

# Arizona Sub Vets Perch Base



## Midwatch

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### Arizona SubVets Perch Base Officers

**Base Commander**  
Dave Hamish  
6509 W. Devonshire  
Phoenix, AZ 85033-3350  
623-846-9245  
dhamish@qwest.net

**Base Storekeeper  
Vice Commander**  
Glenn Herold  
839 N. Rogers  
Mesa, AZ 85201-3849  
duke7@home.com  
623-962-6155

**Base Treasurer  
Memorial Committee Chair**  
Bob May  
1902 E. Karen Dr.  
Phoenix, AZ 85022-3915  
602-867-1445

**Base Secretary**  
Edgar Brooks  
517 Eagle Crest Dr.  
Prescott, AZ 86301-5424  
520-778-4069  
EdgarB5352@aol.com

**Base Chaplain**  
Warner H Doyle  
13600 W. Roanoke Ave.  
Goodyear, AZ 85338-2236  
623-935-3830  
chdoyle@worldnet.att.net

**Membership Committee Chair**  
Ramon Samson  
9324 W. Briarwood Cir.  
Sun City, AZ 85351-1425  
623-815-9247  
rsamson@bnswest.net

**Public Relations Chair**  
Ben Acosta  
12914 W. Alvarado Rd.  
Avondale, AZ 85323-7142  
benvirg@juno.com

**Midwatch Editor/Publisher**  
John Wilson  
PO Box 31056  
Flagstaff, AZ 86003  
520-773-4946  
flood\_negative@usa.net



### May Eternal Patrol Days

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

*Let's We Forget Those Still On Patrol*

Perch Base Picnic - The Railroad Park and Museum. The Park is located across from Water World on 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, just South of Pinnacle Peak Rd.

### From the Wardroom:



Ok, here we are at the second "From the Wardroom" and no one jumped all over me about the first so we are off and running. I would like to thank the membership of Perch Base for a tremendous turn out for our April meeting even when it was on Easter weekend. I would like to also recognize our new Base Secretary, **Ed Brookes** for his support and wonderful contributions to the base. He showed up at our last meeting with a new squirrel cage for the 50/50 raffle and a set of hand carved dolphins for our past commander, **Don Wannamaker**. The dolphins and a special USS Perch plaque were presented to **Don** in appreciation of all that he has done for Perch Base. Also all the troops from up North that came down including **John Wilson** sure made this one of the best meetings as far as turn out that we have had in some time. Our next meeting is being hosted by the Maricopa Live Steamers Railroad Club on May 12<sup>th</sup> at 1100 hours. This will be a short meeting and a long picnic. The menu is Rib Eye Steak or Chicken Breast with Baked Potato, Beans, Salad, and Roll with Butter. For desert we will have a carrot cake. There will be plenty of drinks and a good time should be had by all.

If you have the capabilities check out their web site at <http://www.maricopalivesteamers.com>. This is a group of folks that enjoy sharing their hobby of large scale model railroading and regularly give free rides on Sunday afternoons 1200 to 1700 hours. In addition there are other groups located at this Railroad Park that model in "N", "HO", and "G" scales. If this makes no sense to you come out to the picnic and get a lesson in model railroading while taking a two mile train ride in the desert. We will have toured Luke Air Force Base April 21st and hopefully everyone has some new insight into what Luke's mission is.

The committee working on the By-Laws has received much input and will be looking to make its final report to the membership in the near future. **Howard Doyle** and **Ben Acosta** have been busy passing the word along with **Roger Miller** at Palo Verde and are making plans for a recruiting day there in the future. With things like this and exposure in some of the community papers, which we are going to pursue, we should see a continued growth in our membership. We are always looking for ways to make the meetings more interesting and fun so let any of the officers or committee members know what you would like to see.

The committee work on the trailer for parades is getting going now that we own our own trailer and this should give us even more exposure to the public, hopefully bringing more potential members to us. I would ask that anyone with a gripe or suggestion please feel free to contact any of the Wardroom or Committee chairs and let's all work towards making this the best base we can. Again thanks for your support and a special thanks to those that have served so well in the past.

Dave Harnish  
Base Commander

### New Officers Installed:

Congratulations are in order to the newly elected officers of USSVI Arizona Perch Base. Their names appear in the muster roll on front cover. At the meeting of March 10<sup>th</sup>, we had a presentation for the outgoing Commander **Roger Cousin**. Roger was given a plaque in thanks for his diligence and leadership over the past year. There were times that Roger should have stayed home and rested from his surgery instead of being at

the meetings when his eyesight was in doubt, but he felt his place was at the meeting and "taking care of business", was the bottom line. Thank You Roger!

### Minutes from April's Meeting:

#### E Board Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the Executive Board was convened at the American Legion Post #29; Glendale, AZ at 1210 hours, 14 April 2001. Members present at the meeting were, Mr. **Dave Harnish** — Base Commander, Mr. **Glenn Herold** — Base Vice Commander and Storekeeper, Mr. **Ed Brooks** — Base Secretary, Mr. **Bob May** — Base Treasurer, Mr. **Donald Wannamaker** — Past Base Commander, Mr. **Ramon Samson** — Membership Committee Chairman. The meeting was called to order by Mr. **Dave Harnish**, Base Commander. The following business was conducted by the Executive Board. Minutes for the March 10, 2001 regular meeting of the Executive Board were read, amended, and approved as amended by voice vote of the Board members. The Treasurer's report was read and approved by voice vote of the Board members. The Base Treasurer reported the Base's financial status as the of the first day of April, 2001:

Beginning Balance (March 1, 2001) :\$6,523.05  
Ending Balance (April 1, 2001): \$5,655.89  
Certificate of Deposit (CD) Account Balance: \$0.00  
Party Fund: \$362.00  
Total Balance: \$5,655.89

#### District 8 Meeting

Mr. **Harnish** briefed Board members on the decisions made at the 2001 annual meeting of the USSVI District 8 held at Laughlin, NV. One result of the meeting was that Perch Base agreed to host the 2002 District 8 meet which will also be held in Laughlin, NV. The Submarine Veterans of WWII - Regional Caucus also held their annual meeting at Laughlin shortly after the District 8 meeting. After attending their meeting Mr. **Harnish** realized that their member numbers are dwindling and it is difficult for their organization to find viable hosts for meetings and caucuses. Therefore, in order to support and assist SubVets WWII, it was suggested that the next District 8 meeting be combined with the SubVets WWII Regional Caucus meeting. The combined meeting would most likely take place during a four day period from April 8 through the 12<sup>th</sup>, 2002. Don Brown - Commander; Corvina Base (Reno, NV) has forwarded a proposal to USSVI National Board of Directors to have Corvina Base host the 2003 USSVI national convention and include the Submarine Veterans of WWII in combined convention.

#### May 12 Base Meeting/Picnic

Mr. **Harnish** reminded the Board of the upcoming Base meeting/picnic at the Railroad Park and Museum, on May the 12<sup>th</sup>. This is a nice park and has several running steam trains, that run on over 2 miles of track. The cost of this event will be \$6.00 per. Steaks and Chicken will be offered, with baked potato, ranch beans and salad. Cold drinks will be offered, and yes even a beer or two. I urge all members that get to the North West valley to take a look at this place. You will be in for a surprise. The Park is located across from Water World on 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, just South of Pinnacle Peak Rd

#### Pursuit of a Permanent Meeting Place

Mr. **Don Wannamaker** asked the Board to approve acquisition of a 99 year lease for \$1 on property that would be suitable for building a facility

for future meetings. The Board expressed some concern regarding real estate taxes, insurance, utilities and other expenses associated with having a lease on the property and other expenses relating to a building. It was moved, seconded and approved by voice vote to authorize further exploration of the idea without any formal commitment to a lease or contract.

### 2002 USSVI Calendar

Perch Base is prepared to order 2000 printed calendars for 2002. USSVI national organization is going to pay the expenses associated with printing the 2000 calendars. Perch Base will be responsible for composing, printing, and distributing the calendars to all the Base Storekeepers in USSVI. Profits from the sale will be split evenly between USSVI national and Perch Base. Mr. **Harnish** issued a call for any and all pictures of Fleet Boats, Guppies, or Nuclear Powered Boats to include as photos in the calendar.

### "Subs Against the Sun" - Book

Mr. **May** informed the Board of the availability of the book and agreed to notify members at the meeting and through the Base Secretary of points where the book may be purchased. For those that are interested, there are at least two sources; the publisher and Amazon.com. The publisher's address is; Yucca Tree Press, 2130 Hixon Dr., Las Cruces, NM 88005-3305. Of course, you can go to Amazon.com's web site and order it from them on the "net". The price is \$30 at both sources. The author (Keith Milton) served in the Merchant Marine during WWII. His fascination with submarines resulted in years of combing naval archives and other records for information about the U. S. Submarines in the Pacific.

A motion to adjourn the Executive Board meeting was seconded and approved by voice vote. The meeting was adjourned at 1225 hours.

### Regular Monthly Meeting

The regular monthly meeting of the members of the Arizona Submarine Veterans - Perch Base was convened at the American Legion Post #29; Glendale, AZ at 1303 hours, 14 April 2001. The meeting was called to order by Mr. **David Harnish** - Base Commander. Mr. **Ramon Samson** led the members in the "Pledge of Allegiance"; followed by the dedication, moment of silence for our departed shipmates, "Tolling of the Boats", and invocation. There were 25 members and two guests attending the meeting. The members welcomed newcomers and those returning from prolonged absences. This included: Mr. **Rick Haddow**, Mr. **Bob Bailey**, Mr. **Dan Reel**, Mr. **Tom Tilley**, Mr. **Adrian Stuke**, and Mr. **Ted Fields**. Base Secretary (Mr. **Ed Brooks**) read the minutes from the March 10 meeting. The minutes were amended and accepted as amended by voice vote of the membership. Mr. **Harnish** read a letter of thanks from the Ramada Inn Express; Laughlin, NV with regard to the District 8 meeting held there. Base Treasurer (Mr. **Robert May**) reported the Base's financial status as the of the first day of April, 2001. Mr. **May** also reported that the year 2000 Calendar sales netted \$823.91 after expenses.

### Reports of Committee Chairmen

Mr. **Ramon Samson** - Chairman and Author of the Base Newsletter "Midwatch" reported on the status of the newsletter and solicited the members for

personal stories to be included in the newsletter. **Ray** also introduced Mr. **John Wilson** (newsletter editor & publisher), who was attending the meeting as a guest. **Ray** also reported the status of the development of two Base Web Sites; one for the Ship's Store and one for the Base - in general. A completion date is yet to be announced.

Mr. **Glenn Herold** - Base Storekeeper reported on the status of the small stores available from the Storekeeper and future acquisitions. **Glenn** also asked the members to approve expenditures for acquiring flags, flag stands, flag staffs, and parade harnesses. A motion was made and seconded to approve the expenditure of up to \$300 for these items. The Storekeeper is still looking for a local manufacturer to produce the USSVI Vest for sale to members. There is a possibility of having vests made in Scottsdale. Mr. **Herold** also reported on the status of the Parade Float/Trailer being constructed by member volunteers. A proposal was presented to install a silhouette model of the **USS BANG (SS385)** on the trailer. A motion was made, seconded and approved by voice vote to proceed with construction of the silhouette of **USS BANG** for use on the float

### New Business

Mr. **Harnish** announced that the USSVI Point of Contact (POC) internet newsletters will be printed and archived in a notebook which will be made available to all members at the regular monthly meetings. Mr. **Glenn Herold** has also began keeping Base Photos in a binder to create a photo history for Perch Base. This album will also be available to the membership at the regular monthly meetings.

The subject of advertising for recognition and recruiting was opened for discussion. Members and officers reviewed current efforts in that area encouraged further exploration for new ways to reach submarine veterans in Arizona. It was announced that the Base had received an invitation, from shipmate **Kenny "Snakewake" Wayne**, to provide a Submarine Veterans Color Guard for the Yarnell, AZ "Spring Festival Parade". The membership agreed that the Base Commander should respond positively to the parade organizers and several members volunteered to participate in the 2 June 2001 parade. Members were encouraged to participate in the Memorial Day Services at the National Cemetery on May 30<sup>th</sup>. Perch Base will conduct a "Laying of the Wreath" ceremony and other events as appropriate. The Base must respond by application by May 2, 2001. The membership agreed that the Base Commander should submit the application for participation. It was also suggested that the participants agree on some form of uniform appearance prior to the event. Mr. **Frank Rumbaugh** (USSVI District 8 Commander) reminded the membership that it is our obligation as veterans and as Americans to honor those that have gone before us. Participating in Memorial Day services should be thought of as an obligation.

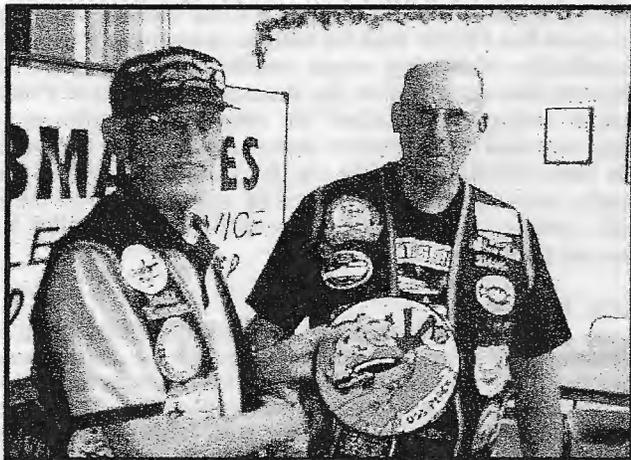
Mr. **Joe Otreba** provided the members with the current status of fellow member **Gary Patterson** whose medical condition prevents him from attending meetings. **Joe** indicated that he would visit **Gary** in the near future and the members asked **Joe** to relay to **Gary** that our prayers are with him.

### For The Good Of The Order

Mr. **Harnish** summoned **Don Wannamaker** front and center where he presented him with a hand carved set of Submariner's dolphins and a Plaque of the **USS PERCH**. The dolphins and plaque were presented to

**Don** from the Perch Base members for his contributions and dedication to the mission of the organization. The 50/50 raffle conducted at the meeting grossed \$127. The winner's share of the raffle was won by Brandi Crouse (**Mike Keating's** grand daughter) who attended the meeting as **Mike's** guest. Mr. **Harnish** gave the Benediction followed by a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded and approved by voice vote. The meeting ended with the closing prayer and was adjourned at 1355 hours.

Edgar T. Brooks - Base Secretary



#### Welcome Aboard New Members:

We can't give these newbie's the ol-heave ho, and hope they clear the ballast tanks, but we can welcome them as new members.

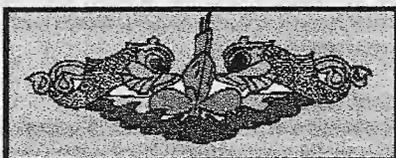
For the month of March from Phoenix we have **Joe Errante**, and his wife Brenda. **Joe** qualified on **USS BARB (SSN596)**, in '82 and left the Navy as a IC1(SS). He can be reached at [sidewinder459@aol.com](mailto:sidewinder459@aol.com).

From Chandler we have **Edwin Brzezinski** and his wife Alix. **Edwin** qualified on **USS DANIEL WEBSTER (Blue) (SSBN626)** in 90 and he left the Navy as a LT.

Hailing all the way from San Jose CA we have **George Marions**, and his wife Gay. George qualified on **USS SALMON (SSR573)** in '60, he also served on **USS SPINAX (SS489)** and **USS STONEWALL JACKSON (SSBN634)** (Gold). He left the Navy as ET2(SS).

For the month of April, we have **Rick Haddow** and his wife Robbie, who reside in Tempe. Rick qualified on the **USS WOODROW WILSON (SSBN624)** (Gold) in 1980 as a STS3. **Rick** also served on **USS STURGEON (SSN637)** **USS GRAYLING (SSN646)** **USS SUNFISH (SSN649)** **USS BATFISH (SSN681)** and **USS SEAHORSE (SSN669)** He can be reached at [rrhaddow@aol.com](mailto:rrhaddow@aol.com). Rick left the Navy as STS2(SS).

Welcome aboard gentlemen and go see the COB for, berthing, stowing of gear and work assignments. We'll be getting underway at 1645.



#### Perch Base Booster Club 2001:

There has been much said for the members

who have given generously, for the betterment of their base. This base only exists because people have given, and given and given some more. No volunteer organization can succeed without these kind of members. Perch Base says "Hand Salute" to all of you.

**Ben Acosta, Jerry N. Allston, Kenneth R. Anderson, Jerry F. Becker, Kenneth E. Becker, Joseph A. Bernard, Harold J. Bidigare, Wayne A. Braastad, Michael J. Breitner, Thomas P. Burke, Greg A. Camron, James F. Clewett, Roger J. Cousin, Earl J. Crowley III, Stephen F. Day, Warner H Doyle Jr., Jeff Duncan, Ron "Doug" Eddy, Harry Ellis, Thomas E. Fooshee, Ray "Lee" Graybeal, Billy A. Grieves, Warren A. Grossetta, David R. Harnish, William L. Hatcher, J Tom Hellem, Glenn Herold, Lester R. Hillman, Stephen F. Hough, Ron Kloch, Larry L. Krieger, Douglas M. La Rock, Robert A. Lancendorfer, Robert E. May, Hubert W. Maxey, Dennis McComb, John H. Michaud, Paul V Miller, Roger M Miller, Robert E. Mitchell, Joseph R. Mullins, Jim A. Nelson, James W. Newman Sr., Joseph S. Otreba, Thomas B. Patterson, Raymond A. Perron, Royce E Pettit, Phil Phillips, W Scott Prothero, Larry M. Rankin, Frank W. Rumbaugh, Ramon Samson, Douglas F. Schultz, Tyler C. Smith, Robert G. Sothern, Adrian M. Stuke, Donald Wannamaker, Kenny Wayne, George Woods, Donald J Whitehead, Jerry D. Yowell.**

#### Small Stores:

Last months newsletter included a inventory list of items available, with prices, of Perch Base small stores. Please place this list in a handy place where it can be retrieved in time of need. Our new storekeeper **Glenn Herold**, will continue to carry a wide array, consisting of hats, belt buckles, mugs, glasses, dolphin stickers, polo shirts, and a mess of other memorabilia. Come to the meetings and see it all first hand or give him a call. (Phone number on front cover).

#### Perch Base Scuttlebutt:

Back in January, new member **Wayne K. Smith**, down Sierra Vista way, donated to Perch Base a real true to life Klaxon with switch. Now boys, this ain't one of them electronic gizzmo's that sets off a buzzer like the "new" Navy's got. This is one that you can hear above the sounds of two, 16-278A's making turns for home. Even those boy's having tea while their 38D 8-1/8 were making turns, could hear it "sound off", thru their ear muffs. I have gotten her all sandblasted and ready for a new paint job and hope to have it up and loud for the May picnic. **Stephen Day** has loaned us the use of his brass Dolphins. These are a thing of beauty some 20" in length. My intention is to make a couple molds, that can be used to produce a urethane product. The trailer is still alive and well, **Jim "Nellie" Newman** has it stored in his back 40. We need a crew to help in wire brushing some of the rust off, getting her primed and painted. Anyone who would like to donate some of their time, contact any of the officers listed on front cover.

At the April meeting a comment was made about "can't make chicken salad, from chicken shit", pertaining to the subject lines of this newsletter. The comment is not without some merit. This newsletter is Perch Bases letter not mine. I try my best to make it interesting, but if there are different subject lines you want pursued, I need to know about them. You members that may have some ideas that I can use send em-down. As I stated at the meeting, there are a ka-zillion stories in our memory banks. How about making a withdraw or two.

Anyone who wants cards "Business type" made up for their use let me know. The cards will have the USSVI Perch Base logo, Dolphins with qualifying boat hull number, name, address, and e-mail. Cost of these will be \$5.00 for 20 cards, payable to Base treasury.

Ray Samson

#### Lost Boats and Crews for May:

*Kohima Epitaph  
"When you go home  
Tell them of us, and say,  
For their tomorrow  
We gave our today"*

#### **USS SQUALUS (SS192) May 23, 1939 - 26 Men Lost**

May 23, 1939 — With the calm of deep water, in the murky depths to which only the last feeble rays of sunlight filter from the heaving surface far above, all is quiet with a stillness that is filled with a quality of ageless, invisible motion. It is the cool world of the small fishes through which an occasional larger form slides noiselessly with outlines distorted in shimmering patterns of sunlight on its curving back. Thus the stage is set when, from the limit of underwater vision, there appears a shadow against the lightness of the ocean's surface. Nearer it comes until the dark underside of the fishlike 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 finlike 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**, 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 those 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 **USS SQUALUS** can do no more. To those at the bottom the smoking beacon of the buoy released is 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 stir 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 **USS SQUALUS's** dive. As though in answer to the call of family, the sister-ship **USS SCULPIN I (SS191)** 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. Silent hours pass. The gradual darkening of the ceiling above the inert submarine indicates the fading of daylight. Those above have established the fact that life still exists in the sunken hull and the gently rocking sister-ship stands by at the upper end of a slender anchor chain which slants through the murky depths to the ocean's bottom. May 24, 1939: Lighter and lighter grows the greenish tint of the water's surface and deeper and deeper into the profound darkness penetrates the light of dawn. The shadowy shape of the sunken craft is discovered still held in the grip of the sucking mud. Darkness saturated with fear and uncertainty must certainly still grip the souls of the hidden men who cover their desperation by mocking it with ribald story and song. Through the floating space a bulky figure with spouting helmet dangling on the end of his lifelines has come from one of the many surface craft whose bottoms are clustered around that of **USS SCULPIN**. The slender telephone line to the surface has been repaired. The water makes no record of the stimulating and encouraging pleasantries that pass over that "private line" to **USS SQUALUS**. The light is high and small craft have shuttled endlessly in and out of the range of vision until a larger, more sturdy prow cleaves a path for a throbbing hull whose purposeful approach gives mute evidence of its race from a distant base. Unheard cheers resound in the stuffy compartments of **USS SQUALUS** as the news the "FALCON: has arrived is relayed. Unheard by these survivors are the words that crackle through the atmosphere to the millions of the world who wait by loudspeakers, "the FALCON has arrived!" With a celebrity born of experience FALCON throws out a circle of anchors which maintain its position over the wreck. A diving stage comes over the side and, after a short drop through the green water, discharges the figures of divers who slide to the deck of the submarine each dragging his lines and his inseparable swirl of helium-oxygen bubbles. It is a scene of fantastic unreality. To a certain point on the forward deck the diver directs his efforts and at some signal, a cable slides down the guide line on a weighted loop. A moment of crouching and this cable is firmly fastened to a bulging hatch on the submarine. The thud of leaded feet on the deck has been cheerful accompaniment to the frenzied nonsense of the

trapped men whose talking has prevented serious thought and the knowledge that no one has even been saved from a disaster of this type. In spite of this, there is an uplifting faith in comrades of the navy and in the resources of a nation whose experts, military and civilian alike, will not rest until rescue is accomplished. Thus starts the climax of a chapter in history. Breaking the surface alongside **FALCON** there appears a strange bell-like shape. After bobbing about for a minute, the cable from the under surface of the bell to the submarine hatch tightens, the bells pulls itself under and starts downward trailing a row of violent bubbles and hose connections. Gently it settles on the deck of the submarine with the flattened end at the apex of tapering sides guided by the diver. Inertly it stays there like a growth marring the sleek lines of the hull. Varying degrees of bubbling surround the bell as the only evidence that its chambers are being blown out of flooded to accommodate the passage of men from the Torpedo Room of the submarine to the bell. Finally the bell stirs. It moves and, under the tug of its cables above, it begins to rise with its freight of survivors. It breaks the surface at the end of the journey and it is known by the world that this task has been accomplished for the first time in history. Down again; up again; down again; up again; two more trips go smoothly — so smoothly that tension grows. The last trip down. Darkness has fallen and the action can only be occasionally glimpsed by the flash of underwater lights. The last trip up. Catastrophe, almost! Snagged by the tangled downhaul cable the bell hangs suspended unable to break away from the inert wreck and hanging by a frayed cable above. Desperate action to clear the foul consumes four dreadful hours but is at last rewarded. In the last load comes the Commander of the ill-fated **USS SQUALUS** to become the only Commander to have survived a submarine disaster. Up above, the survivors. Every man not lost at the time of the accident is saved. Down below, the lonely tomb; further challenge to the **FALCON** that accomplished the greatest rescue in the history of the world. \*\*\*Note\*\*\* Read "The Terrible Hours" by Peter Maas. For \$7.00 bucks you can't go wrong.

**USS RUNNER (SS275) May 28, 1943 - 78 Men Lost**

On 28 May 1943 **USS RUNNER** (LCDR. 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 again. 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 12 July to make an immediate transmission, but no reply came. Although a careful, lookout was maintained in the hope that **USS RUNNER** was safe, results were negative. On 20 July **USS 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 **USS 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. The loss could also be attributed to an operational casualty, or to an unreported enemy attack. Destruction by a mine is considered the most likely of these possibilities. **RUNNER** sank three ships, totaling 19,800 tons, and damaged three

more, for 19,000 tons, on her first two patrols. **USS RUNNER** patrolled the Palau area on her first war run in February 1943, and all of her sinkings were made there. She sank three medium freighters, and damaged two more. During her second patrol off Hong Kong in the South China Sea, **USS RUNNER** damaged a freighter.

**USS LAGARTO (SS371) May 3, 1945 - 85 Men Lost**

**USS 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. **USS LAGARTO** contacted **BAYA**, already patrolling in Siam Gulf on May 2, 1945, and exchanged calls with her by SJ radar. Later that day **BAYA** sent **USS LAGARTO** a contact report on a convoy she had contacted consisting of one tanker, one auxiliary and two destroyers. **USS 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, **USS LAGARTO** and **BAYA** made a rendezvous and discussed plans. **USS 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 **USS 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 **USS LAGARTO**.

This vessel's first patrol was in the Nansei Shoto chain as part of an anti-picket-boat sweep made by submarines to aid Admiral Halsey's Task Force 38 in getting carrier planes to Japan undetected. She sank the Japanese submarine **RO-49** on Feb. 24, 1945, and participated in several surface gun attacks with **USS HADDOCK (SS231)** and **USS SENNET (SS408)**. Two small vessels were sunk and two more damaged in those attacks, and **LAGARTO** shared credit for the results with these submarines. Commander Latta had previously made seven patrols as Commanding Officer of **USS NARWHAL (SS167)**. Every patrol made by this officer was designated successful for the award of combat insignia, a record unsurpassed by any other Submarine Commanding Officer.

**USS STICKLEBACK (SS415) May 30, 1958 - No men lost.**

**USS STICKLEBACK** 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. **USS 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 (SS368)**. 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.

**USS 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. **USS STICKLEBACK** was recommissioned on 6 September 1946 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. **USS 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, **USS STICKLEBACK** was participating in an antisubmarine warfare exercise with **USS 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 **USS SILVERSTEIN**. As **USS STICKLEBACK** was going to a safe depth, she lost power and broached approximately 200 yards ahead of the destroyer escort. **USS SILVERSTEIN** backed full and put her rudder hard left in an effort to avoid a collision but holed the submarine on her port side. **USS STICKLEBACK's** crew was removed by the retriever boat and combined efforts were made by **USS SILVERSTEIN**, **USS SABALO (SS302)**, **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, **USS STICKLEBACK** sank in 1,800 fathoms of water.

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*With the loss of **USS USS SCORPION (SSN589)**, only being 33 years ago, I can assume there are several of our members that have shipmates still aboard, and remember the day with much sorrow. I would like to hear from you on your thoughts and memories of that time, if you would care to share. I have taken time to review several articles on her tragedy, and have selected the story of 05/23/93 to place before you. Do we have the same conditions happening with our service today? I pray this not to be true. I ask all of my Perch Base Shipmates, to pray with me, on the behalf of not only those in the "Silent Service", but all who stand in "Harms Way"*

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**USS SCORPION (SSN589)** May 22, 1968 99 men lost.  
*Story #4 Houston Chronicle, Edition 2 Star, Publication Date 05/23/93 NORFOLK, VA.*

In a farewell gesture, Electrician's Mate Dan Rogers splashed the **USS SCORPION's** bone-white mooring line into Chesapeake Bay as the nuclear attack submarine edged away from its pier. He exchanged shouts with former shipmates as they coiled the wet line into a compartment atop the submarine's smooth snout. Dying afternoon sunlight glimmered off the warship's wake as a winter breeze chilled the submarine piers of the Norfolk Naval Base on Feb. 15, 1968. Six weeks before, Rogers had jeopardized his career in the Navy's submarine elite by quitting the **USS SCORPION** because he considered it unsafe. He worried about his career as he watched the sub accelerate toward the Atlantic, where it submerged for a high-speed dash to a Mediterranean mission. And he feared for his former shipmates. His concerns were well-founded: In 97 days the **USS SCORPION** was lost, a disaster far less noted than the sinking five years before of the only other U.S. nuclear sub lost at sea, the **USS THRESHER**. To the surviving family and former crew members, though, the lack of public notice didn't ease the private grief and bitterness over a loss that might have been prevented.

Almost 25 years later, Dan Rogers perched on the edge of a chair in his north Harris County home, chain-smoking cigarettes while reading for the first time the summary of the Navy's inquiry into the sinking. The document extols the **USS SCORPION's** virtues and exonerates the Navy of responsibility for the disaster. To the U.S. Navy brass, it was a superbly maintained, "showboat" that did double duty as a stalker of Soviet submarines and as a symbol of American technological prowess. Rogers, 51, exhaled a plume of smoke and growled: "If it was so great why didn't it come back?" I can tell you why. It needed an overhaul and it didn't get one. If that was an excellent' submarine, then I'm glad I never served on a bad one. During the 12 months he served aboard it, Rogers had been appalled at the **USS SCORPION's** poor condition, lack of maintenance, and bizarre malfunctions. And his decision not to sail with it on that winter day in Virginia saved his life. Foreboding about the submarine was not restricted to Rogers. Machinist's Mate Max Franklin Lanier turned to his wife Ladell shortly before the **USS SCORPION's** final mission and lamented, This thing ought to be going in for maintenance instead of out for a long mission.

Just before midnight on May 21, 1968, the **USS SCORPION** communicated with the outside world for the last time. Running a few feet below the windswept surface of the heaving North Atlantic, the 252-foot attack submarine extended its radio antenna into the night air for a routine call to a Navy communications station in Greece. The sub's radioman reported the **USS SCORPION** was traveling at 18 knots and was 250 miles south of the Portuguese Azores islands. After the transmission, the **USS SCORPION's** crew guided the submarine downward for the nuclear-powered race home to Norfolk after three months at sea.

The fair winter weather that marked the **USS SCORPION's** departure from Norfolk had been replaced by spring storms on May 27, when the warship was due to return. Winds churned the slate-gray bay waters and rain pelted the families waiting dockside that day for their husbands and fathers. Children in new clothes stood by their anxious mothers for one of the infrequent

reunions that punctuate the long separations of submarine families. "I remember that day," said Allie Sueflow, who awaited her husband's return with their twin boys and daughter. It rained hard enough to knock down a small tree. She recalled a nightmare she'd had, a panorama of terror in which she saw the faces of her husband and his shipmates illuminated by flames as they struggled inside their submarine. We were told the submarine was delayed so we passed coffee around until they told us all to go home. When we got home, a newscaster called and asked me if I knew the **USS SCORPION** was missing. The Navy hadn't told me anything. Other families, told the warship was merely delayed, were shocked when they arrived home to hear radio and television reports that said the submarine had been officially declared missing. The family of Machinist Mate Second Class David Burton Stone was at the dinner table. I was in the middle of telling some dumb joke when the call came, recalled Laura Stone, who was 14 when her brother died. My uncle had seen the news on TV and called. The joke was left hanging forever.

The Navy launched a massive search, but it was five months before the **USS SCORPION's** shattered wreckage was found two miles beneath the Central North Atlantic, 400 miles southwest of the Azores. Because of Cold War tensions and the deep secrecy surrounding submarine operations, mystery soon enveloped the **USS SCORPION's** disappearance. The tragedy became even more enigmatic when the Navy's inquiry, conducted in secret, failed to pinpoint what killed the submarine and her crew. All that was certain was that on approximately May 22, 1968, the **USS SCORPION** and its 99 men died in a disaster witnessed only by other creatures of the deep. Various theories blamed the Soviets, an explosion of the **USS SCORPION's** own torpedoes, and a collision with an undersea mountain. The Navy rejected those theories, according to inquiry transcripts declassified 21 years after the disaster and obtained by the Chronicle under the federal Freedom of Information Act. And though the Navy couldn't determine what doomed the **USS SCORPION**, it was confident in concluding what didn't: the disaster was not caused, by the intent, fault, negligence or inefficiency of any person or persons in the naval service, and the overall material condition" of the **USS SCORPION** was, excellent. A nation overwhelmed by the Vietnam War and the other cataclysmic events of 1968 soon forgot the **USS SCORPION**. Fate had wedged the tragedy between the April assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and the June murder of Robert F. Kennedy. As a result, the **USS SCORPION** disaster remains virtually unknown when compared to the April 10, 1963, sinking of the **USS THRESHER**. When that submarine sank with 129 men off the New England coast — during a more placid American period, news coverage and congressional interest in the matter were intense. But Rogers and hundreds of families remember. Rogers sees no mystery in the loss of the **USS SCORPION**. He believes its poor condition led to its demise. The view is supported by information obtained from Navy documents, interviews with former crewmen, and letters from sailors written before their deaths on the final voyage.

Far from being a gleaming and well-maintained warship, the submarine had a history of confounding maintenance problems, was equipped with a safety system that never worked, and was denied massive reconditioning before its last mission. The **USS SCORPION's** history of problems began early. **USS SCORPION** was built by Electric Boat Division, at Groton,

Conn., and launched Dec. 29, 1959. It suffered chronic problems in its hydraulic system, which among other things operates the stern planes and sail planes. These are winglike surfaces that control a submarine's movement. The submarine's hydraulic problems continued into its final mission. After four years of service, **USS SCORPION** received its first and only full overhaul at Charleston Naval Shipyard, which had never before done such work on a nuclear submarine. Workers discovered numerous faulty piping welds that had to be redone. Similar inadequate welds were blamed for the loss of the **USS THRESHER**, whose destruction encouraged the Navy to fit submarines with a safety system that would allow crewmen throughout their ships to blow ballast and make the vessels buoyant in an emergency. The **USS SCORPION's** system never worked properly and was disconnected at the time it sank. In 1968 it was one of only four vessels out of 60 in the Atlantic Fleet submarine force not certified as having all the required safety systems.

As Cold War pressures mounted and the Soviets began launching a vast submarine fleet, the U.S. Navy by 1966 realized it lacked the capacity to perform all the overhaul work needed by its own growing nuclear submarine force. This problem was so serious that the **USS SCORPION** didn't get scheduled reconditioning. Nearing another full overhaul that could take more than a year to accomplish, the **USS SCORPION** was selected in 1966 as the first to take part in a new overhaul concept, an experimental program that would provide abbreviated but more frequent reconditioning. In place of a full overhaul, the experimental program was to provide reconditioning totaling 85,000 man-days a form of labor measurement used by the Navy in the context of shipyard work. But only 48,407 man-days were performed during the reconditioning between February and July, 1967. And less than a third of that work went into the **USS SCORPION's** mechanical, electrical and hydraulic systems. Most went into refueling and other maintenance of the sub's nuclear reactor. Dan Rogers reported for duty aboard the **USS SCORPION** on Jan. 29, 1967, having enthusiastically volunteered for the elite nuclear submarine service after serving aboard the nuclear-powered surface ship **USS Bainbridge**. He expected to find the **USS SCORPION** being rebuilt by the Norfolk Naval Shipyard's civilian workers. Instead, he walked into a maelstrom of activity as the **USS SCORPION's** sailors worked two grueling six-hour shifts every 24 hours to recondition the submarine with little shipyard help. Machinist's mates had to fabricate their own spare parts because of shortages; work was slipshod. Rogers once was ordered to weld a bookcase onto the submarine's hull, the crew's protection from the crushing depths, without proper authorization. Rogers didn't realize the pressures his officers were under to keep the submarine combat-ready with limited resources. We called the **USS SCORPION** the "USS Scrapiron," he said. You'd spend the entire day working on equipment, and it was still in bad shape. We were giving the thing an overhaul without spare parts. Rogers' dream of being on a nuclear submarine gnarled into a nightmare of disappointment when he complained to superiors about maintenance problems. His warnings were ignored and his concerns grew. Another former **USS SCORPION** crewman who doubts the Navy's claim about the

submarine's excellent condition is retired Master Chief Electrician Andy Elnicki, 51, who spent nearly four years aboard the warship. Rogers and Elnicki were shipmates for 12 months. Elnicki left the **USS SCORPION** 13 days before its final departure to help build another nuclear submarine. The 30-year veteran served aboard nine submarines, including four he helped build. He now lives in Jewett City, Conn. Elnicki was stunned when told the Navy had declared the **USS SCORPION** in excellent condition at the time of its loss. I don't think I would agree 100 percent with that assessment," he said sardonically. We always had problems. We were always making adjustments you normally wouldn't have to make on equipment. I was confident in the (nuclear) reactor systems where most of the work was done but not in the other systems. The shipyard didn't hardly touch the rest of the submarine. Elnicki recalled that difficult work usually done by the shipyard was instead accomplished by the crew and a submarine tender, a maintenance ship.

Following the shorter-than-planned refurbishing, the **USS SCORPION** returned to sea only to be stricken by more problems, the first being a seawater leak through its propeller shaft seal. Navy officers said the leak was soon fixed but another more serious problem that defied explanation occurred during a high-speed run to the Caribbean in November 1967. The boat began to corkscrew through the water, recalls Rogers. It was bad. The guys raised their eyebrows at each other like submariners do when something's wrong. Huge pieces of equipment were swaying on their rubber mountings. The incident came up during the inquiry into the sinking, with conflicting explanations. One theory blamed a torpedo guidance wire, even though the **USS SCORPION** had not fired torpedoes. An officer on board at the time, who said he had never experienced such a malfunction before, claimed that air-contamination of the hydraulic system affected the submarine's control surfaces. We put the thing in dry dock and we never could figure out what was wrong with it, said Rogers, who by then distrusted the submarine. On Dec. 29, 1967, Rogers wrote a letter to CDR. Francis A. Slattery, who had assumed command of the **USS SCORPION** three months before. Rogers was seeking disqualification from submarine duty. To get off the **USS SCORPION**, I had to disqualify myself from submarine duty entirely and I was willing to say whatever I had to, said Rogers. I actually wanted to stay in submarines and eventually was able to. In the letter, Rogers characterized himself as a sailor who could not adapt to submarine duty because of poor relations between the **USS SCORPION's** officers and enlisted men. Rogers wrote that enlisted men like him were not heeded when they raised maintenance concerns: Nor does any facet of duty aboard the **USS SCORPION** compensate for the personal humiliation experienced as a result of not being trusted by certain officers on board. These same officers have no respect for professional pride, which is found in almost every petty officer and disregard their petty officers' opinions even when solicited. My personal opinion is that such a lack of leadership on a vessel such as a submarine, places all personnel in danger. Disregarding even that, it is still necessary for the crew to work and live together under closer than normal conditions and a lack of morale makes this extremely difficult. Slattery ordered it retyped deleting Rogers' warning about danger. Slattery endorsed Rogers' request to disqualify in a Jan. 2, 1968, letter that recognized Rogers' clear record. He recommended

against Rogers being given future submarine duty. Rogers left the **USS SCORPION** and awaited reassignment. Soon after, the **USS SCORPION** was selected as a last-minute replacement for a Mediterranean mission because of accident damage to the nuclear attack submarine **USS SEAWOLF**. **USS SCORPION** officer Lt. Robert Walter Flesch of St. Charles, Mo., asked Rogers to return to the crew, holding out the promise of a visit to Mediterranean ports. Rogers' sense of foreboding steered his decision despite the prospect of exotic sight-seeing. The crew was told of the mission as they struggled to make repairs on the **USS SCORPION**, recalls Elnicki, who had only a few days left aboard the submarine. On my way out I remember handing "Popsicle" (Electrician's Mate Gerald Pospisil of Wilber, Neb.) a stack of 15 or 20 work requests for electrical work alone, he said. Because the **USS SCORPION** was replacing the **USS SEAWOLF** I told him, "These jobs will have to be done in two weeks instead of four, now."

On Feb. 16, 1968, the day after the **USS SCORPION** left Norfolk, the submarine's crew was already struggling with repairs. A leaking hydraulic system in the submarine's conning tower or "sail" stained the Atlantic with 1,500 gallons of oil. Letters written during the voyage by **USS SCORPION** crewmen and mailed during port visits revealed a submarine plagued with problems. Communications Electronics Technician James Frank Tindol III wrote of the hydraulic leak to his wife Ingrid Ann Tindol. 0730 Feb. 16, 1968: Rumor going around that if the hydraulic leak isn't found soon we'll have to pull into Bermuda to fix it. Good. 0330, Feb. 17: Hydraulic leak is losing 50 gallons per hour, bad. Auxiliary men (machinist's mates) think it is from the sailplanes. 0950, Feb. 17: (Machinist's Mate First Class Robert James) Cowan (is) in the sail looking for the leak, can't find it. 1600, Feb. 17th: hyd. leak seems to have stopped — looks like no Bermuda. About the time Tindol began chronicling the hydraulic problems, Rogers found himself explaining to Submarine Squadron Six commander Capt. Jared E. Clarke III his reasons for disqualifying from submarine duty. I told Clarke I had concerns about the **USS SCORPION's** condition but I let him know it was the only submarine I didn't want to serve on. Clarke said little, but surprised the enlisted man by asking him which submarine he'd like to serve on. I told him he was holding my disqualification request in his hand. He threw it in the trash and put me on the **USS LAPON**, another nuclear attack submarine. Rogers' Navy records reflect the transfer.

As Rogers settled into that assignment, troubles continued aboard the **USS SCORPION**. On April 12, Machinist's Mate Second Class David Burton Stone, 24, wrote his parents a letter embellished with a drawing of Sicily's Augusta Bay, one of the **USS SCORPION's** ports of call. We have repaired, replaced, or jury-rigged every piece of equipment, at one time or another and the boat hasn't been overhauled in 4 1/2 years, he wrote. The officers get in and do a lot of arm waving and jaw working, we do the work and they take the credit if anyone gets any, but we grin a little at each other 'cause we know better. **USS SCORPION** commander Slattery also realized the submarine was in need of repairs, and wrote to his superiors about it. Because important reconditioning needed by the **USS SCORPION** was not scheduled until the following year, Slattery wrote a March 23, 1968, request for emergency repairs and warned: Delay of the work an additional year could seriously jeopardize **USS SCORPION's**

material readiness. Its once-sleek hull was so encrusted with barnacles the warship's speed was reduced 1 1/2 knots, complained Slattery, who also sought replacement of the submarine's propeller and its torpedo tube drain valves. Additionally, he wrote that some of the valves that opened to allow the pumping of seawater out of the submarine were leaking, forcing water pressure directly against a drain pump inside the hull. Because of various leaking valves, the **USS SCORPION** had been restricted to an operating depth of 300 feet, though Skipjack-class submarines were designed to descend to more than 2,000 feet. Another letter contradicting the Navy's claim that the **USS SCORPION** was in superb shape was written by a sailor flown to meet the submarine in Rota, Spain, after it crossed the Atlantic. When Senior Chief Radioman Robert Johnson joined the **USS SCORPION** he wrote his wife Doris a letter dated March 2, 1968, raising doubts about the condition of the **USS SCORPION's** communication's equipment. Johnson wrote: I reported aboard and found all the radiomen working. Would you believe that every piece of electronic equipment including antennas was inoperative? The deficiencies that were so obvious to the **USS SCORPION** crew somehow escaped the notice of Navy higher-ups, many of whom testified at the inquiry that they knew of no problems with the **USS SCORPION**. One was Capt. Jared Clarke, the squadron commander who allowed Rogers to return to submarine duty after he left the **USS SCORPION**. Clarke did not mention to the inquiry board the conversation Rogers claims the two had about the **USS SCORPION's** condition. Now retired, Clarke has declined interviews, telling Navy officials too much time has passed for him to recall the events of 1968. During his inquiry testimony, Clarke said he certified the **USS SCORPION** as, combat ready.

Rogers, who was honorably discharged from the Navy in 1971, never was called to testify despite his complaints about the warship. Three members of the inquiry board contacted by the Chronicle said they were not familiar with Rogers or his complaints and would have welcomed his testimony. Rogers knows no better than any other living person exactly what happened beneath the north Atlantic on that May day 25 years ago. But one theory he finds plausible blames a mundane kitchen function, "trash disposal" for setting off a chain of events that led to the horrific disaster. In testimony during the 1968 inquiry, classified until recently, Vice Admiral Arnold F. Schade pointed to the trash disposal unit or "TDU," a simple device compared to other complex submarine systems. After reviewing studies that remain classified, Schade told the inquiry board a number of reasons led him to believe the trash disposal unit precipitated the disaster. Rogers and a former **USS SCORPION** officer have suspected the TDU ever since they learned other nuclear submarines almost sank when malfunctioning TDUs allowed high-pressure seawater into submarines. I don't know what work was done on the TDU but if we'd had a full overhaul it would probably have been rebuilt and checked out, Rogers said. Replacing a 10-cent part may have saved the submarine. But even if it is on target, the TDU theory doesn't answer every question. The **USS SCORPION's** nuclear power coupled with crew procedures should have allowed the submarine to recover from a failure of its trash disposal unit. Speculated Schade: Since it did not recover, we can only assume there were some sequential failures associated with this. There might have been additional material failures, flooding that caused fires, loss of propulsion, or personnel failures, lack of appreciation of what was going on, and a (lack of) ability to counter it in time, but I think it would have to have been something else at the same time.

Deceptively simple, the TDU consists of an inner door in the submarine's galley separated from sea pressure by a basketball-sized valve containing a 10-

inch tunnel. A mechanism prevents the inner door from being opened while the valve is open to the sea. Rather than blindly trust that mechanism, crewmen are trained to check for pressurized water against the inner door using a bleed valve before opening it for trash insertion. Should the system be broken, as it was on several submarines, according to Schade, then opening the inner door without first checking for water on the other side could send a torrent into the submarine. It was apparent to Schade that the **USS SCORPION** had taken on water while submerged at periscope depth, a shallow level where the careful trash dumping procedure occurs. The testimony of Schade and others indicated the **USS SCORPION** had filled with water prior to sinking 10,000 feet beneath the Atlantic. There was no evidence its torpedoes exploded, but a huge hole blown from the side of the **USS SCORPION's** midsection indicated the possibility that seawater had reached the huge batteries several decks below the galley where the TDU was located. Explosive hydrogen gas and poisonous chlorine gas are produced when salt water hits battery acid, said Rogers. The crew could have been incapacitated by the chlorine or the hydrogen gas produced could have exploded, causing that hole.

The elusiveness of a definite answer was illustrated by inquiry testimony from former **USS SCORPION** Torpedoman James M. Peercy. When asked if he had any guess about what caused the loss of the **USS SCORPION**, Peercy replied: I don't know sir. There are a lot of things that can sink a submarine. Rogers was aboard the **USS LAPON** when it was dispatched with many other vessels May 27, 1968, to search for the **USS SCORPION**. We didn't find them but I realized while we searched that I could have been down there with them if I hadn't done what I did. Had it not been for Rogers' foreboding about the submarine's condition, his complaints would today be silenced beneath two miles of cold Atlantic water.

The last mission of the nuclear submarine **USS SCORPION** included various ports of call and maneuvers in the Mediterranean Sea before its ill-fated return voyage across the Atlantic. Feb. 15, 1968: **USS SCORPION** departed Norfolk, Va. March 1: Rota, Spain. March 10: Taranto, Italy. March 23: Augusta Bay, Sicily. April 10: Naples, Italy. May 16: Rota, Spain. May 21: Final radio contact. May 22: **USS SCORPION** sank with 99 crew members. The **USS SCORPION** Crew: 12 officers and 87 enlisted men Launched: Dec. 29, 1959 Length: 252 feet Displacement (weight): 3,513 tons Speed: 36 knots submerged.

#### Important Dates in May:

- May 10 1960 - **USS TRITON (SSRN586)** completes submerged circumnavigation of world in 84 days following many of the routes taken by Magellan and cruising 46,000 miles.
- May 17 1942 - **USS TAUTOG (SS199)** sinks Japanese sub, I-28; while **USS TRITON (SS201)** sinks I-164.

#### I Didn't Know That:

In preparation for development of the next submarine class ("Virginia"), the U. S. Navy elected to create a one-fourth scale, unmanned, submarine, to test new and emerging technologies before they committed to full-scale ships. Designated the Large Scale Vehicle (LSV) 2 and named after a species of trout, Cutthroat, the 111-foot boat is scheduled for delivery to the Navy in the Spring of 2001. In 2000 the U.S. Navy tested "Avenger," a 65-ft mini-sub with a closed-cycle engine powered by diesel fuel and liquid oxygen. Intended for use by the "SEALS" the Navy's clandestine amphibious assault teams, "Avenger" can carry 18 troops and a crew of 6.

### More on the KURSK:

Kursk lays on the seabed, at a depth of 108 meters northeast of Murmansk in the Barents Sea, a sea which is one of the most important fishing areas for both Russia and Western Europe. Just some few tens of kilometers to the west is the famous fishing ground Kildinbanken. The reactor section of the submarine is flooded with water, so some of the barriers between the seawater and the radioactivity in the reactors are damaged. So far, there is no information about the damages inside the reactor compartment. The compartment is located behind the tower of the submarine. The explosion that hit Kursk might very well have made severe damages to the reactors themselves, the cooling pipelines in the first circuit, or to other important parts of reactor installation. A comprehensive analysis of the wreck, and a proper risk assessment may take several months.

Judging on the way Russian officials have handled the rescue operation so far, presenting misleading facts and keeping information secret, Bellona recommends that the risk assessment must be done in a cooperation with a civilian institution in Russia and international experts. Lifting Kursk from the seabed To start a lifting operation before all necessary facts on the wreck's condition are established might very well increase the danger of radioactivity discharge to the marine environment. So far, there are no reports about leakage outside the hull of the submarine. Therefore, Bellona highly recommends that before any decisions on what to do with Kursk is taken, thorough investigations of the wreck have to be performed. First of all, to find out how much the hull structure is damaged but also to clarify the technical condition of the two nuclear reactors. If the technical condition is good enough it could be possible to raise the submarine. In any case such an operation will require international assistance, since Russia has neither the required equipment nor experience in this field. The lifting operation of the submarine could prove to be a risky operation, if the submarine is so damaged as the present information indicates. If the submarine is taken to surface and something happens to its two reactors, radioactivity could be spread to the atmosphere and by sea currents over a larger area, exposing to radioactivity humans, especially those taking part in the lifting operation. Russian Navy officials have said they are considering to partly lift Kursk and tug it to more shallow waters (less than 60 meters deep) so Russian divers could attempt to take out the victims onboard. In respect to the families of the crewmembers, all rescue attempts must of course include the possibilities to bring out the victims. Should the research conclude that it is safe to raise the submarine, such operation can be done either by using floating cranes in a combination with air-balloons or one of the two methods.

Second question is, of course, what to do with the submarine after it is lifted? It might be taken into a floating dry-dock and then shipped to the naval yards outside Murmansk or to Severodvinsk shipyards in the White Sea. To prepare a damaged submarine for decommissioning must of course include a safe plan for taking out spent fuel elements in the reactor cores and a safe storage for the reactor compartment. Such storage site does not exist today, and Bellona underlines that bringing the submarine into a naval yard can pose a radiation threat to the shipyard's workers. If we are not 100 percent sure everything is Ok inside the reactor compartment, leave the Kursk on the seabed. If the investigation and risk assessment studies conclude that it will be impossible or too risky

to lift the submarine from the seabed, there are several options of leaving the Kursk on the seabed in the Barents Sea. One of these options could be to try to cut out the reactor compartment of the submarine and raise it to the surface. The cutting operation would require special equipment, and it is doubtful that Russia has such equipment. Secondly, such large cutting of superstructure steel at 108 meters depth in the Arctic waters has never been done before. Even if lifting of reactor compartment is successful, the nuclear cores of Kursk have to be stored in a safe way. At present, all the Russia's on-shore storage sites for spent nuclear fuel are filled up. Another option is to leave the submarine with its two reactors on the sea bottom. In that case, it could be possible to seal off the reactor compartments to minimize the risk of leakages. Russia has developed a special material to seal off naval reactor sections, which was used at the dumped reactors in the Kara Sea.

Russian specialists claim that this material provides a sealing of reactor compartments for 500 years. At the Komsomolets submarine site, at 1685 meters depth in the Norwegian Sea some of the openings in the hull were partly sealed off with metal lids to stop the water penetration and washout of plutonium. Most likely the final solution would require a combination of these two sealing methods.

The last option would be to build a sarcophagus around the submarine, like it was done with the Chernobyl reactor. The sarcophagus would much likely to be built in concrete, but other materials might also be used. This solution is probably not a very good one, since the experience from Chernobyl showed leakages after only 10 years. Secondly, such option will make it even more problematic and expensive to do something with the submarine and/or its two reactors if coming generations develop new methods and want to raise the wreck.

### Read and Heed:

*Submitted by Mike Keating*

There's a new federal law called The Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act of 1999. Sometime between now and July 2001, you will be getting an important piece of mail from your banks, credit card companies, your mortgage company, insurance company, and any other companies you do financial business with. It may arrive in its own envelope or it may be included with your regular monthly statement. The company you do business with will be essentially asking for your consent to release personal information to other companies or anyone that wants to buy the information. This may include how much money is in your accounts, how fast you pay your bills, your address and phone number, and the amount you still owe on your house. You - MUST - send a letter back to them stating you DO NOT want to release this information. If you do not respond, it will be assumed that you consent to the release of this information. Many companies have deadlines (usually 30-90 days). If they don't get your response, they are free to sell your information to ANYONE that wants to buy it. It's your responsibility to let them know that you don't want this to happen. For further information, check out the following web page belonging to the FDIC: <http://www.fdic.gov/consumers/consumer/news/cnwin0001> (click on the section under "New Rights to Privacy...") This could end up saving you a lot of grief in the future.

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