


# The Snorkel Exhaust

SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE, TN USSVI



**"To Honor Those Who Serve, Past, Present, and Future".**  
**"The USSVI Submariner's Creed"**

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. We pledge loyalty and patriotism to the **United States of America and its Constitution.**



**OUR ORGANIZATION**

**OUR FOUNDERS**


**OUR BROTHERHOOD**

**Our Mission**

The organization will engage in various projects that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyles we enjoy today.

**SNORKEL EXHAUST INDEX**  
**March & April 2018**

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**Scheduled Meetings**

Monthly meetings are scheduled for the **3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday** of each month at:

GOLDEN CORRAL  
 6612 CLINTON HIGHWAY,

KNOXVILLE, TENNESSEE Dinner & Social  
 Hour @ 1800  
 Meeting @ 1900



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 Smoky-Mountain-Submarine-Veterans-273222054302

# SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE OFFICERS



**BASE COMMANDER/  
HOLLAND CLUB CHAIR**  
**Marlin E. Helms, Jr.**



Qualified MM1(SS)  
**USS SPADEFISH (SSN-668)**  
Qualified MM1(SS)  
**USS HAMMERHEAD (SSN-663)**




**BASE VICE-COMMANDER**  
**Ryan Smith, LCDR. USN (Ret.)**



Qualified EM2(SS)  
**USS PROVIDENCE (SSN-719)**  
Qualified LT(SS)  
**USS MARYLAND (SSBN-738)**  
Qualified LCDR(SS)  
**USS PITTSBURG (SSN-720)**




**BASE SECRETARY**  
**Martin Wesley**



Qualified QM2(SS)  
**USS CUBERA(SS-347)**  
in 1968




**WEBSITE MASTER**  
**Stewart McGlassen**




Qualified ET2 (SS) 1988  
**USS TENNESSEE (SSBN-734)**




**CHIEF OF THE BOAT**  
**Terry McBride, EMC(SS) (Ret.)**




Qualified EM3(SS)  
**USS WOODROW WILSON (SSBN-624)**  
Qualified EM1(SS)  
**USS MARYLAND (SSBN-738)**

**BASE CHAPLIN**  
**David Pope, EAWS**

**USS T. Roosevelt (CVN-71)**  
**COMSUBGRU-9, FP DET 2**


David is an Associate  
Member of Smoky Mountain  
Submarine Base





**BASE TREASURER &  
STOREKEEPER**  
**Jim Burkholder**





Qualified EM2(SS)  
**USS CARP (SS-338)**


**LIBRARIAN**  
**Bill Smith**





Qualified ETR3(SS) in 1963  
**USS TRUMPETFISH (SS-425)**  
Qualified ETR2(SS) in 1965  
**USS JOHN C. CALHOUN (SSBN-630)**

**PROGRAM CHAIRMAN**  
**Andy Armbrust**




Qualified MM1(SS)  
**USS HAMMERHEAD (SSN-663)**  
in 1975

**NEWSLETTER EDITOR &  
BASE PHOTOGRAPHER**  
**Bruce Eltzroth ET1(SU)**  
**USS SCULPIN (SSN-590)**

Bruce is an Associate  
Member of Smoky Mountain  
Submarine Base.





**SMOKY MOUNTAIN BASE, USSVI**  
 Meetings, Greetings, Gatherings & Other Stuff  
**January & February - 2018**

## Scheduled Meetings

Monthly meetings are scheduled for the  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday** of each month at:  
**Golden Corral**  
 6612 Clinton Hwy.  
 Knoxville, Tennessee 37912



## Meetings and Happenings



**New Members:**

**Keith Eglinton - Qualified on USS TUNNY (SSN-682)**

April 1 - Newsletter Deadline, April Fools Day and Easter Sunday

April 19 - **SMB Meeting** (1800 Hrs)

April 30 - **Vietnam War ends**



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- May 8 - **V-E Day - 1945**
- May 13 - **Mothers Day**
- May 17 - **SMB Meeting** (1800 Hrs)
- May 19 - **Armed Forces Day**
- May 22 - **National Maritime Day**
- May 28 - **Memorial Day**

**April 2018**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

**May 2018**

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		



## LOCAL HAPPENINGS

### SMB Library Books and Magazines

There are over 100 books in our library - check some out!

"Rising Tide" by Gary E. Weir and Walter J. Boyne  
 "Shadow Divers" by Robert Kurson  
 "The Silent War" by John Pina Craven  
 "The Spy Who Got Away" by David Wise  
 "Stalking the U-Boat" by Max Schoenfeld  
 "Straights of Power" by Joe Buff  
 "Submarines" by Anthony Preston  
 "Submarines and Deep Sea Submersibles" by Jeffery Tall  
 "Submarines at War" by Michael Gunton  
 "Submarines at War" by Edwin P. Holt

We also have copies of "Our Navy" magazines dated from 1945 to 1947 donated to the base library. They are combined by date (month) into two 3-ring binders. Anyone desiring to check them out, can contact our Librarian Bill Smith at: "bsmith684@gmail.com".



## Did You Know?

During the 3-1/2 years of World War II that started with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 and ended with the surrender of Germany and Japan in 1945, "We the People of the U.S.A." produced the following:

22 aircraft carriers, 8 battleships, 48 cruisers, 349 destroyers, 420 destroyer escorts, 203 submarines, 34 million tons of merchant ships, 100,000 fighter aircraft, 98,000 bombers, 24,000 transport aircraft, 58,000 training aircraft, 93,000 tanks, 257,000 artillery pieces, 105,000 mortars, 3,000,000 machine guns and 2,500,000 military trucks.

We put 16.1 million men in uniform in the various armed services, invaded Africa, invaded Sicily and Italy, won the battle for the Atlantic, planned and executed D-Day, marched across the Pacific and Europe, developed the atomic bomb and, ultimately, conquered Japan and Germany.

Submitted BY Thomas Peshke

## Trivia Corner

Until 1796 there was a state within the United States called Franklin. Do you know what the name of that state is now? (See page 14 for the answer.)



## VETERAN INFORMATION FOR USSVI BASE MEMBERS

### LOCAL VFW MEMBER NEEDS HELP

A member of VFW Post 6598 (Goldson, Whitson, Chapman Post) in Harriman, TN has a "Go Fund Me page" to help him in his battle with leukemia. His name is Edwin Taylor and his go-fund-me page is: "Edwin Taylor's Lukemia Fight". (Please note that "Leukemia" is not spelled correctly.)

## 2018 VIETNAM VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION

On March 29, 2018 the Vietnam Veterans of America held their Vietnam Veterans Day Celebration at the East Tennessee Veterans Memorial at Worlds Fair Park, Knoxville TN. This event celebrated the end of the Vietnam War and the return of the last of our fighting troops on March 29, 1973. It also honored the 58,318 men and women killed in action during that war (1291 of whom were from Tennessee). More about this ceremony in next month's issue of the Snorkel.



Vietnam Veterans assembled to receive a Vietnam Veteran's Pin.



Missing Man Table  
(Photos by Bruce Eltzroth)

### The Ad below is for the "Vest Lady"

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Who Already Have.

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Jenny Dugan - Sewing Wench  
757-318-0138 B4 8pm



## Base Commanders Report Marlin E. Helms, Jr.



Shipmates we have a number of events coming up. May fourth is the Music in the Mountains Spring Parade formerly the Dolly Parton Homecoming Parade, this will be in Pigeon Forge. Jim Rock is the contact organizer for this parade please forward questions or suggestions to him. I will not be here for this parade. June eighth and ninth is the Secret City Festival where we will have a booth to display memorabilia and educational material. This will be our twelfth year at this Festival. We will also do our annual Tolling of the Boats Ceremony there as well. I do not have a finalized program for the tolling but it looks like we will be able to do it at the new Peace Bell pavilion now under construction. The new pavilion is in the middle of the park and the festival. The time in the past has been 1000 in the morning but there will be a parade in the morning so we will shift to sometime in the afternoon. I am trying to get our float and booth near the bell to facilitate manning the booth and participating in the tolling. I am told we are considered part of the Festival this year, we should not disappoint. The festival has booked it's second band for Saturday night it will be Dennis DeYoung and the music of Styx. Tickets for The Little River Band (Friday night) and Dennis DeYoung (Saturday night) will go on sale April first. Tickets will be \$22 before May first and \$25 after May first though [www.secretcityfestival.com](http://www.secretcityfestival.com). June sixteenth will be our base picnic at Melton Hill Dam, there will be more to come from Andy Armbrust as we get closer. Haddo base has invited us to their picnic again this year for camaraderie and a chance to win back the horseshoe tournament trophies from us. Time to start practicing for those who wish to defend Smoky Mountain base's honor.

### NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S REPORT—BRUCE ELTZROTH - ET1(SU)

The next couple of months are going to be filled with important and/or fun events. We have one of the first qualified female submariners, Eowyn Pedicini - LT(SS), who will address the group during our April meeting. We also are going to hold our SMB picnic at Melton Hill Dam picnic area in June (See the information below from Andy Armbrust). And please let's not forget that we need nominations for our Smoky Mountain Base Officers submitted to John Augustine or myself by the next meeting (April 19, 2018). Also, we have extra copies of the Morristown Citizens Tribune Newspaper with the story of the SMB float, Marlin Helms and of course, Charlie Weller (See Marlin or me for those). And also let's not forget, the next issue will feature the remainder of the Vietnam Veterans Ceremony story with more information and photos.



### PROGRAM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT—ANDY ARMBRUST

The Spring picnic will be held at the TVA Melton Hill Dam picnic area #3 (same as before). The Picnic will be held on Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> beginning at noon and eating around 1300. The cost of the picnic will be \$15.00/couple or \$7.50/individual. Each attendee should bring a dish to share. We will provide pulled pork, buns, BBQ sauce, plates, utensils, napkins, coffee, iced tea, and lemonade.

We have a large covered pavilion in a nicely shaded area. The pavilion is ADA accessible and bathrooms and running water are within 75 feet. A public swimming area is just below our area. E-mail reminders will be sent beginning a month before the picnic.



### Treasurer / Storekeepers Report - Jim Burkholder

#### Treasurer Report:

Balance 01/01/2018 \$1391.79  
 Balance 03/01/2018 \$1603.39  
 Income From 01/18 meeting- \$30.00  
 Income From 02/15 meeting- \$412.00  
 Expenses Jan. \$75.00 Whale Services for web site.  
                   \$15.00 Bank Fees  
 Expenses Feb. \$125.00 National Dues  
                   \$15.00 Bank Fees.

Jim Burkholder- Treasurer



#### Storekeeper Report:

Items sold at Feb. meeting - One Hat, and (1) Large SMB Magnetic Emblem. I have a large inventory of SMB and submarine memorabilia for sale. See me at the end of our meeting to browse the inventory. If there is any item you would like to have that is not in the inventory just let me know and I will order it for you.

Jim Burkholder- Storekeeper



**Smoky Mountain Base**  
of the USSVI, Inc.  
Meeting Agenda



**Date: March 15, 2018** - Time/Location: 1900 hrs, Golden Corral 6612 Clinton Hwy, Knoxville  
Members and guests please sign in.

Call to Order

Invocation

Pledge of Allegiance

**USSVI Creed - "To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and it's constitution."**

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U. S. Submarine force. The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today."

"Tolling of the Bell": USS Perch-SS-176, March 3, 1942 - 59 Men Lost. USS Grampus-SS-207, March 5, 1943 - 71 Men Lost. USS Bell-SS-28, March 12, 1920 - 4 Men Lost. USS Triton-SS-201, March 15, 1943 - 74 Men Lost. USS Kete-SS-369, March 20, 1945 - 87 Men Lost. USS F4-SS-23, March 25, 1915 - 21 Men Lost. USS Tullibee-SS-284, March 26, 1944 - 78 Men Lost. USS Trigger-SS-237, March 26, 1945 - 89 Men Lost.

Member Introductions: Member introductions (new and previous) for new members and guests.

Secretary's Report and Meeting Minutes – Wes Wesley

Treasurer's Report – Jim Burkholder

Correspondence – None

Committee Reports –

Newsletter– Bruce Eltzroth discussed next newsletter deadline is April 1, 2018.

Library – Bill Smith

Storekeeper – Jim Burkholder

Membership – Marlin Helms indicated that there were 3 fewer members listed this month vs. last month.

Social Committees – Andy Armbrust discussed the timing of the SMB Subvets picnic at Melton Hill Lake.

Web Site – Stewart McGlasson - A meeting was set to discuss this on 3/17/2018 in Oak Ridge, TN.

Old Business-New Business /Good of the Order-

- The nominating committee for the 2018 Base Officers election in May is taking nominations/volunteers for positions. Please send names and positions requested to John Augustine before or at, the April 19 Subvets meeting.
- 2018 Membership dues are due by May.
- The USSVI National convention this year is a cruise out of Ft. Lauderdale, FL (October 20, 2018 thru October 28, 2018).

Next Meeting; **1900 hrs, Thursday, April 19, 2018** at: Golden Corral 6612 Clinton Hwy, Knoxville, TN. Our guest speaker will be Eowyn Pedicini, LT(SS) - one of the initial females to be qualified in submarines.

Motion to adjourn - Approved



**Secretary's Report - Martin Wesley**

No Report Available





# Lost Boats of March



## USS PERCH I (SS-176) - 3 MAR. 1942



### 6 MEN LOST (as POW's)

On March 1, 1942, while on patrol in the Java Sea, the *Perch* was depth charged and heavily damaged by the Japanese destroyers *Amatsukaze* and *Hatsukaze*, at 6-30S, 113-50E. The *Perch* was attacked again on the following day with thirty depth charges by the Japanese destroyer *Ushio*, thus incurring additional heavy damage. On **March 3, 1942**, the *Perch* was caught while surfaced by the Japanese destroyers *Ushio* and *Sazanami* and was pounded with battery gunfire from both vessels. Facing a hopeless situation, the *Perch's* captain, Lieutenant Commander David A. Hurt, ordered the boat scuttled to prevent any usage by the enemy. The entire crew was picked up by the Japanese and sent to Prisoner of War camps for the duration of the war. *Perch* received one battle star for her World War II service.



## USS GRAMPUS I (SS-207) - 5 Mar. 1943



### 71 MEN LOST

On **February 18, 1943**, the *Grampus* damaged the Japanese transport and aircraft ferry *Keiyo Maru* off New Britain. The submarine closed the damaged ship and torpedoed her again the following day at 04°-55'S, 152°-26'E. The attacks by the *Grampus* provoked an aggressive enemy response and the next day Japanese naval aircraft of the 958th Air Group reported bombing and sinking a submarine southeast of New Britain at 05°-40'S, 152°-18'E. They reported one direct hit on the conning tower and a large amount of oil on the surface after the attack. It is possible that this submarine was the *Grampus*. *Grampus* received three battle stars for her World War II service.



## USS TRITON I (SS-201) - 15 Mar. 1943



### 74 MEN LOST

On February 16, 1943, the *Triton*, captained by Lieutenant Commander George K. MacKenzie, Jr., left Brisbane for her sixth and final war patrol. Her orders were to search for and destroy enemy shipping in the area between the Shortland Islands and Rabaul. On March 6, 1943, the *Triton* reported a battle with a Japanese convoy of five ships escorted by a destroyer during which she sank the 3,057-ton freighter *Kiriha Maru*. During this encounter one of her torpedoes made a circular run that had forced her to go deep to evade it. Two days later she reported she had fired eight torpedoes at another convoy and that an escorting destroyer had forced her to go deep, so she had not been able to observe the results. She also reported damaging another freighter. The *Triton's* last message reached Brisbane on **March 11, 1943**, and it said, "Two groups of smokes, 5 or more ships each, plus escorts...Am chasing." She was never heard from again. The *Triton* received five battle stars for her World War II service.



### Pre WW-II Lost Boats



USS H1 (SS-28) (Bell) 12 March 1920 - 4 Men Lost - Ran aground while in transit near Santa Margarita Island, Baja, Mexico.

USS F4 (SS-23) (Skate) 21 March 1915 - 21 Men Lost - Failure of lead lined battery compartment. Her hulk was raised and reburied off Sierra 13 north of Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor.



# Lost Boats of March



## USS KETE (SS-369) - 20 Mar. 1945



### 87 MEN LOST

The *Kete*, captained by Lieutenant Commander Edward Ackerman, left the submarine base at Guam on March 1, 1945, for her second and final war patrol. Her orders were to patrol in the waters surrounding the Nansei Shoto (Ryukyu Islands). While patrolling west of the Tokara Retto islands on the night of March 9-10, 1945, the *Kete* reported she had torpedoed and sank three enemy cargo ships. During the night of March 14th, she reported making an unsuccessful attack on a cable-laying vessel. On March 19th, the *Kete* acknowledged orders to depart the area on March 20th, refuel at Midway Island, and proceed to Pearl Harbor for refit. On March 20th, she sent a weather report from a position south of [Tokara Kaiko](#) (Colnett Strait). This was the last transmission ever received from the *Kete*. Scheduled to arrive at Midway Island by March 31, 1945, she was never heard from again. The *Kete* earned the Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal with one campaign star for participation in the operation involving the assault and occupation of Okinawa Gunto, from March 6-16, 1945.

## USS TRIGGER (SS-237) - 26 Mar. 1945



### 89 MEN LOST

On March 11, 1945, the USS *Trigger*, captained by Commander David R. Connole, left the submarine base at Apra Harbor on Guam on her twelfth and final war patrol. Commander Connole's operation order for the *Trigger's* twelfth patrol instructed him to hunt for enemy shipping in the Nansei Shoto Archipelago (Ryukyu Islands) area and to serve as a lifeguard during a scheduled carrier air strike on Okinawa. On March 18, 1945, the *Trigger* reported she had made a seven-hour end-around attack on a convoy and had sunk a cargo ship. On March 20th, the *Trigger* replied she had been held under by antisubmarine vessels for three hours after attacking the convoy and when she re-surfaced had been unable to regain contact on the escapees. Four days later, ComSubPac directed her to patrol west of the Nansei Shoto chain, to avoid restricted areas, and to stay outside of the 100-fathom curve. On March 26th she sent a weather report that day, but never confirmed receiving the March 26th message. On May 1, 1945, the *Trigger* was reported as presumed lost. The *Trigger* received eleven battle stars for her World War II service and the Presidential Unit Citation for her fifth, sixth, and seventh war patrols.

## USS TULLIBEE I (SS-284) - 26 Mar. 1944



### 79 MEN LOST

On March 5, 1944, the *Tullibee* left Pearl Harbor for her fourth and final war patrol with Commander Charles F. Brindupke at the helm. After fueling at Midway Island on March 9, 1944, she headed for the Palau Islands to join other Pearl Harbor and Brisbane submarines assigned to Operation Desecrate One. She was never seen or heard from again. The *Tullibee* was expected to return to Majuro for a refit around May 4, 1944. When she failed to arrive by May 15, 1944, she was presumed lost. The *Tullibee* received three battle stars for her World War II service.







# Lost Boats of April



## USS GUDGEON (SS-211) 7 Apr. 1944



### 78 MEN LOST

On April 4, 1944, the *Gudgeon*, captained by Lieutenant Commander Robert A. Bonin, left Pearl Harbor for her twelfth and final war patrol. On April 7, 1944, she topped off her fuel at Johnston Island, then left for patrol in the open sea area off the northern Mariana Islands. She was never seen or heard from again. The *Gudgeon's* operating order instructed her to patrol within the rectangle formed by coordinates 21° N to 24° N and 143° E to 147° E from April 16-22, 1944. On May 11, 1944, the *Gudgeon* was ordered to conduct a special assignment in another area. The *Gudgeon* did not acknowledge receipt of this transmission. She was expected there around May 23, 1944. The *Gudgeon* was probably lost on April 18, 1944 after being bombed by Japanese naval aircraft of the 901st Air Group about 166 miles southwest of Iwo Jima. The Japanese report stated the planes dropped two bombs on a submarine and "The first bomb hit the bow and the second bomb was a direct hit on the bridge. The center of the submarine burst open and oil pillars rose." The submarine was reported to have sunk quickly followed by a large undersea explosion. For her first eight war patrols the *Gudgeon* received the coveted Presidential Unit Citation. She earned eleven battle stars for her World War II service.

## USS SNOOK (SS-278) 8 Apr. 1945



### 84 MEN LOST

On March 25, 1945, the *Snook* left the submarine base at Guam for her ninth and final war patrol with Commander John F. Walling at the helm. She departed Guam in company with USS *Burrfish* (SS-312) and USS *Bang* (SS-385), all part of the wolf pack *WHALERS* under Commander Walling's leadership. On March 27th *Snook* returned to Guam for emergency repairs. She left to rejoin the group the following day. The group was under orders to conduct a coordinated patrol in the Luzon Strait area and to perform lifeguard duty if so directed by dispatch. On April 1, 1945, *Snook* was ordered to disband the *Whalers* pack and join a new group, *HIRAM'S HECKLERS*, under Commander Hiram Cassidy in USS *Tigrone* (SS-419). On April 8th *Tigrone* had been fired at by an unseen opponent and had dodged two torpedoes. He suspected that the *Snook* might have fired the torpedoes at him. Cassidy raised the *Snook* by radio that night and Walling said he had not yet fired any torpedoes. Cassidy cautioned Walling to be on guard for the enemy submarine that had fired the torpedoes at *Tigrone*. The next day Cassidy could not raise the *Snook* by radio. She was never heard from again. There are two possible causes for the *Snook's* loss, neither with sufficient evidence to be deemed conclusive. The first possibility is that on April 14, 1945, she was detected by enemy patrol planes off the Chusan Archipelago and attacked with depth charges. Surface vessels were called in and attacked the submarine with depth charges over the next two hours until a widening oil slick was sighted. The second possibility is that on April 14, 1945, while the *Snook* was on lifeguard duty near the Sakishima Islands, she was torpedoed and sunk by Japanese submarine *I-56*. The *Snook* earned seven battle stars for World War II service.

## USS BONEFISH (SS-582) Fire At Sea - April 24, 1988



### 1 OFFICER & 2 MEN LOST

On April 24th, 1988, the Charleston based **USS BONEFISH SS-532** experienced a fire so intense that the ship had to be abandoned and subsequently towed back to port. **BONEFISH** was providing ASW services to the **USS CARR, FFG-52** and to the **USS JOHN F. KENNEDY, CVA-67** off the east coast of Florida. As part of the exercise **CARR** requested that **BONEFISH** go to 250 feet. After securing the battery charge, **BONEFISH** began diving to 250 feet. Investigators later determined that a sea water leak in the TDU allowed sea water into the battery compartment, followed by a loud bang. Instantly the boat filled with smoke. The order to abandon ship was given and Eighty-nine crew members were rescued by whaleboat and helicopter crews from **CARR** and the aircraft carrier **JOHN F. KENNEDY**. One Search and Rescue Swimmer from **HS-7**, Anti-Submarine Warfare Operator Third Class (AW3) Larry Grossman spent over three hours in the ocean and was credited with saving 19 lives. He later received the Navy and Marine Corps Medal for Heroism. Three crewmen: **Lieutenant Ray E. Everts, Jr., Robert W. Bordelon RM2(SS), and Marshal Todd Lindgren YN3(SS)** were overcome by smoke and were killed. The investigation that followed the incident determined that the **BONEFISH** was damaged beyond repair and she was decommissioned on September 28, 1988 and scrapped on August 17, 1989.



# Lost Boats of April



## USS GRENADIER (SS-210) - 22 Apr. 1943



### 4 MEN LOST

On March 20, 1943, *Grenadier* departed Fremantle for her sixth and final war patrol with Lieutenant Commander John A. Fitzgerald at the helm. On April 21, 1943, while on station in the Strait of Malacca, between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra *Grenadier's* lookouts spotted a twin-engine enemy bomber on her port quarter. Fitzgerald gave the order to crash dive. As *Grenadier* passed 120 feet, a bomb exploded directly above the boat near the bulkhead between the maneuvering room and the after torpedo room. *Grenadier* sank until she hit the bottom at around 270 feet. After thirteen hours on the bottom, the crew managed to coax the heavily damaged submarine to the surface. With the deck gun inoperable, and only the bridge machine guns available, Fitzgerald knew fighting was not an option. He gave the order to scuttle the boat. The radio, radar, sound and TDC gear, and decoding machines were destroyed, and the codebooks were weighted and sunk. A Japanese merchant vessel with a small escort came into sight headed for *Grenadier*. As the IJN ships came closer, Fitzgerald lined his men up on the deck in their life jackets, the vents were opened and *Grenadier* sank by the stern, at the approximate geographic position 5° 30' 60.000" N, 98° 45' 0.000" E. They were taken aboard the Japanese merchant ship and transported to Penang, Malaysia. There the Japanese captors tortured them for many weeks in an unsuccessful effort to extract intelligence information. Next they would be sent to Singapore. Eventually, all of the men were transferred to the prison camps in Japan, where they underwent additional relentless interrogation. Four of *Grenadier's* men died while prisoners. The rest were freed following Japan's surrender more than two years later. The *Grenadier* received four battle stars for her World War II service.

## USS PICKEREL (SS-177) - 23 Apr. 1943



### 74 MEN LOST

On March 18, 1943, the *Pickerel*, captained by Lieutenant Commander Augustus H. Alston, Jr., sailed from Pearl Harbor on her seventh and final war patrol. On March 22, 1943, she stopped at Midway Island to refuel, and then headed to her assigned patrol area along the eastern coast of northern Honshu. She was never heard from again. The *Pickerel* was possibly lost on April 3, 1943, off Aomori Prefecture, south of the Hachinohe Sea and near the Shiranuka Lighthouse, on the eastern coast of northern Honshu. At 0020 hours that day, *Pickerel* had sunk the 460-ton Japanese submarine chaser *Ch 13* at 41° 2' 60.000" N, 141° 58' 0.000" E. Later that day a Japanese patrol plane from Ominato spotted an oil patch on the sea near the Shiranuka Lighthouse. The patrol plane summoned the IJN Minelayer *Shirakami*, the submarine chaser *Bunzan Maru*, and additional aircraft to the spot. A total of 53 depth charges and 23 aerial bombs were dropped at the location causing a larger quantity of oil to rise to the surface. No other American submarine was operating in or near the area of the attacks. The *Pickerel* received three battle stars for World War II service.





# Lost Boats of April



## USS THRESHER (SSN-593) - 10 April, 1963

Photo #: NH 97544 USS Thresher (SSN-593) underway, July 1961



129 Officers & Men Lost

The keel of the second THRESHER (SSN-593) was laid down on 28 May 1958 by the Portsmouth (N.H.) Naval Shipyard; launched on 9 July 1960; sponsored by Mrs. Frederick B. Warder; and commissioned on 3 August 1961, **Comdr. Dean W. Axene** in command. Following trials the nuclear attack submarine took part in Nuclear submarine Exercise (NUSUBEX) 3-61 off the northeastern coast of the United States from 18 to 24 September.

On 18 October; the submarine headed south along the east coast. After calling at San Juan, Puerto Rico, she conducted further trials and test-fired her torpedo system before returning to Portsmouth on 29 November. The ship remained in port through the end of the year and spent the first two months of 1962 evaluating her sonar system and her Submarine Rocket (SUBROC) system.

Off Charleston, the ship undertook operations observed by the Naval Antisubmarine Warfare Council, before she returned briefly to New England waters from whence she proceeded to Florida for SUBROC tests. However, while mooring at Port Canaveral, the submarine was accidentally struck by a tug which damaged one of her ballast tanks. After repairs at Groton, Conn., by the Electric Boat Company, the ship returned south for more tests and trials off Key West. **THRESHER** then returned northward and remained in dockyard hands through the early spring of 1963.

In company with **SKYLARK (ASR-20)**, **THRESHER** put to sea on 10 April 1963 for deep-diving exercises. In addition to her 16 officers and 96 enlisted men, the submarine carried 17 civilian technicians to observe her performance during the deep-diving tests. Fifteen minutes after reaching her assigned test depth, the submarine communicated with SKYLARK by underwater telephone, apprising the submarine rescue ship of difficulties. Garbled transmissions indicated that far below the surface things were going wrong. Suddenly, listeners in SKYLARK heard a noise "like air rushing into an air tank", then, silence.

Efforts to reestablish contact with **THRESHER** failed, and a search group was formed in an attempt to locate the submarine. Rescue ship **RECOVERY (ASR-43)** subsequently recovered bits of debris, including gloves and bits of internal insulation. Eventually, photographs taken by bathyscaph **TRIESTE** proved that the submarine had broken up, taking all hands on board to their deaths in 5,500 of water, some 220 miles east of Boston. **THRESHER** was officially declared lost in April 1963.

Subsequently, a Court of Inquiry was convened and, after studying pictures and other data, opined that the loss of **THRESHER** was in all probability due to a casting, piping, or welding failure that flooded the engine room with water. This water probably caused electrical failures that automatically shutdown the nuclear reactor, causing an initial power loss and the eventual loss of the boat. **THRESHER** is in six major sections on the ocean floor, with the majority in a single debris field about 400 yards square. The major sections are the sail, sonar dome, bow section, engineering spaces, operations spaces, and the tail section.

The death toll was staggering; 16 officers, 96 enlisted men, and 17 civilian technicians died that day. We submariners who followed them into the Silent Service owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to their memory because their death was the reason for the "Sub-Safe" program. (See additional new inquiry and analysis information on pages 12 and 13 of this issue).



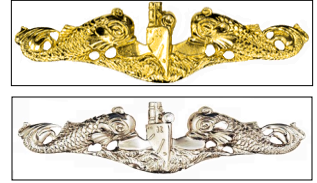
4/10/1963

USS Thresher (SSN-593)

## Unraveling the Thresher's Story

By: Captain Joseph F. Yurso, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Interesting analysis of the loss of the Thresher  
Proceedings Magazine - October 2017 Vol. 143/10/1,376  
Red highlighted superscripts<sup>(1)</sup> by Bruce A. Eltzroth

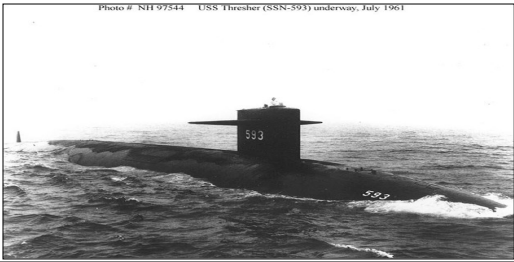


On 10 April 1963, the USS Thresher (SSN-593) sank with all hands during sea trials off the Massachusetts coast. At the time, I was the shipyard watch officer at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, where the submarine was undergoing maintenance as part of a post-shakedown availability (PSA). I had the honor of knowing many of the crew members. The Navy introduced the Submarine Safety (SubSafe) Program following the Thresher's loss, and it has taken many steps to ensure that neither the problems uncovered nor the casualties are forgotten. More important, the procedures instituted in the aftermath continue to be rigidly followed. Nevertheless, as the recent collisions involving the USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62) and the USS John S. McCain (DDG-56) show, safety at sea is an ongoing challenge.

Most people working on submarines today were not around when the Thresher was lost, and though SubSafe training includes reference to the Thresher tragedy, we still have much to learn from the details. In the early 1960s, the Cold War was in an active and dangerous stage. France and the Soviet Union were conducting atmospheric nuclear tests. The Cuban Missile Crisis (October 1962) threatened most U.S. cities with Soviet missiles. As a result, construction of ballistic-missile submarines (SSBNs) became the Navy's top priority, classified "Brickbat 01." Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, Maine, was building SSBNs and SSNs (nuclear-powered attack submarines). The attack boats competed with the missile boats for the same manpower, materials, and resources, and the missile subs usually won. During the Thresher's construction, the Abraham Lincoln (SSBN-602) was also being built, and during the Thresher's PSA, the John Adams (SSBN-620) and the Nathaniel Greene (SSBN-636) were under construction. The Thresher, the newest, most advanced attack submarine in the Navy, was commissioned on 3 August 1961, in spite of all the frustrations associated with being a lower priority. Following delivery, the Thresher exceeded all expectations. During her shakedown, she made it to test depth—the deepest for any sub in the world—more than 40 times. As the first submarine of her class, she was subjected to severe shock tests before returning to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The Thresher performed magnificently during these shock trials but was subject to depth restrictions afterward, because the Bureau of Ships advised the shipyard to conduct inspections for any evidence of shock damage. In addition to some alterations, the guidance included inspecting any accessible silver-brazed piping joints. During the Thresher's construction, silver-brazed pipe joints were inspected visually and subjected to pressure testing, but no non-destructive test was performed, as ultrasonic testing was in its infancy and not yet in widespread use. Following the shock testing, the Thresher returned to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for a PSA on 11 July 1962. This availability was scheduled to last six months and consume 35,000 man-days. As workers discovered shock damage and other problems, the PSA was extended to nine months and more than 100,000 man-days. The Thresher was once again competing with other construction for manpower, talent, and attention during the PSA. Even though the Thresher did not enjoy high priority, commanders were anxious to have her join the fleet. They were ecstatic about the potential this submarine demonstrated during her shakedown period.

As the time approached for the Thresher to go to sea, all the normal frustrations associated with completing a complicated ship were in play. The so-called fast cruise, which permits a submarine to exercise and prove readiness independent of the shipyard, was terminated because of problems with both shipyard and crew. A second fast cruise was successful and the submarine was declared ready for sea. Senior ships superintendent of the Thresher's PSA, Lieutenant Bob Biederman, was an experienced submarine officer. He shared with me several times his frustration working this submarine availability. He was concerned that in his opinion the crew needed more time for training—an opinion shared by the Thresher's court of inquiry. The Thresher got under way on 9 April 1963. Many people wanted to ride the advanced submarine, creating an overcrowding problem. As a result, some people were told no. One naval officer with a bag packed with personal items was turned away as he approached the brow to board the submarine. Franklin James Palmer, an experienced hydraulic expert, had a bad cold and was instructed to stay ashore. At the very last minute, the doctors approved him to make the trial because of his special expertise. The plan for this sea trial was to check out the submarine and the crew on day one, then rendezvous with the submarine-rescue ship USS Skylark (ASR-20) on day two to monitor the location while the Thresher conducted a deep dive to test depth. This would be the first time since the shock trials that Thresher dove to test depth. At approximately 0900 on 10 April 1963, the Thresher advised the Skylark, "Experiencing minor difficulties." Then at 0918, all communications were lost. Some of the Skylark's crew reported they heard sounds as if a ship were breaking up. The Thresher, the most advanced submarine of the time and the lead ship of the new class of submarines was lost. The entire handpicked crew and all the guests and talented advisers were gone.

The worst possible peacetime Navy disaster had occurred. The Navy convened a court of inquiry with some of the most experienced naval officers of the time. Their report is comprehensive and after many years has been declassified. One of the key findings was that a silver-brazed piping joint in a seawater system exposed to sea pressure most probably had failed in the engine room. The leak would have damaged an electrical panel, resulting in a reactor "scram"—the reactor shutting down automatically. This action meant the submarine was suddenly left without propulsion or electrical power and was operating on batteries alone.



One of the last communications from the Thresher to the Skylark was “attempting to blow”—that is, to expel seawater from her ballast tanks to ascend—but she experienced difficulty. The court conducted some tests on the Tinoso (SSN-606), a sister submarine under construction at Portsmouth. The Thresher had strainers installed in her blow system to protect delicate valves from debris and dirt. The court theorized that the submarine initiated a blow, which the crew must have stopped as they began to ascend. But when the submarine had to reinstate the blow, the strainers collapsed because of moisture in the blow piping, resulting in no or limited airflow. With no propulsion, and unable to expel water from the ballast tanks, the submarine sank to collapse depth. When the first messages from the Skylark arrived at Portsmouth, I realized how serious the situation was. Once the Navy recognized the submarine was lost with all hands, the situation became chaotic. None of us was prepared for this. Even now, more than 50 years later, rarely a day passes when I do not think of the tragedy.

I have tried over the years to understand the whys and wherefores of this terrible loss. First, the attack submarine Thresher was built at a time when missile submarines were the top priority. As a result, the Thresher did not always get the best shipwrights or the proper attention from the shipyard. For example, the Bureau of Ships advised the yard to inspect all accessible silver-brazed piping joints in systems exposed to seawater pressure and to remove the strainers in the blow system prior to sea trials. (Silver-brazed joints had a history of problems in earlier submarines that were designed to operate at much shallower depths than the Thresher). The shipyard discontinued inspecting for shock damage and postponed removing the strainers until after the sea trials. Another contributing cause may have been the absence of the submarine’s most experienced reactor officer, Lieutenant Raymond McCool. McCool’s wife experienced a medical problem and the submarine’s commander told McCool to stay home and take care of her. His assistant had just completed retraining in reactor operation, where the operating rules to safeguard the reactor are emphasized.

The Thresher had an unusual reactor plant configuration in that the main steam stop-valves were designed to close automatically in the event of a reactor scram. We know for certain the reactor did scram as the submarine was approaching test depth because of sounds recorded by the national sound surveillance system (SOSUS). The loss of reactor function and the closing of steam valves deprived the Thresher of normal electric and propulsion power. As a result, air banks two, three, and four automatically closed, and one bled slowly. A by-the-book reactor restart could take between seven and ten minutes.<sup>(1)</sup> Overriding the rules and attempting to open the main steam valves manually also would take time because of their location. It took a special decision to ignore the reactor safety operating rules and open these valves.

When the PSA had grown to more than 100,000 man-days and nine months, the shipyard began to make decisions to get the Thresher finished. The shipyard stopped conducting inspections for shock damage, stopped inspecting silver-brazed piping joints, and postponed other items, such as removal of the strainers in the blow system. Although the Thresher was not the highest priority for the shipyard or even perhaps the Navy, the operating forces really wanted this submarine. As a result, Portsmouth Navy Shipyard wanted to finish the Thresher and get on with the other submarines under construction. No one appears to have considered that sending a submarine to sea trials and test depth for the first time following shock trials might put her survival in jeopardy.

Looking back at this truly sad state of affairs, it is clear the Thresher’s crew needed more time to train, and the shipyard should not have stopped inspecting. The technology to inspect silver-brazed joints using ultrasonic testing was available, albeit in its infancy. Such testing might have revealed some of the critical joints that were not safe. Configuring the main steam stop-valves to fail closed during a reactor scram was later proven by actual tests to be unnecessary. In fact, the Thresher’s reactor plant could have sustained dragging steam from a scrammed reactor for more than 20 minutes without any damage to the plant.<sup>(1)</sup> In retrospect, we—those in charge at the time—sent this submarine to sea too soon. More time may have better prepared her.

What if the Thresher had survived the casualties and returned to the shipyard? All or at least many of the deficiencies might not have been corrected. We probably would have continued building submarines with silver-brazed joints and the reactor plant configuration would not have been changed. The SubSafe program would not have been established, and the Submarine Safety Center might never have been created. The complete review of submarine design would have waited for a future tragedy.

As a result of this loss, submarines today are much improved and safer. The 129 men on the Thresher did not die in vain. We must keep this story and history alive.

Captain Yurso, PE, is Director of Technical Development at QED Systems Inc.

<sup>(1)</sup> These actions could only have been effective if the “Sub Safe, Reactor Fast Scram Recovery” procedure was in effect at that time – (unfortunately it was not).



# BOONDOGGLES OF THE MONTH

SMB Newsletter Editor: Bruce A. Eltzroth (ET1-SU)



## Morristown Newspaper doing a story on the new SMB Float.

On March 3, 2018, members of the Smoky Mountain Base Submarine Veterans group took the SMB Float from Kingston, TN to Bissell Park in Oak Ridge, TN. The mission was to take photos of World War II Submarine Veteran Charlie Weller and the rest of the SMB crew with the float, for a story about Charlie's life as a submariner in WW II and the float in the Morristown Citizens Tribune newspaper. Jim Rock, the designer of the float towed the float with his truck while John Augustine and I followed in the chase car. We met Marlin and Lorie Helms at the parking lot of the Oak Ridge Community Center where we unloaded and positioned the float in front of the Bradford Pear trees which had started to blossom (photo below). Also attending the photo shoot were: Jeff Oleson who took several of the photos; Lorie and Jeff's Mom, Charlotte; and Charlie's wife, Betty. Jim Claborn of the Morristown newspaper, who wrote the article about Charlie and the SMB Float, was not present for the photo shoot. Note in the photo on the left how Charlie managed to capture all of the women! What a guy!!!



Photo By Jeff Oleson



Photo By Bruce Eltzroth

**Left Photo** - Left to Right: Bruce Eltzroth, John Augustine, Betty Weller, Charlotte Oleson, Charlie Weller, Lorie Helms, Marlin Helms, and Jim Rock. **Right Photo** - Charlie and Betty Weller in front of the float.



Photo By Bruce Eltzroth

## Trip to visit Haddo Base Submarine Veterans Meeting

On Saturday March 10, 2018, John Augustine and I drove to Cleveland, TN to visit the Haddo Base Sub Vets at their monthly meeting. Their guest speaker was Eowyn Pedicini, LT(SS) - one of the initial females to be qualified in submarines. She earned her commission at the Naval Academy in 2011 where she graduated with distinction, and then her Masters at Texas A&M in 2013. She talked about the processes that she went through to train and then qualify on the USS LOUISIANA (SSBN 743) (Gold Crew) where she served as the Electrical Officer, Chemistry and Radiological Controls Assistant, and Assistant Engineer. She also talked about some of the interesting situations that she encountered during those processes.

Eowyn in discussion with the Haddo Base COB - Lee Rogers.



(Photos by Bruce Eltzroth)

Eowyn in discussion with the Haddo Base Commander - Jim Kearney



Standing in the pouring rain in front of a big puddle outside the pub was an old Submariner. He was drenched from head to toe, holding a stick, with a piece of string dangling in the water. A passer-by stopped and asked, "What are you doing?" "Fishing" replied the old Submariner. Feeling sorry for the old man, the gent says, "Come in out of the rain and have a drink with me." In the warmth of the pub, as they sip their whiskies, the gent, being a bit of a smart ass, cannot resist asking, "So how many have you caught today?" "You're the eighth!", says the old Submariner with a grin.

## JOKE, GOAT AND TRIVIA LOCKER

The state formerly known as "Franklin" is now known as **Tennessee!**





# USSVI APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

Regular  Life  Associate

**OUR CREED:** "To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America & its Constitution."

With my signature below I affirm that I subscribe to the Creed of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc., and agree to abide by the Constitution, all Bylaws, Regulations and Procedures governing the U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., so long as they do not conflict with my military or civil obligations. I will furnish proof of my eligibility for Regular membership, including my discharge under honorable conditions, and proof of my U.S. Navy (SS) Designation, if required by the Base or the national Membership Chairman. If I am not discharged, the discharge requirement is waived. If I am not U.S. N. submarine qualified, I am applying as an Associate and my sponsor is indicated below.

I certify that I was designated qualified in USN Submarines aboard \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ (Yr)  
(Honorary designations regardless of source do not apply under any circumstances.)

I certify that I received a discharge under Honorable Conditions (if not currently in military service) in \_\_\_\_\_ (Yr)

Name: (Print /Type) \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Your E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_ Base/Chapter Desired: \_\_\_\_\_

The Member Dues year runs from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> thru Dec 31<sup>st</sup>. Please indicate your term preference: \_\_\_\_\_

Nat'l Dues: 5 Yr term: \$115.00; 3 Yr term: \$70.00; 1 yr term (Jan thru Sep) \$25.00; (Oct thru Dec adds the next yr): \$30.00;  
Nat'l Life: 76+ yrs = \$100.00; 66 thru 75 yrs = \$200; 56 thru 65 yrs = \$300.00; 46 thru 55 = \$400.00; Thru 45 yrs = \$ 500.00;

**Local Base/chapter dues are separate and additional. Consult the local base for those figures.**

How did you find USSVI?  Friend,  Boat Assn,  Local Event/News,  Internet,  Other (\_\_\_\_\_)

Who is your sponsoring USSVI Regular Member? (Mandatory for Associate Members) \_\_\_\_\_

Associate Applicant is:  Veteran,  Spouse of Veteran,  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## YOUR U.S. NAVY BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Date Of Birth (MM/DD/YY) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ If other military service, What Branch? \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Rate & Rank Attained: \_\_\_\_\_ Mil Retired (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ On Active Duty? (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_

YR entered Mil Service: \_\_\_\_\_ YR left Mil Service \_\_\_\_\_ (Active/Inactive reserve time also counts.)

Check here if your Military Service falls within these time periods: Dec 7, 1941, thru Dec 31, 1946, June 27, 1950, thru Jan 31, 1955; Aug 5, 1964, thru May 7, 1975; and from Aug 2, 1990 to date.

Check here if you have been awarded an Expeditionary Medal.

Submarines and ships served aboard as ship's company (Use back if you need more space.)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Hull# \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_ From Yr. \_\_\_\_\_ to Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_ Hull# \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_ From Yr. \_\_\_\_\_ to Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ Hull# \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_ From Yr. \_\_\_\_\_ to Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Hull# \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_ From Yr. \_\_\_\_\_ to Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

5. \_\_\_\_\_ Hull# \_\_\_\_\_ Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_ From Yr. \_\_\_\_\_ to Yr. \_\_\_\_\_

Next of Kin: Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_ (Spouse, Partner, Son, Daughter, Parent, Other)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

(Leave this address line blank if it is the same as your home address)

Upon completion, give this form, including your National and Base membership DUES to the appropriate base officer, or if you do not know of a base near you, mail to: USSVI National Office, P.O. Box 3870, Silverdale, WA 98383-3870. Questions: Call 1-877-542-DIVE or email office@ussvi.org.