceremony was originally established by the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II. It is a unique and time-honored memorial service and is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Navy. Custom has established that this ceremony be formal, and it honors the memory of those submariners who lost their lives in the line of duty, and especially those who perished during World War II. In the heart of the ceremony the names of each of the U.S. submarines lost, along with the fate of its crew are read aloud as a bell is tolled for each in turn.

The tolling of the ship’s bell reminds us of the debt of gratitude we owe to both our departed shipmates and to those in active service who silently guard the honor of our country while serving silently under the sea. In many ways the “Tolling the Boats” ceremony formally reaffirms to serving Navy submarine personnel that their current “deeds and sacrifices” follow in the footsteps of their fellow submariners who preceded them.

We shall never forget the ultimate sacrifice they made so we all, and especially our families and loved ones, enjoy the fruits of freedom.

THE LONG VERSION: PREAMBLE TO THE TOLLING THE BOATS

For the enlightenment of our guests who may not understand the significance of our ceremony of “Tolling the Boats,” I shall give you a brief explanation of this solemn remembrance of our Shipmates: the officers and enlisted men who sacrificed their lives aboard submarines in the service of our country.

John F. Kennedy once said, “A nation reveals itself not only by the men it produces, but also by the men it honors, the men it remembers.”

It is true that the sea has always taken its toll of seamen. This is especially true for the submariner. Over the years, some four thousand young men have lost their lives in circumstances serving our country in the U.S. Submarine Force. In all, a total of sixty-five U.S. submarines have been lost in war and in peace.

It is also true that no maritime power has ever survived unless its men have been willing to fight back with successively better ships manned by professional seamen who have profited by the lessons learned from the past. Those of us who go to sea in today’s submarines and those who will do so in the future are forever indebted to those submarine sailors who gave their lives testing different innovations in submarine warfare during times of peace.

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These losses, while tragic, have served to provide us with invaluable knowledge to enable us to improve succeeding classes of submarines and are gallant extensions of the traditions of duty, professional competence and self-sacrifice which have always been the hallmark of the U.S. Submarine Force.

The U.S. Submarine Force came into existence on October 12, 1900, with the commissioning of the USS Holland (SS-1). The early 1900s were a period of intense development, resulting in adoption of the gasoline engine for surface propulsion, the periscope, and improvement in double hull design. By 1906, with most of the fleet in the Atlantic, the Secretary of the Navy approved submarines as the only way to defend the West Coast of the United States if attacked. Yet, on the eve of World War I, 1914, the U.S. Submarine Force only numbered 34 submarines.

During World War I, the Secretary of the Navy adopted the position that submarines would defend the vital fleet port at Subic Bay, Philippines and positioned boats there.

Between 1914 - 1940 the U.S. Submarine Force would suffer the loss of 11 submarines and 150 submariners in testing new designs. Despite these setbacks, the U.S. Submarine Force continued to grow. One U.S. Submariner, TM2(SS) Henry Berault, received the Medal of Honor for his selfless courage.

The years of 1941 through 1945 were years of monumental struggle and sacrifice for all Americans. The objectives were to protect and preserve the freedoms of the United States of America, as well as those of our friends and allies. To this end, our entire national efforts, both civilian and military, were rendered to a full measure of devotion.

Immediately following the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on 7 December, 1941, with the Pacific Fleet in ruins, Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz, a submariner himself, upon taking command as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet, recognized the true military value of the submarine. In January 1942, he raised his official flag on the submarine Grayling and upon relinquishing command took down his flag on board the submarine Menhaden. "It was to the Submarine Force," stated Nimitz, "that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons, we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of great peril."

And that they did. This small force, composed of about 50,000 men, including staffs and back-up personnel (less than 2% of the U.S. Navy's personnel and by war's end consisting of 288 submarines) inflicted a staggering 55% of Japan's maritime losses. Of approximately 6,000,000 tons comprising the entire Japanese merchant fleet, from 1941 through 1945, U.S. submarines sank 1,113 Japanese merchant marine vessels for a total of 4,859,634 tons. During that same period, U.S. submarines sank 214 naval warships for an additional 577,626 tons, about a third of all Japanese warships destroyed.

Seldom, if ever in history, had so small a naval force accomplished so much. Japan's war effort depended on shipping. It was sunk in the main by U.S. submarines.

However, these successes did not come without a price. 52 American submarines were lost during World War II. Many of our numbers were lost in the performance of these duties. Some men lost their lives individually, but by far the greater number died as boats failed to return from patrol. In some instances, the cause of the submarine's loss was known, but in most cases, the report "submarine overdue--presumed lost" was the epitaph for both submarine and men. A few were rescued by the

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Japanese and imprisoned until the war's end. From these were then learned the fate of their ship and crew.

The price, overall, was that the U.S. Submarine Force suffered the highest percentage of losses of any branch of the Armed Services. 3,500 submariners quietly paid the ultimate price in the defense of their country which quickly earning the U.S. Submarine Force the nickname –The Silent Service.

Seven submariners were awarded the Medal of Honor during World War II: two posthumously.

More than seventy-five (75) years have passed since the lost men of World War II departed on their eternal patrol. We Submarine Veterans endeavor to keep alive the memory of our departed Shipmates at every gathering of our organizations. We do this by honoring their memory in prayer and by “Tolling the Boats” -- calling the roll of those U.S. Submarines lost since the US Submarine Force was established in 1900.

Still, no one close to the Submarine Service can reflect on those tragic times without again experiencing the shock and sadness felt upon learning of the loss of the USS Thresher (SSN-593) and USS Scorpion (SSN-589). And yet, these losses added an awareness to the initial emotions; the submariners and those persons closely associated with this branch of the service today know feelings of kinship, of pride, of gratitude and of profound respect for the gallant men lost on these submarines. They are remembered not as men who were, but as men who are; men, who because of dedication to their profession of the undersea, have given us greater knowledge of its mysteries, and opened broader paths for its exploration and use.

For many of us they live on as specific individuals, each contributing his special skill to this ever-broadening knowledge. To us they will be more vivid in memory for much longer time than others who in the physical sense are nearby.

They, all of them, have served you and this great land of ours in a way far beyond the contributions of most of us. Their contributions continue, by providing others close to this undersea Navy inspiration, new challenges, new ideas and new operational methods.

No, they are not nearby in flesh, but to us who know them they are very real –in contribution –in memory –in spirit.

We shall not forget them. We shall now proceed with this ceremony.

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U.S. SUBMARINES LOST SINCE THE 1900 FOUNDING OF U.S. NAVY SUBMARINE FORCE UP TO WORLD WAR 2		
USS F-4 (SS-23)	Lost with 21 Men on 25 March 1915 when it foundered off Honolulu Harbor.	[BELL]
USS F-1 (SS-20)	Lost with 19 Men on 17 December 1917 when it was sunk after collision with the USS F-3 (SS-22) off San Clemente, California.	[BELL]
USS H-1 (SS-28)	Lost on 12 March 1920 with the loss of 4 men when it sank after being grounded off Santa Margarita Island, Baja California, Mexico	[BELL]
USS S-5 (SS-110)	Lost on 1 September 1920 off the Delaware Capes. All the crew escaped through a hole cut in hull in the tiller room	[BELL]
USS O-5 (SS-66)	Lost on 29 October 1923 with the loss of 3 men when it was sunk after a collision with the SS Abangarez (owned by the United Fruit Company) off the Panama Canal. Torpedoman's Mate 2nd Class (SS) Henry Berault received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic actions	[BELL]
USS S-51 (SS-162)	Lost on 25 September 1925 with the loss of 33 men when it was sunk after a collision with SS City of Rome off Block Island, Rhode Island.	[BELL]
USS S-4 (SS-109)	Lost with 40 men on 17 December 1927 when it was sunk after being rammed by USCGC Paulding off Provincetown, Massachusetts.	[BELL]
USS Squalus (SS-192)	Lost on 23 May 1939 with a loss of 26 men when it flooded and sank off Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The boat was salvaged and re-commissioned under a new name.	[BELL]
USS O-9 (SS-70)	Lost on 20 June 1941 with 33 men when it foundered off the Isle of Shoals, 15 miles from Portsmouth, New Hampshire.	[BELL]
U.S. SUBMARINES LOST DURING WORLD WAR 2		
USS Sealion (SS-195)	Lost with 4 men on 10 December 1941 by aerial bombs during a Japanese air attack at Cavite Navy Yard, Republic of the Philippines.	[BELL]
USS S-36 (SS-141)	Lost on 20 January 1942 when it was destroyed after she ran aground on the Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, near Makassar City. The crew was rescued.	[BELL]
USS S-26 (SS-131)	Lost with 46 men on 24 January 1942 in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles West of San Jose Light when USS PC-460 rammed it. 3 men survived.	[BELL]
USS Shark (SS-174)	Lost with all hands (59 men) on 11 February 1942 when it was sunk by surface craft East of Menado, Celebes Island as a result of one of three Japanese attacks.	[BELL]


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USS Perch (SS-176)	Lost on 3 March 1942 when it was sunk by Japanese surface attack 30 miles NW of Surabaya, Java. 59 men were taken prisoner, 6 men died as POWs. 53 survived the war.	[BELL]
USS S-27	Lost on 19 Jun 1942 when it grounded off (SS-132) Amchitka Island. All the crew were rescued.	[BELL]
USS Grunion (SS-216)	Lost with all hands (70 men) on 30 July 1942 off Kiska Island, Aleutians (Alaska) to unknown causes.	[BELL]
USS S-39 (SS-144)	Lost on 13 Aug 1942 when it was destroyed after grounding on reef south of Rossel Island, Louisiade Archipelago. All the crew were rescued	[BELL]
USS Argonaut (SS-166)	Lost with all hands (102 men) on 10 January 1943 in the Java Sea by Japanese surface attack.	[BELL]
USS Amberjack (SS-219)	Lost with all hands (72 men) by aerial bombs and surface craft on 16 February 1943 off Rabaul in the Solomon Sea. 1 additional killed earlier in Patrol.	[BELL]
USS Grampus (SS-207)	Lost with all hands (71 men) by Japanese surface attack on the Solomon Islands on 5 March 1943.	[BELL]
USS Triton (SS-201)	Lost with all hands (74 men) by Japanese Surface Attack off New Guinea on 15 March 1943.	[BELL]
USS Pickerel (SS-177)	Lost with all hands (74 men) by Japanese Surface Attack off Honshu, Japan, on 3 April 1943.	[BELL]
USS Grenadier (SS-210)	Lost on 22 April 1943, 10 miles west of Lem Voalan Strait in Indian Ocean. Scuttled after being badly damaged by bombs. 76 men were taken prisoner, 4 men died as POWs. 72 men survived the war.	[BELL]
USS R-12 (SS-89)	Lost with 42 men off Key West, Florida, to unknown causes on 12 June 1943. 3 men survived.	[BELL]
USS Runner (SS-275)	Lost with all hands (78 men) by possible Japanese mine between Midway Island and Japan between June 26 & early July 1943.	[BELL]
USS Grayling (SS-209)	Lost with all hands (76 men) to unknown causes on 9 September 1943 when it was sunk in or near Tablas Strait, Republic of the Philippines.	[BELL]
USS Pompano (SS-181)	Lost with all hands (77 men) probably by Japanese Air/Sea attack off Aomori Prefecture near Shiriya Zaki on 17 September 1943.	[BELL]
USS Cisco (SS-290)	Lost with all hands (76 men) on 28 September 1943 during a Japanese Air and Surface attack in the Sulu Sea.	[BELL]
USS S-44 (SS-155)	Lost on 7 October 1943 with the loss of 56 men when it was sunk by surface craft off Paramushiru, Kuriles. 2 men survived and were taken prisoner.	[BELL]
USS Wahoo (SS-238)	Lost with all hands (80 men) during a Japanese air and surface attack on 11 October 1943 in La Perouse Strait off northern Japan.	[BELL]
USS Dorado (SS-248)	Lost with all hands (77 men) probably by an Allied Air Attack on 12 October 1943 in the SW Atlantic.	[BELL]
USS Corvina (SS-226)	Lost with all hands (82 men) on 16 November 1943 during a Japanese submarine attack off Truk.	[BELL]

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USS Sculpin (SS-191)	Lost with 43 men on 19 November 1943 when it was sunk by a Japanese warship north of Oroluk Island near Truk. 20 more died as POWs & 21 men survived the war.	[BELL]
USS Capelin (SS-289)	Lost with all hands (76 men) between 23 November and 3 December 1943 in the Celebes Sea due to unknown causes.	[BELL]
USS Scorpion (SS-278)	Lost with all hands (77 men) sometime after 5 January 1944 in the Yellow Sea off China due to unknown causes.	[BELL]
USS Grayback (SS-208)	Lost with all hands (80 men) on 26 February 1944 during a Japanese Air and Surface attack off Okinawa.	[BELL]
USS Trout (SS-202)	Lost with all hands (81 men) on 29 February 1944 during a Japanese Surface Attack in the Philippine Sea.	[BELL]
USS Tullibee (SS-284)	Lost with 79 men on 26 March 1944 north of Palau. Sunk by her own torpedo. One man survived and was taken prisoner.	[BELL]
USS Gudgeon (SS-211)	Lost with all hands (79 men) during a Japanese air and surface attack on 18 April 1944 in Northern Marianas.	[BELL]
USS Herring (SS-233)	Lost with all hands (83 men) on 1 June 1944 by a Japanese shore battery and surface craft off Matsuwa Island, Kuriles.	[BELL]
USS Golet (SS-361)	Lost with all hands (82 men) during a Japanese Surface attack off Honshu, Japan, on 14 June 1944.	[BELL]
USS S-28 (SS-133)	Lost with all hands (49 men) when she foundered off the Hawaiian Islands 4 July 1944.	[BELL]
USS Robalo (SS-273)	Lost with 77 men by possible Japanese Mine off Palawan on 26 July 1944. 4 men survived as POWs but they were never recovered.	[BELL]
USS Flier (SS-250)	Lost with 78 men on 13 August 1944 when sunk by Japanese mine in the Balabac Strait south of Palawan. Eight men survived and were rescued by USS REDFIN (SS 272).	[BELL]
USS Harder (SS-257)	Lost with all hands (79 men) during a Japanese depth charge attack off Luzon, Republic of the Philippines, on 24 August 1944.	[BELL]
USS Seawolf (SS-197)	Lost with all hands (83 crew and 17 U.S. Army) on 3 October 1944 when it was sunk by U.S. Navy destroyers just north of Morotai, Philippines.	[BELL]
USS Escolar (SS-294)	Lost with all hands (82 men) by possible Japanese Mine in the Yellow Sea off China on 17 October 1944 or later.	[BELL]
USS Darter (SS-227)	Lost on 24 Oct 1944 when it became grounded on Bombay Shoal off Palawan then was destroyed. All the crew was rescued by USS Dace.	[BELL]
USS Shark (SS-314)	Lost with all hands (87 men) on 24 October 1944 when it was sunk by Japanese surface craft in the channel midway between Hainan and Bashi.	[BELL]

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USS Tang (SS-306)	Lost with 78 men on 25 October 1944 when it was sunk by her own torpedo in the north end of the Formosa Strait. Nine of the crew were taken prisoner and survived the war. Her Commanding Officer, Richard O’Kane, received the Congressional Medal of Honor.	[BELL]
USS Albacore (SS-218)	Lost with all hands (85 men) possibly by Japanese Mine on 7 November 1944 between Honshu and Hokkaido, Japan.	[BELL]
USS Growler (SS-215)	Lost with all hands (86 men) on 8 November 1944 by a possible Japanese Surface attack in the South China Sea.	[BELL]
USS Scamp (SS-277)	Lost with all hands (83 men) probably on 16 November 1944 from progressive damage in multiple air and sea attacks east of Tokyo Bay.	[BELL]
USS Swordfish (SS-193)	Lost with all hands (89 men) either by Japanese surface attack or mine on 12 January 1945 off Okinawa.	[BELL]
USS Barbel (SS-316)	Lost with all hands (81 men) on 4 February 1945 during a Japanese air attack off the entrance to Palawan Passage.	[BELL]
USS Kete (SS-369)	Lost with all hands (87 men) after 20 March 1945 between Okinawa and Midway, cause unknown.	[BELL]
USS Trigger (SS-237)	Lost with all hands (89 men) in the East China Sea on 28 March 1945 during a Japanese air and surface attack.	[BELL]
USS Snook (SS-279)	Lost with all hands (84 men) on 8 April 1945 to unknown causes off Formosa.	[BELL]
USS Lagarto (SS-371)	Lost with all hands (86 men) on 3 May 1945 in the Gulf of Siam during a Japanese surface attack.	[BELL]
USS Bonefish (SS-223)	Lost with all hands (85 men) on 18-Jun-1945 when it was sunk in Toyama Wan in the Sea of Japan.	[BELL]
USS Bullhead (SS-332)	Lost with all hands (84 men) off the Bali Coast by a Japanese air attack on 6 August 1945.	[BELL]
U.S. SUBMARINES LOST SINCE WORLD WAR 2		
USS Cochino (SS-345)	Lost with one man lost on 26 August 1949 off the coast of Norway due to a battery explosion and fire. Six from USS Tusk (SS-426) were also lost.	[BELL]
USS Stickleback (SS-415)	Rammed on exercises off Hawaii by USS Silverstein (DD-534) on 28 May 1958. All crew safely evacuated prior to sinking 29 May 1958.	[BELL]
USS Thresher (SSN-593)	Lost with all hands (129 men) on 10 April 1963 off the New England coast.	[BELL]
USS Scorpion (SSN-589)	Lost with all hands (99 men) on 22 May 1968 due to unknown causes 400 miles southwest of the Azores in the Atlantic.	[BELL]
	Finally, we remember all the brave submariners who died in the course of their duties aboard submarines, some individually and some in groups, but where the submarine itself was not lost.	[BELL]

(Two blasts on the klaxon)
 “Sailors, rest your oars.”

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REFERENCES:

- 1) [USSVI ONLINE MANUALS – Lost Submarine Listings \(02/20/2003\)](#)
Rationale and listing of the Lost Boats as a basis for The Tolling of The Boats Ceremony
- 2) [USSVI ONLINE MANUALS – Lost Submarine Listings \(03/09/2014\)](#)
The Tolling of The Boats Ceremony Honors the memory of Sixty-Five Submarine Losses since the establishment of the U.S. Submarine Force. (53 in Wartime, 1 during WWI and 52 during WWII; and 12 in Peacetime.) This document is the basis for the text descriptions of the Lost Boats.
- 3) [USSVI POST BOD Meeting Minutes – ZOOM meeting of 08/31/2020](#)
On August 31, 2020, the USSVI National Board of Directors approved the addition of USS Bonefish (SS-582) to the list of Boats to be honored during the Tolling of Lost Boats Ceremony. The addition was subsequently rescinded on 09/08/2020 at USSVI membership request.