

TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 8, No.3

March 2012

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 of America and its Constitution”



Base Meeting:

Second Thursday of the month, March 8th, 2012
Social Hour: 1800
Meeting starts: 1900

Location:

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 269
Low Country Home
99 Wisteria Rd.
Goose Creek, South Carolina Phone 843-569-2962

Special Officers Phone Number

Chief of the Boat	Rick Sparger	843-553-5594
Public Affairs	Larry Starland	843 863-8474
Veterans Affairs	Jim Morrison	843-832-9716
Chaplain	John “Nick” Nichols	843-452-3189
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	John Lookabill	843-797-2991
Scholarship	Julian Villegas	843-871-6135
Newsletter	Ervin Chase	904-327-6045
Storekeeper	Ken Hutchison	843-553-0935
Webmaster	John “Nick” Nichols	843-452-3189
Historian	George Scharf	843 873-3318

Base Officers Phone Number

Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Vice Commander	Marty Sessler	843-871-1536
Secretary	Theron Irving	843-572-2731
Treasurer	Terry Trump	843-873-9563

Minutes of the February 2012 meeting

Attendance for Feb 09, 2012 meeting was 102

Opening Ceremony: Base Commander Carl Chinn called the meeting to order. A Quorum was present and the meeting was commenced at 1900.

Introductions: New people introduced: Chuck Boing, CWO; Clement Cager (“CC”), ETC(SS); Gary Sargent; John Mondo, TMC(M)(SS); Randy Cherry, ETC(SS); Randy Soscia; John Sabo; Joe Smith, MMCS(SS); Pat Tully, MMC (SS); Clay Robinson. Welcome aboard!!

Secretary: Asked for and received approval for last month’s minutes.

Treasurer: Terry gave balance report on Base Treasury.

Vice Commander: Marty Sessler report progress of various repairs to Base Float. Base Float will be stored at Ed Young’s after the Grits Festival.

Chaplain:

You all are doing a great job helping me keep the membership updated on issues concerning our shipmates and their families. There's no way I could do this alone. BZ to all of you!

- **Harry Feller:** Harry had 4 x bypasses on Oct. 26 and since then has been in and out of the hospital and rehabs. He is doing well now. Harry is with us tonight.
- **Clell 'Hutch' Hutchinson:** Hutch was in the hospital for heart related problems at the end of 2011. After a few scares he was moved to Heartland for rehab and has been there since mid-January. He does appreciate the visits, calls and prayers. Hutch went home today.
- **Gerry Farr:** Gerry had his knee replacement mid-Jan and all went well with that. Problems began that night with a mild heart attack. He was moved to the ICU, determined to have blockages and needed a 4x bypass. Since then he has been between Health South and Trident for various issues. Now at home doing rehab on the knee. He is scheduled for a 4x bypass on Feb. 14th at Trident. He really appreciates the prayers, visits and calls from everyone. His daughter, Mary McNeese, has been great at keeping us in the loop so if you go by to see Gerry, be sure to thank Mary.
- **Bill Roberts:** Bill fell in early December and fractured the bone around the pin in his left leg from his artificial hip. After several weeks in rehab he is at home and recovering. He has 2 to 3 weeks more on the walker and then using a cane. Bill is with us tonight.
- **Stan Standrich:** Stan went back to Trident in mid-January and had surgery on his leg. He has had a real battle and finally ended up having both legs amputated above the knees. Email today from Anetha is that he finally had a good day and is ready to begin rehab. He will be moving to Health South on Monday and once he is stronger will begin chemo. He and Anetha want to thank everyone for the prayers, visits and calls.
- **Richard Barnette:** Rich fell in mid-January and fractured his pelvis in two places. He was in Health South for rehab for several weeks and is now home doing well.
- **Lee Lookabill:** John's wife, Lee, has been diagnosed with lung cancer. She has begun her radiation and at the completion of that will be taking chemo treatments.

- **Barry Wilson:** Barry has cancer of the pancreas and colon and is taking chemo treatments. His wife, Elsie, has been diagnosed with cancer also.
- **Pappy Henderson:** Pappy had some areas of cancer removed from his head in what was a very painful treatment. He's a strong man. Drove him self home after the removal. Pappy is with us tonight.
- **EP:** Dale Scott departed on Eternal Patrol in January. He as a WWII SUBVET who made two war patrols on the TINOSA during the war. He was not a member of Charleston Base.
- **EP:** Thomas McPeeters departed on Eternal Patrol in January. He was a plank owner on the Sandlance and served with Charleston Base member Chris Hayden on the Francis Scott Key. He was not a member of Charleston Base.
- **Ev Fuhr:** Ken's wife, Ev, has some medical issues and would like everyone's prayers.
- **Janice Carrig:** Bobby Lowe's daughter, Janice, passed away on Feb. 2nd. Her funeral was on Feb. 6th and 7 of our members attended and wore their vests to honor Bobby and the family. (Carl Chinn, Gary Williams, John Hill, Mike Cousino, Jerry Stout, Stacy Power and Jerry Koebel.)
- **Lois Van Swearingen:** Joe's wife, Lois, passed away on Feb. 5th.
- **Walt Deal:** Walt had his left knee replaced this past Tuesday. He is doing well and should be going home for rehab on Friday.
- **Ed Bowles:** Ed was scheduled for 4x bypass at 1230 today at Roper. Ed's daughter, Edie, called during the meeting to let us know he is out of surgery and in ICU and doing well.
- **Dave Saari:** Dave continues with his chemo. He has had to receive several pints of blood in the last few weeks. Dave is with us tonight.

NOTE: Please get your mug shot taken if you haven't already done so. Also, please complete your Page 2 if you haven't done so. Copies are on the SK's table. 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.

Newsletter: No Report

Storekeeper: Calendars are for sale, 90 North patches are on order. Ken reports he will be calling about the

cost of Holland Club Chevrons. Storekeeper has a large selection of various patches that can be ordered.

Holland Club: John reports there are now 14 members to be inducted in April. John is still waiting on word from the National Commander of the Holland Club. Base elections will be held in May.

SUBVETS WWII: Lee reports that SubVets WW II will be disbanded in September 2012 at the National Convention in Norfolk, Virginia. Swamp Fox Chapter Secretary Roger reports of an upcoming event on 14 April in the honor of Sy Mabe. A flag rededication will be held at the family's property in Bowman, SC. More details will be ready at the March meeting.

Veteran's Affairs: No Report

Little David: Rick reports that he is working up a working party in the near future. More details to follow.

Scholarship: No Report.

District Commander: South East Conference will be held April 18 – 22. National Commander is running for a second term.

Historian: No Report.

Nuclear Historian: Various geographical aspects of Women were discussed. A wide range of age groups were discussed about their various attributes as related to geography. Very interesting indeed. Man's geography was also discussed, but between the ages of 1-80 it is pretty much agreed that he is ruled basically by one item.

Chief of the Boat: Oyster Roast will be on Saturday 25 Feb, location will be Cooper River Complex on Bushy Park road. Maps are published and available from the COB. The May Base Picnic will be held at the same location on May 5th.

Base Commander's comments: An audit was performed by Steve with no discrepancies found. Inputs for Distinguished Submariner should be submitted NLT 8 March. By-law change inputs submitted NLT 15 March. Please be thinking about Sy Mabe event to get an accurate head count can be obtained. 11 April is Submarine Birthday memorial at Cold War Memorial.

Old Business: None

New Business: A motion for the Base to fund Holland Club chevrons was tabled for further discussion when a better cost amount can be made.

Good of the Order: Honor flight will be held in April. FRA is having a raffle for Honor Flight escorts. Base will not participate in the Huntley Memorial event. It is urged that we show up as a group to support our Creed. Vests should be worn or a blazer & tie.

Depth Charge: \$598 with \$299.00 to winner Ken Hutchinson. Ken donated \$199.00 to the building fund.

Meeting Adjourned: The Base Commander adjourned the meeting @ 2020.

March Submarines Lost:

USS Perch	SS 176	March 3, 1942
USS Grampus	SS 207	March 5, 1943
USS Triton	SS 201	March 15, 1943
USS Tullibee	SS 284	March 26, 1944
USS Kete	SS 369	March 20, 1945
USS Trigger	SS 237	March 26, 1945
USS F-4	SS 21	March 25, 1915
USS H-1	SS 28	March 12, 1920

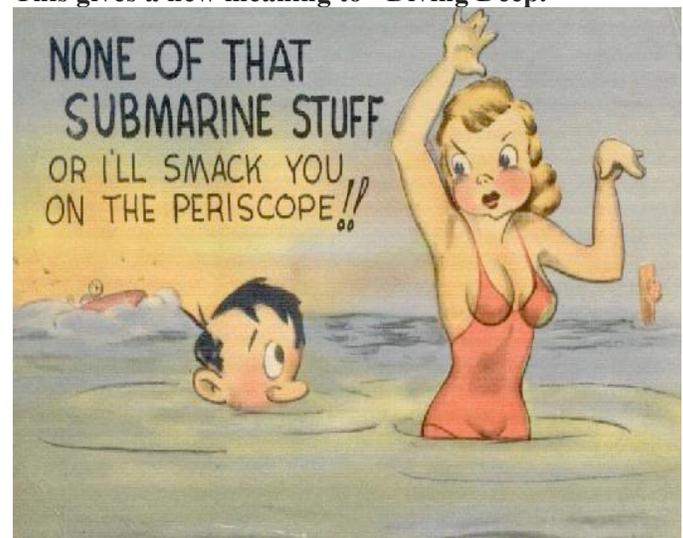
March Events

March 8th - Distinguished Submarine Award Presented

March 17th - St Patrick Day Parade - USSVICB Pulling Float @ Savannah.

March 24th - Amberjack Memorial Service - 1100 @ Patriots Point

This gives a new meaning to "Diving Deep."



Female officers kicked off subs in fraud probe

Navy Times, March 2

Three female supply officers were pulled from submarine crews within months of joining the force for allegedly committing fraud prior to checking in at their boats, a Submarine Forces spokeswoman confirmed Friday. These three were among the eight Supply Corps lieutenants that reported to the submarine force, a cadre chosen to be role models for the younger female submariners reporting straight from training to the previously all-male force.

“The alleged actions under investigation involve financial misconduct and in no way involved their performance while assigned to their current operational units,” said Submarine Forces spokeswoman Cmdr. Monica Rousselow, who explained the allegations concerned fraudulent travel claims while on temporary assigned duty.

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigation began in February, Rousselow said, but she declined to comment further on the nature of the allegations or who had first reported them because the investigation is still open.

The three reliefs are a setback for the ongoing integration of the undersea force. But officials characterized the disruption as “minimal” — pointing out this is not the first time supply lieutenants had been removed from subs — and that the larger effort is still on track.

“Overall, the integration of women onboard submarines continues to progress smoothly and the reassignment of the three Supply Corps officers will have a minimal impact on the integration process,” Rousselow said.

Each of the female Supply Corps lieutenants volunteered for sub duty and had been vetted. Once chosen for sub duty, they attended the 10-week-long Submarine Officer Basic Course, Rousselow said. Each lieutenant was to report to the sub along with two female submariners. In total, there were eight of these groups, one each for the Blue and Gold crews of the four subs selected: the ballistic-missile submarines Wyoming and Maine, and the guided-missile subs Georgia and Ohio. None of the female officers had been taken to mast as of Friday, Rousselow said. She declined to release their names or the subs they had been assigned to, citing privacy concerns. They are being reassigned to Submarine Group 10 in Kings Bay, Ga., she said.



**VFW members duct-tape flag burner to flag pole
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2012
Valley Falls NY**

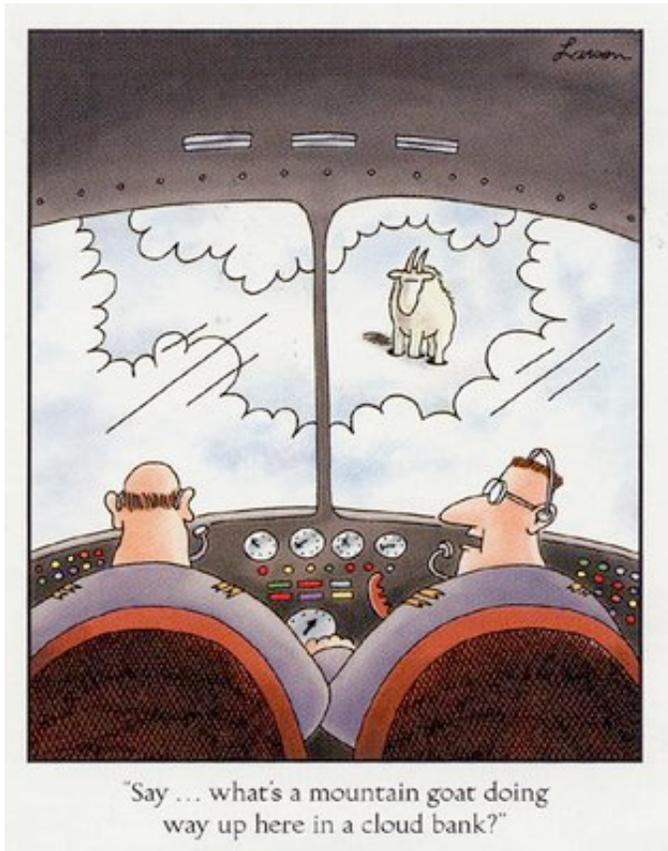
Many Americans are deeply offended when someone sets fire to an American flag. So much so that a Constitutional Amendment prohibiting flag desecration has been proposed. Perhaps none are more upset by this than military veterans, who have seen their fellow service members die in combat fighting for our freedom and know better than any of us what the Stars and Stripes symbolizes.

Local VFW (Veterans of Foreign Wars) representatives took matters into their own hands recently to punish a man who, after being refused alcohol (because he had no identification), decided to burn the VFW Post's American flag:

This was no ordinary flag, either. It had flown over a foxhole in Iraq, where several U.S. soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice for their country. What do you think? Does the punishment fit the crime?

**(The interview with Post Commander is a HOOT; 'We gave him 'choices' and he chose to be taped to flag pole for six hours with a sign around his neck'!
SWEET!!!)-**

<http://resisttyrannynow.blogspot.com/2012/02/vfw-members-duct-tape-flag-burner-to.html>



This is got to be classified as a “YGTBSM”

Thursday, February 16, 2012

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta announced several nominations for promotion to admiral, including Navy Reserve Capt. Timothy W. Dorsey.

(T.J. Kirkpatrick/The Washington Times)

When Lt. j.g. Timothy W. Dorsey intentionally fired his fighter jet's missile at an Air Force reconnaissance plane, nearly killing its two aviators and destroying the aircraft during a training exercise, it was hard to imagine then how his Navy career would wind up 25 years later.

The official investigation into the 1987 shoot-down said the F-14 pilot's decision "raises substantial doubt as to his capacity for good, sound judgment." The Navy banned him from flying its aircraft.

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta this month announced to the Senate several nominations for promotion to admiral.

On the list is Navy Reserve Capt. Timothy W. Dorsey, the same man who, while assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga, committed what the report said was an "illogical act."

Capt. Dorsey today is the inspector general for Navy Reserve Detachment 106 in Norfolk, Va.

His promotion to admiral has some in the aviation community shaking their heads, especially because minor discretions by flight officers over the past decades

have resulted in reprimands and the ends of careers. Lawyer Charles Gittins, a former Marine Corps aviator, has represented several naval officers whose careers were ended for what he considered minor misconduct. "It is shocking that the Navy would promote an officer with this background to flag rank, particularly in an environment where the Navy relieves commanding officers of their commands at the drop of a hat for trivial or insubstantial reasons," Mr. Gittins told The Washington Times.

Capt. Dorsey's father, James Dorsey, was at the time of the incident commander of the carrier USS America and an aviator. A year later, he became assistant deputy chief of naval operations at the Pentagon and later attained three-star vice admiral rank.

In his civilian job, Capt. Dorsey is general counsel at USA Discounters in Virginia Beach.

He said Thursday that he did not want to discuss the shoot-down or his career because he is about to take a Navy Reserve intelligence post.

"I'm going to have to decline to talk right now, based on the kind of job I'm going to be taking," he said. "I'm not really big on talking to press for anything."

"It means heading up some intel factions. So it's really not something I would typically do. I [would] rather not see my name in the paper at all right now because of the job I'm getting ready to take. A lack of press is good on what I'm getting ready to do."

Capt. Dorsey kept his Navy career on track by reinventing himself, first as a Reserve intelligence officer and then as an inspector general in charge of investigating wrongdoing. In 1995, he earned a law degree from the University of Richmond.

A 2010 alumni magazine profile says Capt. Dorsey "has endured countless physical and mental tests in his 47 years - first, as a fighter pilot flying F-14 Tomcats, and later during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq as an intelligence officer interrogating prisoners."

"I've been through naval aviation training, survival training and a dual-degree program in college," he told the magazine, "and nothing came close to the rigors of first-year law."

The flattering profile does not mention what Capt. Dorsey did in 1987 as a rookie Tomcat pilot, with 245 flying hours, in one of the naval air community's most embarrassing incidents.

Then-Lt. Dorsey was taking part in a non-fire flight exercise over the Mediterranean Sea.

He was given a command to simulate a missile firing but took it literally, armed his Sidewinder missile without telling his back-seat radar intercept officer, and shot down the Air Force plane. Its two aviators ejected moments before the plane exploded.

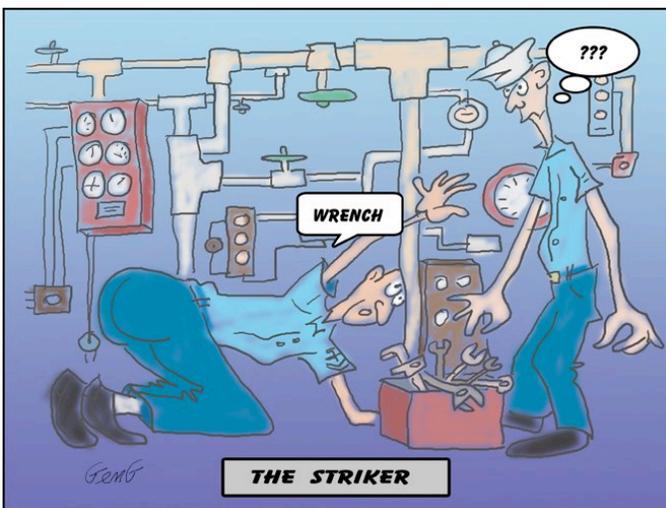
The Navy's 1988 investigative report on Lt. Dorsey was blunt and damning, according to the Associated Press, which obtained a copy via the Freedom of Information

Act in 1988. It said Lt. Dorsey knew the plane was "friendly" and knew he was on a routine exercise. "The September 22, 1987, destruction of USAF RF-4C was not the result of an accident, but the consequence of a deliberate act," the investigator wrote. "His subsequent reaction [to the radio command] demonstrated an absolute disregard of the known facts and circumstances. "He failed to utilize the decision-making process taught in replacement training and reacted in a purely mechanical manner. The performance of Lieutenant Timothy W. Dorsey on September 22, 1987, raises substantial doubt as to his capacity for good, sound judgment."

Vice Adm. Kendall E. Moranville, who had headed the 6th Fleet, said: "We necessarily rely on the self-discipline and judgment of pilots to prevent such incidents; we have no other choice. Nothing, in my opinion, can mitigate Lieutenant Dorsey's basic error in judgment."

Jon Ault, a retired F-14 pilot, said Capt. Dorsey never took responsibility.

"I would never have guessed he'd ever make it to commander, much less admiral," he said. "In fact, I thought his career was over back when the shoot-down happened. He refused to accept any blame for the shoot-down and swore he was just following [rules of engagement] even though he knew it was a friendly. I mean, the guy did it on purpose."



Navy Separation Process Leaves Sailors in the Dark

February 08, 2012

Stars and Stripes|by Matthew M. Burke

SASEBO NAVAL BASE, Japan -- In his first 2 1/2 years in the Navy, Aeron Crouch jumped three ranks to second-class petty officer and appeared to be a rising star among the forward-deployed in the Pacific. He was a leader -- motivated, tenacious, always improving and asking for more, tougher, responsibilities.

His superiors use words like "excellent" and "genius" when describing the decorated 27-year-old sailor. Yet the Navy says he's no longer wanted.

A bloated defense budget and the sluggish economic climate of the country have forced the Navy to downsize, and Crouch was one of 3,000 hand-picked sailors to get caught in the crossfire.

As the 8-year-veteran heads for the door, he is not only stung by the rejection and the daunting prospect of landing a scarce stateside job while overseas, but also by the news that he will never know why he was selected for separation through the force-trimming process known as the Enlisted Retention Board.

"I want to know why I got picked," he said from behind the operations desk in Sasebo last month. "I worked hard. I did everything I was told to be good in the Navy. ... I take pride in what I do. For my own self-improvement, what did I do that didn't put me above the rest?"

His feelings of betrayal are shared by others.

Petty Officer First Class Vilaihan Vongkoth of the USS Essex, a single father of two, was also chosen for separation.

Vongkoth had already made it through one force-cutting measure. Like all sailors up for re-enlistment, he had to prove his worth under a program called Perform to Serve. Under the program, the Navy determines who is a valued employee and, therefore, worthy of re-enlistment. After making it through, Vongkoth signed up for six more years of duty, was sent to school, and got new orders to Sasebo.

"I thought I was already set," Vongkoth said. "Then, I get a message saying I was not selected for retention. It's a big shock for me still."

As the two men prepare to head back to two of the states hardest hit by the recession -- Crouch to Florida and Vongkoth to California -- they will likely never find closure: No records of the ERB deliberations are kept, according to Lt. Laura Stegherr, deputy public affairs officer for the Chief of Naval Personnel.

"During the board, only the votes of board members were recorded and no transcriptions were made of board proceedings," Stegherr wrote in an email response to Stars and Stripes. "[Board members] cannot disclose specifics of the board's deliberations, and the specific discussions and proceedings that take place during these boards are strictly confidential and may not be disclosed at any time."

The board's decisions seem to defy logic, sailors at Sasebo Naval Base said.

Many said they personally know sailors who went before the ERB with failed weigh-ins, fewer commendations, less valuable specialty school training -- and were retained. Stegherr declined to comment as to how the integrity of the process could be maintained without records of the deliberations.

Crouch and Vongkoth criticized the Navy for acting like a careless corporation, using them during a time of war, only to hand out pink slips when the going got rough.

Crouch stands to receive a severance of several thousand dollars, but he said it won't go far as he tries to start a new life.

Vongkoth, 32, could fare a little better. Due to a provision included in the National Defense Authorization Act that was signed into law Dec. 31, Vongkoth could still receive retirement benefits that would have been due at 20 years of active service, including medical and commissary privileges, and a reduced monthly stipend -- if he agrees to forgo his severance. However, he has to apply for the benefits, and there is no guarantee he will be approved. The sailor just made the Sept. 1 cutoff and will hit 15 years of active service in June.

Crouch's commanding officer, Capt. Charles Rock, said he was shocked when he was informed the former training supervisor and combat systems team trainer off the USS Wayne E. Meyer was chosen by the ERB. "He is one of those dependable sailors, always doing great work, the kind of guy you rely on day in and day out," Rock said, adding that Crouch might never get an answer to his questions, because he has "no distinguishing flaw."

Rock also was tasked with passing along the message to Vongkoth that he was selected for separation, because he arrived for duty at the base shortly before results of the ERB were released in November, and the Essex was at sea at the time.

Rock and Capt. David Fluker, Vongkoth's commanding officer onboard the Essex, said the Navy had to make some tough decisions with the ERB, because the longer a sailor has stayed in and the more he or she advances, the more vetting is done, leaving sailors with very few flaws for elimination.

Fluker lost eight out of about 1,000 sailors on his ship. "It's so ultra-competitive" at that level, Fluker said. "The range is so tight."

Fluker said he had faith in the board's fairness and its ability to spot signals and indicators to use in placing some sailors above others.

"It's an extremely rigorous process," he said.

Due in part to low attrition, the Enlisted Retention Board was announced in April to trim the force to meet congressionally mandated strength quotas, Navy officials said at the time. The board reviewed 16,000 sailors in paygrades E-4 to E-8 in 31 overmanned ratings, and by fall, chose about 3,000 for separation. According to Navy directives, sailors were to be flagged for separation due to substandard or declining performance, detachment for cause, revocation of security clearance, disciplinary problems, running afoul of the law, or -- if for no other reason -- to reach quota.

Neither Crouch nor Vongkoth fit any of those categories except the last one.

Crouch received three Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals, completed specialized training at expensive schools and got stellar evaluations.

"Did they just put names in a hat and say, 'This guy?'" Crouch said. "That's what it seems like. There's a real lack of information."

Vongkoth, who got out of another specialized hydraulics training school in September -- paid for by the military -- said he has a blemish-free record. Fluker declined to comment on the records of specific sailors. However, sailors in Sasebo said that being allowed to re-enlist after making it through Perform to Serve appears to back up Vongkoth's claim.

Fluker and Rock said the Navy tried to use a scalpel with its cuts, but it didn't make it any easier for either of them.

"I hope the ERB isn't an enduring thing," Rock said.

Fluker said he had seen similar cuts after the end of the Cold War, and that they weren't as deliberate.

"Every sailor is critical, and you can never have enough," Fluker said. "You hate to lose anyone, but in our job, no one is irreplaceable."

Sailors have complained that the ERB process was convoluted and unfair.

Crouch and Vongkoth were preparing for moves to new duty stations while trying to get their personnel files updated and ready for board review. Crouch said his high operational tempo limited his time to consider switching jobs or work on getting his records in order -- something that moves at a snail's pace in the Navy.

The board added to confusion by pumping out directives exempting some sailors and including others. Crouch said that as more and more sailors were exempt from the process, he watched as his chances of being selected increased in his rate.

Despite all of this, based on his record, Crouch believed he was safe. The board's precepts said they were targeting sailors with spotty records.

Vongkoth had made it through the scrutiny of Perform to Serve and figured there was no way he could be dismissed.

"How do I get approved for one and not the other?" he asked. Crouch's first reaction was disbelief, followed by anger. He had volunteered and served honorably during a time of war, and he was being cut loose.

"Try explaining that to your family," Crouch said.

"They're like, 'So you got fired?' I'm like, 'Well not really. Kind of. I got laid off.' Nobody really understands unless you've been in the Navy or military." Crouch -- under contract until 2014 -- has trouble hiding his dissatisfaction with the process and the fact that the Navy is breaching that contract.

"As it stands right now, I just wasted the last eight years of my life," he said.

Crouch, Vongkoth and some sailors who were up for the board but were spared talked recently about the anxiety of facing cuts while working with a high-operational tempo -- believing they could be dismissed at any time. "There's no real security" in the Navy, Vongkoth said. Petty Officer 2nd Class Erik Ledyard, who survived this year's board, said while he can't believe Crouch was chosen, he is glad he was not; his wife is pregnant. Ledyard said he has started to make changes in case he is chosen later for separation, such as putting money aside and curbing spending. Despite Navy officials saying no ERB will be convened next year, he said he will surely face Perform to Serve soon.

Despite their frustration and anger, Crouch and Vongkoth said that the transition assistance program set up by the Navy to navigate separation has been very helpful. There are move-planning websites, calendars and checklists; workshops on resume writing; and job fairs. Crouch said it helps if sailors include their spouses each step of the way. Crouch and Vongkoth said that their commands have provided timely information and support.

Crouch said people feel bad for those singled out, but the sailors believe the Navy could have done more to explain the board process and its decisions.

As the days go by, Crouch said he gets more and more used to a future without the Navy, whether that will be working for a contractor or struggling to stay afloat while finishing his college degree. He worries about taking care of his wife, he said. He is due to receive severance from the Navy based on his pay rate and years of service -- about \$25,000 before taxes -- but will only have paid health insurance for 180 days.

Vongkoth said he feels lucky that he is one of nearly 300 sailors due for separation who will be considered to receive retirement benefits through the Temporary Early

Retirement Authority. But as a single father with two children, he worries about finding full-time work. He said while he scours the state of California for a job, his kids will spend a lot of time with their grandparents. While the men remain relatively positive, a cloud constantly looms overhead.

"I know I'll be all right," said Crouch, sounding a bit unsure. "I fancy myself as a fairly intelligent person. The question is, what am I going to do with my family when I get back to the States?"

"Can we live off the post 9/11 G.I. Bill? Maybe," he said. "But I don't know for how long."

Is he looking for the mail buoy or trying to feed the shaft seals?

