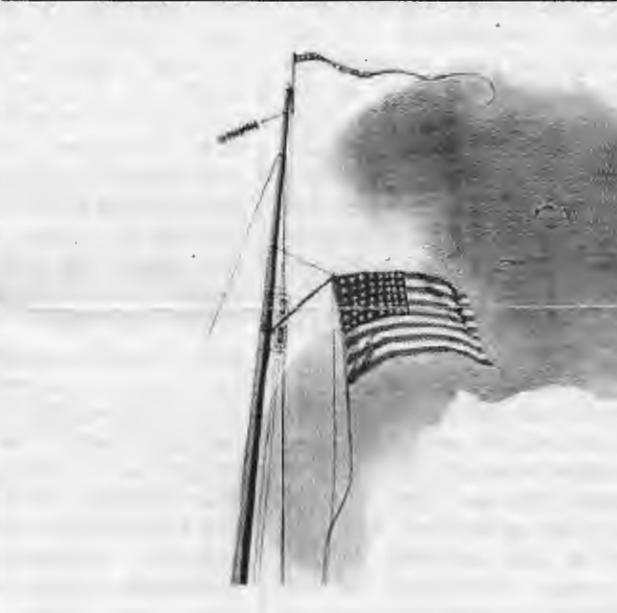




**BASE OFFICERS**  
**Commander:**  
 David Hamish  
 6509 W. Devonshire  
 Phoenix, AZ 85033-3350  
 623-846-9245  
 dhamish@qwest.net  
**Vice Commander:**  
 Glenn Herold  
 839 North Rogers  
 Mesa, AZ 85201-3849  
 480-962-6115  
 duke7@cox.net  
**Secretary:**  
 Edgar Brooks  
 517 Eagle Crest Dr.  
 Prescott, AZ 86301-5424  
 928-778-4069  
 etbrooks62@aol.com  
**Treasurer & Memorial Chair:**  
 Bob May  
 1902 East Karen Dr.  
 Phoenix, AZ 85022-3915  
 602-867-1445  
**Storekeeper:**  
 Garry L. Shumann  
 824 North Rogers St.  
 Mesa, AZ 85201-3849  
 480-495-5639  
 garry1@cox.net  
**Membership/Webmaster:**  
 Ramon Samson  
 9324 W Briarwood Cir  
 Sun City, AZ 85351-1425  
 623-815-9247  
 rsamson@bnswest.net  
**Chaplain:**  
 Warner H Doyle  
 13600 W. Roanoke Ave.  
 Goodyear, AZ 85338-2236  
 623-935-3830  
 d-hdoyle@worldnet.att.net  
**Public Relations:**  
 Ben Acosta  
 12914 W. Alvarado Rd.  
 Avondale, AZ 85323-7142  
 602-935-7752  
 Benvirg@juno.com  
**Historian:**  
 James W Newman  
 3422 North 51<sup>st</sup> Place  
 Phoenix, AZ 85018-6120  
 602-840-7788  
 jimnewman@qwest.net

<http://perch-base.org>  
**USSVI CONVENTION SCHEDULE**  
**DULUTH – 2002 Sept. 17 – 22**  
**RENO – 2003 - August 31 - Sept. 7**  
**Two bases bidding for 2004, no decision yet**  
**Kansas City MO – 2005 - Aug 30 - Sept. 4**

May, 2002  
 Volume 8 – Issue 5



*Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol*

**MAY ETERNAL PATROL DAYS:**

<b>USS SQUALUS</b>	<b>SS192</b>	<b>May 23, 1939</b>	<b>26 men lost</b>
<b>USS RUNNER</b>	<b>SS275</b>	<b>May 28, 1943</b>	<b>78 men lost</b>
<b>USS LAGARTO</b>	<b>SS371</b>	<b>May 3, 1945</b>	<b>85 men lost</b>
<b>USS STICKLEBACK</b>	<b>SS415</b>	<b>May 30, 1958</b>	<b>No men lost</b>
<b>USS SCORPION</b>	<b>SSN589</b>	<b>May 22, 1968</b>	<b>99 men lost</b>

**Perch Base is registered for the Yarnell Spring Festival parade on Saturday May 18th. Meeting time 0830 to 0900 Hours. Parade start time 1000 Hours.**

### From the Wardroom:

So far we have been very busy with a number of items being worked on. We have had the District 8 meeting in conjunction with the Submarine Veterans WWII Southwest regional caucus. Would like to pass along a big THANK YOU to all that helped out with the mess cooking duties in the hospitality room and made this historic event the success it was. To see so many of the wives joining their husbands for this event was appreciated also. There were a number of items discussed in our meeting and will have more on those at our next meeting. There are also a number of items that will be forwarded to Western Regional Director, Jim Foote for him to pass onto the BOD of USSVI for action. There was also a get-together that produced some interesting exchanges with other bases in our district to find out how they are dealing with issues and challenges that all bases seem to have in common. April 20<sup>th</sup> saw Perch Base having their annual Submariner's picnic. Attendance was not what we were looking for but did have submariners from Yuma and San Diego. The highlight of our gathering was having one of our active duty members **Brent Nelson** and a shipmate of his, Kevin Hershall join us from San Diego. Kevin is a Mess Specialist aboard the USS Salt Lake City and jumped right in and did the cooking of the burgers and hot dogs. We are working on getting Kevin signed up as a member of Perch Base. The Maricopa Live Steamers took our group for a ride in the desert to show off the work they have been doing since we last visited them. We all need to mark our calendars for several upcoming events that should prove to be fun and let us get the word out that there is a submarine veterans presence in the desert. The next event that we need a good showing for is the Yarnell Spring Festival, May 18<sup>th</sup> in Yarnell. We will meet at the Assembly of God Church located on the corner of highway 89 and Fountain Hill Road in Yarnell at 0900 and proceed to our parade staging area at 0930. The parade will start at 1000. **Tug Boat Tom** is working on some seating for the float that will allow for 10 to 12 shipmates to ride on the float and there will be seating in the truck towing the float. We need 8 shipmates to act as the color guard, 2 for the banner and 6 for the flags and escorts. This was fun event last year and should be better this year. We would also like to see a large turnout for the Memorial Day services at the National Cemetery. We will be placing our wreath and also joining the Pigboaters for the tolling ceremony at the Perch Memorial following the main festivities. Will have more information at our next meeting. Looking forward to seeing all at our May meeting.

Fraternally, *Dave Harnish*, Commander

### Submarining is About People:

In lieu of having no meeting minutes, I asked **Ed Brooks** if he would send me a sea story, to submit in his normal slot. He sent me two and I present this one for your enjoyment. **Submarining**, if there is such a word, is about people more than equipment. After all, it takes a different if not special type of person to pursue the profession. As my grandmother always lamented; "Lord it don't come easy"! Especially the work it takes to become and survive as a submariner. So, even though the diesel boat enginemen were apt as not to spend hours arguing over the merits of the Fairbanks Morse versus the General Motors diesel engine - both lovingly called "rock crushers" for the sounds emanating from the smoothest running model of either brand - the experiences that we tend to remember most clearly are the people we served with and the things they did. Those are the things that legends are made of. In 1964 a group of us were transferred from the **USS Halibut (SSGN-587)** to new construction at a shipyard that no longer exists, in Camden, New Jersey. When you are ordered to a command that is yet to be formed, it is an interesting process - start to finish. I knew it was going to be interesting from the first day. When we checked in at the Administration Building which housed the senior Naval Officer whose title was Supervisor of Shipbuilding we were asked to deliver our medical records to the command's doctor who was a full Captain. He was so informal, that he greeted sailors by saying; "Hi-dee"! Over his head on the wall behind his desk was a large poster with these words; "There they go, I must hasten to overtake them - for I am their leader"! I will never forget that doctor and his poster. We spent two full years watching over the shipyard workers complete the construction of the ship - a 594 class nuclear powered submarine **USS Guardfish**. As is customary for new construction crews, we trained, took our meals and conducted all of the administrative duties of the command on a covered lighter barge (the ship's barge). All submarine cooks are good - some better than others, but always good. Probably because they wouldn't survive if they weren't. Submariners eat lots of food - good food. Our leading cook was a master chef, not just by reputation, but he had the credentials to boot. He studied under the chefs on the Queen Mary and at Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia. In the interest of honesty, I must include that he was asked, after a period of time, to leave Greenbrier for behaving like a sailor on shore leave. At any rate, we had very good cuisine during the two years. Yorkshire pudding, stuffed Cornish Game Hen, baked Alaska, and the like. Of course, this cook had a suitable name more associated to his day to day behavior than his skill as a chef. Somewhere along the line, Petty officer Madigan was nicknamed "Squirrel". He lived up to that

name in all manner and ways. As time passed on the new construction detail, Squirrel became close friends with the Pharmacist's Mate (Corpsman) and they became like brothers. If one got upset with another person - officer or enlisted, the other one ganged up with him to make the other person's life miserable. Nearing the end of the construction period, the ship was made ready for sea and what is called; "Builder's Sea Trials". Back then, Admiral Rickover insisted in riding each new nuclear powered ship on it's initial sea trials. So, before we could get underway for these important trials, we had to prepare for Admiral Rickover's arrival. The XO was a skilled and well-meaning officer, but he had what we will refer to as serious human relations flaws. The week before Admiral Rickover was to arrive, the CO and XO assembled all the crew in the mess hall of the personnel barge for a briefing. The CO was first and made sure everyone understood that Admiral Rickover was a different type of Admiral. He didn't want any fanfare with his visit, no ruffles and flourishes, side boys or other rendering of honors. Rickover just wanted to come on board, ride the ship on sea trials and then go back to D.C. The CO then turned the floor over to the XO and left. The XO then began reading a list of things that the crew had to do in anticipation of Admiral Rickover's arrival. The list seemed like it consisted of more than one hundred items. The menu for sea trials could feature only beef - no pork, the Admiral would require an automatic tooth brush, a pair of work khakis, his suit had to be dry cleaned immediately upon his arrival, he had to have current copies of at least a dozen national newspapers, periodicals and publications, ad nauseam. Squirrel couldn't contain himself and jumped up and exclaimed; "The CO says Rickover will not tolerate special treatment normally required for a flag officer, but you present us with a list of hundreds of items that we must be do specifically for him. All we're talking about is a more complicated pomp and circumstances for him. The XO's face got red and his temper nearly reached a breaking point. So, after the meeting, the XO instructed the Commissary Officer (Squirrels Division Officer) to get the cook under control. Then as the time neared for Admiral Rickover to arrive, all the preparations were falling into place. The Admiral arrived in Camden, New Jersey the night before the ship was to get underway on sea trials. Then unannounced, the Admiral decided he wanted to take a walking tour of the ship. The XO panicked and called the Corpsman at home and instructed him to hurry in to the shipyard and have a radiation detecting film badge and dosimeter ready to hand to the Admiral as he accessed the ship's interior. Doc Freedly, the ship's corpsman and at that time the radiation safety petty officer was having dinner with his family on a Saturday night. He complained strongly to the XO about the

fact that he would have to leave dinner with his family, drive to the shipyard, walk more than a mile from the parking lot to the pier on a cold rainy night. The XO responded in kind. So, Doc Freedly complied with the XO's order. He was standing at the bottom of the access hatch when Admiral Rickover reached the deck below. Doc Freedly handed the Admiral his film badge and dosimeter and said; here's your dosimetry Admiral. The Admiral merely backhanded the devices knocking them from Freedly's hand commenting: "I'm too old to worry about radiation exposure"! Doc Freedly packed up and headed back to his home where he called his buddy Squirrel. For the hours left before sailing, the two sailors whetted their contempt with copious amounts of adult beverage. By the time the ship got underway on Sunday morning, both men were thoroughly relaxed. They spent the whole three days underway making sure Admiral Rickover and especially the XO understood their anger. Again the XO dressed down the Commissary Officer and challenged him to get the two men under control as a career incentive. The sea trials went off without a major hitch and Admiral Rickover departed as soon as we tied up - taking the tooth brush, khakis and other provided or loaned items with him and wearing a freshly cleaned business suit. Where in this world can one observe and work with so many diverse and interesting characters - only on a submarine!



#### Perch Base Booster Club 2002:

Thank You for your "Above & Beyond" assistance:  
**Jerry N. Allston, Ken Anderson, Bob Bailey, Kenneth E. Becker, Joseph A. Bernard, Richard Bernier, Harold J. Bidigare, Wayne A. Braastad, Michael J. Breitner, Edgar Brooks, James F. Clewett, Roger J. Cousin, Earl Crowley, Stephen F. Day, Warner Doyle Jr., Jeff Duncan, Ronald D. Eddy, Tom Fooshee, Ray Lee Graybeal, Charles Greene, Billy A. Grieves, Warren A. Grossetta, Michael J. Haler, Robert Hanson, John T. Hellem, Glenn Herold, Lester R Hillman, Stephen F. Hough, Mike Keating, Ron Kloch, Larry L. Krieger, Paul Lake, Robert A. Lancendorfer, Doug La Rock, George Marions, Dale Martin, Robert E. May, Bill Mc Nay, Roger M Miller, Roger R Miller, Joseph R. Mullins, Jim A. Nelson, James W. Newman Sr., Joe Otreba, Thomas B. Patterson, Raymond A. Perron, Royce E Pettit, Scott Prothero, Larry M. Rankin, Dan Reel, Frank W. Rumbaugh, Ramon Samson, Dick Schiltneck, Douglas F. Schultz, Tyler Smith, Wayne Smith, Robert G. Sothern, Adrian M. Stuke, James Wall, Kenny Wayne, Richard Weber, Donald Whitehead, Ed Wolf, George Woods, Jerry D. Yowell.**

### Small Stores:

Our Storekeeper, **GARRY L. SHUMANN**, 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! If you want, you can order from the web site at <http://perch-base.org> Garry's address and phone number on front cover.

### Meeting and Events:

Our May 11<sup>th</sup> meeting will be held at American Legion Post 62, located at 11001 North 99th Avenue. Meeting Starts at 1200 Hours. Post 62, is North of West Peoria Avenue, in the city of Peoria, West of Hwy 101. Off HWY 101 take the Peoria exit and proceed West to 99<sup>th</sup> Ave., than right (North) to Post 62, which is on the East side of the street. We would hope to see a good turn-out as the members of this post have welcomed us with open arms. A lunch will be provided at a cost of \$3.00. A heck of a deal, at twice the price. Our next group event will be on May 18<sup>th</sup> in Yarnell. For those of you that have never been to Yarnell, it's located in the Weaver Mountains, and is full of arts and crafts shops. Your wives will love it. We will meet at the Assembly of God Church located on the corner of highway 89 and Fountain Hill Road in Yarnell at 0900 and proceed to our parade staging area at 0930. The parade will start at 1000. Don't miss this one. May 27 is Memorial Day. It is not known at this writing, if services will be held on the 27<sup>th</sup> or before. Any information will be posted on the web-site <http://perch-base.org> or call **Dave Harnish**.

### For The Good of the Order:

Dave received the following via the District Commanders net. They are trying to get the word out via as many means as possible and they did not get put into the American Submariner along with several articles from the bases for Checking in with the bases stuff. By the way, have submitted two articles to the AS for that column and both have never made it in. There were 5 bases that did not get stuff in this last issue even though they were submitted in time. Editors Note !!!! It seems that the more people National places in responsible positions, the less things get done.

### **USS Threadfin (SS410) Reunion**

Las Vegas, Nv. Oct 31 - Nov 3, 2002

Contact Tony DeMarco

680 SE 27th Lane

Homestead, Fl. 33033

(305) 230-0465

E-Mail: [kahunakate@aol.com](mailto:kahunakate@aol.com)

### **USS Gurnard SS254/SSN662 Reunion**

West Coast Silverdale Hotel, July 11 - 13, 2002

Contact Ray Binns

7223 Wellford Ln.

Gloucester, VA 23061

804-695-94444

E-mail: [binns@ccsinc.com](mailto:binns@ccsinc.com)

### Lost Boats and Crews for May:

#### **USS Squalus SS192 May 23, 1939 - 26 Men Lost**

There appears a shadow against the lightness of the ocean's surface. Nearer it comes until the dark underside of the fish-like craft can be distinguished in a frame of foamy brightness with a seemingly inadequate flutter of propellers under its stern. It appears progressively larger but its increasing size seems to signify more than decreasing distance. A rounded hull, a pair of fin-like projections and darker shadows reveal the unmistakable characteristics of a submarine coming down in a dive. A swirl of churning water and a cloud of bubbles follows its wake as the Conning Tower and the deck structures come under. In the shimmering light the number "192" painted in white under the bow identifies the **USS SQUALUS (SS-192)**, a newcomer in the ocean's depths. Inside are men. The ports of the Conning Tower gleam dully and serve only to emphasize the blind faith of tobes men who put their trust in a man-made machine. Down, down; a graceful diving slant under control. But wait! Too many bubbles belch in a cloud around the after part of the boat. It wavers; its forward motion is lost; the angle changes but its progress downward accelerates as the stern falls. The heavy steel walls hide swift drama inside and, as in a picture on a silent film, the stricken submarine sinks noiselessly to the bottom coming to rest in a cloud of churning mud. Tragic bubbles still issue from the undersea giant whose 299-foot length is mocked by the infinite sea. A moment of inaction - stunned indecision - while riled mud settles and bubbles continue to rise from a depth that never before has seen air. The fallen craft with its cargo of trapped survivors seems to stir as clouds of mud rise from the outlets of the valves under the bow with the outward rush of water from the ballast tanks. The long gray ship shows no other sign and the struggle to increase buoyancy ceases as air spurts from the muddy valves. Another moment of thought; inside, probably a conference, and a small movement can be seen in the middle of the forward deck. Lazily at first, but gathering speed rapidly, there rises from a small hatch a bobbing float which struggles upward on the end of the small cable still attached to the boat. It breaks the surface and the foundered **SQUALUS** can do no more. To those at the bottom the smoking beacon of the buoy released is an another world, a world of air and sunshine, calling for help. Who can record what is said as minutes pass within

that long black hull? Who can picture the tension of the officer waiting at the receiver of the telephone leading to the buoy above? Who can be said to have been the first to sense the approach of another long, black shape gliding on the surface with a frame of foam and the stur of its beating propellers? The approach of another undersea boat duplicates the image of the silent shadow which disturbed the sea at the start of the ill-fated **SQUALUS** dive. As though in answer to the call of family, the sister-ship **USS SCULPIN I (SS-191)** has been drawn to the spot and from the smoking beacon discovered the plight of the craft below. Above the surface intense activity must be starting and, in this other world of sunshine and air the alarm is already spreading to shock into purposeful action the resources of the American Navy. The lives of a crew of trapped men has become, in an instant, the major concern of a nation.

**Editors Note:** Read the book, "The Terrible Hours" by Peter Maas

**USS RUNNER (SS 275) May 28, 1943 - 78 Men Lost**  
On 28 May 1943 **RUNNER** (Lt. Cmdr. J. H. Bourland) left Midway to begin her third patrol. She was to patrol the south and west, until she came into the area south of Hokkaido and east of the northern tip of Honshu, where she was to patrol from about 8 June to 4 July 1943. The submarine was never heard from following her departure from Midway. She was expected at Midway about 11 July, and not later than 15 July, and should have made a transmission when approximately 500 miles from this base. She was ordered on 112 July to make an immediate transmission, but no reply came. Although a careful, lookout was maintained in the hope that **RUNNER** was safe but without transmission facilities, results were negative. On 20 July **RUNNER** was reported as presumed lost. A summary of Japanese antisubmarine attacks received since the close of hostilities contains no mention of an attack, which could explain the loss of **RUNNER**. Thus her loss must be ascribed to an enemy minefield, of which there were at least four in the area to which she was assigned, to an operational casualty, or to an unreported enemy attack. Destruction by a mine is considered the most likely of these possibilities. This ship sank three ships, totaling 19,800 tons, and damaged three more, for 19,000 tons, on her first two patrols. **RUNNER** patrolled the Palau area on her first war run in February 1943, and all of her sinkings were made here. She sank three medium freighters, and damaged two more. During her second patrol off Hong Kong in the South China Sea, **RUNNER** damaged a freighter.

**USS LAGARTO (SS 371) May 3, 1945 - 85 Men Lost**  
**LAGARTO**, under CDR F.D. Latta, departed Subic Bay, Philippine Islands, on April 12, 1945, for her second patrol in the South China Sea. On April 27, she was directed to the outer part of Siam Gulf. **LAGARTO** contacted **BAYA SS 318**, already patrolling in Siam Gulf on May 2, 1945, and exchanged calls with her by SJ radar. Later that day **BAYA** sent **LAGARTO** a contact report on a convoy she had contacted consisting of one tanker, one auxiliary and two destroyers. **LAGARTO** soon reported being in contact with the convoy, and began coming in for an attack with **BAYA**. However, the enemy escorts were equipped with 10cm radar, and detected **BAYA** and drove her off with gunfire, whereupon the two submarines decided to wait and plan a subsequent attack. Early on the morning of May 3, 1945, **LAGARTO** and **BAYA** made a rendezvous and discussed plans. **LAGARTO** was to dive on the convoy's track to make a contact at 1400, while **BAYA** was to be ten to fifteen miles further along the track. During the day, numerous contact reports were exchanged. At 0010 on May 4, after a prolonged but unsuccessful attack, **BAYA** was finally driven off by the alert escorts, and no further contact was ever made with **LAGARTO**. Japanese information available now records an attack on a U.S. submarine made by the minelayer **Hatsutaka**, believed to be one of the two radar-equipped escorts of the convoy attacked. The attack was made in about 30 fathoms of water, and in view of the information presented above, the attack here described must be presumed to be the one which sank **LAGARTO**. Every patrol made by this officer was designated successful for the award of combat insignia, a record surpassed by no commanding officer in the Submarine Force.

**USS STICKLEBACK SS415 May 30, 1958 No Men Lost**

**USS STICKLEBACK (SS-415)** completed outfitting on 26 May and held her shakedown cruise off the California coast. She reported to Commander, Submarines, Pacific Fleet, for duty on 21 June. More modern equipment was installed at Pearl Harbor; and, on 2 August, she arrived at Guam, where she held sea trials for a few more days. She began her first war patrol on 6 August when she departed for the Sea of Japan. She arrived there the following week and began patrolling. However, the atomic bombs had been dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and it was believed the war would end shortly. **STICKLEBACK** had only been in the patrol area for two days when the cease-fire order was passed. She remained in the area and, on 21 August, sighted two bamboo rafts containing 19 survivors of a freighter which had been sunk 10 days before by **USS JALLAO (SS-368)**. They were taken on board for 18 hours, given food, water, medical treatment, and set afloat again a short

distance from one of the Japanese islands. **STICKLEBACK** returned to Guam on 9 September and sailed for the United States the next day. She arrived at San Francisco on 28 September as a unit of Admiral Halsey's 3rd Fleet. She participated in the Navy Day celebration in October and, on 2 January 1946, made a voyage to Pearl Harbor. She was decommissioned, on 26 June 1946, at Mare Island and attached to the Pacific Reserve Fleet. **STICKLEBACK** was recommissioned on 6 September 1951 and served at San Diego as a training ship until entering the Mare Island Naval Shipyard on 6 November 1952 for conversion to a snorkel (Guppy IIA) type submarine. The ship was back at sea on 26 June 1953 and joined SubRon7 at Pearl Harbor. **STICKLEBACK** supported the United Nations forces in Korea from February to July 1954 when she returned to Pearl Harbor. For the next four years, she participated in training operations and the development of both defensive and offensive submarine tactics. On 28 May 1958, **STICKLEBACK** was participating in an antisubmarine warfare exercise with Silverstein (DE-534) and a torpedo retriever boat in the Hawaiian area. The exercises continued into the afternoon of the next day when the submarine completed a simulated torpedo run on Silverstein. As **STICKLEBACK** was going to a safe depth, she lost power and broached approximately 200 yards ahead of the destroyer escort. Silverstein backed full and put her rudder hard left in an effort to avoid a collision but holed the submarine on her port side. **STICKLEBACK's** crew was removed by the retriever boat and combined efforts were made by USS SILVERSTEIN (DE-534), USS SABALO (SS-302), USS STURTEVANT (DE-239), and USS GREENLET (ASR-10), to save the stricken submarine. The rescue ships put lines around her, but compartment after compartment flooded and, at 1857 hours on 29 May 1958, **STICKLEBACK** sank in 1,800 fathoms of water.

#### **USS Scorpion (SSN 589) May 27, 1968 - 99 Men Lost**

Assigned to SubRon5, SubDiv62, **USS SCORPION (SSN-589)** departed New London, Connecticut, on 24 August 1960 for a two-month deployment in European waters. During that period, she participated in exercises with units of the 6th Fleet and of other NATO navies. After returning to New England in late October, she trained along the eastern seaboard until May 1961; then crossed the Atlantic again for operations which took her into the summer. On 9 August, she returned to New London and, a month later, shifted to Norfolk, Virginia. With Norfolk her home port for the remainder of her career, **SCORPION** specialized in the development of nuclear submarine warfare tactics. Varying her role from hunter to hunted, she

participated in exercises which ranged along the Atlantic coast and in the Bermuda and Puerto Rican operating areas; then, from June 1963 to May 1964, she interrupted her operations for an overhaul in Charleston, South Carolina. Resuming duty off the eastern seaboard in late spring, she again interrupted that duty from 4 August to 8 October to make a transatlantic patrol. In the spring of 1965, she conducted a similar patrol. During the late winter and early spring of 1966, and again in the fall, she was deployed for special operations. Following the completion of those assignments, her commanding officer received the Navy Commendation Medal for outstanding leadership, foresight, and professional skill. Other **SCORPION** officers and men were cited for meritorious achievement. On 1 February 1967, **SCORPION** entered the Norfolk Naval Shipyard for another extended overhaul. In late October, she commenced refresher training and weapons system acceptance tests. Following type training out of Norfolk, she got underway on 15 February 1968 for a Mediterranean deployment. She operated with the 6th Fleet, into May, then headed west. On 21 May, she indicated her position to be about 50 miles south of the Azores. Six days later, she was reported overdue at Norfolk. A search was initiated; but, on 2 June, **SCORPION** and all hands were declared, "presumed lost." Her name was struck from the Navy List on 30 June 1968. The search continued, however and, at the end of October, the Navy's oceanographic research ship, Mizar, located sections of **SCORPION's** hull in more than 10,000 feet of water about 400 miles southwest of the Azores. Subsequently, the Court of Inquiry was reconvened and other vessels, including the submersible, Trieste, were dispatched to the scene, but, despite the myriad of data and pictures collected and studied, the cause of the loss remains a mystery. **SCORPION** is in two major sections. The forward hull section including the torpedo room and most of the operations compartment is located in a trench that was formed by the impact of the hull section with the bottom. The sail is detached. The aft hull section including the reactor compartment and engine room is located in a separate trench that was formed by the impact of the hull section with the bottom. The aft section of the engine room is inserted forward into a larger diameter hull section in a manner similar to a telescope.

#### **THRESHER .. Forever in our Memories:**

Published on 04/06/2002 New London Day North Stonington — Almost four decades after he lost two brothers-in-law aboard the USS Thresher, David C. Main still wonders whether the Navy should have been able to predict the disaster. Main recalls that the younger of the Shafer boys on the boat, Senior Chief Electrician John D. Shafer, had talked to him

for months about the problems that the Thresher was having during its overhaul at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine. The Thresher was lost on sea trials 39 years ago Wednesday. "If I had known the boat was going to sink, I would have paid a lot more attention to what he was telling me, and asked a lot more questions," Main said. "We'd be fishing or something and he would mention something, but it wasn't as if I thought it was a life or death situation." Main said he was surprised that the Navy Court of Inquiry seemed less interested in what Shafer had told him, than in discrediting the sailor by dragging his pending divorce into the proceedings. He said Shafer was too much the professional to have let his judgment be clouded by personal problems, though. Main was sworn to secrecy after giving testimony to the court, but decided to talk about the issue this year because the investigation has been largely declassified. Though the Navy has since acknowledged that a material failure likely led to the loss of the boat, Main said the Navy should have known that immediately. "In fact, if the Navy had listened to the crew ... " Main said, his voice trailing off. In truth, he acknowledged, most of the crew would probably not have spoken up about the problems through official channels because there was so much pressure to get the Thresher back to sea. "That's probably one reason he told me — he felt he had to tell somebody," Main said. "And he said he wasn't the only one who felt that way." Main was in a position to understand anything that Shafer might have told him. He started welding at the Electric Boat shipyard when he was just 16 years old, during World War II. When he was old enough he joined the Army, and then returned to EB in 1950. He worked there as a welder until retiring in 1990. Main holds a patent in welding as well as an honorary degree from California Polytechnic Institute, and taught the trade for years at EB. "I could have got a lot more information," Main contends. "Then, when that sub went down, I figured he'd be home in a week and we'd go out and have a drink and he'd tell me what had happened. I was so sure nothing could happen to him." But John Shafer, then 34, and Master Chief Electrician's Mate Benjamin N. Shafer, 42, and 127 other men never came back from that shakedown cruise. The Thresher failed to surface after a test dive on April 10, 1963, and was lost about 200 miles off Cape Cod. Clara Main, the Shafers' sister and only surviving relative in this area, said her father was on surface ships in World War I, and her older brother, Joseph, was on a tank landing ship in World War II. There was no question which service her other brothers would choose. "We were a Navy family, and at that time you just went into the service," Mrs. Main said. Main was born in Groton March 14, 1928, which made him a few months older than John and eight years younger

than Benjamin. He wanted to play baseball, and when he found out that Fitch High School didn't have a team, he went to work as a welder at EB for 63 cents an hour to keep busy until he was old enough to join the service. He said the younger Shafer was satisfied in diesel-electric submarines, but his older brother convinced him to transfer to the nuclear Navy. "How they ended up both together on the same boat, I don't know," Main said. "John and I were like brothers — maybe better than brothers, because we never had any fights. We drank together and fished together and talked all the time. He knew I was in welding and would understand what he was talking about." What he was talking about was the seawater pipes on the Thresher, 70 percent copper and 30 percent nickel, which had to be brazed with silver solder rather than welded. Years later the Navy would develop ultrasound tests that would confirm a weld was good, but at the time there was no method other than ripping the weld apart to test its soundness. John Shafer was worried about a lot of the repairs, Main recalls. "He didn't say anything specific, just that the longer they had it in drydock, the more things they were finding wrong with it," Main said. "He told me they were having a lot of problems and the boat wasn't ready to go to sea." In addition, the Thresher was the newest, fastest, and deepest-diving Navy submarine — the first of a class that was designed to find and kill other submarines, and there were demands to get it back to sea quickly to fight the Cold War. And the budget for the repairs was running out, John Shafer told him. "The pressure was really on to get the boat to sea," Main said. Even if John Shafer believed the boat to be unsafe, though, he would never have asked to be left at the pier, Main said. "I don't think he would have gotten off no matter what," Main said. "If it was going, he was going with it." Mrs. Main said she was watching television when she saw the bulletin saying that a submarine was down. When the announcer said it was the Thresher, she rushed to Groton to be with her parents. She still keeps a copy of the story that appeared in the paper after the disaster, headlined, "Groton mother's tragic loss." Her parents moved in with them three years later. Her father died about two years after that, and her mother a couple of years later. Main said he went to the Naval Submarine Base in Groton soon after the Thresher was lost to tell them he had some information that might be of use, and they brought him and the older Shafer brother, Joseph, up to New Hampshire for the Court of Inquiry. Main recalls walking into a room to see a huge table surrounded by more than 30 of the Navy's top officers. "I was so nervous the veins on my neck were standing out, and I figured everyone could see it," he said. "I didn't know what I was getting into. But I thought they wanted to know what I knew." After being sworn in, Main

was asked where he worked and a few more questions to determine his background before his testimony could begin in earnest. "I started to tell them about John, and someone piped up, 'Was John having marital problems?'" Main said. "How he knew that, I could never figure out. But the minute that guy said that, they all seemed to lose interest in what I had to say." John Shafer had been drinking too much, Main acknowledged, and he was in the throes of a divorce, but that would not have affected his ability to tell there was something wrong with the process of overhauling the Thresher. "I could feel the whole atmosphere change. And I was nervous, I wanted to get the hell out of there. I figured they're not going to believe me no matter what I say. So I never told anybody what I knew," Main said. As he walked out of the courtroom, he and Joseph Shafer were surrounded by television cameras, but Main said he didn't know what to say. But soon after the accident, he said, EB began providing additional classes on silver brazing of nuclear submarine pipe joints, which he took as an indication that the Navy had discovered the problems that led to the Thresher's loss. "There was a general feeling that the ship was not ready to go out to sea when it went," Main said. "And now I felt it's time I said what I wanted to say."

#### **Preserve The Battle Flags:**

by Bob Moore The Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Connecticut is undertaking the monumental task of restoring their collection of World War II battle flags. The Museum currently holds 23 original and 32 crew copies of these precious flags. Although these national treasures are currently stored in the new climate controlled museum addition, they require professional preservation and mounting before they can be put on public display. Although the Submarine Force Museum is a US Navy facility, the government only funds the operation and maintenance of the physical plant. Any new displays or exhibits must be funded by an outside source. That is where the Submarine Force Library and Museum Association (SFLMA) steps in. Since 1972 the SFLMA has been intimately involved in supporting the world class museum that tells the full story of US submarine history. Over the years they have funded over \$500,000 in projects in the development of the museum. This is in addition to a \$4million museum expansion completed in 2000. For this expansion, the Association conducted a capital campaign, obtaining a \$2million grant from the state of Connecticut, raising about \$1.6million in new money and providing the balance from Association reserve funds. Some of the more recent efforts the Association has supported are listed below: Obtaining, shipping, restoring, and displaying the **USS GEORGE WASHINGTON** sail.

Obtaining, shipping, restoring, and displaying the **USS X-1** mini-submarine. Restoring and displaying the **USS PIRANHA 5"/25** deck gun. Funding and building the four million dollar museum addition. Mr. Bob Moore, a long time member of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II and a director of Submarine Force Library and Museum Association, is now asking for your help in raising the funds needed to complete the battle flag restoration project. To restore, mount, and display the 23 original battle flags is expected to cost approximately \$130,000. Below you will find a list of those original battle flags scheduled to be restored **Permit SS178, Gato SS212, Sturgeon SS187, Herring SS233, Raton SS270, Spickfish SS404, Flasher SS249, Barb SS220, Jack SS259, Kingfish SS234, Guardfish SS217, Sunfish SS281, Piranha SS389, Finback SS230, Halibut SS232, Flying Fish SS229, Bugara SS331, Blenny SS324, Sterlet SS392, and Hardhead SS365.** The Guardfish, Sunfish, and Blenny have two versions of original flag. The Association hopes to obtain a matching grant administered by the National Park Service and the National Endowment for the Arts to cover half the cost. If they are successful in obtaining the grant, the SFLMA share of the project will be \$65,000. Contributions in any amount are welcome. Donations may be made directly to the Submarine Force Library and Museum Association, PO Box 501, Naval Submarine Base, Groton, CT 06349. A coupon is attached for your convenience. If you are interested in supporting this worthwhile project, please contact Bob at 860-446-8255 or e-mail at bobm@baileyagencies.com. You may also contact the SFLMA Executive Director, Mr. Michael Riegel, at 860-448-0893 or e-mail at association@snet.net.

#### **Seawolf's Operational Debut A Success:**

Defense Week April 22, 2002 By Nathan Hodge The commander of the Seawolf, the Navy's most advanced attack submarine, spoke publicly last week for the first time about the sub's first deployment last year: The sub performed well, he said, but the maiden voyage highlighted the trouble the Navy has providing logistics support for a three-sub class. The Seawolf (SSN 21) set sail on its first mission in June and the deployment lasted until December, said Cdr. Butch Howard, the Seawolf's commanding officer, in a speech Wednesday to the Naval Submarine League. The Seawolf steamed 33,200 nautical miles in two operational theaters, participated in a NATO exercise and lent support. Howard would not disclose specifics to Operation Enduring Freedom. "In summary, Seawolf is an outstanding submarine," said Howard. "The inaugural deployment certainly showcased the crew's hard work, the enhanced stealth, speed and firepower resident in one of the world's most lethal undersea warships." The Seawolf class was

designed to face the threat from Soviet ballistic missile subs. It features a strengthened sail, which allows it to operate under the polar ice cap where Soviet boats loitered. The subs are also fast and quiet, incorporating the latest in stealth technology. However, the Seawolf class has had a troubled history. The Navy originally planned to procure as many as 29 of the subs, but the program was so plagued with cost overruns that, in 1992, the elder President Bush and then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney rescinded funding for the second and third boats in the class. In 1995, Congress agreed to terminate the program after three boats; President Clinton subsequently approved the construction of the third Seawolf as a transition boat to the Navy's next-generation attack submarine, the Virginia-class (SSN-774). The Seawolf was also damaged in its early sea trials. And for several months prior to completing operational tests, she was unable to fire any of her weapons because of a glitch in the doors through which her weapons are fired. Those problems were later solved. To date, two SSN-21 boats—the Seawolf and the Connecticut (SSN-22) have been built. The third and final Seawolf-class sub, the Jimmy Carter (SSN-23), is under construction at General Dynamics' Electric Boat shipyard in Groton, Conn. While Howard said that he could not discuss many of the operational details of the boat's first deployment, he made it clear that the Seawolf performed up to spec. "The ship's control system, bow to stern, is absolutely fantastic," he said. In questions following his speech, however, Howard acknowledged that Seawolf faces one logistical difficulty: it has relatively few parts in stock, and as a new boat, not all of the spares have reached the supply inventory. "We don't have the benefit of 50 Los Angeles-class (SSN-688) submarines" to furnish spare parts, he noted. The crew stocked about 100 parts considered to be critical spares for the mission. Howard said they used 22 of those specific parts over the course of the voyage. But despite having to overcome those logistical challenges, Howard said the Seawolf gave a "solid demonstration of ... the submarine's capabilities for many years to come." When the Seawolf left port, she was carrying a complement of 26 torpedoes and eight Tomahawk cruise missiles. According to Navy documents, the vessel is designed to carry as many as 50 Tomahawks or anti-ship missiles. That weapons complement was there to "demonstrate the payload," Howard explained. On Sept. 11, the boat was in port in Faslane, Scotland, for upkeep. The following day, the Seawolf left port early in response to the terrorist attacks and headed to the Atlantic to meet up with Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71) carrier battle group, which had departed its home port of Norfolk, Va. The sub subsequently headed east after receiving "urgent tasking" to go directly to the Mediterranean to help bolster the

number of Tomahawks in theater. "There's no other submarine in the Navy—and few surface ships, for that matter—that can cover as many miles as we did in a limited period of time," said Howard. The vessel then participated in additional exercises with the Theodore Roosevelt battle group, taking part in Destined Glory 2001, a NATO exercise in the Straits of Gibraltar. In the Mediterranean, Seawolf also prepared for operations in support of the so-called war on terror. Howard gave little information, saying that he could not discuss many details of the deployment in an unclassified forum. David Steigman, a naval analyst with the Teal Group, a Fairfax, Va.-based consultancy, speculated that the boat may have been performing an intelligence and surveillance mission. "I'm sure what they were doing there, since they haven't announced anything about her being a weapons shooter, was intel and surveillance," he said. "She is the pre-eminent intel and surveillance boat in the Navy today." The Seawolf is also capable of carrying special operations teams, but Howard said the boat was not designated to carry special ops during the deployment. Asked about the one thing he would like to see improved on the Seawolf, Howard said adding or enhancing crew accommodations "would go a long way." According to some who have been aboard the Seawolf during testing and evaluation, the boat may be one of the most cramped submarines in the force today. Steigman said: "When you take into account the weapons and the hull space, she's not a pleasant boat to ride." The Seawolf's debut mission was also "jam-packed with maintenance items," said Howard. The inaugural mission required thousands of man-hours in complex repairs. In addition to the battle group operations, the biggest challenge, said Howard, was focusing on the mission at hand. The voyage, he concluded, showcased Seawolf's "plug-and-fight, multi-mission capability."

#### **EB to work with Australia:**

Partnership is forming with submarine builder By Robert A. Hamilton, Daily Day Groton. Electric Boat has sent a small team of submarine experts Down Under to forge a partnership with the Australian Submarine Corp., a company spokesman said Tuesday. "Electric Boat will provide technical and management assistance in support of Australia's Collins-class submarines," said EB spokesman Neil D. Ruenzel. EB builds only nuclear submarines, and ASC builds only conventional submarines, but the two companies had announced they were entering talks about a possible alliance last September. The Australian Minister of Defence and Minister for Finance and Administration also issued a statement Tuesday characterizing the new arrangement as a "capability partnership." "Electric Boat Corporation has now commenced a scoping study of ASC's capabilities in order to assess where it might be

able to add value to the corporation," the joint statement said. "The scoping study is expected to be completed next month. This will be followed by further discussions between the two governments, ASC and (EB) about the desired partnership." Ruenzel said the partnership is likely to be a long-term collaboration, though he was unsure whether the shipyard will establish a permanent presence in Adelaide, where ASC is headquartered. "It's all under evaluation at this point," Ruenzel said. He said the group that is in Australia now, whose members were not identified, will seek to identify opportunities for upgrades to the Collins class of submarines, and how to improve maintenance and repair operations through the life of the class. "Once we have determined the scope of the tasks, the level of effort required to support the program, we'll determine how many people will need to be involved," Ruenzel said. "That's a number that could vary over time." The Collins was commissioned in 1996 and the sixth and last of the class, the Rankin, was launched last year. The 3,353-ton submarines, which can travel 10 knots on the surface and 20 knots submerged, initially had some problems with their combat systems, and were too noisy, but EB and the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Newport, R.I., have been consulting with ASC to design a series of upgrades that are said to have made the class very effective for their role in coastal defense. Top U.S. Navy officials have also been cultivating links with their Australian counterparts, because the six Collins class boats will be able to augment U.S. intelligence gathering efforts in the Pacific, and provide a deterrent presence in troubled areas. The increasingly close relationship between the two shipbuilders mirrors what is happening between the navies of the two countries. Last fall, the chief of the Royal Australian Navy, Vice Adm. David Shackleton, and the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, Adm. Vern Clark, signed a statement of principles that allows collaborative development of submarine technologies. That agreement paved the way for Australia to receive the Mark 48 Adcap (advanced capability) torpedo to replace its older U.S.-supplied Mark 48s. The Australian government has made it clear that it wants EB to be at least a partial owner of ASC. EB's parent company, General Dynamics, would have to approve any such arrangement, and Chairman Nicholas D. Chabraja is expected to hold out for at least a majority position in the company. Australia announced last June that it would put the shipyard up for sale to be run privately. In December, however, it put that sale on hold pending the outcome of its alliance talks with EB. General Dynamics spokeswoman Norine Lyons said the company's policy is to decline comment on any rumor or speculation regarding potential acquisitions. But Navy sources have said such an

alliance could aid the Pentagon in its commitment to provide eight diesel-electric submarines to Taiwan, but no company in this country has build diesels for almost 30 years. In addition, China, which views Taiwan as a breakaway province, opposes the sale, and is expected to pressure countries that have a diesel submarine industrial base away from the work. An EB-ASC alliance, the sources have said, will provide a way to get experts in conventional submarine construction into the project, the sources have said, though Australia will probably not allow the submarines to be built in Adelaide. But even if ASC does not build the Taiwanese diesels, it would provide General Dynamics with a foothold in the Pacific defense business, which is considered to be one of the highest growth areas in the future.

#### Agreement for collision compensation:

Associated Press from Navy Times 04/10/2002  
TOKYO A local government signed an agreement with the Navy on Wednesday to receive compensation for last year's sinking of a fisheries training boat by a U.S. submarine off Hawaii, officials said Wednesday. The signing at the U.S. Embassy, which occurred before a consular official who is also a notary, was necessary before the \$11.47 million can be transferred, a U.S. Embassy official said on condition of anonymity. Signing for the Ehime prefectural (state) government was Vice Gov. Nobuyoshi Yano. The Navy had already signed it, the embassy official and the Navy said. Nine of 35 Uwajima Fisheries High School students, teachers and crew aboard the vessel Ehime Maru died when the nuclear-powered fast-attack submarine Greeneville surfaced beneath the fishing trawler on Feb. 9, 2001, off Diamond Head. The school is located in the Ehime city of Uwajima, about 420 miles southwest of Tokyo. The total compensation includes money for the loss of the ship and equipment as well as covering mental health care for survivors, the embassy official said. The package, however, does not include compensation covering the nine who died. Talks for that are being conducted separately with the Navy. Following a Navy court of inquiry last year, the sub's skipper at the time was found guilty at an admiral's mast of dereliction of duty and negligent hazarding of a vessel. Cmdr. Scott Waddle, who later retired, had expressed hopes to go to the victims' hometown in southwestern Japan to apologize, but hasn't done so.

Last of a Breed - USS Kamahameha (SSN 642):  
4-02-2002 Bremerton Navy Shipyard: At approximately 10:45 PST Cdr Ed Seals (Skipper) ordered the colors struck and USS Kamahameha (SSN 642), the oldest active submarine in US history and the last of the original Polaris boomers,

quietly slipped into the mists of history. Attending the ceremony were 200 - 250 of her closest friends and lovers; her former and current crew. Her keel was laid 2 May 1963, and today, nearly 39 years later, there are but eight decomm crewmembers, and all wearing khaki, that were even born at that time. All submariners ultimately know the sadness that comes with the passing of their boats, and this occasion was no less so for me, even though I never served aboard this fine submarine. No finer tribute can be offered than to report she was a good ship with a fine crew; She and they did their duty and no more can be asked of anyone. "and when at length her course is run. Her work for home and country done, of all the souls that in her sailed Let not one life in thee have failed; But hear from heaven our sailor's cry, And grant eternal life on high!" Author/Date unknown. Her steel hull is now remanded to the charge of the Commander, Puget Sound NSY Bremerton and she will be dismantled until nothing but the memories remain in the hearts and minds of the men that manned and loved her. Hand Salute! Two. Patrick Householder - Issaquah, WA Member USSVI, NSL USS Chopper (SS-342) 1962-63

#### **Female Submariner a Canadian First:**

By Lt(N) Walter Moniz: She's no different than any other sailor, and that's just the way she likes it. Yet 34-year-old Lieutenant(N) Karen Elizabeth O'Connell made history when she became the first female to apply for and be accepted into the Canadian Basic Submarine Qualification (BSQ) course. Born and raised in St. John's, Nfld., Lt(N) O'Connell has always been drawn to the sea. She first joined the Naval Reserve in 1986 as a Cook, serving in HMCS Cabot. She attained the rank of Petty Officer, 2nd Class before taking her commission as a MARS (Maritime Surface and Sub-surface) officer in 1995, and subsequently conducted a component transfer to the Regular Force the following year. Like all MARS officers, Lt(N) O'Connell conducted her basic MARS training in Esquimalt, B.C. before becoming the first female ever posted to HMCS Montréal in Halifax, N.S. It was shortly thereafter that Lt(N) O'Connell developed a passion for submarine warfare. "While on the Naval Operations Course, we were given instruction on submarine tactics," she says. "I knew

then, long before any announcement that women would be allowed to serve on submarines, that I wanted to work in submarine warfare. She continued to follow her passion, and graduated from the Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) Director course in October 2000. While serving as the ASW Director on HMCS Fredericton, one of the first females to serve on that ship, she was deployed on her second NATO tour. "That's when I had my first submarine experience. I was offered an opportunity to embark on a Norwegian submarine, NOMS Uredd, while it transited from Germany to Norway." While the submarine conducted exercises with the NATO task group, Lt(N) O'Connell gained valuable insight into the tactics employed by submariners, and was instrumental when the submarine conducted a simulated attack on her own ship, HMCS Fredericton. "The week-long experience on the Uredd put everything into perspective. At that point, I knew beyond a doubt that I wanted to be a submariner." Luckily, Canada had purchased four Victoria-class submarines from the Royal Navy and recently announced women would be allowed to serve on them, an option that would have been impossible with the older Oberon-class submarines. The rest is history. Lt(N) O'Connell began the BSQ course earlier this year, and will be finished in mid-April. From there, she will take an advanced submarine course, involving work with the submarine trainers and enhancing basic skills. In August, she will be posted to one of the Victorias to begin a demanding on-the-job training package, after which she will be brought before a review board to determine if her knowledge and skill set, meet the requirements of the submarine community. Asked whether she has ever reconsidered her decision to join the submarine community, Lt(N) O'Connell was emphatic in her response: "I couldn't be happier. People are very professional and fair right across the board. They don't treat me any differently than anyone else, and I wouldn't have it any other way." Lt(N) O'Connell will be a welcome asset to the submarine community. I know, because having conducted all of my basic training with her, and write this article as a former submariner. Always the groundbreaker, she's a passionate, professional sailor who will do the service proud.

"No matter where you travel, when you meet a guy who's been...  
There's an instant kind of friendship  
'cause we're brothers of the 'phin."

Robert Reed, George Washington Carver (SSBN-656)

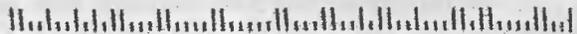


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 U. S. Submarine Veterans, Perch Base  
 6509 W. Devonshire  
 Glendale, AZ 85033-3350

<http://perch-base.org>



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