



USS Virginia Base Deep Water Gazette

First Quarter 2016

The Little Base That can Does



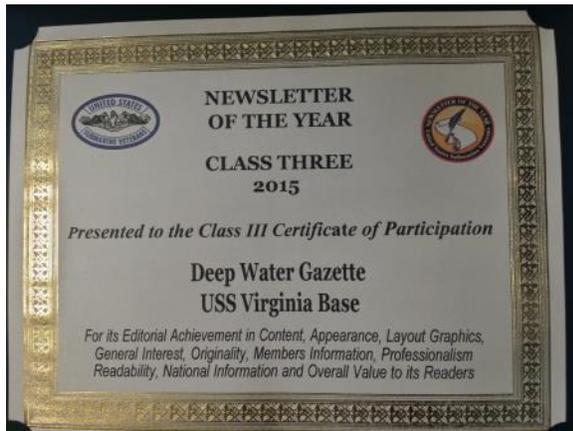
**To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments.
Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America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

Base Commander

Greetings fellow undersea warriors and welcome to the ninth edition of our quarterly newsletter. I



offer John Mosticone my usual "Well Done" for volunteering to produce these newsletters, which are very much appreciated – and congratulate him on receiving USSVI recognition for his efforts as shown below:



We had our total membership up to 54 members this past year but it looks like we will be losing some members in 2016 because they haven't paid their dues. If you are one of those who haven't yet paid your USSVI dues you missed the deadline and must now pay \$25 instead of \$20. However, the good news is that Base dues remain \$20. You have until February 1st to get a check to Treasurer Jim Lencalis to maintain your good standing with USSVI. While we're talking about dues, let's continue to do our best to

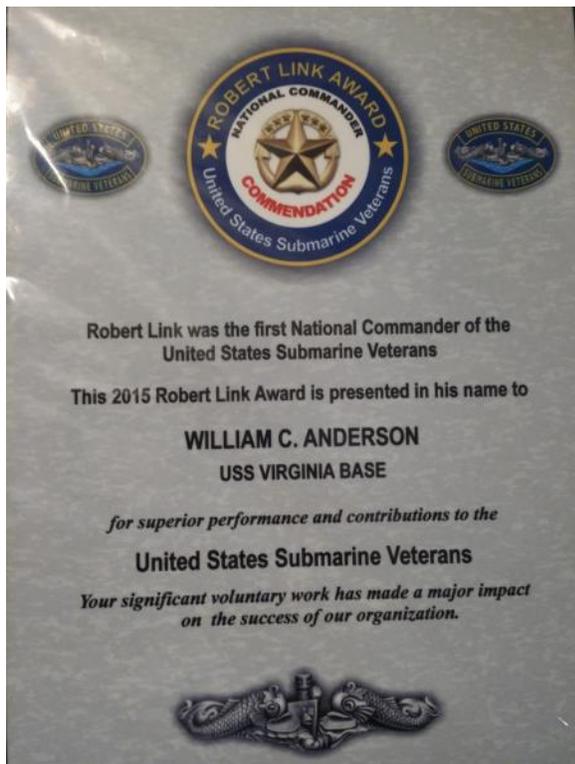
recruit other submariners and also join your shipmates at meetings as often as you can.

USS VIRGINIA BASE RECEIVED FOUR AWARDS AT THE 2015 USSVI CONVENTION IN PITTSBURG, PA

As I mentioned in our last newsletter our Base was recognized at last year's USSVI convention and were formally presented to us at our Annual Picnic at Al & Mary Ann Ptasznik's beautiful home on Lake Anna on October 18th (Thanks Al & Mary Ann). These awards were presented by Southeast Region Director (and Base member), Dick Kanning, who joined us at our picnic along with his wife Marge. One award was recognition of our newsletter as shown to the left – plus the Base received the Class III Golden Anchor Award as shown here:



Two of our members, Jim Lencalis and Bill Anderson, received the Robert Link National Commander Commendation as shown below:



These awards are for superior performance by our members and Base – and all members should be proud of these USSVI awards.

NEW CHALLENGE COINS STILL AVAILABLE FOR SALE!

Don't forget that we are trying to sell as many of our new challenge coins as we can to recoup their purchase cost. The coins were received August 3rd and immediately made available for sale to members, family, friends, veterans and the general public. Everyone who has seen these unique, one of a kind coins, have complimented us on their quality. See Bob Kutzenberger to purchase yours. Here's what they look like:



These coins make great gifts and collectors will love them!

NEW OFFICERS ELECTED FOR 2016

It shouldn't surprise anyone – but our lineup for 2016 remains unchanged from earlier years in that I and our other officers were elected and sworn in by Nominating Committee Chairman, Thurman Register, for new terms at our December 12th meeting. All appointed officers have also agreed to remain in their positions. I want to thank Thurman for his work and I thank all of our elected and appointed officers for agreeing to continue to serve USSVI and our Base for another year. WELL DONE!

Greenboard/Straightboard and all the best!

Mac

LT, USN (Ret)

Boats Lost This Quarter



JANUARY --

[USS S-36 \(SS-141\)](#) was lost on 20-Jan-1942 when it was destroyed after grounding on Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, Near Makassar City, the crew were all rescued.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM

Remarks: No known reports of wreckage being salvaged or sighted.

[USS S-26 \(SS-131\)](#) was lost on 24-Jan-1942 with the loss of 46 crew when it was sunk after ramming by USS PC-460 in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Ship reported dived shortly after sinking. In diveable water off Panamanian coast.

[USS Argonaut \(SS166\)](#) was lost on 10-Jan-1943 with the loss of 105 crew when it was sunk off Rabaul near 05° 15N; 153° 50E; (Another location given as 5° 40S; 152° 02E)

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Water over 1000'

[USS Swordfish \(SS-193\)](#) was lost on or after 12-Jan-1945 with the loss of 90 crew when it was sunk near Yaku Island off Kyushu, water <600' deep near island; (27° 00 N; 128° 40 E).

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Loss declared 15 Feb 45, some use this date.



FEBRUARY --

[USS Shark \(SS-174\)](#) was lost on 11-Feb-1942 with the loss of 59 crew when it was sunk

East of Menado, Celebes

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Loss most likely was the result of one of 3 attacks. 11Feb42 E of Menado, 17 Feb 42 N of Kendari 21 Feb 42 E of Kendari (Ros).

[USS Amberjack \(SS-219\)](#) was lost on 16-Feb-1943 with the loss of 72 crew when it was sunk off Rabaul; Last Contact at 5° 05S; 152° 37E

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM

[USS Scorpion \(SS-278\)](#) was lost on 1-Feb-1944 with the loss of 77 crew when it was sunk East China Sea.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: WDR date spread is 1-5-44 to 2-24-44

[USS Grayback \(SS-208\)](#) was lost on 26-Feb-1944 with the loss of 80 crew when it was sunk near 25° 47N 128° 45E.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Japanese records indicate 26 Feb, US records state 27 Feb. Dateline difference.

[USS Trout \(SS-202\)](#) was lost on or after 29-Feb-1944 with the loss of 79 crew when it was sunk near 22° 40N; 131° 45 E, middle of Phillipines Basin.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

[USS Barbel \(SS-316\)](#) was lost on or after 4-Feb-1945 with the loss of 81 crew when it was sunk in southern entrance to Palawan Passage 7° 49.5N; 116° 47.5E Palawan.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: Loss date could be as late as 6 February, however Japanese records indicate the 4th as the sinking attack date.



MARCH --

[USS F-4 \[ex-SKATE\] \(SS23\)](#) was lost on 21-Mar-1915 with the loss of 19 crew when it foundered off Honolulu Harbor.

Sources: R, D, SFLM

Remarks: Hulk raised and reburied off Serria 13 north of Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor.

[USS H-1 \(SS-28\)](#) was lost on 12-Mar-1920 with the loss of 4 crew when it Grounded, Magdalena Bay, Mexico, was sunk in 9 Fathoms while being towed off.

Sources: R, D, SFLM

Remarks: Hull reported located in 1995. Return expeditions have not relocated hull. Likely to be buried in sand and uncovered only periodically.

[USS Perch \(SS-176\)](#) was scuttled on 3-Mar-1942 30 Miles NW Soerabia, Java 60 crew were taken prisoner, 52 survived the war.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: All crew survived sinking and were rescued by Japanese forces. Reportely the wreck has been located and dived. No written report seen.

[USS Grampus \(SS-207\)](#) was lost on or after 5-Mar-1943 with the loss of 72 crew when it was sunk in the Blackett Strait; Possibly in Vella Gulf, last contacts at 4° 55S; 152° 30 E

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

[USS Triton \(SS-201\)](#) was lost on 15-Mar-1943 with the loss of 74 crew when it was sunk at

0° 09N; 144° 55E

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

[USS Tullibee \(SS-284\)](#) was lost on 26-Mar-1944 with the loss of 79 crew when it was sunk in operating area just north of Palau. (One man was taken prisoner and he survived the war)

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

[USS Kete \(SS-369\)](#) was lost sometime on or after 20-Mar-1945 with the loss of 87 crew when it was sunk somewhere between 29° 38N; 130° 02E and Midway.

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Remarks: R states probably sunk off Nansei Shoto on or about 20 Mar 1945, WDrR gives date spread of 3-20-45 to 3-31-45

[USS Trigger \(SS-237\)](#) was lost on 28-Mar-1945 with the loss of 91 crew when it was sunk in area 32° 16N 30° 40N by 132° 05E-127° 50E,

(Maybe near 32° 16N; 132° 05E).

Sources: R, D, Ros, SFLM, WDR

Meeting Minutes

- The December 12, 2015 Meeting was held at Anna's Restaurant & Pizzeria
- Cheese Ravioli, pizza and salad were on the buffet menu
- 14 members and 8 guests were present
- Doug Blaha won the 50/50 raffle and received \$29.00 and the Base received \$28.00.
- Base Commander Kenn McDermott called the meeting to order with the traditional sounding of two blasts from the Diving Alarm and a good hearty "DIVE, DIVE" from all those in attendance. A word of prayer was offered..
- Opening ceremonies were led by Base Vice Commander Pete Fortier and Base Storekeeper Bob Kutzenberger
 - Pledge of Allegiance
 - Reading of the USSVI Creed
 - Tolling of the Boats for December
 - 4 Boats were lost during the month of December with the loss of 139 crewmen
 - Birthdays for the Month of December
 - Mickey Wins
- Ladies were excused
- Nominating Committee Chairman Thurman Register presided over the following
 - Taking nominations of officers
 - Election of officers
 - Installation of Officers
- USSVI USS Virginia Base Officers for 2016
 - Commander - Kenn McDermott
 - Vice Commander - Pete Fortier
 - Treasurer - Jim Lencalis
 - Secretary - Bill Anderson
- Treasurer's Report was read and approved
- Secretary's Report was read and approved
- Doug Blaha gave a presentation on the sinking of the USS Pueblo
- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1430

Respectfully

Bill Anderson
Base Secretary

TREASURERS REPORT

Balance as of 12 December: \$3499.61

DEPOSITS:

Store keeper sales \$ 48.00

(from 11-14 sales)

50/50 from 11-14 meeting \$ 48.00

2016 USSVI DUES \$ 160.00

2016 BASE DUES \$ 160.00

TOTAL: \$ 256.00

EXPENDITURES:

No Expenditures this report period

PAYMENTS PENDING

USSVI Dues payment (to date) \$ 300.00

TOTAL: \$ 300.00

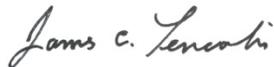
Increase for period: \$ 416.00

Note:

As of this report:

5 members have not paid USSVI dues

5 members have not paid USS Virginia Base dues



James C Lencalis

Treasurer

(Additional reports available upon request)

COB's Locker

"Field days will continue until moral improves"

Our Base COB position is presently open and we are looking for an able body



Chaplin's Corner

SUBMARINERS ARE BROTHERS REGARDLESS OF THEIR FLAG



Stuffed into my Bible is a worn copy of the order of worship from the National Convention of the U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II, held in Phoenix, AZ, some 15 years ago. I hang on to that scrap of paper because of a single sentence that it contains: "We ask that you join all submarine veterans of the world, from all nations, and of all religions in a prayer for the souls of the Russian submarine KURSK, and for their families and friends."

That sentence reflects my personal belief that in very few places is the brotherhood of man more evident than in the submarine service, regardless of the flag under which they serve.

I was reminded of that belief when I chanced across the book, "A Measureless Peril" by Richard Snow. It contains an eloquent reinforcement of that belief based on the memoirs of Karl Doenitz, a name that should be familiar to most of you. A German, a submariner's submariner, his career extended through both World Wars, and culminated in his becoming Hitler's successor and Supreme Commander of the German Armed Forces. Read the following excerpt from Snow's book and see if you don't agree that the description doesn't fit any submariner, regardless of his flag.

"I had been fascinated by that unique characteristic of the submarine service, which requires a submariner to stand on his own feet and sets him a task in the great spaces of the oceans, the fulfillment of which demands a stout heart and ready skill; I was fascinated by that unique spirit of comradeship engendered by destiny and hardship shared in the community of a submarine's crew, where every man's well-

being was in the hands of all and where every single man was an indispensable part of the whole. Every submariner, I am sure, has experienced in his heart the glow of the open sea and the task entrusted to him, has felt himself to be as rich as a king, and would change places with no other man." Bless submariners the world over!
 Chaplain Bill
 Tarheel Base, USSV

Dick Kanning	1962 SS-240
Kenn McDermott	1962 SS-385
Bob Stolarz	1962 SS-395
Tom Chaffee	1963 SS-331
Bill Lewis	1963 SS-272
Ron Randolph	1963 SSBN-617
Al Ptasznik	1964 SSBN-610
Sanford Harvey	1964 SS-488
Doug Blaha	1964 SSN-584
Bob Kutzenberger	1964 SS-214
Bill Besley	1965 SS-423
Steve DuBosky	1965 SSBN-641

Welcome Aboard
New Member: Jake Jacobs
Help us fill this space!

Base Eternal Patrol

Jack Winn (founding Commander)
 Sid Padgett (WWII sub vet)
 Bob Mitchell FTC (SS), USN (Ret)
 John C. Miller, RM2(SS)

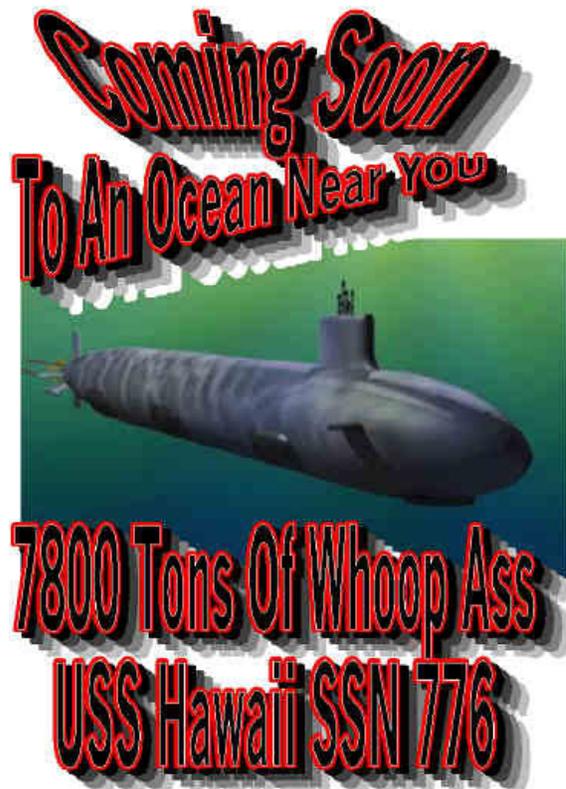
Holland Club



Welcome to the Holland Club

Holland Club Members

Pat Rodgers	1951 SS-482
Warren Rucker	1951 SS-523
"Doc" Smith	1956 SS-476
John Leonard	1957 SS-339
Mickey Martin	1957 SS-352
Bill Hiesley	1957 SS-403
Paul Benton	1958 SSR-269
Dick Brown	1959 SS-424
Ron Irons	1959 SS-394
Dave Kratch	1959 SS-405
Richard Moore	1960 SS-269
Thurman Register	1961 SS-523
Bill Wellner	1961 SS-422



Crew Birthdays this quarter



Dick Brown	01/04
Tom Chaffee	01/08
Robert Stolarz	01/09
Matt Washko	01/11
Gene Knight	01/15
Dick Kanning	02/03
Ron Randolph	02/03
Sanford Harvey	02/17
Jack Jacobs	02/24
Bob Kutzenberger	02/25
Al Ptasznik	03/01
Paul Massey	03/10
Bill Wellner	03/18
William Lewis	03/30
Herby Ortiz	03/30

Upcoming Events
01/09/2016 Base Meeting
02/13/2016 Base Meeting
03/12/2016 Base Meeting

Elected Officers:

Commander – Kenn McDermott

kennmcd@pewterguy.com 434-286-2529

Vice Commander – Pete Fortier

pe4tier@gmail.com

Secretary – Bill Anderson

ftb1ss@comcast.net

Treasurer – Jim Lencalis

j.lencalis@comcast.net

Appointed Officers:

Newsletter Editor - John Mosticone

jmosticone@gmail.com 434-242-9747

Ways & Means - John Lamsens

jlamsens@verizon.net

Nominating Committee - Thurman Register

thurman@tbrinc.com

Storekeeper - Bob Kutzenberger

kutzb@comcast.net 804-556-6932

Ships Store



Be sure to visit our Ships Store at:

<http://ussvirginiabase.org/ship-s-store.html>

(The Web Site and the Ship's Store are currently under construction)



Base Bulletin Board

NEWS-01: 2016 Proposed Amendments to the C&Bs Submitted by: Alfred H Singleman Jr on 11/5/2015

Shipmates,

2016 is an election year and any member in good standing may submit proposed amendments to amend the Constitution and Bylaws by forwarding the proposed amendments to the Chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee on or by March 1st, 2016.

The Constitution And Bylaws Chairman is Skip Turnbull sub351@aol.com

Pride Runs Deep,
Al Singleman, Jr. NC

From the NAUS Watch Dog report:

SpecOps Forces Still Might Need Some Persuasion

Next year women may become Navy SEALs and Army Rangers, should they meet the test, but according to a study special operations leadership commissioned when the end of the ban on women in ground combat was announced, committed senior leadership and a single, gender-neutral standard for performance will be absolutely critical to winning acceptance from male

colleagues who say they oppose the battlefield entrance.

In a nearly 300-page report with more than 150 additional pages of technical notes based on focus groups and a survey of those inside the special operations community, RAND Corporation researchers note that, according to their work, SEALs, Air Force special operations forces and non-commissioned officers “appeared most strongly opposed” to integrating women into special operations forces.

“There is strong, deep seated and intensely felt opposition to opening SOF (special operations forces) specialties that have been closed to women,” the report notes. “Overall, 85 percent of survey participants opposed letting women into their specialty, and 71 percent opposed women in their unit.”

House Starts Hearings on Military Health Care Reform

Having reformed the uniformed services retirement system in this year’s NDAA, House and Senate armed services committee chairmen, Sen. John McCain (R-AZ) and Rep. Mac Thornberry (R-TX), next aim to overhaul military health care, including TRICARE.

On Thursday, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel held a hearing to review the current state of TRICARE and the Military Health System and to identify areas that need improvement.

Chairman of the Military Personnel Subcommittee, Rep. Joe Heck (R-NV), stated in opening remarks that the panel’s on-going review of military health care is NOT driven by budgetary concerns. “The

overarching goal,” Heck said, “is to ensure the Military Health System can sustain trained and ready healthcare providers to support the readiness of the force, while providing a quality healthcare benefit that is valued by beneficiaries.”

Witnesses during the hearing described both what works and what needs to be fixed in the Military Health System from the beneficiaries’ perspective.

As for what works, witnesses praised battlefield care and related combat casualty care and gave high marks for the quality of care beneficiaries currently receive from military and civilian providers, once access to care is available. In addition, strong approval was given for TRICARE for Life and TRICARE Standard.

Regarding areas that need a fix, witnesses spoke specifically about difficulties in beneficiary access to care under the TRICARE Prime system. Witnesses told the panel that “too many Prime beneficiaries” find delays in the opportunity or right to receive care. The process of obtaining timely appointments for specialty care, they said, represents the most significant area of beneficiary dissatisfaction. Comments were also highly critical of the medical record system that too often does not reflect specialty care, once secured, from outside the military treatment facility.

As the year advances, NAUS will press lawmakers to ensure proposed reforms assure the health-readiness of the armed forces, while remaining consistent with the promises made for career service.

From The VA news:

VA today announced a number of changes to make participation in the [Veterans Choice Program](#) easier and more convenient for Veterans who need to use it. The move, which streamlines eligibility requirements, follows feedback from Veterans along with organizations working on their behalf.

“As we implement the Veterans Choice Program, we are learning from our stakeholders what works and what needs to be refined,” said VA Secretary Bob McDonald. “It is our goal to do all that we can to remove barriers that separate Veterans from the care they deserve.” To date, more than 400,000 medical appointments have been scheduled since the Veterans Choice Program went into effect on November 5, 2014.

Under the old policy, a Veteran was eligible for the Veterans Choice Program if he or she met the following criteria:

- Enrolled in VA health care by 8/1/14 or able to enroll as a combat Veteran to be eligible for the Veterans Choice Program;
- Experienced unusual or excessive burden eligibility determined by geographical challenges, environmental factors or a medical condition impacting the Veteran’s ability to travel;
- Determined eligible based on the Veteran’s current residence being more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility.

Under the updated eligibility requirements, a Veteran is eligible for the Veterans Choice Program if he or she is enrolled in the VA health care system and meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Told by his or her local VA medical facility that they will not be able to schedule an appointment for care within 30 days of the date the Veteran's physician determines he/she needs to be seen or within 30 days of the date the Veteran wishes to be seen if there is no specific date from his or her physician;
- Lives more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician;
- Needs to travel by air, boat or ferry to the VA medical facility closest to his/her home;
- Faces an unusual or excessive burden in traveling to the closest VA medical facility based on geographic challenges, environmental factors, a medical condition, the nature or simplicity or frequency of the care needed and whether an attendant is needed. Staff at the Veteran's local VA medical facility will work with him or her to determine if the Veteran is eligible for any of these reasons; or
- Lives in a State or Territory without a full-service VA medical facility which includes: Alaska, Hawaii, New Hampshire (Note: this excludes New Hampshire Veterans who live within 20 miles of the White River Junction VAMC) and the United States

Territories (excluding Puerto Rico, which has a full service VA medical facility).

Veterans seeking to use the Veterans Choice Program or wanting to know more about it, can call 1-866-606-8198 to confirm their eligibility and to schedule an appointment. For more details about the Veterans Choice Program and VA's progress, visit: www.va.gov/opa/choiceact.

From Navy Times Submariner issues:

A submariner is medevaced from their sub every 14 days for mental health issues, an issue the Submarine community is trying to tackle through better access to mental health care, the Atlantic Fleet's top enlisted bubblehead said Oct. 22.

Mental health issues account for about 30 percent of the unplanned losses — where sailors leave the fleet for reasons other than normal rotation or temporary assigned duty, Force Master Chief Wes Koshoffer said.

It's a trait that is pronounced among the millennial generation now populating the lower ranks, with most losses among sailors E-1 to E-6.

"I'm a fan of millennials all day long: They are smart, capable, driven — they are getting the job done," Koshoffer said. "But there is a flaw in the system, and that's this millennial phenomenon that the reaction to discipline, failure or rejection, generally [elicits] a response disproportionate to what you would expect."

Setbacks and challenges can cause tumult, even suicidal thoughts for younger sailors.

"A first breakup with a girlfriend, maybe they fail a qualification board and they've never failed anything before ... and the first words out of their mouths are 'I'm going to kill myself.'"

The force is trying to get ahead of the problem by improving crisis lines and making sure sailors aren't stigmatized for reporting mental health issues, an important step toward lowering the Navy's suicide toll.

"We cannot rewire an entire generation, but we can adjust, we can change the environment," he said.

Fleet areas now have an embedded mental health professional who works with chaplains to better address the issues.

"We've trained ourselves on how to react, we don't overreact," he said. "We take them off the ship, get them help ... and when we get the 'go' signal from a mental health professional, we get them right back in the force instead of overreacting and having them as a loss forever."

Women on subs

The first four enlisted women passed the intensive basic enlisted submarine course Oct. 16, Koshoffer said, bringing the integration of enlisted women on subs this year one step closer.

The women will join the Blue and Gold crews of the guided-missile submarine Michigan, where berthings are being modified to accommodate them.

The sub force is reviewing its policies around relationships between submariners, Koshoffer said, citing a few couples who met in "A" school and who are now in advanced training together.

"The sum total of the plan to integrate enlisted women into submarines, we are revising our instruction that was — no kidding — 49 pages long of excruciating detail on what you wear on the treadmill and how you manage the head. The instruction just ought to read: We will treat each other with dignity and respect because we are professionals.

"We have a fraternization policy and until we cross those lines, proceed."

The videotaping of women officers undressing on board the ballistic missile submarine Wyoming was alluded to during the junior officer panel.

Lt. Cmdr. Krysten Ellis, a supply officer who served on a submarine, told the audience that she thought the Silent Service could integrate enlisted women but that setbacks are likely.

"The sub force has always been able to adapt," Ellis said. "Obviously things happened when women were integrated. ... When enlisted women integrate, they'll have a plan, they'll execute it and some bumps will happen. They'll recover from those bumps and good things will happen. I don't have any doubts the sub force will be able to adapt."

Naval Reactors controversy

The selection of Adm. John Richardson to be the chief of naval operations has been a sore point in the retired submarine community, who were concerned that his leaving the eight-year Naval Reactors job after just three years sets a precedent that could undermine nuclear safety.

If NR becomes a landing pad for rising four stars, the thinking goes, then the Reactors boss could be thinking about follow-on military commands instead of overseeing the Nuclear Navy and its largely spotless safety record.

At the conference, one audience member asked Adm. Frank Caldwell, the new NR head, if he would serve his entire term so he "won't have to worry about his fitness reports or any of that BS."

"I think the answer to that is the Navy and the nation sees value in this eight-year tour," Caldwell replied. "There is a lot in this program that is significant, and there is value in having continuity of leadership. And I think what's been indicated to me is a commitment to preserve this as we go ahead."

Also during the answers, the Reactors boss said the force was looking at upping its capabilities against ships, by adding an anti-ship missile.

"I think its something we need to consider and move out on," he said. "We are looking at that and we are taking some steps to deliver that to the submarine force."

Reading Locker

The Boats

When the hatch closes over your head, the OOD says last man down and the COW says green board, you understand the meaning of adventure.

When the only thing between you and millions of gallons of seawater is a steel hull and some closed valves, you understand the meaning of courage.

When its' ALL FOR ONE AND ONE FOR ALL, you understand the meaning of brotherhood.

When sonar calls out to the conn high speed screws in the water in a hostile area, you understand the meaning of fear.

When hissing water in the overhead turns from a slight annoyance to a terrifying rushing cascade bouncing off the hull and equipment, you understand the meaning of survival.

When you hear the quick sound that the curtain makes on your rack that indicates your watch is about to begin, and you have only been asleep for an hour you understand the meaning of irritation.

When you see a shipmate stand at attention while the Captain pins on the fish he worked so hard to earn, you understand the meaning of pride.

When you retire and they pipe you over the side for the very last time, you learn the meaning of great sadness.

When your eyes grow dim and your strength ebbs with age, you understand the meaning of envy every time you see a submarine getting underway.

When a shipmate from a time so long ago passes on and people say so many things they wish they had said before they departed, you understand regret.

Pride Runs Deep

Submarine Force Now on 24-hour Work Day

The Brunswick News, Ga. | Oct 16, 2015 | by Gordon Jackson

ST. MARYS -- For years, sailors serving aboard submarines worked a different workday than the rest of the world.

They worked six hours on, 12 hours off once the boats were deployed and didn't return to a traditional 24-hour day until they returned home months later. The logic was it was easier for sailors to give their undivided attention to the electronic equipment they operate if the work shift was only six hours.

While it was never required, Navy officials said it was widely practiced because of a requirement that the maximum number of hours on watch was six. That rule has been relaxed to support the 24-hour model.

The Navy began the transition to the 24-hour watch rotation on submarines in December 2014. All submarine commands were ordered to start a watch rotation that gives every crew member "adequate protected sleep at about the same time each 24-hour day."

"Submarines here have been implementing the 24-hour work day gradually after a December 2014 message was released to all submarine forces that mandates the 24-hour schedule," said Lt. Lily Hinz, a Navy spokeswoman. "The emphasis is on maintaining a fixed watch

rotation to allow for proper and consistent sleep on a 24-hour circadian rhythm cycle." Commanding officers are given the flexibility to implement temporary watch rotations for short periods during extenuating circumstances. All submarines were directed to start the 24-hour watch cycle by March 31. The advantage is it provides adequate training time and improves crew rest.

When boats deploy, sailors rotate work shifts once a week so they get the same opportunity to train and participate in drills. The decision about how to rotate watches is the commanding officer's decision.

One requirement of safe submarine operations is assuring sailors are working at their highest level of readiness. The 24-hour schedule has proven to support the requirement, Hinz said. The change has boosted morale significantly, said Master Chief Yeoman Dave Wright, the chief of the boat for USS Alaska (Blue).

Wright was working under the old 18-hour work shift when he was told his boat was changing to a 24-hour watch rotation. He said he needed to see it in practice before he made a personal decision on whether he liked it better.

"My main concern was that there would be sailors who only stood the mid-watch, for example, and were not participating," he said. "The solution to that was to rotate weekly on a designated day, which ensures each watch team has the same opportunity to participate in drills and training. We have found this to be effective on Alaska (Blue)."

He said the change in work schedules increased morale significantly.

"I noticed an increase in the amount of people socializing with each other in common spaces," he said. "In other words, the camaraderie increased significantly and I saw sailors spending more time together, whether working out, conducting maintenance or working on qualifications, by choice."

Sources: Few women choose to stay in submarine force

By Meghann Myers and David Larter, Staff writers 3:02 p.m. EST December 6, 2015

For the first women to earn the coveted dolphin pin, it's decision time about whether to stay in the Navy. And so far, only three of the original 24 have signed up.

The reasons span the work-life spectrum. The demands on a nuclear engineering trained submarine officer. The strain of balancing careers with a spouse who's also a military officer. A lingering sense of disgust after the submarine video scandal.

"I would probably expect that most of the women are going to get out," Lt. Jennifer Carroll told Navy Times. "I don't know exactly what everyone's personal reasons are for it, but I think a lot of it has to do with co-location."

Carroll, 28, was one of the first women to earn her dolphins in 2012 as a junior officer aboard the ballistic missile sub *Maine*, and today works with the Submarine Force's integration office in Norfolk.

Carroll said she is considering leaving the Navy instead of becoming a department head, principally because it's unlikely she'll be able to find orders in the same area as her husband, an E-2 Hawkeye pilot.

The number of women who re-up for undersea service is a crucial test to assess whether the five-year integration effort will be sustainable and will yield enough women to serve as department heads, and eventually submarine skippers, to make the sub force appealing to young women. Officials expect original cadre's take rate to hover around the force-wide average for female line officers of 18 percent.

Officials are already concerned by an underwhelming take-rate among both male and female nuclear-trained junior officers from the 2010 class, which broke the gender barrier on subs, according to three sources familiar with internal discussions.

"Regardless of community or gender, committing to a department head tour requires dedication and sacrifice by our junior officers and their families," SUBFOR spokesman Cmdr. Tommy Crosby said in an email. "Submarine force leadership remains committed to mentoring our junior officers, male and female, as they face this challenging decision."

Keeping officers

Crosby confirmed that three of the original 24 women selected for submarines have signed up for their department head tour, and noted that the window for the bonus is still open.

When assessing officer retention, Crosby said officials factor in losses and time served.

Five officers have washed out of the program for medical issues, academic failures and other reasons. Something as simple as a shellfish allergy could disqualify a person from submarine service.

The service also only counts those who have reached three years of commissioned service.

Factoring in those unplanned losses leaves the retention rate at 16 percent for the first submarine officers, Crosby said.

Crosby noted that retention for nuclear-trained women in surface warfare stands at 14 percent, and pointed out that one woman from the 2011 year group has already committed to being a submarine department head.

Keeping women officers serving is a challenge across the force. In the surface and aviation communities, 36 and 39 percent of officers take the department head bonus, according to statistics.

But within those communities is a great disparity.

While 41 percent of male SWOs stick around, about 22 percent of their female colleagues do.

And for aviators, the numbers show a 48 percent take rate for men and just 18 percent for women.

Women make up less than 20 percent of the Navy and are much less likely to stay past an initial contract regardless of their specialty.

Couple that with the fact that many more female sailors are married to male sailors than the other way around, and keeping a dual-service family together is a challenge.

Carroll said that's the issue for her and many of her colleagues. She said her options to be stationed with her husband for sea duty are limited to Norfolk and the Los Angeles-area Naval Base Ventura County. **Lt. Jennifer Carroll, one of the first women to serve in the submarine force, expects that most of her peers will decide to leave the service. Carroll, who is married to a Navy pilot, said she's on the fence about staying in. (Photo: MC3 Timothy Schumaker/Navy)**

"I think our career path is really unique, too," she said. "We're opening more ports. We've got Kings Bay, Bangor, Groton. We're working on Pearl Harbor."

Women took another step this year, from boomers to attack boats, which means more duty stations. Carroll stays in touch with her submarine cohort, she said, many of whom have married in the past

few years. Of those, only one is married to a civilian. The rest are married to other officers and in the same boat, so to speak.

There are also stresses unique to being a so-called pioneer, she added.

"Any female in the military can probably speak to this, that being a demographic minority or looking different from all the people you work with, there's a spotlight on you," she said.

The sub force is trying to head off some of those issues with the integration of enlisted women, she said, by keeping the ratio to about 20 percent.

Another important factor is the commanding officer. In her case, Carroll said, her skipper made it clear to everyone on the boat that they were all equal and would be expected to do the same things.

"I think there already is kind of a perception that we're special or different or there's something big going on here," she said. "I think everybody feels that quite clearly. So downplaying that, I think that made the transition easier for me."

The goal is to get women through the initial shock of joining a force where they are still a rarity and then convincing them to stick around for another tour.

Sweetening the deal

The Navy Department is trying to tackle that issue, for officers in general and women in particular, with a slew of new measures announced earlier this year.

Among them is a fully-funded, in-residence graduate school program, expansion of the service's career intermission program and — in the future — getting rid of officer year groups altogether.

Officers can take up to three years off with CIP to raise children, or possibly work in new parenthood during a graduate school stint. But for those staying on active-duty, the Navy extended both installation child care hours and maternity leave this year. Eighteen weeks of maternity leave sounds great in theory, one female officer told Navy Times, but there are still concerns about how it will affect careers.

"It's nice, but I don't know anybody who could spend four months away from their job and still do well," said the designated helicopter pilot, who asked not to be named out of concern for her career.

As with CIP, she added, there are concerns that taking the time off could jeopardize a promotion or come with a stigma.

"Maybe on the up-and-up it's not supposed to, but if you've got somebody who doesn't spend four months away from work and you've got somebody who does, and you're saying, 'Okay, which one am I going to rank higher?' You know?" she added. Still, Carroll said, she's optimistic about the future of women on submarines.

"When you look at the first year group going through, I think there is more friction associated," she said. "I would expect the numbers in the first couple year groups to be lower anyway."

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus has said the service would work to make co-location easier for active-duty couples, while keeping their career paths in mind. For Carroll, however, the timing might not be right.

"The idea of going back to a fast-attack is exciting, but the other piece of that is just it's a really demanding job," she said.

"So when you want to prioritize your family, you really have to decide if you're willing to go back to that demanding lifestyle."

Friday the 13th

On Friday the 13th, 1967, at 11:05am, 110 men's lives changed. The USS Scamp, a US Navy nuclear fast attack submarine, had just struck an underwater mountain at 700ft below the surface of the water. The submarine was running at maximum speed, approximately 55.2 miles per hour. When the sub hit the mountain, it was disabled due to severe damage to all five blades of the propeller, making it nearly impossible to steer. For ten days, the men aboard the sub were at the mercy of the currents.

In the time between 1950 and 1989, the US Navy was in a cold war with the communist countries of the world. Between 1960 and 1975, submarines were deployed to the coast of Russia around the entrances to their harbors. The USS Scamp was among these subs sent to watch the Russian Navy's actions. Both countries' navies were guarding against nuclear attack on one another. The subs involved would patrol the coasts of the enemy country, waiting for a sign of attack,

in which they were to launch missiles. They were supposed to destroy the enemy ships before they could launch any missiles. The USS Scamp was also assigned to “fingerprint”, or identify, enemy ships by recording sounds. The Navy would use the recorded data to identify other enemy subs. During the short time leading up to the USS Scamp hitting the underwater mountain, the sub was located off the coast of Vladivostok. The men aboard the submarine suspected that a periscope lens had begun to leak, so they sent a message to Hawaii, a nearby port. They were then told by Hawaii to “leave station and go to Subic Bay in the Philippines,” Morgan Melton Sr., who was only 30 years old at the time, recalled. They were told to transfer scopes with another submarine, and had orders to get back to Vladivostok as soon as possible. The sub ran for three days and nights at maximum speed, coming to periscope depth every twelve hours to get a navigational fix and to receive radio messages. In order to get an accurate location, they needed three radio beams, but they were only able to receive one or two of these beams. Because of this, they were guessing their location for about three days. Another way of knowing where they were was from a map of the ocean floor, but it wasn’t very accurate. They also were able to use a fathometer, a tool that shoots off single ping soundings, but at their rate of travel, it became more of a guessing game as to their exact location. While trying to guess an approximate location, they calculated that they would be reaching the underwater mountain around 1:00 p.m., but due to bad navigating and estimated locations, they arrived nearly three hours early, causing them to crash into the mountain. Submarines have no windows, so they literally see by hearing. Although they had hydrophones and other various tools used to pick up underwater sounds, since the mountain made no noise, they couldn’t tell it was there. They struck the mountain in three different places when they crashed. It ruined all five

blades of the propeller, effectively disabling the submarine. Luckily, even though the submarine was greatly damaged, there were no leaks, so no water got in. At 700 feet below the surface, the water pressure was 310 pounds per square inch, enough to cut a person in half if directly hit by a stream of water. “We couldn’t send a signal to Pearl Harbor to tell them what had happened,” Melton Sr. explained. They couldn’t send any radio messages for fear of the enemy picking up the signal, locating them, and capturing them and the submarine. A hydrophone in the ocean at the time picked up the sound of the submarine hitting the mountain, hearing the mountain crumble, and then silence. It was assumed that everyone on the submarine was either dead or in the process of dying. This, however, wasn’t true. They managed to get the submarine back up to just 100 feet below the surface of the water, where they leveled off. They found out they were near North Korea and China, two of the communist enemy countries. They were unable to send any sort of radio signal because of the possibility that they would be found. For ten days, the men were at the mercy of the ocean currents, where they were carried north. Finally, they drifted far enough away from the enemy countries that they could send a flash message to Pearl Harbor. They received a message back that said, “stay submerged until USS Apache will tow you to dry dock in Guam.” Once the USS Apache located the submarine, it took about a week to tow back to Guam. There, they spent 55 days to repair the ships’ damages. After these 55 days, they were sent to Mare Island in California to do the final major repairs. “We overcame by perseverance. We didn’t want to be captured, so we just stayed hidden.” Melton Sr. said. When asked about the crew’s reaction, he summed it up with, “We were just calm. We were well-trained. In this sort of situation, you don’t think about dying. You’re thinking about how to fix things. We were too busy to worry about dying.”

He recalled being relieved when it was over. "We were exhausted, but very happy and excited. We were in wonder of the fact that we weren't killed, although we never felt like we weren't going to survive." He went on to discuss what would've been done differently and what would have been done the same. "I think that we would've been more cautious of our actual location. But other than that, we would've done exactly what we did before." He gave a simple response when asked if he would ever go through this again willingly. "No, I wouldn't."

When Melton Sr. was asked if he was a survivor, his response came instantly. "Yes, definitely! On a scale of one to ten in intensity, this event was at least a 9, because it could've cost the lives of 110 men almost instantly." He went on to explain his definition of a survivor, seeming to choose his words carefully. "A survivor is someone who has overcome physical forces that should've left you dead."

Although he said he wouldn't go through this event again willingly, he added one final statement. "We were all reborn on that day."

USS Virginia Base:

<http://www.ussvirginiabase.org/>

<p>John Mosticone USS Virginia Base Newsletter Editor</p>
--

USSVI link to Amazon Smiles Program:

<https://www.facebook.com/USSVCF>

<https://smile.amazon.com/about>

General Links:

<http://www.ussvirginiabase.org/naming-of-uss-virginia.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Virginia

USSVI Facebook address:

<https://www.facebook.com/USSVI.NATOFFICE>

<https://www.facebook.com/USSVI.Submarine.Museum.online>

USSVI

<https://www.ussvi.org/home.asp>