

Arizona Sub Vets Perch Base



Midwatch

March 2001
Volume 7 - Issue 3

Arizona Sub Vets, Perch Base Officers

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March Eternal Patrol Days

USS PERCH (SS176)	March 3, 1942	11 men lost (6 as POW's)
USS GRAMPUS (SS207)	March 5, 1943	71 men lost
H1 (SEAWOLF) (SS28)	March 12, 1920	4 men lost
USS TRETON (SS201)	March 15, 1943	74 men lost
USS KETE (SS369)	March 20, 1945	87 men lost
F4 (SS23)	March 25, 1915	21 men lost
USS TULLIBEE (SS284)	March 26, 1944	79 men lost
USS TRIGGER (SS237)	March 26, 1945	80 men lost

Let's We Forget Those Still On Patrol

**March's Meeting Will Be Held On The 10th The
American Legion Post #29 In Glendale**

From the Wardroom:



I will not be running for any office this year due to not being up to par from my past illness. I will still be helping out and working to keep this base growing. Let's all work together for this endeavor. I would still like to see us finding a piece of land for our meeting place and a museum for the school kids. For the members who have not paid their dues please send them in. We need your help. Also, all calendar money is due now. We do not have any calendars left. Thank you for all your support.

Don Wannamaker
Base Commander

Elections – Nominations – Vote:

As acting Base Commander of USSVI Arizona Perch Base, and in accordance with By Laws, Article VIII, Section 2, I am asking for nominations for the offices of Base Commander and Vice Commander. Please inform **Don Wannamaker** of your choices through e-mail or by letter. The elections will be held at the business meeting immediately following the regular meeting of March 10th. Results of this election will be published in April's edition.

Chaplains Corner:

No Report from the Chaplain this month.

Minutes from February Meeting:

No Report from the Secretary this month.

SS Lane Victory Ship Cruise:

The SS Lane Victory cruise has been cancelled for this year. Perhaps we will try again next year.



Perch Base Booster Club for 2001:

Perch Base gives a hardy BZ's, to the following members and affiliates, for their "above and beyond" financial assistance: Ben Acosta, Jerry N. Allston, Kenneth R. Anderson, Jerry F. Becker, Kenneth E. Becker, Joseph A. Bernard, Harold J. Bidigare, Wayne A. Braastad, Michael J. Breitner, Thomas P. Burke, Greg A. Camron, James F. Clewett, Roger J. Cousin, Stephen F. Day, Warner H Doyle Jr., Jeff Duncan, Ron "Doug" Eddy, Harry Ellis, Thomas E. Fooshee, Ray "Lee" Graybeal, Billy A. Grieves, Warren A. Grossetta, David R. Harnish, William L. Hatcher, J Tom Hellem, Glenn Herold, Lester R. Hillman, Stephen F. Hough, Ron Kloch, Larry L. Krieger, Douglas M. La Rock, Robert A. Lancendorfer, Robert E. May, Dennis Mc Comb, Roger M Miller, John H. Michaud, Robert E. Mitchell, Joseph R. Mullins, Jim A. Nelson. James W. Newman Sr., Thomas B. Patterson, Raymond A. Perron, Royce E Pettit, Phil Philipps, W Scott Prothero, Larry M. Rankin, Frank W. Rumbaugh, Ramon Samson, Douglas F. Schultz, Tyler C. Smith, Robert G. Sothern, Adrain M. Stuke, Donald Wannamaker, Kenny Wayne, George Woods, Donald J Whitehead, Jerry D. Yowell.

A New Submariner Gets Dad's Dolphins:

When my son went into the Navy, almost two years ago and said he was going subs, I can't tell you how happy I was. I told him, here was the deal; when he qualified, where ever he was, I would be there to pin my dolphins on him. Well, on Jan. 4th of this year, my wife Nancy and I were given the opportunity to ride the fast attack, **USS SALT LAKE CITY (SSN716)** out of San Diego. During this time, the skipper, CDR. Hoelt allowed me the opportunity to pin my dolphins on my son, Brent Nelson, MMFN (SS). That was one great time in both of our lives that we will not soon forget.



Perch Base Calendar of Events For 2001 (Mark Your Calendars):

I have talked to the Maricopa Live Steamers and they would like to host our May 12th meeting at their facilities located at 43rd Ave. and Pinnacle Peak Rd. They have several picnic tables and 8' folding tables with chairs that we can use. You members let me know what you think. It may be possible to get a steak and baked potato at less than three bucks. Give **Dave Harnish** a call and let him know. His number on cover.

The Christmas/ Hanukkah party will be held on the 8th of December, at Luke AFB. This is a set date.

Arizona Perch Base Raffle:

Glen Herold has donated a *Boots Reynolds* print for the base to auction. The value of the print is \$100.00. Raffle tickets are available at \$1.00 a piece or 6 for \$5.00. The article will run in the *Midwatch* for March, and April with the drawing to be held at the May meeting. Members can send the money in the form of checks made payable to Perch Base, to **Dave Harnish**, (see front cover) or give me cash at the meetings and I will put their name on the ticket for them. **Dave** will also take this to the WWII Sub Vet meetings and try to sell tickets there. The print is 17 by 22 inches and unframed so an individual could get what ever kind of framing that would suit them.

DUES . . . DUES . . . DUES:

The re-enlistment's for the New Year have passed the 100 mark. Last year we finished the year at 114. Many of the life members in USSVI National have not sent their base dues. You guys, who have not paid your year 2001 dues as yet, they are now overdue. Remember, the base by-laws say, all names are dropped from the rosters, after April 1st.

Please send your check of \$20.00 (\$10 Base / \$10 Nat'l's) to Treasurer, **Bob May**, (see front cover). Thank You.

Small Stores:

Our Storekeeper, **Dave Harnish**, has a

comprehensive array of USSVI Small Stores, consisting of hats, shirts, sweat shirts, belt buckles, beer mugs, cocktail glasses, coffee mugs, and a slew of other memorabilia. Give him a call or better yet, come to a meeting and see everything first hand! (Phone number on front cover.)

Lost Boats and Crews for March:

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.

USS F-4 (SS 23) March 25, 1915 - 21 Men Lost
Keel laid down by Seattle Construction & Drydock Co.,
Seattle, WA, August 21, 1909;

Launched: January 6, 1912; Sponsored by Mrs.
M.F. Backus; Commissioned: May 3, 1913 with Lt
Kirkwood H. Donavin in command; Lost March 25, 1915
after foundering off Honolulu, Hawaii. **USS F-4 (SS23)**
was christened **USS SKATE** and was renamed **USS F-4**
on 17 November 1911. Joining the 1st Submarine
Group, Pacific Torpedo Flotilla, **USS F-4** participated in
the development operations of that group along the west
coast.

During submarine maneuvers off Honolulu on
25 March 1915 she sank in 51 fathoms of water. 1 1/2
miles from the harbor. Despite valorous efforts of naval
authorities at Honolulu to locate the missing boat and
save her crew, all 21 perished. A diving and engineering
precedent was established with the Navy's raising of
the submarine on 29 August 1915. Courage and tenacity
marked the efforts of divers who descended to attach
cables to tow the boat into shallow water. Ingenuity and
engineering skill characterized the direction of Naval
Constructor J.A. Furer, Rear Admiral C.B.T. Moore, and
Lt C. Smith who accomplished the feat with the aid of
specially devised and constructed pontoons. The
investigating board theorized that corrosion of the lead
lining of the battery tank had permitted seepage of sea
water into the battery compartment causing the
commanding officer to lose control of a submerged run.
USS F-4 was struck from the Navy List on 31 August
1915.

USS H-1 (SS28) ex **SEAWOLF** Launched May 6, 1913
Lost March 20, 1920. 4 men lost

The new submarine **USS H-1 (SS28)** was
attached to the 2nd Torpedo Flotilla, Pacific Fleet, and
operated along the West Coast out of the submarine
base at San Pedro, CA. On various exercises and patrols
she traveled the coast from Los Angeles to lower British
Columbia, often in company with **USS H-2 (SS29)** and
sometimes **USS H-3 (SS30)**.

Sailing from San Pedro on 17 October 1917, she
reached New London 22 days later via Acapulco, Balboa,
Key West, Charleston, and Philadelphia. For the
remainder of WWI, she was based there and patrolled
Long Island Sound, frequently with officer students from
the submarine school on board.

USS H-1 and **USS H-2** sailed for San Pedro on 6
January 1920, transiting the Panama Canal on 20
February via Norfolk, Key West, and Havana. On 12
March 1920, as **USS H-1** made her way up the coast.
The submarine suffered an onboard fire and was
intentionally grounded off Santa Margarita Island, CA.
Four men, including the Commanding Officer, were killed
as they tried to reach shore. **USS VESTAL**, a repair ship,
pulled **USS H-1** off the rocks in the morning of 24 March,
only to have her sink 45 minutes later in some 50 feet
of water. Salvage was abandoned.

Her name was struck from the Navy List 12 April
1920, and her hulk was sold for salvage scrap on 1 June
of that year. Never salvaged, her hulk was rediscovered
in 1992.

USS PERCH (SS176) March 3, 1942 - 6 Men Died as
Japanese POW's.

Having been serviced at Port Darwin, Australia,
USS PERCH under the command of LCDR D. A. Hurt,
departed on February 3, 1942 for her second patrol in
the Java Sea. At this time the Japanese campaign to
secure the Netherland's East Indies was at its height.
The Philippines had been effectively neutralized by
them, and their fall was only a matter of time. The
Japanese were forcing their way down the Strait of
Makassar, and an invasion of Borneo or Java was
imminent. From 8 to 23 February **USS PERCH** was sent
several reports concerning enemy concentrations near
her area, and was directed to patrol or perform
reconnaissance in various positions near the islands of
the Java Sea. On February 25 she was directed to go
through Salajar Strait and patrol along the 100 fathom
curve northeast of the Kangean Islands as part of the
force then attempting to defend Java. On February 25
she reported two previous attacks with negative results,
and stated that she had received a shell hit in her conning
tower, which, damaging the antenna trunk, made
transmissions uncertain, but she could however receive.
On February 27, she sent a contact report on two cruisers
and three destroyers. No further reports were received
from her and she failed to arrive in Fremantle where
she had been ordered by dispatch.

The following account of what happened to **USS
PERCH** is taken from a statement made by her surviving
Commanding Officer, who was repatriated at the end of
hostilities.

The last station assignment was given **USS
PERCH** on February 28, 1942, in the Java Sea. A large
enemy convoy had been cruising about for several days,
awaiting to land on Java. Now that the objective had been
discovered the submarines were to disregard their areas
and attack at the landing point. Shortly after surfacing
on the night of March 1, **USS PERCH** sighted two
destroyers, and dove. After the destroyers had passed
well clear, they turned about and came back; one near
USS PERCH. The CO prepared to attack with torpedoes,
but at 800 to 1,000 yards the destroyer turned straight
toward him. The Commanding Officer ordered 180 feet.
At 90 to 100 feet, the destroyer passed over and dropped
a string of depth charges. Shortly thereafter **USS PERCH**
hit bottom at 147 feet. During the depth charge attacks
which followed, the ship lost power on her port screw,
but she managed to pull clear of the bottom and surface
when depth charging had ceased.

Shortly before dawn two Japanese destroyers

again were sighted, and once more **USS PERCH** went to the bottom, this time at 200 feet. Efforts to move from the bottom were unsuccessful, and the attackers continued depth charging until after daylight. At dusk on March 2, **USS PERCH** again surfaced after an hour of effort. There was no enemy in sight.

The reduction gears were in bad shape. There were serious electrical grounds, broken battery jars, and the engine room hatch leaked badly, so arrangements were made to scuttle if necessary. On trying to dive before sunrise on March 3, 1942, it was found that due to the severe depth charge attacks she had been through, water poured in from conning tower, engine room hatches, and there were three-inch circulating water line leaks in the hull. Nothing the crew did seemed to help the leakage and while further attempts were being made to repair the ship, three enemy destroyers came in sight and opened fire. The submarine's gun was inoperative and torpedoes could not be fired. Enemy depth charges had caused three of **USS PERCH's** torpedoes to run in their tubes. The heat, exhaust gases, and mounting nervous tension aggravated the already extremely difficult conditions. The decision was made to abandon and scuttle her. The entire crew got into the water safely, and all were picked up by Japanese ships.

Personnel of **USS PERCH** were held for a few days on a Dutch Hospital Ship and transferred on March 10 1942 to a prison camp at Makkasser Clebes, Dutch West Indies until found by Brigadier General Barnes on Sept. 13, 1945. Fifty-three of their crewmembers were handed over to the United States at the end of the war.

USS PERCH was credited with sinking a 5,000-ton enemy freighter on her first patrol, conducted west of the Philippines.

USS GRAMPUS (SS207) March 5, 1943 - 71 Men Lost

After starting on the 9th and being ordered to return on the 10th, **USS GRAMPUS** (LCDR. J. R. Craig) departed Brisbane on 11 February to make her sixth patrol in the Solomon's area. After leaving her exercise target on 12 February 1943, she was never heard from again. She was directed, during the period from 14 February to 20 February, to patrol successively in the area west of Shortland and south of latitude 6-30 'S, in essence the entire Buka-Shortland-Rabaul Sea area. She was instructed to leave the southern area to **USS TRITON (SS201)**, which subsequently was lost in this general vicinity.

On 20 February, **USS GRAMPUS** was ordered to patrol north of 4-30 'S, until dawn on 21 February, and then to patrol east of Buka and Bougainville. On 2 March she was told to round Cape Henpan, proceed down the west coast of Bougainville, south of Treasury Island, north of Vella Lavella, and into Vella Gulf on the afternoon of 5 March. She was to sink any enemy ship trying to pass westward through Blackett Strait. **USS GRAYBACK (SS208)** was teamed with **USS GRAMPUS** in the above operation, and each was informed of the other's assignment.

On the evening of 5 March, **USS GRAYBACK** and **USS GRAMPUS** were warned that two destroyers were proceeding from Faisi (off southeastern Bougainville) toward Wilson Strait (between Vella Lavella and Ganogga). These destroyers later went through Blackett Strait into Kula Gulf, where they were sunk by

our surface forces, but **USS GRAYBACK** did not report having seen or heard them. Shortly after the report concerning these destroyers was sent, **USS GRAYBACK** heard and saw a ship in the area of Vella Gulf assigned to **USS GRAMPUS**, and, assuming it was she, maneuvered to avoid. She was unable to track it or exchange recognition signals by radar, since her SJ radar was not functioning. When **USS GRAMPUS** made no radio transmission, she was ordered by COMTASKFOR 72 on 7 March to do so. No transmission was received, and on 8 March she was ordered again to make one, again without results. She was reported lost on 22 March, 1943.

Since the war's end, the following facts have been culled from enemy sources. On 17 February 1943, the enemy claims to have sighted one of our submarines. During the afternoon of the 18th, a submarine torpedo attack was delivered on enemy ships and a freighter of 6,400 tons was damaged. An enemy counter-attack was made. All of these positions were in **USS GRAMPUS'** area. On the afternoon of 19 February, enemy seaplanes claim to have sighted and attacked a U. S. submarine somewhere in the southeast. The next day, two patrol boats found a large amount of oil on the surface at this position, and the enemy believed that the submarine had been sunk. However, another enemy report states that a submarine was sighted on 24 February in the southeast. Since no other U.S. submarine could have been in this position at this time, it may be assumed that **USS GRAMPUS** escaped serious injury on 19 February, or that **USS AMBERJACK (SS219)** was the victim of that attack.

Whether the ship **USS GRAYBACK** saw and heard in Vella Gulf on the night of 5-6 March 1943 was **USS GRAMPUS** is impossible to determine, since she was unable to identify it. However, if it was **USS GRAMPUS** and she did survive the enemy attack of 19 February, the only other possibility is that **USS GRAMPUS** was sunk by the destroyers passing through Blackett Strait on the night of 5-6 March, 1943. From the information at hand, it appears that **USS GRAMPUS** could have been no more than 15 miles from **USS GRAYBACK** on that night, yet **USS GRAYBACK** reported hearing no depth charges.

In view of this, it seems likely that **USS GRAMPUS** was caught on the surface by the destroyers and sunk by gunfire. Since the enemy ships were themselves destroyed subsequently, no mention of any attack by them is made in Japanese reports. A large oil slick was reported in Blackett Strait on 6 March.

In the five patrols made before her fatal one, **GRAMPUS** sank six ships, for a total of 45,000 tons, and damaged two more, for 3,000 tons. On her first patrol, conducted in February and March 1942 in the Caroline Islands, **USS GRAMPUS** sank two 10,000-ton tankers and reconnoitered Wotje and Kwajalein atolls. Her second patrol was a passage from Pearl Harbor to Fremantle, Western Australia, where no sinkings were made. Going to the area west of Luzon and Mindoro, P.I., for her third patrol, **USS GRAMPUS** was again unsuccessful in her attempts to sink enemy ships. She conducted her fourth patrol in the Solomons. Here she landed coast watchers on Vella Lavella and Choiseul Islands, and was credited with one escort type vessel sunk and another damaged. **USS GRAMPUS'** fifth patrol

was made in the Solomons also. She sank a large transport, a medium transport, a freighter and damaged a destroyer.

USS TRITON (SS201) March 15, 1943 74 Men Lost

The fourth of our submarines lost in the Solomons-Bismarck area in the early part of 1943, **USS TRITON**, commanded by LCDR. G. K. MacKenzie, Jr., left Brisbane on 16 February 1943 to begin her sixth patrol in that area. She hunted for traffic between Rabaul and Shortland Basin on her way north, and began to patrol the equator on 23 February. She reported on 26 February having seen smoke on 22 February, and had obtained evidence of enemy radar on Buka.

Moving westward, she patrolled areas Northwest of **USS SNAPPER (SS185)** and southeast of **USS TRIGGER (SS237)** from 26 February to 6 March, when she left her area to attack a convoy in **USS TRIGGER**'s area. Her report on 7 March, amended by another 8 March, stated that the convoy had been composed of 5 ships and 1 DD escort. She reported their speed and course and the fact that she had sunk two AK's of the convoy and damaged another, claiming 3 hits out of 6 torpedoes fired. A circular torpedo run forced her deep, where she was depth charged by the destroyer. She had later tried two night attacks, one dawn attack, and one afternoon attack, all without success, and was returning to her area at the time she sent the message.

About eight hours after this message came, **USS TRITON** transmitted the telling of another night attack on the convoy. She claimed 5 hits of 8 torpedoes fired, and, although she could not observe results due to gunfire and attack by the escorting destroyer, she believed two more freighters to be sunk. The last word received from **USS TRITON** came on 11 March 1943 when she reported, "Two groups of smoke, 5 or more ships each, plus escorts...Am chasing." She was ordered to stay south of the Equator, and was informed of the adjacent area assigned to **USS TRIGGER**.

On the morning of 13 March **USS TRITON** was told that three enemy destroyers had been sighted southeast on a northerly course. She was informed that they were probably on a submarine hunt or were a convoy cover and had missed contact. **USS TRITON**, on 16 March, was ordered to change her area slightly to the east. **USS TUNA (SS203)** and **USS GREENLING (SS213)** were placed in adjacent areas (to the south and west, respectively) on 22 March, and all were to disregard areas when on the chase, and to avoid contact when encountering a submarine. **USS TRITON** was told to clear her area on 25 March 1943 and return to Brisbane. When she failed to make her report of position, and estimated time of arrival, she was ordered to do so. No report was received and she was reported as lost on 10 April 1943.

Information available after the war shows that **USS TRITON** was sunk by enemy destroyers on 13 March. Enemy reports show that these ships made an attack on 15 March. Their position was slightly north and west of **USS TRITON**'s area, but she undoubtedly left her area to attack the destroyers or the convoy they were escorting. The report of the attack by the destroyers leaves little doubt as to whether a kill was made, since they saw "a great quantity of oil, pieces

of wood, corks and manufactured goods bearing the mark 'Made in U.S.A.'" In addition, **USS TRIGGER**, in whose area this attack occurred, reported that on 15 March she made two attacks on a convoy of five freighters with two escorts. At this time she was depth charged, and heard distant depth charging for an hour after the escorts had stopped attacking her. Since she was only about ten miles from the reported Japanese attack cited above, it is presumed that she heard the attack which sank **USS TRITON**. Apparently by this time the destroyers had joined their convoy.

USS TRITON was a most active and valuable member of the Submarine Force prior to her loss. In total, she is credited with sinking 16 ships, totaling 64,600 tons, and damaging 4 ships, totaling 29,200 total tons. Her first patrol, conducted around Wake Island, resulted in no damage to the enemy, but her second, in the northern part of the East China Sea, was very productive. In ten days she sank two freighters and damaged a freighter-transport and another freighter. She went back to the East China Sea for her third patrol, and again was most successful. She sank a trawler, two freighters, a freighter-transport, two sampans, and a submarine. The latter was I-64, torpedoed south of Kyushu on 17 May 1942. **USS TRITON**'s fourth patrol was made in the Aleutians, where she was credited with sinking two escort-type vessels. On her fifth patrol, **USS TRITON** went into the Solomon's area. She sank a tanker, and two freighters, in addition she damaged a tanker weighing 10,200 tons plus and an additional freighter. She was credited with having sunk two medium freighters on her last patrol.

USS TULLIBEE (SS284) March 26, 1944 - 79 Men Lost.

On March 5, 1944, **USS TULLIBEE**, commanded by CDR. C.F. Brindupke, departed Pearl Harbor starting her fourth war patrol. She stopped at Midway to top off with fuel, and having departed on March 14, and was not heard from again. The area assigned to **USS TULLIBEE** was an open sea area north of Palau, and she was to cooperate with surface forces in the first carrier strike on Palau. **USS TULLIBEE** was to leave her area not later than April 24, 1944, and on that date a dispatch was sent directing her to proceed to Majuro for refit. She was expected at Majuro about 4 May, but instructions stated that a submarine unable to transmit would not go to Majuro, but to Midway. On May 6, 1944, Midway was alerted for a submarine returning without transmission facilities, but the lookout was not rewarded and **USS TULLIBEE** was presumed lost on May 15, 1944.

The following story of **USS TULLIBEE**'s loss is taken from a statement made by the lone survivor, C.W. Kuykendall, GM2c. He reports that the boat arrived on station, March 25, and on the night of March 26, radar contact was made on a convoy consisting of a large troop and cargo ship, two medium sized freighters, two escort vessels and a large destroyer. Having solved the convoy's speed and course, **USS TULLIBEE** made several surface runs on the large transport, but held fire, being unable to see her due to squally weather. The escorts had detected the submarine's presence, and dropped 15 to 20 depth charges. The submarine came in to 3,000 yards, still

unable to see the target, and fired two bow tube torpedoes. A minute or two later a terrific concussion shook the boat, and Kuykendall, who had been on the bridge, soon found himself struggling in the water. Since range and bearing of escorts were known, the survivor states that he is sure the explosion was the result of a circular run of one of **USS TULLIBEE's** torpedoes. There were shouting men in the water when Kuykendall first regained consciousness after the blast, but after ten minutes everything was silent, and he never again saw or heard any of the other **USS TULLIBEE** men. At 1000 on March 27, an escort vessel located the swimming man, and after firing on him with machine guns, came in and picked him up. He learned here that the transport they had fired at had sunk.

The story of his captivity is much the same as the stories of survivors of **USS GRENADIER**, **USS SCULPIN**, **USS TANG**, **USS PERCH** and other U.S. submarines. He was questioned assiduously by English speaking officers, and beaten when he refused to give any more information than international law required. In April 1944, he was taken to Ofuna Naval Interrogation Camp, where he stayed until September 30th. From that date until rescue on September 4, 1945, he was forced to work in the copper mines of Ashio.

TULLIBEE began her career in the Submarine Force in July 1943, with a patrol in the western Caroline Islands. In this patrol she sank one freighter and damaged another. Her second patrol was in the area south of Formosa off the China coast; here she sank a transport ship and damaged a large tanker and another transport. On her third patrol, in the Marianas area, **USS TULLIBEE** sank a small freighter. This gave her a total of three ships sunk, totaling 15,500 tons, and three damaged for 22,000 tons.

USS KETE (SS369) March 20, 1945 - 87 Men Lost

Departing Guam on March 1, 1945, **USS KETE**, under the command of LCDR. Edward Ackerman, headed for her second patrol in the vicinity of the Nansei Shoto (island chain). In addition to performing a normal patrol, **USS KETE** had orders to submit special weather reports, and to carry out rescue services during an air strike by carrier based planes. On the night of March 10, 1945, **USS KETE** reported having sunk three medium sized freighters. She reported on the night of March 14th that she had fired four torpedoes which missed a small enemy cable laying vessel, and that she had only three torpedoes remaining aboard. Because of the small number of torpedoes left, **USS KETE** was directed to depart her area on March 20th, and proceed to Pearl Harbor for refit, stopping at Midway enroute for fuel. On March 19th, she acknowledged receipt of these orders. On March 20th she sent in a special weather report. This was the last message received from her. At normal cruising speed she should have arrived at Midway about March 31, 1945. When she was neither sighted nor heard from by April 16, 1945, she was reported as presumed lost.

Japanese information concerning antisubmarine attacks gained since the end of the war gives no positive evidence to what happened to **USS**

KETE. None of the attacks on U.S. submarines occurring within the period from March 20th to March 31st 1945, was made in a position in which **USS KETE** was likely to be. There were a few minelines in the Nansei Shoto Chain but, since **USS KETE** was already east of the islands at the time of her last message on March 20th and was heading home, loss through a mine is considered improbable. It is known that a number of enemy submarines were in the area through which **USS KETE** was required to pass enroute to Midway. RO-41 was sunk east of Okinawa by a U.S. destroyer on March 23, 1945, and two other Japanese submarines were sunk southeast of Okinawa near this date. Conditions attendant to **USS KETE's** loss suggest a likelihood that one of these submarines might have torpedoed and sunk her and **KETE** been unable to report the attack before being sunk. Thus, **USS KETE** must be considered a loss probably due to an unreported enemy attack.

She is credited with sending three medium freighters, totaling 12,000 tons, to the bottom on this last patrol. During her first patrol, conducted in the East China Sea, **USS KETE** encountered no enemy targets.

USS TRIGGER (SS237) March 26, 1945 - 89 Men Lost

Departing Guam on March 11, 1945, **USS TRIGGER**, under the command of CDR. Connole, headed for the Nansei Shoto area to conduct her twelfth war patrol. She was to provide rescue services for carrier based aircraft, as well as to carry out a normal offensive patrol. After having sent several routine messages enroute to her area, **USS TRIGGER** reported her first action on March 18th. She stated that she had made a seventeen-hour end around on a convoy she had previously reported, and had attacked. She sank one freighter and damaged another. The other two merchantmen of the convoy and four escorts proceed west. For some time, Allied forces had been aware of a large Japanese restricted area west of the Nansei Shoto in the East China Sea. The area had been marked "restricted" in captured enemy notices to mariners, and Allied forces were obliged to accept that the area was mined, and to keep out of it. Submarines had been warned of its presence and given its position, and were in the habit of proceeding around it to the north when patrolling the Formosa Strait and the adjacent China Coast.

The convoy, which had been attacked by **USS TRIGGER**, was heading for this restricted area. It had always been strongly suspected that there were gaps in the minelines, since the area was too big to be completely and effectively mined. Immediately after receipt of **USS TRIGGER's** report of the attack she had made, COMSUBPAC told her to give as much information as possible concerning the subsequent movements of the convoy, in order to help establish the existence of a safe passage through the restricted area.

On March 20th, **USS TRIGGER** reported that the attack she had made on the convoy had taken place to the northeast and that she had been held down for three hours by escorts following the attack. When last seen or heard the convoy was heading for the restricted

area, but **USS TRIGGER** had been unable to regain contact after she was able to surface.

On March 24th, **USS TRIGGER** was given further orders. On March 25th she was to move west and patrol, remaining clear of restricted areas and outside the 100-fathom curve. On March 26th **USS TRIGGER** was told to proceed at best speed to form a coordinated attack group, known as Earl's Eliminators, with **USS SEADOG (SS401)**, and **USS THREADFIN (SS410)**. The group was to be commanded by CDR. E.T. Hydeman in **USS SEADOG**. This message to **USS TRIGGER** required an acknowledgment, but on the same day she sent a weather report which did not contain an acknowledgment, and she never was heard from again. On March 28th, **USS SEADOG** reported that she had been unable to communicate with **USS TRIGGER** since the formation of the wolfpack. To clarify the situation for the other submarines, **USS TRIGGER** was given another assignment and told to acknowledge. The wolfpack was disbanded on 30 March.

After many attempts to contact her by radio had failed, **USS TRIGGER** was ordered on April 4th to proceed to Midway. When she failed to arrive by May 1, 1945, she was reported as presumed lost in enemy waters on her twelfth patrol. Since she knew the position of the enemy restricted area containing mines, and had been told to keep clear of it, it is extremely doubtful that **USS TRIGGER**'s loss was due to a mine. On the afternoon of March 28th, a two-hour long depth charge attack was conducted by Japanese planes, in cooperation with other ships. Other U.S. submarines in the area heard the attack. An hour later, **USS THREADFIN** reports, "Many distant strings of depth charges and several heavy explosions heard from what was believed to be from the east (In the opposite direction from the location of our attacks). It sounded as though someone was getting quite a drubbing." No other submarine in the vicinity reported having been attacked, although all reported hearing many explosions. The Japanese report of the above attack states, "Detected a submarine over eight times and bombed it. Ships also detected it - depth charged. Found oil pool of 1 x 5 miles in size the following day."

It is doubtful that **USS THREADFIN** received sufficient damage to have left the oil pool described by the Japanese, it must be presumed, however, that **USS TRIGGER** was lost in this action. That it occurred two days after **USS TRIGGER** had been told to acknowledge a message, and none was ever received is not considered unusual. Conditions often forced submarines to delay transmissions for considerable periods of time.

USS TRIGGER is credited with one freighter sunk and another damaged on her final patrol. This makes a total of 27 ships sunk, totaling 180,600 tons, with 13 other ships damaged, for 102,900 tons, during the ship's career. In her second patrol to Empire in the area south of Honshu, **USS TRIGGER** sent a freighter to the bottom, and damaged two large tankers and a freighter.

USS TRIGGER's third patrol was a mining mission as well as an offensive patrol; it, too, was in

the Empire. She saw a large freighter blow up and sink when it hit a mine she had laid, and also sank two freighters by torpedo attacks. Also on January 10, 1943, **USS TRIGGER** torpedoed and sank the Japanese destroyer **OKIKAZE** near Honshu.

USS TRIGGER covered the Palau-Wewak (New Guinea) traffic lanes on her fourth patrol and succeeded in sinking one freighter and damaging two more. Again in the area south of Honshu, On her fifth patrol, **TRIGGER** sank a large freighter and damaged an aircraft carrier and a tanker. Her sixth and seventh patrols were in the East China Sea. On her sixth she sank three good-sized tankers and a freighter, doing damage to another freighter. Her seventh resulted in the sinking of four good-sized freighters, one tanker, and one large transport. The eighth patrol of this vessel was made in the Carolines on the Truk-Guam route, and she sank a large freighter-transport and an escort vessel. She sank four freighter- transports as well as a patrol vessel near Palau on her ninth patrol; she also damaged a large tanker, two freighters and a sampan. **USS TRIGGER**'s tenth patrol, covered the Northern Nansei Shoto area. She received partial credit for sinking a small tanker, which was sunk cooperatively with **USS SALMON (SS182)**. **USS TRIGGER**'s eleventh patrol was in the Empire, but resulted in disappointingly few enemy contacts and no attack opportunities.

This ship was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for her fifth sixth and seventh patrols.

The Heart that beats, in the Sharks of Steel:

In all of it's power and glory - tactical weapons and weapons of mass destruction, precise navigation and sophisticated communications, absolute stealth and long range SONAR, nuclear propulsion to steam, submerged many times around the world; ability to deter an enemy, defend a people or destroy a nation; respected by all, feared by most, and loved only by the men called submariners - the submarine is but a mass of steel, electronics, and weaponry. It's the sweat of the assigned to her that's the lifeblood flowing through the veins of the beast. It's their courage that matches the violence of the seas. It's their dedication and ingenuity that provide the margin of victory over the enemy. It's their service that assures the peace for a free nation. And it's their personal sacrifice that is shared only by their families.

These are the men who live in the belly of the beast. They are the crew. They are the heart that beats in the shark of steel.

Captain Don V. Hahnfeldt
(A Submariner)

From Distant Shores:

Some History of the Japanese Submarine Navy,
by Yoya Kawamura

(NOTE: Yoya lets us know that the pre-war part of the history will consist mostly of technical data of old boats and will be pretty dry, but he promises it will get more and more interesting as we get further into this history.)

In 1905, the small, backward and impoverished Japan was locked in death struggle with the colossal Imperial Russia. The Imperial Japanese Navy (I.J.N.), far outclassed in fleet strength by its adversary, decided

to bridge the great gap by acquiring a new weapon, namely the submarine. It was just four years after the U.S. Navy commissioned its first submarine, **USS HOLLAND**.

The first step the I.J.N. took towards this end was to purchase five **USS HOLLAND** type boats from Electric Boat Company. Those five boats were, one by one, carried to Japan by freighters in disassembled states, and were reassembled at the Yokosuka Naval Yard. They were commissioned in the I.J.N. as Boat #1 through #5.

In parallel with the above development, in 1904 the Kawasaki Dockyard Company, at the behest of the I.J.N., bought blueprints of an improved-type boat privately from Mr. John P. Holland, who had by then severed his relationship with Electric Boat Company. Kawasaki invited two American engineers who had been assistants to Mr. Holland - Messrs. Chase & Herbert - together with a few other technicians, and built, with their assistance, two modified **USS HOLLAND**-type boats based on the purchased blueprints. After much hard work, those two boats were completed in 1906 and were commissioned in the I.J.N. as Boat #6 and #7.

These two different types of **USS HOLLAND** boats are compared as follows. Displacement from 103/124 tons, to 57/63 tons. Length from 24.42 meters, to 23.5 meters. Beam from 3.63 meters, to 2.83 meters. Draft from 3.12 meters, to 2.04 meters. Engine from 180hp gasoline, to 1250hp gasoline. Electric motor 70hp to 22hp. Fuel load from 2 tons to 1.4 tons. Range (surf) from 264 miles at 8 knots to 184 miles at 8 knots. Range from (subm) 20 miles at 6.8 knots, to 12 miles at 4 knots. Single tube remained the same at 45cm (fwd). Torpedoes from 2 to 1. Test depth 46 meters, to 30.5 meters. The crew compliment remained the same at 16. (Specifications of Boat #6 & #7 were not quite the same. It appears the modified version was designed with the reduction of cost in mind; its smaller size also made it easier to transport it aboard a tender to the area of operation.)

Those submarines came too late in the war, and could not take part in combat, but the Russians knew of the Japanese plan to acquire submarines whose capability was considerably overrated in those days, and it exerted certain psychological pressure upon them.

On 13 April, 1904 the Flagship of the Russian Pacific Fleet, the battleship **PETROPAVLOVSK**, hit a Japanese mine and sank, killing the Commander in Chief Admiral Makarov; some Russians wrongly suspected that it was the work of a Japanese submarine. After the victory on 23 October, 1905 the Japanese Fleet held a victory parade in Tokyo Bay, and it was on this occasion that the submarines came to the public eye for the first time. Subsequently, the first submarine squadron was formed at Kure Naval Base in the Inland Sea, and in 1909 the first submarine tender **TOYORASI** was assigned. However, contrary to the great expectations of the Japanese naval authorities, those **USS HOLLAND** boats displayed extremely poor sea-keeping qualities, and it was impossible to operate them in the open ocean. They could by no means prove themselves to be the revolutionary new weapon - at least not yet - that would change the concept of sea warfare. But now submarines were there to stay in the I.J.N. and through various experiments using those **USS HOLLAND** boats, experiences were gradually accumulated and a basis

for future development was formed.

Of the initial seven **USS HOLLAND** boats, boat #6 is specially remembered for the tragic accident it suffered. On 15 April, 1910, the boat was engaged in an experiment; it was trying to utilize the technique known later as 'Snorkeling'. It ran submerged with its gasoline engine, sucking air through the extended air induction tube. Then the tube inadvertently dipped under the waves, and alas, the chain that would have closed the air induction valve broke in the middle. Tons of water poured into the boat and it sank to the bottom. All the attempts to surface the boat failed. Realizing that his fate was sealed, the C.O. of the boat, 31 year old Lieutenant (SG) Tsutomu Sakuma began scribbling his last message on a note pad with the faint light coming through the conning tower porthole. Apart from technical observations, he apologized for sinking his boat through carelessness and bringing death to his crew, praised them for performing their duties immaculately to the last moment, and begged that the bereaved families of his crew should not be made to go hungry. When the boat was located and raised on the following day, it was found that the order had been maintained to the very last minute, and every crewman died serenely at his post.

The brave behavior and self-sacrifice of the crew of Boat #6 deeply moved the entire nation. LT Sakuma's message was displayed at the prewar Naval Academy's museum at Etajima, and Boat #6, after retirement, was placed in the yard of the Submarine School at Kure as a memorial. The story of the brave deed of the crew of Boat #6 was written in the text books of primary school children. **GOOTEI DAMASHII** (Spirit of Boat #6 Crew) became the motto of the Japanese Submarine Service. It was with this tradition that the Japanese submariners were to live and fight under the most severe and trying conditions, and face death always serenely and unflinchingly.

John Holland was the Father of the I.J.N. Submarines too? How many of us knew that!

Important Dates in March:

- March 13, 1895 - Award of first submarine building contract to John P. Holland Torpedo Boat Co.
- March 17, 1898 - **USS HOLLAND**, first practical submarine, launched.
- March 7, 1958 - Commissioning of **USS GRAYBACK (SSG574)**, first submarine built from keel up with guided missile capability, to fire Regulus II missile.
- March 23, 1958 - First launching of simulated Polaris missile from submerged tactical launcher facility off CA.
- March 17, 1959 - **USS SKATE (SSN578)** surfaces at North Pole.
- March 23, 1971 - Poseidon (C-3) missile becomes operational when **USS JAMES MADISON (SSBN627)** began her 3rd patrol carrying 16 tactical Poseidon missiles.

More Information on the KURSK:

"Forensic seismology provides clues to Kursk disaster."

Submitted by **Frank Rumbaugh**

WASHINGTON - The explosions that sank the Russian submarine Kursk on August 12, 2000, triggered shock waves that were recorded by a network of seismic stations in the Baltic region and beyond. Now, forensic seismologists have used these data to reconstruct the disaster. Writing in the January 23 issue of *EOS*, the weekly newspaper of the American Geophysical Union, Keith D. Koper and Terry C. Wallace of the University of Arizona and Steven R. Taylor and Hans E. Hartse of the Los Alamos National Laboratory report that, based on their analysis of seismograms, explosions, not impact, caused the Kursk to sink with the loss of all crew members. The authors note that underwater explosions are highly efficient producers of seismic signals, and these have been long studied, including those generated by the sinking of a Soviet submarine in 1989.

The Kursk seismic data possess features unique to underwater explosions, a strong indication that the Kursk did not sink because of a collision or other impact, they say. Seismic stations recorded two explosions that correspond to the Kursk disaster in time and place. The first explosion was 250 times smaller than the second one, which occurred 135 seconds later. The earlier explosion was clearly recorded only at a few nearby stations, while the second one released energy equivalent to around five tons of TNT and was recorded up to 5,000 kilometers (3,100 miles) away. Koper and his colleagues note that this area of the Barents Sea rarely experiences any seismic activity, so it was highly unlikely that the seismic signals were caused by an earthquake.

One point of careful analysis, they say, concerned whether the second event consisted of one massive explosion or several simultaneous smaller ones and perhaps also impact of the Kursk on the seafloor. The most compelling seismic evidence that the main Kursk event was dominated by an explosion was the observation of a "bubble pulse." This pulse results from oscillations of a bubble of hot gases unleashed by an explosion as it rises toward the surface. The spectral pattern produced by an underwater explosion and recorded by seismic stations provides strong evidence that the second explosion was one massive event, not several smaller ones. The approximate size of the main Kursk explosion can be determined, thanks to a series of calibrated tests conducted by Israeli scientists in the Dead Sea in November 1999. The authors note that the largest Israeli explosion produced a signal similar to that of the Kursk, and both were recorded by a German seismic array, located at virtually equal distance between the Dead Sea and the Barents Sea. Putting seismic data together with other reliable information, the authors are able to provide a more solid explanation of the Kursk disaster than if they were limited to the seismic data alone.

It is believed that the first explosion occurred with the Kursk near the surface, as its periscope was filmed in the up position on the seafloor. Also, it had radioed for permission to fire ordnance just before the first explosion. That explosion produced a seismic record consistent with 250 kilograms (550 pounds) of high explosive, equivalent to the warhead of a modern

torpedo. The scientists conclude that a torpedo misfired or exploded prematurely, and that the submarine absorbed a large fraction of the energy released. As for the large second seismic signal, the authors conclude that it was not from impact with the seafloor, as the Kursk would have sunk the 80-100 meters (265-330 feet) much faster than the 135 seconds between the seismic signals. They say the boat may have remained above the seabed for a time after the first explosion or that the explosion occurred on the sea floor, but only after fire had finally reached other warheads on board. The main event is consistent with the explosion of four to eight SS-N-19 ship-to-ship missiles, which the Kursk carried, or one cruise missile tipped with conventional high explosive warheads. The authors note that the seismic data they used came from openly available sources, recorded at some of the 16,000 stations permanently installed around the world. Their availability has enabled forensic seismologists to assist law enforcement agencies in cases of terrorist bombings, gas pipeline explosions, and firework factory detonations.

No Sh**er Section:

Chapter III *White Lilies and Silver Angels.*

In chapter II we had just ousted the "Live Band" with a barrage of "Swedish meat balls", (which in all honesty, was the best purpose these lumps of unidentifiable meat could be put to.) Although the evenings events may seem to have already deteriorated into utter chaos to the reader, this was not yet apparent to our hosts who continued with their agenda as though all was right with the world. A huge sheet cake was brought out to the front stage with frosting, writing, whorls, flourishes and flowers. An officer drew a fancy sword from the table, with a silver handle and golden sash for the cake cutting ceremony. The pieces were distributed and consumed, whetting our appetites for sweets. I don't know when the association between submarine sailors and floral arrangements began, but then, offhand, I can't recall attending any function where both existed and the former didn't beset the latter and consume them!

Maybe it all started at the 1965 Naples Submarine Birthday Ball, because the flowers went next. Flowers of all colors, chewed up! Eaten! A chant rose in the hall, Eat the flowers! EAT the Flowers! EAT the FLOWERS! So...We ate the flowers. Ate them that is, until someone first bit into a large white Lilly! Damn those things were HOT! DON'T EAT the LILIES DON'T EAT THE LILIES! We didn't and years later, I learned it was good that we didn't, because they are poisonous. Good thing poison doesn't please the taste buds of drunken sailors!

Once the troops had began the ingestion of plant life they didn't stop with flowers. The stage had a rather large ficus tree in an even larger pot decorating one side. At first only a few guys nibbled at the lower leaves (like goats), then some thought that was funny so they ate more leaves and some of the branch tips. Soon the average boat sailor couldn't reach any leaves or branches that were less than pencil thickness so they tipped the tree and attacked the upper branches with greater enthusiasm. Those who had been milling around the hall didn't want to be left out of the greatest tree eating contest ever held and crowded the stage

for their turn!! When the poor ficus was finally returned to its upright position, it was a bare trunk with mangled branches sticking out and bits of bark chewed from it. It was a sad sight indeed, but seem to fill the hall and its revelers with an even greater glee!

I believe that this may have led to the next occurrence (as I recall them, that is). There was one shore duty jg's wife who had caught the eye and admiration of several testosterone filled sailors and they were competing for her attention. What I remember most about her was her dress. It looked like pure silver. I had never seen cloth so lovely. To this day I have know idea what it really was, but those who should, have told me it is called lame'. It was supple (as was she) and followed every curve with the greatest integrity to detail. (A local Italian, might in English, say de-"tail", if you follow me, if not.....oh well) Eventually her husband grew somewhat put-out with the attention given his wife and made some sort of effort to quell it. He was unceremoniously removed from the hall and taken I know not where, but he didn't return, at least not in time. After several whirlwind dances (to the tape recorder tunes) some bright lad thought her dress might taste good. (He more than likely had "ahem" in mind, but either under or overshot his goal and ended up with a mouth full of dress.) Now today, I have a far better understanding of women and their "stake" in the dress they choose to wear to an event as important as the sixty-fifth annual Submarine Birthday Ball. With this knowledge, gained over the years, I can feel very sorry for this young lady. However, at the time, eating a dress to expose whatever was hidden within seemed a completely reasonable idea, and one which was implemented posthaste, much to her distress!!!

She ran, sans shoes- (which were also silver and doubtlessly reside in the collection of some diesel boat sailor with a foot fetish)-from the hall clad in her slip, flowing shreds of silver cloth...an angel in flight-into the night.

Chapter IV "A sword, a sword, my kingdom for a sword!"

We last left our free wheeling lads in the wake of a damsel put in distress by their own hands and teeth. I can sense my vision of the remaining evening becoming myopic as my own consumption of Italy's version of the Breakfast of Champions increased. Details of the events around me no longer exist in memory, I was consumed with my own revelry at this point. The heads in this great hall were a floor below the main. Serviced via huge marble stairways. Topping one of these, fully intent on relieving a bladder distended by the personally distilled juice of the grape, I came upon Mad Dog Kohler.

Mad Dog was seated at the very top step, he cradled a large set of dolphins in his arms. (The hall was decorated for the evening in gold bunting and large 2-3 foot sets of gold and silver dolphins made of plaster of paris). (Wouldn't we love to have the mold for them today!) Mad Dog sat there, holding his prize with tears in his eyes. (Mad Dog was an emotional sort at heart. He was also my friend.) I sat beside him and put a comforting arm around his shoulder. "Whasss-th'matter Doggie Dog?" Between light sobs, I came to understand

that he felt he was too incapacitated to navigate the stairs successfully with his precious cargo. Seeing as I was pressed to get to the lower level myself, a quick answer was required, when it came to me, it seem brilliant! With my arm still securely around his shoulder, I said, "Look, all we gotta do is slide on our butts, one step at a time and we'll make it. I'll help ya." We slid. One step at a time, just like three year olds. Slide, bump, slide, bump. When we made the bottom, I rejoiced! "See, I told you we could do it!!" Mad Dog stood up, and kept right on going, face and dolphins first, right into the marble floor. The dolphins shattered to a million pieces.

After attending to the emotional outburst that unfortunate turn of events had created, we made our way into the head. This edifice was in keeping with the rest of the hall. It had marble urinals that ran clear to the floor which was also marble and rather messy from, well, from all its usage, actually. A very dapper Italian gentleman, dressed in a suit, (all Italians not involved in digging a ditch, wore a suit to work in those days and he was no exception.) He was pushing a large mop around the floor trying to make the marble show again. Mad Dog grabbed the first urinal he came to, with both hands to better maintain alignment. However his body shook and he was overwhelmed with his stomachs distress over its contents. From the emission, it seemed to be mostly red wine, which I fear did not all go in the urinal, some splattered on the marble floor which seemed to aggravate the mop wielding gentleman. (He was undoubtedly tired of mopping up "emissions" and this may well have been the straw that broke the camels back!)

He moved in to clean right at Mad Dogs feet, cussing (or so it seemed) Mad Dog all the time and mopping his shoes a little in his effort. Mad Dog seemed to take umbrage at the befouling of his spit shine (yea, right!) and turned towards the old gent just as the next spasm took him. A great fountain of red wine erupted outwards and over the recently cleaned area and the old fellas shoes as well!!! This really teed him off and the mop went into high gear as did his oration in Italian. Mad Dog released his death grip on the urinal sides and stalked unsteadily towards his intended prey, who pissed as he was, wasn't stupid and retreated under a vociferous blast of verbal abuse and much mop waving. It was then that I decided to retreat myself and return to the hall, for Mad Dogs "liberation" of the dolphins had made me realize that this was to be an evening to remember and all memories require something substantial to recall them by.

I crawled back up the stairs to the great hallway and the festivities. You may recall my mentioning an officer drawing a sword from the table on the stage to perform the cake cutting ceremony. I have always liked swords (although I don't have any, even to his day) and the silver handle and golden sash had caught my imagination. I made my clouded way towards that table. Once I had surmounted the stage, (no mean feat under the circumstances, there were no stairs from the front.) I found to my delight that the sword still lay there, forgotten no doubt due to the great meat ball barrage. Being a bit of a thief, I slipped the cake covered weapon

down the right leg of my thirteen button pants, placing the tip into the edge of my shoe!! I then spent most of the evening hobbling around like Chester on Gunsmoke trying not to carve off anything important!! Can you imagine my humility when hidden somewhere, with a conspirator, I withdrew forth my prize, only to discover it was a long thin cooks spatula, with aluminum foil and a yellow ribbon on the handle. I was dejected to say the least, but glad that all was still intact below!

Well, our next installment will move outside for the great ride back to the boat aboard a severely overloaded bus. Until then, mind your helm, and watch out for the Slithery Dee.

Roger "RamJet" Burleigh.
USS COBBLER (SS344)

A Little Humor, don't hurt:

Little Johnny got on a bus and sat down next to a man. He noticed that the man had a strange kind of shirt collar, so he asked him, "Excuse me, sir, but why do you have your shirt collar on backwards?" The man smiled kindly and answered, "I wear this collar because I am a "Father." Little Johnny thought a second and responded, "Sir, I have a father, but he wears his collar the other way around. Why do you wear your collar so differently?" The priest thought for a minute, and said, "I am the Father for many." Little Johnny quickly answered, "My father, too, is the father of many. He has four sons, four daughters and many grandchildren. But he wears his collar like everyone else does. Why do you wear yours backwards?" The priest, flustered, said impatiently, "I am the Father for hundreds and hundreds of people." Little Johnny sat silently for a long time. As he got up to leave the bus, he leaned over to the priest and said, "Mister, maybe you should wear your pants backwards too."

Tricare for life-Second payer to Medicare:

Submitted by Roger Cousin

TFL Update 4: These four scenarios illustrate how the new Tricare for Life (TFL) benefit works as second payer to Medicare:

Scenario 1: Procedures covered by both Medicare and TRICARE. In this situation, there would be no Medicare co-payments or deductibles (TRICARE would cover these).

Scenario 2: Procedures covered by TRICARE but not Medicare. In these circumstances, the beneficiary will pay the TRICARE deductible (\$150 individual/\$300 family) and co-payments:

(a) The most obvious example is prescription drugs under the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program (TSRx). This is a significant new benefit for Medicare-eligible military retirees that Medigap policyholders don't receive. TSRx co-pays are small, especially if the beneficiary uses the National Mail Order Pharmacy (NMOP) and accepts generic drugs. Generic drugs cost \$3 for a 90-day supply through the NMOP and \$3 for a 30-day supply in DOD's retail network pharmacies. Name brand drugs are only slightly more expensive — \$9 for a 90-day supply through the NMOP or a 30-day supply from a retail network pharmacy. There is no deductible for pharmacy benefits, except in non-

network pharmacies. In that case, there is a \$150 annual deductible, and the copayment is 20 percent of the bill or \$9, whichever is greater. In the unlikely event that out-of-pocket expenses for prescription drugs become extraordinary even at this low cost, new legislation specifies that no TRICARE family will be required to absorb more than \$3,000 in out-of-pocket medical/pharmacy expenses in any year. This lowered "catastrophic expense cap" tends to get overlooked but is enormously important to the few who find themselves in dire circumstances, whether they are Medicare-eligible or not. In addition to the above TSRx options, beneficiaries can still continue to use a military pharmacy at no cost.

(b) In cases when the beneficiary's inpatient hospital stay exceeds the 150-day maximum Medicare-allowable hospital stay, TFL becomes first payer once Medicare benefits are exhausted. In this rare circumstance, the beneficiary would be liable for TRICARE copayments and deductibles (not to exceed \$3,000 per family per year, regardless of how long the individual is hospitalized). TROA's records indicate only 5 out of 150,000 Mediplus policyholders had hospital stays over 150 days last year.

(c) For Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF) stays that exceed the Medicare maximum of 100 consecutive days, TFL becomes first-payer, with the beneficiary liable for TRICARE copayments and deductibles (capped at \$3,000 per family per year, regardless of how long the individual is in a SNF). Only 31 Mediplus policyholders had SNF stays over 100 days last year.

(d) In the extremely unlikely event a beneficiary was placed in a SNF without meeting Medicare's requirement for 3 days' hospitalization in order to qualify for SNF care, TRICARE would be first payer and the patient's co-pay/deductible liability would be as indicated in (b) and (c) above (\$3,000 maximum per family per year). For individuals residing in foreign countries, TRICARE would be first payer and the patient's liability would be \$3,000 per family per year for charges that do not exceed 115% of the TRICARE maximum allowable charge. This is an area that still requires more clarification from DoD. In addition, there are intentions to seek legislation to exempt overseas members from the requirement to enroll in Medicare Part B, since Medicare does not function overseas.

Scenario 3: Procedures covered by Medicare but not TRICARE. Review of the relationship between Medicare and Tricare to date have identified only one Medicare-covered service - chiropractic care - that is not covered by TRICARE. Others may still turn up, but this appears to be a rare disconnect.

Scenario 4: Procedures not covered by Medicare or TRICARE. In such cases, the beneficiary is responsible for 100% of the cost. The primary example is an individual who enters into a "private contract" with a physician, normally a specialist, who does not accept Medicare patients. Under current law, this provider may not bill Medicare for services provided to a Medicare-eligible patient, nor may the beneficiary claim reimbursement from Medicare. We believe TRICARE should act as first payer in these situations, and will seek legislation to that effect. Dental care, eyeglasses and hearing aids also fall in this category, since Congress had no intent to modify the list of TRICARE-covered services when it enacted TFL. **Source:**

TROA's Leg Up 01-19-01)

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