

TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 4, No. 2

February 2008

Newsletter of Charleston Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.



USSVI 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"



Base web page: <http://www.ussvich.org/>

National web page: www.ussvi.org

Base Meeting:

February 14, 2008

Social hour 1800, General Meeting 1900

Location:

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 269, Low Country Home
99 Wisteria Rd.

Goose Creek, South Carolina. Phone 843-569-2962

Base Officers		Phone Number
Commander	Steve Nelms	843-563-7115
Vice Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Secretary	Ronnie Kerstetter	843-367-1026
Treasurer	George Lisle	843-559-4242

Special Officers		Phone Number
Chief of the Boat	Marty Sessler	843-871-1536
Public Affairs	Richard Cleeve	843-899-4563
Publicity	Larry Starland	843-863-8474
Sub Vets WWII	Barnwell Chaplin	843-762-6945
Nuclear Historian	Rick Carlson	843-875-4030
Veterans Affairs	John Nichols	843-873-5897
Chaplain	John Nichols	843-873-5897
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	Bob Lowe	843-573-9045
Little David Project	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Roving Reporter	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Scholarship	Jim Yates	843-873-0246
Newsletter	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Storekeeper	Paul Viering	843-797-2623
Alcohol & Gaming	Dave Mueller	843-553-2775



Minutes of the January 2008 meeting

Attendance for the January 10, 2008 meeting was 113

Opening Ceremony: Base Commander called the meeting to order. A Quorum was present and the meeting was commenced at 19:00.

Introductions: New people were introduced; Brian

Holland Club: Bobby Lowe reports that 8 men are eligible for the Holland Club this year. They are John Camp, Frederick Daughtery, Roger Gibson, Sy Maybie, Henry Gilmer, William Roberts, John Spear and Francis Young. This honor is for those qualified in submarines for 50 years.

Little David: Rick wise reports that the original plans for the replica have been given to the Berkeley museum. We will retain a copy of the

Steffen, Gene Cahall, Gerald Howarth, Val Daschle, Robert Kirtley and Darrell Guidry. Welcome aboard.

Guest Speaker: Executive Director LeeAnne Newton presented an overview of the new 28 million dollar Veterans Victory House nursing home located at 2461 Sidneys Road (behind the airport in Walterboro). Doors opened on November 1, 2006. Currently 142 residents are served by the facility with a capacity of 220. To qualify for the nursing home you must require nursing home care, be honorably discharged and be a resident of SC for 12 months. Named for five heroes, Captain John Truluck, Master Sgt Frank Currey, Rodney Williams, Staff Sgt Eugene Lyons, and James Elliott Williams.

On December 19th, Charleston Base donated numerous items including various clothing items (men & women), books, tapes, CDs, movies, caps, puzzles, etc., for the Veteran's Victory House. In addition, over \$700 in cash was donated. This included \$150 from Charleston Base directly and \$100 from the Christmas party Depth Charge drawing. Julian Villegas, nursing home liaison, delivered all items and made the presentation.

LeeAnne related how this act of kindness from the CB changed the lives of Victory House residents on Christmas day. Handouts with pictures were distributed that showed the resident's appreciation for the support that they received. Sub Vets were encouraged to come out and visit a veteran at Victory House especially on Memorial Day and Veterans Day.

Secretary: Secretary Ronnie Kerstetter asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from last month. A motion was made and seconded. Minutes approved.

Treasurer: George Lisle gave the treasurer's report.

Storekeeper: Paul Viering is generating money for the base while keeping the profit margin low at 1.3%.

Chaplain: Nick Nichols was not present. Roger Gibson presented the binnacle list.

December Report:

Al Addington was admitted to a hospital for a collapsed lung. The base sent a card wishing him a speedy recovery.

John Paul Pardo, an honorary member, has some medical problems and is undergoing tests. The base sent a card wishing him well.

Robert Coundry, a Royal Navy WWII submariner

plans on CD.

Newsletter: No report

Membership: Carl reports the Charleston Base had 297 members at the end of December. We had 267 coming into tonight's meeting, 30 did not renew and we had 3 who paid tonight. 27 will be dropped for our rolls.

Vice Commander Report: Carl will submit an amendment proposal to national to drop the 5-year requirement for annual members to be eligible for the Holland Club.

Fleet Reserve: No report

District Commander: Jerry Stout, Eastern Region District 4 Commander, introduced himself. The election cycle has started, anyone interested in EDR4 commander position submit your name thru your base commander. All National Officers, ERD, and DCs are up for re-election, including several by-law and constitution changes. Columbia has started a base called the Palmetto Base. It will be chartered soon.

Planning will be finalized soon for the 23-26 April 2008 District 4/6 Convention to be held at the Ramada Inn, Kingsland, GA. Registration fee is \$30 (this will include some food). Room rates are \$49 a night, nightly entertainment, boat tours, BBQ, shrimp boil, banquet, submarine museum/swamp tours are planned.

The memorial service will be held outside of the St. Mary's submarine museum along the waterfront. Registration forms will be out next week.

Alcohol & Gaming: No report

Chief of the Boat: Marty Sessler gave the following report. Thank you to all who got the parade float ready. This committee is headed up by Mike Emerson and Ben Heber.

If you change your e-mail keep Carl Chinn or Marty Sessler informed.

We will be having an oyster roast on 23 February at 1300 at The After Battery. The cost of the oysters has gone up, but your cost is still \$5 a head that includes food and drinks. Bring a side dish or dessert.

If you have not seen it yet, a submarine mural has been painted on the side of the pole barn entitled "Charleston Inbound". A motion to pay \$300 for the cost of the mural was made, seconded and was approved.

The 23rd annual Grits festival will be held in St

was not able to be with the Brits on the trip due to illness. The base sent him a card wishing him a speedy recovery.

Carl received a report that Ralph "Dutch" Wieland has been fighting brain tumors and chemotherapy. The base sent him a card wishing him well.

Mike Smith surgery was very successful and he is back at work in Hilton Head. The base sent a card wishing him well in his recovery.

Rodney Waldrop IC chief who was a submariner but not a base member passed away in December.

Rick Wise reported that Albert Lonsberry Sr., who was a submariner but not a base member, passed away. The base sent his wife and family a card with our condolences.

The base sent a card to the Standrich's on celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary.

January Report:

Mike Smith sent a note to Carl Chinn for the base: "Carl, thanks to all my brothers at Charleston Base for the cards and well wishes during my recovery from surgery. I wish I could be there to thank them personally, but work schedules prevent that at the current time." Mike has moved to Bluffton, SC.

Bill Kennedy was in the hospital over Christmas and will be undergoing knee surgery next week. The base sent him a card wishing him a speedy recovery. Sy Mabie is having a rough time with his cancer treatments.

Keith Schnebel is in the VA hospital.

Gary Semler is at home with the flu.

Arthur O'Meally doing much better, hopes to be at our next meeting.

Al Addington thanks everyone for the support shown during his illness.

Several follow-ups were made on those who've had surgery or illnesses in the last couple of months along with the base sending additional cards.

If you know of shipmates or spouses from other bases who are having a difficult time, had surgery, etc. and would like for USSVI Charleston Base to send them a card please send their name and address to the Chaplain via email or phone call.

Scholarship: Jim Yates was not present. Carl Chinn reminded everyone to buy our military challenge coin. Charleston Base logo on one side and the back side has dolphins and the US submarine service. This will help to keep the scholarship fund going. Julian Villegas and Carl Chinn have the coins, you can buy them and give them out as gifts.

Public Affairs: Richard Cleeve has many pictures of the Christmas party on the TV monitor and the

George on 12 April. We will pull the float. Float leaves The After Battery at 0945, the parade starts at 1100.

Base Commander: Buddha reminded everyone of the annual base elections. Charleston Base officers are elected at the regular meeting in May each year. If you desire to run or have a nomination for one of these positions: Commander, Vice-Commander, Treasurer or Secretary, please get your nomination to Stan Standrich soon so your name will be on the ballot. Buddha has several copies of the American Submariner magazine for anyone who would like one. Clean your tables before you leave tonight.

Nuclear Historian: No report

Old Business: None

New Business: Larry Starland reports that the Fleet Reserve Association will be hosting the 2008 SE regional convention. They will be producing a journal and are soliciting advertisers to help pay the expenses of the convention. Full-page ad runs \$150, ½ page \$75, ¼ page \$40, and business card size is \$15. A motion was made for CB to purchase a full-page ad for the FRA convention. The motion was seconded and approved. Carl Chinn will design the page for the CB.

Larry has had discussions with the new rehab center across the street about using their lot for overflow parking for our meetings.

George Lisle made a pitch for an academy classmate and friend who is a Republican presidential candidate. John McCain is a veteran, a straight talker and needs your vote.

Good Of The Order: The depth charge drawing was held. The winner was "Nate" Nathan.

Mike Emerson said that we have been trying to expand where we go with the float and someone has suggested going to Savannah for St. Patrick's Day. If you think that we should do Savannah let Ben Heber, Mike Emerson or the Buddha know so that we can decide.

Paul Viering noted that TV signals will be going digital on February 17, 2009. All old analog TV's will need a \$40 converter box. Paul has coupon program applications for no cost converter boxes (2 per household). If you have a cable ready or satellite signal already than you do not need a converter box.

A door prize drawing was held for those that signed the book. A succession of winners was drawn; Ben Heber, Frank Zeigler, and Bobby Lowe all passed on the liquor. Finally Panama Jack

website.

Sub Vets WWII: Lee Allison invited everyone to the next Swamp Fox Chapter meeting at Ryan's Family Steak House 1314 North Main Street in Summerville, on Thursday, February 21st, at 1200 (noon). The meal cost has been reduced to half price by the manager to compensate the Sub Vets WWII group for the mix up in meeting rooms at the December meeting.

Veteran's Affairs: No report

Stevenson's name was drawn and he claimed the door prize

The Base Commander adjourned meeting at 2000.

**** End of the minutes for January 2008 ****

"Don't tell mom I'm a submariner, she thinks I play piano in a whorehouse."



Acton	Barwick	Burke	Cox
Gilmer	Grassman	Jennings	Koebel
Koehler	Lavergne	Massey	Minaudo
Rash	Rogers	Rook	Sickle
Stout	Van Swearingen	Waller	Wickenhoffer

Membership and Dues Information:

Your **2009** dues will be payable on 1 October 2008. You can pay me at the meeting or send your dues to me. Not sure how much you owe? Just ask me. Pay early, avoid the rush.

The following annual members have been dropped for non-payment of 2008 dues:

Chollet	Miller, R
Coy	Poole
Drentlaw	Rummans
Fuller	Sanders
Gallagher, G	Schirmer
Giddens	Siebert
Gleason	Stevenson, T
Hubert	Tischler
Jenkins	Velez
Martinson	Willis, D

The following National Life members or previous national dues paid members have been dropped from Charleston Base and transferred to the Member-At-Large list for non-payment of dues:

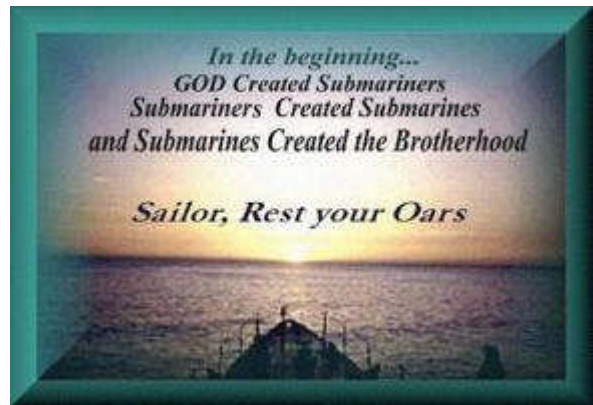
Cates	Fulton
Cline, R	Gallagher, R
Dentzman	Gawronski
Deschaine	



February 14 – Regular meeting

February Submarines Lost:

H.L. Hunley		February 17, 1864
USS Shark	SS 174	February 11, 1942
USS Amberjack	SS 219	February 16, 1943
USS Grayback	SS 208	February 26, 1944
USS Trout	SS 202	February 28, 1944
USS Barbel	SS 316	February 4, 1945



2008 Holland Club Inductees



The following Charleston Base members will be inducted into the Holland Club for 2008:

Rate	Name	Qual Boat	Hull #
EMC(SS)	Burton, G.	Cavalla	SSK244
EM1(SS)	Camp, J.	Threadfin	SS410
ENC(SS)	Daughtery, F.	Seapoacher	SS406
ICC(SS)	Gibson, R.	Jallao	SS368
IC3(SS)	Gilmer, H.	Darter	SS576
WO4(SS)	Mabie, S.	Tusk	SS426
EMCM(SS)	Roberts, W.	Toro	SS422
CDR(SS)	Spear, J.	Medregal	SS480
ETCM(SS)	Young, F.	Dogfish	SS350

All members qualified in 1958. Presentation and induction will be held at our regular meeting on 10 April 2008. All inductees

February 17 – CSS Hunley Memorial, starts 1900,
Sunrise Presbyterian Church

February 23 – Oyster Roast at The After Battery;
starts 1300; \$5 per person, pay at the
gate



Liberty Rules Have Changed

Kitty Hawk sailors chafe under liberty rules
SAN DIEGO — So you've got liberty in Japan? First, fill out this form. Then, get your chief's OK. And if you want to drink, don't forget your liberty buddy. And remember to phone in each day, even on your weekend off.

Those are just some of the rules for sailors stationed in Japan aboard the carrier Kitty Hawk, at least until the ship hands over its berth next summer to the George Washington before its eventual decommissioning. Kitty Hawk sailors are living with some of the strictest liberty rules in the Navy, even when their ship is at its homeport in Yokosuka with other forward-deployed Naval Forces commands.

Every Kitty Hawk sailor E-6 and below, and anyone planning to drink off base, must have an authorized liberty buddy and a detailed individual liberty plan that requires approval from his superior. Any change to that plan must be reported and approved by the first khaki in the command chain. The liberty restrictions — often tightened after a spate of off-duty and alcohol-related incidents involving sailors — don't always end there, according to sailors and fleet spokeswomen.

Several incidents occurred the week after Kitty Hawk returned from deployment Nov. 27. In response, the command tightened the policy by requiring departmental chiefs or officers to reach by phone or physically see each of their sailors E-6 and below every evening — even on weekends and regardless of marital status — to make sure they were following approved liberty plans. The restrictions infuriated some sailors.

“Kitty Hawk has entered a new phase of stupidity with its liberty plan requirements. 100 percent contact of every sailor by a khaki every night!” an unidentified sailor wrote in an e-mail to Navy Times. “The good are being punished with the bad.”

Another Kitty Hawk sailor, in a posting on a blog, lamented the newest restrictions.

“It's just sickening the way we are treated. The biggest sting of all is watching the 16-year-old dependents of other sailors walk the base freely by

are requested to attend.

National Constitution Proposed Amendment

Every member who has e-mail should have received the following:

As you remember at our January meeting I put out that we were submitting a proposed amendment to the USSVI National Constitution. From the response at the meeting, Charleston Base supports this change.

To refresh; the current Holland Club rules state that an annual dues paying member must pay dues for 5 consecutive years before being eligible for the Holland Club. After the 5-year period and induction into the Holland Club that member does not pay further national dues. Our proposal was to remove the 5-year requirement and only require a guy to be a member in good standing.

We since have compromised somewhat and this is our stand point: To be inducted into the Holland Club a member must be qualified for 50 years and be a member in good standing. If he is an annual dues paying member he will pay dues for 5 years and then pay no further national dues. Each base handles their base dues independently. This position is financially exactly the same as what exists today. There would be no financial impact on USSVI and a member would get his Holland Club recognition as soon as he meets the qualified for 50 year requirement.

I ask 2 things:

1. Please let me (Carl Chinn) know your position on this issue positive or negative. The sooner the better, e-mail is best (documentation). We need numbers to help support our input. I have asked all bases to do the same.
2. Read the information below on how our Board of Directors is handling things. This information is from the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws committee. Note specifically the info in red and blue.

Later, Carl

Below is the message from the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws committee:

“Carl, I can sympathize with your feelings. **I of course have no idea what is being done since the committee's meeting was stopped by the NC and taken to higher grounds. Some up there seem to feel that there is no discontent among the members and that all are happy with what ever the board decides.** I think that is partly because of the natural hesitancy many have of voicing their true feelings when around some members of the board.

I will continue to push to have someone let the committee continue on with the mission they were charged with doing. Actually as far as that goes, you can

themselves.”

And it's not necessarily any better for sailors on the other Japan-based ships.

One petty officer first class aboard the destroyer Mustin, in an e-mail to Navy Times relayed by another sailor, wrote about an impromptu date with his wife to a local restaurant, thanks to a helpful friend's offer to baby-sit their son. But before they could sit down to dinner and drinks that night, he had to go back to the ship to fill out a liberty plan and get his command's OK.

Considering his age and rank, “[I] should not have to ask for approval to consume a drink in public with my wife.”

But Navy officials say the liberty rules are needed to ensure good relations with the local community at their homeports or other foreign liberty ports. Alarmed by some high-profile crimes and allegations involving sailors, officials rewrote liberty rules in 2003, setting new off-duty and liberty restrictions for junior sailors, and instituted a system of color-coded liberty passes for sailors with U.S. Naval Forces-Japan.

“Relationships with our friends and partners can be negatively impacted by the poor conduct in foreign ports,” Cmdr. Dawn Cutler, a 7th Fleet spokeswoman, said by telephone Wednesday.

An off-duty incident that gets little attention in the U.S. often becomes a firestorm of controversy in Japan, officials said.

Kitty Hawk's recent spot checks were temporary, “since most liberty incidents in the past have occurred in the first few days after a return from deployment,” she said. The carrier did throttle back to require spot checks on 20 percent of sailors E-6 and below, Cmdr. Jensin Sommer, a spokeswoman for Task Force 70 aboard Kitty Hawk, said Friday via e-mail. Sommer said that is a normal fleet requirement, noting that spot checks are at each ship commander's discretion.

“These spot checks are a way to re-emphasize the point that if you want to deviate or make a change to your original plan, it is OK to do so, as long as you contact the first khaki in your chain of command and inform him/her of the change,” Sommer said. “This allows the sailor the flexibility to make a change to enjoy his/her liberty.” While officials laud the “flexibility” such rules provide, sailors call them restrictive and little more than baby-sitting.

“In my 21 years of service in the Navy and 10 years served under 7th fleet, [I've] never seen [it] this bad,” an unidentified Kitty Hawk chief petty officer wrote on a blog. “Hopefully, the future is more promising with the GW.”

Some sailors said tight restrictions have hurt morale. “The ships are so paranoid about people messing up because if they do, the ship has to formally address the incident, why it happened, why they didn't prevent it and what they'll do to ensure it doesn't happen again,” one sailor assigned to a Yokosuka warship wrote to Navy Times.

The recent crackdown in Kitty Hawk's liberty came about the same time as the publicized arrest of a petty

present your PA in the accepted form and I'll make sure at least that it gets presented to the board. As I said before, that is all I can do at this time. **My response would be to disseminate this information to as many bases and members as possible to let them know that the only chance any base has of having its desires listened to is if enough can join together to where perhaps the board will feel that we can not be ignored.** I think the best thing that could be done would be to try and get a movement going for putting in the C & B a referendum allowance, so that regardless of what the board might choose not to do, the membership could force an issue to be on the ballot. **To me it is a sad state of affairs, when it is evident that a large number of members want to vote on something and it can't be done.** Put your PA in the language you choose and I will help you with whatever else is needed to make sure that it is presented to the board to be approved. The Bylaws do state that similar PAs have to be combined, but I feel that there is a big difference in voting to make someone a member of the HC with 50 years in and having nothing said about relieving their having to pay dues and having them have to pay dues, so I also see no reason we couldn't have both on the ballot. **In the meantime let others know and if you can get support from other bases, do so.** Then maybe it will be approved.

Bill”

From Richard Cleeve

Take a look at the pictures on our web site under “The After Battery”. I added pictures of the new mural on the side of the float pole barn.

From the Storekeeper



The store is closed during the general meeting. It will be open before the meeting and for 30 min after the meeting, NOT during the meeting.



If you have ordered anything please check to see if it is in and pick it up.



Check out the store's new patches and pins.



Winter is here, It's time to order your USSVI Jacket

Welcome to the New Veterans Affairs (VA) Officer

On February 1st, Jim Morrison will relieve Nick Nichols as the Charleston Base VA Officer. Jim retired from the Navy in 1994 as a STSCM(SS) with his last command being USS Von Steuben Decom COB. His qual boat was USS Thomas Jefferson (SSBN) 618 Blue and he served on a total of five boats. He is married with three children and is a soon-to-be grandfather.

Jim began working at the Charleston VA Hospital in '96 and is currently the Information Security Officer. His wife, Deborah, works at the VA Hospital where she is the Administrative Officer for Long Term Care and Geriatrics and Rehab

officer second class, who allegedly punched a Japanese woman Dec. 2 in Yokosuka and is assigned to 7th Fleet command ship Blue Ridge, according to articles in Stars and Stripes.

The sailor who wrote the e-mail said the Blue Ridge doesn't require its sailors to submit individual liberty plans.

Military Compensation Offsets

For most of the century, the military compensation system has been riddled with a confusing maze of offsets (i.e., benefit deductions) intended to constrain compensation payments and limit government costs. More than a decade of intensive education efforts by The Military Coalition, along with the graphic examples of inequities facing veterans and survivors of current and past conflicts, have convinced Congress that many of the offsets are unfair, as indicated by the following list of victories:

- 1999: repealed retired pay penalty for officers working as federal civilians;
- 1999: won the first easing of the disability offset to retired pay for severely disabled retirees;
- 2001-03: expanded full concurrent receipt to all combat-disabled service members with 20 or more years of service and won a 10-year phase-out of the disability offset for others with 20-plus years;
- 2004: won a four-year phase-out of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity reduction imposed on survivors age 62 and older (intended as an offset to Social Security);
- 2004: won full, immediate concurrent receipt for 100-percent disabled service members with 20-plus years; and
- 2005: accelerated the effective date of full concurrent receipt for unemployables.

And those changes proved only a start, as the tide of philosophical change has generated more and more cracks in the logic behind the offsets. In 2007, there have been several new developments of major significance:

- The Dole-Shalala wounded warrior task force recommended (and the Bush administration endorsed) repeal of the deduction of military disability separation pay from VA disability compensation.
- The Veterans Disability Benefits Commission recommended elimination of any deduction of service-earned retired pay from VA disability compensation and elimination of the deduction of VA Dependency and Indemnity compensation from survivors' SBP annuities if the death was caused by service.

Medicine. This combination will ensure our Base membership is kept up-to-date with the most current information from the Department of Veteran Affairs.



Construction Complete on Unique Submarine Escape Trainer at SUBASE New London

GROTON, Conn. (NNS) -- Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC), Mid-Atlantic has completed construction on a one-of-a-kind Submarine Escape Trainer at the Naval Submarine School in SUBASE New London, Conn.

At the core of the new \$18 million facility is a 20-foot diameter, 40-foot high, 84,000-gallon pool atop escape trunks, called the Lock-out Trunk (LOT) and the Logistics Escape Trunk (LET), that simulate conditions a submariner would experience during an escape from a submerged submarine. Also within the four-story pool tower are diving support equipment, pool operation equipment, and two recompression chambers.

"A key component of the success of this project was the extensive involvement and assistance from the Naval Submarine School's N4 Engineering and High Risk Training Department during the entire project," said Robert Howland, the project engineer from NAVFAC Mid-Atlantic's New London Public Works Department. "They are the professionals who will use this facility and they know exactly what is needed to sufficiently train these sailors." The pressurized training unit is intended to train for escape from a disabled submarine with current escape immersion equipment that is in the fleet. The facility is designed to be compatible with the Navy's Seawolf, Los Angeles, Trident and Virginia class submarines. The training facility will familiarize submariners with realistic escape procedures, marking a significant improvement over the unpressurized simulator currently in use. The contract was awarded on Feb. 14, 2005, as a Design Build Contract to M. A. Mortenson Company of Minneapolis, Minn. and Kling Architecture & Engineering of Philadelphia, Pa., as the Architecture and Engineer. Mortenson completed construction in August 2007. Naval Facilities Engineering Service Center is now installing the LOT and LET trunks and relocating the existing recompression chamber and other

- The new FY 2008 Defense Authorization Act authorizes full concurrent receipt for all combat-disabled service members forced into medical retirement before 20 years of service, full concurrent receipt for unemployables, and at least some modest payment to SBP-DIC survivors in recognition of the inequity of the offset.

Unfortunately, most of these improvements were won despite strong objections from DoD and whichever (Clinton or Bush) administration was in place at the time (the notable exception being the Dole-Shalala recommendation on military disability separation pay, which the current administration has endorsed).

The past years of progress, along with the dramatic developments in 2007, show that "it's always been that way" arguments are losing their credibility. Now, we're winning more focus on what the payments actually are for and whether offsets serve that purpose. Congress has recognized that the disability offset to retired pay and the DIC offset to SBP are wrong, and we're now only talking about finding the money to fix those inequities. The next logical move is to examine the various separation pays that are subject to offset by VA disability compensation and reserve retired pay. Current law, in effect, treats separation pays as advances on retired pay. MOAA among others, disagrees with that. We think a main purpose of separation pay is to help service members offset the expense of transition to post-military life, and amounts paid for that purpose shouldn't be subject to later recoupment from reserve retired pay or VA compensation. Past progress on the disability and survivor offsets gives hope for the future on easing separation pay inequities, too.

From the VA Officer:

1. Protecting Your Social Security Number

Experts offer the following tips to protect your Social Security number (SSN) and protect yourself from identity theft: Do not carry your Social Security card, passport or birth certificate in your purse or wallet; cancel any credit cards you do not use; do not share your SSN when it is not necessary; remove your name from the marketing lists of the three primary credit bureaus by calling (888) 5OPT-OUT; request a copy of your Social Security Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement at least every three years to make sure the information in your file is correct; be aware of what is on your credit report -- obtain your report once or twice a year to be sure it is correct.

2. Some of you may have seen this information already but it is always worth repeating:

government furnished equipment for the facility. The tank will be filled in July 2008 and the facility will become operational in December 2008. Upon completion of the pool operating system testing, the N4 Engineering and High Risk Training Department staff has approximately four months for staff training and certification before the facility can send the first class of students through this Navy training course.



TriCare For Life Enrollment

When TRICARE beneficiaries become entitled to Medicare Part A and B on the basis of age, disability or end-stage renal disease, they are eligible for Tricare for Life (TFL). TFL is Tricare's Medicare-wraparound coverage available worldwide to Tricare beneficiaries who are also entitled to Medicare. Beneficiaries entitled to Medicare Part A who decline Medicare Part B coverage will lose their former Tricare health care benefit (with the exception of active duty family members). TFL is available to all Tricare and Medicare dual-eligible Uniformed Services beneficiaries, regardless of age, including retired members of the National Guard and Reserve who are in receipt of retired pay, family members, widows/widowers and certain former spouses. Dependent parents and parents-in-law are not eligible for TFL. Uniformed Services beneficiaries entitled to Medicare Part A are required by law to have Medicare Part B coverage to retain their Tricare benefits with one exception. Active duty family members entitled to Medicare Part A are not required to purchase Medicare Part B coverage. When the active duty service member retires, family members must have Medicare Part B coverage in place upon the date of retirement to avoid loss of Tricare benefits. There are no enrollment fees for TFL. Eligible Medicare-Tricare beneficiaries must pay Medicare Part B premiums if other than active duty family member. DoD encourages beneficiaries to purchase Medicare Part B when they are first eligible. Although beneficiaries may delay Medicare Part B sign up for up to eight months in certain circumstances, they will not be covered by Tricare until Part B coverage begins. Beneficiaries should confirm that their Medicare status

A veteran recently received his Military Retiree Account Statement and reviewed the information. He discovered that someone totally unknown to him was designated as the beneficiary in case of his death and would receive 100% of the benefits. Based upon the fact that recently the VA had military retiree personnel information compromised it is interesting that somehow this veterans beneficiaries was changed. Please be sure to check who your current beneficiary is. I have gone to the MyPay website and verified mine.

VA Insurance Dividends In 2008

More than a million veterans are in line to share \$349 million in annual insurance dividends during 2008, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). VA operates one of the nation's largest life insurance programs, providing more than \$1 trillion in coverage to 7.1 million service members, veterans, and family members. The dividend payments will be sent to an estimated 1.1 million holders of VA insurance policies on the anniversary date of their policies. Sent automatically through different payment plans, the amounts will vary based on the age of the veteran, the type of insurance, and the length of time the policy has been in force. The dividends come from the earnings of trust funds into which veterans have paid insurance premiums over the years, and are linked to returns on investments in U.S. government securities. VA officials caution veterans about a long-running scam in which various groups charge fees to "locate" veterans who are eligible for the dividends. Veterans eligible for the dividends have had VA life insurance policies in effect since they left the military and have received annual notifications from VA about the policies. Dividends are paid each year to veterans holding certain government life insurance policies and who served between 1917 and 1956. World War II veterans holding National Service Life Insurance ("V") policies comprise the largest group receiving 2008 insurance dividend payments. They are expected to receive total payments of \$269.6 million. An additional group of World War II era veterans, those who have Veterans Reopened Insurance ("J," "JR" and "JS") policies, will in total receive dividends of \$9.2 million. Korean War era veterans who have maintained Veterans Special Life Insurance ("RS" and "W") policies can expect to receive dividends totaling \$69.3 million. Dividends totaling \$875,000 will be paid to veterans who served between World War I and 1940 and who hold U.S. Government Life Insurance ("K") policies. Veterans who have questions about their

is current in the Defense Eligibility and Enrollment Reporting System (DEERS) by calling the DSO Telephone Center at 1(800) 538-9552 or for the Deaf (TTY/TDD) 1(866) 363-2883. Beneficiaries can visit Tricare's DEERS Web site www.Tricare.osd.mil/deers/update-info.cfm to learn how to update their personal information. Beneficiaries are signed up for Medicare Part B during their initial enrollment period, which begins three months before the month beneficiaries turn 65 and ends seven months after the month beneficiaries turn 65. Those who do not sign up for Medicare Part B when first eligible may sign up for Part B during the general enrollment period that occurs 1 JAN through 31 MAR of each year. For those who enroll in Part B during the general enrollment period, Part B and TFL coverage begin 1 JUL of that year. Beneficiaries pay a Medicare Part B premium penalty surcharge of 10% for each year or portion thereof they failed to sign up when first eligible. (NOTE: Although the eligibility age for full Social Security benefits is changing, the eligibility age for Medicare is not).

Beneficiaries with group health plan coverage based on their current employment or that of a family member are not required by Medicare to sign up for Part B. They may sign up for Medicare Part B without paying the surcharge for late enrollment as long as they were covered by an employer group health plan or they may delay signing up for up to eight months after employment or health plan coverage ends, whichever comes first. Although Medicare does not require beneficiaries with group health coverage to sign up for Part B, TRICARE coverage will not begin until Medicare Part B coverage begins. For information about Medicare Part B, beneficiaries can visit the Social Security Administration Web site, www.ssa.gov, or call 1(800) 772-1213. Beneficiaries can also visit the Medicare Web site, www.medicare.gov.

Sugar Substitutes

Some people try to limit the amount of sugars they consume to lose weight or because they have certain medical conditions, such as diabetes mellitus. The FDA has approved several alternative sweeteners; however, anecdotal reports continue to question the safety of some of these products. Sugar alternatives are of two basic types: nonnutritive and nutritive sweeteners. Nonnutritive sweeteners are low-calorie sweeteners and include saccharin, aspartame, acesulfame K, and sucralose. Early concerns about saccharin causing human urinary bladder cancer based on animal studies have not been substantiated in later human studies. Nutritive sweeteners have the same calories as sugar (i.e. the calories are what make them nutritive) so they are not useful in low-calorie diets. They are metabolized more slowly than sugar, so they don't cause a rapid increase in blood glucose

policies may contact the VA insurance toll-free number at 1-800-669-8477 or send an email to VAinsurance@va.gov. They may also visit VA on the Internet at <http://www.insurance.va.gov/>.

SBP Paid Up Provision Update 04

- 1) What is Paid-up SBP? Paid-up SBP refers to a provision of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) law passed by Congress in OCT 98 and which is due to take effect in OCT 08. This change in the law applies to qualified members who will no longer be required to pay SBP premiums once they satisfy certain age and premium payment requirements.
- 2) Who is eligible to have their SBP premiums stopped? Any retiree who is age 70 or older and whose retired pay has been reduced for SBP premiums for at least 360 months will qualify to have their SBP costs terminated.
- 3) Are retirees with Reserve Component SBP (RCSBP) coverage eligible? Yes. Any reference made to SBP premiums also includes RCSBP premiums.
- 4) Is a retiree who has paid SBP premiums for 360 months or more but has not reached age 70 eligible to have premiums terminated? No. In order to qualify for the termination of SBP premiums, a retiree must satisfy both requirements of the law. The retiree must be age 70 or older and made payments for at least 360 months of SBP costs.
- 5) Does the termination of premium payments also apply to retirees with RSFPP coverage? Yes. Congress amended the law in OCT 99 to include Retired Serviceman's Family Protection Plan (RSFPP) participants. Any retiree who is age 70 or older and currently enrolled in the RSFPP is eligible to have their RSFPP costs terminated.
- 6) When does Paid-up SBP begin? The earliest effective date that a qualified retiree may stop paying SBP premiums is 1 OCT 08. The first retired pay payment affected will be the payment dated 1 NOV 08.
- 7) What if the retiree has paid more than 360 months of premiums before 1 OCT 08? Will there be a refund? No. There will be no refund of excess premiums paid prior to the 1 OCT 08, effective date of Paid-up SBP.
- 8) When will SBP premiums stop for retirees who reach age 70 and have paid 360 months of premiums after 1 OCT 08? Retirees who fall into this category will not be charged SBP premiums beginning with the month they reach age 70 and have paid 360 months of premiums.

which is an advantage for diabetics. Nutritive sweeteners include mannitol and sorbitol, which can cause diarrhea if taken in large amounts. Consumers should read labels to find out which sweetener is used when a product says it is sugar free.

It is difficult for the home cook to replace the sugar called for in recipes with sugar substitutes. Sugar (and chemically related products such as honey, brown sugar, corn syrup, molasses, and maple syrup) has a significant effect on the texture, appearance, and other characteristics of home-cooked food - it adds more than sweetness.

Eliminating sugar and replacing it with substitutes generally results in an inferior product. If you want to eat sweet yet minimize consumption of sugar and its relatives, it is probably easiest to tour your local grocery store to see what commercially available products there are with sugar substitutes. The list continues to grow - ice creams, frozen fruit pies, yogurts, pudding mixes, chocolate and other candies, etc. These can easily be combined to make novel low-sugar desserts. For example, a root beer float can be made with "diet root beer" and ice cream made with a sugar substitute.

For those who want to try cooking with sugar substitutes consider the individual characteristics of each sweetener before you use it. Many are not heat stable and should not be used in cooked products.

- Aspartame when heated loses its sweetness so it does not work well in cooked products. Since it doesn't have an aftertaste, it can be used in products that aren't heated.
- Saccharin can be used in cooking. However, when used in the larger amounts needed to sweeten custards and other products it has a noticeable aftertaste.
- Acesulfame-K is in between saccharin and aspartame with little aftertaste and some heat stability.
- Sucralose is packaged to be sold as a sugar substitute for cooking, and can be found in many grocery stores in the baking section.

Read the label - some products sold as a substitute for sugar are actually a combination of sucralose and table sugar. Using them only reduces calories by about 25%. An alternative is just to reduce the amount of sugar in the recipe. This works for most recipes except for some cakes and candies, which need the sugar for the desired texture and consistency. In general, it is difficult to substitute artificial sweeteners for sugar. When small amounts are used and the sugar doesn't contribute to the texture of the product - such as a sweetener

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- 9) How will the 360 months of paid-up premiums be determined? The retiree will receive a one-month credit for each month retired pay was reduced. This will be determined by using both current election records and historical records of the initial SBP election.
 - 10) What if the retiree does not have 360 months of paid-up premiums on 1 OCT 08? A retiree who does not have 360 months of paid-up premiums on 1 OCT 08 is not eligible to have the SBP costs stopped. In these cases the retiree will receive an additional one-month credit for each month retired pay is reduced until 360 months of paid premiums is reached.
 - 11) What if the retiree does not have SBP costs deducted from retired pay but pays by direct remittance? For the purpose of computing the number of months of retired pay reductions, direct remittance payments shall apply as if retired pay was reduced.
 - 12) Will retirees be notified of their paid-up status? Notices will be mailed to retirees informing them of the number of months of coverage that have been credited to their account toward paid-up status.
 - 13) When will retirees receive notification from DFAS? Details regarding a retiree's personal account will not be ready for release until May 2008. DFAS will begin the notification process at that time.
 - 14) Who can expect to receive notification letters from DFAS in May 2008? Retirees enrolled in either the SBP or RSFPP programs that are at least 68 years of age or have been retired and paying premiums for at least 27 years will receive notification letters in May 08.
 - 15) What type of information will be provided in the notification letter? The notice retirees will receive will provide Paid-up SBP information as well as specific information about their account, the number of months of paid-up premiums and their current paid-up status. The notice will also instruct retirees of the right to challenge their paid-up status if they disagree with the number of months of paid-up premiums calculated by DFAS.
 - 16) What if the retiree does not agree with the number of months of coverage provided on their notice? If the retiree does not agree with the number of months of coverage credited to their retired pay account the retiree will have the option to prove differently.

sprinkled on fruit or cereal, or added to beverages such as tea or coffee - they work quite well.

SSA Future Benefits Update 01

Cuts to Social Security, as well as Medicare, may come under consideration of lawmakers this year. The Congressional Budget Office is predicting that surplus Social Security payroll taxes will start to decline in just two or three years. Program costs will begin to exceed cash revenues in just ten years, thus putting pressure on other parts of the federal budget. In his recently published book, retired Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan said that "resolving the funding shortfall for federal social insurance (Social Security) is going to require benefit cuts." "In short," he says, "the promises may have to be broken." Yet, despite the gloomy financial outlook for Social Security, Congress recently considered "piecemeal approach" legislation that would legalize illegal immigrants. Just three months after Congress failed to pass guest worker immigration amnesty last year, legislation was once again introduced in the Senate that would give conditional legal status to young illegal immigrants. The measure failed. Without changes to current Social Security law, should illegal immigrants gain legal work authorization and a work-authorized Social Security number, they eventually would be able to claim Social Security benefits. Under current Social Security policy, when determining benefits the Social Security Administration counts all reported earnings, even those earned for unauthorized work using an invalid or fake Social Security number. If Congress adds millions of illegal immigrants to Social Security's rolls it would make Social Security's troubled finances even worse, and could trigger benefit cuts for seniors and future retirees who earned their benefits legally. To counter this Representative Dana Rohrabacher (CA) has introduced the "No Social Security for Illegal Immigrants Act". The legislation would ban Social Security credit for earnings from illegal work, and wages from unauthorized work could not be used to determine entitlement to benefits.

VA Hospice Care Update 01

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is providing hospice and palliative care to a growing number of veterans throughout the country as the need continues to rise for care and comfort at the end of life. VA provides palliative care consultation services at each of its medical centers and inpatient hospice care in many of its nursing homes throughout the country. VA contracts with

- 17) What information must the retiree provide to have their months of coverage adjusted? The retiree must submit DD Form 2656-11, "Statement Certifying Number of Months of SBP Premiums Paid." In addition, the retiree may be requested to provide documentary evidence for each month of Paid-up SBP credit claimed. Upon receipt of the DD Form 2656-11, DFAS will review and adjust the retired pay record to reflect the number of months that the retiree certifies has been paid.
- 18) Can the DD Form 2656-11 be filed at any time? No. Retirees who elect to submit a DD Form 2656-11 must do so within one year after initial notification of the number of months of Paid-up SBP credited.
- 19) How often may retirees challenge their paid-up status by filing a DD Form 2656-11? Retirees will be permitted to challenge their paid-up status only once. They will not be permitted to submit multiple forms to DFAS.

Sharing A Glimpse Of The Life Many Of Us So Dearly Loved...

Editor's Note:

Although this item is mostly in "skimmer-ese", we all can change a few words and relate very well. It fits. Thanks Al

I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains pipe, the syncopated clangor of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, harsh, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I liked Navy vessels -- plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers.

I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Midway, Lexington, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge - - memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

I liked the lean angular names of Navy "tin-cans" and escorts, mementos of heroes who went before us.

And the others - - San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago, Oklahoma City, named for our cities.

I liked the tempo of a Navy band.

I liked liberty call and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

I even liked the never ending paperwork and all hands working parties as my ship filled herself with the multitude of supplies, both mundane and to cut

community-based hospice programs to enhance VA's ability to provide this critical service when and where needed. Nearly 9,000 veterans were treated in designated hospice beds at VA facilities in 2007, and thousands of other veterans were referred to community hospices to receive care in their homes. The number of veterans treated in VA's inpatient hospice beds increased by 21% in 2007. In addition, the average daily number of veterans receiving hospice care in their homes paid for by VA increased by 30% this past year.

Because of the large number of World War II and Korean era veterans and a tripling of the number of veterans over the age of 85 from 2000 to 2010, the increase in the need for hospice care is expected to continue. The proportion of Vietnam-era veterans over the age of 65 will continue to increase through 2014, when Vietnam veterans will account for nearly 60% of all veterans in that age group.

VA's expansion of its hospice and palliative care capabilities came about through collaboration with community-care providers. In 2001, the National Hospice-Veteran Partnership Initiative began to build partnerships between VA facilities and community hospice providers, funded in part by the VA and by nonprofit groups such as the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization and the Advanced Illness Care Coordination Center. To date, VA has partnered with community hospice programs in 35 states to promote hospice services that are not provided directly by VA staff. These partnerships help veterans transition from VA hospitals to their homes in the community.

Palliative care adds a focus on quality of life and comfort to veterans with life-limiting illness, and their families. Palliative care consultation teams include physicians, nurses, social workers and chaplains. Additional support may be provided by pharmacists, rehabilitation therapists, recreation therapists, mental health professionals and other specialists. VA provides palliative care consultation teams at all of its hospitals nationwide, although such services are provided at only about one-fourth of all American hospitals. Nearly half of all veterans who died in VA facilities received care from a palliative care team prior to their deaths. For more info on VA's programs and obtaining services refer to

<http://www1.va.gov/geriatricsshg/page.cfm?pg=65>.

Admiral Osborne Scholarship Fund

How about helping out the scholarship fund? We are offering a Charleston Base Challenge Coin for sale. ALL proceeds go into the scholarship fund. Coins only cost \$7 each. Available for an

ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men from all parts of the land, farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the big cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me -- for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed:

"Now Hear This" "Now station the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port," and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

I liked the fierce and dangerous activity on the flight deck of aircraft carriers, earlier named for battles won but sadly now named for politicians.

Enterprise, Independence, Boxer, Princeton and oh so many more, some lost in battle, and sadly many scrapped.

I liked the names of the aircraft and helicopters; Skyraider, Intruder, Sea King, Phantom, Skyhawk, Demon, Skywarrior, Corsair, and many more that bring to mind offensive and defensive orders of battle.

I liked the excitement of an alongside replenishment as my ship slid in alongside the oiler and the cry of "Standby to receive shotlines" prefaced the hard work of rigging spanwires and fuel hoses echoed across the narrow gap of water between the ships and welcomed the mail and fresh milk, fruit and vegetables that sometimes accompanied the fuel.

I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness - the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small that told me that my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

additional \$1 is a protective plastic capsule.

To get your coin(s) see Jim Yates, Julian Villegas or Carl Chinn.

Make sure you have one for "when you get challenged"!

Buy several for great gifts!



Veterans Build Replica Of Submarine

Frank Holland and Ken Cole, two U.S. Navy submarine veterans, are active participants with the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Nautilus Base.

"After we got the local chapter of Submarine Veterans started, we decided our group needed a project to give us cohesiveness," Holland said. "We started looking around for a project that would interest them."

The two men came up with the idea of building a replica of the Nautilus submarine, the first sub to make an underwater crossing at the North Pole. Holland, a 22-year veteran, served on the Nautilus and was part of the crew to receive a New York City ticker-tape parade in 1958.

Cole, a four year veteran, served on the USS Trumpetfish, doing maneuvers during the Cold War era with the U.S. Navy 6th Fleet.

The Nautilus was the first nuclear powered boat, with a diesel engine back-up to get where it needed to go if repairs were needed.

"The first submarine, the Hunley, was built during the Civil War," Cole said. The Hunley was found about five years ago in Charleston Bay, S.C., and is on display there.

Cole went on to say that submarines were counted as 27 percent of the Navy and were used to sink 52 percent of Japanese merchant and war ships.

The local group's replica of the Nautilus was built to 1/13th scale. Holland is an engineer and machinist, and built many of the parts. A Boeing B-25 drop fuel tank was donated to the group by Hoffman Air Boats in Inverness.

Holland and Cole called the Nautilus Museum in Groton, CT, for information on the boat. "They sent us the blueprints for the Nautilus," Cole said.

Holland took them to Staples and had them blown up until the boat was exactly 24 feet. He made a

I liked quiet mid-watches with the aroma of strong coffee -- the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness.

I liked the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war -- ready for anything.

And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and now women who made them.

I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones and Burke.

A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, we still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and mess decks.

Gone ashore for good we grow humble about our Navy days, when the seas were a part of us and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, WE stand taller and say, " I WAS A SAILOR ONCE."

Captain Lew Thames, U.S. Navy(retired)

The Scuttlebutt

After Battery Scuttlebutt

On a recent Wednesday Social the following was overheard:

(Ken Hutchison to Rick "Tunnel Rat" Wise)...

"Well, you might as well have a nemesis 'cause you sure don't have any friends!"

Of course...all of the Torpedomen in the room ran around trying to find a dictionary.

template of the tank and laid it against the pressure hull of the Nautilus to make sure they started with an exact fit.

"Hoffman also donated a trailer the size of a small mobile home, so we could make the project mobile and have something to carry it on when we finished," Cole said.

The project had the exact effect on their Nautilus veterans group they hoped for. Everyone got in on the act and it took two years to complete the project.



The Marines Don't Have Anything On Us!
We have our own Latin phrase:

SEMPER TACITUS
ALWAYS SILENT

