

# TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 2, No. 7

July 2006

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



### USSVI Creed

*"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States Government"*



Base web page: [www.ussvicb.org](http://www.ussvicb.org)  
 National web page: [www.ussvi.org](http://www.ussvi.org)

#### Base Meeting:

Thursday, July 13, 2006  
 Social hour & Board of Directors meeting at 1800  
 General meeting at 1900

#### Location:

VFW Post 3433, 10154 Bellwright Rd.  
 Summerville, South Carolina. Phone 843-871-0607

Base Officers		Phone Number
Commander	Steve Nelms	843-563-7115
Vice Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Secretary	Ronnie Kerstetter	843-553-9235
Treasurer	George Lisle	843-559-4242

Special Officers		Phone Number
Chief of the Boat	Dave Mueller	843-553-2775
Public Affairs	Richard Cleeve	843-899-4563
Sub Vets WWII	Barnwell Chaplin	843-762-6945
Nuclear Historian	Ed Simokat	843-873-1709
Veterans Affairs	John Nichols	843-873-5897
Chaplain	Bill "Friar Tuck" Kennedy	843-875-3109
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	Bob Lowe	843-573-9045
Little David Project	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Roving Reporter	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Scholarship	Jim Yates	843-873-0246
Newsletter	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Storekeeper	Paul Viering	843-797-2623

## Minutes of the June 2006 meeting

**Opening Ceremony:** Base Commander, Steve Nelms calls to order. Quorum was present and the meeting was commenced at 1900.

**Introductions:** Two new persons were introduced, Paul Korp and Bernard Polle. Welcome aboard.

**Treasurer:** Financial report was given by George Lisle. Also Budda presented a check to USSVI Charleston base for \$3,350. That is our profit from the convention. That's clear profit. Also a check for \$3,350 going to WWII Swamp Fox and also a check to the Aiken base for the same amount. That will leave about \$245 in the account to make sure all charges get paid. At the end of the month the account will be closed out and the money left will go to the casino fund for the After Battery.

**Secretary:** Jerry Stout has resigned as Charleston Base secretary and is now serving as the District Four Commander covering six states and nine bases. The new base secretary, Ronnie Kerstetter, was introduced. A motion was made to accept the minutes from the May meeting, a second was heard, no discussion. Minutes approved.

**Storekeeper:** Paul Viering reported that business was good (very busy). The store is currently doing approximately \$500 per meeting. Paul asked for some help on meeting nights. Ken Fuhr volunteered. Paul said that \$100 profit was given back to the base from the store; all base loans to the store are now paid off.

**Chaplain:** Bill Kennedy was not present. The chaplain report was given by Marty Sessler.

**Public Affairs:** No report

**SubVets WWII:** Next meeting to be held at Ryan's in Summerville on Thursday June 29, 2006 at 12:00. Come hungry. All members and Associate Members are invited to attend. Any USSVICB member made participate as an associate member.

Lee Alison shared that a former submariner on the Seadog during the war just passed away. A memorial service will be held at Stella Maris Catholic Church on Sullivan's Island on Saturday July 8th at 2 pm. Asking sub vets to be present. We will remind you later. Base Chaplin to fill out form with funeral director to respect wishes of the family.

**Veteran's Affairs:** No report.

**Steering Committee:** No report.

**Holland Club:** No report.

**Membership:** Carl Chinn reports three new members have signed up for the month of June for a total 228. We need to continue to concentrate on attracting new younger

I did not see a lot of kids at the ceremony. The best way to pass along patriotism is for everyone to bring along a kid or grandchild to one of these ceremonies. Men if you and I don't pass the word along, they just won't get it.

Like I said before if you're on our float at a parade and you see those ROTC kids and they give a hand salute, salute them back. They look up to us and if we don't respond we will reap what we sow.

I have three hundred dollars from Sub Vets casino group to turn back in to Charleston Base. We were going to turn in five hundred dollars but we just bought a hot water heater for two hundred dollars for the After Battery. Hence the three hundred dollars.

The "After Battery" for you new guys is where we have social nights and play poker and tell lies. It is located in back of Budda's house. I have directions if anyone needs them. This makes a total of \$1,374 from social nights and stag game nights turned back in to the organization.

Aluminum cans – WE SAVE ALUMINUM CANS - Don't let constable Gary Semler or his squad catch you disposing of cans in an improper manner at any of our functions. There were three ass whippings at the last oyster roast because of this. Don't let it be you. Money from sale of aluminum cans is turned back in to Charleston base and totals \$66 to date.

I took it on my own to purchase two new coolers, they cost \$127.50, and they hold eight cases of beer each. Here is the deal, we need a vote on this or I will have to pay for them myself. There was a motion and a second. Motion was approved to pay for the new coolers.

Lets me say this "since I have been the COB we have never run out of beer", and "we will never run out of beer God willing". We may run out of your brand of beer but never out of beer. This brings up another item about a whinny ass group of people at the poker night last Wednesday. At 10:30 they ran out of Miller Light bottles and had to drink Miller Light cans. Well there were still 2 cases of Miller Light bottles, all they had to do was put them in the cooler. However they did not do this. So what can I say! So for these men I leave them with a quote from a famous American Thomas Jefferson and he said: "f--- 'em, feed 'em rice".

**Base Commander:** Along with what the COB said about bringing your nieces or grandchild or bring anybody that you want to our memorial services. Yeah, bring anybody you want. Just show up. It doesn't matter how you are dressed.

Along with being membership and newsletter editor, Carl Chinn is our new Base Vice Commander. Big hand for Carl.

Originally five hundred dollars was approved to make

members if we are going to keep our organization alive and active.

Also for you guys that did not go to the conference, we have extra books if you want to take a look. Also these are the books that we sold the ads for. If you sold an ad you may take one and take them to the people that you sold the ad to so that they can see what they paid for. We have plenty.

**Nuclear Historian:** No report.

**Scholarhip:** Jim Yates received letter and picture from scholarship recipient, Sarah Collins. She sends her appreciation.

Academic Magnet High School juniors Leah Plante and Lauren Moore enjoyed learning the regulations and tradition regarding the American flag thanks to watching their guidance counselor Jim Yates. They plan to continue the tradition next year of raising and lowering the flag before passing it on. They baked thank-you cookies for Charleston Base Sub Vets in appreciation for each receiving the fifty dollars and certificate of appreciation during a ceremony that was held in the old Cochran hall on the old Navy Base. The Post and Courier covered the event and published an article entitled "Students take pride in caring for flag".

**Fleet Reserve News:** FRA branch 269 will be moving into their new building at the end of June. After a final inspection by SLED on June 23rd they will request help to make the move the following weekend. E-mails will be sent out with the details.

**Chief of the Boat:** Good turn out for the Memorial Day service at Parks in Summerville. It was a sea of blue vests out at the cemetery. There was a young girl, an 18 year old gal, (whose name we later found out to be Christina Lewandowski from North Charleston), played taps for the ceremony. Near the end she lost her place and was unable to finish and just stopped. She really felt bad and started to cry. Bill Roberts came up to me after the ceremony and said "we need to do something about this girl", we need to recognize her for what she did. A young person that shows respect for the flag is something that we need more of. COB will send flowers, chocolate, a certificate of appreciation and encourage her to come back again next year with her horn.

repairs to our float. We did not end up needing this money because we have gotten donations for all materials for float repairs. The replica of the USS Thresher SSN 593 is currently away being painted by the Aiken Base (they use the float every Memorial Day).

80-90% of material was donated to house the float (pole barn) and to build a storage building (12 x 15 feet) to store tables, coolers, tents, etc. Poles were donated; roof nearly-all donated, three yards of concrete donated and most of lumber donated, trusses for buildings donated. However we will need to purchase some items to complete the two buildings. A motion was made for USSVICB to approve \$1000 for materials including ridge cap for roof and additional lumber to finish these two building projects. Motion was seconded and approved.

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** The city of Hanahan will be erecting a veteran's memorial in the front plaza of their city hall on Yeamans Hall road. It will be dedicated to all killed in action; army, navy, air force, marine, coast guard, fire, police, and emergency workers. They will sell brick pavers which can be purchased as memorials for living and deceased veterans. Would like USSVICB to participate in the future dedication ceremony. They expect to start building in a couple of months.

**Good Of The Order:** Convention thank you from Betty Rodgers (WWII Ladies Auxiliary Swamp Fox district) said the convention was great. Thank you from Sue Eckles regarding her letter of appreciation from Charleston Base for her donation.

Jim Eckles commented that he had been to a few submarine conventions and the 2006 combined conference USSVI Eastern Region Districts 4 & 6 and Submarine Veterans of WWI Southern Region held in Charleston was the best that he had attended. Jim sends a thank you to Steve Nelms for ram Roding the conference.

Well done to Carl Chinn for Memorial Day set-up. The Depth Charge Drawing was held; winner announced was Bill Roup.

The Base Commander adjourned meeting at 2006.

**\*\* End of the minutes for June 2006 \*\***

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**From the COB**



No input

**From the Base Commander**



No input

**\*\*July Happenings!\*\***

July 1 – Freedom Fest at Marrington Plantation. Gates open at 1700, fireworks at 2100. Lots of fun, games, food and cold drinks! Sponsored by MWR.



**July Birthdays!**

Bognar	Cowman	Dasch	Deal
Freshour	Gunnis	Hazard	Kennedy
Menefee	Owens	Petersen	Simpo
Snyder	Stoll	Stuffle	Yates

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**Terminology Trivia**

**Chit**

One tradition carried on in the Navy is the use of the word "chit." It is a carry over from the days when Hindu traders used slips of paper called "citthi" for money, so they wouldn't have to carry heavy bags of gold and silver. British sailors shortened the word to chit and applied it to their mess vouchers.

Its most outstanding use in the Navy today is for drawing pay and a form used for requesting leave and liberty, and special requests. But the term is currently applied to almost any piece of paper from a pass to an official letter requesting some privilege.



**From the Base Storekeeper, Paul Viering**

If you ordered any item(s) from the store, check back with the storekeeper to see if it (they) may be in.

**Membership and Dues Information:**

We're up to **228** members! Keep on recruitin'!

If you have any changes to your membership info (address, phone, e-mail, etc.) please let Carl Chinn know at [chasbasemembernews@sc.rr.com](mailto:chasbasemembernews@sc.rr.com) or [carlc@sc.rr.com](mailto:carlc@sc.rr.com) or call 875-3098.



**Public Affairs Announcement  
Richard Cleeve**

No input

**June Submarines Lost:**

USS S 28 (SS 133) July 4, 1944  
USS Robalo (SS 273) July 26, 1944

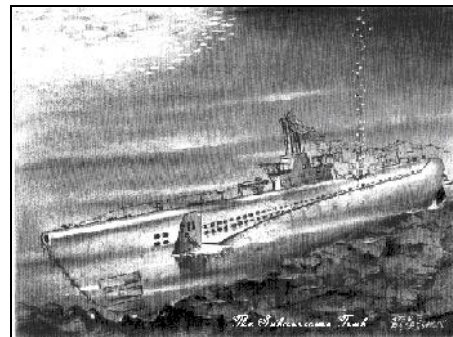
**The Final Patrol**

*Lord, this departed shipmate with dolphins on his chest is part of an outfit known as the best.*

*Make him welcome and take him by the hand. You'll find without a doubt he was the best in all the land.*

*So, heavenly Father add his name to the roll of our departed shipmates still on patrol.*

*Let them know that we who survive will always keep their memories alive.*



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**Exercise Valiant Shield**

Check out this link for a recently completed joint exercise in the Pacific:

<http://www.pacom.mil/exercises/vs2006/index.shtml>

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## **Sticker Renewal Goes Online Navywide**

Release Date: 6/22/2006 11:49:00 AM

SILVERDALE, Wash. (NNS) -- Since July 2005, anyone trying to renew a regional vehicle decal has been able to do so online. The new process allows normal customers of Pass and I.D. to bypass lines and waiting times and conduct business with only a few clicks of the mouse.

Navy Region Northwest Webmaster Ray Mills developed the new program and said that within the next few months, all regions throughout the Navy will be able to renew their respective regional vehicle stickers online. Currently, six CNI Regions are online. Navy Region Midwest came online in April, and Mid-Atlantic is expected to be online soon.

"When Rear Adm. Len Hering was commander, Navy Region Northwest, he wanted to decrease the wait times at the gates," said Mills. "We don't even look at the vehicles anymore. We just verify the data, so a system like this made perfect sense."

The site can be accessed by going to the local region Web page and clicking on the "Vehicle Decal Renewal" link on the left side of the page. Mills said that since the site began, his office has been receiving feedback from the users of the Web site and have begun implementing some of their requests.

"One person said they would like to receive an email confirmation saying they have successfully completed their registration," Mills said. "So now when you renew your decal online, you will get an email with all the pertinent information."

Wait times at Pass and I.D. have been up to two hours, so valuable man-hours have been lost. Since the Northwest region has gone to the Web, a number of other regions have followed suit. For Mills, the idea is to get everyone renewing their vehicle stickers on the Web, adding that man-hours will be saved by doing so, since using the system takes approximately 10 minutes.

It avoids waiting and drive times, said Mills.

Security is always a concern when using the Internet; therefore, your full social security number is not a necessity to renew your decal. With this in mind, Mills said that soon, customers will be able to attain decals of the new naval region they are transferring to. Currently, the system allows you to edit your personal information such as your phone number or address, saving the customer from doing so at the Pass and I.D. office itself.

"The vision to improve our way of life in and around the Navy made this happen," Mills said. "With a total team effort here in the Northwest, we will continue to improve projects such as this one."

The regional online decal applications can be found at

## **Secretary Nicholson Announces VA to Provide Free Credit Monitoring**

WASHINGTON (June 21, 2006) - As part of the continuing efforts by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to protect and assist those potentially affected by the recent data theft that occurred at an employee's Maryland home, Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson today announced that VA will provide one year of free credit monitoring to people whose sensitive personal information may have been stolen in the incident.

"VA continues to take aggressive steps to protect and assist people who may be potentially affected by this data theft," said Nicholson. "VA has conducted extensive market research on available credit monitoring solutions, and has been working diligently to determine how VA can best serve those whose information was stolen.

"Free credit monitoring will help safeguard those who may be affected, and will provide them with the peace of mind they deserve," he added.

The Secretary said VA has no reason to believe the perpetrators who committed this burglary were targeting the data, and Federal investigators believe that it is unlikely that identity theft has resulted from the data theft.

This week, VA will solicit bids from qualified companies to provide a comprehensive credit monitoring solution. VA will ask these companies to provide expedited proposals and to be prepared to implement them rapidly once they are under contract. After VA hires a credit monitoring company, the Department will send a detailed letter to people whose sensitive personal information may have been included in the stolen data. This letter will explain credit monitoring and how eligible people can enroll or "opt-in" for the services. The Department expects to have the services in place and the letters mailed by mid-August. Secretary Nicholson also announced VA is soliciting bids to hire a company that provides data-breach analysis, which will look for possible misuse of the stolen VA data. The analysis would help measure the risk of the data loss, identify suspicious misuse of identity information and expedite full assistance to affected people.

As part of VA's efforts to prevent such an incident from happening again, Secretary Nicholson previously announced a series of personnel changes in the Office of Policy and Planning, where the breach occurred; the hiring of former Maricopa County (Ariz.) prosecutor Richard Romley as a Special Advisor for Information Security; the expedited completion of Cyber Security Awareness Training and Privacy Awareness Training for all VA employees; that an inventory be taken of all

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these URLs:

Region South

<https://www.pid.cnic.navy.mil/form2.asp?region=cnr>s

Region Southwest

<https://www.pid.cnic.navy.mil/form2.asp?region=cnrsw>

Region Hawaii

<https://www.pid.cnic.navy.mil/form2.asp?region=cnrh>

Region Southeast

<https://www.pid.cnic.navy.mil/form2.asp?region=cnrse>

Region Northwest

<https://www.pid.cnic.navy.mil/form2.asp?region=cnrnw>

positions requiring access to sensitive VA data by June 30, 2006, to ensure that only those employees who need such access to do their jobs have it; that every laptop in VA undergo a security review to ensure that all security and virus software is current, including the immediate removal of any unauthorized information or software; and that VA facilities across the country - every hospital, Community-Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC), regional office, national cemetery, field office and VA's Central Office

- observe Security Awareness Week beginning June 26. People who believe they may be affected by the data theft can go to [www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov) for more information. VA also continues to operate a call center that people can contact to get information about this incident and learn more about consumer-identity protections. That toll free number is 1-800-FED INFO (1-800-333-4636). The call center is operating from 8:00 am to 9:00 pm (EDT), Monday-Saturday as long as it is needed.

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## The Early American Guided Missile Submarines

From the Submarine Research Center

Fleet ballistic missile submarines glide in and out of Bangor and Kings Bay carrying Trident II missiles. We seldom look back to those years of missile development from V 1 s, to Loons, to Regulus Is, Regulus IIs and finally to Polaris, the first vertically launched missile from a submerged submarine. What's more, we forget that while Polaris research and development took place our submarines had to sustain special operations in the worst climatic conditions carry-ing missiles that seem like relics from today's perspective.

During the late 40s, the Navy competed with our land and air forces for priority in getting its hands on the V-1 s captured at the end of the World War II. The V 1 s were finally used up and replaced with an American version, the Loon. Cusk (SS-348) and Carbonero (SS-337) were equipped with launchers on the after decks. For the most part, launches were successful, but on one occasion the Loon's Jato bottle exploded on take off sending the missile into the after tor-pedo room hatch. An enormous fire engulfed the after section of the superstructure, but since the ship was rigged for dive, the captain simply submerged and extinguished the fire.

Research and development pushed ahead as Loon taught submariners how to modify boats and living conditions to accommodate the mis-sile age. As Regulus came off the drawing board, down the production line and onto submarines, more accommodation was needed. The Tunny (SS-282) and Barbero (SS-317) had been decommissioned and sat sadly awaiting their fates at the junkyard. Regulus saved them. They were recommissioned, sent to the yard and converted to SSGs.

Barbero had been a cargo conversion shortly after the war so that officer quarters were in the after battery and the crew's berthing was forward of control. Both had snorkels and Tunny had a fairwater added to its conning tower shears with a large hanger astern of the sail to house two Regulus missiles. Barbero retained the shears but had added to it a snorkel. Below decks special equipment was needed for missile op-erations.

The Regulus had an approximate range of 500 miles, but needed guidance on the second half of its journey to target. After the end of the Loon program, Cusk and Carbonero were con-verted to tracking submarines. Thus the first team of missile submarines was made up of these four boats, deploying a total of four nuclear warheads against the Soviets. These boats stood a lonely sentry in the waters of western Bering Sea as Growler and Grayback rushed to join them.

## Sunken Sub Appears to be USS Lagarto

From ComSubPac Public Affairs

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (NNS) -- Navy divers completed six days of diving operations June 16 on wreckage in the Gulf of Thailand believed to be that of the lost World War II submarine USS Lagarto (SS 371).

Divers will send photographs and video of the submarine to the Naval Historical Center in Washington for further analysis.

The divers' observations appear to confirm the discovery made in May 2005 by British wreck diver Jamie MacLeod. "Without a doubt, it's a U.S. submarine, a Balao-class," said U.S. 7th Fleet Diving Officer, Cmdr. Tony San Jose. San Jose and his fellow divers reported identifying twin 5-inch gun mounts both forward and aft, a feature believed to be unique to Lagarto. They also reported finding serial numbers and the word "Manitowoc" engraved on the submarine's propeller. Lagarto was one of 28 submarines built in Manitowoc, Wisc.

The operations were conducted from the rescue and salvage ship USS Salvor (ARS 52) with embarked divers from Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit (MDSU) 1, based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The Japan-based mine countermeasures ship USS Patriot (MCM 7) assisted by first pinpointing the location of the wreckage with its SQQ-32 sonar and remotely-operated Mine Neutralization Vehicle.

The mission to positively identify Lagarto was carried out as part of the Thailand phase of the exercise Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training, or CARAT. A Royal Thai Navy liaison officer was embarked aboard Salvor to assist during the mission.

San Jose said that the diving operations were very challenging because of short bottom times, strong currents and limited visibility. Due to the depths involved, the dives had to be conducted with mixed gas.

"We are deeply grateful to the divers of MDSU 1 and USS Salvor for their efforts to confirm this discovery and bring closure to the families of Lagarto's crew," said Pacific

The Navy wedded a greatly modified Tang class hull type to the specialized needs of the next generation of Regulus missiles, the Regulus I. This was a swept back, hot rod version of the air breathing Regulus I. The bow of the two boats thus modified was lifted to accommodate four Regulus IIs each. They were the Growler (SSG-577) and the Grayback, (SSG-574). Grayback was commissioned March 1958 and Growler, August 1958. These were the first dedicated missile boats. They trained until 1959 when they and their colleagues, Tunny and Barbero commenced a routine of continuous de-ployment in the northern Pacific.

The nuclear submarine Halibut (SSGN-587) was commissioned in January 1960. Unlike the Growler and Grayback, it carried four Regulus I or IIs in any combination. Its foredeck was flush but raised. Her missile system was a completely automated group of hydraulically powered machinery, controlled from a central control station. The boat began regular patrols in April of 1961 making the fifth boat to carry the Regulus threat to the Soviets.

Tunny and Barbero together carried four missiles, as did Grayback, Growler, and Halibut each. This meant that Russia would have to deal with four weapons on station at all times. Division Eleven of Squadron One based in Hawaii made up the initial organization. GMU-10 was its shore based guided missile facility. Not to be forgotten were Cusk and Carbonero, the guidance boats.

A total of about nine patrols were made by each of the division's elements during the late 50s and early 60s. The typical run lasted for about four months; one month in transit northwest from Pearl, sixty days on station and another month getting back home. Stop off points were Midway and/or Adak, both for refueling and food.

The boats left in top shape with band playing, wives waving and all equipment operational. On return the boats were rusted hulks and the crews were exhausted. The incredible weather battered the boats. It was not uncommon for a boat to return to Pearl with only a partial superstructure. Sails were punched in, deck hatches torn off, planes ripped off, and periscopes bent or shattered by ice.

Growler and Grayback with their high speed diesels had constant problems with propulsion as did their Tang class counterparts. Tunny and Barbero hulls had seen service during World War II and these boats probably suffered the most. Snorkeling became a super human effort in the ice fields and heavy seas battering the hangars on the afterdeck. And snorkeling was the name of the game in the worst weather imaginable.

Running submerged by day and snorkeling by night became the waiting routine for those early boats. Snorkeling took its toll on equipment and men. "Commence snorkeling" was so often followed by the slam of the head valve, and the altimeter spinning as engines sucked air from the boat.

At high altitude cut off, about eight thousand feet, the mast flooded, the boat got 2000 pounds heavy and the diving officer fought to regain depth control. This scenario played again and again during each agonizing watch. Men in their bunks slept fitfully.

Passageways were stacked with food cartons and rations were packed into every crevice of the boat. Only in maneuvering and control were the decks as the designers had meant them to be. The men ate their way through the food, the passages became clear but the crews ate well. Living conditions were worst in the early boats. Growler and Grayback fared better and Halibut with its nuclear plant didn't have to worry about snorkel effect.

Tunny developed a small leak in the pump room. It was nothing of great consequence, requiring pumping to sea about once a day. When Tunny went into dry dock after one patrol one could stand in the control room and see the dry dock below through the hatch grate and through a seven inch crack in the pressure hull close to the keel. At depth the hull would compress and the crack would be sealed by sea pressure. The boat was simply worn out.

Men who came back from patrol came back pale and filthy. Many long

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Submarine Force commander, Rear Adm. Jeffrey Cassias. For 60 years, crew members' families did not know the exact circumstances surrounding the 86 submariners who perished. Lagarto was last heard from May 3, 1945, as it was preparing to attack a Japanese convoy under heavy escorts. Japanese war records later revealed that the minelayer Hatsutaka reported sinking a U.S. submarine at roughly the same time and location.

Cassias met May 6 with Lagarto family members at the Wisconsin Maritime Museum in Manitowoc, where a memorial service was held to honor the lost crew. Last year, Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle signed a proclamation making May 3, the day the craft was presumed sunk, as USS Lagarto Remembrance Day in perpetuity.

"We owe a great debt to these men, and to all of the World War II submariners," said Cassias. "In the world's darkest hour, they faced the greatest risks, and demonstrated the most noble courage to preserve the freedom of our nation." Lagarto was one of 52 submarines lost on patrol during World War II.

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## USS Swordfish

Lesson Learned - Standard Operating Procedure. Do not go to sea without vital damage control equipment fully operational. As usual, a casualty usually results in compounding detrimental events. Today, we get a chance to see how the SKATE was involved in permanently putting Columbus Base shipmates, Steve Bascomb and Galin Brady's former boat, USS SWORDFISH (SSN-579) out of commission, forever.

Hang on to your cup of coffee for this ride:

In late November 1985, Swordfish was delayed in departing Pearl Harbor due to the failure of the drain pump. A replacement was obtained from USS Skate (SSN-578), in the shipyard for decommissioning, but Swordfish put to sea before the pump was fully connected and tested, and the crew could not get the pump to operate. Since the engine room bilges could not be pumped, by the evening of 24 November the water in the engine room lower level bilge was over the deck plates (more than four feet). The crew tried to use a portable submersible pump, but were not successful. The weight of water in the engine room bilges required large angles on the stern planes to maintain a "zero bubble" (keep the pitch of the submarine level). While attempting to trim the boat, the Diving Officer ordered "zero your planes." The planesman complied, the stern dropped, and the boat's up-angle increased rapidly as the water in the bilges sloshed aft. When the water in the rear of the engine room rose over the main lube-oil pumps, the operating pump shorted out and caught fire.

When "fire in main lube oil" was announced, three men in the stern torpedo room, aft of the engine room, took fire extinguishers and began climbing forward, against the steep up-angle, to fight the casualty. When they opened the hatch into the engine room, which swung into the torpedo room, the bilge water began pouring in. As the first man through the hatch was struggling against both the up-angle and the rush of water, he dropped his fire extinguisher, which fell the length of the torpedo room. When it hit, its valve and nozzle broke off, and the extinguisher began rocketing around through the chaos of water and debris. The first man was pulled into the engine room by another crewman, while the other two men began trying to shut the watertight door. They struggled with that hatch for the remainder of the casualty.

The crew throughout the submarine continued to take the immediate actions they were trained to automatically perform during a casualty. Appropriately for a fire in main lube oil, the Officer of the Deck ordered "All Stop," and the throttleman shut the throttles for the

days in the Hawaiian sun was in order, but the grinding schedule required the boat to immediately begin repairs to be able to go out again. Keeping on schedule was the Regulus boats' constant goal. So that was the routine, four months of the cruelest submarining imaginable and time in port during which the crew worked frantically to get the boat back in shape.

An article appeared in Navy Times, dated March 14, 1962. The following is an excerpt from that article: "Who are the hardest working men in the Navy? Among the strongest contenders for this dubious honor are the officers and enlisted men who man the Navy's five Regulus firing submarines." "Regulus you ask? That program was halted in December, 1958." But right this minute there are a couple of U.S. submarines in Far Eastern waters with nuclear tipped Regs ready to fire at carefully selected targets in Red China and Soviet Siberia.

"Deployment for these subs means six or seven months in the Far East with minimum liberty in the coveted port cities of the Orient..." Regulus subs spend 47 percent of their time de-ployed and an additional 25 percent at sea in local operations and training. "Not many ships can top this."

Of all the submarine duty during the cold war in both diesels and nuclear, it is difficult to find any stretch of duty so demanding and so unre-mitting as the early missile boats. The nuclear boats had the blue and gold crews, but the early missile boats had the black and blue crews. The rest of the cold war submariners having contributed to the nation's defense can think of the difficult conditions of special operations and say, "We didn't have it so bad."

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main engines. Without propulsion, the extreme up-angle caused the ship to quickly stop and begin moving backwards, sinking stern first. When the fire was announced, the Engineer had lain to Maneuvering (the control center of the engine room). He saw the depth gage indicating a rapid increase in depth, ordered "Ahead Flank" on his own initiative, and opened the forward throttle himself in an effort to drive the ship to the surface. In Control, the Officer of the Deck saw similar indications, and ordered "Emergency Blow." The Chief of the Watch, following procedures, started the blow on the forward group of ballast tanks first. Before he could initiate the blow on the aft group the up-angle became so steep that he was unable to maintain footing and slid to the rear of Control. He quickly climbed back up to the manual air manifold, where, hanging from one hand, he opened a valve with his other hand that was very difficult to turn under normal conditions with two hands. (Emergency blow on Skate-class boats was performed by opening valves with standard handwheels; later classes were equipped with lever-actuated hydraulic mechanisms.)

Swordfish surfaced successfully. However, the reactor had scrambled and the diesel was inoperable due to the depth of the water in engine room lower level, leaving the battery as the only source of power.

During the up-angle the air injectors for the steam plant were submerged and sucked contaminated water into the feed system. The crew succeeded in blowing down the steam generators before the very rapid corrosion caused by chlorides in the high temperature water penetrated the tubes of the steam generators and caused leaks of reactor coolant into the steam system, but the effort consumed all fresh water available in the boat.

Since the only source of power was the battery, the boat's air communication. The temperature in the ship exceeded 100°F (38C) with near 100% humidity for the several hours required for a tug to be dispatched from Pearl Harbor, rig for tow, and tow Swordfish home.

The actions of the Chief of the Watch and the Engineer saved Swordfish and her crew. The boat spent many months in port making repairs but was decommissioned without ever putting to sea again.

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### News from the "After Battery"

It appears that the saga of the Miller Lite bottles will just not die. At the last Stag Social Night there were a few (and I do mean *few*) bottles of Miller Lite remaining in the coveted cooler. Some were enjoyed by the regular Lite drinkers and all was well. Then the conspiracy started. Two of our members who were obviously cohorts in crime ended up drinking the last 2 bottles, not bothering to let anyone know. Since one was an A-ganger turned traitor officer and the other was a sextant sissy the obvious happened. Neither guy would fess up and they ultimately blamed each other for their glutinous behavior and lack of care for their fellow Miller Lite in a bottle drinking shipmates.

*Anonymous*

### Summer Picnic a Success

The Sub Vets summer picnic held on June 24 was a huge success. Everyone got plenty to eat and drink. The music was great, the camaraderie better. Some even got to have cheese on their burgers even though some burgers were deemed "lightly cooked". Rick Sparger and his crew did a great job! As the photo below shows...some had more fun than others!





