



MARCH 13TH—Set your clocks before going to bed Saturday night.

VOL. 2022 #3



HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY!!!



MARCH 2022

## USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER

### Association Officers & Board of Directors 2021 - 2023

PRESIDENT Tom [Marie] Krauser	VICE PRESIDENT Jerry [CJ] Blevins	SECRETARY Nick [Linda] Nichols	TREASURER Ken [Diane] Meigs
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### Other Positions 2021 - 2023

HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN Larry [Linda] Knutson	WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER Nick [Linda] Nichols	CHAPLAIN Bruce [Vicki] Stefanik
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#### From the Association President - Tom Krauser, MM1(SS) B 72-74:

As March is here, hopefully, spring is around the corner. Looking forward to warmer weather and a trip to someplace warm. Trying to plan a trip to south Texas to visit family.

Marie's mother is living with us now so any trip takes coordinating with her sister and brother to provide coverage while we are gone.

Marie and I are looking forward to the next reunion in Charleston in 2023.

If you have any questions or concerns for the board, please feel free to contact us so we can address them.



#### From the Association Vice President - Jerry Blevins, LT(SS) B 76-79, Assoc. Life Member, USSVI Groton Base:

I was reminiscing that the USS Lafayette, SSBN 616, completed its initial sea trial during February of 63. This was the beginning of an era for many of us. As usual, Admiral Rickover provided a terse message

announcing the successful completion of the trial.  
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At Sea  
North Atlantic  
25 February 1963

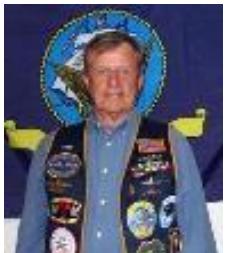
Dear Mr. McCone:

We are returning from the first sea trials of the USS LAFAYETTE, our twenty-ninth nuclear powered submarine, and the eleventh equipped to fire Polaris missiles. The ship successfully complete all tests including full power, both surface and submerged.

The LAFAYETTE is the first of a new, larger class of Polaris submarines; she is also the largest submarine ever built. The increased size of the ship is used for better habitability and improved weapons systems. She will ultimately be armed with missiles having a range of 2500 nautical miles.

With the fourteen submarines included in this year's appropriations, the Navy will have thirty-five Polaris and forty attack nuclear submarines in operation, under construction, or authorized. Sincerely,

*H. G. Rickover*



**Custodian - Larry Knutson,  
MMCS(SS) B 79-81 USSVI-  
Charleston Base:**

We still have the box of Gold Crew check-in cards that were from the time of Bob Weeks CO tour. If you were on the Gold Crew during any time when Bob Weeks was the CO you completed a check-in card for him. The box of cards is now held by our base secretary. If you would like a copy of your card sent to you please contact our Secretary at [655webmaster@ssbn655.org](mailto:655webmaster@ssbn655.org).



**From The Editor & Secretary -  
Nick Nichols, TM1 G/SY1/B 70-  
75; FTCS B COB 85-89, USSVI  
Charleston Base, Holland Club,  
655 Assoc Life Member**

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**Where Submarines Go to Die Article**

There was an article recently printed in the American Submariner, 2022 1st Quarter. I asked the author for permission to reprint this in our newsletter and he was gracious enough to allow it. You will find it at the end of this.

If you like this article the story came from --Sub

*Tales 3*. It was released 10 days ago. It and the other two books in the series, *Sub Tales* and *More Sub Tales*, would be of great interest to any submariner or submarine enthusiast.

Charles Hood co-authored these books with his brother who was a JO on the USS Seahorse SSN 669 over 50 years ago.

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**TOMMY COX SUBMARINE MUSIC**

If you have not heard of Tommy Cox then you are missing out on some great music. Tommy is a legend in the Submarine Music genre. Most of his songs are available via YouTube but I thought I'd send along some links that you can listen to as you have time. I enjoy everything he has recorded.

- [Big Black Submarine](#)
- [Seawolf](#)
- [The Dives We've Known](#)
- [Whitey Mack \[Lapon - Lady in Black\]](#)
- [Torpedo in The Water](#)
- [Diesel Boats Forever \[Take Her Deep\]](#)
- [Run Silent Run Deep \[CAPT Edward L. Beach\]](#)
- [Scorpion](#)
- [Sailor's Prayer](#)
- [Kursk is on the Bottom](#)
- [Blind Man's Bluff](#)
- [Payback's \[Are Hell\]](#)
- [Freedom Patrol](#)
- [Boomer Patrol](#)
- [The Sacrifice](#)
- [These Eyes \[with Bobby Reed\]](#)
- [Tango Charlie](#)

**Submarines Lost During the Month of March**

<b>USS PERCH (SS-176)</b>	<b>3 March 1942 – 1<sup>st</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>61 POWs; 55 survived the war; 6 died as POW</b>
<b>USS GRAMPUS (SS-207)</b>	<b>5 March 1943 – 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>Lost with all hands – 71 souls</b>
<b>USS H-1 (SS-28)</b>	<b>12 March 1920 – grounding</b>	<b>Loss of 4 souls</b>
<b>USS TRITON (SS-201)</b>	<b>15 March 1943 – 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>Lost with all hands – 74 souls</b>
<b>USS KETE (SS-369)</b>	<b>20 March 1945 – 2<sup>nd</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>Lost with all hands – 87 souls</b>
<b>USS F-4 (SS-23)</b>	<b>25 March 1915 - founded</b>	<b>Lost with all hands – 21 souls</b>
<b>USS TULLIBEE (SS-284)</b>	<b>26 March 1944 – 4<sup>th</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>Lost with 79 souls – 1 POW survived the war</b>
<b>USS TRIGGER (SS-237)</b>	<b>26 March 1945 – 12<sup>th</sup> war patrol</b>	<b>Lost with all hands – 89 souls</b>

**Eight Boats and 431 Men Lost**

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## Submarine Qualification Certificate

I have added a new page to our website for our SS Qual Certificate. Most of us still have them and know exactly where they are. Some may have to go digging. Start looking for those certificates. When you find it either scan it or take a good picture and send it to me at [655webmaster@ssbn655.org](mailto:655webmaster@ssbn655.org). Your name will be added to the new page with a link to your certificate. This is for all Stimson shipmates, not just the ones who qualified on the 655. No matter what boat you qualified on if you were on the Stimson send me a scan or picture and it will be added to the website.

This can be any item related to your SS qualification: Qual Certificate; Qual card, picture receiving your dolphins; etc.

Check out: [Qualification Cards of Stimson Sailors](#)

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## Sharing Pictures with Shipmates:

If anyone has pictures you would like to share with your shipmates please either email them to me or contact me and I will send you directions to upload to our Stimson Dropbox file.

[655webmaster@ssbn655.org](mailto:655webmaster@ssbn655.org)

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The following Stimson Shipmates have departed on Eternal Patrol.

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**ETN2(SS) David Carl Hobart G 68-71**

**Eternal Patrol 1.22.2022**

[info reported by Larry Huisen, ETN2(SS) G 69-71]

**ETC(SS) Simon 'Si' Moore G/SY1 70-73**

**Eternal Patrol 8.10.2017**

[info reported by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G/SY1 69-74, Assoc. LM, USSVI Carolina Piedmont Base]

**MT1(SS) William Charles Wilson IV B 89-92**

**Eternal Patrol 11.23.2021**

[info reported by Legacy.com & Lindsay Nelson, EMC(SS) B 76-78]

**MT2(SS) Richard Kinder G 77-79**

**Eternal Patrol 12.31.2020**

[info reported by Merv Miller, MM2(SS) G 77-79]

**FTB2(SS) Raymond Male G/SY1/B 71-75**

**Eternal Patrol 10.12.2021**

[info reported by Don Ort, MM1(SS) G/SY1/G 69-74]

**ET2(SS) Marlin Arlie Wattnem G 65-70**

**Eternal Patrol 12.22.2020**

[info reported by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G/SY1 69-74]

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The direct link to the Association Eternal Patrol page is: <http://ssbn655.org/eternal-patrol/eternal-patrol.html>



## WELCOME ABOARD: Found & Updated Shipmates

(Shipmate has contacted us to be added or have info updated on our Sailing List. Please check the online Sailing List for shipmates contact info.)

**NOTE: MANY THANKS TO DON ORT, MM1(SS) G/OVHL1/G 69-74, FOR THE EFFORTS HE IS MAKING TO LOCATE OUR STIMSON SHIPMATES WHO ARE ON OUR SAILING LIST BUT WITH NO EMAIL ADDRESS.**

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**TM2(SS) Kirby K. Kee G 68-70**

[info updated per member request]

**STS3(SS) Michael R. Liles G 91-92**

[info updated per member request]

**FTG1(SS) Nels Kelstrom B 70-71**

[info updated per member request]

**LT David C. Matherly B 77-81**  
[info updated per member request]

**FTB1(SS) Patrick Ransom G 83-87**  
[info updated per member request]

**MM1(SS) Jack Shaw G 85-89**  
[info updated per member request]

**TM3(SS) Joe Mazur B Comm 64-67 Plank**  
[info updated per member request]

**LT(SS) Richard Massa B 74-76**  
[info added per member request]

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**BINNACLE LIST UPDATES:** If you know of a shipmate who should be on the binnacle list please let me know. I will contact the shipmate for permission to add them to this list. I only add those who have given permission.

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**Karen Huckeba** [Dave's wife, MM1(SS) B 71-75]  
Cards to: 4611 Wickford Cir NE, Roswell GA  
30075

**2.21.2022: Update from Karen:** Today at the pulmonary dr I did tests to measure how my oxygen levels and lungs are doing plus some X-rays. Results were good. My lungs have cleared up by 2/3rds! I kept my oxygen level up walking and doing the tests without using oxygen. So I am off oxygen completely during the day!!! PTL! We are doing a sleep study for 2 nights with a special oximeter. If my oxygen stays up then I don't have to use it at night anymore. Dr feels it will stay up but I wanted to be sure! I don't want any mess ups at this point in time!! Tomorrow I go to primary care Dr. I want to get some answers about physical therapy. God is so good! I have to admit I thought my lungs would have more spots on them than they do. I also have the go ahead to swim and workout in the pool! So happy about that!! Thank you for your prayers!!

From Karen

**1.23.2022: Update from Karen:** I wasn't sure whether to do an update or not but we've had some Stimson people text the past couple of days to see what is happening. David encouraged me

to update. If this is too long, feel free to condense it because you know I'm a "Talker." you won't hurt my feelings!! It's hard to condense for me because so much has happened.

I have had artery and vein ultrasounds on both arms since my thank you note. Thankfully, there are no blood clots, however, the artery that had the blood clot while I was on the ventilator was still a little thin so I am staying on blood thinner. I will be going to a vascular Dr in 3-4 weeks. Hopefully, the artery will be healed and I can go off blood thinners. The blood Dr wants him to make the decision.

My biggest issue is trying to keep my oxygen level above 90 when I get up to do things. Sitting it stays about 97-99 which is good. I can go up and down stairs with no issues which is a blessing. I didn't know weak muscles take more oxygen than strong muscles. Physical therapy will help with that. They started me out with too strenuous exercises than I could handle causing my muscles to go into spasms. I'm praying I am past that now since they've given me milder exercises.

God is still blessing me with a miracle every day. I'm trusting Him to heal me completely... David says that I am expecting too much too soon because I was very sick. I finally figured out that to me, waking up after 6 weeks sleeping was just like 1 night of sleep to me. I remember how I felt before the hospital and waking up and seeing a feeding tube, tracheotomy, 3 needles stuck in my arms full time, a soft diet, and numerous blood tests, was a total shock. Sitting, I feel normal but when I get up to walk is when the breathing issues show up. I think God may be trying to teach me patience!

Thanks again for all the prayers and cards! God is still working miracles every day that are amazing. I am so thankful for that. I find that if I am worried about an appointment or going to new Drs. that God has gone before me paving the way and my worry was for nothing. Praising Him for that!! God Bless, Karen

**1.12.2022 Update from Karen:** A deep felt thank you to all who prayed for me when I was diagnosed with covid pneumonia in November. God answered your prayers in a mighty way

*because I have since found out it is against all odds to come off a ventilator after 6 weeks.*

*After a few shaky days once I woke up, I started physical therapy and was able to walk steady which was another miracle. In the time since, God has shown His love for me by the miracles he worked in my life daily and my recovery. (It amazed the therapists. I was scheduled 14 days at rehab and was there 5.) At this point in time, I am walking in the house without a walker, doing exercises, and everyday living.*

*I see a pulmonary specialist at the end of this month. He will wean me off the oxygen I'm using 24 hrs a day. They estimate 6 month recovery time till I get back to normal.*

*I am so thankful to all of you who have sent me cards, texts, but most of all your prayers. I believe those prayers on my behalf is the reason God spared my life. I feel so humbled by the many people who were praying for me and also for David as he had many difficult decisions to make on my behalf while on the ventilator. Words just can't express how thankful I am for your caring hearts. Please continue to remember me as I still have a long road ahead. Thank you. Sincerely, Karen Huckeba*

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**Pam Flynn** (Mike Flynn's wife, MM1(SS) B 72-76)

**Cards to:** 97 Arbor Place, New Albany IN 47150

**2.24.2022: Update from Mike:** Pam is home from the hospital. She came home Sunday afternoon. She is very weak and still suffering from the Covid pneumonia. Her fever has subsided as has her nausea. She on large volume of oxygen 24/7 for now and I am monitoring it very close. Taking medications for pneumonia and her heart arrhythmia. Very slow process for healing from this point on. Thanks for all your prayers.

**2.17 2022: Update from David Huckeba:** Pam had a very rough night and early morning. She peaked a fever of 103, her heart was defibrillating wildly between 160 and 40. Thought she had a blood clot but CT scan proved - no clot but did show Covid in both lungs. The staff rallied to her symptoms and got her stabilized. Tonight, she is off oxygen, talking and weak. She has an appetite but they are careful because of diarrhea. He is

*exhausted because of all these events. Dodged a big bullet. Keep prayers rolling for complete recovery. Another miracle among us.*

**16 Feb 2022: Update from David Huckeba:**

*Folks. I am reaching out to you because Mike*

*Flynn's wife Pam is in hospital. She tested positive for Covid Jan 31. Has been in and out of ER three times and was admitted to hospital early this AM. She has pneumonia in lower left lung. She has a UTI also. Her immune system is compromised after attempting to ride this out at home. So, hospitalization was a good thing to get her in a position to beat this. She is in a regular room right now. She needs our prayers so I am reaching out to you on Mikes behalf. He sounded run down and tired. More updates as I get them.*

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**Kim Sanner** (Bill Sanner's wife, ET2(SS) B 73-77)

**Cards to:** 2009 Glenda Ave., Haltom City TX 76111

**2.24.2022: Update from Bill:** At the end of January, we spent a full 12-hour day meeting and greeting with doctors, PAs and Social Workers, having 18 vials of blood taken for tests, and an end of day blood transfusion to finish it off. Since then, we have been patiently waiting for a transplant donor to be determined and located.

We have a video appointment slated for this coming Monday (2.28) with Kim's transplant doctor to discuss timelines and procedures. I'm close to ending my computer business because I'm about to begin full time caregiving for her, which is way more work than I expected.

Kim's attitude is good, although sometimes her emotions take over and she becomes overwhelmed. She gets winded putting clothes in the washing machine, or even walking from the living room to the kitchen, and gets frustrated from that. She has lived a vigorous lifestyle and just gets frustrated. She is a good woman.

Next time we go to Houston, she will be admitted to MD Anderson and immediately begin "extreme chemotherapy" (their words) to kill her immune system and to eliminate her current bone marrow. Then the transplant process will begin.

Please remember Kim Sanner when you pray. Our trust for our future together lies in His hands. Bill Sanner, 817-713-3530 cell

**1.23.2022:** Email from Bill: The date of our registration and start of our MD Anderson dance has been moved to January 31. Unfortunately, we both contracted covid which forced the change. Meanwhile, I expect that she'll receive another blood transfusion before she travels. That will be her fifth or sixth, I can't remember which. Anyway, we are so grateful for your prayers.

Here is a song I wrote while my dad was in ICU. I hope you enjoy it. Bill

**12.17.2021:** Email from Bill: My wife, Kim Sanner, has been diagnosed with a bone marrow cancer called myelofibrosis which is kissing cousins with leukemia. We've been accepted to MD Anderson hospital in Houston, but this is going to be murder since she is barely too young for Medicare and has no other health insurance. The hospital itself is paying for much of her care, which begins on December 27<sup>th</sup>, but the logistics of travel and other care requirements are substantial. My daughter, Sherri, has setup a GoFundMe page to allow others to help with these costs, and the link is <https://gofund.me/ff78d706>. Please let our Stimson group know and please assist with your prayers whether or not they choose to donate. Our God is the only One who can heal her. The doctors, with their transplants, are merely His hands.

Thanks with Love, Bill Sanner 817-715-3530 cell

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#### **Andrew 'Andy' Mckay, TMC G 85-88**

Cards to: 2207 FM 1729, Lubbock TX 79403

**1.25.2022:** Email from Andy: As time goes by, I slowly get a little worse each day. I am now homebound. I have not been able to leave my house since July of last year. I use a walker to get around. This past November I went on home hospice. It has worked well for me. I have a nurse visit once a week. A nurse aid 3 times a week to help shave, bath and stuff like that. Hospice provides my medications, medical supplies and medical equipment. Bottom line is I am still kicking just not as hard as I use to. Thanks // Andy

**4.1.2021:** Email from Andy: I was found to have lung cancer in 2007. I had surgery to remove half of my right lung. I did 4 months of chemo. I now have final stage COPD. I am on full time supplemental oxygen

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#### **GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH**

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#### **655 Association Website**

[www.ssbn655.org](http://www.ssbn655.org)

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Submitted by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G 69-74, Assoc. LM, USSVI Holland Club / Carolina Piedmont Base

#### **"The Cruise of The U.S.S. Codfish"**

Bob Newhart on The Ed Sullivan Show on January 8, 1961.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FFPUVHAQ-BQ>

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Submitted by Don Ort, MM1(SS) G/SY1 69-74, USSVI Charleston Base, Holland Club

#### **The Battle of Iwo Jima and the unbreakable Navajo Code**

The Code Talkers used native languages to send military messages before World War II. Navajo, which was unwritten and known by few outside the tribe, seemed to fit the Corps' requirements. They took their language and developed a "Type One Code" that assigned a Navajo word to each English letter. In addition to being unbreakable, the new code also reduced the amount of time it took to transmit and receive secret messages.

#### **Navajo Code Talkers**

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Don Ort, MM1(SS) G/SY1/G 69-74, USSVI Charleston Base & Holland Club was initiated into FRA Branch 269 which meets in Goose Creek SC. Congratulations Don!!!

*Submitted by Don Ort, MM1(SS) G/SY1 69-74,  
USSVI Charleston Base, Holland Club*

A great link to a series of really good submarine knowledge.

### smarter every day submarine - YouTube

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*EDITOR NOTE: This has been around before but it never grows old. I can say I would do it again...if I was younger!*

## **I WAS A SAILOR ONCE AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN**

I liked standing on the bridge wing at sunrise with salt spray in my face and clean ocean winds whipping in from the four quarters of the globe -- the ship beneath me feeling like a living thing as her engines drove her swiftly through the sea.

I liked the sounds of the Navy - the piercing trill of the boatswains' pipe, the syncopated clang of the ship's bell on the quarterdeck, the harsh squawk of the 1MC, and the strong language and laughter of sailors at work.

I liked Navy vessels -- nervous darting destroyers (they were called 'tin cans' for a reason), plodding fleet auxiliaries and amphibs, sleek submarines and steady solid aircraft carriers.

I liked the proud names of Navy ships: Bennington, Midway, Lexington, Bunker Hill, Saratoga, Coral Sea, Antietam, Valley Forge -- memorials of great battles won and tribulations overcome.

I liked the lean angular names of Navy "tin-cans" and escorts -- Kenneth D. Bailey DDR-713, Barney, Dahlgren, Mullinix, McCloy, Damato, Leftwich, Mills, Stickell, Noa, Paul, Coontz, T.C. Hart, Glover -- mementos of heroes who went before us. And the others -- San Jose, San Diego, Los Angeles, St. Paul, Chicago -- named for our cities.

I liked the tempo of a Navy band blaring through the topside speakers as we pulled away from the oiler after refueling at sea. (I missed this thrill...)

I liked Liberty Call and the spicy scent of a foreign port.

I even liked the never-ending paperwork and all-hands working parties as the ship filled herself

with the multitude of supplies, both critical and mundane in order to cut ties to the land and carry out her mission anywhere on the globe where there was water to float her.

I liked sailors, officers and enlisted men, from all parts of the land; farms of the Midwest, small towns of New England, from the cities, the mountains and the prairies, from all walks of life. I trusted and depended on them as they trusted and depended on me - for professional competence, for comradeship, for strength and courage. In a word, they were "shipmates"; then and forever.

I liked the surge of adventure in my heart, when the word was passed: "Now set the special sea and anchor detail - all hands to quarters for leaving port," and I liked the infectious thrill of sighting home again, with the waving hands of welcome from family and friends waiting pier side.

The work was hard and dangerous; the going rough at times; the parting from loved ones painful, but the companionship of robust Navy laughter, the "all for one and one for all" philosophy of the sea was ever present.

I liked the serenity of the sea after a day of hard ship's work, as flying fish flitted across the wave tops and sunset gave way to night.

I liked the feel of the Navy in darkness -- the masthead and range lights, the red and green navigation lights and stern light, the pulsating phosphorescence of radar repeaters - they cut through the dusk and joined with the mirror of stars overhead. And I liked drifting off to sleep lulled by the myriad noises large and small and the rocking from side to side that told me my ship was alive and well, and that my shipmates on watch would keep me safe.

I liked quiet mid watch with the aroma of strong coffee -- the lifeblood of the Navy permeating everywhere.

And I liked hectic watches when the exacting minuet of haze-gray shapes racing at flank speed kept all hands on a razor edge of alertness. (Sometimes those shapes came too damn close.)

I liked the sudden electricity of "General quarters, general quarters, all hands man your battle stations," followed by the hurried clamor of running feet on ladders and the resounding thump

of watertight doors as the ship transformed herself in a few brief seconds from a peaceful workplace to a weapon of war -- ready for anything.

And I liked the sight of space-age equipment manned by youngsters clad in dungarees and sound-powered phones that their grandfathers would still recognize.

I liked the traditions of the Navy and the men and women who made them. I liked the proud names of Navy heroes: Halsey, Nimitz, Perry, Farragut, John Paul Jones and Burke. A sailor could find much in the Navy: comrades-in-arms, pride in self and country, mastery of the seaman's trade. An adolescent could find adulthood.

In years to come, when sailors are home from the sea, they will still remember with fondness and respect the ocean in all its moods - the impossible shimmering mirror calm and the storm-tossed green water surging over the bow. And then there will come again a faint whiff of stack gas, a faint echo of engine and rudder orders, a vision of the bright bunting of signal flags snapping at the yardarm, a refrain of hearty laughter in the wardroom and chief's quarters and mess decks.

Gone ashore for good they will grow wistful about their Navy days, when the seas belonged to them and a new port of call was ever over the horizon.

Remembering this, they will stand taller and say, "I WAS A SAILOR ONCE AND I WOULD DO IT AGAIN."

Written by Mark Midgley

#### SOMETHING FROM OUR SHIPMATES:

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#### Really????

The old man and his wife have gotten into bed and were finally settled down for the night.

The wife turned to her husband and said, "You used to hold my hand."

He slowly reached over and took hold of her hand.

A few minutes later she said, "You used to kiss me before going to sleep."

He leaned over and placed a soft kiss on her cheek.

A few minutes later she softly said, "You used to bite my neck."

He threw back the covers, got out of bed and started walking away.

She quickly asked him where he was going.  
He said, "... to get my teeth."

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*Submitted by Pete Peterson, MM1(SS) B 70-72, USSVI Member-at-Large,*

A guy at the bar said I was in no condition to drive home in my car and should take the bus instead. It turned out I was in no condition to drive the bus either.



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*Submitted by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G 69-74, Assoc. LM, USSVI Holland Club / Carolina Piedmont Base*

**Super Bowl Sunday** - from a Marine Corps Colonel in Afghanistan:

"So, with all the kindness I can muster, I give this one piece of advice to the next pop star who is asked to sing the national anthem at a sporting event: save the vocal gymnastics and the physical gyrations for your concerts. Just sing this song the way you were taught to sing it in kindergarten - straight up, no styling."

"Sing it with the constant awareness that there are soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines watching you from bases and outposts all over the world. Don't make them cringe with your self-centered ego gratification. Sing it as if you are standing before a row of 96-year-old WWII vets wearing their Purple Hearts, Silver Stars and flag pins on their cardigans and you want them to be proud of you for honoring them and the country they love - not because you want them to think you are a superstar musician. They could see that from your costume, makeup and your entourage."

"Sing 'The Star Spangled Banner' with the courtesy and humility that tells the audience that it

is about America, not you. And please not everything needs to be spunked up! We're getting a little weary of that. Francis Scott Key does not need any help."

Semper Fi.



## VETERANS AFFAIRS - RETIREE INFO - AARP

<https://www.va.gov/>

And FLEET RESERVE

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## Anticipating Boom of Aging Veterans, VA to Expand Care, Services for the Elderly

Military.com, Jan. 26:

The Department of Veterans Affairs is planning to expand several programs that allow senior veterans to age in their homes or live in home-like settings as alternatives to elder care facilities. VA officials announced Monday they will expand the Home-Based Primary Care and Veteran-Directed Care programs, which provide medical care and caregiver services to housebound older veterans, and its Medical Foster Home program, which provides housing and services to veterans who otherwise would be in nursing homes.

[Read More](#)

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## Home Depot has changed 10% Discount

As of 1 Feb 2022, you must be "Enrolled"--online at: [Homedepot.com/military](http://Homedepot.com/military) to receive your 10% discount for Veterans, and Spouses!

Use your discount online

1. Add items to your cart on homedepot.com
2. Your discount will be applied to all eligible items at checkout

Use your discount in-store

1. Scan your items at the register.
2. Open the Home Depot mobile app or sign in to homedepot.com on your phone.
3. Select My Account and navigate to Military Discount Program.
4. Scan the QR code at the register.

If you have questions about applying your discount, visit the FAQ page. At Home Depot, we

appreciate everything you do for our country. Thank you for your service.

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## VA Pensions for Surviving Spouses

Did you know VA provides tax-free, supplemental income for qualified, surviving spouses? Learn how to apply for this benefit by watching the YouTube video and visiting the web links in the video description. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgWWni7Vfg>

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## Warning Signs of Pancreatic Cancer and Advances in Treatment

by Cheryl Platzman Weinstock, [AARP](#), Updated February 4, 2022

Survival rates have risen and there are new treatments, but early diagnosis is key

Twenty years ago, getting a pancreatic cancer diagnosis was very often devastating. The cancer usually wasn't caught until later stages, partly because the pancreas is tucked behind the stomach, making it hard to detect tumors. Plus, some of the warning signs — abdominal discomfort, back pain, unintended weight loss and fatigue — are easy to overlook or attribute to other conditions. And they often arise late in the game.

The five-year survival rate for this kind of cancer was around 4 percent. For treatment, doctors were able to offer patients only standard chemotherapy, radiation and/or a risky surgery.

Today, however, the five-year survival rate for pancreatic cancer has more than doubled. If the disease is caught early and the tumor is small and confined to the pancreas, the survival rate is around 40 percent.

[READ MORE](#)

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## Proposed changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities

The Department of Veterans Affairs is proposing changes to the [VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities](#) specifically pertaining to the respiratory, auditory and mental disorders body systems.

The proposed updates to the rating schedule for these conditions will enable VA to incorporate modern medical data and terminology to provide Veterans with more accurate and consistent

decisions.

Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated. Updating the rating schedule allows Veterans to receive decisions based on the most current medical knowledge relating to their condition.

By incorporating modern medical data in the assessment of disabilities and how they impact earning capacity, Veterans will receive evaluations which more accurately compensate them for their service-connected disabilities. Proposed updates include:

- Modernizing the evaluative rating criteria for sleep apnea, using developments in medical knowledge to evaluate it based on its responsiveness to treatment, bringing the rating criteria for sleep apnea more closely in line with the stated purpose of the rating schedule.
- Evaluating tinnitus (ringing in the ears) as a symptom of the underlying disease which causes it, rather than as a stand-alone disability.
- Evaluating mental health conditions based on a more robust and holistic approach that assesses how impactful the disability is to cognition, interpersonal relationships, task completion, life activities and self-care. Additionally, the proposed evaluation criteria include a 10% minimum evaluation for having one or more service-connected mental health conditions and will no longer require “total occupational and social impairment” to attain a 100% evaluation.

No change to a Veteran’s current rating would occur due to these proposed changes. If the proposed changes are finalized, Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition can apply for increased compensation, but no reductions shall be made unless an improvement in the Veteran’s disability is shown to have occurred.

**Thomas J. Murphy**  
Director, Northeast District

Performing the Delegable Duties of  
the Under Secretary for Benefits

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## **VA Update on Recall of Philips CPAP or BiPAP Resironics Positive Airway Pressure devices used for sleep apnea**

Your safety is our top priority. This is to update you on the recall of some Philips Resironics Positive Airway Pressure devices (CPAP or BiPAP) used for sleep apnea.

**If you do not have a Philips Resironics device, it is not part of the recall and you can ignore this email.**

Philips Resironics recently recalled some CPAP and BiPAP devices due to breakdown of the foam used to reduce sound and vibration. Additional information on the recall is available from Philips Resironics.

**Some Veterans have not yet registered their CPAP or BiPAP device with Philips Resironics. You will not receive a replacement until your current device is registered.**

To register your recalled device, go to the **Philips Resironics website** or call **877-907-7508**. Philips Resironics will provide a replacement device when one is available as well as a prepaid return label to send them your old device. This may take a year or more.

**Priority for replacement.** In mid-December 2021 Philips Resironics began requesting patient’s health information to prioritize replacement of devices. If you have not yet provided your health information, please contact Philips through their website or by phone. This may help you get a replacement device faster.

This recall has led to a shortage of CPAP and BiPAP machines worldwide from all manufacturers. Current supply chain issues related to microchip production and shipping from international manufacturers is causing additional delays.

Philips Resironics guidance notes that the likelihood of foam breakdown is higher in older devices, those that are used in high heat and humidity environments (more than 95 degrees), or that were cleaned with an ozone sterilizing device.

If you use a Philips Resironics CPAP or

BiPAP device, such as a Dream Station or System 1, continue to use your device as prescribed, register the device and:

If you are concerned about using your current device, contact your care team to schedule an appointment. Veterans who receive their care from the VA can send a secure message to their care team through [MyHealtheVet](#)

- Do not attempt to remove the sound reduction foam. This can't be done without breaking the machine.
- If you and your care team decide you can safely pause use of your device until a new one is available, **this will not impact** any related VA disability compensation benefits.

Tips to improve Sleep Apnea are found [here](#).

Only clean your device following the manufacturer's instructions. Use of an ozone sterilization cleaner may be related to foam breakdown.

For more information on the recall, visit the [Philips Respiration Recall](#) website or the VA [Philips Respiration Recall](#) site for frequently asked questions.

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### How to Use Secure Messaging

#### Non-urgent vs. urgent messages

Secure Messaging is mainly for routine or follow-up questions. But if you have an emergency, like trouble breathing, chest pain, or even suicidal thoughts, you should call your doctor or 911. [Learn More](#)

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### Five Exercises for People Over 50

Whether you have exercised all your life or have a new goal, exercise can help you stay healthy. Add these five useful activities to your weekly fitness plan. [Learn more](#).

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### Know Your Vision Benefits

Have you ever wondered if VA will cover your eye exams? The answer might be yes. VA covers eye exams and preventive vision testing for things like glaucoma. [Learn more](#).

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### Eating Out with Diabetes

Whether it's dinner from your favorite carryout or going to lunch with friends, eating out is a part of

life. If you have diabetes, use these tips to enjoy eating out. [Learn more](#).

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### PTSD: Your Treatment Options

Medicines help treat PTSD. To receive medication for PTSD, you'll need to meet with a healthcare provider who can prescribe them to you. [Learn more](#).

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### Apps We Think You'll Love

Get help on the go or at home from VA mobile apps. Whether you're looking to improve sleep or relieve stress, here are five health apps to try. [Learn more](#).



### The Computer Corner

By: Tom Krauser, MM1(SS) Blue 72-74, Assoc. Life Member

#### Cloning Your Hard Drive

*Thanks to George Birmingham for his continued support and feedback on the Computer Corner.*

Having your hard drive fail unexpectedly is not a pleasant experience. You may or may not have all your important files backed up to an external source but now you may not even be able to boot up your PC because of a problem with the actual hard drive.

After a recent Windows Update I could not access my hard drive. Nothing I tried allowed me to boot the drive to see the files. All repair attempts failed and diagnostic software was reporting problems with the hard drive. The drive was about 7 years old so maybe a failure should have been expected.

This is why you should have a complete backup or clone of your hard drive which has hopefully been kept up to date so that only recent programs and files may have to be restored.

This describes how to "clone" your hard drive to a drive you can store for such an emergency. The "clone" will only get the PC back to the date/time the drive was cloned so hopefully you have made other backups of more recent files you want to recover.

You can purchase hard drives fairly cheaply online. Just make sure that the size you buy is as large as or larger than the drive currently in your

PC and is the same connection type as your current hard drive. It should be at least larger than the used space on your current drive. For example, the drive that failed was a Samsung 750 GB drive of which I was on using less than 200 GB of that space. So, a drive of 250 GB or larger should work to clone your drive. After you clone the drive, label it with the PC Name /date / time and store it in a safe place. Schedule to update the clone on your calendar on a regular basis to make sure you have a recent clone of the drive. Cloning a drive should only take a couple of hours so you can plan it when you have time.

For example, I purchased Samsung SATA 750 GB hard drives online for about \$32 each. This may be cheaper than large USB flash drives and the clone can just be swapped into the computer to restore the PC to the point when the clone was created. Then any newer backup files and programs can be reloaded onto the new drive.

You may have to purchase a USB 3.0 hard drive enclosure so you can attach it to the PC to clone to the new drive. You may have to "initialize" the new drive if it is not recognized by Windows when you put it in the enclosure. A USB 3.0 enclosure used in a 3.0 port (usually has a blue connector) will give about 10 times more speed than if one of the items is only 2.0 (port or enclosure).

The following link explains how to do this:  
<https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-server/storage/disk-management/initialize-new-disks>

After the new drive is initialized and assigned a drive letter and "Clone" with the following software.

The following article from PC Magazine- How to Clone a Hard Drive. It describes how to clone a hard drive with Free software you can download.  
<https://www.pc当地>

Note: If you have an external hard drive already attached to the PC you should turn it OFF or unplug it before starting the cloning process so the cloning software does not detect that drive giving it as an option to clone. Having multiple source drives can make the drive selection confusing. Remember to turn it back on after the

cloning is completed.

I used the software to make a clone of my laptop hard drive and stored in with my important documents.

I selected:

- "Clone this disk",
- Selected the new drive to be cloned,
- Selected Copy Partitions
- Since my drives were 2 different sizes, I selected "Shrink or extend to fill the target disk"
- The main partition "C:" should be adjusted based on the different sizes of the 2 disks.
- Click Next
- Do not need to schedule this Clone for later so click Next.
- Click Finish to start the process.
- To be safe I would just let the process finish before doing other things on the PC
- After clone made label the disk and store in a safe place.

You can use the USB 3.0 hard drive enclosure with a separate hard drive to do your current backups so you have saved up to date files.

The following link discusses backup and recovery options in Windows.

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/backup-and-restore-in-windows-352091d2-bb9d-3ea3-ed18-52ef2b88cbef>

**Note:** After I had reinstalled the new drive I was able to access the damaged drive, even though it would not boot, using the USB enclosure and copy files from the old drive to the new drive.

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*Submitted by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G 69-74, Assoc. LM, USSVI Holland Club / Carolina Piedmont Base*

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#### **Quick tip of the day**

When you have trouble with an Amazon order, there are times when it's easier to talk to a customer service representative rather than write a lengthy note or deal with a chatbot. An Amazon customer service rep will call you if you know the trick.

While logged into your Amazon account, go to the Contact us page. At first glance, it appears as

only a way to chat with a representative.

Here's the secret. If you look closely underneath the yellow Start Chatting Now box, in small letters, you'll see the "We can call you" link.

Click that, enter your phone number, and you'll see an estimated time before you receive the call. I've never waited more than three minutes. Be sure to have your order number handy to expedite getting the result you want.

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## Hacker Circulates Fake, Malware-Laden Windows 11 Installer

By Michael Kan February 9, 2022

The hacker created a look-alike Microsoft Windows site to trick users into downloading the malware.

Watch out for malicious Windows 11 installers. Microsoft's recent decision to expand Windows 11 to more PCs has inspired at least one hacker to exploit the software's rollout.

HP has reported a fake Windows 11 installer that'll deliver malware to a victim's PC. The company spotted the scheme after noticing the curious "windows-upgraded[.]com" domain.

According to HP, the domain was created a day after Microsoft announced it was entering the final stage of delivering Windows 11 to eligible PCs. The fake domain was dressed up to look like an official Windows 11 site, and included a "download" button. However, the download is actually a Trojan capable of stealing passwords and other data from a PC's web browser.

[\*\*READ MORE\*\*](#)

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*Getting tired of the scammer and phishing phone calls and wondering why someone is not doing anything to stop it? Note the targeting of the elderly... not that we are elderly, mind you, but we know folks who are.*

## U.S. Authorities Charge 6 Indian Call Centers Scamming Thousands of Americans

February 04, 2022 Ravie Lakshmanan

A number of India-based call centers and their directors have been indicted for their alleged role in placing tens of millions of scam calls aimed at defrauding thousands of American consumers.

The indictment charged Manu Chawla, Sushil

Sachdeva, Nitin Kumar Wadwani, Swarndeep Singh, Dinesh Manohar Sachdev, Gaje Singh Rathore, Sanket Modi, Rajiv Solanki and their respective call centers for conspiring with previously indicted VoIP provider E Sampark and its director, Guarav Gupta, to forward the calls to U.S. citizens.

"Criminal India-based call centers defraud U.S. residents, including the elderly, by misleading victims over the telephone utilizing scams such as Social Security and IRS impersonation as well as loan fraud," the U.S. Justice Department said in a release.

According to the November 2020 indictment issued against E Sampark and Gupta, the calls from India-based phone scammers led to reported losses of over \$20 million from May 2015 to June 2020, with the company maintaining roughly 60 servers in the U.S. state of Florida for this purpose and which contained over 130,000 recordings of scam calls.

The scheme involved the callers posing as Internal Revenue Service (IRS) employees to dupe the victims into transferring money, threatening them with arrest and fines should they fail to pay back taxes. The illegally amassed funds were then laundered through an overseas fraud network.

As part of the Social Security scam, the fraudsters purported to be federal agents in an attempt to mislead victims into believing that their Social Security numbers (SSN) were involved in crimes and once again applied intimidation tactics to trick them into sending cash.

Lastly, the callers also masqueraded as people working for lending institutions and informed the affected parties that they were eligible for fictitious loans, only to direct them to "pay upfront fees to demonstrate their ability to repay the loan" in exchange for nothing.

"Scam robocalls cause emotional and financial devastation to victims, particularly our vulnerable and elderly populations," said U.S. Attorney Kurt Erskine in a statement. "These India-based call centers allegedly scared their victims and stole their money, including some victims' entire life savings."

Found this article interesting? Follow THN on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to read more exclusive content we post.

<https://thehackernews.com/2022/02/us-authorities-charge-6-indian-call.html>

### **The Lean Submariner**

Here's the latest posts on the blog. Still going strong. The link to his blog is

<https://theleansubmariner.com/>

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### **Rear Admiral Taussig and the Warning Before Pearl Harbor by Mister Mac**

Rear Admiral Taussig and the Warning Before Pearl Harbor An obscure article in the Southern Jewish Weekly put forward an interesting idea in the form of an article published on January 30, 1942. In some ways, this is part three of a series about Taussig. But it casts the story in a different light and [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **Against all odds – The Story of the USS Barton at Guadalcanal by Mister Mac**

Against all odds – The Story of the USS Barton at Guadalcanal On January 31, 1942, the USS Barton was launched in Quincy, Mass. At the Bethlehem Steel Co. shipyard. She was a capable ship designed to provide anti-aircraft services for herself and larger ships as well as provide a platform for launching torpedoes. Her [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **The Origin of Submarine Dolphins – The Fourth (and I think) Final Chapter by Mister Mac**

Originally posted on [theleansubmariner](https://theleansubmariner):

The rest of the story This will hopefully be the final segment in my saga of how the Submarine Dolphin insignia came to be. Each stage along the way has been a lot of fun as I have sifted through magazines, articles on line, historical societies, the Library of Congress and...

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **"We thought they would be taller" The Americans Arrive in Northern Ireland, January 1942 by Mister Mac**

I don't normally write much about the War in

Europe on my blog since it doesn't fit well with my core interests. But a story from the newspapers of January 28, 1942, caught my eye. The story was about the arrival of the US Army in Belfast Northern Ireland. Debbie and I travelled to Northern [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **How much the world has changed in fifty years. And how little. by Mister Mac**

How much the world has changed in fifty years. And how little. January 1972. Fifty years ago this month, I was just beginning to figure out where I was going to head after high school. To be honest, the choices were not very open. I had spent a lot of time pursuing anything but my [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **"hey... you have the next watch" by Mister Mac**

Originally posted on [theleansubmariner](https://theleansubmariner):

Watches in the military have been around since the beginning of recorded time. The Jews, like the Greeks and Romans, divided the night into military watches instead of hours, each watch representing the period for which sentinels or pickets remained on duty. The proper Jewish reckoning recognized only three such watches,...

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **Death of the Old Gambler – Yamamoto's End by Mister Mac**

I was browsing through the movie selections on my TV a few weeks ago looking for something to occupy my time while I was on the treadmill. One of the movies that came up was about Admiral Halsey called The Gallant Hours. The Gallant Hours is an American docudrama from 1960 about William F. Halsey, [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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### **Women went to war; I wonder what they wore ? – February 3 1942**

by Mister Mac

My Mom celebrated her tenth birthday on February 3, 1942. She and I talked a few times about the war that was going on around her at that time and she did not have many memories. She was born into a well to do family and was

isolated from the events that were transpiring [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## Sinking of the S-26 Boat January 1942

by Mister Mac

Subsafe Anyone who has ever sailed on a US Navy submarine probably had at least some idea about the reasons for all the training and emphasis on safety that was given to them. From the beginning of submarine operations in the early 1900's, diving on a submersible ship in an unforgiving ocean has always [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## All Hope was abandoned – the S-26 (Part 2)

by Mister Mac

Submarine rescues were still pretty rare in 1942. The rescue of the sailors from the sunken USS Squalus in 1939 was made possible because of the emerging technology that allowed a rescue bell to be attached to the boat. On the morning of May 23, 1939, the submarine USS Squalus slipped beneath the storm-tossed surface [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## Crossing the line February 8, 1974

by Mister Mac

Our fears are always more numerous than our dangers Seneca Forty-eight years ago, I was brought into one of the most ancient organizations called the Ancient Order of the Deep. The Crossing the Line Ceremony is as old as the sea. From the Official Navy Web Site: Although crossing the equator may seem like a [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## The cost of peace is often the next war.

by Mister Mac

On February 12, 1922, the American fleet began their annual exercises. These exercises had been conducted for a very long time and were designed to test the readiness of the ships and the men who sailed on them. But in 1922, a very different atmosphere hung heavy over the entire fleet. Coming off of [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## Prepare to launch

by Mister Mac

"Take a chance. All life is a chance. The man who goes furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The "sure thing" boat never gets far from the shore." From the writings of Dale Carnegie Today is one of those days where you stand on the edge of the cliff [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## The Short Life of the USS Juneau – February 14 to November 13 1942

by Mister Mac

A fast ship for a new kind of war As the Japanese were crushing their opponents all across the western Pacific Ocean, the USS Juneau was commissioned on February 14, 1942, with great fanfare. Captain Lyman K. Swenson was her first commanding officer. Little could anyone have predicted that less than 9 months later, the [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## The Surrender of Singapore and the Great Bluff – February 15, 1942

by Mister Mac

The Surrender of Singapore and the Great Bluff In the early chaotic days of World War 2, the Japanese took advantage of the fact that the allies had bartered away so many opportunities to prepare for a conflict. The Washington Naval Arms limitation treaty of 1922 resulted in smaller navies among the future belligerents, but [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## The Ship That Wouldn't Die – USS Shaw DD-373

by Mister Mac

The Ship That Wouldn't Die – USS Shaw DD-373 One of the most remarkable pictures captured at Pearl Harbor on December 7th was the spectacular explosion of the USS Shaw which was in a floating dry dock as the attack began. The bomb damage was significant enough to make anyone watching wonder if anything could [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## **Gallant Leadership and Courageous Conduct Under Fire – The Story of the USS Duncan DD 485 in 1942**

by Mister Mac

In February 1942, the Navy was desperate for fighting ships. From the attack at Pearl Harbor to the battles that stretched across the Pacific, years of neglect in building an adequate amount of combat vessels was being felt in every theater. Shipyards were being pushed to finish the ships that were authorized a year before [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## **The USS Albacore SS 218 and her Sponsor – February 1942**

by Mister Mac

The story of World War 2 is always a combination of the stories of the ships that served and the men who were involved in their lives. This story is about the USS Albacore, but it is also a story about some of the men who were around when she was launched. The ship's sponsor [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

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## **USS Wyoming Exchanges Command, Crew At Sea**

(THE BRUNSWICK NEWS 01 FEB 22) ... Gordon Jackson

Ballistic missile submarines home-ported at Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Ga., deploy for about 80 days before returning to swap crews and resupply the boat with enough food to feed the sailors.

The quick turnaround is necessary because the boats are a key deterrent to nuclear war.

They remain submerged nearly the entire time they are deployed, undetected and poised to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack.

But there could be a time when a submarine cannot return to Kings Bay, and the crews aboard the boats train for that possibility.

The USS Wyoming, home-ported at Kings Bay, successfully completed a crew swap while at sea on Jan. 24. The crew exchange also included a fresh supply of food during the deployment.

"This regularly scheduled exchange of command at sea demonstrates the continuity and operational flexibility of our sea-based nuclear

deterrence operations and our ready, reliable ballistic-submarine force," said Lt. Stu Phillips, public affairs officer for Commander, Submarine Group Ten.

"The efficiency of exchanges of crews at sea allows sailors to reunite with their families and provides a ready, resilient submarine force."

The crew was transported by Military Sealift Command supply vessels USNS Black Powder and USNS Westwind at a location that cannot be disclosed, Phillips said.

"As a matter of operations security, it is U.S. Submarine Forces policy not to discuss future exercises, operations or ship movements," he said. "It is also policy not to disclose specific operational or readiness details of units."

"Submarines remain operationally ready to support any tasking and are currently operationally deployed around the world today." <https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2022-02-01/uss-wyoming-exchange-command-crew-sea-navy-4485803.html>

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## **Submarine Maintenance Delays Lowering Inventory Use For Operations**

(DEFENSE DAILY 18 FEB 22) ... Rich Abott

The Navy's attack submarine (SSN) force is at a low point that is worsened by a backlog in maintenance and that technological development work is taking too long, a top Navy submarine official said this week.

"Right now, I'm at a low point in my fast attack numbers, I'm at 47 SSNs," Rear Adm. Jeffrey Jablon, Commander of Submarine Force at U.S. Pacific Fleet said Feb. during a panel of the West 2022 conference in San Diego.

The West conference is co-hosted by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) International and the U.S. Naval Institute (USNI).

He said this is made worse by idle time and maintenance delays. Jablon underscored idle time means submarines are awaiting maintenance because they have exceeded their period at sea for unrestricted operations, so they are no longer approved to submerge.

In 2016 the Navy submarine force had 360 days of idle time; days of operations lost.

By comparison, “last year we had almost 1,500 days of idle time. That’s [the equivalent of] four SSNs that I could not use for operations,” Jablon said.

He said his force also had about the equivalent of three and a half attack submarines due to maintenance delays “based where they were supposed to finish their availabilities and where they [actually] finished.”

“So that’s about seven and a half SSNs that I could not use last year because of awaiting maintenance or maintenance delays,” Jablon said.

He said the Navy has also had issues in shipbuilding delays. Both the shipbuilding and maintenance industries have had to deal with COVID-19 pandemic and supply chain issues, which is stressed by the significantly smaller number of suppliers compared to 30-40 years ago.

“Back in the ‘80s we had 17,000 suppliers for the submarine force. Now we’re down to 5,000 suppliers for the submarine force. That hurts and that affects our ability to get our submarines out on time,” Jablon said.

He confirmed that despite the low attack submarine numbers, “I can reiterate that we meet all our operational commitments, we’re able to ensure that our ships are combat ready when they deploy and meet the requirements of our combatant commanders that are placed upon us.”

However, Jablon noted the downside is this tension between readiness and capacity results in a lower ability to do “tactical development at sea.”

This means the Navy does not have as many submarines go out and do tactical development or it cuts commanding officers’ discretionary time.

“We’re still able to prepare the ship to be combat ready when they deploy,” Jablon said, but “it’s more difficult, it’s more deliberate, it takes more input from the [type commander’s] staff to do that. But we’re able to meet...what we’re tasked to do.”

He also said his force is partnering with Naval Sea Systems Command to help ensure submarines are ready to start work at the start of their availabilities to increase efficiency.

“Some of the things that NAVSEA is working

on is expanding capability and capacity within their shipyards, optimizing production, investing in capital equipment, and investing in manpower, recruiting, and training those shipyard workers and we need to support them.”

Jablon noted he is satisfied with submarine force manning levels, but the Navy’s submarine force is not moving fast enough with new tactical development technology.

When he got to his current role, he said their Undersea Warfighting Development Center (UWDC) was doing tactical development work (TACDEV) for technologies “that would be put on a submarine in the next 10 years or so. I need technologies in the near term, I need TACDEV to be done quickly and to put those technologies on my submarines for the near term for which I mean next two to five years.”

<https://www.defensedaily.com/submarine-maintainedelays-lowering-inventory-use-for-operations/navy-usmc/>

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### “It’s Just A Dog” by Richard A. Biby

From time to time people tell me “relax, it’s just a dog” or “it’s a lot of money just for a dog.” They don’t understand the distance traveled, the time invested or the costs incurred by “just a dog.”

Some of my proudest moments happened with “just a dog.”

Many hours passed being my only company “just a dog”, but not for a single moment I felt despised. Some of my saddest moments were for “just a dog,” and on those gray days, the gentle touch of “just a dog” gave me the comfort and reason to spend the day.

If you also think “it’s just a dog,” then you’ll probably understand phrases like “just a friend,” “just a sunrise,” or “just a promise.” “Only a dog” brings into my life the very essence of friendship, trust and pure and unbridled joy. “Only a dog” brings the compassion and patience that make me a better person.

For “just a dog,” I’m getting up early, going for long walks and looking forward to the future. So for me, and for people like me, it is not “just a dog,” but an embodiment of all the hopes and dreams of the future, the memories of the past and the absolute joy of the moment. “Only a dog”

brings good in me and diverts my thoughts away from me and the daily worries.

I hope one day you can understand that it's not "just a dog", but what gives me humanity and prevents me from being "just a human". So the next time you hear the phrase "just a dog," you just smile because you "just don't understand."

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### Use of Tools Explained...



#### CIRCULAR SAW:

A portable cutting tool used to make boards too short.



#### BELT SANDER:

An electric sanding tool commonly used to convert minor touch-up jobs into major refinishing jobs.



#### WIRE WHEEL:

Cleans paint off bolts and then throws them somewhere under the workbench with the speed of light. Also removes fingerprints and hard-

earned calluses from fingers in about the time it takes you to say, 'Oh shit'.



#### DRILL PRESS:

A tall upright machine useful for suddenly snatching flat metal bar stock out of your hands so that it smacks you in the chest and flings your beer across the room, denting the freshly-painted project which you had carefully set in the corner where nothing could get to it.



#### MULTI-GRIPS:

Used to round off bolt heads. Sometimes used in the creation of blood-blisters.



#### HACKSAW:

One of a family of cutting tools built on the Ouija board principle... It transforms human energy into a crooked, unpredictable motion, and the more you attempt to influence its course, the more dismal your future becomes.



#### **VISE-GRIPS:**

Generally used after pliers to completely round off bolt heads. If nothing else is available, they can also be used to transfer intense welding heat to the palm of your hand.



#### **OXY ACETYLENE TORCH:**

Used almost entirely for igniting various flammable objects in your shop and creating a fire. Also handy for igniting the grease inside the wheel hub out of which you want to remove a bearing race.

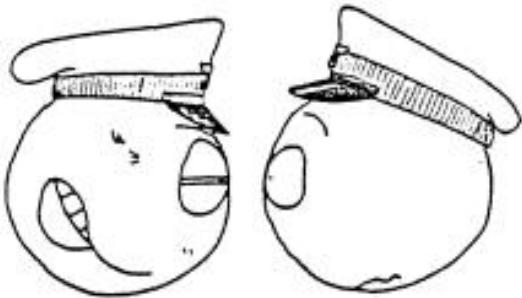


#### **HYDRAULIC FLOOR JACK:**

Used for lowering an automobile to the ground after you have installed your new brake shoes, trapping the jack handle firmly under the bumper.

#### **DAMMIT TOOL:**

Any handy tool that you grab and throw across the garage while yelling Dammit' at the top of your lungs. It is also, most often, the next tool that you will need.



*"IT'S 'LET GO FORE AND  
AFT,' JONES. NOT  
'WILL SOMEONE  
PLEASE UNTIE US!'"*

no one ever tells you how often you'll whisper "righty tighty, lefty loosey" to yourself as an adult and they really should



"This article by Charles Hood (a fellow South Carolinian) appears in the new book, *Sub Tales* 3, along with 17 other interesting stories about various aspects of the Silent Service.

Charles and his brother and co-author Frank--who was stationed at Charleston 50 years ago as a junior officer aboard the USS *Seahorse* (SSN-669) --have written six nonfiction submarine books of general interest.

Along the way, they have raised \$50,000 for the Charitable Foundation of the USSVI."





# WHERE SUBMARINES GO TO DIE

*Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

GENESIS 3:19

BY CHARLES HOOD, MD

When the U.S. (and the USSR) began building nuclear submarines in the 1950s, the longevity of the fuel source (U-235) was touted as a major advance. Relatively little attention was paid to plans for what to do with the radioactive components of a submarine when it had reached the end of its operational life. Such considerations floated to the surface in the 1980s when the first crop of nuclear boats reached their obsolescence.

The scrapping of nuclear submarines is a story that begins in the mid-1980s during a period of rapidly declining public support for nuclear power as well as growing concern about the long-term health consequences of nuclear waste. As plans for disposal were formulated, a few novel ideas were proposed that never took flight because of public outcry about environmental effects. Despite some missteps along the way, the final decisions about how to handle the problem of aging submarines served to underscore the notion that the U.S. Navy remains the world's foremost nuclear power expert—based upon the sheer number of reactors it has successfully operated, its unparalleled track record for safety, and more recently, its commitment to the responsible dismantling and disposal of nuclear-powered ships. But more than that, as we shall see, the end of the road for any submarine evokes very strong emotions.

Let's pick up the story in January of 1982, when the U.S. Navy released its initial proposal to bury more than a hundred worn-out nuclear submarines in deep oceanic waters off the U.S. coastlines. The plan called first for the removal of highly-radioactive spent fuel from decommissioned submarines. Subsequently, the otherwise intact boats would be hauled out to sea at a rate of three to four per year and sunk at prescribed locations approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. Two "graveyards" were envisioned: One about 160 miles off the California coastline at Mendocino, and the other about 200 miles off the North Carolina coastline.

The bold and controversial plan, intended to end a twelve-year moratorium on the ocean-dumping of nuclear waste, immediately drew the ire of environmental activists and scientists. They saw the plan as both hazardous and reactionary. Until 1970, ocean dumping had been sanctioned for the disposal of nuclear waste by the Navy. Between 1946 and 1970, more than 89,000 barrels of nuclear waste were dumped in more than fifty locations off the nation's Atlantic and Gulf coastlines. (The Navy had also quietly disposed of a nuclear reactor in 1959 when the liquid metal-cooled reactor of

the USS *Seawolf* [SSN-575] was hauled by barge to sea and scuttled about 120 miles off the Delaware coast.) The public outcry was deafening. Seeing such disposal as a giant step backward ecologically, constituents concerned about the long-term consequences of maritime nuclear waste began to place greater pressure upon leaders in Congress to resist the new Navy plan. Scientists also weighed in with dire predictions of the potential risk of ocean contamination, given the corrosive nature of seawater and its ability to break down even the thickest metal barriers over time. Further, much media attention was paid to a widely reported contemporary story from Great Britain about people ingesting radioactive seafood harvested around the Windscale plutonium production plant. Windscale was somewhat like the Hanford Works in the U.S., producing plutonium for British nuclear weapons using graphite-moderated "piles." The contamination of the local food supply was the result of a fire in one of the piles that had spread radioactive particulate over the surrounding area. Researchers claimed that the subjects received doses of radiation equivalent to 300 X-rays.

Initially, the Navy resisted calls for a land-based burial system, pointing out the much greater costs and increased risks of exposure to radioactivity incurred by shipyard workers and burial specialists. Citing the absence of significant measurable radioactive contamination of the Atlantic Ocean at the sites of the two fallen nuclear submarines,—*Thresher* (1963) and *Scorpius* (1968)—the Navy maintained that sea burial posed no threat to the public health.

Beneath the simmering debate about the fate of old nuclear submarines were some simple but irrefutable numbers. By mid-1981, only five nuclear submarines had been decommissioned: *Triton* in 1967, *Halibut* in 1976, *Nautilus* in 1979, and the two Polaris subs, *Abraham Lincoln* and *Theodore Roosevelt*, in 1980. All five had been defueled and put in mothballs in various Navy shipyards, so an urgent backlog was not a major factor driving the discussions.

However, by the end of the 1980s, the number of retired submarines was expected to climb exponentially to at least 100. A definitive and permanent solution was needed that would please (or perhaps better stated, least upset) all interested parties. Furthermore, decisions made by the U.S. could be expected to set a global precedent for nuclear submarine disposal by other countries, including Great Britain, France, and the USSR.

The matter was settled through an international agreement ten years in the making. In 1983, countries participating in the London Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, thankfully known more succinctly as the “London Convention,” introduced a moratorium on low-level waste dumping. Two years later, the proposal was adopted on a voluntary basis, and in 1993 all contracting parties—including the major countries in possession of nuclear submarines—agreed to a total prohibition of radioactive waste disposal at sea.

With the ocean graveyard proposal no longer an option, the Navy developed a land-based strategy of scrapping nuclear ships and submarines. In 1995, an existing section of the Hanford Site in Washington State was officially set aside for shallow land sequestration of spent reactor compartments following a rigorous dismantlement procedure conducted only at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS) located on the eastern shore of the Olympic Peninsula at Bremerton, WA, just west of Seattle. Such was the genesis of the Ship/Submarine Recycling Program (SRP) and Reactor Compartment Disposal (RCD).

While PSNS benefited greatly as the chosen destination for all decommissioned nuclear submarines, another historic West Coast naval shipyard took the decision hard. Mare Island Naval Shipyard (MINSY), the first U.S. naval station established on the Pacific Coast in 1854, had been chosen for closure in 1993 in accordance with the Base Closure and Realignment (BRAC) process. (The purpose of BRAC was to consolidate and streamline military operations in the wake of the end of the Cold War.) More than 500 ships were built for the U.S. Navy at MINSY, and it had reached its peak industrial capacity during World War II as one of the primary centers for the construction and maintenance of Pacific fleet submarines. The establishment of SRP at PSNS dashed any hopes of salvaging MINSY as a submarine dismantlement station. MINSY was decommissioned on April 1, 1996.

We'll return to the disposal story momentarily, but now let's pause to examine the series of events marking the end of a submarine's operational life. Prior to dismantlement and sequestration, the process of breaking down a submarine begins at the time of decommissioning—the date that any submarine is officially removed from active service. Just prior to that time, tradition demands that an “inactivation ceremony” be conducted. This represents the final public celebration for the submarine, and it is usually a bittersweet affair attended by a mix of military and civilian well-wishers. Crew members (past and present), family members, industrial supporters, Navy League members, and Navy officials gather to bid the boat farewell with a combination of speeches, prayers, patriotic music, and pomp. Compared with the celebratory nature of a commissioning ceremony, the tone is much more subdued.

The order of events during the inactivation ceremony varies somewhat from sub to sub, but several rituals are generally observed reflecting the traditional Navy “farewell” to any ship—surface or submerged. Noting that the primary source for the following description is [seaflags.us/customs](http://seaflags.us/customs), here is the general sequence of events:

*Once the arrival honors for the senior officers and distinguished guests are completed, the national anthem opens the ceremony.*

*An invocation is offered.*

*The commanding officer (CO) delivers remarks and introduces the guest speaker if there is one.*

*After the guest speaker has finished, the CO calls, “Attention to orders!” and then reads the decommissioning order(s). The CO then says, “XO, make preparations to decommission United States Ship*

*[name].” The XO (executive officer) then replies, “Aye aye, captain.”*

*The XO simply utters, “Reports!” One at a time, the heads of the various departments state their reports, which briefly summarize the final necessary tasks. To each of the reports, the XO replies, “Very well.”*

*After the final department report, the XO says, “Captain, [name of ship] is ready for decommissioning.” The CO then asks the senior officer present for permission to decommission the ship.*

The conclusion of the inactivation ceremony is especially stirring. As the present crew stands shoulder-to-shoulder on the deck of the submarine, “manning the rails” as a show of utmost respect, the XO issues a final order: “Secure the watch.” With that utterance, the continuous cycle of watchstanding aboard the ship is broken.

The proceedings end with all sailors standing at attention and saluting while the boat's three pennants are hauled down: the ensign (American flag), the naval jack, and the boat's commissioning pennant. Traditionally, the ensign is given to the sailor with the most years of service on the boat, and the commissioning pendant is awarded to the commanding officer. However, such traditions vary widely among boats and eras.

After the inactivation ceremony, the actual decommissioning occurs very quietly. The name of the boat is changed by eliminating the “USS” prefix and adding “ex-” before her name. For example, in 1980, the “USS Nautilus” became “ex-Nautilus.” Before any physical dismantling work starts, a period of time, usually several months, is allowed to elapse for any radioactive isotopes with relatively short half-lives to decay, such as I-131 (half-life of 8 days) and Xe-133 (half-life of 5.3 days). The reactor also cools very slowly during this “hands-off” waiting period. During this interval, a skeleton crew of nuclear watchstanders remains on board to ensure security.



**USS Sperry (AS-12) moored with sixteen retired submarines awaiting scrapping at PSNS. Photo was taken in the mid-1990s.**

All weapons and any recyclable equipment that may be reused aboard other Navy assets are removed. (Note: Anything usable on the boat is removed and either put into storage or hustled to another boat needing spare parts. One veteran of the USS Plunger [SSN-595] who witnessed her recycling at Mare Island Naval Shipyard in 1990—prior to the consolidation of submarine dismantlement operations at PSNS—described it as similar to an organ harvest. Everything not welded to the deck was removed—even the bunks!) Note that these initial steps may be performed at a number of designated naval stations on both coasts prior to moving the vessel to PSNS.

Next on the agenda is the removal of the spent nuclear fuel assemblies. This is dangerous work performed by a well-trained and

highly protected welding crew at PSNS. The submarine is first towed to drydock at PSNS from its previous location, if applicable. Before beginning the extraction process, shipyard workers erect a sealed two-story building atop the submarine hull in drydock to create an airtight working environment that is not exposed to the elements. The welders then cut through the hull, disconnect the reactor control rod mechanisms and remove the reactor vessel head, thus exposing the top of the core and allowing for the removal of the fuel assemblies. Each assembly weighs several hundred pounds and measures around five- to ten-feet-long and ten inches wide.

Inside the sealed temporary enclosure, workers then transfer each fuel assembly to a lead-lined container that is then picked up by a crane and moved to a railcar cask. It's important to point out that the spent fuel is not reprocessed; in other words, the valuable plutonium that has accumulated inside the fuel rods as a natural byproduct of U-235 fission is not extracted. Instead, the spent fuel is shipped undisturbed by rail to the Naval Reactor Facility at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEL), where it is stored in canisters.

After defueling, the dismantlement process kicks into high gear. The first step is slicing the once-proud submarine into three to five large pieces, depending on whether the scrapped boat is a fast attack or a boomer. For a fast attack, the reactor compartment (typically mounted just aft of amidships) is sliced away from the remaining forward and aft sections, generating three primary pieces (or four if the sail is detached separately). For a boomer, the same pattern of division occurs, but with the additional detachment of the missile compartment in accordance with the provisions of the START I (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement signed in 1991, which results in four or five large pieces.

In the earliest days at PSNS, the reactor compartment was first cut away, then the remaining halves of the boat were welded back together. This decidedly odd-looking vessel was then placed back in the water to await its final weeks in the "graving dock." In fact, such floating storage was the standard policy before 1991.

Steve Gunderson, a retired manager at PSNS, worked in various capacities there for nearly forty years. He recalls some of the early problems which had to be solved:

*In the beginning, when decommissioned submarine hulls were sent to PSNS, they were moored at whichever pier had the space. Some areas were too shallow for some of the hulls, which required the removal of their rudders when they arrived. This turned out to be an unexpectedly consequential action since when orders came down to have some of the hulls towed to other shipyards to augment their workload, it became apparent that such action was not possible for rudderless hulls. Temporary rudders would need to be installed in order to safely tow these boats, and in the end, it was decided that such activity was economically unfeasible. As a result, all submarine hulls stayed at PSNS, and ultimately PSNS became the sole location for cut-up and recycling.*

The first submarines to be scrapped at PSNS were in Dry Dock 3. Initially, a metal-tracked excavator was adapted with a hydraulic shear replacing the usual bucket at the end of its arm, like a huge backhoe. This excavator could travel the length of the drydock on one side, maneuver around the head of the dock, and then travel down the other side. This enabled the excavator to effectively shear off piping sections and equipment foundations. The hull and other major structural components of the sub were too large for the hydraulic shear. They had to be lifted out of the drydock by crane and cut manually using an oxy/gas torch, carbon arc, or grinding.

Several issues were encountered during these early months and years, including the proper sequestration and removal of toxins and carcinogens (asbestos in insulation and adhesives, lead in paint and ballast/shielding, polychlorinated biphenyls [PCBs], and heavy metals). If any of these substances were to be left behind when the drydock was reflooded, they could easily contaminate the bay and pose major health risks to local people, fish, and other wildlife.

Along these lines, the concrete bottom along the north end of Dry Dock 3 became so contaminated that a cofferdam had to be built to permit only the south end to be flooded for submarine and Reactor Compartment docking and removal; the north end was reserved for cut-up and recycling operations.



Dry Dock 3 at PSNS showing caisson (background) and wall.

Photo courtesy of Library of Congress.

Jim Armstrong [EMC(SS)] was stationed at PSNS in the 1980s and 1990s. He recalled the dismantlement procedure used for the joint decommissioning of USS George Washington (SSBN-598) and USS Thomas Jefferson (SSBN-618) in late 1984 and early 1985:

*Once the workers completely defueled the boats and removed the missile and reactor compartments, they jacked the two remaining ends together and welded them into one hull. During this time, almost all onboard equipment was removed. Maneuvering had all its panels (SPCP, RPCP, EPCP) removed, leaving a strange-looking empty shell. The remaining skeleton crew was still standing watches in engineering, but the only thing left to monitor was the water level inside the empty reactor vessel.*

*After they had both the 598 and the 618 in a condition where they could float, the drydock was flooded, and the two strange-looking boats were towed to the pier before the joint decommissioning ceremony. By then, the CO of the 598 had been reassigned, so the CO of the Jefferson had command of both ships. As I had the honor of being the last OOD on the Washington, I saluted the ensign as it was lowered for the last time. It was the greatest honor of my career and a memory I will always cherish.*

*It was really weird to see both ships in drydock—it looked like Frankenstein's lab. They welded the turtlebacks (fairings) together as well, so what you had were two very odd-looking shortened boats riding extra-high in the water because of the reduced weight. To be honest, it was a sorry sight.*

The now-separated reactor compartment (RC), which contains not only the reactor vessel and other radioactive primary system components but the steel submarine hull as well, is then sealed at both ends with three-quarter-inch-thick steel bulkheads. This step completely entombs the RC, which varies from about 35 to 42 feet



At PSNS, here we see the separation of the reactor compartment from sections fore and aft.



The former USS *Thomas Jefferson* (SSBN-618) has been reassembled following removal of the missile and reactor compartments at PSNS.



Reactor core making the final journey to the Hanford Site.



Trench 94—note the man walking under the RCs to provide a scale perspective.

in length. Now considered low-level nuclear waste, the encased RC is ready for transport to the designated sequestration pit at the Hanford Site.

Previously known as Hanford Works during its heyday in the mid-twentieth century, the 500-square-mile complex served primarily as a plutonium production facility. The fissionable material needed for the Trinity test detonation at Alamogordo in July 1945, as well as the “Fat Man” bomb dropped on Nagasaki in August 1945, was purified here (uranium for the “Little Boy” bomb dropped on Hiroshima was enriched at the sister facility in Oak Ridge, Tennessee), and much of the plutonium required for U.S. thermonuclear weapons during the Cold War originated at Hanford Works.

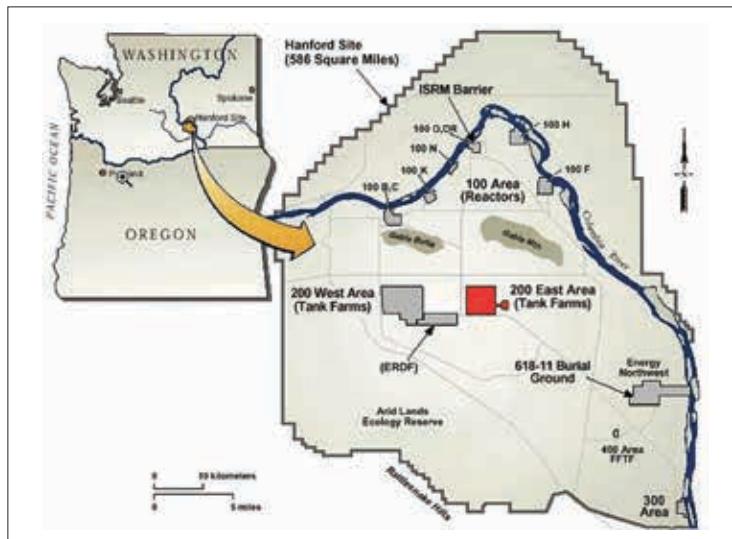
Now operated by the Department of Energy, the Hanford Site is located in south-central Washington State, approximately 200 miles southeast of Seattle. Transport of a sealed RC to Hanford is a complex process requiring the use of both a specialized barge and a high-capacity terrestrial mover. First, the sealed RC—weighing more than 1,000 tons—is loaded on a reinforced barge from the Puget Sound shipyard. Towed by an ocean tug, the barge heads out to sea via the Strait of San Juan de Fuca and down the Washington Coast to the mouth of the Columbia River. The barge then travels upstream for approximately 342 miles, passing by Portland, Oregon, negotiating the 24-foot-deep lock at the majestic Bonneville Dam, and then traversing the scenic Columbia River Gorge before arriving at the inland Port of Benton just north of Richland, Washington. The voyage from PSNS to Benton usually takes three days.

At that point in the transfer process, the barge has finished its role, but there is a final thirty-one-mile leg of the trek to complete from the port to the disposal trench at Hanford. The RC is lifted by four 600-kilopound hydraulic jacks from the barge and placed on a giant land transporter featuring bulldozer-like tracks. Vehicular traffic is then temporarily restricted to enable the transporter to safely negotiate the highway to Hanford. The massive mover plods along slowly at no faster than one mile per hour—meaning the road trip takes more than a full day to complete.

The specific trench at the Hanford Site representing the final destination of the encased reactor compartments is designated “Trench 94” of 200 East Area. Trench 94 is oriented in an east-west direction and spans the length of approximately three football fields. The depth of the trench is specified at 30 feet and no closer than 250 feet above the groundwater table. Each RC is mounted on piers to distribute the weight evenly and prevent self-crushing. Approximately one-tenth of an acre is devoted to each RC.

The trench is an open-earth pit at the present time. Plans call for complete burial in the soil after the trench has reached full capacity. Once interred, the RCs are expected to maintain full integrity against radioactive leaching into the soil for at least 600 years.

Although the international policy mandating terrestrial disposal of spent nuclear reactors did not go into effect until 1995, the burial trench at Hanford was dug years earlier, and dismantlement, transport, and sequestration of spent RCs were first implemented at the site during the prior decade. In 1986, the RC of the *Patrick Henry* (formerly SSBN-599), the nation’s second FBM after the *George Washington*, became the first occupant of Trench 94. (The 599 was a victim of the drawdown imposed by the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty [SALT] II treaty.) Subsequently, more than forty additional RCs were added to the trench by the mid-1990s, and it grew increasingly clear that the Hanford solution was the only feasible option for submarine-related low-level nuclear waste disposal. Since that time, the RC total has swollen year by year and recently (2020) surpassed 135.



**Map of the Hanford Site. Area 200 East is the location of the submarine RCs as designated in red.**

Courtesy of navy.memorieshop.com.

It's sad to note that many RCs wound up in Hanford well before the end of their designed lives. In the 1990s, shortly after the end of the Cold War, many of the *Los Angeles*-class (688) boats were due for refueling. Anticipating a sharply reduced need for submarines, the Navy determined that the refueling was too expensive; the boats were scrapped instead. Many of the boats were recycled before their 20th year of operation. For example, the USS *Baltimore* (SSN-704) served a paltry fifteen years and eleven months, and the USS *Baton Rouge* (SSN-689) had an abbreviated lifetime as well of just under eighteen years. (By comparison, the USS *La Jolla* [SSN-701] is the grande dame of the 688 class thus far. As of 2021, she had served a remarkable thirty-eight years, and she has now been rebuilt as a training ship at the Naval Nuclear Power School in Goose Creek, South Carolina!)

One more facet of the RC disposal story is worth mentioning here. When PSNS and the Hanford Site were chosen as participants in the disposal program, several major impediments to successful barge transport up the Columbia River may not have been fully anticipated. These roadblocks created dilemmas needing to be worked out on a situational basis. For example, several bridges spanning the river offered only minimal clearance (in inches) for the barge, and even then only under ideal conditions (when river levels are high, the barge simply cannot pass). In turn, the Columbia River rises and falls depending on a number of independent factors including general drought status, seasonal snowpack melt-off, the need for power generation at Bonneville Dam and other hydroelectric stations, and the manipulation of river levels during salmon migration. Furthermore, such variations are subject to a whole host of governmental agreements and contracts among the states of Washington and Oregon, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Army Corps of Engineers, multiple Native American tribes, and local port authorities. In short, barge transit becomes a bureaucratic morass and logistical nightmare. Despite these considerable obstacles however, the process has been made to work.

Let's return now to the cannibalized submarine in drydock at PSNS, currently with its RC removed, sealed, and transported to Hanford. The remaining non-radioactive steel components of the boat are next chopped into smaller pieces for sale on the scrap metal market. The overwhelming fraction of the recovered metal is steel, and there are lesser quantities of lead, aluminum, brass, bronze,



**The beautiful Pacific Northwest setting for PSNS.**

copper, and zinc. While the proceeds raised by this practice represent only a small fraction of the original construction costs, the revenue helps to sustain the budget of Submarine Recycling Program from year to year. An estimate in 2007 placed the cost of dismantlement at about \$30 million per submarine, or about 1/30th of the original cost to build.

Steve Gunderson added these observations:

*When the materials generated by recycling the submarines were sold on the open market, it didn't take long for the supply to exceed the demand and for prices to drop. The market was flooded with steel, HY-80, stainless steel, copper, and other nonferrous metals. The shipyard assigned the recycle/disposal engineering department to look into new and improved ways for the industry to use the scrapped materials. A new marketing strategy was implemented that emphasized the value of increasing HY-80 alloy content in rebar manufacturing. When more HY-80 is added, the tension in the rebar increases substantially and allows for the manufacture of stronger and longer pre-stressed concrete beams and assemblies for bridges, overpasses, and buildings. Interestingly, it can also be recycled into manufacturing new submarine hulls!*

During the diesel-electric boat era, such a complex disposal method following decommissioning was unnecessary. Without a nuclear propulsion system, the old boat could be cut up, sunk, or sold to another nation. Such boats could also become centerpieces of museums around the country; indeed, most boats that one may visit today are diesel-electrics. According to submarinemuseums.org, there are currently twenty-four so-called "museum submarines" on display at facilities around the U.S. Of these, all but one are diesel-electric boats. The granddaddy of nuclear submarines, the former USS *Nutilus* (SSN-571) at the U.S. Navy Submarine Force Library and Museum at Groton, remains the prominent single exception. It is the only intact former U.S. nuclear submarine (sans nuclear apparatus, of course) available for touring.

Otherwise, apart from the preservation of more than a dozen sails and scattered other parts, every other decommissioned nuclear submarine has been dismantled—forever relegated to the past and only preserved by the documents, visual media, and memories of those who served aboard them.

In a slight touch of irony, a stirring reminder of the once-mighty Cold War fleet is found not far away from Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Magnuson Park. Located in northern Seattle, the park contains a number of sailplanes salvaged from decommissioned and dismantled fast-attack submarines and installed in a public art project known as The Fin Project. Created by artist John Young,



**Magnuson Park in Seattle, Washington.**

the sailplanes are mounted vertically in a beautiful grassy setting along Lake Washington. They stand in silent majesty overlooking the water, much like the moai figures on Easter Island.

## **POSTSCRIPT**

The lifespan of a submarine, like those who ride her, is finite. Still, the end of the road for a cherished boat may evoke very strong emotions among those who called her “home” for awhile. We humans have a way of personifying inanimate things that carry a lot of meaning for us, and submarines are certainly no exception. For centuries, ships have carried maternal significance; the ship protects her crew from the elements, feeds them, and gives them a place to sleep. Hence the designation of a submarine or boat as “she” and not “it.”

For many veteran submariners, the boat is not just a former home but a symbol of several important life themes or archetypes. First, a submarine exudes qualities of strength and might; a majestic submarine in the prime of her career can provoke unforgettable memories of sheer exhilaration among the ship’s company. Just ask anyone who has ever had the privilege of standing on the bridge of a U.S. Navy submarine running swiftly on the surface of a calm ocean on a clear and sunny day. It’s no wonder, then, that to see a once-powerful and seemingly invincible boat reduced to so much scrap metal in a shipyard is a difficult vision to reconcile.

The boat also symbolizes the brotherhood of those who served aboard her. The members of a ship’s company create a family forged through common trials and experiences. One veteran submariner who reviewed this essay put it this way: “In many ways, it was a love/hate relationship. When you were aboard, there were times when you absolutely hated it, but upon further reflection—often years later—you realized what being in the Silent Service did to mold you into the person you became. It was a family affair—yes, you could hate it at times, even fight with your mates, but nobody better say anything bad about your boat or your mates.”

Another aspect of the sadness accompanying such endings is the profound nostalgia the recollection of the years spent aboard a particular submarine may provoke. For the vast majority of submarine veterans, their time in the Silent Service coincided with their transition from childhood to manhood. (In the coming years, similar emotions are certain to be felt by the “sisters of the ‘Phin” as well.) Everyone’s coming-of-age story is slightly different, but the idea that the submarine itself helped each and every crew member find his way forward in life is a very real one. To see a submarine dismantled is akin to finding out your favorite school has been razed, your childhood sports idol has passed away, or that the pizza joint you took your first date to has closed down. In other words, while we may wish otherwise, time inexorably moves on. Everything has its season—even the submarine.

One recurring thought I have had shared with me—by more than a few submarine veterans—is the notion that although they didn’t (or couldn’t) realize it at the time, their years in the Navy were the best of their lives. While it’s true you sometimes can’t know how well you have it until life hands you a catastrophe or huge disappointment, it’s perhaps more accurate to say that as life progresses, it tends to grow increasingly complicated. Sure, the average submariner at age twenty-two was doing a heck of a lot more than his typical civilian peer—but the tenet still holds. The relative freedom offered by youth from the many burdens of adulthood lasts all too briefly.

Seeing a boat being taken apart unmistakably marks the passage of time. It hearkens one back to a time when you could work all day, stay up most of the night having fun, and then report back to duty nearly as good as new. It’s not until you have a few more years under your belt that you realize that the fount of seemingly endless physical vitality has its limits after all. And those stairs you used to bound up effortlessly, two at a time, look steeper with every passing year.

In the end, there remains a true affection for that familiar submersible metal structure which took you around the world, taught you the meaning and value of teamwork, and of pride in your craft. It infused you with abiding patriotism in knowing that your work was critically important, and gave you the tools and skills to succeed in your post-Navy career. In that sense, every boat lives on in perpetuity.



**Area 200, Trench 94, Hanford Works.**

Photo courtesy of Google Maps.

We close here with the comments of one of our contributors. Robin Smith wrote these remarks after reading the above postscript:

*I have to say this story invoked not a small amount of emotion in me. The thoughts expressed are those I have had myself, particularly later in life. I was not a career Navy man and, frankly, I did not always enjoy my time on the submarine (USS Sam Houston—SSBN-609) and was happy to leave.*

*But now, after over forty years, it remains the ultimate experience of my life. Although it sometimes seems like a different, previous life.*

*One of the weird ways I remember the boat is through memories of feel and touch. I can still vividly remember the sensation of shimming the rods, starting a main coolant pump, and snapping the RPCP switches. I still can feel myself sitting on the workbench in AMR2UL with the insulated pipe on my back. I can feel the pain of catching one of the hatch dog protrusions on my shoulder, and the pain in my hands from opening the main steam stops. I remember the feel of a growler phone in my hand.*

*Those sensations elicit a combination of nostalgia and pride that I did my small part to carry on the legacy of the U.S. Submarine Force.*

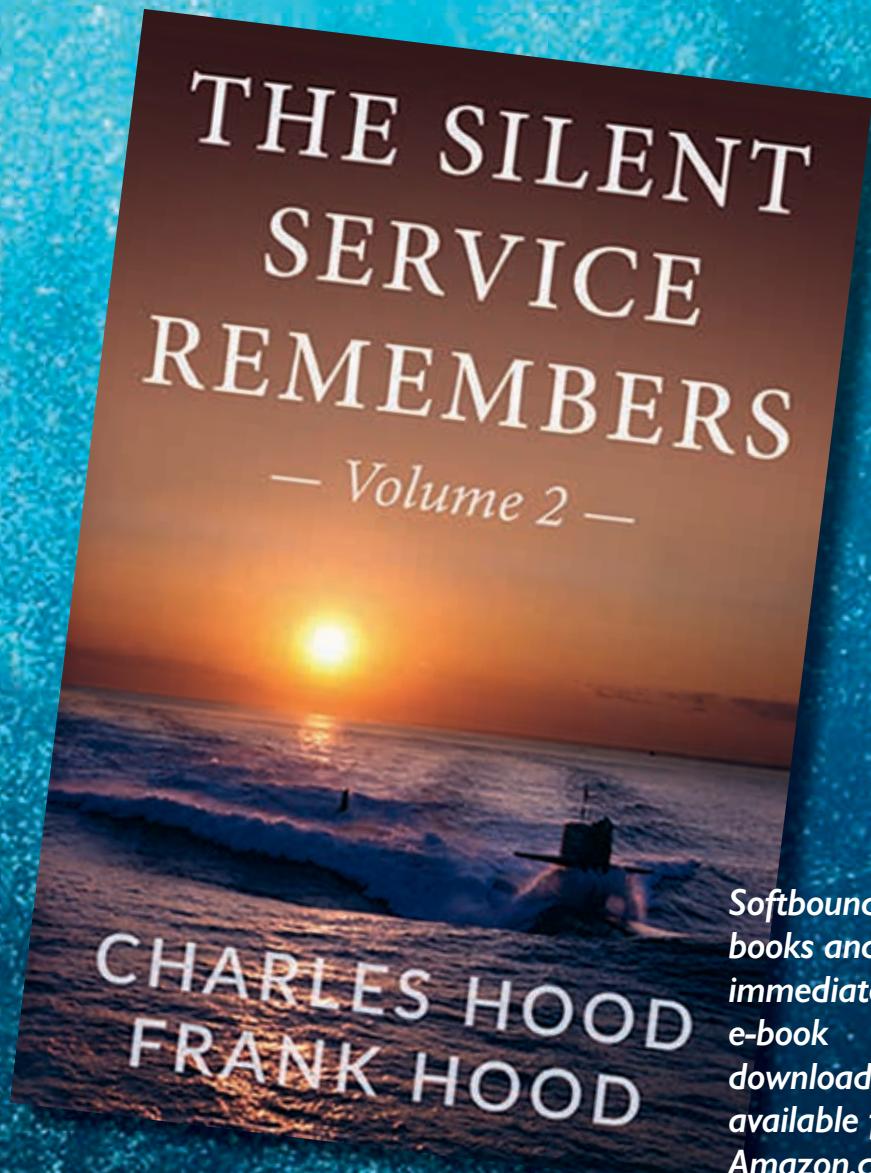
## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The author wishes to thank Steve Gunderson, Jim Armstrong, Mike Chapman, Robin Smith, Gregory Scott, and Keith Weitemeyer for their assistance with this article.

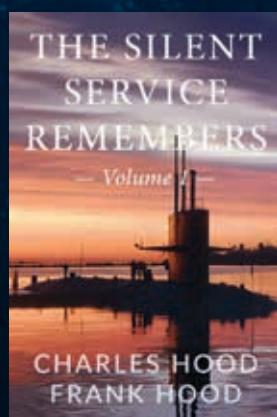
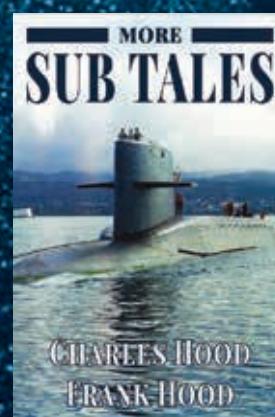
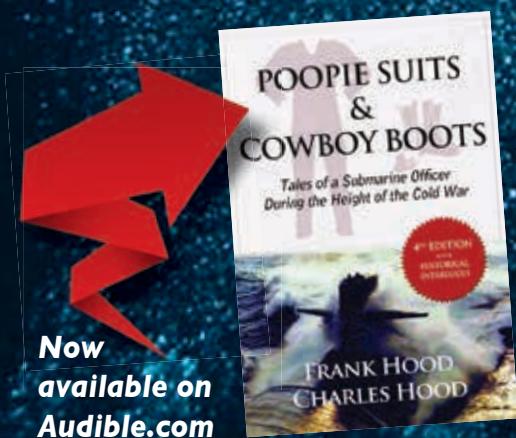
# True-Life Submarine Books Tell It the Way It Really Happened

“Tell us a sea story.” Modern submariners field this query all the time. And the Hood brothers—one a submariner himself—have been collecting the best of these tales into popular books for years.

Their latest, *The Silent Service Remembers Volume 2* brings additional flavor and insight to more true undersea yarns—detail, often previously unknown, which in many cases could have come only from the men who lived it.



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