

TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 13 No. 12

December 2017

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

Base Meeting:

BOD: None
 Membership: Christmas Party

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



| | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
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| Base Vice Commander | Mike Knaub | 843.795.6665 | Veterans Affairs | Ken Curtis | 843.797.1268 |
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Submarines Lose During the Month of December

| | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| USS CAPELIN (SS-289) | December 2, 1943 | 1 st War Patrol | Lost with all hands – 76 souls |
| USS SEALION (SS-195) | December 10, 1941 | Bombed in Philippine Shipyards | First submarine lost in World War II Loss of 5 souls |
| USS F1/CARP (SS-20) | December 17, 1917 | Collision with USS F3 (SS-22) | Loss of 19 souls |
| USS S4 (SS-109) | December 17, 1927 | Rammed by USCGC Paulding | Lost with all hands – 40 souls |

Four Boats and 140 Men Lost During the Month of December

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Upcoming Charleston Base Events

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| Board of Directors Meeting | Thursday, Jan 4 | 1800 | FRA Branch 268, Goose Creek |
| Base Meeting | Thursday, Jan 11 | 1800 | FRA Branch 269, Goose Creek |
| Victory House Visit | Tuesday, Jan 16 | 1000 | VFW Ladson to carpool |

Information on all these events are on the base website www.ussvicb.org/events/index.html

FROM THE BASE COMMANDER

I would like to wish all members of Charleston Base, their friends and family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

From the Editor

I was **VERY** disappointed by the turnout for the Christmas Parades. There may have been better turnout for the Ellloree Parade but the weather caused us to cancel. Parades are one way we make our presence known to the communities. It takes a lot of work to get the float to and pulled in the parades and we are well received by the public at the parades but if the base no longer wants to participate we can donate the float to someone who will support it.

I want to wish all members of the base a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

REMEMBER: H. L. Hunley—USS Housatonic Memorial Service will be coming up February 17. We **NEED** at least 14 members of Charleston Base to participate.

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

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NEWS-2017-66: ARA SAN JUAN

Submitted by: John E. Markiewicz on 11/28/2017

The following was sent to the Argentine Chapter of the ISA on this date with my approval:

On behalf of the United States Submarine Veterans (USSVI), I offer our sincere condolences on the loss of ARA San Juan. The crew and family are in our thoughts and prayers. We are grateful for their service to the Argentine Submarine Service. To our Brothers we say, "Sailor, rest your oar. We have the watch. May you rest in peace and may God bless your loved ones who remain. Thank you for your service.

"Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you peace always in every way." 2 Thess 3:16.

ARA San Juan , Now on Eternal Patrol.
Fair Winds and Following Seas Shipmate.

Bill Dixon, National Chaplain United States Submarine Veterans, USSVI.

ANALYSIS OF ACOUSTIC DETECTION OF THE LOSS OF THE ARGENTINE SUBMARINE SAN JUAN By Bruce Rule

An analytical review of all information released by the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization on the acoustic signal associated with the loss of the Argentina Submarine ARA SAN JUAN confirms the following: That acoustic signal originated near 46-10S, 59-42W at 1358Z (GMT) on 15 November 2017. It was produced by the collapse (implosion) of the ARA SAN JUAN pressure-hull at a depth of 1275-feet. Sea pressure at the collapse depth was 570 PSI. The frequency of the collapse event signal (bubble-pulse) was about 4.4 Hz. The energy released by the collapse was equal to the explosion of 12,500 pounds of TNT at the depth of 1275-feet. That energy was produced by the nearly instantaneous conversion of potential energy (sea-pressure) to kinetic energy, the motion of the intruding water-ram which entered the SAN JUAN pressure-hull at a speed of about 1800 mph.

The entire pressure-hull was completely destroyed (fragmented/compacted) in about 40 milliseconds (0.040s or 1/25th of a second), the duration of the compression phase of the collapse event which is half the minimum time required for cognitive recognition of an event.

Although the crew may have known collapse was imminent, they never knew it was occurring. They did not drown or experience pain. Death was instantaneous.

The SAN JUAN wreckage sank vertically at an estimated speed between 10 and 13 knots. Bottom impact would not have produced an acoustic event detectable at long range.

The open question is: why was no corrective action - such as blowing ballast - taken by the SAN JUAN crew before the submarine sank to collapse depth? According to Argentine Navy spokesman Gabriel Galeazzi, the Commanding Officer of the SAN JUAN reported a "failure" in the submarine's "battery system," The time of that report was 0730 on 15 November, assumed to have been GMT. Subsequently, the problem was reported to have been "fixed." The SAN JUAN intended to submerge and continued its transit north. The SAN JUAN pressure-hull collapsed at 1358 GMT on 15 November.

In the case of the loss of the US nuclear submarine SCORPION (SSN 589), hydrogen out-gassed by the main battery exploded at 18:20:44 GMT on 22 May 1968 incapacitating/killing the crew with an atmospheric over-pressure in the battery well estimated to have been 7-10 times the fatal value. The pressure-hull was not breached. This assessment was based on analysis of acoustic detections of the event and damage observed in pieces of the fragmented battery recovered from the wreckage at a depth of 11,100 feet by the US submersible TRIESTE, e.g., microscopic, spectrographic and x-ray diffraction analyses. (There was no flooding of the pressure-hull before the battery exploded.)

SCORPION lost power and sank slowly over nearly 22 minutes to collapse at a depth of 1530-feet at 18:42:34 GMT on 22 May 1968.

There is the possibility that a similar sequence of events occurred aboard the SAN JUAN. If the wreck is located and efforts are made to recover components, emphasis should be placed on the battery system.

The author of this assessment was the lead acoustic analyst at the US Office of Naval Intelligence for 42 years, analyzed acoustic detectors of the loss of the USS THRESHER (SSN 593) on 10 April 1963 and testified before that Court of Inquiry. The author expresses his appreciation to those who supported this assessment with research and calculations

NEWS-2017-67: PEARL HARBOR DAY

DECEMBER 7, 1941

Submitted by: John E. Markiewicz on 12/7/2017

LEST WE FORGET

At 0748 Hawaii Time (1248 Eastern Standard Time) on Sunday 7 December 1941, 353 attack aircraft (high-level bombers, torpedo bombers, dive bombers and escort fighters) of the Imperial Japanese Navy Fleet Air Arm staged a preemptive surprise attack on the US Navy Pacific Fleet moored at Ford Island, Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

With all this carnage, there was a hopeful sign. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Fleet (CINCPAC), Admiral Chester Nimitz observed that the Japanese, while scoring an incredible tactical victory, made 4 strategic blunders, among which was that they failed to attack and destroy the US Naval Submarine Base adjacent to the Navy Shipyard. Consequently, the only effective US Navy fighting forces available to take the fight to the Japanese on 8 December 1941 were the 3 US Carriers that were at sea, their supporting Battle Groups and 62 submarines of the US Submarine Force. From 8 December 1941 until the end of hostilities on 16 August 1945, the US Submarine Force, comprising less than 2% of the total manpower and materiel assets of the US Navy, waged the most successful undersea warfare campaign in history. US subs sank more than 30% of the Imperial Japanese Navy, and, just as importantly, virtually destroyed the Japanese merchant marine fleet, sinking 2,400 ships and sending 4.9 million tons of critical supplies, oil and other war materiel to the bottom of the sea.

The cost of this outstanding victory was high: 52 boats and one out of four submarine sailors (3,507) did not return and are still honored by the submarine community as being on Eternal Patrol -the highest loss ratio of any US military unit in WWII.

JOHN MARKIEWICZ, NATIONAL COMMANDER

From the District Commander:

Subject: National, Regional & Base Awards

Base Commanders & POCs: Pass this information on to your Base Officers and members. As soon as the new National Awards Manual is out, I plan on sending you a copy for distribution to your members, even though you may receive/retrieve it yourselves. I encourage each Base (Officers or members) to submit qualified members or Base for any of the awards available for members or bases. You may not get recognized, but you might be surprised and someone you submitted may receive an award. I know for me, that would make me feel good. I ask that you let me know who and for what you submit for, so I can support you.

Regional Awards: The National Awards Manual should be out late January. Please push your bases to submit some when it comes out. We are going to have some new Regional awards. If a

Base has 100% retention, we will give them a certificate (Eternal Patrol nor one that transfers to another base do not count against the base). For the retention award, the base must complete the 100%E by 31 December. The retention is for primary base members only. We have 3 levels of recruiting awards, a DC which requires a member recruiting 2 new members, a RD level which requires the member recruiting 4 new members, and a National Commander which requires the member recruiting 5 new members. The time period for the recruiting is 1 Jan 17 to 31 Dec 17. Also I will ask each of you to submit one base and one individual from your district for a District Commanders award. Again, the period is 1 Jan 17 to 31 Dec 17. I will print up all the certificates and mail them to you. I was going to give them out at the conference but have changed that thought and will allow each of you to present them when you visit a base. I think that will actually get more attention and possibly encourage others.

For those of you that have a BASE AWARDS Program, I commend you.

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Chaplain's Report For December

In 5 days we will observe the 75th Anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

74 years ago in 1943 on this same date, December 2nd, USS CAPELIN SS-389 was lost with all hands, 76 souls. She was on her 1st war patrol, and her exact location, date and cause of loss remains a mystery.

THE FOLLOWING SHIPMATES HAVE DEPARTED ON THEIR ETERNAL PATROL SINCE OUR 2016 CHRISTMAS PARTY

**Boatswain's Mate Third Class, Submarines, Andrew Edward Palenchar,
US Navy World War II Submarine Veteran
Departed on Eternal Patrol – February 18, 2017**

**Master Chief Electronics Technician, Submarines, Phillip E. Euper
United States Navy Retired
Shipmate Departed on Patrol – April 2, 2017**

**Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines, Donald M. 'Don' Larsen,
United States Navy Retired
Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol August 1, 2017**

**Master Chief Machinist Mate, Submarines, Joseph P. 'Joe' LaRose,
United States Navy Retired
Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol September 16, 2017**

**Master Chief Electricians Mate, Submarines, James B. 'Jim' Lowman,
United States Navy Retired
Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol October 3, 2017**

**Chief Quartermaster, Submarines, William T. 'Buck' Owens
United States Navy Retired
Shipmate Departed on Eternal Patrol December 2, 2017**

Ramp Build For Terry Trump
John "Nick" Nichols

On Thursday, Nov. 16th, our shipmate Terry Trump decided to clean his chimney in preparation for winter. Although he had done this every year, this year things went awry. As he was climbing his ladder, it began sliding and he ended up with two broken ankles. He is home and healing well but he can't use his right foot/leg for 4 weeks and can't use the left right foot/leg for at least 4 months. That's a long time to have to use a wheelchair. His son, Danny, asked several of the SUBVETS for help in building a ramp. On 25, 27 and 28 November, a team of shipmates got together to build the ramp. The team consisted of Charlie Hudson, Marty Sessler, Carl Chinn, Mike Emerson, Rick Sparger, Nick Nichols, Rick Wise, and Ed Stank. Terry is very pleased with his ramp and eager to try it out. These pictures are just a few from that ramp build.





A Visit to Willie Jones

- In November base members Jerry Stout and Gerald Starr visited Willie Jones at his home in St. Stephens, SC. Since then Willie has been admitted to the VA Hospital in Charleston. He has suffered a significant infection He has been given the option of staying at the VA or going home with home health care (hospice.) As of now he is still at the VA.

- Visitors are very welcome but if you plan on going there you should call first to ensure he has not gone home yet. VA Phone number to check on patients is 843-577-5011 Ext. 0 He is in 3B North Bed 1.



Final Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Visit for 2017

Thank you to all our Veterans who have served our country and protected our freedom. And a special thank you to members of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. Charleston Base - John Kennedy, Mike Emerson, Ken Hutchinson, Ed Stank and John Flynn - who recently visited McLeod Children's Hospital to deliver a handmade rocking horse. This group of submarine veterans generously donated time and service to craft this chair, which will greatly benefit the patients of McLeod Children's Hospital.



THE DBF PIN

by Patrick Meagher TMC(SS) USN RET.

Probably none of today's submariners know the origin or the significance of the Diesel Boats Forever (DBF) pin.

Most former Diesel boat sailors are also ignorant of its origins even though it is worn with pride on many SubVets vests.

The last diesel attack boat built for the US Navy was commissioned in October 1959. At that time there were five classes of nuke boats along with two "one off" designs in various stages of construction and pre commissioning trials along with USS Nautilus SSN-571, and the four Skate class boats in operational status. The diesel boat force made up predominantly of modernized fleet boats (Fleet Snorkels, Guppy 1A's, Guppy 2's, Guppy 2A's, Radar picket, Regulus missile, (SSK 246 CROAKER) troop carrier, and hunter-killer conversions), six Tang's plus Darter, Growler, Greyback, the two Salmon's and the three "B" girls had become the source of pre-commissioning crews for the nuke boats.

There was a steady stream of 9901's passing through the diesel boat force, spending seven months onboard learning the boat and earning their dolphins before departing for nuke school. A smaller number of career enlisted electricians, machinist mates, enginemen, and electronic technicians also volunteered for the nuke program. Admiral Hyman Rickover personally interviewed all officers applying for the nuclear power program as well as many of the senior enlisted submariners. Tales of Rickover's interviews consistently reported on his efforts to intimidate and discredit the accomplishments of the officer interviewee's, alienating many who interviewed with him. Disturbing reports from senior enlisted veterans of the nuke boat navy in favorite submarine "watering holes" ashore indicated

Rickover's new operating philosophy was at work in the engineering spaces. "Don't trust enlisted engineers." Nuke trained officers consistently checked, double checked, and triple checked the work and system lineups of the enlisted engineers, a major change to the long standing professional relationship between enlisted and officer submariners. In addition, "front-enders" the non-nukes, were reporting excessive wardroom focus on the engineering plant at the expense of the historic mission of the submarine. They were also describing the "no-touch" rule from the reactor compartment aft. If you were not a nuke, you couldn't touch any part of the engineering plant-period. You could learn it in theory, identify major components, valves and panels, but that was it. Gone was the traditional submarine qualification program that demanded standing all watches under instruction as well as rigging all compartments for all evolutions.

Lost on most submariners was the reason Rickover imposed the new operational Philosophy which is best summarized by Gary E. Weir.

"The potential for major disaster in the nuclear propulsion program caused him (Rickover) to elevate professional competence, discipline, and responsibility to the rank of absolute virtues required of every naval and private participant. Unfortunately for a great many people, Rickover's personal and professional manner made the lesson difficult to learn."

By early 1967 total nuclear submarine crews numbered in excess of one hundred counting blue and gold SSBN crews with sixty four nuke boats (forty one of which were SSBN's) in commission. The thirty seven Sturgeon class nuke boats would start to commission with the lead ship in March of that year. The Diesel boat fleet in contrast numbered slightly over one hundred in commission with most of the modernized fleet type boats nearing the end of their useful lives. Former SSR's, SSK's, and Fleet Snorkels would start to decommission within eighteen months to be followed shortly by the guppy conversions. More and more Rickover trained officers were appearing on squadron and force staffs bringing with them Rickover's operational philosophy. It was apparent to all that the diesel boat navy were dinosaurs soon to be extinct along with their officer community who were either unwilling to become nukes or passed over by Rickover as unfit to become nuke boat engineers in order to ascend to command of a nuke boat. Diesel boats were still conducting most of the non-deterrent submarine operations including "special missions." Nuke attack boats were "wowing" many with their performance and potential along with occasional contributions such as "a mission of great value to the government of the United States of America." The nukes were not without their teething problems however. It was not uncommon for a nuke boat to be unable to get underway as scheduled due to an "engineering problem." A refueling every three to four years also required a shipyard stay of from eighteen months to two years again reducing the number of nuke boats available for operations. So it was left to the diesel boats to pick up the slack.

'Dex' Armstrong (5) describes the thinking of the enlisted smokeboat sailor during these years.

"We were it. One crew. Nobody took over our boats when we came in. When the old girl went to sea, we were there. The same names, same faces, same officers forward. If someone failed to maintain a system or piece of equipment, the Chief of the Boat knew precisely what butt to put his boot into when ass-kicking time rolled around.

Those were great days. Didn't know it then...that came later...much later. We knew nuclear boats represented progress but we didn't think much about it...We could see the he future of submarining floating in the after nest. The big, fat, black monsters getting all the attention. High speed, deep-diving ugliness rapidly sending our smokeboat fleet up the river to the scrapyard. To us nuke boats were like elephants...They were big as hell, uglier than sin and none of us had any idea what went on inside of the damn things. They were just there."

This brings us to the DBF pin. In 1969 USS Barbel SS-580, the lead ship of the last class of diesel boats built for the US Navy was deployed to WesPac. While on a “special mission” in early 1970 the control room gang got into one of those nuke boat vs. diesel boat discussions.

It was pointed out during the discussion that on a number of occasions a diesel boat would have to get underway for a “broke-down” nuke boat again proving the superiority of smokeboats over unreliable nuke boats. Someone suggested there ought to be a pin for smokeboat sailors, something like the new Polaris Deterrent Patrol Pin for “boomer” sailors, for the times you had to take a nuke boat commitment because they were broke- down. A contest was commissioned to design the pin. ETR3(SS) Leon Figurido’s winning design was a broadside view of a guppy boat with SS superimposed on the North Atlantic sail. There were two bare breasted mermaids, one on the bow and one on the stern facing in with arms extended. Completing the design was a ribbon underneath the boat with holes for stars, and centered on the ribbon the letters “DBF”. ETR3(SS) Figurido received appropriate recognition for his winning design along with a prize of some sort, now long forgotten. Upon Barbel’s return to Yokosuka the design of the DBF pin was hand carried to a local manufacturer of nautical gewgaws where a batch were cast and brought back to the ship and sold at cost to Barbel crewmembers that began to wear them ashore. As the DBF pin grew in popularity within the diesel boat community it continued to be cast and sold in shops around Yokosuka eventually making its way to Pearl Harbor, San Diego, and on to the east coast. Most “smokeboat” sailors assumed a gold star would be placed in the ribbon for each diesel boat served on. However, it was confirmed to the author years later by Capt. John Renard, USN RET. Skipper of Barbel at that time, a star was to be placed on the ribbon for each time a diesel boat you served on had to get underway for a broke-down nuke.

The DBF pin continued to gain in popularity among current and former smokeboat sailors who wore them with pride as either a pin or on a belt buckle, all the while collecting the ire of the senior nuke officer community. As the wholesale decommissioning of the fleet type boats occurred during the early 70’s scores of career electricians and enginemen were forced to “surface” as there was no room for them on Rickover’s boats. Their designation was changed by BUPERS from “SS” to “SQ” indicating they were excess to submarine force manning requirements although they were still allowed to wear their dolphins. Soon they too would be gone along with their collective histories. In 1973 Rickover issued an edict that Midshipmen would no longer go on summer cruises on diesel boats.

Rumor had it that too many were showing up at his interviews with “bad attitudes” about nuke boats picked up on their summer cruise on the smokeboats. It was reported in favorite submarine hangouts ashore that on more than one occasion nuke boat skippers banned the wearing of DBF pins by their crew members, typically “front enders” the non-nukes, implying that to do so would indicate disloyalty to the nuke submarine force. In the mid 70’s the DBF pin went into the display of submarine insignia maintained at the Pacific Submarine Museum then located at the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor. The caption alluded to an “unofficial” insignia worn by a disappearing breed of submariner nostalgic for the days of diesel boats.

In July 1975 the last guppy submarine in US service, USS Tiru SS-416, decommissioned in Charleston SC. A handful of the guppies sailed on in foreign service into the late 90’s with two, ex-USS Cutlass SS-478, and ex-USS Tusk SS-426 continuing to serve today in the Republic of China (Taiwan) navy as training boats. The last diesel attack boats in US service were USS Darter SS-576, USS Barbel SS-580, USS Blueback SS-581, and USS Bonefish SS-582. They decommissioned between 1988 and 1990. Two Tang class boats, ex-USS Tang SS-563, and ex-USS Gudgeon SS-567, recently decommissioned in the Turkish Navy with ex-Gudgeon slated to be Turkey’s museum submarine. The Turkish skipper of ex-Tang when asked about the difference between the German designed and built replacement boats for their retiring ex-US boats is reported to have said, “American submarines are built for war, German submarines are built for export.”

It’s ironic that 15 years after decommissioning of USS Blueback SS-581 at the Submarine Base in San Diego, a Swedish Navy Type A-19 Gotland Class Air Independent Diesel Boat is conducting weekly ops there to “familiarize” US Navy ASW forces with the operating characteristics of advanced non-nuclear submarines. When the Swedish crew comes ashore on Friday after a week at sea they still look and smell like the smokeboat sailors of old. Our current crop of submariners avoids them.

The DBF pin, originally designed by a USS Barbel SS-580 crewmember as an unofficial insignia to recognize the diesel boats ability to fill-in on very short notice for broke-down nuke boats, now resides with pride on the blue vests of Submarine Veterans who qualified and served on smokeboats. Today the DBF pin is the unique symbol of the professionalism, discipline, and camaraderie of American smokeboat sailors who sailed on, unloved, unwashed, and underpaid as their era was coming to a close. DBF!

AN "UNKNOWN SAILOR" NO MORE

On December 7, 1941, a Japanese bomb went off in the forward ammunition magazine of the USS Arizona, setting off a cataclysmic explosion. More than 1,100 Marines and sailors were killed.

Donald Stratton and Lauren Bruner survived the inferno, and then beat the actuarial tables to live well into their nineties. They came to Washington to win recognition for the sailor who saved them that day.

"We got out on the deck, on the hot steel deck, and he threw us a heaving line," said Stratton.

The sailor was on the repair ship USS Vestal tied up next to the Arizona. Stratton, Bruner and four other men were trapped on that platform, badly burned and about to be roasted alive.

"After about three or four throws, he finally got the line over to us," Stratton recalled. "We pulled it across and tied it off on the Arizona, and we went hand-over-hand across the line to the Vestal, about 70 or 80 feet. He was probably the only guy that could have got that line to us."

For years, neither man knew who that sailor was. But now they do. He was a 26-year-old Boatswain's Mate named Joe George.

Before he died, George did an interview with University of North Texas for an oral history of the "day of infamy." It is the only record that exists of him telling his own story.

"One of these books is written about Pearl Harbor that the unknown sailor on the Vestal throwing a line over to the Arizona sailors. I'm that unknown sailor that whoever wrote the book didn't find," he said.

When Martin characterized George's description of his role as understated, George's daughter, Joe Ann Taylor, replied, "Yep, well, that's kind of probably how he was about it."

Taylor had never heard her father tell that story, until she heard the recording: "That was so emotional. My father had been dead 19 years, and I hadn't heard his voice in 19 years, and I sat out there in the garage in the car, and I just cried and listened to him talk."

"They were surrounded by fire on the Arizona. They were stranded over on the ship and they were trying to get off."

Joe George was the kind of sailor you read about in books. "My father had, I'd say, a wild streak in him; he got himself in trouble a few times," Taylor laughed.

An amateur heavyweight boxer who fought in Friday night smokers, he would take his winnings, go drinking, and usually end up in another fight -- which is what happened on the Friday night before the Pearl Harbor attack.

"He was brought back by the MPs to the ship and, you know, ordered to stay on the ship," Taylor said. "That's why he was there on that Sunday morning. I always say, because that's where God meant him to be and put him there."

But God apparently didn't want George to receive a medal for what he did that day. When his daughter wrote the Navy, nothing happened.

Martin asked, "Have you been surprised by how hard it's been?"

"I'll be honest, it can be overwhelming and depressing sometimes, because his story is real, and so it is hard," she replied.

George had already been commended for his actions by Captain Cassin Young, the commanding officer of the Vestal, a fact Taylor learned when she found his log book, containing his entire career, in a drawer at her mother's house. "You can look through there and see exactly the ships he's been on, where he was stationed," she said.

Including the USS Vestal, Pearl Harbor, with this notation: "Aided men from the USS Arizona which was afire in getting over to the Vestal and assisted in the ship getting clear of the Arizona."

But for her father to receive a medal, Navy regulations required two sworn affidavits from eyewitnesses. There are only five survivors of the Arizona still alive. Two of them, Stratton and Bruner, had been saved by George.

"What are the odds of that?" Taylor said. "It was just incredible. Well, which makes you think his story was meant to be told."

The eyewitness reports read, in part, "Had it not been for Joseph George and his heroism, we would have all perished in the fire that was engulfing the Arizona."

Documents in hand, Joe Ann Taylor, Lauren Bruner and Donald Stratton took their case not just to the Senate, but to the Pentagon, where they met with Secretary of Defense Mattis, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, and the Chief of Naval Operations -- and finally, to the White House and the Commander-in-Chief.

"We will always honor and remember a man whose courage knew no limits," said President Trump.

Martin said, "That doesn't happen very often."

Taylor said, "I know. It was a gift from God. It was a blessing. It was wonderful."

"After that visit to Washington, your father was no longer the unknown sailor."

"For me, personally, and my family, that's the most wonderful thing that has occurred through all this -- that now, he's not the unknown sailor; he's known as the man who did what he did. And I'm eternally grateful for that."

"And history knows."

"And history. That's the best part of it."

And history will show that on this 76th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, Boatswain's Mate Second Class Joseph L. George received the Bronze Star with a "V" for valor for his actions on December 7, 1941.

COMMUNITY WELCOMES FISHER HOUSE TO CHARLESTON

Tuesday, December 12, 2017

By Lanelle W. Strawder, MA, Public Affairs Specialist

Last Thursday, Veterans, community members and Charleston VA Medical Center employees and volunteers gathered at 150 Wentworth Street for the grand opening of the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Fisher House. The newly opened 16-suite home served as a stunning backdrop for nearly 300 guests who braved the December winds and rains to welcome South Carolina's first Fisher House.

The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center Fisher House, which expects its first guests in early January, will serve as a no-cost "home away from home" for the families of Veterans and military members receiving care at Charleston VA.

Medal of Honor recipient Major General James E. Livingston, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.), served as the emcee for the grand opening ceremony. The general's involvement in the day's event was a special honor in that he was a willing participant in a lunch five years ago when the Fisher House was nothing more than an idea. During a lunch at downtown eatery Hominy Grill, Livingston, Trux and Durbin Emerson, and Charleston VA Public Affairs Officer Tonya Lobbstaal sat down to discuss the need for a place where Veterans' family members could stay while their loved ones received care.

"We talked about the dream of having a Fisher House to meet those needs, and we talked about what looked like a mountain of hurdles standing in the way," Livingston said as he recounted that memorable meeting. "But today, the hurdles have been cleared and the mountain has been conquered and we have a beautiful home-away-from-home that offers the finest accommodations for Veteran families."

The new home features a fully appointed kitchen, pristine laundry facilities, and comfortable living and dining spaces where families can relax and spend time together. When designing the impressive home, architect Carl Zarrello took care to honor the beautiful architectural landscape of Charleston.

"The Veterans, and their families and caregivers, who will call this place home, will benefit from the best our VA has to offer." *Scott R. Isaacks, Director & CEO of Charleston VA Medical Center*

Outfitted with 9-foot ceilings, Charleston-inspired artwork and plantation shutters throughout, the characteristically Southern three-story home is keenly appointed with the décor of a five-star hotel. Yet no hotel can offer the comfort and comradery that Charleston Fisher House guests will enjoy surrounded by fellow Veteran families and dedicated VA staff and volunteers who will be there to every step of the way as they attend to their Veterans' needs.

"The Veterans, and their families and caregivers, who will call this place home, will benefit from the best our VA has to offer," said Charleston VA Director Scott Isaacks. "Not just in the sense of health care services – but also in the compassion and true devotion embodied in the employees who will staff the Charleston Fisher House."

The Fisher House will be managed by former Voluntary Service Program Manager and Air Force Veteran Vicki Johnson. For years, Johnson has worked extensively throughout the Charleston VA catchment area, donating her time and talents to championing Veterans' issues. Director Isaacks describes her as "as fierce and friendly as they come" and that no one else more suited to the job. Long-time Charleston VA employee and Navy Veteran Percy Jones will join Johnson as the lead housekeeper at the new home. Guests are sure to be greeted with Jones' infectious smile and dedication to serving his fellow Veterans.

Ceremony guests were invited to tour the new "home away from home" for Veterans' families following the ceremony. The Ralph H. Johnson VAMC Fisher House is the [Fisher House Foundation's](#) 73rd home. One of the few VA Fisher Houses not situated on a VA property, the nation's newest Fisher House is conveniently located on the Charleston peninsula just one mile from the Ralph H. Johnson Medical Center.

Finding a suitable piece of land on which to build the new home was no easy feat, but Kiawah Island residents and Fisher House Charleston co-founders Trux and Durbin Emerson were up for the challenge. Together the couple spearheaded a community fundraising effort to raise \$4 million to purchase the land upon which the Charleston Fisher House would eventually stand. During their address at the ceremony, the Emersons were honored to have been able to contribute to Charleston's rich history of honoring Veterans.

Ceremony guests were able to hear just how much a Fisher House benefited U.S. Air Force Veteran Heather Carter and her family. Following a leg amputation in 2015, Carter and her family spent 18 months in total at the Bethesda Fisher House as endured several several surgeries. Carter credits the Fisher House and the staff and families she met during her stay with playing a significant role in her recovery. The Ralph H. Johnson VA Fisher House will offer the same solace and comfort to Veteran families for years to come.

VA Suspends Applications for New ID Cards

Military.com 5 Dec 2017 By Amy Bushatz

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) has suspended applications for its new veteran identification card program due to a large number of applicants, according to [a notice on its website](#).

The new, free ID card was ordered by Congress in 2015 as a way to give veterans proof of service at businesses without carrying a copy of their DD-214 forms. The VA a week ago rolled out the online application for the card for all honorably discharged veterans, but the system appeared to immediately face technical problems.

Tests by at least two Military.com reporters accessing the site with their own VA logins and military service credentials encountered repeated errors. One was able to successfully complete the process despite multiple rejections and system timeouts.

Currently, however, veterans who look to apply for the card are instead told they need to come back later.

"Thank you for your interest in the Veteran Identification Card! Currently, we are experiencing a high volume of traffic. We apologize, and want you to know we're working to fix the problem," the notice states. "In the meantime, please enter your email address and we'll send an update when the Veteran Identification Card application is back online."

Officials with the VA did not respond to requests for information on when the application will be reopened, how many users successfully applied for the ID card before applications were suspended, or how many users started but did not complete the application process.

"We are aware some veterans have experienced issues with the application process, but leaders of VA's Office of Information and Technology are actively engaged in fixing them," Curtis Cashour, the agency's press secretary, said in a statement.

"Still, many Veterans have successfully registered for the card since the program was announced, and we are excited finally to begin providing this resource to Veterans, fulfilling a promise that was made to them more than two years ago under the previous administration," he added.

To apply for a card, users had to log in to the VA website using either a DS login or the ID.me system, provide a variety of personal information, and upload a copy of a government-issued ID. They also needed to provide a shoulders-up photo to be displayed on the ID card. VA officials said Nov. 29 that users could expect to receive their new ID cards within 60 days of application.

Some veterans, such as those who receive health benefits from the VA and military retirees, already have IDs that can provide proof of service. The new IDs will not qualify as official government-issued identification for air travel or other uses. The ID card program is voluntary.

-- Amy Bushatz can be reached at amy.bushatz@military.com.

Lost WWII Sub Discovered Off Oahu

(HONOLULU START-ADVERTISER 14 DEC 17) ... William Cole

A wreck-hunting organization announced that its search team has located the sunken World War II submarine USS S-28 in 8,700 feet of water off Oahu.

STEP Ventures said on its website that the S-28, which was lost with 49 crew during training on July 4, 1944, is "considered to be one of the most important lost ships in the central Pacific."

"When the bombs fell on Dec. 7, she was being overhauled at Mare Island Naval Shipyard outside of San Francisco, Calif.," the organization said. "She was one of several S-boats that were put into service in World War II and was initially sent to Alaska to defend the Aleutians against a possible Japanese invasion."

STEP, which stands for Search for Those on Eternal Patrol, is made up of historians and explorers with a mission of discovering and documenting submerged maritime history. The organization said the expedition used

autonomous underwater vehicles and a remotely operated vehicle to map and film the wreck, and that data will be shared with the Navy to help determine the cause of the loss.

The S-28's was commissioned after World War I on Dec. 13, 1923, according to the organization.

The Naval History and Heritage Command said on its website that the sub got underway from Pearl Harbor on July 3, 1944, to conduct a week's worth of operations. The vessel made two practice torpedo approaches on the Coast Guard cutter Reliance.

A day later while off the Waianae Coast the S-28 again carried out sonar exercises and made another practice approach on Reliance.

At 5:30 p.m. S-28 dove while about four miles from Reliance, according to the Navy. The Coast Guard cutter made sound contact with the sub, but at 6:20 p.m. at a distance of 4,700 yards, Reliance permanently lost sound contact with S-28.

"At no time during the approach or the ensuing sound search were distress signals from S-28 seen or heard, nor was any sound heard which indicated an explosion in S-28," the Naval History and Heritage Command said.

The Court of Inquiry determined the S-28 sank shortly after 6:20 p.m. Because of the depth, salvage operations were not possible, the Navy said.

The court said the submarine lost depth control "from either a material casualty or an operating error of personnel, or both, and that depth control was never regained. The exact cause of the loss of S-28 cannot be determined."

The "Lost 52 Project," dedicated to the legacy of lost World War II submariners, also announced the discovery, which it said was made on Sept. 20.

"Based on preliminary video and other documentation," the website said, "the team currently speculates that the sub suffered a hull failure that resulted in the eventual separation of the bow, causing a near instant loss."

A release on the discovery said the expedition team was led by explorer Tim Taylor, president of Tiburon Subsea, and is Taylor's third U.S. World War II submarine discovery. The team was supported by STEP Ventures, the release said.

<http://www.staradvertiser.com/2017/12/14/breaking-news/lost-wwii-sub-discovered-off-oahu/>

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