



Vol. 14 No. 2

February 2018

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

**Base Meeting:**

BOD: February 1, 1800  
Membership: January 8, 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 BARBEL (SS 316)	Feb. 4, 1945 – 4 <sup>th</sup> War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 81 souls
USS SHARK 1 (SS 174)	Feb. 11, 1942 – 1 <sup>st</sup> War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 59 souls
USS AMBERJACK (SS 219)	Feb. 16, 1943 – 3 <sup>rd</sup> War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 72 souls
USS GRAYBACK (SS 208)	Feb. 27, 1944 – 10 <sup>th</sup> War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 80 souls
USS TROUT (SS 202)	Feb. 29, 1944 – 11 <sup>th</sup> War Patrol	Lost with all hands – 81 souls
<b>Five Boats and 373 Men Lost</b>		
H.L. HUNLEY	Feb. 17, 1864	Lost with all hands – 8 souls

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### Upcoming Charleston Base Events

Board of Directors Meeting	Thursday, Mar 1	1800	FRA Branch 268, Goose Creek
Base Meeting	Thursday, Mar 8	1800	FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek
Victory House Visit	Tuesday, Mar 13	1000	VFW Ladson to carpool
Kap(SS)4Kid(SS)	Tuesday, Mar 20	1000	McLoed Med Ctr, Florence, SC
Charleston Base Oyster Roast	Saturday, Mar 3	TBD	CRP Picnic Area, Bushy Park
NNPS Graduation	Friday, Mar 9	0800	NEX Parking Lot
Information on all these events are on the base website <a href="http://www.ussvicb.org/events/index.html">www.ussvicb.org/events/index.html</a>			

## FROM THE BASE COMMANDER

None this issue.

## From the Editor

I am very discouraged by the lack of participation by the membership of Charleston Base. Several of the members of the Board of Directors have served for several years and many are in multiple positions.

**WE NEED SOME HELP!**

Just because you are new to the Base doesn't mean you can't serve. I joined in 2002 and in 2004 took the position of Roving Reporter. I have held positions ever since. Anyone who could earn those Dolphins you wore is capable of filling a Charleston Base position.

Please consider where you could help the Base!

## 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

**Subject:** USSVI OFFICIAL BUSINESS: SubVet News - #2018-010

Date: 1/23/2018

To: Distribution List

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NEWS-01: Welcome new Base

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

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Subject: New USSVI Base

Submitted by: Steve Bell, Southeast Regional Director

On 24 January 2018, the "USS Baya Base" was commissioned and joined our ranks within USSVI. The home port for the base Port St. Lucie, FL. Base Commander is Jordan Kahle, , Vice Commanders are Rick Cohen and Chris Rainey, Base Secretary is Tony Reese, and Base Treasurer is Travis Koeper. We welcome the new base and wish them the best of success in the future.

Steve Bell  
SERD

**Feb. 7, 2018**

### VA Celebrates African-American Veterans throughout February

**WASHINGTON** —Today the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced several events in celebration of African American History Month.

"All of our Veterans have a story to tell," said VA Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin. "It's an honor to be able to celebrate the accomplishments of African-Americans who, despite myriad challenges, have made a profound, lasting impact in the story of our nation."

This year's national theme is "[African Americans in Times of War](#)," which calls attention to the heroic contributions of African Americans during the nation's military conflicts, from the Revolutionary War to present-day operations.

[VA Center for Minority Veterans](#) (CMV) in partnership with Blacks In Government and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Braintrust will host a reception at the African American Civil War Museum located at 1925 Vermont Ave., NW, on Feb. 21 from 5:30-8 p.m.

The event will include a reception, a showing of short films celebrating African- American Veterans, an update on the CBC Veterans Braintrust and a four member panel of Veteran speakers with an opportunity for questions. The event is free and open to the public. Attendees must register at the following link: [CMV Reception](#).

In continued celebration of African American History Month, Barbara Ward, director of Center for Minority Veterans, will moderate a roundtable discussion on the Vets Speaks radio program hosted by the Kentucky National Association for Black Veterans. The roundtable is scheduled for Feb. 12, from noon to 12:30 p.m.

Additionally, CMV, in partnership with Women In Military Service For America Memorial Foundation and The Center for Women Veterans, will host a luncheon at the Women's Memorial located at Arlington National Cemetery on Feb. 27, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. The event will feature guest speaker, Verna Jones, ***executive director of the American Legion, followed by a*** series of short films celebrating African-American women Veterans. This event is free and lunch will be provided. Attendees must register at the following link: [CMV Luncheon](#).

### **VFW Praises Two-Year Sequestration Alleviating Budget Deal**

In a bipartisan deal passed early Friday morning, Congress voted to increase sequestration spending caps for fiscal years (FY) 2018 and 2019, keep the government open, and ease the impact of sequestration on our service members, veterans, and their families. The VFW has long called for an end to sequestration which has caused dangerous budget cuts harmful to the military and VA. The VFW is glad Congress recognizes that arbitrary caps set in 2011 no longer reflect the reality of today's demands on our military and VA's obligation to provide care to those who have served. This action by Congress raises those caps by nearly \$300 billion for both defense and non-defense spending over FY18 and FY19. The VFW applauds the actions of Congress, but continues our call for the permanent repeal of sequestration, which has only been delayed for two more years. [Read the VFW's statement](#).

### **VFW Meets with DHA Director**

On Thursday, VFW Executive Director Bob Wallace met with VADM Raquel Bono, director of the Defense Health Agency (DHA). The two discussed how VFW and DHA can increase collaboration on issues impacting TRICARE beneficiaries. Also included in the discussion were VFW's concerns regarding the sunset of TRICARE Retiree Dental Plan, which will occur Dec. 31, 2018, and how to ensure beneficiaries transitioning to the new Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) receive consistent, quality care. Eligible retirees and active-duty family members will also be eligible to obtain vision care through FEDVIP. In order to have dental or vision coverage in 2019, interested individuals must enroll during the open season — Nov. 12 - Dec. 10, 2018. There are 10 dental and four vision carriers from which to choose. [Read more or sign up for updates on the program](#).

### **House Hearing on VA Caregiver Program**

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing on Tuesday to discuss VA's Caregiver Program. Committee members focused on improvements made to the current caregiver program, as well as how to fairly and effectively expand the program to veterans who served before Sept. 11, 2001. Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin testified in support of expanding the program and explained that VA views the program as not only the morally correct thing to do, but that expansion may save taxpayer dollars in the long run. The VFW submitted a statement for the record, which urges support for expanding the program and reiterates that this would avoid VA expenditures on more costly inpatient nursing home care. The Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs has advanced a bill which would expand this important program, but the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs has yet to do so, despite showing public support for expansion. [Watch the hearing](#) or [read the VFW's testimony](#).

### **VFW Endorses Veterans Financial Protection Legislation**

This week, the VFW formally endorsed H.R. 506, the [\*\*\*Preventing Crimes Against Veterans Act of 2018\*\*\*](#). This legislation is the latest effort to close an existing loophole that allows individuals and businesses to target veterans seeking to file disability compensation, pension, and aid and attendance claims, and charge them exorbitant fees for little to no actual assistance. As this practice is illegal, the legislation would close the current loophole in federal law and finally give prosecutors the ability to punish those found guilty. Penalties include fines, imprisonment up to five years, or both, for any person who knowingly engages in any scheme or artifice meant to defraud an individual of veterans' benefits, or in connection with obtaining benefits for that individual. [Read more](#).

### **VFW-Supported Bill to Improve TAP Introduced**

On Tuesday, Representative Stephanie Murphy (D-Fla.) introduced a bipartisan bill to help service members transitioning from the military to civilian life. *The Better Access to Technical Training, Learning, and Entrepreneurship (BATTLE) for Servicemembers Act* will better prepare transitioning service members for paths in

education, career technical training, or starting their own businesses. Murphy said, “As a nation, it’s our responsibility to help our servicemembers succeed, whether on the battlefield or in the workforce.” The VFW strongly supports this effort to set up transitioning troops for success once they leave the service. We are thankful for Congresswoman Murphy’s continuing efforts in making sure service members successfully transition back to civilian life. [Read the press release.](#)

### **TRICARE Webinar**

TRICARE will hold a webinar on Feb. 12 to discuss changes to the TRICARE program that took effect Jan. 1, 2018. The webinar will feature subject matter experts from the Defense Health Agency who will provide information on changes to the new Select plan, health plan costs, enrollment requirements, regions and contractors, accessing urgent care, and other topics. The webinar is scheduled from 1-2 p.m. Eastern Time. Interested individuals can [register here](#) or dial in by calling (213) 929-4232 and entering attendee code: 270-539-237.

### **DOD Releases Service Academy Report**

On Wednesday, the Department of Defense (DOD) released its *Annual Report on Sexual Violence and Harassment at the Military Service Academies* for the academic program year 2016-2017. This year’s report shows that the three academies received 112 reports of sexual assault involving cadets or midshipmen in academic program year 2016-2017 — an increase from 86 reports the previous year. Most of the reporting increase occurred at the U.S. Military Academy, which DOD attributes to a change in reporting policy and the relocation of its victim assistance office. Additionally, the Air Force Academy’s victim assistance efforts during the past academic program year did not comply with policy, which DOD says Air Force Academy leadership has taken action to rectify. Recent DOD efforts on sexual harassment and assault have focused on promoting empirically proven prevention, enhancing a culture of respect, and improving reporting. [Read the full report.](#)

### **MIA Update**

The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency has announced the identification and burial updates of four American servicemen who had been missing in action from WWII and Korea. Returning home for burial with full military honors are:

**Navy Fireman 1st Class Charles R. Ogle**, 20, of Mountain View, Mo., whose identification was previously announced, will be buried Feb. 12 in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis. Ogle was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Ogle was one of 429 crewmen killed in the attack. [Read about Ogle.](#)

**Army Sgt. 1st Class Alfred G. Bensinger, Jr.**, of Oklahoma City, whose identification was previously announced, will be buried Feb. 16 in the Fort Sill National Cemetery, Fort Sill, Okla. Bensinger was a member of Company D, 2nd Engineer Combat Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division. On Nov. 25, 1950, while operating in the Ch’ongch’on River area in northwestern North Korea, his unit was attacked by Chinese forces. Withdrawal orders were issued on Nov. 29 and Bensinger’s unit provided security for the division. Bensinger was captured during the withdrawal. It was later reported by returning American POWs that Bensinger died at a POW transient camp known as the Hofong Camp, a sub-camp of the Pukchin-Tarigol Main Camp Cluster in mid-January 1951. [Read about Bensinger.](#)

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Leon Arickx** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Arickx was one of 429 crewmen killed in the attack. Interment services are pending. [Read about Arickx.](#)

**Navy Seaman 1st Class Eugene W. Wicker** was assigned to the USS Oklahoma, which was moored off Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, when Japanese aircraft attacked his ship on Dec. 7, 1941. Wicker was one of 429 crewmen killed in the



## Homecoming... its a harder journey than you think without brothers

When you get to a certain point in your life you start taking stock of what mattered.

The first seventeen or eighteen years of most people's lives are the foundations for much of who they become. If you grew up in Middle America, your understanding of relationships, education, and spirituality are all forged from those basic foundations. I will admit that I truly struggled with all three of these in those early years. By the time I was seventeen, I had shown remarkably little interest or aptitude in any of the categories. Perhaps because I was so much like him, my relationship with my Dad was tortured if nothing else. As I got older he got less well informed and my defiance ended at least once in a physical altercation (which I lost). As a middle kid, I never really fit into any of my brothers or sisters circles so mostly went out on my own. I saw a great description of how service members see themselves and the Navy person was described as being the adventurous middle child that left home and nobody cared. (To be fair, my Mom cried when I left but she was also convinced I would end up in Vietnam and get killed). One of my favorite family pictures is of me in uniform after I came home from Boot Camp. I never really noticed it until a short while ago but the looks on my sibling's faces were pretty telling. "Can we just get this over with and aren't you supposed to be leaving soon?" I know that look pretty well since I just saw it again a short while ago.

The education part was a struggle too. Don't get me wrong, I loved to read, its just that the teachers kept making me read the wrong books. Given a choice, I would have read every book about the Navy and warfare that had ever been written. But it was the late sixties and early seventies and frankly we were on the cutting edge of books about hating wars and the military and the ecology was just beginning its rise to worship status. So I did the minimum and guaranteed that I would receive rejection letters from every college that I applied for. The only group that seemed to be interested were people in uniforms and frankly by the time I was seventeen, I was ready to get away from endless classes and boring curriculum.

I will save the spirituality part for another time. Let's just say that God probably got tired of trying to get through to me. I am eternally grateful for the redemption I am assured of now but at the time, well, I was seventeen and bulletproof. The whole matter of a higher power just seemed a bit unnecessary.

### **Mom, Dad and my girlfriend saw me off to the airport and the real learning lessons of my life began.**

In Boot Camp, I learned that you could rely on another person and it wasn't on a phony or contrived basis. You were all going through the same testing and in the end, if you failed the team, you paid a price. So you learned to pay attention to details, pull your share, and trust your shipmates. After fourteen weeks (the war was still on and I was in the band), we graduated and were sent to our next commands or school. I found out quickly there were real consequences to failing and not some far off threat of a career opportunity. The steam and hydraulics that powered many ships could actually kill you just as quick as a bullet. The gasses used to refrigerate or air condition were invisible demons that replaced the very air that you need to breath. And every modern vessel relies on electricity in some form or another and that little devil will light you up just like a light bulb on your way to being dead.

Submarine school just made the learning more relevant. It seemed like from the first day you got there, you were exposed to more and more things that were designed to do one thing but actually had a side effect of doing another; killing you and your fellow submariners if you did it wrong. Hard to believe that its been forty five years this month (2018)



During all this learning, you start to figure out that even as dangerous as all of these things are, if you follow the directions and become qualified, you will find yourself surrounded with a whole group of people who have also committed themselves to not getting killed. As you grow, you find out that most if not all of them also know that working together as a team will push you beyond what you ever thought you could do. You found the capacity to overcome amazing odds together.

### **Over time, they become your family.**

The members of the family often change because of duty rotations, but that family grows and grows. For those of us lucky enough to make a career of the Navy (even a shortened one or one that had broken service) you discover that these family members are the ones that have the most meaning. Outside of those of you who have had a great marriage like me, these are the people who made a difference in your life.

- There is the Chief who took a very non-focused young Midwesterner and made him into a fire breathing sea devil capable of fighting a galley fire and setting a broken bone in a state four sea.
  - There is a shipmate that made you work your ass off for a qualification signature but was the first one to shake your hand when you put your fish on.
  - There is that first time that a non-qual comes to you and asks for help and you make sure they get the same advice and knowledge you did. You know that you will be able to count on them because you did your best to train them to the same high standard.
  - There is the shipmate who was so happy to get that letter from home only to find out his girlfriend grew tired of waiting and now he faces a future of uncertainty.
  - There is the watch section that has just spend a harrowing six hours doing something submariners never admit to outsiders they have done in defense of our country only to be racked out for a field day or drill.
  - There is a boat that always seems to be first in line when it comes to unplanned deployments. It's almost as if you are the only boat in the harbor. But you suck it up, load stores and go do your job
- There is a radio message to the Captain telling him that he needs to tell your shipmate that his Mom didn't make it to the end of the patrol or mission. And we can't go home just quite yet.

**There is that day when you see each other years later at some boat reunion and all of the memories come flooding back. And you all hoist a beer and say  
“Hell yes, I'd do it all again.”**

**You would do it all again with your brothers and for some of us a few sisters too. That is the often unstated part of the vow. The men and women you qualified with, suffered through long deployments with, struggled through untold hardships, and every once in a while blew off a little steam in a foreign port.**

### **There is an old saying that you can't go home again.**

I believe there is some partial truth to that. The things that you saw and lived through for the first seventeen years of your life were all done in a place that probably didn't move or grow very much while you were gone. They learned to live without you just like you learned to live without them. It's the nature of things I suppose. In the past five years since we moved back to the area I grew up in, that has become abundantly clear. In fact, you often learn that some of those who never moved away actually resent you for thinking you could come back and have a role. They know nothing of your life just as you can't possibly imagine why someone would miss a lifetime of adventures.

### **On days like those, I remember my brothers (and a few sisters of note).**

I think about all the places we went and all the challenges we overcame. I think about the joy of seeing a brother advance in rank or get his dolphins. I know that they earned and did something that the average person can never understand. I am grateful for each and every one of my family that has stayed faithful and loyal over the past forty five plus years. You listened without judgement, you honored me when I deserved it and you tightened my chain on the times when I have been wrong. But you always did it in a way that showed me I could trust you. I hope when the final muster is taken, you can say the same about me.

***Mister Mac***

## USSVI Charleston Base Meeting Minutes

8 February 2018

The attendance for the February 2018 meeting was 71 members.

**Opening Ceremonies:** The meeting was called to order by Base Commander Ralph Rhorssen. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1858. 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 Vice Commander Mike Knaub. Ralph welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

**Introductions:** The following introduced themselves at the meeting: EM3 (SS) Frank Reinbold Qual Boat: USS Harder SS 257. HMC (SS) Nick Medveoeff. Qual Boat: USS Carbonero SS 337.

**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 GRAYBACK SS-208 was lost on Feb 26, 1944 with the loss of 80 officers and men on her 10th war patrol. She appears to have been caught on the surface in the East China Sea by a Japanese carrier plane whose bombs made a direct hit. During this patrol she sank 4 ships totaling 21,594 tons and was tied for 11th in the number of ships sunk.

□ **MOMM2(SS) Samuel Eugene Whatley, a WWII Submarine Veteran**, departed on Eternal Patrol, Nov. 28, 2017. The base found out about this when we received a notice from National on Jan. 15th. Sam lived in Ninety-Six and had not attended meetings in a long while. He was a member of Swamp Fox Chapter World War II Submarine Veterans, joined USSVI National and Charleston Base in 2008 and he was a member of the Holland Club. Samuel qualified on USS SPOT SS-213 in 1945 making 3 war patrols and was a plank owner.

□ **Don Ort's brother, Tom**, passed away in Yorktown, VA Saturday evening. He was a decorated veteran and served honorably in the U.S. Marine Corps during the Vietnam War. Tom's memorial service will be held on Saturday in Grafton VA.

□ **Charles 'Chuck' Wood** is in Trident Rm 344. I had a call from him on Sunday afternoon and went to visit him. Chuck had major heart surgery on Dec. 28th, and has been in the hospital since then. His throat is still very sore from the tube he had in it. He is very hard to understand unless you listen closely due to the throat soreness and having a hard time 'pushing' the sounds out. He's very upbeat and would very much enjoy having visitors to come by to see him. He doesn't know when he will be leaving the hospital or what rehab he will be doing. This was a sudden surgery. Chuck had told his wife to contact me if anything should happen...she took that to mean if he died. He meant it as if he had to go to the hospital or have surgery...miscommunication.

Update: Chuck's vocal chords need time to get back to normal. Anyone having some time to go by his room and help with some easy physical therapy please call or visit him to discuss.

□ **Beetle Bailey's** daughter **Diane MacBride** had her kidney removed. The growth was benign. She also had a cancer in her liver but the spot is gone...No cancer.

□ **Ken and Barbara Curtis'** daughter-in-law, Lisa, wife of oldest son Tim, passed away Saturday evening, the 27th. They were not able to attend the funeral this past Sunday due to the flu. Lisa was an organ donor and the doctors told us that 6 people will benefit from her organs. **From Ken:** To everyone who attended my daughter-in-law's funeral on the 4th, I have received word from some of the family members how much they appreciated the "men with the vests". My personal thanks and appreciation to my shipmates even though Barbara and I had the FLU and could not attend.

□ **Rick Sparger** is doing well after his hip surgery.

□ **Walt Curtis** has a tumor on his liver which is malignant. He is in Hospice of Charleston Mt. Pleasant room 12. Address is 222 West Coleman Blvd. Suite 104, Mt. Pleasant SC 29464. The phone number to the Hospice is 843.212.2813. **MAP to Hospice**



- **Terry Trump** had his latest doctor visit and was told he can now walk. He did find out that after 2 ½ months off the foot he had to take it easy. Terry was not able to make it tonight due to his ankles swelling after PT today.
- **Don Peterson** is back with us tonight.
- **Carol Yates** sent me an email which I forwarded to the membership about having a motorized chair/scooter that belonged to Jim. She's trying to give it to a veteran who needs it. I understand Jerry Stout is working with her on this now.
- Received an email that two Palmetto Base Shipmates, Milt Berkey and Terry Matlosz, are in need of our prayers for healing.

I still need page 2s for about 30% of our members.

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.

I have volunteered to be the Charleston Base contact with the 2018 Charleston Submarine Birthday Ball Committee. I sent an email yesterday to the NNPTC SubBall Chairman asking for further info. The only thing I know right now is the Ball will be April 7<sup>th</sup> beginning at 1900 and located at Trident Tech again. As I get more info I'll be sending it out via email to all base members.

#### **WEBMASTER NOTES:**

□ There are a lot of updates to the VA section on our website. The latest one is the VA Disability Rates for 2018.

□ 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.

**Membership:** Larry Knutson informed us we have 265 members.

**District Commander:** Wade Phillips introduced himself as the new District Commander. He gave us a brief History of Himself.

**Kaps for Kids:** Bill reported that the February Kaps for Kids has been cancelled. Kaps for Kids will travel to Florence on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

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

**FRA:** No Report.

**Submarine Veterans of World War II:** Stacy Power was present tonight. George Scharf commented on Willie Jones Funeral and how happy the Family was. The WWII luncheon is 13 Feb.

**Scholarship:** Applications due 15 April.

**NPS Awards:** March 9<sup>th</sup>.

**CRAMA:** Butch Bryar is giving personal tours on the USS CLAMAGORE. Just call him ahead of time.

**Public Affairs:** No Report

**Storekeeper:** No Report

**Special Events:** No Report.

**Chief of the Boat:** Joe Lunn reported the Oyster roast is March 3<sup>rd</sup>. Tickets will be sold \$20.00 each Subvet member and immediate family all others \$30.00 anyone not eating Oysters will be charged \$10.00.

**Base Commander:** We have been asked to host the 2019 Southeastern Convention. Ed Stank is the Chairman for this event. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

Ralph has encouraged Subvets to bring their wives to the social hour before our meeting.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Ralph has asked the Base members to submit hand written recommendations for Distinguished Submariner award. Voting will take place at the next board meeting.

**Good of the Order:**

**The After Battery:** Hog Roast is April 21<sup>st</sup>. The festivities start April 16<sup>th</sup> and run all week. The New England Subvets will be down again as well. There is a raffle for a 30-30 rifle. Tickets are \$10.00 each

**Nuclear Historian:**

A mustang retired after 35 years in the Navy and realized a lifelong dream of owning a bird-hunting estate in Alaska. He invited an old Admiral friend to visit for a week of pheasant hunting.

The friend was in awe of the mustang's hunting dog, "Chief". The dog could point, flush and retrieve with the very best.

The Admiral offered to buy the dog at any price. The mustang declined saying that Chief was the very best dog he had ever owned and that he could not part with him.

6 months later the same Admiral returned for another week of hunting and was surprised to find the mustang breaking in a new dog.

"What happened to Chief?" he asked.

"Had to shoot him," the mustang replied. "Another old shipmate came to hunt with me and couldn't remember the dog's name. He kept calling him "Master Chief. After that all the dog would do was sit on his butt and bark."

**A WISE OLD MASTER CHIEF ONCE SAID.....**

A young Ensign approaches a crusty old Master Chief and asks about the origin of the commissioned officers insignias.

"Well," replied the Master Chief. "The insignias for the Navy are steeped in history and tradition."

"First, a gold bar is presented showing that you are valuable but also malleable."

"The silver bar also represents significant value but is less malleable."

"When you make LT, your value doubles, hence the two silver bars."

"As a Captain you soar over the military masses, hence the eagle."

"As an Admiral you are obviously a star."

"Does that answer your question?"

"Yes Master Chief," replied the young Ensign. "But what about LCDR and CDR?"

"That sir goes waaay back in history – back to the Garden of Eden. You see we always cover our pricks with leaves."

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

**Red ticket FRA ticket** was won by Jerry Stout.

**Blue ticket depth charge** was won by Ralph Rhorsen.

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

**Meeting Adjourned:** Following the benediction by Nick Nichols, the Base Commander adjourned the meeting at 2007.

**Charleston Base Participates in H. L. Hunley—USS Housatonic Memorial Ceremony**

On Saturday, February 17 at the Sunrise Presbyterian Church, Sullivan's Island, SC members of Charleston Base Participated in the memorial service. Former Base Commander Ed Stank emphasizing our relationship to the men of H. L. Hunley as submariners and to the men lost on USS Housatonic as US Navy sailors. Members of the base presented a white rose to each of the 13 lady mourners and led the procession to the beach where the roses were thrown into the water as well as a wreath for all men lost in the first successful attack by a submarine.



Ed Stank Addresses the attendees



Presenters (from left to right) 1st row: Ken Hutchison, Larry Knutson, Rick Wise 2nd row: Wayne Phillips, George Scharf, David Taylor, Theron Irving 3rd row: Charlie Hudson, John Flynn, Gordon Williams, Bill Freligh, Gordon Smith, Gary Williams



Presenting a rose



The Wreath

Also attending from Charleston Base were Scott Freligh, Paul Viering, and Stacy Power. Several of the wives also attended. A special thanks to Roxy Smith for the pictures.



## **Male-Female Crew Planned For Kings Bay Navy Sub**

**Joe Daraskevich, The Florida-Times Union, February 19**

**ST. MARYS, GA.** – Capt. Gregory Kercher spent about a week on an Australian diesel-powered submarine back in 2006 as part of a command course to prepare for a position as the executive officer on a U.S. Navy submarine.

The Royal Australian Navy had already integrated the submarine force, and Kercher was impressed by how well men and women worked together on the vessel.

He said he knew at the time that the United States would one day make the transition from an all-male submarine culture to one allowing women to serve, but there was no telling how long that change would take.

Twelve years later, he's playing a major role in the transition at Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base in Southeast Georgia by leading one of the first crews at the installation mixed with enlisted male and female submariners.

"If we tried to do this 15 to 20 years ago in a sudden manner, I think it would have been difficult," Kercher said. "We wouldn't have been prepared for it, and it probably wouldn't have went off as seamless as it has."

Each submarine uses a two-crew concept - blue and gold - to alleviate the long periods of time spent at sea. Kercher took over as the commanding officer of the gold crew on the Ohio-class guided-missile submarine USS Florida in September. His counterpart, Capt. Brett Moyes, is leading the blue crew.

Kercher said his crew will be ready to deploy for the first time in a few months thanks to careful planning by the Navy that allowed the integration process to unfold one step at a time.

First, female officers started serving on submarines in 2011. Then enlisted women joined the crews of the USS Michigan in Bangor, Wash., in 2016. Now the Navy has made the transition on the East Coast with the two crews of the Florida.

### **ASKING FOR ADVICE**

"I had a lot of thoughts over the six months leading up to the time when I was coming to take over and become the commanding officer," Kercher said.

So he reached out to his peers for advice on how to handle the new environment. He said he talked to some who had served with female officers on submarines, and he reached out to personnel on the Michigan to see how it went when the first enlisted women joined.

Kercher said most of the advice he received dealt with low-level issues like how the modifications worked out with berthing and bathrooms. There wasn't much advice on how to deal with actual crew members getting along, Kercher said, because for the most part they were focused on the mission instead of the difference in gender.

He said the Navy did a great job of setting up berthing without taking away very much space for the men.

One obvious difference Kercher noticed was the chief petty officer quarters were altered to accommodate three people in each one, allowing for three women to live in one of the spots together.

The same is true of the bunk rooms for enlisted sailors in the missile compartments, he said. The submarines already had nine-person bunk rooms, and now some of them are designated for women with bathrooms nearby.

### **PLENTY OF PRIVACY**

Kercher said the idea that Navy submarines are places without privacy is a common misconception that goes back to World War II when the vessels were much smaller. It's not like current submarines have as much room as surface ships, he said, but there are definitely doors on all the toilet and shower stalls.

"I just don't think that we had that many privacy concerns before, and I really don't think about that now," he said.

The crew completed a training drill recently with special forces and Navy SEALs on board. Kercher said the total complement on the vessel was about 240 people, and the major concern was how to feed everybody. Privacy wasn't an issue.

"I would say many of the female sailors are helping take care of the problems we are working on rather than there being problems because of them," Kercher said.

Neither Kercher, his executive officer or the chief of the boat have any experience serving with women on board a submarine, so they've been relying on some of the women on the crew to help work through any potential issues related to gender that might come along.

"Sometimes we might over-think things," Kercher said. "But I'd rather we over-think and plan properly."

He said the men on his crew were getting used to the idea of women joining them well before he arrived. Discussions started as soon as the decision was made to involve the Florida in the integration process, and it helped that the modifications were made in dry dock at Kings Bay so the sailors could monitor the progress.

"It remains an all-volunteer force. If somebody wanted to step up and say 'I no longer want to serve on a submarine,' they could have certainly done that," Kercher said. "We've had none of that."

### **FITTING IN NICELY**

Kercher said he's been impressed with the attitude displayed by the women and their willingness to work hard to fit in, but he's also impressed with the behavior of the men.

He said there's always been an unwritten rule to look after sailors who are serving on submarines for the first time. They seem to be meshing just like they would if all the newcomers were men, Kercher said.

"The rest of the crew sees this as the same opportunity I see, and they see it as a pride thing for the Florida," he said.



Kercher said it's obvious through interacting with his crew that the women share that same sense of pride. They don't necessarily show it outwardly because they are so focused on the mission, he said.

"They won't go out of their way to show that pride, but it's there, it's evident all the time," Kercher said. "They just don't want to make it about themselves."

In some cases serving on a submarine is a lifelong goal for the women, Kercher said, but they aren't thinking of themselves as pioneers. He said they just want to be thought of as submariners just like the rest of the crew.

#### **FIRST TO EARN PIN**

A member of the blue crew just cemented her place on the vessel by becoming the first junior enlisted woman to earn her enlisted submarine warfare pin, or "dolphins," this year while the submarine was underway.

Fire Control Technician 2nd Class Jasmine Kiernan-Rolen was required to qualify as petty officer of the deck, topside roving patrol and numerous in-rate qualifications in order to receive the pin. She also was required to perform damage-control functions and demonstrate proficiency in the various areas of submarining.

"It feels incredible to be a part of such a tightly woven community, and it's an honor to earn the right to wear the Navy's first qualification pin," Kiernan-Rolen said. "The guys here have been both tough but inspiring."

The leaders from the Florida and Michigan recently got together to talk about their experiences over the last six months. But they moved on from the topic of women pretty quickly, and the conversation turned to operating in a deployed status, Kercher said.

Moyes said the talent level of the women on the blue crew has made the integration process smooth and successful. Kercher echoed that sentiment and was excited about the prospect of the first enlisted woman on the gold crew going through her qualification board recently in the hopes of receiving her pin.

#### **FORCE GETTING STRONGER**

The women on both Florida crews amount to about 30 total, with a handful of them being officers. More are expected to arrive soon, just in time for deployment.

Kercher said it's a universal thought that the U.S. submarine force is the greatest in the world, and adding enlisted women to the equation is only going to make it better.

"We need that constant infusion of the best talent possible in order to maintain the submarine force as the best in the world," Kercher said.

He said by opening the pool of candidates to the female population in the United States, the Navy is going to have a whole new group of talented submariners that weren't available before.

Kercher said the deliberate integration process took a long time to accomplish, but it was the right way to do it to ensure a smooth transition.

Soon it will be time to see how they do on deployment.

### **Mattis: Deploy-Or-Get-Out Rule Is About Fairness**

**Aaron Mehta, Navy Times, February 18**

**WASHINGTON** – New rules requiring members of the military to be able to deploy or get out were put in place to ensure fairness in deployment rates, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said.

"You're either deployable, or you need to find something else to do. I'm not going have some people deploying constantly and then other people, who seem to not pay that price, in the U.S. military," Mattis told reporters Feb. 17 in his first comments on the issue since the new policy was formally introduced.

"If you can't go overseas [and] carry a combat load, then obviously someone else has got to go. I want this spread fairly and expertly across the force."

Under new rules first reported on by Military Times, military members who have been non-deployable for the past 12 months or more will be separated from the military.

Approximately 11 percent, or 235,000, of the 2.1 million personnel serving on active duty, in the reserves or National Guard are currently non-deployable, Command Sgt. Maj. John Troxell, the senior enlisted adviser to Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joe Dunford, told Military Times earlier this month.

Of that total non-deployable force, Troxell said, about 99,000 are on that list for administrative reasons, such as not having all their immunizations or their required dental exams. About 20,000 are not deployable due to pregnancy, and 116,000 are not deployable due to either short- or long-term injuries.

In discussing why he felt this policy was needed, Mattis said he felt it was no longer fair to ask healthy warfighters to carry the load for others, particularly due to the stress on military families from multiple deployments.

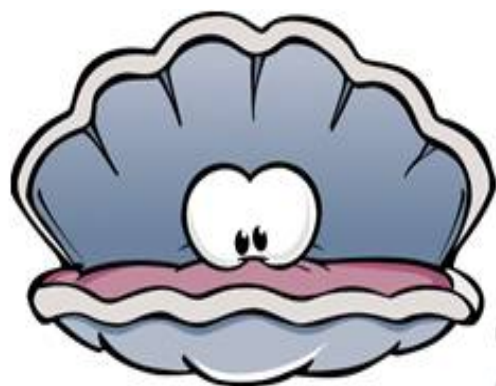
"They need time at home; they need time with their families. We may enlist soldiers, but we re-enlist families. That's the way it is. If you can't keep the family together, then you're either going to lose the family or you're going to lose the soldier, and that's a net loss for our society and for our military," he said.

Mattis stressed that those who were injured in the field would be exempt from the new policy, saying “we’ll find a place to use them. That’s a special category. They’ve earned that special status.” But for everyone else, either you have to be able to meet the requirements, or it’s time for you to go.

However, the secretary did acknowledge that the failure to meet deployability requirements is not always on the individual. The classic example is a situation where someone was unable to get a dental appointment quickly enough and hence did not meet the requirements.

And so, Mattis’ message is not just to the troops, but to those in charge: make sure bureaucracy doesn’t get in the way, and make every option available for those who need to get certain checks done. As an example, he imagined a scenario of “a base where everyone is dentally fully qualified, and they have a fort 200 miles away that’s not, bring down the dentist and get them qualified.”

“This isn’t all ‘somebody screwed up,’” he said. “The services have got to make certain they are working on deployability.”



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