

TORPEDO ALLEY



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April 2013

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:

May 9 2013 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	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Treasurer	Terry Trump	843-873-9563

Appointed Officers	Click to email	Phone Number
Chief of the Boat	Rick Sparger	843-553-5594
Public Affairs	Ed Stank	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 Kratz	843-873-0238
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

The attendance for the March 14, 2013 meeting was 98.

Opening Ceremonies: The meeting was called to order by sounding the klaxon. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1902. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, Chaplain Nick Nichols gave the Invocation and tolled the boats lost in March. MT1/SS Augustus "Gus" Christian Martin, who departed on Eternal Patrol February 15, was also tolled. Vice Commander Jerry Stout read the USSVI creed.

Vice Commander Jerry Stout welcomed the members and guests to the meeting. He then presented the 2013 Base Distinguished Submariner of the Year Award to ETCM/SS Carl H. Chinn. COB Rick Sparger presented Carl with a plaque on behalf of the base. Jerry Stout thanked Connie Chinn, Carl's wife, for her support on behalf of the base. Carl thanked the base and said he was honored and humbled to be in the same company as Nick Nichols, the 2012 Distinguished Submariner.

Introductions: The following were new attendees to Charleston Base meetings: Billy Cady CMDCM/SS Qual Boat: USS Nathaniel Greene SSBN 636, Gordon "Gene" Williams TMCS/SS Qual Boat: USS Scorpion SSN 589, Ron Cleeve, a target sailor, the brother of base member Richard Cleeve.

Secretary: Base Secretary Rick Wise called for a motion from the floor for the minutes for the February Meeting as published in the newsletter to be approved. A motion was made and seconded and approved on a voice vote.

Treasurer: Base Treasurer read a report for the month of February 2013. He also stated that he had checks for those who had given receipts for purchases made for the oyster roast.

Vice Commander: Base Vice Commander Jerry Stout had nothing to report.

Chaplain and Webmaster: Base Chaplain and Webmaster Nick Nichols gave the following report:

Sharon Sessler, Marty's wife, had a knee replacement today at Trident. Her surgery went well. She is now in room 619.

James Parker, Marty Sessler's brother-in-law, passed away on 3 March. James lived in OH.

MT1/SS Gus Martin, USN, departed on EP on 15 February. Gus was a member of the Tri-State Base in PA. He moved here last year and became a joint member of Charleston Base. He was not able to attend more than a couple of our meetings due to illness. Gus was buried in PA on 23 February. His family is planning a memorial service and reception in Charleston two weeks from tonight, 28 March, 1800-2000. Gus's daughter has invited SUBVETS Charleston to conduct our bell tolling service. It will be held at the North Charleston Hyatt Place Hotel at 1830 and we will wear the vest uniform. More info will be put out via e-mail next week.

Wayne Skinner had heart surgery on 4 March. The surgery to replace a valve and install a stent went very well and he is home recovering and having rehab.

Kathy Smith, Smitty's wife, is now home after having back surgery. She is having in-home therapy and was able to attend the oyster roast.

Bill Buxton has stopped his chemo treatments but is now taking oral meds for his liver cancer. Hospice care has been called in to help him and Sue with the things she can't do for him. Phone calls and visits are very welcome.

Dave Rein has lung cancer and has completed his first rounds of chemo. He is weak but regaining some of his strength and was able to come to the oyster roast.

Lee Lookabill was in and out of the hospital since the last meeting. She was not able to have her chemo last week as scheduled due to a bout of pneumonia. Lee is now on O2 24/7.

Julian Villegas' mother fell and broke her hip. Julian and Gloria made the trip out to New Mexico to help out.

My wife, Linda, broke her ankle the first week in February. She has now been moved to a walking boot, doing well and was able to attend the oyster roast.

Clyde Peters is still in Mt. Pleasant Manor Nursing Home, 921 Bowman Rd, Rm 323.

Tim VeArd, USSVI Chief Technical Officer, has been given about 4 weeks to live. He has stopped all treatment and is in hospice care. Anyone that would like to can send a card as follows: Tim & Linda VeArd, 2240 Lakes of Melbourne Dr., Melbourne FL 32904.

The following shipmates departed on Eternal Patrol this past month. None were members of Charleston Base. Online memorial entries were made if possible.

WWII Shipmate YN2 (SS) Edward Fran Jones, departed on Eternal Patron on February 15th in TX. Ed was a life member of SUBVETS WWII and had just turned 100 years old.

EMC (SS) Samuel Jay Query, departed on Eternal Patrol on February 15th in Moncks Corner. He was not a member of USSVI.

STS1 (SS) Maury S. Scarborough, departed on Eternal Patron on February 26th in Trident Medical Center. He lived in Summerville. While in the Navy he served on JAMES K. POLK and JOHN ADAMS. He was nor a member of USSVI.

Note: Please get your mug shot taken if you have not 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 to 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.

Webmaster Updates: Events page constantly updated. Activity Pictures for February and March Events. Map Page completely updated with maps to all event locations. Newsletters have been updated back to 2003.

E-mail addresses on the website will be changed to replace @ with #. You will have to change it back to get a usable e-mail address. This will defeat e-mail harvesting programs.

Public Affairs and Submarine Veterans of WWII: PAO Ed Stank reported that an article was submitted to the US Undersea Warfare News, The Patriot the Combined Base Charleston paper, and The American Submariner on the H. L. Hunley Memorial Service, the Massing of the Colors, and the Tribute to WWII at Marrington Elementary School that four of our WWII veterans attended.

On Submarine Veterans of WWII Swamp Fox Chapter, Ed reported that following the February meeting the number of Associate Members has increased from 30 to about 40. The next meeting will be the third Thursday in April at 1130 at Ryans in Summerville. Wives and girlfriends are welcome. The teachers and kids at Marrington Elementary School were overjoyed with our members who attended their ceremony.

Membership: Membership Chairman Carl Chinn reminded the new guys that he had applications.

Newsletter and Recreation Committee: Newsletter Editor Steve Morawiec reported that the February newsletter electronic and print versions have been sent out.

Storekeeper: Base Storekeeper Ken Hutchison mentioned that the calendars he had ordered because of member interest at the last meeting were in. Please come and buy one.

Holland Club: Holland Club Chairman John Kratz stated that the Holland Club induction ceremony would take place at the April meeting. There are 18 members to be inducted and they can bring guests.

Little David Project: The Little David working party will start at 0900 on 30 March at the Berkeley County Museum in Moncks Corner. We'll be painting on the interior as well as the exterior and will be taking down the smoke stack to paint. If you can come out we can use you.

Kaps For Kids: Carl Chinn announced that Walt Deal has stepped up to take over as Kaps For Kids Coordinator.

Fleet Reserve: Larry Starland stated that the Short Stay Picnic was coming up in May as well as the election of officers.

Scholarship: Scholarship Chairman Julian Villegas reported that they had collected \$110 so far selling raffle tickets. He thanked Steve Morawiec and Don Meadows for donating items for the raffle.

Chief of the Boat: COB Rick Sparger said that at this oyster roast there was the least food left over of any of our events. With the exception of the vegi-burgers almost everything was consumed. It was a great event. He thanked everyone involved. He asked that a letter be sent to NPTC thanking the students that took over most of the scut work for the oyster roast.

The float will be heading down to Savannah on Friday, March 15. The base of operation will be at the Quality Inn in Hardeeville. The lineup starts at 0830 in Savannah, GA.

The tickets for the Submarine Birthday Ball on April 12 will be available up front following the meeting.

The Amberjack Ceremony, the Submarine Birthday and the USSVI SE Regional Boat Tolling will be held at the Cold War Submarine Memorial near the SC lost Boat Memorial in Mt. Pleasant, SC at 1000 on 10 April.

We need volunteers to join the flag folding detail. Once we get enough volunteers a training schedule will be set.

If you change your email address please let the COB or Membership Chairman know.

Sue Eckles, who collapsed at the oyster roast, had spent three days in the hospital while they did tests. They never found a cause for her collapse. She has been released and is doing fine. Her daughter has taken time off to help her.

Base Election Status: Election Coordinator John Lookabill announced that Rick Wise and Rick Sparger have removed their names for consideration as Base Commander. Ed Stank is running for Base Commander and Steve Morawiec is running for Base Treasurer.

Base Commander: Carl Chinn said that new base challenge coins should be in next week. They will be a little bit larger than our current challenge coins so even if you have an old coin please by a new one to support the Scholarship Fund. The coins should sell for \$10.

The Executive Board recommended to the base that they make a donation to the Scorpion Memorial this year of \$198 (2 X \$99 each sponsored name solicited by the fund for the memorial service). The names recommended by the board were STS1/SS Harold Snapp and FTG1/SS John M. Wallace. A motion was made from the floor to do this and after a heated discussion the motion carried.

Old Business: None

New Business: Jim Lewis made a motion that the base sends challenge coins to the seven students that helped with the oyster. The motion was seconded and carried.

Good of the Order: Stacy Powers asked that the base show their gratitude to the Salty Dogs. They received a round of applause. Joe O'Saben invited the members to a fish fry at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church held by the Knights of Columbus on Friday, March 15.

Thom Beach gave a report on the USSVI Southeast Regional Convention being held on April 7 – 11 at the Sheraton Hotel on Goer Drive in North Charleston. Members who want to go on the base tour need to give him their full name, birth date, and SSN for security clearance. The luncheon at the FRA will be Monday, April 8 at 1100 and the base tour will be at 1300 vice 1400. The memorial service will be held on Wednesday, April 10 at 1000 in conjunction with the Amberjack Memorial and Submarine Birthday.

Ed Stank offered stars that have been cut from flags that became too damaged to fly. The donations received will go to the Major Stuart Adam Wolfer Institute to support troops stationed abroad. Information on this program is available at www.MSAWI.org

Rick Wise explained that he removed his name for consideration as Base Commander because he had recently taken the position of Base Secretary and that the position is not in a condition to be turned over. He thanked the base for the nomination.

The Scholarship Fund raffle drawing was held. The winners were Larry Starland, Mike Emerson and Dave Clark.

John Kratz reminded the base that a hog roast would be held at the After Battery on April 6. The lead up to the hog roast starts April 1. Everyone is invited. Admission is free with donations encouraged. Information is available at www.theafterbattery.com

Depth Charge: Willie Jones won the depth charge and donated \$100 to the Scholarship Fund.

Meeting Adjourned: Following the benediction by Base Chaplain the Base Commander adjourned the meeting at 2012.

April Submarines Lost

USS Pickerel	SS 177	April 3, 1943
USS Grenadier	SS 210	April 22, 1943
USS Snook	SS 279	April 8, 1945
USS Thresher	SSN 593	April 10, 1963

April Birthdays

Carlson	Cochrane	Comp	Detwiler
Gianetto	Gibson	Gillitzer	Hill
Hurd	Kimbrell	Little	McDonald
Nettles	Olsen	Oser	Pepper
Pierce	Shoemith	Slattery	Smith
Sparger	Vlam	Walsh	Watson
Weir	Wood		

NOTES FROM THE CHAPLAIN

CHOOSING WISELY

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. James 3:17 (NKJV)

Every life, including yours, is a tapestry of choices. And the quality of your life depends, to a surprising extent, on the quality of the choices you make.

Would you like to enjoy a life of abundance and significance? If so, you must make choices that are pleasing to God.

From the instant you wake up in the morning until the moment you nod off to sleep at night, you make lots of decisions: decisions about the things you do, decisions about the words you speak, and decisions about the thoughts you choose to think.

Today and every day, it's up to you (and only you) to make wise choices, choices that enhance your relationship with God. After all, He deserves no less than your best.

A Prayer for Today

Dear Lord, today I will focus my thoughts on Your will for my life. I will strive to make decisions that are pleasing to You, and I will strive to follow You. Amen

Adapted from "Courage for my Daily Walk"

Submarine News

Submarine Drama 'Phantom': Down Periscope

As one might expect from a submarine drama, Phantom is claustrophobic and confining. If only it were compelling.

This leaden thriller (** out of four; rated R; opens Friday nationwide), set during the Cold War, takes place almost entirely aboard a Soviet submarine. Supposedly inspired by true events, the story centers on a Soviet naval

commander, Demi (Ed Harris), who is haunted by his past. He is ordered to direct a covert mission that could ignite a nuclear war.

The dialogue and action on the boat are fictional. The true events, though, are undeniably intriguing: A rogue Russian ballistic-missile submarine that sank in 1968 was later found on the ocean floor. This little-known event could have triggered a nuclear war.

The idea of imagining what happened aboard this doomed vessel sounds riveting, but as envisioned here it feels talky, tedious and vague. The action sequences are riddled with movie clichés.

The story, written and directed by Todd Robinson, is told from the perspective of a Russian crew. A cast of mostly American actors plays Russians, without any vestige of accents. This might be the film's most intriguing choice. But the flat rendering of the Russian point of view sheds no light on foreign sensibilities.

Harris and William Fichtner, as Alex, his second in command, put in solid performances, but their characters are thinly drawn. Harris' Demi is either in gruff mode or psychologically tortured. The rest of the cast, whose objectives and personal stances are murky, could be cardboard cutouts.

The dialogue is often trite, punctuated by military jargon. When those on board stage an insurrection, Demi denounces them with: "This is the work of madmen." And yet, by his own admission, he might be equally mentally unstable: "There are times I feel I'm losing my mind." Cue the ominous swelling music.

Alex later tells him: "If I'm going to die, I'm going to do it here." Well, seeing as how he's trapped in a submarine with a missile and a crew that has mutinied, that's hardly news. We learn that Demi once crashed this very ship, and mystery shrouds that incident but haunts him in feverish flashbacks. He suffered a brain injury in that crash. And if it's not bad enough that a crew of sailors is being led by a man with possibly clouded judgment, the ship's technicians know more than he does about the real nature of this mission.

The technicians are led by Bruni (David Duchovny), a KGB spy who installs a cloaking device on the sub and plans to detonate a nuclear device. The nuke, according to his top-secret orders, would be fired on an American fleet, and blame would be deflected onto the Chinese. In order to set off World War III, Bruni must wrest control from Demi. But as depicted, the Soviet sub exists in a vacuum. No shots of the American vessel are offered, nor are any real sense of oceanic or geographic context, beyond generic establishing shots of a vast ocean. A heightened drumbeat and dramatic music don't mask a lack of real tension in the storytelling.

When the inevitable happens, it's followed by a sentimental, quasi-spiritual conclusion that offers a corny sense of redemption. The combination of tight close-ups and jarring camera work might require a dose of Dramamine. Better yet, give this movie a wide berth and check out a superb film set in a submarine, the 1981 classic *Das Boot*.

S. Fla. Submarine Company Dives Into Success

Who would have thought Florida's Treasure Coast would be the new hot spot in the submarine business? Vero Beach based Triton Submarines said they went from several calls a month to several calls a day seeking information on their custom built personal submersibles.

Triton's subs have become quite popular with mega-yacht owners in the Mediterranean and Caribbean. They're also being used for serious ocean exploration. Last year, a Triton sub was used in the documentary of the Giant Squid off the coast of Japan. Another Triton sub will be used to find the Giant Squid's cousin, the "Colossal Squid" in the waters off Antarctica.

Triton's subs, which start at around \$3 million dollars, have an acrylic bubble cockpit which offers a unique view of the world beneath the waves. "You can look downward, upward, rearward, upward and it's just not possible in a conventional steel hulled sub," said Triton Submarine's Patrick Lahey. "You can't build empathy with the oceans from a machine or a screen," said Triton Submarine's Marc Deppe. "Putting a human eye into the ocean is critical."

The newer Triton models can dive to 3,300 feet. Deppe said many of the subs' wealthy owners bring their guests onboard to "have a bottle of wine and some sushi and chill out." "It's just a whole different want to experience the ocean," said Deppe. On the scientific side of things, Triton executives said they are so proud their subs were used in the discovery of the Giant Squid last summer. Triton's Jim Harris was behind the controls when the squid appeared.

"It just came out of nowhere! We saw it. It was pretty exciting," said Harris. "It was 10 feet long. If it had out its tentacles, which this one particular animal did not have, it would have been about 28 feet long I think over all." The Fort Pierce based Ocean Research and Conservation Association played a key role in the Squid's discovery. Dr. Edie Widder created the optical lure that was mounted on a probe extended from the sub. "It's got the biggest eye of

any animal in the animal kingdom so it's a visual predator," said Dr. Widder. "We paid attention to that and tried not to use light that would scare it away, instead light that would attract it." The Triton team joked that they used to be referred to as the crazy guys in the corner at different boat shows with a submarine. Now, this Florida company is considered a leader in an industry catering to the world's wealthiest people who just have to have one for their mega yachts and personal under-seas adventures. "You're seeing things in a manned submersible that are not possible to see any other way," said Lahey.

China frets over India's atomic subs - Nuclear-capable vessels offer to destabilize Beijing's expansion agenda

India recently test-fired a submarine-launched ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead – something that is of serious concern not only to New Delhi's arch-rival Pakistan, but also to China, according to report from Joseph Farah's G2 Bulletin.

China recently has been concerned about India's efforts to expand its influence in the East and South China Seas, where Beijing has asserted exclusive jurisdiction especially over maritime resources. Beijing is upset with India over its assistance to Vietnam in off-shore oil exploration.

At the same time, New Delhi has been equally concerned about China's expansion into the Indian Ocean. Beijing strategists see the Indian nuclear ballistic missile submarine capability as threatening its access to the Indian Ocean through the Malacca Strait, where 25 percent of global trade takes place.

At the same time, India could use its future ballistic missile submarine force to block Chinese oil imports through the Strait, thereby causing major disruptions in the Chinese economy.

In response to this future prospect, China has set up a network of forward-deployed naval bases to protect its oil shipping lanes to the Middle East. Some of these facilities will be in the Indian Ocean, which New Delhi sees as a plan by Beijing to surround it.

However, New Delhi's deployment of these SLBMs could complicate that strategy and actually position Indian submarines off of China's shores, resulting in the threat to China of a ballistic missile attack.

India's ability to launch a ballistic missile submarine will ensure that neither China nor Pakistan will be able to destroy New Delhi's nuclear capability in a first strike. With the ability to launch a ballistic missile from a submarine, it completes New Delhi's nuclear triad – launching a nuclear attack from land, sea or air.

The missiles will be placed on India's Arihant nuclear submarine. It will be outfitted with four launch silos designed to hold 12 of the new missiles that have a range from 700 kilometers to 3,500 kilometers. The Arihant is expected to be operational this year, with three more planned for construction and put into operation by 2025. Sources say that this reflects a new Indian strategic direction to make the Indian Ocean its own area of influence in competition with the Pakistanis.

USS Olympia returns to Pearl Harbor

Senior Chief Sonar Technician Jim Sowa kisses his wife Heidi kiss following the return of the Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Olympia (SSN 717) to Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam after completing a seven month deployment to the Western Pacific region.

Attack submarines are designed to seek and destroy enemy submarines and surface ships; project power ashore with Tomahawk cruise missiles and Special Operation Forces; carry out Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) missions; support battle group operations, and engage in mine warfare.



SUBLANT Recognizes 2012 Sailors of the Year



From left to right: YN1 Derrick Scott - Senior Sea Sailor of the Year for Commander, Submarine Group 10; MM1 William Cox - Submarine Force Atlantic (COMSUBLANT) Senior Shore Sailor of the Year; MM1 Jared Leary - COMSUBLANT Senior Shore Sailor of the Year; STS1 Jason Zirk - Commander, Submarine Group 10 Senior Shore Sailor of the Year; Vice Admiral Michael Connor, Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic; EM2 Austin Walters - COMSUBLANT Junior Shore Sailor of the Year; MM2 Nicholas Rucinski - COMSUBLANT Junior Sea Sailor of the Year; and STS2 Antwan Haywood - Junior Shore Sailor of the Year for Commander, Submarine Group 2.

US Operating Five Submarines in Persian Gulf

The number of US submarines deployed to the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman has reached five with the dispatch of the USS Springfield (SSN-761) to the region. The USS Columbia (SSN-771) is operating west of the Strait of Hormuz, which is a key oil transit route. The US has also stationed eight minesweeping ships in international waters of the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman.

The United Kingdom has also deployed HMS Trenchant, a Trafalgar-class nuclear-powered submarine, to the Sea of Oman. Financial woes in the United States have forced Washington to reduce its military presence in the Persian Gulf. The news comes after the US administration was forced to sign into effect the spending cuts known as the sequester last Friday, which will take USD85 billion from the US federal budget in 2013.

About half of the cuts, or USD46 billion, will affect the US military sector, the most sensitive of which will be altering plans for the deployment of Pentagon's naval assets. While the Pentagon had been previously considering plans to assign two of its 10 aircraft carriers to the Persian Gulf, the giant budgetary cuts have now forced the Department of Defense to deploy only one of those aircraft carriers to the region.

Monitor Sailors' Remains Arrive For Burial

The wind rustled the red, white and blue flags on the two caskets. It blew the pantlegs of the waiting ceremonial guard, and it lifted the jumper flaps on the sailors' uniforms. It might have seemed familiar to the two shipmates whose bones were borne from the hold of an aircraft Thursday, a century and a half after they perished in a storm off the North Carolina coast.

But the two men, who died aboard the USS Monitor in 1862, were safe from the winds now, and back in the white-gloved hands of fellow sailors who were readying them for their burial Friday at Arlington National Cemetery. The two sets of remains, which were found when the famous Monitor's 150-ton turret was raised from the bottom of the ocean in 2002, arrived at 11:30 a.m. at Dulles International Airport.

They were flown through Atlanta on a Delta Airlines commercial flight from a military identification laboratory in Hawaii. There they had been studied for the past 10 years and their identities sought, in vain. As the plane landed, passengers could be seen taking snapshots from the windows, and the plane's pilot, Capt. Steve Manley, came down from the cockpit, stood at attention and saluted near the nose of his jet. Manley had told the passengers about the remains, explained the history of the Monitor and asked that people stay in their seats until the caskets were unloaded.

As the gusts came, and quiet commands were issued, the caskets were then carried by a Navy Ceremonial Guard to two gray hearses, which took them to an Arlington funeral home to await burial Friday. One of the most renowned vessels in history, the Monitor is famous for engaging in the first battle between ironclad warships, on March 9, 1862. Its opponent was the formidable Confederate ship CSS Virginia, formerly the USS Merrimack.

The battle in Hampton Roads was a draw, but many people thought the Monitor had saved the Union from the Confederate behemoth. The Monitor and its crew became national heroes. The ship was swarmed with visitors who begged for autographs. One woman, given a tour, kissed the guns. An emotional President Abraham Lincoln went aboard and reviewed the assembled crew, hat in hand.

But 10 months later as the Monitor was being towed off the coast of North Carolina, it got caught in a fierce storm, capsized and sank. It went undiscovered until a scientific team located the wreck in 1974. Most of the Monitor's crew escaped the sinking, but 16 men died, including the two who were trapped in the turret.

The names of all 16 are known, but experts could not determine which of them were the ones who were recovered. One was a younger man, about 21, whose skull showed he had suffered a broken nose and whose feet were clad in a pair of beat-up, mismatched shoes.

The other man was older, about 35, and his bones showed that he might have had a limp from a previous injury. He also had a groove in his left front teeth, probably from clenching a pipe, and he wore a gold ring with a crude swirling pattern on a right-hand finger.

The arrival at Dulles was emotional for some of those who had been working on the Monitor project for years. "I was thinking of the irony that these men who fought to preserve the Union flew over a United States last night that they couldn't even have comprehended in 1862," said David W. Alberg, superintendent of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, who was aboard the plane.

"It's reassuring that everything that they fought for was not in vain, that the nation not only survived but has thrived," he said. The funeral Friday is open to the public. After a service at the adjacent Fort Myer chapel, the men are to be buried at 4:30 p.m. in the cemetery's Section 46.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Juan M. Garcia, who was on hand to meet the plane, said: "It's delivering on a commitment we make to every one of our sailors . . . you will to the maximum extent possible, you will be brought home . . . even if it takes a century and a half."

View a video on the internment here: <http://www.navy.mil/viewVideo.asp?id=18194>

No British Submarines to Patrol Falkland Islands

The Navy is finding it "increasingly difficult" to deploy a nuclear hunter-killer submarine to patrol British waters around the Falkland Islands. Senior sources made the warning last night, three weeks after the Sunday Express reported exclusively that the forced return of HMS Tireless means that just one of Britain's five Trafalgar-class submarines is fully operational and even that is about to undergo a brief period of maintenance after duties in the Middle East.

Submarines proved their effectiveness in the Falklands War when HMS Conqueror sank the General Belgrano. However, the Conqueror was decommissioned in 1990 and the hunter-killer fleet is "now well beyond its sell-by date". Last night Admiral Sandy Woodward, who led the Task Force to recapture the islands in 1982, called the situation "very worrying". He said: "I have always argued that we need to have a submarine on permanent deployment in the South Atlantic but this was reduced to occasional deployment. Now we seem not able to do that, either."

Hunter-killer submarines are needed to carry out vital duties, including protecting Britain's Trident missile-carrying Vanguard submarines which patrol the North Atlantic. However, HMS Torbay is undergoing maintenance, HMS Trenchant will need servicing after its deployment in the Middle East, HMS Talent is awaiting decommissioning and HMS Triumph, which should have been decommissioned last year, is being used for training.

HMS Astute, the first of our new £1.2 billion Astute class submarines, is still not fully operational. Tireless, dubbed HMS Tired, was forced to return to base last month due to a coolant leak in its nuclear reactor. Sources suggest it could be out of action for 10 months.

Last night naval sources suggested the likelihood of an Argentine sea borne invasion was "almost non-existent". However, submarines have long been regarded as the "secret weapon of ultimate deterrence" against Argentine aggression. Details of their deployment are never made public but last year Navy sources let it be known when HMS Talent was sent to the islands to put a lid on any threat of Argentine aggression during the 30th anniversary of the conflict.

The Navy aims to send a hunter-killer nuclear submarine to South Atlantic waters at least twice in 12 months. Last night former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West said Britain is "now paying the price" for the 10-year delay in ordering the Astute-class replacements. "Even when they come on line fully, we will not have the eight submarines which, I believe, is the minimum number we should have in our locker to undertake the tasks required."

Last night a Ministry of Defence spokesman said there were contingency plans to increase the military footprint in the South Atlantic if required but there was no suggestion of any need to do this at present.

Kittery Shipyard Submarine Arsonist 'A Talented Musician' with 'History of Being Bullied'

A civilian shipyard worker to be sentenced Friday for setting fire to a U.S. Navy nuclear submarine is described in court documents as "a talented musician and artist" who once attended film school. But Casey James Fury, 24, also experienced homelessness at a young age, has long been troubled by anxiety attacks and had "a history of being bullied at school and at work."

Federal defender David Beneman, representing Fury, urged U.S. District Court Judge George Z. Zingales in a presentencing memorandum Monday to put Fury in prison for no more than 15 years and eight months. That is the minimum period agreed to by federal prosecutors in a November plea agreement reached with the former shipyard worker. The May 23 blaze caused more than \$450 million in damage to the USS Miami, a Los Angeles-class nuclear attack sub that was undergoing an overhaul at the shipyard. More than 100 firefighters from multiple states responded to the fire, and six people were injured in the incident, although nobody was killed.

Fury pleaded guilty to two counts of arson in November 2012 in exchange for a recommended prison sentence between 188 months and 235 months. Prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's Office are asking the court to sentence Fury to the longest prison term in that range — which works out to 19 years, seven months. Fury faces a maximum possible sentence for the two counts of arson — for May 23 and June 16 fires at the Kittery-based shipyard — of life in prison plus 25 years, as well as restitution payments.

The fire on June 16, on the facility drydock near the burned submarine, was extinguished quickly. The former Portsmouth Naval Shipyard worker may also be required by the court to pay restitution to the Navy and victims injured in the fire, but U.S. Attorney Thomas E. Delahanty acknowledged at the time of Fury's plea that "there isn't much hope of [Fury] completely — or even substantially — repaying [the more than \$450 million]."

Delahanty has said Fury can withdraw his guilty plea if the court indicates it will issue a sentence greater than the prison term prosecutors promised to seek in exchange for the plea. Fury, who was working as a painter and a sandblaster at the shipyard at the time, allegedly told investigators he set both fires because he wanted to leave work early to meet with his girlfriend.

In his presentencing memorandum, filed Monday, Beneman urges the court to be lenient, writing that Fury is remorseful and "was not intending to cause a major fire" when he used a cigarette lighter to ignite a pile of rags on a bed in a midlevel room in the submarine.

The public defender writes that his client's severe anxiety and depression have made it difficult for him to cope with stress. Beneman wrote that Fury, a 2006 Portsmouth High School graduate, dropped out of film school by the end of his first semester of postsecondary education, but not before incurring more than \$14,000 in debt.

Financial trouble and a series of break-ups with girlfriends put Fury in a downward emotional spiral in the months leading into the fires, Beneman argues. The recent depressions build on a foundation of instability, the attorney writes, including a period in the third grade when he and his mother were homeless after she broke up with her boyfriend at the time.

But Beneman argues that Fury has shown signs of promise, as well. As a percussionist in high school, he "won several band related awards playing in the high school marching band and in band competitions." Despite a failed attempt at film school, Fury was described by friends and family as a "passionate, caring and gentle individual" who had no previous history of violence, according to the court document.

"Fury presents as a low risk for reoffense, particularly as these actions are atypical for his history and personality makeup," Beneman writes, in part. The attorney adds that Fury struggled with bullying during school and at work, and his "vulnerability in prison" should be considered by the court in determining the sentence.

Federal prosecutors countered, however, that even if Fury did not intend for the first fire to cause as much damage as it did, he should have learned from the incident. Instead, prosecutors argue, he set a second fire, indicating a "great capacity for recklessness."

"The defendant's capacity to intentionally set a fire of any kind involving a nuclear submarine, not once, but a second time after personally witnessing the destruction caused, should lead the court to conclude, at best, the defendant lacks good judgment, and, at worst, that he is an arsonist," the prosecution's presentencing memorandum, filed Friday, reads in part. The prosecution document also calls for a heavy sentence as a deterrent to others.

"A lengthy sentence is necessary to send the message that arson of any kind, let alone involving a nuclear submarine, is a serious and dangerous crime," the memorandum reads.

The Navy has committed to repairing the USS Miami, and about one-third of the initial preparation and planning work — for which the Department of Defense has so far allocated \$94 million — will be performed at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery. However, Navy officials have said restoration of the vessel will be largely put on hold because of the automatic federal spending cuts, also known as the sequester, triggered earlier this month.

U.S.S. Silversides submarine featured on CNN's list of top 5 'boatels' in the world

MUSKEGON, MI -- The U.S.S. Silversides, a World War II submarine that sits in the Muskegon Channel, has recently been featured as one of the top five "boatels" in the world by "MainSail," a monthly sailing show on CNN.

A boatel is a cross between a boat and a hotel, according to a story posted CNN's website. "Catering for those who seek the romance of the high-seas without sacrificing the creature-comforts of dry land, an increasing number of enterprising hoteliers are converting historic vessels into over-night stays," reads the story, written by Sheena McKenzie.

The story bills the U.S.S. Silversides as a way for history buffs to "experience life as a World War II sailor – without the combat." It also highlights the submarine's distinction as the third most prolific U.S. submarine during the war after it sank 23 Japanese ships.

Accompanying attractions and activities include a visit to the adjacent U.S.S. Silversides Submarine Museum and a remote operating vehicle (ROV) class, in which participants can build their own underwater robots, the article said. Denise Herzhaft, business manager of the U.S.S. Silversides Submarine Museum, said the organization was excited to be included on the list.

"We are delighted," she said. Herzhaft said the submarine is a huge draw to the site and attracts Boy and Girl Scout troops, 4-H groups, church groups, reunions and veterans groups. All 72 beds are booked almost every Friday and Saturday throughout the year and during the summer, the Silversides is also occupied on weekdays, she said. "We are open all year long," Herzhaft said. "It's been this way since the late '80s."

Overnight stays include a guided historical and mechanical tour of the submarine as well as workshops like knot-tying and Morse code, she said. Rates are \$35 a night Friday through Sunday and \$30 Monday through Thursday. The Silversides is also starting to take reservations for 2014, although rates will increase by \$2.50 next year, Herzhaft said.

Groups need a minimum of 20 people to make a reservation. For more information, contact the museum at (231) 755-1230. Also included in the list were boatels from New York, the Netherlands, Long Beach, Calif., and London.

Australian vandals steal Japan WWII submarine relics

Vandals have damaged the wreck of a Japanese mini submarine that famously attacked Sydney Harbour during World War II, stealing parts and protected relics, authorities said on Thursday. The crews from two of the three vessels involved in the assault scuttled their boats and committed suicide but the fate of the third was unknown until 2006 when scuba divers discovered it off Sydney's northern beaches.

Authorities put an exclusion zone around the vessel, which is believed to contain the remains of the two crew members and personal items such as samurai swords and good luck charms. It is supposedly monitored by long-range cameras. But divers entered the site, damaged the hull of the midget submarine and stole relics, Australia's Environment Department said in an appeal for information, without specifying what had been taken.

"The resulting damage includes the breaking off and removal of two of three visible propeller blades... of the submarine, causing permanent damage to a significant piece of Australia's WWII heritage," the department said. The damage was discovered during an archaeological inspection. Anyone found guilty of damaging or disturbing a protected wreck faces up to five years in jail. The site is also protected under New South Wales heritage laws, with a breach incurring a fine of up to Aus\$1.1 million (US\$1.14 million).

The lethal assault in 1942 came after a Japanese reconnaissance flight reported Allied warships anchored in Sydney Harbour. The commanding officer of a flotilla of five Japanese large submarines cruising off the city decided to attack with three mini submarines, each carrying a two-man crew. They avoided the partially constructed Sydney Harbour anti-submarine boom net and attempted to sink the warships but were detected and attacked. One submarine attempted to torpedo the heavy cruiser USS Chicago, but instead sank the converted Australian ferry HMAS Kuttabul, killing 21 sailors.

Soviet Nuclear Submarine Disasters Were Exposed Only Under Gorbachev

All information on nuclear submarines in the Soviet Union was strictly classified. For the first time the Soviet media reported the death of a nuclear submarine in 1986 under Gorbachev, when strategic nuclear submarine K-219 sank into the abyss of the Bermuda Triangle. The fact that in 1983 an atomic submarine K-429 sank off the coast of Kamchatka, killing 16 people, became public knowledge only in the mid-1990s.

This tragedy, in my opinion, to some extent was the result of the triumph of the Communist Party (CPSU). Many researchers are inclined to think that time is to blame in the tragedy of the K-429, the time when the threat of being excluded from the CPSU was the worst that could happen to any career.

Even senior submarine officers had no access to the information about the accident. Although they believe that if the details of the tragedy were duly reported to the personnel of the Navy allowing for a full analysis of the situation, it may have prevented the death of K-219 in 1986, "Komsomolets" in 1989, and even "Kursk" in 2000. Of course, it is impossible to compare the technical aspects of these disasters because of different equipment, different depths and different people. However, this story should be known, at least for the sake of a lesson.

In our time, a lot was written about this tragedy, including books by Admiral Nikolai Mormul "Underwater Disaster" and "The Case of Suvorov, K-429," and articles on the Internet. According to nearly all authors, this tragedy has not yet been given a fair estimate.

In the spring of 1983, nuclear submarine K-429 Project 670 returned from its autonomous navigation. Most of the crew went home, and the boat was sent for the planned maintenance repair. The crew of the Captain of the first rank Nikolai Suvorov was to meet the boat after the repairs to go to sea in the fall for training and testing of the torpedo firing responses.

Unexpectedly, the Command decided to conduct the training in the summer instead of the fall, and take the boat that did not undergo due repair to the sea for combat exercises. This was done to meet the plan of combat training. One thing was not taken into account - the boat was still in the mode of transfer from one crew to another. The regular crew had to be assembled from different boats. The threats of admirals about taking away party memberships had their effect, and on June 23rd K-429 submarine had a crew from five different boats. The crew was finalized only three hours before going to sea, which is a violation of regulations.

When 30 percent of the crew is replaced, the boat is considered non-operational. This is understandable, because sometimes under water it all depends on collective effort, the unity of the crew, the feeling of the other person's elbow. In this case, there was no three-day basic training; there was not even time to check the systems and mechanisms. But the admirals were not concerned. The submarine with a disjointed crew was sent to sea, relying on good luck. The luck was not there.

That day the division chief of staff, Captain of the first rank Alexei Gusev and the newly appointed commander, Captain of the first rank Nikolai Suvorov protested against going into the sea on unprepared boats. After the Admiral's threat to take away their party membership, the two wrote a report on the complete unpreparedness of the boat to sail. As it turned out, the reports were simply put aside. The Charter states that the orders, no matter how crazy they may be, must be followed. K-429 went to sea with a composite crew. They were 120 people on board instead of the usual 87. The people were herded just in case someone would have to be replaced at sea.

On June 24th, 1983 the boat set out of the Krashennikov Bay. In the Sarannaya Bay where the depth is about 50 meters, a decision was made to "weigh" the boat in the sea water to determine whether it could dive. The command "to dive" was not implemented in the compartments, vent flappers were not closed, and the ship's ventilation system was not blocked. The boat sank and quickly fell to the depth of about 35 meters. In the fourth compartment water gushed out. The central post Echo devices displayed zero mark, as though the boat has not sank. The devices were disabled at the factory because the boat was in repair. Reports on the flow of water through the ventilation system started coming from the compartments.

The submarine, taking 420 cubes of ice water in her gut, lay on the bottom. Only then the emergency alarm was activated. Commander Suvorov gave the order to blow the main ballast tanks. The operator, who was not familiar with the devices on the remote control, instead of closing ventilation valves, shut down Kingston valves. Instead of displacing the water from the tank, the air went straight out, and the body of the boat gradually filled with water. Soon all electrical equipment broke down, and the control room was disconnected and partially flooded. The crew managed to close the ventilation valves only next night. The boat was lying on the bottom at the depth of 45 meters. If the "weigh-in" was done not in the Sarannaya Bay but a little further out in the sea, where depths reach a mile, the boat would have simply been crushed.

The crew was not able to release the emergency buoy meant to give an acoustic and radio signals of distress. To prevent separation and loss, the buoy was firmly welded to the hull. This practice was widespread, at least, at the time. A loss of a buoy was a straight path to losing the party membership. Later it turned out that the submarine escape trunk designed for an emergency evacuation of the crew was also welded to the boat. At this point, the entire team of the fourth compartment (14 divers) was already dead.

Neither the headquarters of the fleet, nor the command knew of the emergency situation on K-429. Everyone on the shore was convinced that the submarine carried out combat exercises. When it became clear that help would not arrive, Captain Gusev made an executive decision to send two divers to the surface through the torpedo devices of the first compartment. They came to the surface using IDA-59 - rescue breathing apparatus and swam to the shore. When a few hours later they were noticed from a passing border ship, they were mistaken for the enemy. Only after an hour of interrogation, the commander of the border ship reported to the headquarters of submariners asking whether they were missing a boat. This is how the command learned of the death of K-429.

Fortunately, of the 120 people on board only 16 were killed. The debate about who exactly was to blame for this tragedy is ongoing to this day. In 1983, the court simply appointed those guilty, namely, the commander Nikolai Suvorov and the crew mechanic Boris Likhovozov. Suvorov was sentenced to 10 years, Likhovozov - eight. They were taken into custody right in the barracks, where the court was held.

Chief of Staff of the flotilla Oleg Yerofeev later became the commander of the Northern Fleet. Under his leadership the nuclear submarine "Komsomolets" perished in 1989. How fair was the trial? Who else should have gone to prison? The controversy still continues to this day. Why was the exercise not delayed? There is only one answer to all questions - party membership.

Some officials in uniform tried to declare the survivors who escaped from the sunken submarine criminals. Particularly ardent was a captain of the first rank, secretary of the party committee, known for the fact that he has never set foot on the deck of a battleship. The commander became the scapegoat. Suvorov spent three years in a penal colony in the Novgorod region. He was released under an amnesty in September of 1987 and passed away on September 26th, 1998 in St. Petersburg.

First Nuclear Submarine Disaster Marks 50-year Anniversary: Vista Man Still Feels Impact - USS Thresher Sank in Atlantic in 1963

Fifty years ago next month, the U.S. Navy suffered one of the worst disasters in submarine history when the USS Thresher sank, killing all aboard. A North County man still feels the impact of that disaster on that day in April 50 years ago.

"It was one of a kind," said Bob Miller of Vista. Miller was among a handful of sailors who was actually aboard the USS Thresher during its launch on July 9, 1960. Three years later, the nuclear-powered submarine sank in the Atlantic, killing the 129 people aboard.

The USS Thresher was designed to go faster and deeper than anything that came before it. Miller had been to sea on the submarine at least 40 different times but in 1963, the electronics technician made a decision to advance his career and go to school. It was a decision that saved his life. "I was driving back from school with three others in the car," he said. "When I heard the news that Thresher had sunk, I blacked out."

It was later determined that a weld on a pipe or valve gave way, which flooded the engine room and ultimately doomed everyone on board. The submarine sank in about 5,000 feet of water. Initially, Miller was haunted by what had happened. "I kept thinking that maybe if I was there, I could've done something to help save her," he said. Miller said he has since come to realize that those who were aboard that fateful day were as skilled as anyone who ever sailed and that did all they could. Miller is preparing to attend the 50-year memorial in Maine next month. A second nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Scorpion, sank five years later under different circumstances.

Sub Crew Earns Unit Commendation For Libya Mission

It's been two years since the guided-missile submarine Florida fired more than 90 Tomahawk missiles over Libya. Last month, as the March 19 anniversary approached, the sub's sailors were given the Navy Unit Commendation, an award for extraordinary action against an enemy. The unit ribbon is comparable to the Silver Star for individual combat heroism.

Five ships responded March 19, 2011, firing 221 Tomahawk missiles on Libyan targets, the Navy reported. The attacks were part of Operation Odyssey Dawn, the military operation that stemmed from the civil war among Libyan citizens and those loyal to Moammar Gadhafi's regime. About 45 percent of the Tomahawks fired came from Florida. "I am extremely proud of my crew," said Capt. Tom Calabrese, Florida's commanding officer at the time of the strike. Calabrese currently serves with Naval ROTC at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. "They displayed initiative, quiet confidence, technical competence and professionalism."

The Navy Unit Commendation can be presented to any ship, aircraft, detachment or other unit of the Navy and Marine Corps. Florida received the award in a Feb. 15 ceremony at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga. Chief Electronics Technician (SS) Kiel Farley, who served on Florida during the Libya strike, said the crew tried to remain calm.

"I wouldn't say the atmosphere was nervous. We were excited," Farley said. "Anytime we get to execute a mission, we're all about it, we're 100 percent gung ho to go out and do what we've trained to do." Leading up to and during the mission, sub leadership kept crew members updated on what was going on above the water, Farley said. "It helps you understand what you're doing and whom you're helping," he said. "The captain would keep us updated daily on the goings-on of the country and the NATO operation itself, and that really makes you feel like you're helping out and doing your part." While the crew was always close-knit, Farley said going through the strike brought the men even closer together.

Though sailors aboard the Florida didn't know how much of an impact they were having at the beginning of the strike, their captain soon filled them in on the history they were making. "Towards the end, our captain started relaying to us that we were definitely setting some naval milestones with regard to strike warfare," Farley said.

The actions marked the first time a guided-missile sub launched Tomahawks in battle, a Navy news release said. Farley, who is stationed at Trident Training Facility in Kings Bay, said participating in the strike was a career highlight. All the submariners who served aboard the Florida for the strike have moved on to other commands, said Lt. Leslie Hubbell, spokeswoman for Submarine Group 10.

The current commanding officer of Florida's gold crew, Capt. David Kirk, accepted the award on their behalf. Submarines have played a greater role in recent land conflicts. While the submarine force launched only 5 percent of the Tomahawk missiles fired during Operation Desert Storm, that number jumped to 33 percent during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Today, the submarine force accounts for more than 50 percent of Tomahawks fired, the Navy release said.

Sequestration and Budget Issues Begin to Impact SUBASE patrons

The impacts of sequestration and government budget issues became very visible to patrons of Naval Submarine Base New London (SUBASE) Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs and facilities, Monday, March 18. As the base implements a number of changes to the way it supports the fleet, fighters, and families stationed here, SUBASE was forced to reduce hours of operation at the base gymnasium, pool, and library.

"During this period, we at SUBASE MWR will do our best to continue to provide the services you have come to expect," said Robert Kydd, SUBASE MWR Director, in announcing the changes. "We also ask for your patience and understanding."

The changes reduce Morton Hall gymnasium hours by 10.5 hours a week, swimming pool hours by 24 hours a week, and library hours by 11.5 hours a week. The reduced hours of operation will continue through the remainder of the fiscal year, unless budget issues are resolved.

For Kydd if there is a silver lining to the cloud, it is that SUBASE MWR was able to limit any impact to the Liberty program and Liberty Center, which support the base's significant population of young, single Sailors attending Naval Submarine School.

"With a constricting budget, programs and or service hours have to give somewhere," said Kydd. "For the foreseeable future, as we try to balance budget and services, we're tipping the scale in favor of our active duty Sailor support and usage. They're our primary reason for being here, and that's why we're extremely relieved that we were able to keep the Liberty program untouched."

On March 2, the Secretary of the Navy issued an All Navy message informing the Department that sequestration had begun. Sequestration set in motion required automatic, government-wide cuts. These budget cuts to the Navy, and ultimately to SUBASE, will manifest themselves at various times according to SUBASE Commanding Officer, Capt. Marc W. Denno; some, like the MWR service hour changes, are taking place now and are very visible, while others may occur, or become more apparent, months downstream.

"Maintenance and base upkeep is being greatly reduced," said Denno. "Repairs and upgrades to buildings and building systems are being curtailed, and additional cuts are already impacting training, travel, and purchasing. New construction, support, and service contracts cannot be let and a hiring freeze also impacts SUBASE's ability to replenish the natural attrition of the civilian workforce. But despite these compromises to our base efficiency and support effectiveness, I know Navy Team New London and SUBASE will continue to do their utmost for our fleet, fighters, and families and our Nation's defense."

In a message to senior leaders in Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, Rear Admiral Tim Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, also acknowledged the impact that sequestration and budget issues are making.

"As we go forward in this uncertain fiscal environment, please know that we truly appreciate the effect these service level adjustments will have on your day-to-day operations and quality of life of your personnel and families," said Alexander. "These decisions were not made lightly, but were necessary and prudent to sustain important support services to the Fleet."

Navy & Veteran News and Other Gouge

MCPON Weighs In - Why "induction" had to change, PT is personal and alcohol abuse can't be tolerated

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (AW/NAC) Mike Stevens made waves early this year when he announced an end to chief "induction" as sailors have come to know it. The shenanigans often considered a rite of passage would not be tolerated. Stevens is also stamping out use of the term "induction" altogether, because of its association with hazing. Stevens talked about his decision and the response from the fleet in a candid interview March 11 at Navy Times headquarters in Springfield, Va. He also weighed in on other hot-button issues sailors face today, including looming tuition assistance cuts, personal fitness, new jobs for women and the fire risk of your Navy working uniform.

A stop to hazing.

When Stevens put on his chief anchors in 1995, he was subjected to antics that, at the time, were accepted as part of the induction process. Today, they would certainly be considered hazing. "The chief petty officers that initiated me

were initiating me based on what they had learned, what they had experienced and what they felt at that time was the best thing to prepare a young first class petty officer to become a chief petty officer," Stevens said.

While he did not go into great detail about his induction, he did share that he was forced to eat a number of unpleasant things covered in whipped cream "that would exercise your gag reflexes." "They were edible. They did not kill me ... that was one of the things that we did back then to earn the rite of passage," he said. "It was probably not unlike what some college fraternities did." This experience has colored Stevens' opinion of induction and hazing, and he now believes there is no place for such "demeaning" behavior in the Navy. Back then, Stevens said, "pain and suffering" were believed to forge unity. "Some people believe that," Stevens said. And in today's Navy those people would be in opposition to his orders for the fleet.

In January, Stevens put out his guidance on chief's initiation with the intent to eliminate hazing in one of the Navy's most time-honored traditions. "I believe that CPO initiation, transition and induction worked well for its time as times change, we must change." The term "induction" is gone. Alcohol is no longer permitted during interactions between chiefs and selectees. There's no profanity. And in those final hours before pinning, good order and discipline must be maintained. These changes are part of his update to CPO 365, the yearlong program that prepares first classes to become chiefs.

His hope is to open a new chapter in the process of putting on chief that has been marked with events that have often crossed the line, violating the Navy's hazing policy. "When you have to review a policy on hazing before you conduct training, you have to ask yourself if you need to make some adjustments," he said. "As we have laid out CPO 365 in its current state, it is a professional and well-organized training event that lasts throughout the year if it is done per the guidance, you would not have to concern yourself with things like the potential of hazing." Initial reaction to MCPON's change mostly from the retired community was quick and harsh.

"It is something that our chiefs' community has been very passionate about for a long time. We expected it," Stevens said. "I was and am convinced within the very depths of my heart that the decision we made was the right thing to do." Stevens said he's hearing more support from the fleet. Meanwhile, evidence of inductions gone wrong persists. An investigation is underway onboard the aircraft carrier George Washington, looking into allegations a sailor was hazed during last year's final night of chiefs' induction. Stevens declined to discuss the case because the investigation is ongoing. He said he believes that his changes will reduce such problems.

And it's not just the end of induction as sailors have known it. The Navy is also getting away from some of the shenanigans associated with becoming a shellback, or crossing the equator for the first time. Another Navy ceremony steeped in tradition, it has involved crawling through rancid food and kissing the greased up belly of "King Neptune," usually a crew member with an exceptionally round belly.

"When you talk with sailors that have done it recently, what you will find is that many of the same changes have occurred with crossing the line, to make it more of a training and education ... experience. It has gotten away from some of the practices of old." Stevens said he does not regret his initiation experience. "I did not see any issue with it because that was the Navy we lived in ... but certainly as I have grown, learned and developed, and as times have changed, I would say that if you were to do today what we did then it would certainly be considered inappropriate."

Cutting Tuition Assistance

With the budget crisis still raging, troops are really beginning to feel the squeeze. Most recently, the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps and Coast Guard suspended their tuition assistance programs for the remainder of the fiscal year. That's not what Stevens wants to happen in the Navy, but he's not ruling out cuts, either.

"It would not be a recommendation of mine to suspend it," he said. "I found that in my time in the Navy, when we suspend something, it becomes very difficult to start it back up again." Though he wasn't ready to discuss specifics, he said sailors could expect changes. Sources tell Navy Times that the Navy will release its new TA guidance and rules "soon," and that the Navy will keep an active TA program in place this fiscal year.

"I would support making adjustments to tuition assistance so that we can still keep tuition assistance in place," Stevens said. "I think what you do is you lay everything on the table and you say 'these are the options.' ... I would hope that we can still keep it open to some degree, and keep it going to the largest degree possible."

PT Responsibility

Physical training can be a positive activity as a command, but making command PT mandatory would not work across the board, Stevens said. Because the service has many different "tribes," which have different work and operational schedules, commands must have control to determine how they encourage physical training. In Stevens' experience, command PT works best when it's broken down into smaller units.

"I think a lot of times when we envision command PT, we envision all of our sailors in formation on a flight deck all doing PT at the same time," he said. "That is not practical in all cases. You may have to take a small cadre of folks with a work center supervisor and go to the gym and work out. This group is going to do cardio and another group is going to go and do weights. Maybe a small group is going to go PT. They may break that down by division or

department." And while commands should foster a culture of fitness and give sailors the chance to PT, at the end of the day, it's really up to each sailor to control his or her own fitness, Stevens said.

"Nobody is more responsible for physical fitness and health than the individual," Stevens said. "I believe that sailors need to take, and I believe a lot of them are, first and foremost responsibility for their own physical fitness."

Mandatory School For E-9s

Just a few years ago, the Navy announced that associate degrees would be required to advance to senior chief, but later rescinded that requirement after the off-duty education was found too difficult for many to complete. Even so, Stevens believes "secondary education is a very valuable tool for us to develop ourselves as sailors and as leaders." So he's looking at new professional, on-the-job requirements, and that could mean making attendance at the Navy's Senior Enlisted Academy a must for putting on master chief.

But he added that putting this vision in place could take time and would involve increasing the capacity at the Newport, R.I.-based school. "This is not something that you can just wave a magic wand to do," he said. "If I can get every senior chief petty officer at some point through the Senior Enlisted Academy, I believe it goes a long way in our developing leaders' strategy ... more than secondary education." Stevens said he does not favor requiring every chief to have a degree to be eligible for senior chief or master chief.

Concern Over NWUs

Stevens said the recent news that the service's aquaflage Navy working uniform burns "robustly" when exposed to flame came as a surprise. Even worse, the fabric melts and drips in a fire, adding to a sailor's injuries. "I am always concerned about our sailors," he said. "I am a sailor, my son was a sailor, my brother is a sailor - I have a vested interest in our safety and well-being." Though service leaders didn't immediately ban the uniform from being used on ship, Stevens said the Navy's senior leadership is taking this seriously.

"No one sat around and said to themselves, 'Oh well, we are just going to leave this alone,'" he said. "Once it was identified and brought to light, leadership quickly took action and put this working group together to take a fast and furious look and what our best course of action needs to be I am confident knowing that both U.S. Fleet Forces and [Pacific Fleet] are working on this. They will put together a good proposal to move forward with."

Fighting Alcohol Abuse

The Navy has increasingly gotten stricter on drinking, and there's still work to be done to "deglamorize the use of alcohol," Stevens said. "If we could change the behavior of how we use alcohol for one that is more responsible, then it would certainly help us to eliminate some of these issues of misconduct that we have," Stevens said.

It's no secret that irresponsible alcohol use is still a problem. Last year, while Stevens was still the top enlisted sailor at Fleet Forces Command, Navy leadership decided to start a random breath-testing program at all commands for sailors reporting for work. The program has been called "nonpunitive," but commands can flag sailors for counseling and education programs. Sailors who have a blood-alcohol level of 0.04 percent or higher can trigger a competence-for-duty examination which could lead to punitive action.

In the time he's been in, Stevens said he has seen the service get tough on those abusing alcohol. "We are very strict on the adjudication of alcohol misconduct," he said. "A DUI for most sailors is going to be very damaging to their career they know that." In his time in the service, Stevens said he has seen a culture shift.

"There was a time 10 years ago or so, that you would go to a Christmas party or some kind of a function and it was not uncommon to see a number of people using more alcohol than they probably should," he said. "Now, it is not uncommon to go to an event - even an all chiefs event where there is no alcohol being served. Or if it is, those planning the event have arranged for designated drivers and all-night parking so cars wouldn't be towed.

"You are talking about an all chiefs event, where at one time it would have been a free-for-all," he said. "There was no pre-planning whatsoever now you go to one of those types of events and there is a lot of due diligence paid just to that specific issue."

New Jobs For Women

Now that the Pentagon has formally lifted the combat exclusion policy for women, the Navy and the other services are reviewing their selection criteria for all jobs. That could mean female sailors serving as riverines or SEALs. Stevens fully supports more career opportunities for women.

"I mean this with all my heart. I have said this and I have been saying this long before I became MCPON. Every single sailor in the Navy deserves a fair and equal opportunity to succeed. We need to look at every possible way that we can make that happen," he said.

While reviewing the jobs, it's also important to review and possibly update the standards, Stevens said. "They are not male and female standards. They are just standards," he said. "If we have had a standard in place for a number of years, the only question that we ask now is what is the purpose of the standard? If that standard is proved to be legitimate, it needs to remain in place." For example, the SEALs have long required sailors be able to pass a

special fitness test that includes running, swimming, pushups, sit-ups and pull-ups to even be considered for the training. He said it's these kinds of requirements that must be validated again.

"If 20 pull-ups is the right number based on what they may be physically asked to do, then so be it," he said. "If it is not the right number, then we have to determine what that number is ... We are working very hard and diligently to make sure those opportunities present themselves for everybody."

On The Web

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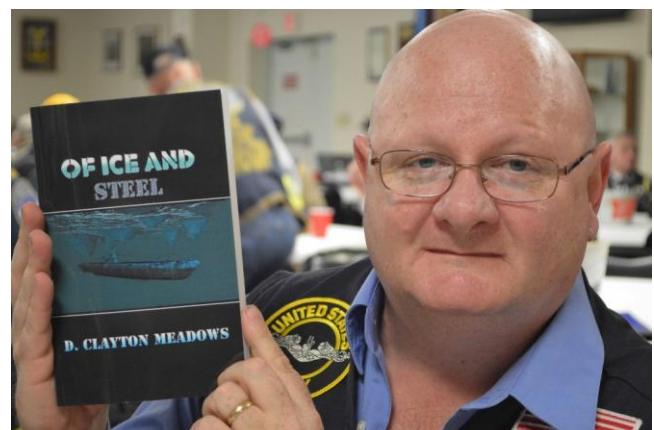


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