

# TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 14 No. 1

January 2018

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

**Base Meeting:**

BOD: January 7, 1800  
 Membership: January 11, 1900

**Location:**

FRA Branch 269  
 Low Country Home  
 99 Wisteria Rd.  
 Goose Creek, SC



Base Commander	Ralph Rohrssen	843.670.2135	Chief of the Boat	Joe Lunn	843.747.5368
Base Vice Commander	Mike Knaub	843.795.6665	Veterans Affairs	Ken Curtis	843.797.1268
Secretary	Mike Ciesielko	843.324.0011	Membership	Larry Knutson	843.860.1155
Treasurer	Gordon Williams	843.553.3015	Scholarship	George Scharf	843.873.3318
			Storekeeper	Ron Chambers	843.821.2268
			Historian	George Scharf	843.873.3318
			Public Affairs	Rick Wise	843.875.5559 (H) 843.276.0899 (C)
			Chaplain	Nick Nichols	843.452.3189
			Holland Club	Bill Freligh	843.553.1115
			Newsletter	Rick Wise	843.875.5559 (H) 843.276.0899 (C)
			Webmaster	Nick Nichols	843.452.3189
			Kaps for Kids	Bill Kennedy	843.875.3109



# Submarines Lose During the Month of January

USS SCORPION (SS-278) Jan. 5, 1944 –	4th War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 77 souls
USS ARGONAUT (SS-166) Jan. 10, 1943 –	3rd War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 102 souls
USS SWORDFISH (SS-193) Jan. 12, 1945 –	13th War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 89 souls
USS S-36 (SS-141) Jan. 20, 1942 –	2nd War Patrol	No loss of life
USS S-26 (SS-131) Jan. 24, 1942 –	2nd War Patrol	Lost with 46 souls– 3 men rescued
<b>Five Boats and 314 Men Lost</b>		

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## Upcoming Charleston Base Events

Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, Feb 1	1800	FRA Branch 268, Goose Creek
Base Meeting	Thursday, Feb 8	1800	FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek
Victory House Visit	Tuesday, Feb 13	1000	VFW Ladson to carpool
Hunley-Housatonic Memorial Service	Saturday, Feb 17	1900	Sullivan’s Island, SC
Kap(SS)4Kid(SS)	Tuesday, Feb 25	1000	McLoed Med Ctr, Florence, SC
Charleston Base Oyster Roast	Saturday, Mar 3	TBD	CRP Picnic Area, Bushy Park

Information on all these events are on the base website [www.ussvicb.org/events/index.html](http://www.ussvicb.org/events/index.html)

## FROM THE BASE COMMANDER

None this issue.

### From the Editor

On February 17 USSVI Charleston Base will again participate in the H. L. Hunley—USS Housatonic Memorial Service at Sunrise Presbyterian Church, 3222 Middle Street, Sullivans Island, S.C, 29482. This will remember the 8 submariners lost with the H. L. Hunley and the 5 US Navy sailors lost on USS Housatonic. Please come out and honor these men who were doing their duty as they understood it. More information is on the Charleston Base Website, [www.ussvicb.org](http://www.ussvicb.org) .

Also posted on the website is the 4th Quarter report for the 2017 budget. We ended up spending about \$1000 more than we received as income. This deficit was intentional in that we have had a significant surplus for many years and thought to give it back to the base by reducing the ticket price for the base Christmas Party. If we had kept the price of tickets where they had been before we would have ended the year with a surplus again. As it was we still had almost \$4000 in surplus from 2017 going into 2018.

## From USSVI National

Normal message traffic from USSVI will be published each month in the newsletter. If the message is of immediate interest to the membership it will be sent out by the Base Secretary. Messages are arranged in the order received

NEWS-2018-004: WORLD WAR I CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Submitted by: John E. Markiewicz on 1/12/2018

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The following was received from the WWI Centennial Commission and is forwarded for your information:

I am writing on behalf of David Hamon, the Military & Veterans Service Organization Coordinator for the World War I Centennial Commission, a Non Profit Federal Organization dedicated to building a National Memorial for the Service men and women of the Great War.

Next week the U. S. Mint will officially release for sale the World War I Centennial Silver Dollar to honor the 4.7 Million who served. (See Link below)

<http://www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/communicate/press-media/wwi-centennial-news.html>

If you, or any member of your Military/Veteran Service organization is interested in the coin, it will available beginning Wednesday, January 17.

Please feel free to contact Mr. Hamon at [david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org](mailto:david.hamon@worldwar1centennial.org) if you have any questions about this or our organization.

NEWS-2018-007: POOPIE SUITS AND COWBOY BOOTS

CHAPTER 11 PREVIEW

Submitted by: John E. Markiewicz on 1/16/2018

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Thanks to Dave Schueler, Seattle Base Newsletter Editor for uploading the file to the Box account. If you go to the link below, you should be able to get to the chapter, read, and download it as needed.

<https://app.box.com/v/Poopie-Suits-Chapter11>

Frank Hood here. Vice Commander, Marblehead Base.

Most sub vets would agree, that civilians have no idea what we went through, what we endured.

To increase understanding, my brother and I have written a book about day-to-day life aboard a US Navy submarine.

Fellow sub vets would enjoy reading it, because the book's details will take them back to their days on the boat, and the funny stories add spice.

It is written in language that civilians will understand, so once a vet has read it, he can pass it on to his children, so they can understand what he went through.

The Title of the book is: "Poopie Suits and Cowboy Boots - Tales of a Submarine Officer During the Height of the Cold War"

**We have designated that all proceeds go to the USSVI Scholarship Fund** - to help kids and grandkids of our Brothers of the Phin.

Would you let your membership know about the book? Put a reference to it in your Base Newsletter? Would you forward this email with Chap 11 attached so they can read it and see if they are interested?

This message was forwarded as POC 2018-005 by National Commander John Markiewicz on 14 Jan.

Here is the easy way to order it.

Go to Blurb.com and type in "poopie suits" near the search spyglass.

There are 3 options: e-book, a soft back or hard cover version.

There is also a version for the Mac iPad or iPhone at iBooks.com

Shipmates can read the first 115 pages of the book for free on the Blurb ebook option page.

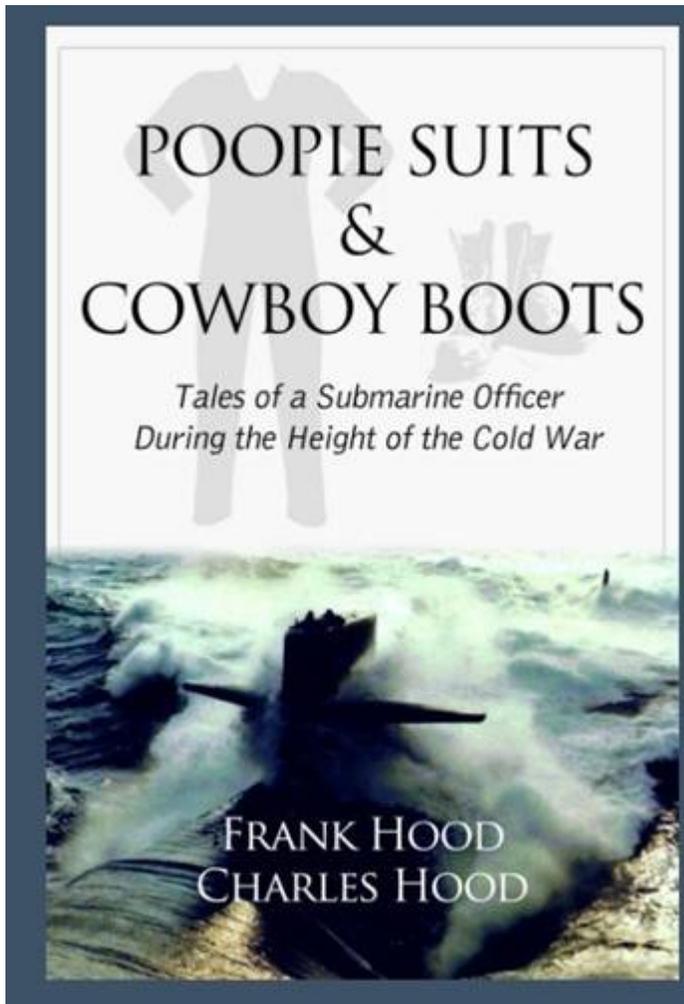
There is a technical problem with the Amazon site, which only sells the Kindle version. That will be fixed soon.

I am attaching Chap 11 for your perusal so you can see what is in the book.

Thank you for mentioning this to your membership.

Straight Board,

Frank Hood



NEWS-2018-009: USSVI 2018 Convention Cruise important information

Submitted by: William C. Andrea on 1/23/2018

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It is unfortunate we must send this message, but clarification is needed in addressing a situation where we have several of our members that are attempting to or have book(ed) passage for our 2018 Convention Cruise through a travel service other than Kim Hedges with AAA, who is our designated agent.

The expense and benefits (meeting rooms, hospitality suite, vendor space, etc.) that USSVI incurs/needs to host the upcoming Cruise is no different than any past landlocked convention. Both the expense and benefits are regulated up or down by the number of people that register through the hosting facility we have in place at that particular event. For the 2018 Cruise that facility is Kim Hedges at AAA Washington. Any bookings outside of AAA will not be registered for the convention and credited to USSVI, which means their attendance does nothing for our organization.

Guys, do not try to save a couple of bucks by backdooring a booking through a friends or relatives travel agent, you will not be registered and issued a name tag required to participate in our events and will not be able to participate in any of the convention activities including use of the Hospitality & Vendor Room.

We would like to see all of you attend this cruise, but please do not attempt to ride the backs of your shipmates and support our organization by going through the proper channels to register. Please note: No Registration Fees after the Cruise casts off.

If you have not done so already, you can register by going to: <http://www.ussviconvention.org/2018/>

Click on the Cruise Registration Button/Register Now

Fill out the form and submit the form along with your deposit.

If you have any questions or comments, please address them to me instead of Bill Andrea, he is only the messenger, not the author of this message.

Regards and hope to see all of you in Fort Lauderdale on October 21st.

Wayne Standerfer

NSVC

Note: If you have already booked through another agent, you still have time to cancel without a penalty.

## From South East Regional Director and District Commander

Southeast Region Director, Southeast Region District Commanders, and Southeast Region Base Commanders,

I'm saddened to report that the **USSVI 2018 Southeast Region Conference** has been canceled.

Please see the message below from the Region Director, Steve Bell.

In compliance with his directions, refund checks for all existing registrations will be mailed to the address given by each registrant by Friday, 26-JANUARY-2018.

Any registrations received from this point forward will be returned as received.

Please give this the widest possible distribution to all of your members.

-- **EMCS(SS) Craig S. Werner, U.S.N. (Ret.)**

**Hampton Roads Base Secretary & Treasurer**

Direct (24/7/365): **757-373-3142**

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Steve Bell** <[usnret82@carolina.rr.com](mailto:usnret82@carolina.rr.com)>

Date: Tue, Jan 23, 2018 at 9:36 AM

Subject: 2018 Southeast Region Conference

After receiving a count from some of the Bases of potential attendees, we came up with about half of what is necessary for us to not put ourselves into a financial risk situation. Therefore, I am cancelling the 2018 Southeast Regional Conference that was to be hosted by the Hampton Roads Base.

Those funds collected are to be returned..

This is not any fault of HRB as this event was well advertised. It is just a sign of the times.

Steve Bell, SERD

## USSVI Charleston Base Meeting Minutes

11 January 2018

The attendance for the January 2018 meeting was 77 members.

**Opening Ceremonies:** The meeting was called to order by Base Commander Ralph Rhorsen. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1900 .Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Invocation and the Tolling of the Boats lost in October was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. The USSVI Creed was read by Base Secretary Mike Ciesielko. Ralph welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

**Introductions:** The following introduced themselves at the meeting: EMCS (SS) Kevin E. Jones Qual Boat: USS Key West SSN 722. ETN1 (SS) Bleys M Prescott. Qual Boat: USS San Juan SSN 751. MM1 (SS) Matt Mathis Qual Boat: USS Darter SS 576.

**Chief of the Boat:** Joe Lunn reported the next Victory House visit will be 16th January. The next NMPTC Graduation is 19th January. The Oyster roast is possibly slated for March 3rd.

**Secretary:** The Minutes have been published and promulgated, are there any additions or deletions. If not the Minutes are Approved

**Treasurer:** The treasurers report is published and promulgated, are there any additions or deletions. If not the report is Approved.

## Chaplain:

### January Report

#### Highlighted boat of the month:

USS S-26 SS-131 sunk with the loss of 46 officers and men in the Gulf of Panama, on her 2nd war patrol. She was rammed by the USS PC-460 and sunk within seconds. The CO, XO and one lookout on the bridge, were the only survivors.

- Buck Owens** started feeling bad on Nov 19. I visited but Buck didn't know I was there. He passed away on Dec. 2nd. Still waiting on the family to tell us of any services they would like.
- Willie Jones** passed away at the VA on Dec 30. His service was held this past Monday. Between Swamp Fox Chapter, Charleston Base, and FRA 269, there were 24 present for the church service with a large number going to the graveside. The family appreciated our presence. As one of our members stated: Willie deserved all the respect he received. Submariners like him are why our organization exists. Sometimes we tend to forget that.
- I would like to thank all of you who have made the effort and attended our shipmate's funeral services in the past several years. In the time I've been Chaplain 89 of our shipmates have departed on Eternal Patrol. Charleston Base has participated in 70 funeral services.**
- Larmarr Seader NCCM(SS) USN Ret** departed on Eternal Patrol on 7 Dec 2017 in FL. His funeral was held on 15 Dec and he was buried at the VA Cemetery NAS Pensacola. He was a 31 year veteran of the Navy starting as surface the transferred to subs after 4 years. He qualified on HALFBEAK SS-352 in 1960. He served his last 12 years as a Career Recruiter. Lamarr was a Life Member of Drum Base and USSVI.
- Rick Sparger** came through his hip replacement surgery on Friday with no problems and is now in rehab. He is doing well and is at the Elms Rm 14P. His goal is to be home either the 18th or 19th.
- Ken Curtis** has been diagnosed with cirrhosis of the liver due to fatty liver tissue. He will be taking some experimental treatments to deal with it. He gets tired very easily.
- Rich Alkire** was in Trident with a COPD issue. He's also been diagnosed with congestive heart failure.
- Walt Curtis** was in the hospital over Thanksgiving and has informed us at the Christmas party that he has a malignant tumor on his liver.
- Terry Trump** fell from a ladder on Nov 16 and broke both ankles. Right had a hairline fracture, left was shattered. He had surgery to install plates and pins on Nov 25...surgery was successful. Between Nov 25 and 28 several shipmates came together to build a ramp for him. He came home on Nov 28 and is doing well while healing. He had a doctor's visit on Monday and Xrays show he is healing very well. Right ankle cleared to walk on and left now has an inflatable boot. Allowed to put weight on the left foot but no walking on it. Next doctor visit is February 7th at which time he will be free to walk again.
- Lee Agnew** HTCM USN Retired, Rick Collins' father-in-law, passed away on Nov 24. His viewing was on Nov 29 and funeral on Nov 30.
- Bryan Sparks**, Ray Sparks' son, has had a relapse and spent some time in Trident ICU. He is home and is recovering. He has appointments at the VA this week, to hopefully determine cause of relapse. Thanks Ray
- Edwin Swanson**, Linda Nichols' brother passed away on Dec 1st in GA.

I still need page 2s from many people. I have them for 29% of our members...90 out of 303.

If you have a change of mailing address, phone number, email address please let the base leadership know about it. We need to make sure all of our records are updated so we can make contact with you if we need to.

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

#### WEBMASTER NOTES:

- Website is constantly updated.
- Make use of the EVENTS page on the Charleston Base website. All events that are put out to the

membership via email will be listed and updated on the events page.

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**Membership:** Larry Knutson informed us we have 304 members.

**District Commander:** No Report.

**Kaps for Kids:** No Report.

**Veterans Affairs:** Ken Curtis had no report. Check the website.

**FRA:** Larry Cox announced the Valentines Dance is February 17<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$20.00 until February 11<sup>th</sup> then they are \$25.00. February 4<sup>th</sup> is the Superbowl Party Tickets are \$60.00 each and all inclusive. FRA ballcaps are for sale. The FRA has a program to sponsor a bar stool. The cost is \$50.00 they will put your name on the back of the barstool.

**Submarine Veterans of World War II:** We had two members present. We celebrated Walt Curtis' 93<sup>rd</sup> Birthday

**Scholarship:** No Report

**NPS Awards:** 19 January

**CRAMA:** Butch Bryar is talking to a lawyer. CRAMA membership dues are due. CRAMA donated a plaque and some pictures to the FRA.

**Public Affairs:** No Report

**Storekeeper:** No Report

**Special Events:** No Report.

**Base Commander:** Ralph has gone to the High Schools to get more visibility. He intends to speak to Teachers and Vocational Tech Counselors first Visit is Summerville High School on the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> of February. Ralph commended Ed Stank on an awesome Christmas Party. Southeast Regional is up for us for next year. Get with Ed Stank if you want to help. Ed is also looking for a smaller float to involve us in more parades.

**Old Business:** Rick Wise made a motion to accept the 2018 Base budget as written. Ken Curtis seconded. The motion passed by voice vote

**New Business:** None

**Good of the Order:**

Ralph Rhorsen announced that we are going to try to have a Dinner at the FRA for the Chiefs.

Paul Viering encouraged everyone to come out for the Hunley Memorial Service Saturday 17 February. Aiken Base will be participating as well.

Bill Roberts informed us that there are a few programs on the History channel on Monday concerning submarines and the USS Hunley.

Tom Clark Announced that there will be a "Armed Citizens Rules of engagement course January 27-28<sup>th</sup> The class is \$400.00 it is an informative class going over everything you need to know if you have to use your concealed weapon.

Ed Stank recognized the back table for donating \$400.00 to the Christmas Party that was at the Victory House.

Ed is also asking for anyone with information for the smaller float to contact him.

**The After Battery:** Hog Roast in April. The After Battery is open every Wednesday.

**Nuclear Historian:** DEAD PENGUINS

Did you ever wonder why there are no dead penguins on the ice in Antarctica? Where do they go?

Wonder no more!!! It is a fact that the penguin is a very ritualistic bird which lives an extremely ordered and complex life. The penguin is very committed to its family and will mate for life, as well as maintain a form of compassionate contact with its offspring throughout its life.

If a penguin is found dead of the ice's surface, other members of the family and social circle have been known to dig holes in the ice, using their vestigial wings and beaks, until the hole is deep enough for the dead bird to be rolled into, and buried.

The male penguins then gather in a circle around the fresh grave and sing:

“Freeze a jolly good fellow”

“Freeze a jolly good fellow”

Then, they kick him in the ice hole.

The spot of the grave is then marked so that Polar Bears can find fresh meat (blubber) when they wake from their winter slumber.

You really didn't believe that I know anything about penguins, did you”

It's so easy to fool older people.

I am sorry the “Buddha Made me do it”

**Gun Club:** Mike Ciesielko had no report.

**The Red FRA ticket** was won by Mike Collins

**The depth charge** was won by Ralph Rhorssen. Ralph Donated 50 Dollars to the Victory House.

**Benediction:** Chaplain Nick Nichols gave the benediction.

**Meeting Adjourned:** Following the benediction by Nick Nichols, the Base Commander adjourned the meeting at 1950.

## **Charleston Base Presents Submariners' Legacy Award to Class 1706**



On Friday, January 19 the USSVI-Charleston Base Submariners' Legacy Awards for US Naval Nuclear Power School Class 1706 were presented to ETN3 Michael A. Gindlesperger and LTjg Jorge D. Garcia. These men had the highest GPA for Submarine Designated graduates in this class as well as being the Class Honormen for Class 1706.

The next graduation is Class 1707 on Friday, March 9.

## Other Items of Interest

### Get a Claim Decision in 30 Days with the DRC Program

Since you last filed a VA disability claim, VA has improved the claim process by launching the **Decision Ready Claims (DRC)** Program.

When you file a DRC, you can get a decision on your claim in **30 days or less** by working with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Your VSO will help you gather and submit all relevant and required evidence so your claim is ready for VA to make a decision when you submit it.

You can now file a DRC for the following claim types:

- Direct Service Connection Claims
- Presumptive Service Connection Claims
- Secondary Service Connection Claims
- Increased Disability Claims
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) Claims

Pre-Discharge Claims

Don't miss out on this important opportunity to get a faster claim decision. Learn more about the DRC Program, including eligibility requirements, what medical evidence you need to submit, and how to find an accredited VSO at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/drc.asp>.

Thank you for your service!

Veterans Benefits Administration

### Have you heard of Vet Tix yet?

Veteran Tickets Foundation (Vet Tix), has given away 3,900,957 free event tickets to US Military, Veterans and their Families since 2008!

Enrollment in the program is free and takes only a few minutes to become verified.

You can start to enjoy events as soon as today.

Visit Vet Tix now by clicking <https://www.vettix.org/email>

From: NAVY OP TRG-FOST N SMERAS SI (Thorpe, Stephen WO1)

Sent: Wednesday, January 17, 2018, 8:15 AM

To:; NAVY NPS-EXEC CWOSM (Knox, Andrew WO1)

**Subject: San Juan**

**Jim / Andy**

**As you are aware I returned from the search for ARA San Juan in December. I know there has been a lot of support in the form of fundraising for the unfortunate families by varying SA branches, WRS charity, and individuals.**

**I have maintained contact with an Argentinean Commander, he is aware of the support in the UK, and it is appreciated. However, no funding provision has been made for the donations to be given to the families. He has assured me that once a funding channel has been made available I will be informed and this will be disseminated accordingly.**

**Can I please request that this message is distributed as widely as possible to ensure no money is donated into Argentina without the guarantee that it will meet the intended recipients. As soon as any further information is known, I will notify everyone accordingly.**

**Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.**

Regards

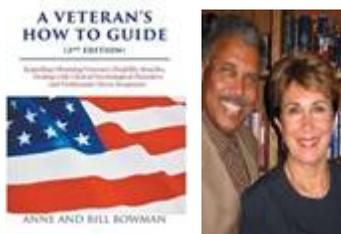
Steve, WO1 COX (SM) Steve Thorpe MA

Senior Instructor SMERAS Training

Submarine Escape Training Tank

Fort Blockhouse | Gosport | PO12 2AB UK

**A Veteran's How to Guide (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)**  
**Regarding Obtaining Veteran's Disability Benefits, Dealing with Clinical Psychological Disorders and Problematic Stress Responses**



View, “A Veteran’s How to Guide (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) published by Litfire Publishing, at websites

[www.veteransshowtguide.com](http://www.veteransshowtguide.com) and

[www](http://www)

[books.litfirepublishing.com/product/a-veterans-how-to-guide/](http://books.litfirepublishing.com/product/a-veterans-how-to-guide/) (Kindle \$9.95, Paperback \$12.99, Hardcover \$25.97). Consumers can purchase this book at traditional brick & mortar bookstores, Barnes and Nobel, as well as Amazon.com, Kindle and ebook.

*Authors Chaplains Anne and Bill Bowman: Bill Bowman Ph.D. served in the U.S. Marines, fought in Vietnam, 1967–68 (“Tet Offensive”) was granted 100% disability rating. Chaplain Anne Bowman holds a master’s degree from UCLA and a lifetime teaching credential. She taught high school with LAUSD for thirty-two years. She’s a chaplain and a biblical counselor, and a member of the American Association of Christian Counselors and the American Psychotherapy Association.*

“A Veteran’s How-to Guide 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition” was written with the intent of guiding veterans (combatant/non-combatant) through a process established by the Department of Veterans Affairs, Disability Benefits and Pensions Qualification System when applying for veteran’s disability benefits.

This book offers a detailed description of the veteran’s journey from the initial visit to the Veteran’s Administration facility where the veteran meets the Veteran’s Service Officer (VSO) to finally receiving his/her health benefits and/or disability check. It takes you through the journey that the author experienced firsthand and warns the veteran of pitfalls and obstacles set up on his/her pathway. While the VA system is ultimately rewarding, it is a very complex and frustrating system, not user friendly. This book’s primary goal is to make the journey “user friendly” and rewarding for both the veteran and his/her family.

**Remember, you have earned your benefits by serving your country.**

## NAVY REDISCOVERS CAPTURED FLAGS HIDDEN FOR NEARLY 100 YEARS

(MILITARY.COM 28 DEC 17) ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The curator of the U.S. Naval Academy Museum wasn't exactly sure what would be found: records indicated five display boxes long used to exhibit captured British flags from the War of 1812 actually concealed more banners underneath.

But not until all 61 banners were painstakingly removed in December for a conservation effort did curator Charles Swift, who is also the museum's managing director, actually see what was hidden. And he was gratified to learn that conservationists had uncovered dozens of other flags — many captured by the Navy in other conflicts of the 19th century.

The 46 newly discovered flags — including banners from battles in Asia and from the Spanish-American War — had originally been put on display in 1913. But seven years later, they were covered up by the 15 flags from the War of 1812 — and sealed up for nearly a century.

No one alive had seen the flags long hidden from view.

"More importantly than just seeing them was seeing the colors," said Swift. "It is what struck me immediately. It was sort of dark, but you could see the colors — the vibrant colors — of them having not been in light for 100 years, and so it was exciting."

The flags, covered by the others in boxes with large plate-glass lids, speak to an earlier era of U.S. intervention overseas. They include one taken from a Chinese pirate fort off Macau dating to 1854 and another captured in Korea in 1871, according to Swift.

There were even some replicas of Revolutionary War-era flags among them.

He said no one had attempted to open the boxes for so long until it came time for needed conservation.

"It was mostly the recognition that after 100 years, these things really needed to be taken down, because hanging like this places stresses on the flags," said Swift. "It can tear them. They can be damaged. So, they're getting a well-deserved vacation."

In 1849, then-President James K. Polk designated the academy in Annapolis, Maryland, as the repository of flags captured in battle by the Navy. The museum is now home to about 800 flags and trusted with their conservation, Swift said. About 250 of them are trophy flags seized in battle. The museum also houses seafaring instruments, naval uniforms, medals, photographs, art and items recalling past naval expeditions and explorations.

"We are ultimately stewards of these objects that tell important stories," said Swift, whose museum boasts more than 100,000 visitors a year.

Amelia Fowler, a well-known flag preserver who restored the original Star-Spangled Banner in 1914, was contracted in 1912 to con-

serve the academy's collection of trophy flags. She worked with dozens of other women in the museum's Mahan Hall, using a patented stitching method to help preserve the fabric. All told, they stitched up enough flags to cover two football fields, Swift said. Camille Myers Breeze is working on a new conservation process for the flags as director of an independent conservation studio, Museum Textile Services, based in Massachusetts. She said Fowler's work has enabled her crew to handle the flags without risk of damage.

"For us to conserve a collection of flags like this that's historical — not only for its use, but for how it was preserved and how it has been installed here for 100 years for Naval Academy students and visitors to appreciate and learn from," she said. "It's really our favorite kind of project."

Swift said funding for the conservation, about \$40,000, came from the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command, which is tasked with preserving artifacts, documents and other items of that military branch.

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2017/12/28/navy-rediscovered-captured-flags-hidden-nearly-100-years.html>

## **The Unique Way the Navy Performs Burials Under the Sea**

**Brock Vergakis, The Virginian-Pilot, December 31** NORFOLK – The Navy is a tradition-bound military service, and few traditions are as important as burials at sea.

Perhaps the most unique services in the fleet occur on board submarines that spend the majority of their time under water. Submarine Force Atlantic says it is preparing for burials at sea on several Norfolk-based subs in the next few months.

One of those burials will be for World War II submarine veteran Marcus White, who served on seven war patrols in the Pacific theater during World War II and the Korean War, and was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with the "V" device for valor, signifying it was earned in combat.

White died in June at age 95. The USS Newport News, a Los Angeles-class attack submarine, will commit him and his wife Mary Miles White, who died seven years earlier, to the sea sometime next year. White's son, Marcus White Jr., lives in Chesapeake and said his father loved being a submariner, and that he's fulfilling his father's wishes. The Navy allows active-duty sailors, veterans and their family members to be buried at sea.

The chaplain for the Navy's Norfolk-based submarine squadron, Lt. Cmdr. Richard Smothers, spoke with The Virginian-Pilot about what makes burial ceremonies on board subs unique and special for those who choose them.

### **Releasing of cremains**

Unlike larger ships such as aircraft carriers that can accommodate caskets, all submarine burials at sea involve cremains. They also must occur at least 3 miles from shore.

Smothers said burials at sea aboard a sub primarily occur in two ways. If the weather is fair, a sub will surface, stop moving and conduct a ceremony topside that involves raising a flag the family can keep, reading any scriptures the family requests and firing a 21-gun salute with seven rifles. A member of the crew will then pour the ashes overboard. Chaplains don't serve on board subs, and the service is usually led by a lay leader on the boat.

Smothers said the sub's commanding officer will usually address the crew from an onboard communications system so everyone can learn about the person who was committed to the deep. If the weather isn't good enough to allow for a full topside ceremony, the cremains can be poured overboard in a smaller ceremony from a ship's sail, the tall structure found on the topside of the sub.

The other option involves releasing ashes underwater through a torpedo tube while the sub is still moving. Smothers said this is a popular option among those who served as torpedomen.

"I know it sounds amazing or strange, but it does happen, and it can be done very honorably, very respectfully," he said.

Smothers said the crew will clean the torpedo tube's surface and place the cremains inside. After the burial, the family will usually receive a letter of condolence and appreciation from the sub's commanding officer and a chart showing the GPS coordinates where the cremains were released.

### **Custody of the fallen**

The Navy accommodates requests for burials at sea when it can, but it's not always a speedy process. A ship's operational schedule takes priority, and it can be months between the time a request is made and the time the burial occurs. In White's case, that also allowed for a traditional memorial service long before his cremains were set to sail from Norfolk.

For a burial at sea on board a Norfolk-based sub, Smothers said a family will first provide their loved one's cremains to Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. A religious program specialist in the submarine force will then take custody of the cremains and examine sub schedules to find the best fit.

If former submariners spent most of their time in a certain home port such as Groton, Conn., or Kings Bay, Ga., they'll try to find a sub based there. Otherwise, they'll find the best available schedule. Sometimes family members will be allowed onto Naval Station Norfolk or another base to watch the sub carrying their loved one's remains depart, which is a rare occurrence for an outsider to know when a sub is departing.

Smothers said a religious program specialist will go aboard the sub with the cremains and transfer it to either the executive officer or chief of the boat, where they will be safely locked away in a state room until the burial. Smothers said the Norfolk squadron typically performs about a dozen burials at sea a year.

## **Crew connection**

The submarine force is a small, tight-knit, all-volunteer community that places a premium on valuing tradition and respecting their forerunners. In some cases, subs will perform a burial at sea where a sub sank so a former submariner can be committed to the deep with some of his former crew members or the sub where he served.

Smother also said it's not uncommon for family members to request that someone who holds the same job their loved one did participate in the ceremony.

"I think burials at sea, that's one of the ways we not only just honor those families and their service, but we reactivate our commitment and our appreciation for serving," Smother said. "It's a real privilege to be a part of. ... Every sub that's ever been part of a burial at sea has thanked us and said, 'Hey, we appreciate being able to do this.' It's an honor."

## **“Underwater Peril” – Norbert Struempf, Navy Veteran Shares History of Service**

### **Aboard Submarine During WWII**

***Jeremy Amick, War History Online, January 9***

In the annals of military history, submarine service has gained a certain level of mystique, inspiring the vision of a sleek, fast underwater craft that moves about in relative secrecy in the world's oceans. Though such visions might possess a level of truth, local submarine veteran Norbert Struempf recalls his own underwater service being far from romantic, fraught with peril and necessitating a lengthy separation from family.

While growing up in the rural community of Vienna, Mo., Struempf was raised one of 12 children. After completing the eleventh grade, he made the decision to go to work and left for St. Louis, becoming a riveter for the Curtiss-Wright Corporation.

“That’s where I was when Pearl Harbor happened,” recalled Struempf. “I remember walking downtown and people were standing in line for four or five blocks waiting to sign up (for the military).”

On June 5, 1942, six months after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Struempf joined scores of other patriotic Americans and enlisted in the United States Navy. Days later, he was transferred to the Naval Air Station once located on the site of Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, to undergo his initial training.

In training, he and other sailors attended dances and special events hosted by a local USO, where he soon met a young woman named Phyllis Fites; the couple married weeks later in November 1942.

“Sometime during our boot camp, these guys came down to talk to us and said they were looking for volunteers for the submarine service,” Struempf said. “I didn’t know much about it but I decided to volunteer because it meant that I would receive extra pay,” he added.

After passing the requisite tests, the recruit was sent to Groton, Conn., and was indoctrinated into his new duty assignment by learning to work on and operate the diesel engines and associated electrical systems used aboard submarines.

The next step of his journey took him to California, where he boarded a boat for Pearl Harbor. Shortly after his arrival, he received the news of the birth of his first child, which, he added, was a joyous event tempered by his exposure to the continuing efforts to recover bodies of those who perished during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

“Every morning, ambulances would line up on the piers to pick up bodies of sailors that had been killed in the attack,” Struempf said. “They had guys in the water with torches cutting the metal and removing the bodies from the compartments inside the ships that had been hit.”

Following a brief stay in Hawaii, the sailor was sent by ship to Fremantle, Australia to work aboard the USS Orion—a submarine tender that stored supplies used to perform certain repairs on damaged submarines. It was here, Struempf said, that he worked for several weeks before receiving assignment to his submarine, the USS Narwhal (SS-167).

The Narwhal, naval records indicate, returned to port in Fremantle, Australia, in late 1943 after completing several war patrols. With Struempf aboard the Narwhal as a machinist’s mate, they soon deployed for the Philippines transporting special cargo in support of the localized guerilla movement.

“We began missions of hauling Filipinos that were loaded down with grenades, radios and all kinds of equipment; they were trained to fight by the United States,” said the veteran. “We would sneak up some shallow tributary at night to avoid detection by Japanese warships. Then,” he continued, boats would come from shore to pick up the Filipinos and carry them off to fight the Japanese.”

In addition to delivering troops, Struempf recalls missions where their sub also transported soldiers and Filipinos who had escaped from Japanese imprisonment. Once everyone was aboard, the Narwhal would “back out” of the tributary and slip into waters with more depth and concealment.

“One time, our captain brought the Narwhal up a little bit and put the periscope up,” Struempf said. “He saw nothing but wings, tires and parts from airplanes floating everywhere from a battle that had taken place. He quickly retracted the periscope and we went back down and got out of there before we were detected.”

On a separate occasion, Struempf recalled, the submarine slipped through shallow waters between the islands at night and used their six-inch guns to detonate tanks used by the Japanese to store fuel.

Though the submarine experienced many narrow escapes with Japanese warships, the crew survived the war and returned to the East Coast. The Narwhal was decommissioned on April 23, 1945 and her two six-inch guns were removed for display at the Naval Submarine Base at New London, Conn.

The war in Europe ended shortly after their return stateside. However, Struempf and many of the crew of the Narwhal remained at New London for preparations to serve aboard a new submarine to be used in the planned invasion of Japan. Fortunately, he added, the war ended when Japan signed the surrender documents on September 2, 1945, resulting in his discharge the following month.

In the years following his wartime service, the veteran and his wife raised seven children and later moved from Vienna to Jefferson City, Mo., where he retired from the maintenance section of Jefferson City Parks and Recreation.

Reflecting on his service, the veteran maintains even though he and his fellow submariners frequently lived and operated under very stressful conditions, Struempf's time in the service included many good memories, one of which made him think about the family back home awaiting his return.

"One time, while we were in Australia, some guys I was on leave with got in trouble at a bar and ended up getting locked up in the local jail," said the veteran. "I was not involved in the scuffle but had no way to get back to the ship and there was no place for me to stay that night." He paused, "But an Australian guy took me home to stay with his family."

"The next morning they took me fishing and I really had a good time," he smiled, recalling the event. "With all of the things that went on during the war, it was nice to meet good people such as them during my Navy time and to be treated as if I was just another member of his family even when mine was so far away."

## **From the archives: U.S. Submarine rammed in 1917; 19 men lost**

**John Bunker, San Diego Union Tribune, December 16**

**SAN DIEGO, California** — One hundred years ago, on Dec. 17, 1917, Submarine F-1 sank about 15 miles west of the San Diego Harbor entrance after colliding with a sister submarine. Nineteen sailors lost their lives; the commander and four men on the bridge escaped. Details of the tragedy remained secret for almost 50 years. From the Union, Aug. 30, 1970:

Navy Lifts 50 Year Silence On Point Loma Sub Sinking.

On Dec. 18, 1917, the Navy Department issued a brief, cryptic press release to the effect that an American submarine had been lost "along the American coast." There were no details. Not until many hours later did it become known that the submarine was the F-1 and that it had sunk within sight of San Diego. The tragedy had occurred on Dec. 17 but not until Dec. 19 was The San Diego Union able to print the barest facts about the accident and give the names of five survivors and the 19 who went down with the ship.

"The Navy has withheld details," the story said.

Because of wartime censorship, no details were ever released and as the years passed, the sinking of the F-1 became an almost unknown and virtually forgotten incident in American naval history.

Now that the 50-year period of military "restricted classification" has passed on the reports of this sinking, full details are available from government records in Washington. They show that the tragedy was caused, as are so many sea accidents, by a simple failure in communications.

F-1 built by the Union Iron Works at San Francisco, was launched Sept. 6, 1911. During construction she was known as the USS Carp and on the naval list was Submarine Torpedo Boat 20.

The designation was changed to F-1 in November 1911, after the secretary of the Navy had ordered letters and numerals for submarines instead of names. The 142-foot 330-ton F-1 was commissioned at Mare Island Navy Yard June 19, 1912, with Lt. (j.g.) J. B. Howell in command.

The new boat operated between San Diego and San Francisco for several months after her commissioning, then was assigned to Honolulu, being towed to her new station behind the battleship South Dakota. In Honolulu, she became part of the First Submarine Division, Torpedo Flotilla, Pacific Fleet, her companions being the other boats of this class; F-2, F-3 and F-4, all mothered by the, submarine tender Alert.

It was on the morning of March 25, 1915, that F-1, F-3, and F-4 left Honolulu for local operations. F-4 did not return and the eventual detection and recovery was a classic of naval salvage.

She was later "interned" at the bottom of Pearl Harbor after it was discovered that she had suffered a leak in the battery compartment and the crew had been killed by chlorine gas. This was the Navy's first submarine disaster.

The loss of F-1 so soon after this dealt the fledgling, submarine service a heavy blow

In partial layup during 1916, the F-1 returned to full commission in 1917 and was assigned to, Patrol Force, Pacific, taking part in the development of submarine tactics, spending much of her time maneuvering with her sister subs and making practice attacks on surface ships based at San Pedro.

On a day of generally good visibility, F-1, F-2 and F-3 were making a surface run from San Pedro to San Diego, competing for semi-annual efficiency and performance ratings. All boats were making about nine, knots, running abreast, Point Lorna was just ahead.

What happened then is told in this terse report from the log of F-3.

“Stood on course 142 degrees true until 6:50 p.m. when course was changed to ,322, degrees true to avoid a very thick fog bank. At about 5:55p.m. heard fog whistle and sighted mast-head, light and port side light of approaching vessel. Ship was then swung with 10 degrees right, rudder. Gave hard right rudder and stopped both engines. Closed bulkhead doors. Struck F-1 abaft of conning tower with bow of ship. Backed -both motors; F-1 listed and sank almost immediately. Stood by survivors of F-1 and brought five on board.”

F-1 had sunk in 10 seconds at the most, giving the 19 men below no chance to escape.

One of the survivors was Lt. A. E. Montgomery, the commanding officer.

He told a board of inquiry how the lookout, Machinist J. J. Schmissrauter, had called him from the chart room, reporting a light on the Port bow.

“Almost immediately,” said Montgomery, “it grew brighter. I gave the order ‘hard right’ as it was too late to stop and it seemed but an instant when F-3 came out of the fog and rammed us.

The board of inquiry found that the three vessels had all decided ,to change course to clear the fog bank and had signaled their intent by radio, but none of the ships had received the others messages. F-3’s change of course was deemed excessive under the circumstances. The board pointed out. in holding. F-3 responsible, that radio failure was partly to blame, all boats of this class suffering from poor radio communication because of weak transmitters and excessive engine noise while underway.

Because of the depth of water and the lack of submarine rescue equipment, no attempt was made to locate the ship.

## **Russian Spy Ship Spotted 100 Miles Off North Carolina Coast**

**Ryan Browne, Zachary Cohen, CNN, January 22**

**WASHINGTON** - The Russian spy ship, the Viktor Leonov, was spotted 100 miles south east of Wilmington, North Carolina, in international waters, according to a US military official, just days after the vessel was seen leaving the capital of Trinidad and Tobago, Port of Spain.

Two US military officials said the Russian ship is being tracked by the destroyer USS Cole and other naval assets.

Outfitted with a variety of high-tech spy equipment and designed to intercept communications signals, the Viktor Leonov was observed operating in the Caribbean last week, a US defense official told CNN.

It was unclear at the time where the vessel was heading, but the official said the spy ship has typically traveled up the eastern seaboard near Cape Canaveral, King’s Bay, Norfolk and New London in the past.

All these locations are home to US naval installations.

A second official told CNN last week that based on historical patterns the ship is likely on a four-to-six month deployment off the East Coast where it will be conducting intelligence operations.

The Russian ship routinely performs this mission.

The ship sailed along the east coast of the United States in February and March of last year, lingering in international waters just off the coast of US naval installations.

Last March, the Viktor Leonov was spotted some 20 miles south of the US Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay near the Florida border, a US defense official told CNN.

In February, the US Navy spotted the same ship sailing 30 miles off the coast of Connecticut, the farthest north it had ever ventured, according to a US defense official. The Vishnya-class spy ship also conducted similar patrols in 2014 and 2015.

## **On 50th Anniversary Of Capture By North Korea, USS Pueblo Crew Still Feels Scars**

**Andrew O’Reilly, Fox News, January 22**

Ralph McClintock wasn’t even supposed to be on the mission that changed his life.

Out of duty to both his country and sense of curiosity, the young U.S. Navy communications technician volunteered to fill a vacant spot on the USS Pueblo’s mission in the waters off North Korea in January of 1968.

“I took the job because I wanted know what the North Koreans did and I wanted to see the enemy up close,” McClintock told Fox News. “The mission was only supposed to last 22 days.”

Instead of lasting 22 days, McClintock and 82 other Pueblo crew members would spend 11 grueling months away from their home port – most of it spent in North Korean prisoner of war camps – in what might have been one of the more gripping dramas of the Cold War. But the incident was somewhat buried in the headlines of a tumultuous time.

It “was just an extraordinary year, with the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, Lyndon Johnson announcing he wouldn’t seek reelection, RFK and MLK being killed, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the Apollo 8 launch to name just a few,” Jack Cheevers, author of “Act of War: Lyndon Johnson, North Korea, and the Capture of the Spy Ship Pueblo,” told Fox News in an interview. “The Pueblo fell through the cracks of history because it became a sideshow to everything that happened.”

But Cheevers added that given the current heightened tensions between the U.S. and North Korea, the saga of the Pueblo could hold clues as to how Washington should deal with its longtime adversary.

“The Pueblo incident may gain prominence over time because it teaches us that you can deal with North Korea, even during a major crisis,” he said.

The tale of the Pueblo begins in early January, 1968, when the crew set off from the U.S. Navy base on Yokosuka, Japan with orders to conduct surveillance on Soviet Navy and North Korean communication activity. The ship carried out its work without incident for the majority of the mission, with little to no resistance, as Commander Lloyd M. Bucher kept the vessel safely in international waters.

The problems began as the mission approached its close. First, a North Korean submarine chaser passed within some 4,000 yards of the Pueblo. Two days later, a pair of North Korean fishing trawlers came within 30 yards, while the “fishermen” looked on with binoculars and snapped photos.

“I’d never heard off any North Korean fishermen bringing cameras with them,” McClintock said.

The following day, Jan. 23, another submarine chaser appeared, challenged the Pueblo, and ordered the crew to stand down. The Pueblo tried to outmaneuver the other ship, but another submarine chaser, four torpedo boats and two MiG-21 fighter jets joined the scene.

After a protracted chase, which the Americans insist occurred in international waters and which cost one Pueblo crewmember his life, the U.S. sailors signaled compliance, and began destroying any sensitive material.

“We had large, weighted bags for dumping documents,” Don Peppard, an administrative assistant on the Pueblo and the president of the ship’s veterans association, told Fox News. “The problem was that there were just too many documents for us to destroy in such a short time. The North Koreans got a lot of documents.”

The North Korean also took all 82 surviving Pueblo crewmembers captive – blindfolding them and binding their hands on the trip to the port of Wonson. They were then bused to Pyongyang, and kept as prisoners of war in two different camps: the “Barn” and the “Farm.”

“We had no idea what was going to happen to us, but whatever it was, it didn’t seem like it would be pleasant,” Peppard said. “At that point I felt like my life wasn’t going to be worth very much.”

While all of the crew were beaten and tortured, some of the worst treatment was reserved for Cmdr. Bucher. He was subject to horrific psychological torture, which included putting him in front of a mock firing squad in an attempt to force a confession. It was only when the North Koreans threatened to execute the entire crew in front of Bucher that he relented, and agreed to confess to the crimes leveled against him.

Bucher, who died in 2004, spent much of the rest of his life defending his actions. It wasn’t until 1989 that the U.S. government finally recognized the crew’s sacrifice, and granted them Prisoner of War medals.

“His view was that the Navy treated the crew very unfairly,” Cheever said. “The crew really have had to fight to have their reputations restored.”

Some of the worst treatment came during a period they refer to as “Hell Week,” which occurred when the North Koreans discovered the crew had secretly given “the finger” in staged propaganda photos, an action the crew had initially explained as being a “Hawaiian good luck sign.”

“They must have seen the Time Magazine article where they explained what ‘flipping the bird’ was,” Peppard said. “After they found that out, they beat us mercilessly.”

After 335 days in captivity – and following an apology, a written admission by the U.S. that the Pueblo had been spying - as well as an assurance the U.S. would not spy in the future – the men were sent to the Demilitarized Zone border with South Korea, and ordered to walk south across the “Bridge of No Return.” Many of the men were crippled, malnourished and almost blind from the treatment they received.

Some, like Peppard and McClintock, say the fact that the story of their suffering has gone under-reported remains very difficult to accept.

“There are a lot of people who have no idea of what we went through,” Peppard said. “I think we’re lost to history.”

Another sore point: The Pueblo itself remains in North Korea. Still officially in commission in the U.S. Naval Vessel Register, it sits in the Botong River in North Korea, where it has become a popular tourist attraction.

The U.S. has attempted to have the boat repatriated, without success. “I would really like to see our ship come home,” Peppard said.

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