

TORPEDO ALLEY



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August 2012

United States Submarine Veterans - Charleston Base Newsletter

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:

August 9, 2012 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	Click to email	Phone Number
Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Vice Commander	Jerry Stout	843-871-9533
Secretary	Theron Irving	843-817-5118
Treasurer	Terry Trump	843-873-9563

Special Officers	Click to email	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 Nichols	843-452-3189
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	John Lookabill	843-797-2991
Scholarship	Julian Villegas	843-871-6135
Newsletter	Steve Morawiec	843-410-0131
Storekeeper	Ken Hutchison	843-553-0935
Webmaster	John Nichols	843-452-3189
Historian	George Scharf	843 873-3318

Minutes of the July 2012 meeting

Attendance for the June, 2012 meeting was 99.

Opening Ceremony: Base Commander Carl Chin called the meeting to order. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1900.

The Base Commander deviated from the normal meeting order to allow Gary Semler's daughter Andrea to give a heartfelt thanks for the memorial service at the After Battery.

Introductions: Grandsons of Abel Jenkins, James and Chris; Fred Bowles, Branch President of local FRA. Welcome aboard to all.

Secretary: Asked for a motion to accept the minutes as published in the newsletter. Seconded and the motion was carried.

Treasurer: Terry gave report for the month of June.

Vice Commander: Vice Commander Jerry Stout adopted a portion of Old Orangeburg Road for cleanup in the name of USSVICB. Due to his efforts, he has won an award from the SCDOT and our Base has public exposure due to this efforts. He has asked for volunteers in the future to help with the clean up. BZ and a hymn to Jerry for this effort.

Storekeeper: No Report. If you order something come get it!!!

Scholarship: No report.

Public Affairs: No report.

Chaplain: To begin with I would like Charlie Holycross to stand. I publicly want to say thanks to Charlie for his dedication visiting our shipmates who've been in the downtown hospitals. Several months ago Charlie kindly offered to assist with those hospital visits. And, being the very smart person that I am, I quickly took him up on his offer. Thank you Charlie.

- **Gary Semler, MMCM (SS), US Navy Retired**, departed on EP on March 19th. A memorial service was held at the After Battery on Saturday, June 23rd at 1300. The service was very well attended. The AB gang did a great job setting up for the service and for the picnic following.
- **Pauline Stank**, Ed's wife, is still at Duke. The latest update from Ed is that she is still on a ventilator 24/7 and having major anxiety issues. Those visitors she's had make her very happy. They have been at Duke this time for 4 months.
- **Greg Czech**, a member of Denizens of the Deep, is in the VA hospital in Augusta. He had spinal surgery in April and afterward could not move his legs. A follow-up surgery a week later corrected some of the problem. He is having slow but constant improvement and should be moved to a rehab location soon.
- **Lucy Osborne**, Sandra Woodley's sister-in-law, who was fighting bone cancer, passed away late Wednesday evening.
- **Erma Cleeve**, Richard's wife, passed away on Saturday, July 7th. The funeral was yesterday and ten base members attended.
- **Tom Skorepa** will be going in for a hernia operation on the 19th. He's hoping this is the last one for a long time.
- **PM Smith** had knee surgery on Tuesday and was released this afternoon.
- **Bill Buxton** is in Summerville Medical. He fell on Monday and broke his right humerus and right elbow in three places. He will have surgery as soon as the swelling goes down and is not sure how long he'll be in the hospital.
- **Lee Allison** had a hip operation on June 4th at the VA. He is home recovering. However it turns out the hip problem is really a nerve issue that will need to be corrected.
- **Henry 'Skip' Gilmer** is now confined to a wheelchair and needs a voice simulator to

communicate. However, his mind is very clear. Skip lives in Anderson, SC and is a Charleston Base member.

- **HMCS (SS) Ray Murphy**, one of our WWII SubVets now living in Portland OR with his family, recently had a stroke and is doing well. He is able to talk and is coherent.

The following shipmates departed on Eternal Patrol this past month. None were members of Charleston Base.

- **QMC (SS) Milton R. Gaedt Sr.**, departed on EP on June 21st in Uncasville CT. Milton qualified on the USS SARDA in 1948. He was a life member of USSVI and Groton Base, and a member of the Holland Club.
- **William 'Bill' Mayo** departed on EP on July 1st in Ridgeville. Bill was a retired submariner but not a member of USSVI.
- **Waymon Shane Waits** departed on EP on July 7th in Summerville. Shane was a submariner and made at least a dozen patrols but he was not a member of USSVI.

Members are encouraged to go to the Funeral Home Guest book for a fellow brother of the Phin and offer a few words of condolence to a grieving family.

Webmaster: Please visit our site at:

<http://www.ussvicb.org/>

The following are available on the website under documents:

Form SF180 Military Records Request – to request documents for veterans or deceased veterans

Page 2 – it would really be helpful if everyone would complete a Page 2 for me.

Important Instructions for the family:

How to get replacement records

Ready reference Contact Info/Phone numbers

Retiree checklist – what survivors should know

Guide for family members of surviving spouses

How to report the death of a military retiree or annuitant

A Guide for getting your affairs in order

Please get your photograph taken if you haven't already done so. Also, please complete your Page 2 if you haven't done so.

Veteran's Affairs: No report

Little David: No report

Holland Club: No report

SUBVETS WWII: Next meeting 16 August 2012. 5 WWII Vets in attendance tonight.

Historian: No report

District Commander: Happy 15th anniversary to Charleston Base.

16 members have voted on line in the National Election so far. Online voting is available at the National Web Site - visit ussvi

The WW II Memorial in Kings Bay will be October 31st thru November 4th. Each person attending will have had to submit an application from the Submarine Museum.

Patrick Householder will issue the 2013 calendar.

Remember to go on line and vote or send in the ballot that is in the American Submariner. The national website also has a mail in ballot.

Nuclear Historian: This is about the rumor mill as related to Greek Philosophy. Seems that Socrates was widely lauded for his wisdom and foresight. An acquaintance of his was rather excited to relate a tidbit of news about a fellow Greek named Diogenes, but before he could say anything, Socrates said that his bit of news had to pass the "Triple Filter Test". Pray tell me, said the acquaintance, what is this test? Socrates related the three filters as being Truth, Goodness and Usefulness.

Socrates: Are you sure what you are going to relate is true? The man said no. How about Goodness? Is it something Good? The man said that on the contrary.... So, said Socrates, you want to tell me something bad about Diogenes even though you're not certain it is true. The man shrugged, a little embarrassed. Socrates continued, you may still pass the filter as to the usefulness of this news. Is what you want to tell me about Diogenes going to be useful to me? No, not really replied the man. Well, concluded Socrates, if what you want to tell me is neither true, nor good, nor even useful, why tell it to me or anyone at all? The man was bewildered and ashamed. This is an example of why Socrates was such a great philosopher and held in such high esteem. This also explains why Socrates never found out that Diogenes was banging his wife.

Fleet Reserve: The annual convention is in August. Please all FRA members attend the monthly meetings.

Membership: Dues are payable now. Please expedite payment. A thank you card was received from Jessica Ford, a scholarship recipient. She wrote a short note thanking the base and Admiral Oz. It is truly refreshing to have a thoughtful teenager.

Chief of the Boat: Bravo Zulu and kudos to all hands that participated in our shipmate Gary Semler's Memorial Service - especially to Nick and the flag detail.

This year's hog roast will be on October 13th at the Cooper River Partners site.

Jimmie Legg has kudos coming for dropping off our excess plaques and photos to the Razorback Base in Little Rock.

A 50/50 drawing was held at Gary's service with half going to the Semler family. They in turn donated a part of it to the scholarship fund.

Base Commander: Please vote in the upcoming National elections - National SubVets and Commander in Chief. Both elections are very important to us all.

Old Business: None.

New Business: None.

Good Of The Order: Tom Lufkin is heading the effort to save the USS Clamagore. The USS Clamagore Association is a 503(c) and is tax exempt. Donate here:

<http://www.savetheclamagore.com/>

Donations are also tax deductible. Response has been astounding - more than \$6000.00 in just a short period of time.

Buddha relates an effort to raise funds for the Wounded Warrior Project. Buddha and No Neck (Dave Mueller) will collect donations for this worthy project.

Marty Sessler has volunteered to be the Public Event and Float coordinator.

Depth Charge: Drawing winner Harry Kirk donated \$100 to the Scholarship Fund.

Meeting Adjourned: The Base Commander adjourned the meeting at 1950.

" I enlisted when I was a boy. The Navy looked after me like my mother. It fed me, took care of me and gave me wonderful opportunities." Tony Curtis

August Submarines Lost

USS Bullhead	SS-332	August 6,1945
USS Flier	SS-250	August 13,1944
USS S-39	SS-144	August 14,1942
USS Harder	SS-257	August 24,1944
USS Cochino	SS-345	August 26, 1949
USS Pompano	SS-181	August 29, 1943

August Happenings

- August 9 – Regular Monthly Meeting
- August 11 - [Free Skin Screenings at Splash Zone](#)
- August 25/26 - [7th Annual Charleston Beach Music and Shaq Festival](#)



August Birthdays

Allison	Hanson	Kirby	Nelms
Barnhart	Hardaway	LaRose	Preston
Clark	Henderson	Larsen	Reuer
Cleeve Jr	Hudson	Lowman	Snyder
Daughtery	Hutchinson	Mills	Turner
Freligh	Ilgenfritz	Morrow	White
Graff	Irving	Mulkey	



Submarine News

S***bag admits to setting USS Miami afire

The Naval Criminal Investigative Service says it has charged a worker at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard with setting two fires on the U.S.S. Miami.

The second fire on June 16 was minor. According to court documents, investigators said Casey James Fury admitted to setting the June 16 fire on the vessel using alcohol wipes.

The documents said Fury agreed to a polygraph test and when questioned about the May 23 fire admitted to setting that one as well.

Court papers said Fury told them he set a bag of rags on fire and left them near bunk beds. The documents said Fury set the fire to get out of work. According to the papers Fury is a civilian employee of the shipyard.

60 Years Of Stuff We Can't Talk About

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the construction of the first nuclear powered sub, the USS Nautilus. Completed in 1955, the Nautilus served until 1980, at which point it became a museum ship. Since the Nautilus, over 400 nuclear subs have been built, most of them (254) Russian. As was their custom the Russians went for quantity rather than quality. As a result of this, some 80 percent of those Russian boats have since been retired. Not only did Russian subs wear out quickly but they were not able to get to sea as often as their Western counterparts. When they did get to sea they had more problems with radiation and reactor reliability.

Thus, the peak year for Russian nuclear sub patrols was 1984, when they had 230 patrols. That number rapidly declined until, in 2002, there were none. Since the late 1990s, the Russian navy has been hustling to try and reverse this decline. But the navy budget, despite recent increases, is not large enough to build new ships to replace the current Cold War era fleet that is falling apart. The rapid decline of Russia's nuclear submarine fleet needed international help to safely decommission over a hundred obsolete, worn out, defective or broken down nuclear subs. This effort has been going on for nearly a decade and was driven by the Russian threat to just sink their older nuclear subs in the Arctic Ocean. That might work with conventional ships but there was an international uproar over what would happen with all those nuclear reactors sitting on the ocean floor forever. Russia generously offered to accept donations to fund a dismantling program that included safe disposal (of the nuclear reactors).

While Western nuclear subs can last for about thirty years, Russian models rarely get past twenty. That means two new SSN or SSGN type subs has to be put into service each year to maintain a Russian force of forty boats. Unless the sub construction budget get billions more dollars a year, that is not going to happen. Right now, the priority is on producing a new class of SSBNs (11 more Boreis are planned or under construction). These Boreis are critical because they carry SLBM (Sea Launched Ballistic Missiles) that provide a critical (they are much harder to destroy in a first strike than land based missiles) portion of the nuclear deterrent. The rest of the Russian armed forces, like most of the navy, is in sad shape and unable to resist a major invasion. Only the ICBMs and SLBMs guarantee the safety of the state. So the way things are going now, in a decade or two, Russia will end up with a force consisting of a dozen SSNs and a dozen SSBNs.

The current Russian fleet of nuclear subs is tiny and the Russians would rather keep them tied up at dock most of the time. The crews can do a lot of training at dockside and only go to sea a few times a year, to check on their state of training. Given the number of accidents their subs have had in the past decade, the training the crews are getting now is not sufficient.

Only the U.S. and Britain were able to build nuclear subs that could stay at sea regularly and for long periods. French nukes were nearly as reliable but the Chinese built nuclear boats have, so far, been of lower quality than three decade old Russian designs. India is also in the midst of getting its first generation nuclear subs operational and it has been rough going.

While nuclear subs are a much feared weapon, they have gone sixty years with only one instance of combat. That was in 1982, when a British SSN sunk an Argentinian cruiser (the former World War II era USS Phoenix). Nuclear subs have been much more active in espionage work. While not as flashy as sinking other ships, it is dangerous, demanding, and rewarding work. Most of these efforts during the Cold War are still secret.

Iran To Deploy Submarines In Caspian Sea

With three super-heavy submarines operating in the Persian Gulf, Iran is seeking to use lighter submarines in the Caspian Sea.

Admiral Abbas Zamini told Fars news agency that Iran's navy has made huge gains and become self-sufficient in designing, building and repairing its own submarines.

Iran is producing semi-heavy submarines with the goal of building super-heavy ones in the future.

The projects are part of an overall strategy to expand Iran's naval fleet and presence in international waters. Currently, battle groups are getting ready to set sail for the north Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Suez Canal, the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Aden.

An exercise outside Iran's border kept a super-heavy submarine under water for 67 days in the Red Sea. In February, Iran's navy sent ships through the Suez Canal for the second time since Iran's revolution.

USS Alexandria Leads the Formation

ATLANTIC OCEAN (June 27, 2012) The fast-attack submarine USS Alexandria (SSN 779) is alongside the Brazilian submarine BNS Tikuna (S 34) during a formation sailing event while participating in the War of 1812 fleet exercise. The exercise is a week-long multi-national exercise involving 19 ships from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Brazil, and Portugal, and is designed to increase interoperability with allied nations, improve tactical prowess and certification of participating units.



Pakistan Navy's 'Nuclear' Aspirations

Recent reports from Pakistan seem to suggest the Pakistan Navy (PN) may be on the cusp of developing a naval nuclear missile capability, even as its plans for acquiring a nuclear submarine capability gradually become clearer. The first indication of this came in May 2012 when Pakistan tested the Hatf VII (Babur)—an indigenously developed Cruise Missile with high precision and maneuverability. Reports suggested that the missile was launched from a state-of-the-art multi-tube Missile Launch Vehicle (MLV), which significantly enhances the targeting and employment options of the Babur Weapon System in both the conventional and nuclear modes. Importantly, this is the third test of the Babur in the recent past, of different capacities and loads.

Then, in another significant development, on May 19, the PN inaugurated the Headquarters of the Naval Strategic Force Command (NSFC). A statement from the Pakistan military's Inter Services Public Relations said that the NSFC "will perform a pivotal role in development and employment of the Naval Strategic Force," and was "the custodian of the nation's 2nd strike capability" – presumably for use against India, in case the need ever arose. This is noteworthy because Pakistan is not known to have a sea-based second-strike capability. Therefore, a public statement that the NSFC would be in-charge of such a capability is an open admission of sorts that Pakistan is in the process of developing a naval variant of a strategic nuclear missile.

For long, the Pakistan Navy has viewed the Indian Navy (IN) with suspicion. The IN's sustained growth over the past few years has, in fact, become an excuse for the PN to push for its own development and expansion of assets. In an article written for a Pakistan daily in May 2012, Tauqir Naqvi, a retired Vice Admiral of the PN, suggested that the 'hegemonic' elements of the Indian Navy's maritime strategy have been the main drivers of the resurgence of the Pakistan Navy. The article, when read closely, is a dead give-away of Pakistan's real ambitions with regard to nuclear weapons and nuclear submarines.

Naqvi writes extensively about India's strategic vision, characterizing it as a "hegemonic" impulse that has led the IN to aim for control of the seas over an area extending from the Red Sea in the West to Fiji in the Pacific Ocean. While Pakistan, he contends, is a "peace-loving" nation, India has never been serious about developing friendly relations, fixated as it has been with the "idea of projecting power". Surprisingly, he showers Indian scientists and the IN with some unexpected, even if 'motivated' praise, by mentioning the sterling efforts of the Indian scientific community and shipyard workers in operationalising a strategic maritime capability. The complimentary references are, in effect, a none-too-disguised message to Pakistan's political leadership and mandarins in the defense ministry about the ineluctable need for Pakistan to buttress its own strategic arsenal with naval nuclear missiles and a nuclear submarine, without which, the PN can forget about countering the "evil designs" of the Indian Navy.

It is, however, Naqvi's references to India's two nuclear submarines—INS Chakra (SSN) and INS Arihant (SSBN)—that dispel all doubts about the real intentions behind the avidly rendered piece. Naqvi opines that the threat that the two nuclear platforms collectively pose to the security of Pakistan, is near existential. It is the completion of the Triad (land, air and sea based nuclear weapons), he observes, that gives India the confidence to respond with nuclear weapons, even if it is made to absorb a first nuclear strike. INS Arihant is that crucial second-strike capability which could give India the vital edge during a conflict. The SSBN, he concludes, is an essential component of a nuclear arsenal, one that Pakistan must singularly pursue.

However, in his enthusiasm to convince Pakistan's defense establishment about the need for a SSBN, Naqvi overstates his case when he mentions the "diplomatic advantage" that may accrue to India on account of its nuclear submarine. There is hardly any modern precedent of a nuclear submarine (by itself) being an effective instrument of 'diplomatic persuasion', as he suggests. Nor does it really help in negotiating with other states possessing similar capability, as cooperation and negotiation in the strategic realm has to do with 'bottom-line' naval capacities in securing maritime interests and an overlap in strategic interests. While maritime cooperation does lead to economic benefits, it is not on account of possessing a ballistic nuclear weapon submarine capability, which is purely for the purposes of strategic deterrence.

The Arihant is a significant addition to the Indian Navy's arsenal but it does not introduce a strategic imbalance in the India-Pakistan context, as India, by embracing a 'No First Use' doctrine, has already renounced the strategic

advantage. The Arihant's introduction does not alter this basic reality and is unlikely to tilt the strategic balance drastically. If anything, it gives India a measure of greater confidence in securing its own maritime interests, which does not necessarily translate into overwhelming dominance of the Indian Ocean or greater vulnerability of Pakistan to India's strategic weapons.

Given India's territorial expanse and the spread of its nuclear weapon sites, even if Pakistan did get a nuclear missile capable submarine, it would not be able to neutralize India's broader nuclear weapon capability, with or without the Arihant. As regards the comparison of combat capabilities of conventional submarines and SSNs/SSBNs, it is well established that the former are not 'inferior' operational combat platforms merely on account of the absence of nuclear propulsion or nuclear weapons. Both these capabilities (though vital strategically) rarely come in handy in a tactical scenario. Admiral Naqvi again exaggerates his case by suggesting that the Pakistan Navy's conventional submarines would not be able to stand up to India's SSBN.

Interestingly, signs that the PN has been thinking seriously about nuclear submarines have been around for some time now. As early as in 2008, in an interview to a Pakistan daily, the then PN Chief, Admiral Noman Bashir, had said that Pakistan was quite capable of building a nuclear submarine and would do so "if required". Pakistan, he said, is a recognized nuclear power and if the government made a decision, the nation would develop a nuclear weapon.

In February 2012, Admiral Asif Sandhila, the present Chief of the PN, stated to the Pakistani media that the PN was mindful of India's plans to complete the sea-based arm of its nuclear triad, and was "taking necessary measures to restore the strategic balance" in the Indian Ocean region.

Questions, however, remain on Pakistan's capability to design and develop a sea-based nuclear missile. Even China, which is known to be helping Pakistan in its nuclear capabilities, does not possess a credible submarine-launched missile. The odds that Pakistan will succeed in developing its undersea nuclear ballistic missile without assistance from China are highly unfavorable. Even if it did manage to get an SSBN, it is not certain whether the Pakistan Navy will be in a position to undertake the responsibility of the nation's second-strike capability.

Therefore, the recent drive by PN's senior serving and retired naval officers to persuade the security establishment as well as the man on the street of the necessity of a nuclear submarine capability appears ill-founded, if not disingenuous. Outwardly, it may serve to create a sense of insecurity—vital in persuading politicians about the need for a new capability—but the manifest lack of strategic logic will eventually convince few.

Pakistan's naval leadership will also be aware of the risks and financial costs of developing and operating a nuclear submarine—the need to constantly refine equipment and train personnel; of razor-sharp communications and command and control systems; and the requirement of mastering safety procedures. In the final analysis the SSBN is not an asset if it is not mastered well and operated optimally. Merely possessing one offers no strategic advantages.

Portuguese Submarine NRP Tridente Arrives in New London

GROTON, Conn. (June 30, 2012) The Portuguese submarine NRP Tridente moors to the pier at Naval Submarine Base New London. The diesel submarine has a crew of only 33. Prior to its arrival in Groton, Tridente participated in the multi-national Fleet Training Exercise War of 1812, June 19 to 29.



Esquimalt-Based Submarine Makes Debut At International Super-Drill

The arrival Tuesday of Canada's only functioning submarine at the world's largest naval exercise off Hawaii marks the first time a Victoria-class sub will participate in the international drill.

The ability of HMCS Victoria, the CFB Esquimalt-based submarine, to train with 40 surface ships, six submarines and more than 200 aircraft is an opportunity "you can't replicate through simulation," said Commodore Peter Ellis, the commander of Canadian Fleet Pacific.

The six-week Rim of the Pacific exercise, or RIMPAC, also marks the first time the United States has handed over control of key operations to Canadian officers.

The exercise, which began June 27 and ends Aug. 7, includes 25,000 personnel from 22 nations.

Ellis and two other Canadian officers leading operations during RIMPAC spoke to the Times Colonist on a conference call Tuesday from Pearl Harbor.

After a decade spent mostly in dry dock, HMCS Victoria completed the first part of its workup and fired an exercise version of the MK48 torpedo in March. The boat will complete its high-readiness certification during the exercise, which Ellis called "a huge milestone."

"Victoria's crew will really benefit from the entire experience and I dare say the surface ships [and other submarines] will benefit from having Victoria as an opponent," Ellis said. "Everyone can learn from each other here."

The super-drill, which is held every two years, is aimed at building relationships between Pacific nations, considered key to keeping the Asia-Pacific corridor safe.

Ellis compared some portions of the exercise to a pick-up hockey game, where players swap teams in order to understand how others operate. "We'll do that during the exercise to enhance the ability to work together but also to show off [our navy's] independent capabilities."

CFB Esquimalt-based war ships HMCS Algonquin and HMCS Ottawa are also participating, as are the base's fleet diving unit and a Sea King helicopter from 442 Squadron at CFB Comox.

The first week starts with myriad safety meetings and communications tests before the ships start more intense live training, including missile trials, aircraft landing and anti-warfare drills.

The exercise ends with a fast-paced, four-day "real world" scenario that incorporates land, sea and aircraft capabilities, said Ellis, who is the commander of combined task force 176, an amphibious group led by USS Essex.

This year marks the first time Canadian officers have been given senior leadership positions in the exercise, which is typically dominated by the United States.

"The fact that Canada is playing a key role speaks to the size of our contributions to RIMPAC, which is second to the United States in this case," said Brig.-Gen.

Michael Hood, the combined forces air component commander for the exercise.

Rear-Admiral Ron Lloyd has been assigned deputy commander combined task force, the command structure in charge of the exercise.

COMSUBGRU 2 and USS Pittsburgh Sailors Recognized at Boston Red Sox Game

BOSTON (NNS) -- Commander, Submarine Group 2 and four Sailors assigned to the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720), who all hail from Massachusetts, were recognized at the Boston Red Sox vs. Yankees Major Baseball League game at Fenway Park in Boston July 7-8.

As part of the Red Sox Military Recognition Program, Rear Adm. Rick Breckenridge, commander, Submarine Group 2 attended the Boston Red Sox vs. New York Yankees Major League Baseball game July 7 and was recognized during the fourth inning. Four Sailors from USS Pittsburgh attended the Red Sox vs. Yankees game July 8. The Sailors stood on the field during the national anthem, prior to the start of the game, and were also recognized during the fourth inning.

Fire Control Technician 1st Class (SS) Derek Downen, who has served aboard Pittsburgh for nearly six years, was accompanied to the Red Sox game by three of his fellow shipmates.

"It means a lot to all of us and we are all very excited about it," said Downen. "We are all from the area and are avid Red Sox fans."

Downen and his fellow shipmates collectively have been fans of the Red Sox for more than 80 years. He added that his mother, Carol, arranged the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for him and his fellow shipmates to participate in several of the Red Sox military recognition events July 8.

"I'm excited that the Red Sox allowed us on the field to take part in the national anthem," said Downen, who added that it will be an honor to represent the U.S. Navy and the submarine force during his favorite team's game.

Carol, who fought back tears when describing what this type of recognition means to her and her family, emphasized the pride she has for her son and the men assigned to Pittsburgh.

"I'm just glad that it all worked out because they deserve the recognition," said Carol, who added that her son is a bigger fan than her and his recognition with the Red Sox's rival - the Yankees - couldn't have been planned better. Pittsburgh recently returned from a six-month deployment where they conducted maritime security and theater security cooperation efforts in the 5th and 6th Fleet area of operations. Pittsburgh, commissioned Nov. 23, 1985, was built by General Dynamics Electric Boat Division, and is the fourth American warship to be named for the city of Pittsburgh.

Indonesian Navy Officers Die In Sub Drill

Two Indonesian navy officers have been killed during a submarine emergency rescue simulation in Situbondo, East Java. The men, from the KRI Cakra submarine were killed on Saturday morning, navy spokesman Admiral Untung Suropati said but added that the cause of the accident was not yet known.

The accident happened during a second dive, although all procedures had been followed after a successful first simulation. In the drill, the submarine crews were intended to be saved by divers.

USS Nevada Returns From Patrol

BANGOR, Wash. (July 8, 2012) The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS Nevada (SSBN 733) returns to its homeport of Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor following a strategic deterrent patrol.

Navy Sends Tiny Submersibles To Persian Gulf

WASHINGTON — The Navy is rushing dozens of unmanned underwater craft to the Persian Gulf to help detect and destroy mines in a major military buildup aimed at preventing Iran from closing the strategic Strait of Hormuz in the event of a crisis, U.S. officials said.



The tiny SeaFox submersibles each carry an underwater television camera, homing sonar and an explosive charge. The Navy bought them in May after an urgent request by Marine Gen. James Mattis, the top U.S. commander in the Middle East.

Each submersible is about 4 feet long and weighs less than 100 pounds. The craft are intended to boost U.S. military capabilities as negotiations with Iran over its nuclear program appear to have stalled. Three rounds of talks since April between Iran and the five countries in the United Nations Security Council plus Germany have made little progress.

Some U.S. officials are wary that Iran may respond to tightening sanctions on its banking and energy sectors, including a European Union oil embargo, by launching or sponsoring attacks on oil tankers or platforms in the Persian Gulf. Some officials in Tehran have threatened to close the narrow waterway, a choke point for a fifth of the oil traded worldwide.

The first of the SeaFox submersibles arrived in the Gulf in recent weeks, officials said, along with four MH-53 Sea Dragon helicopters and four minesweeping ships, part of a larger buildup of U.S. naval, air and ground forces in the region aimed at Iran.

The U.S. already has sent two aircraft carriers and a squadron of F-22 fighters to the Persian Gulf, and is keeping two U.S. army brigades in Kuwait. Though much of the buildup has been publicly acknowledged by the Pentagon, the deployment of the submersibles has not been publicly disclosed, apparently to avoid alerting Iran.

The SeaFox is small enough to be deployed from helicopters and even small rubber boats, but it also can be dropped off the back of a minesweeper. It is controlled by a fiber optic cable and sends live video back to a camera operator.

It can be used against floating or drifting mines, which Iran has used in the past. It operates up to 300 meters deep, and moves at speeds of up to six knots. But the \$100,000 weapon is on what amounts to a suicide mission. The "built-in, large caliber shaped charge" it carries destroys the mine but also the vehicle itself.

Sub Forces Leader: Stress Integrity To Combat Recent Failures

Failing to report hazing. Failing to lead. Falling down drunk. Fraternalization. These are four stumbles that have cost top submarine enlisted Sailors their jobs in the past six months, as the normally silent service outpaces much larger Navy communities in the tally of fired senior enlisted and commanding officers. Two sub captains have been canned this year, as well.

Every single one of these firings is a very public "D'oh!" for the proud service, which has faced scrutiny over the past year after revelations of a cheating ring and a Sailor's hazing in separate incidents aboard two boats. And the trend is heading in the wrong direction: Only one chief of the boat was fired last year.

The solution, according to the head of the sub force, is to double down on character and integrity from top leadership to the most junior Sailors.

"I think it's only through that type of awareness and making it part of our daily awareness that we will drive these incidents down to zero," Vice Adm. John Richardson said in a late June interview. "And that's the goal: We just want none of this sort of behavior in our force." While Richardson stopped short of calling the reliefs and scandals anything more than "disappointing," he said that each one is examined and that a general report is provided to sub leaders to train their officers and Sailors.

"It's very important that we confront these situations head-on and that we discuss them thoroughly to recognize what happened, what were the vulnerabilities associated with that and we learn from them and then also we hold people accountable for when they fail to meet standards," said Richardson, who was tapped July 13 to be the four-star head of Naval Reactors.

Officials punished five Sailors, including the COB, in the 2011 hazing case on the guided-missile submarine Florida, where a junior Sailor was subjected to months of anti-gay taunting. The Navy found "a culture of hazing and sexual harassment did exist onboard" and noted that sub leaders' early efforts to stop it were ineffective, raising questions whether they were disconnected from the deck plates.

Asked if this represented a more widespread problem along the waterfront, Richardson replied: "We do not have a problem in that regard ... We're sort of foxhole leaders: We are in and amongst our people while we're leading and so we get a high familiarity with what's going on." In the Florida case, Richardson continued, "There was some leadership that knew it was going on and they just really didn't respond as we would expect them to do, particularly when it got beyond the point of just ribbing and became oppressive and into hazing." Cheating on nuclear exams has also been in the headlines. In the past five years, there have been five reported incidents of cheating in the fleet on exams required for all nuclear-qualified personnel. Three of the five have been onboard subs, with the latest coming in late 2010 aboard the now-decommissioned attack sub Memphis.

One of the 14 Memphis crew members punished complained that he had been made a scapegoat and alleged that cheating was a forcewide issue. But a naval inspector general investigation found no additional evidence for this, noting that allegations of cheating have been "vigorously investigated." Adm. John Harvey, head of Fleet Forces Command, recommended the IG close the inquiry, finding the assertions "unsubstantiated." The March 8 report was obtained via a Freedom of Information Act request. Richardson stressed that these failures and scandals, which provoke hand-wringing in the sub community, are "very rare instances" and that they shouldn't come "at the expense of losing sight of what's going right" in the sub force.

Commendation For Entire Boomer Fleet

The entire boomer fleet has earned the Meritorious Unit Commendation for four years of exceptional strategic missions - the first such award for the nation's undersea deterrent.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert signed the award, which is expected to be presented July 20 at ceremonies in Bangor, Wash., and Kings Bay, Ga., where the boomers are homeported, a spokeswoman said.

Sailors who served aboard one of the 14 ballistic-missile submarines from July 16, 2007, to Jan. 28, 2011, will be eligible to wear the midlevel unit commendation, a unit award equivalent to the Bronze Star.

During this time frame, these 14 boats "conducted over 119 deterrent patrols," said Submarine Force spokeswoman Cmdr. Monica Rousselow, who estimated 4,500 sailors are in the boomer fleet.

In addition to these boomers, sailors assigned to Submarine Groups 9 and 10, Submarine Squadrons 17 and 20, and Naval Submarine Support Centers Bangor and Kings Bay are also eligible to wear the MUC.

"Task Force 134 and 144 demonstrated high standards in day-to-day operations, in exercises, in training and every time they went to sea," according to the citation, referring to the Bangor and Kings Bay task forces, respectively. Given the highly classified nature of strategic missions, the citation doesn't provide any more details.

In general terms, boomers deploy for three months at a time to positions around the globe, cloaked and ready to launch nuclear intercontinental ballistic missiles, a credible and fearsome threat designed to give other nations pause before attacking the U.S. The awards presentation will coincide with the 52nd anniversary of the service's first submerged launch of a ballistic missile.

USS Buffalo Arrives In Singapore For Exercise

SINGAPORE (July 17, 2012) The Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine USS Buffalo (SSN 715) arrives at Changi Naval Base, Singapore as part of Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Singapore 2012. CARAT is a series of bilateral military exercises between the U.S. Navy and the armed forces of Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Timor Leste joins the exercise for the first time.



SUBVETS NEWS & VIEWS

USSVI National Elections, VOTE!!! VOTE!!! VOTE!!!

Shipmates,

If you are one of the approx 1,400 members who have already voted, thanks and read no further.

USSVI National Elections is one of the few instances that everyone has a chance to help determine the direction our organization will take. We understand that some of you are still working full time jobs and have other obligations that prevent you from participating in most of our activities, but this gesture takes so little of your time and can be completed without leaving the comfort of your home. If you are a part of a large group of our members that uses the excuse "I am not familiar with the candidates so how can I cast a vote", feel free to contact me and I will give you my take for what it is worth on each of the election decisions. The Dallas Base needs your participation to increase our percentage of members that cast a vote, please consider helping by using one of the methods listed below. I promise it is painless.

1. Go to <http://www.ussvi.org/>, then click the VOTE NATIONAL ELECTION button. Follow the instructions to log in as a member, then register your vote. (Be sure to have your copy of AMERICAN SUBMARINER Magazine at hand so you can review the full text of the Proposed Amendments and the Candidate Bios.)
2. In AMERICAN SUBMARINER Magazine, you will find a paper ballot you can complete and mail in. If you do so, BE SURE to enter your name and Base on the ballot so that I can verify your eligibility to vote before entering it into the vote tracking system.
3. At <http://www.ussvi.org/>, under the DOCUMENTS button, then the ELECTIONS button, there are downloadable documents covering the Proposed Amendments, Candidate Bios and A Ballot, all of which can be printed out for use.

It is important to remember that Proxy Voting is not allowed. This means, each member must do his own voting, regardless of method chosen. Bases cannot vote as a bloc, and any votes received as such will not be accepted.

Proxy voting can lead to a loss of membership for the person attempting to do so.

Your vote is your voice in the future direction and operation of our organization, so please carefully consider your alternatives and vote your choices.

I am sure you will help the Base in this annual event, so I am thanking you in advance.

Wayne Standerfer
Central Region Director

2013 USSVI Calendar 'The Victors' available to order

This calendar honors the World War II U.S. submariners and their boats. In World War II American submarines spent 31,571 days on patrol in the Pacific, attacking 4,112 Japanese controlled merchant ships with 14,748 torpedoes, which resulted in the sinking of 1,152.5 vessels, totaling 4,859,634 gross tons, or an average of 329.5 tons for every torpedo expended.

The loss dates for all U.S. submarines sunk or destroyed are listed in addition to other historic dates in both U.S. Submarine Veteran and U.S. Navy submarine history.

Individual calendars are \$ 9.95 + 2.00 shipping.

Order yours today by credit card at <http://ussvinationalstorekeeper.com/> or by sending your check or money order made payable to USSVI to Barry Commons, USSVI National Storekeeper, 2603 Main St. PMB 293 . Oakley, CA 94561.

If the base member indicates his base name when he orders online, his base will get \$1.00 credit per calendar ordered towards future Base SK purchases.

NEW YORK CITY'S VETERANS DAY PARADE, NOVEMBER 11, 2012

Shipmates:

We (USSVI) have been invited back to New York City again this year for the Veterans Day Parade on November 11, 2012. The NYC Veterans Day Parade is the largest Veterans Day Parade in the nation. The sole purpose of the NYC Veterans Day Parade is to honor the service of our Veterans and to salute our currently serving military.

This year's theme is "UNITED WE STAND", reminding the public to stand behind America's veterans, as well as reflecting on the founding principles of our nation.

Last year, they expected in excess of 20,000 participants and over 600,000 parade spectators along the parade route. Those numbers were FAR exceeded. The event is televised also, so millions more will view it.

Last year was our first year of participating, and we had a small number of participants (10) and one submarine float. Five different bases were represented and all had a great time. I would like to see many times that amount participating this year. They can handle as many as want to show up. This includes floats.

Please get back to me if you are interested in participating this year. It is a great opportunity to show the rest of the world we are proud Submariners and great advertising for USSVI. I will be handling the application and registration process again this year, and the sooner I can find out approximately how many shipmates and floats will be participating, the better the parade committee can plan their logistics (parking, staging, etc).

Thanking you in advance, and looking forward to seeing you in NYC on Veterans Day.

Bill Andrea
ESRD

Do you have stories relating to SUBSAFE?

April 10, 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of the loss of THRESHER with 129 aboard during trials off the coast of New England in 8,400 feet of water.

TEAMSUB of NAVSEA has already undertaken several efforts to help memorialize the 50th anniversary of the loss of THRESHER.

During the celebration of the life of Don Matteo in April, a couple conversations noted the upcoming 50th anniversary of the loss of THRESHER. Also, it was recognized how few of the submarine community members that were active at the time of the loss are still with us today.

Paul Sacilotto is one and he shared some great stories from that time. Many of today's active members were not born at the time of the loss.

That led a few of us to ask "What can we do to help perpetuate in the culture of the current and future TEAMSUB community the impact the loss of THRESHER had on the development of a safety program for submarines?" The conclusion was that the putting together the history of the development of the SUBSAFE program as it was established and evolved by collecting stories, recollections of events and related documents from those that participated would be worthwhile.

Janey Nodeen of Burke Consortium, Inc. has volunteered to organize the contributions into a coherent package for donation to the current SUBSAFE community.

What can you do? Think back to when you were an active member of the submarine community and recall events that contributed to the development of the SUBSAFE program. Think of the efforts that lead to the issuance of the 20 December 1963 letter and modifications and ultimately the SUBSAFE Manual as it exists today. The following may help jog your memory:

History/stories surrounding the original 20 December 1963 letter establishing the SUBSAFE program.

History/stories surrounding the development of the SUBSAFE Manual and its subsequent revisions.

History/stories of key program groups: SUBSAFE Steering Task Group, SUBSAFE Oversight Committee, SUBSAFE Working Group

History/stories of key positions and responsibilities: SEA92/SEA07, 92Q/07Q, Program Office SUBSAFE Directors, SUBSAFE Program Directors, etc.

History/stories/testimonies surrounding the actual loss of THRESHER, the Court of Inquiry, Congressional Hearings, restrictions placed on submarines, etc.

What was the first in-service submarine to be SUBSAFE and any details?

What was the first new construction submarine to be SUBSAFE and details?

What were the first SUBSAFE certifications like and how did they evolve?

What boat received the first SUBSAFE Certification Audit?

What were the first SUBSAFE Certification Audits like and how did they evolve?

When did we start Functional Audits and who had the first one?

When did 92Q (07Q) stand up and any history of the standup?

Any noteworthy significant problems or hurdles in the SUBSAFE program evolution.

Please send your contributions to: subalum@bcinow.com

Please send any hard copies to:

Burke Consortium, Inc.

(Attn: Sub Alum)

5500 Cherokee Avenue, Ste. 510

Alexandria, VA 22312

Our goal is to create a story that will be meaningful to current and future members of the submarine community so that the loss of THRESHER's impact on submarine safety will be carried on as a part of the culture of future members of the submarine community.

Remember - No SUBSAFE certified submarine has been lost. We need to help keep it that way. Thank you for your help.

Bob Schultz

Navy & Veteran News and Other Gouge

Save The Clamagore

The USS Clamagore (SS 343), the last Guppy III submarine, is destined for the scrap heap. Clamagore, still serving as part of the Patriots Point museum in Mount Pleasant, SC, needs a multi-million dollar overhaul. Unfortunately, neither the museum, nor the state of South Carolina has the money to fund the refurbishment.

And, if we, the past and present submariners of the world don't save Clamagore, she will be sold to the highest bidder for scrap. None of us wants to see that. The USS Clamagore Veterans Association has established this website to help raise enough money to keep Clamagore out of the smelter's pot. To help, click the link for the rest of the story...

[Save The Clamagore](#)

U.S. Navy Renders Honors at Funeral of Ernest Borgnine

LOS ANGELES (NNS) -- A U.S. Navy honor guard paid tribute to the late actor Ernest Borgnine with a full-honors military sendoff at Forest Lawn Memorial-Park and Mortuaries cemetery in Hollywood, Calif., July 14.

The honor guard honored Borgnine's lifetime of service and contributions to the Navy and its cause.

"Ernie, as you may know, loved and adored the Navy, and the sea, and all of you," said Tova Traesnaes Borgnine, the late actor's wife. "I know Ernie's looking down on us right now and blessing all of you and all of your fellows across the world for all you do for our country, for our people, and especially for us today."

After serving in the Navy for ten years, Borgnine left the service at the end of World War II as a Petty Officer 1st Class. Ten years later, he won an academy award for his performance as the lead in "Marty."

He went on to star as the title character in the hit '60s sitcom "McHale's Navy." In 2004, then-Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Terry D. Scott awarded Borgnine with an honorary advancement to chief petty officer.

"When Ernie was promoted to honorary chief ... there was never, of all the honors - even Ernie's academy award - never anything that meant as much to him," said retired U.S. Navy Capt. Kathi Dugan, one of Borgnine's closest friends. "He had tears in his eyes."

When Borgnine was making his final arrangements, requesting military honors at his funeral was definitely his idea, said Dugan.

Dugan quoted Borgnine as saying, "'I don't know if I've earned [a military funeral], but I can't think of a more appropriate way for me to leave this world than with my Navy men and women'."

The Navy portion of the ceremony was organized by Builder 2nd Class Marco Valdovinos, the funeral honor guard district coordinator attached to the Navy Operational Support Center in Moreno Valley. Valdovinos says that his 30-member contingent of Reserve Sailors have officiated at more than 1,450 ceremonies this past fiscal year.

"This veteran has a great history of contributions to our community, to our nation and to the service," Valdovinos said. "To me, it's a tremendous honor. There's nothing greater for me, to be able to serve in this capacity. To render one final salute to our fallen veteran - it is just great."

Borgnine thought so highly of the Navy that he asked in his will that attendants to his funeral donate to the Navy and Marine Corps Relief Society in lieu of bringing flowers.

One attendant from the press donated a thousand dollars that day.

For more information, visit www.navy.mil, www.facebook.com/usnavy, or www.twitter.com/usnavy.

For more news from Navy Public Affairs Support Element West, visit www.navy.mil/local/pacensandiego/.

Gender-neutral Ford layout nixes urinals

For the first time, the Navy has designed an aircraft carrier with women in mind. Gerald R. Ford-class carriers will have gender-neutral berthing and heads without urinals, differentiating them from all previous carriers.

These design details, provided only to Navy Times, give an early look at the amenities planned for the new carrier class, the first of which will hit the fleet in 2015.

Gender-neutral berthing is just one part of a broader plan intended to ensure comfort aboard the carriers, Navy officials said. All berthing areas will be connected to a toilet and shower, and there will be no more crew living spaces with 200-plus sailors, according to Rear Adm. Thomas Moore, program executive officer for aircraft carriers.

Carriers have deployed with women since 1994, but every one built since then has included urinals. By using just toilets, any head quickly switch from male to female.

Giving every berthing area a connected toilet and shower — another carrier first — means sailors won't have to get dressed if they wake up in the middle of the night to use the head.

Engineers have completely scrapped quarters designed to hold 200-plus enlisted sailors. While that's probably good news for sailors, the design also reduces the number of smaller quarters that hold 20 or fewer sailors.

In their stead are more medium-sized living areas.

Specifically, enlisted sailors will be spread among 86 different berthing spaces. Of those, 83 will hold between 20 and 83 sailors; the remaining three will hold 19 or fewer. In comparison, Nimitz-class carriers had 33 spaces with 19 or fewer sailors and three with more than 200 sailors.

An exact layout of every berthing space was not available. But a Ford floor plan for a 36-sailor living area shows three-high stacks of racks, one locker per person plus two dirty clothes lockers and smaller lockers for sailors who do not have storage space underneath their mattress. Directly connected to the berthing areas are three toilets, three sinks and two showers.

Officers may find themselves in larger berthing areas with more racks. The number of staterooms — quarters that accommodate one to three sailors — is dropping from 68 percent of total officer living quarters on Nimitz-class flattops to 52 percent on Ford. Meanwhile, the number of bunkrooms — quarters that accommodate four or more officers — went from 32 percent of officer berthing on Nimitz-class carriers to 48 on Ford. On the upside, Nimitz-class carriers have as many as eight officers per bunkroom while Ford maxes out at six.

All officers will have adjoining bathrooms on Ford. On George H.W. Bush, the last Nimitz-class carrier, only senior officers had them.

Ford-class carriers won't have modular "sit-up" berths, which allow more headroom in the racks. The Navy is sticking with the traditional racks stacked in twos or threes for enlisted and ones or twos for officers.

Sailor reaction

Sailors contacted by Navy Times about the changes were largely optimistic. Unauthorized to speak on the subject, they spoke only on the condition of anonymity.

Several sailors were glad to hear urinals were going away, mainly because they're harder to clean than toilets and they easily break down. One less toilet fixture also means fewer parts to have to store.

Ford will use a vacuum-powered septic system like Bush, which experienced widespread toilet failures during its first deployment that were due, in part, to narrow pipes. Bush's skipper, Capt. Brian Luther, said he planned to encourage the Navy to make changes to Ford to prevent toilet outages.

There are clear advantages to connecting berthing space to the bathrooms, said a chief petty officer at an aviation training unit.

Many sailors like to sleep in little clothing, he said. On Ford, they won't have to bother with putting on more appropriate clothing before hitting the head.

A corpsman said he has seen sailors relieving themselves into bottles in their rack rather than having to get dressed in the middle of the night.

Sailors also said adjoining bathrooms will likely reduce the harassment sometimes faced by sailors wearing robes or towels in the passageways.

There is one downside, the corpsman noted: If a toilet backs up, it means the smell will drift into the berthing area.

The smaller the crew in the berthing space, the better, added an electronics technician on the carrier Enterprise.

"I live in a 27-person berthing, where we are a tight-knit group," he said. "It is very easy for us to address issues with individual sailors that violate living standards and fix the issue quickly. Some of my colleagues don't have that luxury."

Kings Bay Memorial Service

The Annual Kings Bay Memorial Service will be Wed 31 Oct thru Sun 4 Nov 2012. Registration forms will be mailed out this week. Keep in mind that it's ONE FORM PER PERSON and EVERY PERSON MUST HAVE A SEPARATE FORM. If you have never attended this Memorial Service, you just don't know what you are missing.

On Thursday, prior to the Friday Base Memorial Service, there will be a service for Jim Eddy Johnston in the park across the street from the St. Mary's Submarine Museum. Jim was the self-appointed Southern Regional Historian for Submarine Conventions and Memorial Services and always made available photo albums documenting prior events in the Hospitality Room.

On The Web

Some Websites and Blogs of Interest to USSVICB Members

[Summer From Kandahar](#)

[USSVICB Scholarship Presentations](#)

[Buffet Discounts](#)

[I Am The American Sailor with Ernest Borgnine](#)

[Aboard The Quietest Submarine In The World](#)

(email your favorite links for publication to steve)

Navy History

Subject: Why the USS THRESHER (SSN-593) Was Lost?

In April 1963, the author, then the Analysis Officer at the Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) Evaluation Center in Norfolk, VA, had just completed the U.S. Nuclear Submarine Acoustic Data Handbook, a comprehensive summary of the low frequency, narrowband acoustic signature characteristics of all U.S. nuclear submarines then operational, including the USS THRESHER (SSN-593). That document was based on analysis of more than 700 acoustic detection events of all nuclear submarines.

Acting in that capacity, and with those technical qualifications, the author, subsequently the lead acoustic analyst at the Office of Naval Intelligence for 42 years and author of WHY THE USS SCORPION (SSN-589) WAS LOST, reviewed on page 151 of the WINTER 2012 issue of THE SUBMARINE REVIEW (WI12TSR), called in acoustic data from all Atlantic SOSUS stations to determine if the loss of the USS THRESHER had been acoustically detected. That analysis identified a signal of extreme amplitude produced by the collapse of the THRESHER pressure hull at 09:18:24R on 10 April 1963. The derived position - a four nautical mile (nm) by eight nm ellipse with a major axis oriented 040-220 - provided the basis for the successful search for the THRESHER wreckage.

That analysis also determined the THRESHER non-vital electrical bus, after two minutes of line-frequency instability, failed for unknown reasons at 0911R while the nuclear reactor coolant pumps (RCPs) were in FAST. (Note: the SSTGs were not acoustically detected; the instability of the non-vital bus was derived from measured instability in the RCP rotational-rates. The non-vital bus line frequency was determined by correcting for the 2.5 percent slip of the RCP drive motors. Also note that the signal strength of the RCP sources at 0911R, at a detection range of about 30 nm, indicated that had the RCPs been shifted to SLOW at 0911R, they should still have been acoustically detected - but no such detection occurred.) The electrical load thrown on the vital bus at 0911R by the failure of the non-vital bus with the RCPs in FAST exceeded the capabilities of the vital bus; the RCPs (initially detected at 0845R in FAST as THRESHER, according to the deep-dive OP-PLAN, was approaching a depth of 1000 feet) went off-line and the reactor scrambled at 0911R. The coincident detection of an acoustic signature component at a fixed ratio relative to the RCP source unique to S5W RCPs confirmed the SOSUS detection was THRESHER. There were no acoustic detections by SOSUS of any THRESHER main propulsion sources as would have been probable had speeds above about 14 knots been employed. The author provided the above assessments of RCP operating mode and loss of signal in testimony before the THRESHER Court of Inquiry (COI) on 18 April 1963 with supporting testimonies by BUSHIPS Code 345 and the David Taylor Naval Ships Research and Development Center personnel, respectively, CAPT Patrick Leahy and Mr. Edwin Savasten.

At 0913R, two minutes AFTER - repeat, AFTER - the reactor scrambled, THRESHER informed her escort ship, the USS SKYLARK (ASR-20), by underwater telephone, that she was (quote) experiencing MINOR difficulty.(end quote) The COI concluded the rupture of a silver-brazed, sea-connected pipe had produced flooding in the engine room that shorted-out electrical systems causing the scram, an assessment still accepted at the highest levels within the Navy; however, that assessment requires that flooding at test-depth that resulted in a reactor scram and a loss of propulsion be described by THRESHER as a (quote) minor difficulty. (end quote)

At 0917R, SKYLARK received a final communication from THRESHER that contained the number 900. That number is assessed to have been the depth in feet (referenced to test-depth as required by the deep-drive OP-PLAN security directive) by which THRESHER had exceeded her test-depth of 1300 feet, or 2200 feet. With an estimated average

sink-rate of about 130 feet per minute, the THRESHER pressure-hull collapsed at 09:18:24R at a depth of about 2400 feet, more than 400 feet below her estimated collapse depth. Independent confirmation of that assessment has been provided by a post COI testimony analysis of the collapse event acoustic bubble-pulse frequency which indicated a depth between 2000 and 2400 feet. (See "Technical Comment" page 134 of the WI12TSR.) The author has no information on the change in displacement produced by hull compression at great depth and the extent to which that decrease could have accelerated the THRESHER sink-rate.

There was not in 1963 - nor is there now - any evidence in the specific case of the loss of THRESHER to support the COI conclusion that on 10 April there was a rupture of a silver-brazed, sea-connected pipe that caused a reactor scram. The occurrence of silver-brazing problems earlier with THRESHER, and with other submarine hulls, is NOT conclusive evidence that it occurred during the 10 April deep-dive, especially since THRESHER's 0913R transmission to SKYLARK makes no mention of flooding and because the results of analysis of the SOSUS acoustic data are consistent with failure of the non-vital electrical bus which resulted in a reactor scram at test-depth because the RCPs were operating in FAST. Unable to deballast because of a subsequently confirmed ice-formation condition in the high-pressure air lines, THRESHER sank to collapse at extreme depth without any prior flooding. Both the pressure hull and all sea-connected systems survived well beyond design specifications. As discussed in THE DEATH OF THE USS THRESHER by Norman Polmar, THRESHER had made some 40 dives to test depth prior to April 1963.

To repeat, there was not - as maintained on page 122 of the WI12TSR - any (quote) failure of a silver-brazed fitting in the engine room, with immediate flooding, and subsequent emergency shutdown of the nuclear reactor (scram due to spray on the engine room affecting electrical control panels) (end quote); hence, it is wrongly asserted, also on page 122, that Portsmouth Naval Shipyard personnel were responsible for the loss of the USS THRESHER because of the failure of a silver-brazed fitting.

The acoustic bubble-pulse data indicate the THRESHER pressure hull and all internal compartments were completely destroyed in less than one-tenth of a second (100 milliseconds), significantly less than the minimum time required for human perception of any event: 50 milliseconds for retina integration plus 100 milliseconds for cognitive integration. Measurements made during the lowering and recovery of an instrumented diesel submarine to collapse depth are consistent with the conclusion that the water-ram produced by the initial breaching of the THRESHER pressure hull at 2400 feet traversed the diameter of the pressure hull in about 0.005 seconds (five milliseconds), a velocity of about 4000 mph. That force would have torn the pressure hull longitudinally and vertically as verified by imagery of the THRESHER wreckage. Even allowing for differences in pressure hull design, the extent of the damage to THRESHER, compared to the USS SCORPION (SSN-589), which collapsed at 1530 feet, indicates THRESHER collapsed at significantly greater depth.

The above discussed information on the failure of the non-vital bus, the RCP operating mode and implications for a reactor scram is provided in COI documents available in the public domain.

As of March 2007, the Office of Naval Intelligence still held a photo-copy of the SOSUS paper display (LOFARgram) upon which the above assessments are based. There were no SOSUS recordings of the THRESHER event. The original SOSUS LOFARgram data from all Atlantic stations - except Barbados, which was bathymetrically blocked - were destroyed by SOSUS Evaluation Center personnel because the data was more than five years old and because it was concluded another submarine would not be lost. The date of destruction of the original THRESHER acoustic data was 22 May 1968, coincidentally the same day on which it was subsequently determined the USS SCORPION was lost.

With the approach of the 50th anniversary in 2013 of the loss of THRESHER, it would be appropriate for the Navy to officially acknowledge why the USS THRESHER was lost for the benefit of surviving family members and friends of those onboard who may find some solace in the knowledge that the collapse event occurred too fast to be apprehended, and also for the benefit of those surviving Portsmouth Naval Shipyard personnel who continue to be falsely implicated in the loss of the USS THRESHER by assertions that a silver-brazed fitting failed.

As previously stated, the THRESHER pressure hull and all sea-connected systems significantly exceeded design specifications; there was no flooding before collapse of the pressure hull at extreme depth.

Although this analysis advances an understanding of why the USS THRESHER was lost by establishing there is no evidence of the failure a silver-brazed fitting during the 10 April deep-dive, the analysis still leaves the perhaps unanswerable question of why the non-vital bus failed after two minutes of line frequency instability.

The USS THRESHER was lost nearly half a century ago because her nuclear reactor shut down at test depth of 1300 feet and the crew could neither blow ballast nor restart the reactor in the seven minutes during which THRESHER sank to collapse at a depth of about 2400 feet.

One would expect that Cold War "special ops" involving U.S. nuclear-powered submarines are shrouded in secrecy. Other American sub activities during that era, however, are also hidden, one for a very strange reason.