

# Arizona Sub Vets Perch Base

## Midwatch

July 2000  
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### Arizona Sub Vets, Perch Base Officers

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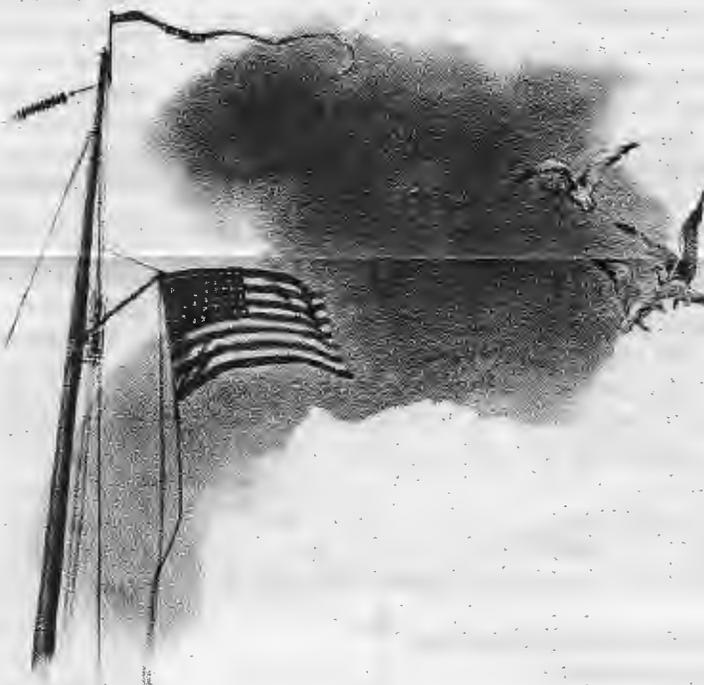
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### July Eternal Patrol Days:

USS-S28 (SS133) 4 July 1944 52 men lost  
USS ROBALO (SS273) 26 July 1944 81 men lost

*Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol*

July's meeting will be held on 8 July 2000  
at American Legion Post #6 in Prescott

(See Page 6)

### July's Meeting Location:



As has become a summer custom, July's meeting will be held in Prescott at the American Legion Post #6, located on Pleasant and Goodwin Streets, just south of Gurley (RT 69), and east of the center of town. Lunch at a nominal fee will be served between 1200 and 1300. Drinks will be available from the bar. Bring your wives to this one, they'll enjoy the ride and meeting other wives.... The cool air and shopping of Prescott isn't too shabby either. Perhaps even make a weekend of it. You guys from Prescott. There's no excuse to miss this one. We're holding it for you in your own backyard. Come on out!!

### From The Wardroom:

As many of you may have already noticed, our "Next Meeting" notice has been shifted from inside pages of *Midwatch* and now appears on the front cover. I believe this may remove any confusion some of you have had in searching through the newsletter trying to find this information and giving up in frustration. I hope this also is a wake-up call for those who always showed up at meetings in the past and have lately been greatly missed. You know who you are, but I'll only give their initials: **Steve Day, Doug Eddy, Charlie Greene, Steve Hough, Larry Krieger, Paul Miller, Joe Otreba, Ray Perron, Bob Sungy, Brian Thomason, Kenny Wayne, and George Woods.** To name a few. Gee, I forgot. I did say only initials, didn't I. Sorry guys. But honestly, we do all miss seeing and being with you. You have been among the backbone of our Base. Drop in occasionally and say, "Hi". For anyone trying to reach me in July, Lee and I are heading north to San Luis Obispo, California, for a couple of weeks immediately following the July meeting. Our email will be functioning and our voice mail activated; but don't expect a reply until we return. I'll be rigged for silent running. I'll contact all those trying to reach me when I return. See you in August. Stay well !!

### Perch Base Member Shipping Out:

"Received the following"

Roger,

I am being transferred by my company to a new position in Atlanta. I want to thank the Perch Base members for the respect they have shown me at a very difficult time in my life. Things have now smoothed out for me, but as you know, I was not around much because of my changed priorities. I will always remain a member of USSVI, and may attend meetings at Grayback Base (Roswell, GA) or Kings Bay. I wish all of you good luck and smooth sailing. Perch Base will always have a special place in my heart.

Your shipmate,

**Monica Helms - MM1 (SS)**

### Commanders Reply

Dear Monica,

I wish you luck in your new position but want you to know that both Lee and I will always think of you as a friend. Perhaps equally as important, Perch Base and especially I will always value you as a fellow submariner. Keep in touch.

Zero Bubble,

Roger

### Lost Boats & Crews for July:

**USS S-28 (SS133)** Launched December 13, 1923, Lost July 4, 1944. 52 men lost.

**S-28** participated in a variety of Fleet exercises and training missions prior to WWII. On 7 December 1941 she was undergoing overhaul at Mare Island. On 22 January 1942 she returned to San Diego, where she resumed her prewar training activities for the Underwater Sound Training School. In spring she was finally ordered to the Aleutians to augment the defenses of that Alaskan Island chain. Poor weather, lack of speed, and mechanical failures impeded the hunting of the WWI design submarine during five war patrols out of Dutch Harbor. After overhaul and superstructure modification, **S-28** returned to Dutch Harbor and on 13 July 1943, departed for the northern Kurils for her sixth patrol. She patrolled off Paramushiro, Japan, and in the straits to the north and south of that island. Again she was hindered by the weather, obsolete design, and by mechanical failure. On 16 August she returned to Massacre Bay, Attu, for further refit. On 8 September 1943, **S-28** departed the western Aleutians to return to the northern Kurils for her seventh war patrol. On the afternoon of the 19<sup>th</sup>, she closed on a Japanese ship off Araitō but her torpedoes missed the mark. The enemy ship turned and delivered a ten-minute depth charge attack, which further weakened her. Later in the day, **S-28** fired a spread of four torpedoes that sent a Jap gunboat to the bottom. After another overhaul, at Pearl Harbor, **S-28** found herself back on training duty. On 3 July 1944 she began training operations off Oahu with Coast Guard cutter *Reliance*. Contact was lost between the two on the afternoon of the 4<sup>th</sup>. All attempts to establish communications failed. Two days later, a diesel oil slick appeared in the area where **S-28** had been operating, but the extreme depth exceeded the range of available rescue equipment. A Court of Inquiry was unable to determine the cause of the loss of **S-28** and the 52 officers and men who went down with her. **S-28** received one battle star for her World War II services.

**USS RABALO (SS273)** Launched 28 September 1943, Lost 26 July 1944, 81 men lost

After trials on Lake Michigan, **USS RABALO** departed for the Pacific via the Mississippi River and Panama Canal, which I found interesting. On her

first war patrol, she hunted for Japanese ships west of the Philippines, where she damaged a large freighter. During her second war patrol in the South China Sea near Indochina, she damaged a 7500-ton tanker. **USS RABALO** departed Fremantle 22 June 1944 on her third patrol. She set course for the South China Sea to conduct her patrol in the vicinity of the Nauma Islands. After transiting Makassar and Balabac Straits, she was scheduled to arrive on station about 6 July and remain until dark on 2 August 1944. On 2 July, a contact reported that **USS RABALO** had sighted a Japanese battleship with air cover and two destroyers for escorts. The ship was then just east of Borneo. No other messages were ever received from the submarine and when she did not return from patrol, she was presumed lost. On 2 August a note was dropped from the window of a cell of Puerto Princesa, a prison camp on Palaw Island in the Philippines. It was picked up by an American soldier who was on work detail nearby. The note was in turn given to H.D. Hough, Yeoman Second Class, who was also a prisoner at the camp. On 4 August he contacted Trinidad Mendosa, wife of guerrilla leader, Dr. Mendosa, who furnished further information of the survivors. From these sources it was concluded that **USS RABALO** was sunk on 26 July 1944, 2 miles off the western coast of Palawan Island, from an explosion in her after battery, probably caused by an enemy mine. Only four men were able to swim ashore and made their way through the jungles to a small village northwest of the Puerto Princesa camp, where Japanese Military Police captured them and jailed them for guerrilla activities. On 15 August, they were evacuated by a Japanese destroyer and never heard from again. **USS RABALO** received two battle stars for her World War II service.

#### Submarine Stories:

All submariners have sub stories. Send us yours in 450 words or less (may be anonymous). Or better yet, come forward and tell us about it at a meeting. Here's one submitted by Shipmate **Gary Patterson**, from Harry Hedin EN1(SS) Blackfoot Idaho.

#### Life on the New/Old Boats - The Hardluck Four and a Quarter:

The years following World War II, lasting well into the 60's, were noted in the submarine force for accelerated programs aimed at upgrading and streamlining the boats that survived the war. New construction brought about the **TRIGGER** class - smaller and faster - but not too reliable. Strip and streamline: **USS ODAX** - 19 knots submerged for 30 minutes! Give all boats a snorkel (two engine, four engine) - series/parallel battery capability - no deck guns, etc. What a way to treat those old warriors. Electric Boat, Portsmouth and Mare Island were going full bore on conversions. A missile firing boat came next - **USS HALIBUT**. Shoot from a housing on

deck, dive and hide. Nuclear power - Boomers - Fast Attacks were just on the drawing boards. The **USS NAUTILUS** in the late 50's would soon seal the fate of the old diesel boats. No longer was heard "answer bells on four main engines". The **USS TRUMPETFISH (SS425)** had been constructed on Portsmouth plans. Cramp Shipyard, Philly, was about to enter the world of the **GUPPY**. Snorkel - series/parallel batteries, etc. The dinky engine was pulled from the aft engine room. A not so effective air conditioning plant was put in its place. The air compressors were crowded out of the pump room by a snorkel mast plus other gear. They were "stuffed" into the forward engine room, lower level flats. They were also "stuffed" down the throats of the engine room gang. If you run 'em, you fix 'em! More than one engineman "busted" over those Hardy-Tynes. Dockside trials after conversion were interesting. An aircraft altimeter was installed at the main engine throttle station. When the snorkel head valve was shut, a system of solenoids and linkages would shut down the fuel racks and kill the engines. The altimeter was to perform this task at a vacuum comparable to an altitude of 6,000 feet. With two engines on line and the snorkel head valve shut, the altimeter response was so violent the needle flew off and throttlemen had to shut down the engines by hand. Number two sanitary tank inboard vent was piped and valved through the forward engine room bulkhead and terminated a short distance from the number one engine intake "silencer". Number two sanitary had to be near full when this exercise was started. That Fairbanks engine sucked up toilet paper plus some "wrinkled dead trout" or so the throttlemen said. A hacksaw increased the distance between the inboard vent and the engine. And, number one main engine was no longer referred to as a "rag burner". Free at last! **USS TRUMPETFISH (SS425)** was back in Key West. Heavy duty sea trials were scheduled. North Atlantic snorkel ops! CO was K. G. Schact of **USS PERCH** fame - Navy Cross and ex-POW. All ahead full skipper. Forty-seven days of pure misery. The much hated snorkel took its toll, ear aches, sinuses, and the inability to sleep. Just waiting for the next heavy sea to short out the snorkel head valve electrodes and slam the valve shut - then wait for the engine vacuum or head valve to reopen sucking all the frecken air out of the boat **Life's a bitch**.

Key West Ops once again. A new CO, Herman "The German" Miller. New problems too. The snorkel once raised would not lower. The steel mast had rusted and pitted and would sometimes jam when being lowered. Many buckets of diesel fuel and much use of wire brushes might, if we were lucky, coax it down. We found out accidentally that a hard astern bell - when the entire boat shuddered - might also lower the mast. It was "Maneuvering - prepare to answer a hard astern bell - Control - prepare to lower the snorkel mast" in that order. **Life's a bitch**.

In 14 months that I served on the old four and a

quarter, I don't remember ever completing an equalizer charge. An equalizer was required every 28 days. The battery age, its condition, and the ambient temperature drove the battery temperature to 128 degrees and then the charge secured. This, after two engines were on line for as long as seven or eight hours. **Life's a bitch.**

A major All Navy exercise in the Caribbean....At the end of the ops, Herman the German was going to make one more "Battle Stations Torpedo" run. "Up scope" was followed by "Flood Negative! - Rig for Collision!" Proceeded immediately by a severe jolt and a down angle by the stern. An APA had rammed the old 425! Aft torpedo room reached test depth and we were blowing safety plus the aft group of ballast tanks. On reaching the surface, it wasn't a pretty sight - scopes, radar, snorkel mast and sail section all cluttered together and bent. SUBLANT to **TRUMPETFISH**: "Proceed to San Juan - anchor out - tug to arrive and assist". The tug provided torches and much of the loose hardware was burned off and pushed over the side. A letter of reprimand was received later about littering the area!

SUBLANT to **TRUMPETFISH**: "Proceed Portsmouth via New London Sub Base. Surface ops only!" The old four and a quarter was set up and equipped for tropical waters only - no DC heaters on board, no foul weather gear, few blankets, fewer shoes, definitely no dress blues. Cape Hatteras in March gets real nasty. We would run on two engines - alternate forward to aft run. When lookouts came off the bridge, they would run back to the engine room and lay over those Fairbanks covers to get warm. Captain Miller gave the OOD permission to shut main induction, secure engines, and go on battery propulsion if the heavy seas warranted it. The heavy seas made it so.

Forward engine room taking in water - the OOD orders the main induction shut

No green light! It didn't shut (debris was found in the valve). Engines started, Throttlemen shut down the engines again along with the inboard air supply. Bilges were filled with seawater up to the engine bedplates. **Lifes a bitch!**

You may have used or heard the old expression, "The best two boats in the fleet are the one I'm going to and the one I'm leaving." Upon leaving the old four and a quarter, I reduced that old expression by half. **Life's a bitch.**

#### Commander's Comments:

I guess I was just lucky. I served on two of these old conversions and found them sound. However, all us old diesel boaters that sailed the old snorkels can readily sympathize with Harry's comments about what it was like running on engines when submerged at periscope depth and having the snorkel dive under a wave. This caused a suction through the boat that little rally sucked your eardrums out through your head. What fun . . . especially while you were sleeping. AHHH, the good old days!

#### The Old Days and The New....A Comparison:

- The Old Days - NCO's had a typewriter on their desks for doing daily reports.  
 Today ----- They have computers, and wonder why no work is getting done.
- The Old Days - They painted pictures of girls on airplanes to remind us of home.  
 Today ----- They put the real thing in the cockpit.
- The Old Days - You were taught to aim at your enemy and shoot him.  
 Today ----- You spray 500 bullets into the brush, don't hit anything, and retreat because you're out of ammo.
- The Old Days - They collected enemy intelligence and analyzed it.  
 Today ----- They collect your pee and analyze it.
- The Old Days - Medals were awarded to heroes who saved lives at the risk of their own.  
 Today ----- Medals are awarded to people who work at headquarters.
- The Old Days - You slept in barracks like a soldier.  
 Today ----- You sleep in a dormitory like a college kid.
- The Old Days - We defeated powerful countries like Germany and Japan.  
 Today ----- We come up short against Iraq and Yugoslavia.
- The Old Days - If you wanted beer and conversation, you went to the NCO or Officers' Club.  
 Today ----- Beer costs you \$2.75, membership is forced, and someone is watching how much you drink.
- The Old Days - The Exchange had bargains for sailors who made little money.  
 Today ----- You can get it better and cheaper at WalMart.
- The Old Days - We could recognize the enemy by their Nazi helmets.  
 Today ----- We are wearing the Nazi helmets.
- The Old Days - We called the enemy "Krauts" and "Japs" because we didn't like them.  
 Today ----- We call the enemy the "opposing force" or "aggressor" because we don't want to offend them.
- The Old Days - Victory was declared when the enemy was defeated and his homeland destroyed.  
 Today ----- Victory is declared when the enemy says he is sorry, or wants his homeland rebuilt.
- The Old Days - A commander would put his butt

on the line to protect his men.

Today ——— A commander will put his men on the line to protect his butt.

The Old Days - Wars were planned and run by competent officers who won important victories.

Today ——— Wars are planned by politicians and ended by politicians.

The Old Days - We were fighting aggression and the country was committed to winning.

Today ——— We don't know why we're fighting and the government is committed to social programs.

The Old Days - All you could think about was getting out and becoming a civilian again.

Today ——— All you can think about is getting out and becoming a civilian again.

### For Your Health:

There are two types of Diabetes. Type 1 appears in childhood or early adulthood. Type 2 appears more frequently in adults and affects 7% of the population. Since early symptoms are subtle, men and women our age should have annual blood sugar tests but also, being overweight, or on a high-calorie, high-fat diet, a sedentary lifestyle, or having a parent with diabetes are major risk factors. Diabetes raises risk of nerve damage, impotence, stroke, heart attack, blindness, amputation, kidney failure, dementia, and quite possibly cancer. Lose weight if over weight. Exercise regularly and vigorously. Avoid alcohol. Avoid stress. Eat a diet high in fruits and vegetables. And limit your intake of high calorie, high fat foods.

### Small Stores:

Our Storekeeper, **Dave Harnish**, has a comprehensive array of USSVI Small Stores, consisting of hats, shirts, belt buckles, beer mugs, cocktail glasses, coffee mugs and a slew of other memorabilia. Give him a call. (See front page listing.) Or better yet, come to a meeting and see these items first hand.

### Membership List:

Perch Base is in the process of updating its Membership List, complete with email and home addresses and phone numbers. It will be available to all members. However, if perchance you do not wish to disclose this information and make it openly available to the membership, it is essential that you notify the Base Commander before October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000. Although Perch Base has no intention of divulging this list to outside solicitors, Perch Base nor its officers will accept any responsibility should this list fall into hands of solicitors.

### On The Lighter Side:

The Pope dies unexpectedly and finds himself at the gates of Heaven at 0300 hours. He knocks and

the very sleepy former submarine electricians mate on watch opens the gate and grumbles "wadda you want?" I'm the recently deceased Pope and have done 63 years of Godly works and thought I should check in here. The old gate watch checks his clipboard and says, "I ain't got no orders here for you, just take your stuff over to the old WWII barracks, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, open bay, and we'll sort this out in the morning. Off the Pope goes only to find that all the bottom racks are taken and all empty lockers have no doors. The tired Pope then stows his gear under a rack and climbs into an upper bunk.

The next morning he awakens to sounds of cheering and clapping. He goes to the window and sees a shiny convertible coming down from a golden mansion on the hill. The sidewalks are lined with Angels cheering and throwing confetti. In the back seat of the convertible is a Navy Chief, Dolphins shining on his chest, a cigar in his mouth and a can of beer in one hand and his other arm around a beautiful blonde Angel. This upsets the Pope greatly and he runs downstairs to the MAA shack and says, "Hey, explain this to me, here I am, the recently deceased Pope, and I have spent 63 years doing Godly deeds on Earth, am here in old open bay barracks, and I see this Chief that I know has committed every sin known to man, staying in the golden mansion on the hill and getting a hero's welcome. How can this be?" The Master at Arms calmly looks up and says, "We get a Pope up here every 20 or 30 years, but this is the first Navy Submarine Chief we've ever had."

### Meeting Location:

The August Meeting will be held at the American Legion Post 29 at 6822 North 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Glendale, one block south of Glendale Avenue. Take I-17 to Glendale Ave., head west to 58<sup>th</sup> Avenue, then south 1 block. The Legion is on the left and parking is in a lot directly behind the post. From west valley, just get to Glendale Ave., via Grand, and follow the rest of the directions. The building is the one on the west side of the parking lot. The American Legion ladies will serve us lunch at a very nominal cost. It will be served between 12:00 and 13:00. Beer and soda will be available throughout the meeting. All meetings, unless otherwise specified, will be conducted at this location. The DAV will no longer be our meeting site. This is the last issue that will reflect this change.

### Perch Base Calendar of Events for 2000:

(Mark Your Calendars)

- 8 Jul 00 ——— Meeting @ Prescott American Legion, Prescott, 1300 hours
- 12 Aug 00 ——— Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, 1300 hours
- 9 Sep 00 ——— Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, 1300 hours
- 14 Oct 00 ——— Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, 1300 hours

11 Nov 00 — Meeting @ American Legion,  
Glendale, 1300 hours  
(Veteran's Day)  
? Dec 00 — Perch Base Christmas/Hanukkah  
Party Date and location TBD.

#### Chaplains Corner:

I'm not sure if all our members are aware of what the Chaplain's job entails, so let me fill you in. It's kind of like a "central clearing house" for making our members aware of illnesses, deaths, etc., which may occur to shipmates or their families. The Chaplain sometimes visits, makes comforting phone calls, sends appropriate sympathy or get well wishes and, in the case of a member or his immediate family, perhaps flowers. So if the plight of a shipmate should come to your attention, please contact your Base Chaplain for follow-up. (It's he who customarily contacts these persons on behalf of Perch Base.) And for those who didn't know, until someone else steps forward to take over this job, your Base Chaplain for the last four years has been **Roger Cousin**, your current Base Commander. No one has contacted me this month, so I assume all is well in Perch land.

#### Insights:

If you tell the truth, you don't have to remember anything. If you lend someone \$20, and never see that person again, it was probably worth it . . . . . Think about it!

USSVI National Centennial Convention, October 16 - 20  
WWII National Convention August 30 - September 2.

Reprint from June's Perch Base Midwatch - for those interested. This will be the last time this will appear in any issue of Midwatch, so pay heed. The WWII National Centennial Convention will be held in Phoenix, August 30 - September 2, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. (Contact Jack Richardson, **623-546-9009** for particulars). The USSVI Centennial Celebration will take place at their convention in Atlantic City, October 16 - 20. The location of the USSVI Convention will be the Boardwalk Holiday Inn (headquarters). The Boardwalk Howard Johnson, International Howard Johnson Hotel, and the Tropicana Hotel and Casino, all in Atlantic City, are within walking distance of each other. We are getting the same special pricing from all three hotels and the down payment requirements are much more reasonable with this new Casino.

Boardwalk Howard Johnson - \$91.60/night single  
or double (tax incl.) (Chelsea Ave. off  
Boardwalk) **1-800-548-3030.**

International Howard Johnson - \$80.40/night single  
or double (tax incl.). Chelsea Ave. & Pacific  
Ave. (1 block from Boardwalk HJ)  
**1-800-695-4685.**

Tropicana Casino & Resort - \$112.80/night single  
or double (tax incl.) (on the Boardwalk and  
Brighton Ave.) (1 block from host hotel)  
**1-800-345-8767.**

You must make your own Hotel Reservations and provide your own transportation. Rooms are allocated under United States Submarine Veterans Convention (or Reunion). (Cancellations will be accepted up to 48 hours in advance.) You may fly into either Philadelphia International or Atlantic City International (ACI) airports, depending on your carrier. At the Philly Airport you can take a train directly to Atlantic City (about a one-hour ride). You can also arrange transportation at the "Ground Transportation Desk". Recommendation: Do it through your travel agent when you book your airline. Bring your Wives to this one, Guys . . . . They'll Love It.



#### Perch Base Booster Club for 2000:

I wish to thank the following members for their above and beyond financial assistance to our Base. **Jerry Allston, Ken Anderson, Joe Bernard, Jerry Becker, Wayne Braastad, Mike Brietner, Tom Burke, Jim Clewett, Roger Cousin, Earl Crowley, Steve Day, Jeff Duncan, Doug Eddy, Tom Fooshee, Billy Grieves, Lee Graybeal, Warren Grossetta, Dave Harnish, Glenn Herold, Steve Hough, Jim Johns, Davy Jones, John Lang, Hubie Maxey, Bob May, Jim Michaud, Roger Miller, Bob Mitchell, Bob Moore, Joe Mullins, Jim Nelson, Jim Newman, Joe Otreba, Tom Patterson, Royce Pettit, Ray Perron, Scott Protero, Ray Samson, Frank Rumbaugh, Joe Schwartz (deceased), Tyler Smith, Adrian Stuke, Lou Trejera, Don Wannamaker, John Wilson, Don Whitehead, Bob Wonsley, George Woods, Jerry Yowell.**

Thanks to all of you who realize the financial burden of running this organization and for giving that extra financial support to help our Base. (Please excuse me if I missed anyone, but please let me know.)

#### Women in the Submarine Service:

The following was forwarded by Shipmate  
**Warner Doyle**

*"The Washington Times, May 1, 2000"*

The Pentagon's civilian Defense Advisory Committee On Women In The Services (DACOWITS) has recommended the Navy sexually integrate submarines by first putting female officers on ballistic missile submarines. This recommendation from DACOWITS represents a new tactic in its unsuccessful drive to convince the Navy to make male-only submarines coed. Their report to the Navy says complete integration should begin by putting female officers on Ohio-class missile submarines, a much larger ship than Los Angeles attack subs. By recommending female officers, but not enlisted sailors, the committee is attempting to blunt the Navy's chief argument that insufficient space exists for women's privacy, even on the bigger boats. The 155-sailor Ohio-class boats can lurk undetected for months under the sea, armed with long-range Trident ballistic missiles. The Navy had no immediate comment yesterday. Committee spokeswoman, Army Maj. Susan Kolb (why must there always have to be Army personnel overseeing Navy projects?) said they picked officers and missile subs because of the vessel's larger size and because officer quarters would provide more privacy than enlisted berthing (no kidding!). "They need to first introduce women into the larger submarines before any recommendation could be made on the smaller submarines," Maj. Kolb said. Last summer, for the first time, the Navy dispatched female ROTC students to spend two nights on Ohio subs - a sign to some that the Navy is inching toward coed submarines. Previously, the future women officers were restricted to day trips. (Hell, this was no more than a "civilian" Tiger Cruise . . . nothing was proven.)

The new DACOWITS report also recommends the Navy "redesign" Virginia-class subs now under construction to accommodate women - a move the Navy says will cost 4 million more per ship and take away war-fighting capabilities. (That sounds like a great idea!) The committee is comprised of 36 civilians, including five men, appointed by the Defense Secretary. 34 members attending a meeting last weekend voted unanimously to integrate submarines. The panel is chaired by Vickie McCall, a **real estate agent**, who serves on the Utah alcohol and Beverage Control Commission (cripes!) The Navy is not expected to accept mixed-sex subs any time soon. A Navy memo provided to the Advisory Committee describes the cramped living and working conditions for male submariners. The memo concluded by saying, "The Navy's decision regarding the assignment of women to submarines has been reviewed, determining that no new information has become available, which would provide a basis for

changing the policy." In response, the Committee's report "DACOWITS acknowledges the Navy's concerns regarding privacy and the costs associated with integrating women into the submarine community. However, the Navy's historic experience and commitment to utilization of women on other platforms "provides a model for change. Drawing on these experiences will better enable the Navy to overcome obstacles it perceives as prohibiting integration of women into submarine service." On redesigning the entire Virginia class, the committee wrote, "Current experience indicates it is unreasonable to presume that women will not be assigned to submarines sometime in the next 40 years (estimated service life of Virginia-class submarines). Redesign now before this submarine class begins full production will avoid even more costly reconfiguration in the future."

A Navy briefing paper obtained by The Washington Times says redesigning the Virginia subs, which are due for operation in 2004, "would have two negative effects: further degrade habitability for both genders and require removal of necessary operational equipment reducing war fighting effectiveness." The Committee has had mixed success. For example, it has recommended for years that the ARMY (again, the ARMY), sexually integrate crews for the multiple launch rocket system. The Army has refused each time. The Navy sexually integrated most combat ships in 1994, including 5,000-sailor aircraft carriers. But it excluded submarines because of tight living conditions, tense months at sea and worries that sexual tension could ruin unit cohesion. (I agree.)

I believe this nightmare should be put to bed permanently. I also believe that wives of today's submariners should be poled to see what they think about having their husbands deployed for months at a time in such tight quarters as a submarine with young probably shapely and attractive women aboard. What do your wives have to say about it?)

#### Is this a Joke?

USS William J. Clinton, USN Press Release, Newport News, Virginia May 7.

The U.S. Navy, amidst lavish celebration, launched the newest addition to the Fleet today: the USS William J. Clinton. Clinton, according to a Navy spokesperson, will add a new twist to the Fleet's combat capabilities, and will solve a number of tricky problems that have arisen in the year since women were added to the complements of naval vessels. The USS Clinton, which has been designated AGH(M)-1, is a brand-new, state-of-the-art **maternity hospital ship**. (You read correctly.) A Navy Spokesman, briefing reporters before the christening ceremony (the ceremony for the ship, of course, not its occupants) stated that the new vessel is designed to alleviate a serious problem aboard ships of the fleet, to wit, the increasing incidence of shipboard pregnancy. "We are concerned because the necessity

of evacuating female sailors from fleet units has become in increasingly difficult operation, given the number of evacuees that we have to deal with on a weekly basis. "Clinton will be equipped with its own helicopter-airlift wing, which will relieve the operational burden on existing combat units. Clinton is the first of a 15 ship class. (15?) Each ship, of 80,000 tons, costs \$15 billion. A Clinton-class ship is to be added to each of the Navy's Carrier Battle Groups to insure full combat-readiness in the face of the increasing number of expectant naval personnel. Each AGH(M) is provided with a fully-equipped OB/GYN staff, a complete birthing facility (staffed by Navy medical personnel trained as midwife/Lamaze specialists) and a Neonatal Clinic. "A comprehensive Day Care Center is included in order to allow new sailor-mothers to return to duty as quickly as possible, which will greatly increase the EFFICIENCY OF NAVAL OPERATIONS." The ship's sponsor, "Patricia Ireland" christened the vessel by breaking two bottles across the ship's bow, (one containing infant formula) symbolizing the services to be provided to a new generation of Navy women. The other, filled with kiwi/orange/cucumber nectar, representing the Navy's commitment to fulfilling the needs of all its pregnant crewpersons. (What the hell is the United States Navy turning into? And what metamorphose will submarines have to go through under these circumstances? No wonder there's little place in today's Navy for America's career fighting men. This is one hell of a serious problem. (Roger)

### Remembering Independence Day

*Have you ever wondered what happened to the 56 men who signed the Declaration of Independence?*

Five signers were captured by the British as traitors, and tortured before they died. Twelve had their homes ransacked and burned. Two lost their sons serving in the Revolutionary Army; another had two sons captured. Nine of the 56 fought and died from wounds or hardships of the Revolutionary War. They signed and they pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor. What kind of men were they? Twenty-four were lawyers and jurists. Eleven were merchants, nine were farmers and large plantation owners; men of means, well educated. But they signed the Declaration of Independence knowing full well that the penalty would be death if they were captured. Carter Braxton of Virginia, a wealthy planter and trader, saw his ships swept from the seas by the British Navy. He sold his home and properties to pay his debts, and died in rags. Thomas McKean was so hounded by the British that he was forced to move his family almost constantly. He served in the Congress without pay, and his family was kept in hiding. His possessions were taken from him, and poverty was his reward. Vandals or soldiers looted the properties of Dillery, Hall, Clymer, Walton, Gwinnett, Heyward, Rutledge, and Middleton.

At the battle of Yorktown, Thomas Nelson Jr,

noted that the British General Cornwallis had taken over the Nelson home for his headquarters. He quietly urged General George Washington to open fire. The home was destroyed, and Nelson died bankrupt. Francis Lewis had his home and properties destroyed. The enemy jailed his wife, and she died within a few months. John Hart was driven from his wife's bedside as she was dying. Their 13 children fled for their lives. His fields and his gristmill were laid to waste. For more than a year he lived in forests and caves, returning home to find his wife dead and his children vanished. A few weeks later he died from exhaustion and a broken heart.

Norris and Livingston suffered similar fates. Such were the stories and sacrifices of the American Revolution. These were not wild-eyed, rabble-rousing ruffians. They were soft-spoken men of means and education. They had security, but they valued liberty more. Standing tall, straight, and unwavering, they pledged: "For the support of this declaration, with firm reliance on the protection of the divine providence, we mutually pledge to each other, our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." They gave you and me a free and independent America. The history books never told you a lot about what happened in the Revolutionary War. We didn't fight just the British. We were British subjects at that time and we fought our own government! Some of us take these liberties so much for granted, but we shouldn't. So, take a few minutes while enjoying your 4th of July holiday and silently thank these patriots. It's not much to ask for the price they paid.

Remember: freedom is never free! I hope you will show your support by please sending this to as many people as you can. It's time we get the word out that patriotism is NOT a sin, and the Fourth of July has more to it than beer, picnics, and baseball games.

### Perch Base Lottery

As you have noted, there was an insert in this months Midwatch with tickets attached. Shipmate **Luis Tejera** has once again donated a COLOR, LIMITED EDITION action print of a fleet type submarine in a pre-Guppy configuration with guns mounted and underway on the surface. This beautiful painting is already matted, ready for framing, and is signed by the artist, non other than CDR Pete Bucher, former XO of the **RONQUIL (SS396)**, and later Captain of the famous Pueblo when the North Koreans seized and imprisoned him and his crew in the incident that is so familiar to us all. Pete is now a famous artist living in California.

Lou is making this print and a copy of the hard covered, 577 page, complete dramatic accounts of "SUBMARINE OPERATIONS IN WORLD WAR 2" available to our members through a raffle which will be drawn at the September meeting. Winner need not be present to win. This book is a MUST for any former or current submariner's library. If you wish to

participate in this drawing (your chances are a hell-of-a-lot better than Vegas and it has been voted on by the membership that all proceeds go to either a destitute submariner, if we know of one, or to a fund set up at Luke Air Force Base here in Arizona to benefit active AF military families stationed there who do not have the means to give their families a holiday meal or small Christmas/Chanukah gift of a toy or piece of clothing.....and YES, there are many of these cases at Luke and in today's military), then fill out the information on the ticket stubs provided, each ticket costs \$2.00, retain your half, and send your check and hopefully winning ticket to **Roger Cousin** 13754 Via Montoya , Sun City West AZ, 85375-2053. If additional tickets are desired (or if you just wish to help these military families with a little extra this holiday season), contact Roger...address, phone & email is on front cover under Base Cmdr & Chaplain

*Good Luck !*

### June's Meeting Attendees

Considering the time of year and vacation schedules, June's meeting was well attended. My thanks to those that showed up for our monthly lunch and get-together: **Carl Scott, George Woods, Don Wannamaker, Rod Sanborn, Frank Rumbaugh, Bob May, Jim Strassels, Bill Hatcher, Luis Tejera, Royce Pettit, Howard Doyle, Gary Patterson, Paul Miller < Larry "Bubba" Loftus, Davy Jones, (perhaps new member) Bruce Kasmer, and me Roger Cousin**

### Thresher Addendum From June's Newsletter:

*By: Wayne Braastad*

Thank you for printing my piece about the **THRESHER** in last month's newsletter. The only part I left out was the Epilogue.....ever since that dreadful day, April 10, 1963, I have had to live with.....What if? Did I do enough to fight for what I knew was wrong with this submarine? You see, today I am a retired submarine officer of 78 years old, but back then, I was like so many young former enlisted men who came up through the ranks as mustangs that were looking to step up to command. I had been a good Chief and the Navy was my life . Then, at the time of the **THRESHER**, I was a Lieutenant and Duty Officer. But how much more could I do than what I did? I keep asking myself that same haunting question over and over...through I can't tell you, how many sleepless nights. Yet, I still feel haunted with the pain that I should have done more. There were 129 young men on that boat...some of them I knew. So as I constantly pray to God and to these brave men for forgiveness for my lack of.....whatever more I could have done, I can't help but think that I should have at least yelled out at the top of my voice that sending this boat out was wrong as it was in dire need of help.

So I live with this guilt today. But as years go by, I think of it less.....that is until I have a few drinks

in me and the whole thing again surfaces and again I find myself crying.

Please forgive me.....your shipmate

Wayne

### Commander's Comments:

Wayne is living with an unjustifiable amount of guilt and anguish. He's a simple man who lives a quiet life. He and his wife of 57 years live near Tucson where he remains active in community organizations. He doesn't know what ever became of Captain Cushing, and doesn't much care. Two additional interesting occurrences happened to Wayne during his submarine years.

As one of two Materials Officers working at SUBLANT, he was destined and looking forward to shipping out as an Officer aboard the **THRESHER** that fateful day. His superior, however, canceled his orders in favor of his friend and co-Materials Officer who came up first in needing sea time. His friend went down with the **THRESHER**.

The other incident happened an ocean apart and in a different age. It was 1943. His boat was the **HERRING**. Wayne had already made war patrols aboard his boat. But now, he was about to be married to Maddie, his sweetheart. The crew of the **HERRING** were all at the wedding.....some were in his wedding party. Wayne was given leave for his honeymoon. The **HERRING** and it's crew under Lcdr D. Zabriski, left Pearl Harbor May 16th to conduct her 8th patrol . You can read about this exciting patrol in **Lou Tejera's** lottery book "U.S. Submarine Operations in World War 2", or my shortened and not nearly as hair-raising account found in June's issue of Midwatch. Suffice to say, **HERRING** was sunk, and along with her, Maddie and Wayne's entire male wedding party.

All I can say to Wayne is: it was *not* your fault in any of these incidents. God works in strange ways not to be interpreted by you or any other human being. None of these crews hold you responsible, I truly believe this....nor do their families or loved ones. Be proud of what you tried to do, and be prouder that you can count these submariners amongst your shipmates..... just as we at PERCH BASE are proud to call YOU ....SHIPMATE.

*God be with you SHIPMATE ! GREEN BOARD !*

### Perch Base Honors New Holland Club Inductees

Perch Base has received word from Jim Rolle of the Nationals honoring our request that 6 of our members be inducted into the famed USSVI Holland Club. These men will join those members of Perch who have already reached 50 Years Qualified in Submarines. The new inductees are: **Ken Becker**, 1947; **Joe Bernard**, 1944; **Billy Grieves**, 1939; **Hubert Maxey**, 1940; and **Bob May**, 1950 Two others are on the way: **Joe Mullins** and **Scott Prothero** who joined USSVI as National Life members in 1996 and will be eligible next year. They need 5 years continuous membership.

## Japanese Submarines on the West Coast?

Over a seven-day period, from December 18 to 24, 1941, nine Japanese submarines positioned at strategic points along the U.S. West coast attacked eight American merchant ships, of which two were sunk and two damaged. Six seamen were killed. It was the first and only time during the three years and eight months of war to come that more than one Japanese submarine appeared at the same time off the American coast.

Twelve I-type submarines of the Imperial Japanese Navy's 1st Submarine Squadron had taken up position in Hawaiian waters by the evening of December 6, 1941, anticipating an attack on U.S. Pacific Fleet ships if they broke out of Pearl Harbor the next day. So successful was the December 7 surprise attack that for two days not a single American ship was spotted at sea.

On December 10, the Japanese learned that an American Lexington-class aircraft carrier was heading for the U.S. mainland. Nine of the 12 subs were ordered to pursue and sink the enemy carrier, then take up positions at designated sites off the Pacific coast and begin attacking American merchant ships. As a climax to the operation, around midnight on Christmas Eve all nine subs were to shell selected U.S. coastal cities and lighthouses. After expending all of their 5.5-inch shells, they were to retire to Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands.

The nine submarines sent to shell the U.S. coast were all launched a year or two before the war began. With only slight differences, all had a range of approximately 15,000 miles, a surface speed of 23½ knots, carried as many as 18 torpedoes, mounted a 5.5-inch deck gun, were over 355 feet long and carried a complement of 94 to 100 men.

The nine subs were strategically located—based on prewar intelligence—to give them the best opportunity to attack the shipping lanes most commonly used by American merchantmen. Four subs, I-19, I-15, I-25 and I-26, were ordered to the most important locations: I-19 off Los Angeles Harbor, I-15 off San Francisco Bay, I-25 off the mouth of the Columbia River and I-26 off the Strait of Juan de Fuca, the important waterway leading into and out of the port of Seattle. The remaining five subs, assigned to locations that had been deemed less crucial, would nonetheless see the most action: I-9 off Cape Blanco, Ore.; I-17 off Cape Mendocino, Calif.; I-23 off Monterey Bay, Calif.; I-21 off Estero Bay, Calif.; and I-10 off San Diego.

About an hour before dawn on December 18, I-17 was moving quietly along the surface 15 miles off Cape Mendocino when one of her lookouts spotted a ship approaching. Kozo Nishino, captain of the 2,500-ton sub, ordered an attack on the American freighter Samoa, which was on her way to San Diego with a load of lumber. Since he was allotted only one torpedo per merchant ship, Nishino decided to open the attack with his 5.5-inch deck gun and use a torpedo only if necessary.

Moments before Samoa crossed the bow of I-17, First Mate John Lehtonen, on watch at the time, spotted a dim light from the approaching enemy sub and yelled down to the captain, "A submarine is attacking us!" Captain Nels Sinnes, who had been asleep, sat bolt upright in his bunk, quickly pulled on his pants and shirt, grabbed a life jacket and yelled into the crew's quarters for everyone to report to their lifeboat stations. As crewmen began tearing the canvas covers from the lifeboats, the Japanese opened up.

"Five shots were fired at us," Captain Sinnes later recalled. "One, apparently aimed at our radio antenna, burst in the air above the stern. Fragments fell to the deck."

Captain Nishino, unsatisfied with the results of the shelling from his pitching deck, ordered a torpedo fired at 70 yards. Seconds later, as Sinnes recalled, "We saw the telltale wake of a torpedo coming directly at us amidships. It was too late to do more than just wait for our destiny."

"(Then) the miracle happened. The torpedo went directly beneath us, didn't even touch the hull and continued beyond. A short distance away it exploded. There was a huge shower accompanied by smoke and flames. Fragments from the torpedo also fell on our deck."

A combination of three things saved the freighter and her crew. Two were the darkness and the torpedo's explosion away from the ship.

Nishino, unable to see whether the torpedo had hit the ship, moved in closer to check it out. In the dim light, with the Japanese sub less than 15 feet away, the third bit of luck came into play. "Shortly after the attack," said Sinnes, "the sub hove to about 40 feet away. Visibility was extremely poor and I couldn't make out the flag or anybody on board. There was a shout: 'Hi ya!' from the submarine. I replied, 'What do you want of us?' There was no answer. Then it disappeared, evidently thinking that we were sinking on account of our heavy port list."

The list was due to the fact that the engineers had been shifting water in the ballast tanks," Sinnes explained. "We also lost our No. 1 lifeboat a couple of days before in a storm, part of which was still hanging from its davit. He evidently thought... (we were) sinking on account of this and left us alone."

Sinnes was right. Captain Nishino did radio the flag submarine, I-15, off San Francisco, that he had sunk an American merchantman. Samoa hove to until daybreak at 7 a.m., then headed at full speed for San Diego, making port two days later.

On December 20, two days after his attack on Samoa, Captain Nishino got his second chance at an American merchantman. Around 1:30 that afternoon, the Socony-Vacuum Oil Company's tanker Emidio, returning empty from Seattle to San Francisco, was about 20 miles off Cape Mendocino when a report came down to the captain that a sub had been sighted about a quarter of a mile off the stern and was closing.

Captain Clark Farrow, after first attempting to outrun the enemy raider, ordered "full speed, and dumped ballast, but... had no chance to escape. We were rapidly overtaken. The sub was making 20 knots. I tried to get behind her but (the sub) reversed course and kept after us."

Realizing the situation was hopeless, Farrow ordered his radio operator, W.S. Foote, to send an SOS, which he did, accompanied by the words, "Under attack by enemy sub." No sooner had the message been tapped out over the wireless than I-17 opened up with its deck gun, the first shot carrying away the radio antenna. Two more shots from the sub struck Emidio, one of which destroyed one of the lifeboats hanging in its davits on deck.

Farrow stopped the engines and hoisted a white flag, then ordered the crew to take to the lifeboats. "Three of the crew—R.W. Pennington, Fred Potts and Stuart McGillivray—were attempting to launch one of

the boats when a shell struck it, spilling them into the water," said one of the crewmen later. "Other lifeboats were put over the side to search for the three missing men, but we couldn't find them."

With the exception of four men still on board and the three lost over the side, the remaining members of the 36-man crew quickly rowed away from the imperiled ship. About 10 minutes later, after a parting shot in the direction of the lifeboats, I-17 abruptly submerged. A couple of minutes later the reason for its sudden disappearance became apparent. "It may have been 10 or 15 minutes after the SOS when two U.S. bombers came roaring overhead from the coast," said Farrow later. "To us in the lifeboats it was a welcome sight. One of the two planes, circling where the sub had gone down, dropped a depth charge. We couldn't tell if it hit it or not."

The depth charge did not damage the sub. On board I-17, in fact, Captain Nishino had decided to risk attack from the American planes in order to take one torpedo shot at the abandoned tanker.

"We were still looking at where the sub went down," continued Farrow, "when we saw its periscope slowly push up above the surface. While still partially submerged it fired a torpedo from 200 yards. We could see the trail as it sped straight for the ship. It struck with a loud explosion."

On board Emidio, radioman Foote, who had quickly jury-rigged another antenna, was just preparing to send a second SOS when the torpedo hit. Undaunted by the blast, the dutiful wireless operator tapped out his SOS, added the words "Torpedoed in the stern,"

then calmly made his way to the main deck and jumped overboard.

The other men, oiler B.F. Moler, fireman Kenneth Kimes and 3rd engineer R.A. Winters—who had either ignored the order to abandon ship or were unaware of it—were still at their stations in the engine room when the torpedo struck. Astoundingly, Moler saw it penetrate the engine room bulkhead and pass so close to him that, as he told an examining medical officer the next day at the Eureka naval section base, "I could have reached out and touched it. It exploded on the other side of the engine room and killed Kimes and Winters outright." Despite three broken ribs and a punctured lung, Moler "somehow swam and climbed up to the upper deck and jumped overboard." Both Moler and Foote were picked up by the lifeboats.

"Back came the planes as the sub sank out of sight again," continued Farrow. "One of them dropped another depth charge. There was a big blast and plenty of smoke. That may have hit her, we figured, for we didn't see her again." Once again, however, the sub escaped damage. On February 23, 1942, I-17 would shell the Ellwood Oil Company refinery, 10 miles north of Santa Barbara—the first enemy shells to land on the continental United States in World War II.

Despite the torpedo hit, Emidio did not sink. Several days later, in fact, she ran aground on a pile of rocks off Crescent City, Calif., an amazing 85 miles north of where she had been torpedoed. The 31 survivors of the stricken ship rowed their lifeboats for 16 hours and 20 miles through a driving rainstorm until they were picked up by a Coast Guard lightship a few miles off Humbolt Bay.



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