



# THE "MIDWATCH"



November 2009  
Volume 15 - Issue 11

**SubVettes Vote to  
Disband (story on  
page 4)**

**The monthly newsletter of  
Perch Base - USSVI  
Phoenix, Arizona  
<http://perch-base.org>**

What's "Below Decks" in the  
MidWatch

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## **Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol** **NOVEMBER ETERNAL PATROLS**

<b>USS CORVINA (SS-226)</b>	<b>4 Nov 1943</b>	<b>82 Lost</b>
<b>Japanese Submarine Attack off Truk</b>		
<b>USS ALBACORE (SS-218)</b>	<b>07 Nov 1944</b>	<b>86 Lost</b>
<b>Possible Japanese Mine between Honshu and Hokkaido, Japan</b>		
<b>USS GROWLER (SS-215)</b>	<b>08 Nov 1944</b>	<b>85 Lost</b>
<b>Possible Japanese Surface Attack in South China Sea</b>		
<b>USS SCAMP (SS-277)</b>	<b>11 Nov 1944</b>	<b>83 Lost</b>
<b>Japanese Surface Attack in Tokyo Bay area</b>		
<b>USS SCULPIN (SS-191)</b>	<b>19 Nov 1943</b>	<b>12 Lost (51 POWS)</b>
<b>Japanese Surface Attack off Truk</b>		

## **2009 Booster and Float Support Members**

*Perch Base, USSVI, cannot support its on-going operations and provide funds for the Base's float activities on dues alone. While the Base tries to develop activities to raise additional funds, we salute the members, listed below, who have supported the base with additional contributions. Shipmates, we salute you!*

**These are the 2009 Contributors. Have you given you support?**

Jerry Allston, Reynaldo Altos, Gary Bartlett, Ken Becker, Dick Bernier, Walt Blomgren, Bradley Butler, Michael Dahl, Jim Denzien, Howard Doyle, Joe Errante, John Graves, Dave Harnish, Stephen Hough, Davey Jones, Mike Keating, Darrell Lambert, DeWayne Lober, Burtis Loftin, George Marions, Ray Marshall, David Meese, Angus McPherson, Alan Miller, Tim Moore, James W. Newman, Craig Olson, Ernest Plantz, Stan Reinhold, Robie Robinson, Stanley Rud, Frank Rumbaugh (in memory), Garry Shumann, Rick Simmons, William Tippet, Forrest Watson, Donald Whitehead, Ed Wolf, Jerry Yowell, John Zaichkin, Ron Zomok.

---

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# Sailing Orders

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The Phoenix Commission's official "Going-Out-of-Business" Party will be held at Aunt Chilada's restaurant, North, 7777 N. Dreamy Draw Drive (one block SE of the Pointe-Hilton Squaw. the happy hour event will be from 1700 to 2000 hours. Come and WEAR YOUR VEST!

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Static float display at Sanderson Ford in Glendale. Call Jim Denzien (see list of base officers) for more details.

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The Base will be participating in the Anthem Veterans Day Parade held on Saturday, Nov. 7. The Base float will be included and all hands are invited. More details will be sent electronically when they become available.

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Veteran's Day - 2009 (Nov. 11) Plan on attending the annual Phoenix parade. Details will be announced on the web page. Just type:

[perch-base.org](http://perch-base.org)

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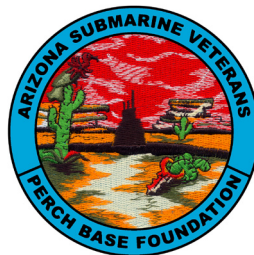
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## *Foundation Shipmates*

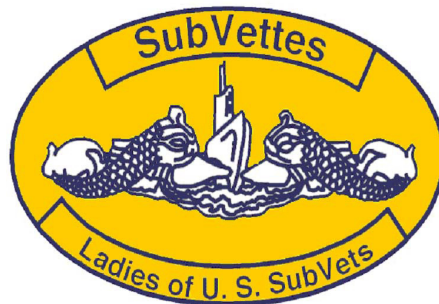


*These organizations and individuals have contributed to the Perch Base Foundation and deserve special recognition as "Foundations Shipmates." Perch Base members are encouraged to use these organizations as a way of saying, "thanks."*

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**Avondale Toyota**  
**Larry Harker Auto Repair Inc.**  
**Fairings - Etc**  
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**Frank Bono Metal Design**  
**Southwest Steel Sales LLC**  
**United Parcel Service (UPS)**  
**David L. Meese, Jr. CPA PLC**  
**ARC Impressions**

# Subvettes Are No More



## **LAST LETTER FROM THE DESK OF THE SEAHAG**

**At the last meeting, a proposal was made, seconded and unanimously passed to dissolve our relationship with the National SubVettes.**

**We will still gather at the men's meeting, have lunch and socialize. Our main focus will now be to support the men's group in any way we can without dealing with National.**

**The men have already asked us to create centerpieces for the Awards Banquet, January 16<sup>th</sup> and to work on two wreaths for Memorial Day. Jackie will spearhead the centerpiece project. Contact her if you have any ideas or just want to participate.**

**I still look forward to seeing you ladies on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of the month!**

**I am no longer your President...just your friend! As it should be!**

**Hope to see you at the Men's Meeting, friends!**

Even without the SubVettes, wives, girlfriends, sisters, daughters and grand-daughters will continue to contribute to the success of Perch Base.

# October Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Arizona Submarine Veterans Perch Base was convened at the American Legion Post #105, Phoenix, AZ at 1210, 10 October 2009. The meeting was called to order by Jim Denzien, Base Commander.

The "Call to Order" was led in a prayer of invocation by Walt Blomgren followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the standard ceremonial opening. The tolling ceremony was conducted for all boats lost in October and a moment of silence was observed for our shipmates on eternal patrol. A moment of silence was also observed in honor of the memory of our shipmate Dave Harnish, who was tragically taken from us on 19 September 2009.

As the first order of business, a motion was made and seconded that the minutes from the August 2009 regular meeting be approved as published in the MidWatch monthly newsletter. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote.

As Acting Treasurer, Jim Denzien reported on the base's financial status as of 01 October 2009. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's Report as read. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote. Jim reported that Wayne Pettes has stepped forward and offered his services to fill the vacated Treasurer's position. Thanks to Wayne from the board and the membership for taking on this responsibility.

According to the sailing list, thirty (30) members and guests were present. One new member, Gene Crab, was introduced and he shared his background with the membership. His bio included tours as XO of the Grayback as well as Commander of the Bashaw. Gary Waterbury was introduced. He did a tour of duty in the Navy as well as a twenty year career in the Air Force. Welcome aboard Gene and Gary.

## **Base Commander's Board of Directors Meeting Report**

Jim reported on the recent USSVI Convention in San Diego. While the convention was a success overall, we were disappointed with the lack of camaraderie and participation between the USA & ISA attendees. It seemed that there was a lack of coordinated or

planned events for introducing the two groups and promoting interaction.

Jim reported that until Wayne can officially take over the Treasurer position that he (Jim) will continue in the roll of Acting Treasurer and all members should send in all dues or any other payments to Jim at his home address in Tolleson.

## **Reports of Officers and Committee Chairmen**

**Base Vice-Commander** – Howard Doyle reported that all members are invited to the 04 November USS Phoenix Commission "Decommissioning Party". Members were reminded that Pete Lumianski has requested that all members send an R.S.V.P. He also reported that we will be participating in the Anthem Veteran's Day Parade on 7 November and Phoenix on 11 November. We need a head count on who will be attending so we have adequate transportation.

**Base Secretary** – Tim Moore encouraged all members to attend both the "Decommissioning Party" and both Veterans' Day parades. They are enjoyable events

and the "Decommissioning Party" will be an opportune time to promote the "SOS" project.

**Base Treasurer** – TBA

**Chaplain** – Walt Blomgren spoke with Frank Bono's wife and reported that Frank is back in the hospital but seems to be doing well. Joe Varese further reported that Frank had fallen down into some cactus which resulted in cactus poisoning. Joe also stated that Frank seems to be on the mend but does not wish to receive visitors. Joe will keep us posted on Frank's progress. Walt went on to report that Jim Nelson has taken a turn for the worse and will be going back to the doctor for further evaluation. Jim Denzien then interjected

that Nancy broke her foot as a result of attempting to catch Jim when he fell down.

**Base Chief of the Boat** – TBA

**MidWatch Editor/Interim Webmaster** – Chuck Emmett reported that we are in a transition with our Membership Chairman and Webmaster positions being recently vacated. Chuck commended Rick Simmons on the great job he has done of taking over and updating the membership list. He further reported that it has been determined that we now have only 35 members who do not have good e-mail addresses and receive the newsletter via snail mail. Because of the costs related to the printing and mailing the newsletter, in the near future we will be going paper-

less. Simply stated the cost of mailing a member the newsletter exceeds the membership dues received. All other correspondence and communications are sent to the membership via e-mail. All members are encouraged to get set up with e-mail post haste.

**Base Storekeeper** – DeWayne Lober announced some special prices he had on some summer weight hats. He also acquired some posters from the USSVI convention that depict historic submarine silhouettes from early production through 2003. These posters are available for \$1.00 ea.

**Membership Chairman** – Rick Simmons reported that between Holland Club and Perch

Base Life members, we only collect annual dues from about thirty (30) people. The result is we do not receive much revenue from dues paying members and are becoming more dependent upon Booster Club participation. He further encouraged all members to assist us with Booster Club contributions. Rick also stated that we want to have our Holland Club Induction Ceremony at the Annual Awards Banquet. So anyone who qualified in 1960, is eligible for Holland Club so be sure you get your dues sent in so we can update our records with National. Rick also reported that if any member needs transportation to any of our meetings, or knows of someone who does, please let one of the board members know so we can arrange help.

**Historian** – Jim Newman was not present.

**Float Coordinator** – Barry Bowers was not present.

**Past Commander** – Stan Reinhold reported that he had provided all the food for the Dave Harnish memorial service at the cost of \$150.00 out of pocket. He requested that the base reimburse him \$140.00. We “passed the hat” and Stan received his reimbursement of \$140.00 and there was an additional \$92.00 donated by the membership. It was moved and seconded that those funds be donated to the base treasury in memory of Dave Harnish. The motion was carried by unanimous voice vote. A big “BRAVO ZULU” to you, the membership for assisting with this worthwhile cause. Also it should be noted that our shipmate Stan Reinhold and his crew deserve kudos for the terrific job they did on behalf for our past shipmate’s memorial service... thank you Stanley.

**Public Relations** – Ben Acosta was not present.

### **Old Business**

Jim Denzien announced that on Saturday, 17 October the All Arizona Bases Picnic at Picacho Peak State Park. He asked for a show of hands from all who plan to participate. It is anticipated that 35-40 Perch Base members and guests will be in attendance. There is an entry fee of \$6.00 per car and picnic will be held at the Ironwood Ramada. Tautog Base will be providing hamburgers, hotdogs, buns, condiments, plastic knives & forks, plastic cups, paper plates, soft drinks ice, etc. Attendees are asked to bring a side dish to share with others.

We need two replacements for the BOD, one elected position, (Treasurer and one appointed position (Chief of the Boat). Wayne Pettes will take over the Treasures position and we still need a volunteer for the COB. The COB position still needs to be defined.

Jim announced that Rick Simmons will be filling in and assisting Chuck on developing the Policies & Procedures manual. Chuck reminded all hands that any input the membership has to offer would be greatly appreciated.

### **New Business**

Jim re-iterated that the USS Phoenix Commission “Decommissioning Party” previously discussed will be at Aunt Chiladas from 1700 to 2000.

In addition to the Veteran’s Day events, our float will be present at the USS Phoenix Commission “Decommissioning Party” and we have the potential of displaying it at the Palo Verde retirement party on the 30th of October.

With respect to the Phoenix Veteran’s Day Parade, Palo Verde is picking up all costs with the exception of towing the Goodyear Fire Truck. Howard Doyle made arrangements with EZ Towing to provide for the transporting the Fire Truck.

We need to come up with some innovative fund raising ideas to bolster the Perch Base treasury. One idea is to conduct an Opportunity Drawing. Keep in mind that the Perch Base Submarine Veterans Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization so monies received from outside sources is fully tax deductible. Many of you probably have contacts would be willing to make contributions to support our cause knowing that they are tax deductible. Other ideas on the table include raffles for gift certificate for a grocery store or a weekend at a local resort. We would like the membership to ponder these suggestions and make some suggestions or recommendations on other ideas we could explore which will aid us in becoming more self supporting.

The Annual Awards Banquet will be 16 Jan 2010 at the American Legion Post #105. Walt Blomgren is coordinating



the event and he will be working with Stan on planning the banquet dinner. Awards that will be considered are not limited to but include; Sailor of the Year, Vendor of the Year and Longevity Pin Awards. Longevity pins are awarded to members in 5 year increments, who have 5, 10, 15 year anniversaries (and beyond) in the USSVI. We will also conduct the 2010 Holland Club Induction ceremony for all members who qualified in 1960. The Sailor of the Year is determined by a committee of Past Commanders who make this selection. Additional details about the Awards Banquet will be forthcoming as plans are made.

Jim received an e-mail for the National office announcing that they are conducting a nationwide poll. The annual conventions are becoming more expensive and the poll is to determine if the USSVI membership would or would not be in favor of having the conventions every other year in conjunction with the National elections. Members are encouraged to log on to the USSVI website at [www.ussvi.org](http://www.ussvi.org) and vote in this poll.

Joe Varese aka "The Wanderer" is putting together a CD with pictures of the USSVI Convention to give to Frank Bono. Frank had originally planned to attend the convention but because of his health problems he was unable to attend. Joe will make two CD's one of which will be given to Frank and the other to the base for our historical archives. Members who attended the convention are encouraged to send their photos to Joe via e-mail.

Jim announced that he and Stan will be meeting with Steve Hall who is a professional fund raiser to discuss ideas for the SOS project.

### **Good of the Order**

Jim Denzien announced that Billy Grieves will be our guest speaker for our November meeting. Billy made many WWII war patrols and his presentation is entitled "A Tribute to Skippers". Members are encouraged to attend, especially past CO's.

Tim Moore announced that his company is looking for a Spanish speaking person to work as an air conditioning company representative in Home Depot. If any of the membership knows of a reliable, bi-lingual individual who might be interested in this part time opportunity please let Tim know.

### **50/50 Drawing**

The 50/50 drawing was held and the winner was Richard Kunze who won \$52.00.

### **Adjournment**

All the outstanding business having been concluded, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote and the meeting adjourned at 1330 hours.

The benediction was offered by Walt Blomgren.

Tim Moore, Secretary, Perch Base USSVI



## A Submariner's Prayer

"Eternal Father, strong to save  
 Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,  
 Who biddest the mighty ocean deep  
 Its own appointed limits keep.  
 O hear us when we cry to Thee  
 For those in peril on the sea.

Bless those who serve beneath the deep.  
 Through lonely hour their vigil keep.  
 May peace their mission ever be,  
 Protect each one we ask of Thee.  
 Bless those at home who wait and pray,  
 For their return by night or day."

Do you know a shipmate who is on the lee side of a fair wind? Someone who could use the help of a shipmate? Remember, we are the "**Brotherhood** of the Phin." Contact our Base Chaplain if you know of any way we can help:

Walt Blumgren  
 5120 W. Gelding Dr.  
 Glendale, AZ 85306  
 (602) 309-4407  
[chaplain@perch-base.org](mailto:chaplain@perch-base.org)



### ETERNAL PATROL PREPARATIONS

Shipmates, while we hope your day and those of your shipmates is far off in the future, we must nevertheless prepare. Please copy this notice and place it with your will or important papers.

#### IMPORTANT

In the case of my death, please immediately notify the U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc., (USSVI) at 877-542-3483 or 360-337-2978 and give the person on duty the information regarding my death, funeral, and burial arrangements, plus who they can contact for follow-up and support.

Please ask them to contact my local chapter's Base Commander with this information as well (they can look it up in their membership records).

This information can alternatively be E-Mailed to the National Office at [office@ussvi.org](mailto:office@ussvi.org).

**But remember, your family should always notify the Base Chaplain first. He and your local shipmates can help!!**

# Shipmate



# Shipmate

## USSVI Membership cards

All members of USSVI have a membership card. A number of Base members have told me that they do not have their card. If you don't have a card please let your Membership Chairman, Rick Simmons, know and he will contact USSVI National Headquarters to get you one. Remember that new cards are not issued every year so once you get your card hang on to it.

## 2010 Re-enlistment

A reminder that we need to get all 2010 re-enlistment dues processed before December 31<sup>st</sup> to keep you current with USSVI. By processed we mean we need to receive your payment and then enter that payment into the USSVI and Perch Base databases. As with anyone else your Board members and USSVI staff are busy with family holiday activities in late November and throughout the month of December so please don't wait until the last minute to take care of this important duty. Remember to send your payments to Jim Denzien's address. If you have any questions, please give Rick Simmons a call.

=====

## NEWS-01: SUBASE GROTON Honors World War II Hero

Submitted by: Pat Householder on 10/11/2009

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GROTON, Conn. (NNS) -- Naval Submarine Base (SUBASE) New London rededicated Building 429 in honor of World War II submariner and Medal of Honor recipient Rear Adm. Richard H. "Dick" O'Kane, during a ceremony, Oct. 9.

The late admiral's son and daughter, James H. O'Kane and Marsha O'Kane Allen, and their spouses and friends, joined nearly 100 guests at the special event which also included a ribbon cutting formally opening the base's new Navy Gateway Inn & Suites located in the building.

O'Kane served in the Navy from 1930 to 1957. As commanding officer of USS Tang (SS 306), he was recognized for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity" in action against the enemy during October 1944 and awarded the Medal of Honor.

"The admiral is one of seven submariners from [World War II] to be awarded our nation's highest tribute, the Medal of Honor," said base Commanding Officer Capt. Marc W. Denno. "I'm a Sailor and a submariner through and through, so it means a lot to me to be able to recognize one of the heroes of our force."

The re-dedication and ribbon cutting marked the completion of a three phase transformation of the former barracks building through the Navy's Shore Vision 2035 Plan.

The Navy's most recent vision of shore basing, the plan reduces unneeded infrastructure, reduces financial drains, and ultimately allows the Navy to recapitalize key requirements.

The new O'Kane Hall is an innovative retail, recreation, and lodging facility. Home to not only the new Inn and Suites which serves as temporary quarters for authorized base visitors and guests, the hall is also home to the Officers and Chief Petty Officers Clubs and the on-base branch of the Navy Federal Credit Union which moved to the building and opened in January and November 2008 respectively.

James O'Kane, who spoke on behalf of the family, talked of the few wartime memories his father would discuss with him, such as returning to Hawaii after those early war patrols.

"He had a wonderful time relaxing at the Royal Hawaiian in Honolulu, and I think this does that the same way. Those officers that come back to Groton, to the SUBASE, can unwind and feel very appreciative of what is presented here today. I think it will do them all a great honor," he said.

The new 35,000 square-feet, Navy Gateway Inn & Suites welcomes guests with a spacious lobby warmed by

a two-sided fireplace and boasts 80 renovated and newly appointed guests rooms. Room amenities include flat screen televisions, upgraded mattresses and linens, and Keurig single-serving coffee service. The entire facility benefits from Free Wireless internet (WIFI), a Meeting and Conference Room and a Business Center with computers and printers.

Having not only enjoyed the hospitality of the facility the prior evening, James O’Kane and Marsha O’Kane Allen, and their spouses, participated in a tour of SUBASE, the Submarine Force Library Museum, and newest commissioned submarine in the submarine force, USS New Hampshire (SSN 778).

Rear Admiral O’Kane was a New Hampshire native, born in Dover in 1911, and the submarine pays tribute to the heroic “Granite Stater” having named its galley and mess deck, the O’Kane Café.

“As Building 429 takes on its new mission and more in support of our fleet, fighters, and families, I can think of no finer sailor and submariner to dedicate it after than Admiral Dick O’Kane,” Denno concluded.



## Perch Base November Birthdays



<b>William Sherman</b>	<b>Nov. 4</b>
<b>L.A. (Mike) Keating</b>	<b>Nov. 6</b>
<b>Roger M. Miller</b>	<b>Nov. 7</b>
<b>Larry M. Rankin</b>	<b>Nov. 11</b>
<b>William M. Tippet</b>	<b>Nov. 14</b>
<b>Harry Ellis</b>	<b>Nov. 17</b>
<b>Roger R. Miller</b>	<b>Nov. 25</b>
<b>Robert B. Gilmore Jr.</b>	<b>Nov. 30</b>



# DON'T LET YOUR MEMBERSHIP LAPSE - THERE IS NO GRACE PERIOD AFTER YEAR END

Shipmate,

Once again it's time to renew your membership with **USSVI** and **Perch Base**. The annual **USSVI** and **Perch Base** dues for those who are not a **Holland Club** member or **Life Member** in **USSVI** and **Perch Base** are listed below. Please send the applicable amount to the Base Treasurer along with the bottom portion of this letter in the enclosed self addressed stamped envelope.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Dues must be received and processed no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> or your membership will lapse. **USSVI IS NO LONGER GRANTING ANY GRACE PERIOD.** Please return your dues payment as soon as possible to avoid any interruption in membership.

This is a good time to consider becoming a **Life Member** of **USSVI** and **Perch Base**. The costs are age based and are as follows:

**USSVI:** 76+ Yrs = \$100.00; 66 thru 75 = \$200; 56 thru 65 = \$ 300.00; 46 thru 55 = \$400.00; Thru 45 yrs = \$ 500.00

**Perch Base:** 65 and over = \$50.00; 56 thru 64 = \$100.00; 45 thru 55 = \$150.00; Under 45 250.00  
To become a Life Member of Perch Base you must also be a USSVI Life Member

Please keep in mind that we Submarine Veterans are a relative minority of the Armed Forces Veterans of this country. This is very apparent any time you visit an American Legion or VFW in most parts of the country. Having a place where you can spend time "with your own kind" to swap sea stories and be with others who have shared at least some of your experiences can be very special. Your shipmates want you around, we need your sea stories, so please renew today.

All members, including **Holland Club** and **Life Members**, are encouraged to support their Perch Base and it's ongoing activities with a donation to the **Booster Club**. Please show your support by sending a contribution and remember, no matter what the amount, it is appreciated. If you would like to make this a tax-deductible contribution, please make your check out to: **Arizona Submarine Veterans Perch Base Foundation**.

If you have any questions, please call Rick Simmons, Membership Chairman, at 623 583-4235 or Jim Denzien at 623 547-7945.

----- Cut Along This Line -----

## Please Return This Portion With Your Remittance

USSVI Dues: (1 Year \$20, 3 Years \$55, 5 Years \$90)      Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Perch Base Dues: (\$10)      Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Perch Base Booster Club:      Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am a; Holland Club Member: \_\_\_\_ USSVI Life Member: \_\_\_\_ Perch Base Life Member: \_\_\_\_

Please make any necessary corrections to the following:

Name:-

Address

City, State Zip+4

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need help getting to Base meetings /events? (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in car-pooling to Base Meetings/events? (Yes/No) \_\_\_\_\_



## Eternal Patrol November 7, 1944

Editors Note: *Less we forget, each month, one boat on eternal patrol will be highlighted in this newsletter. Sailors, rest your oars.*

### The Final Patrol



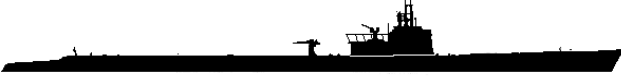
Lord, this departed shipmate with dolphins on his chest  
Is part of an outfit known as the best.  
Make him welcome and take him by the hand.  
You'll find without a doubt he was the best in all the land.  
So, heavenly Father add his name to the roll  
Of our departed shipmates still on patrol  
Let them know that we who survive  
Will always keep their memories alive.



### USS Albacore (SS-218) November 7, 1944 86 men lost

USS Albacore (SS-218) was a Gato-class submarine which served in the Pacific Theater of Operations during World War II, winning four Presidential Unit Citations and nine battle stars for her service. During the war, she was credited with sinking 13 Japanese ships (including two destroyers, a light cruiser, and the aircraft carrier Taihō) and damaging another five; not all of these credits were confirmed by postwar JANAC accounting.

Albacore was the second ship of the United States Navy to be named for the albacore. Her keel was laid on 21 April 1941 by the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. She was launched on 17 February 1942 (sponsored by Mrs. Elwin F. Cutts, the wife of Captain Cutts), and commissioned on 1 June 1942, Lieutenant Commander Richard C. Lake (Class of 1929) in command.



The **Gato-class submarine** was the state of the art in American design at the start of World War II. Using the previous Tambor-class submarine as a basis, Gatos incorporated improvements to increase their overall patrol and combat abilities. Modifications to the diesel engines and batteries increased patrol duration over Tambors, and internal alterations provided more amenities for the crew. The class is named after its lead ship, USS Gato (SS-212).

- Displacement: 1,526 tons surf., 2,424 tons sub.
- Length: 311ft 9 in, Beam: 27 ft 3in, Draft: 15 ft 3in
- Test depth: 300ft., Speed: 20 knots surf., 9 knots sub.
- Armament: 10 x 21 in torpedo tubes (6 forward, 4 aft, 24 torpedoes)  
1 x 3/50 cal AA gun, 2 x .50 cal, and 2 x .30 cal machineguns
- Crew: 80 – 85 officers and men
- Powerplant: •4 x 1350 hp 16cyl GM 278A diesels  
(except SS228-239 and SS275-284 10cyl Fairbanks-Morse 38D-1/8),  
2 x 1370 hp GE electric motors  
(except SS228-235 Elliott Motor or SS257-264 Allis-Chalmers),  
two 126-cell Exide main storage batteries  
(except SS261, 275-278, & 280 Gould)
- Range: •11,800 nm at 10 knots surf, 100nm at 3 knots sub.  
Submerged Endurance: 48 hours

### World War II - 1942

Following shakedown, the submarine proceeded via the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor and, from that base on 28 August 1942, began her first war patrol, to waters of the north and northeast pass through the coral reef which surrounds Truk. On 13 September, Albacore sighted two cargo vessels in column and prepared for her first combat action. She made a submerged approach and fired three torpedoes at the leading ship and two at the second. One or two torpedoes

hit on the first ship; none struck the second. Albacore claimed to have damaged the leading vessel.



Her next enemy contact came on 1 October when she made a night surface attack on a Japanese tanker. She expended seven torpedoes and scored two hits. Although the tanker appeared to be low in the water, she was still able to leave the scene under her

own power. On 9 October, Albacore spotted a Shōkaku-class aircraft carrier escorted by a heavy cruiser and a destroyer, but the submarine was depth charged by the escorts and forced to break off her pursuit. The next day, she attacked a freighter. One torpedo hit the mark, and 12 minutes after firing, the sound of two heavy explosions caused the submarine's crew to presume they had downed the vessel.

Beginning on the mid-morning of 11 October, Albacore was depth charged numerous times. At 1548, the conning officer finally spotted the Japanese attackers, two submarine chasers and an airplane. A third ship equipped with sound gear joined the group and continued the hunt. The ships crisscrossed over Albacore, close enough for propeller noise to reverberate throughout her hull and compelled her to proceed at silent running, with her ventilator fans shut down. After a chase of nearly seven hours, the Japanese ships disappeared astern, and Albacore then surfaced to clear the immediate area. The next day, Albacore headed for Midway Island. Although she had had several opportunities to score during the patrol, Albacore was not credited with any damage to Japanese shipping. The submarine arrived at Midway Island on 20 October and commenced a refit.

With her refurbishing completed and a new Oerlikon 20 mm cannon installed, Albacore sailed on 11 November for her second patrol. Her assigned areas were the Roger St. George's Channel, New Britain, along the east coast of New Guinea to Vitiaz Strait, and the Dallman Pass off Madang harbor. On 24 November, the submarine spotted a convoy of two cargo vessels. Albacore maneuvered into position and fired two stern tubes, but neither torpedo found its target. Two days later, on 26 November, Albacore herself became the quarry. Two Japanese destroyers depth charged her and the explosions caused numerous small leaks around the cable packing glands in the pressure hull. After a two-hour chase, the Japanese retired, and Albacore shifted her patrol area to Vitiaz Strait. Another golden opportunity arose on 13 December, when Albacore found three Japanese destroyers. She released a three-torpedo spread but again was unsuccessful. On 18 December, Albacore was stationed off Madang. The submarine discovered what seemed to be a transport and a destroyer.

Albacore torpedoed the "transport," and it exploded in a mass of flames and sank. Albacore had in fact downed Tenryū, and the second Japanese cruiser sunk by an American submarine in World War II. Albacore put into port at Brisbane, Australia, on 30 December.

### **1943**

After an overhaul of her engines, Albacore got underway on 20 January 1943 to begin her third patrol. Off the north coast of New Guinea, she spotted 11 targets in as many days. The first group, encountered on 20 February, consisted of a destroyer and a frigate escorting a minelayer. Albacore fired ten torpedoes and believed she had sunk the destroyer and damaged the frigate. In the following days, Albacore attacked one tanker, several freighters, and another destroyer. Of eight torpedoes expended during these actions, all missed their targets. When Albacore ended her patrol at Brisbane on 11 March, she was credited with sinking one destroyer and a frigate for a total of 2,250 tons.

Albacore was briefly dry-docked for repairs and underwent refresher training before sailing for a fourth patrol on 6 April. This time, her area was around the Solomon Islands and Bismarck Islands and off the north coast of New Guinea. While she sighted several convoys, she recorded no hits. Albacore returned to Brisbane on 26 May. While Albacore was being refitted at that port, Lieutenant Commander Oscar E. Hagberg relieved Lieutenant Commander Lake in command of the submarine.

On 16 June, Albacore was underway for her fifth patrol and waters surrounding the Bismarcks and the Solomons. During this patrol, she sighted three separate convoys and attacked two. Albacore claimed to have damaged a transport on 19 July but the submarine failed to sink any vessels. Albacore arrived back at Brisbane and began a refit alongside Fulton.

On 23 August, Albacore left to patrol roughly the same area as on her previous assignment. She spotted a Japanese submarine on 31 August but was unable to press home an attack. On 4 September, she encountered a two-ship



convoy protected by two escorts and sank one of the ships, Heijo Maru, with three torpedo hits made shortly after the initial contact. The submarine then pursued the other vessel for the next two days but was able to inflict only minor hull damage on her target. She terminated her patrol at Brisbane on 26 September.

Albacore's seventh patrol began on 12 October 1943. She fired six torpedoes at a large merchant ship on 25 October but recorded no hits. On 6 November, she received a report of a convoy which had been spotted by Steelhead, and began to search for it. On 8 November, the submarine found the convoy and started to track it. However, a plane from the Fifth Army Air Force bombed her and caused her to lose contact with the Japanese ships. The submarine sustained no damage.

Albacore was again bombed by American aircraft on 10 November. This time, the submarine suffered considerable damage. All auxiliary power was knocked out, and the submarine was plunged into total darkness. The main induction valve went under water before it was shut, and it began filling up with water. Albacore plunged to a depth of 450 feet (140 m) before her dive was checked. For the next two and one-half hours, she bounced between 30 feet (10 m) and 400 feet (120 m) while at various attitudes. She finally managed to return to the surface with her trim almost restored. The submarine re-submerged, and it was decided to continue the patrol while simultaneously making necessary repairs.

Following this ordeal, Albacore received orders to locate and attack Agano, which had been hit and damaged by Scamp. Albacore found Agano on 12 November and tried to attack, but Japanese destroyers held the submarine down with a four-hour depth charge barrage.

On 25 November, Albacore sank Japanese army transport Kenzan Maru.

On her return to Brisbane on 5 December, Lieutenant Commander James W. Blanchard replaced Hagberg in command.

Albacore departed Australia on 26 December to patrol north of the Bismarck Islands. She spotted her first target on 12 January 1944 and sank Choko Maru with two separate torpedo attacks. Two days later, in company with Scamp and Guardfish, she blew up Sazanami (flushed by Guardfish) with four shots from Albacore's stern tubes. Another destroyer pinned Albacore down and delivered fifty-nine depth charges, leaving Scamp and Guardfish free to pursue the three tankers; they succeeded in sinking one each. Following more than a fortnight of uneventful patrolling, the submarine headed home. She made brief fuel stops at Tulagi and Midway Island before reaching Pearl Harbor on 22 February. After three days of repairs to get her ready for the voyage, Albacore continued on to the Mare Island Navy Yard in Vallejo, California for overhaul.

## **1944**

Albacore left Mare Island on 5 May 1944 and held training exercises with Shad (SS-235) en route to Hawaii. Albacore reached Pearl Harbor on 13 May and spent the next two weeks on final repairs and training. Albacore began her ninth patrol on 29 May, and was assigned waters west of the Mariana Islands and around the Palau Islands. In the next few days, she made only one contact, a Japanese convoy which she encountered on 11 June. But before the submarine could maneuver into attack position, a Japanese aircraft forced her to dive and lose contact.

### **The Sinking of Taihō**

On the morning of 18 June, two days after American forces began landing on Saipan, Albacore shifted from her position west of the Mariana Islands to a new location 100 miles (160 km) further south. Admiral Charles Andrews Lockwood (ComSubPac) ordered this move in the hope of enabling the submarine to intercept a Japanese task force (under command of Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa) reportedly steaming from Tawi Tawi toward Saipan. At about 0800 the next morning, Albacore raised her periscope and found herself in the midst of Ozawa's main carrier group. Blanchard allowed one Japanese carrier to pass unharmed and selected a second one for his target. Once inside 5,300 yards (4,800 m), the submarine's Torpedo Data Computer started giving false information. To maximize the odds of a hit, Blanchard fired all six bow tubes. The carrier was in the process of launching an air strike, and one of the pilots {Sakio Komatsu} intentionally dove his plane into a torpedo, setting it off early. Three Japanese destroyers immediately charged Albacore. While the submarine was diving to escape, her crew heard one solid torpedo explosion. About that same time, 25 depth charges began raining down on the submarine. Then Blanchard heard "a distant and persistent explosion of great force" followed by another.

One of Blanchard's torpedoes had hit the carrier. It was Ozawa's flagship, Japanese aircraft carrier Taihō, 31,000 tons, the newest and largest in the Japanese fleet. The explosion jammed the ship's forward aircraft elevator; its pit filled with gasoline, water, and fuel. However, no fire erupted, and the flight deck was unharmed. The one torpedo hit on Taihō caused little concern on board. Ozawa still "radiated confidence and satisfaction" and by 11:30 had launched raids Three and Four. Meanwhile, a novice took over the damage-control work. He thought the best way to



handle gasoline fumes was to open up the ship's ventilation system and let them disperse. When he did, the fumes spread all through the ship. Unknown to anybody on board, Taihō became a floating time bomb. About 3:30 that afternoon, Taihō was jolted by a severe explosion. A senior staff officer on the bridge saw the flight deck heave up. The sides blew out. Taihō dropped out of formation and began to settle in the water, clearly doomed. Though Admiral Ozawa wanted to go down with the ship, his staff prevailed on him to survive and to shift his quarters to Japanese cruiser Haguro. Taking the Emperor's portrait, Ozawa transferred to Haguro by destroyer. After he left, Taihō was torn by a second thunderous explosion and sank stern first, carrying down 1,650 officers and men.

No one on Albacore thought Taihō had sunk, and her skipper was angry for "missing a golden opportunity." After this action, Albacore was assigned lifeguard duty for planes striking Yap and Ulithi. On 2 July, Albacore shifted over to intercept traffic between Yap and the Palau Islands. The submarine spotted a wooden inter-island steamer loaded with Japanese civilians. Albacore decided to stage a surface gun attack. After insuring the ship was afire, Albacore dived to avoid an airplane. The submarine surfaced soon thereafter and picked up five survivors.

Albacore put in to Majuro on 15 July. She was praised for an aggressive patrol and received credit for damaging a Shōkaku-class carrier. American codebreakers lost track of Taihō after the Battle of the Philippine Sea and, while puzzled, did not realize she had gone down. Only months later did a prisoner of war reveal her sinking.

After a refit alongside Bushnell, the submarine began her tenth patrol on 8 August. Her assignment was the Bungo Suido-Kii Suido area, and, during this period, Albacore was credited with sinking two Japanese vessels, a cargo ship and a submarine chaser. The patrol ended at Pearl Harbor on 25 September.

### **Loss**

Albacore left Pearl Harbor on 24 October 1944 (with Hugh Raynor Rimmer, Class of 1937, in command), topped off her fuel tanks at Midway Island on 28 October, and was never heard from again. According to Japanese records captured after the war, a submarine (presumed to be Albacore) struck a naval mine very close to the shore off north-eastern kaidō on 7 November 1944. A Japanese patrol boat witnessed the explosion of a submerged submarine and saw a great deal of heavy oil, cork, bedding, and food supplies rise to the surface. On 21 December, Albacore was presumed lost. Her name was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 30 March 1945.

### **Awards**

Albacore won nine battle stars for her service and the Presidential Unit Citation for her second, third, eighth, and ninth patrols during World War II.



## **Submarines of Today ??**

### **New Nuke Training Reactors Needed**

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### **Top Nuke Officer Details Training Backlog**

*By Andrew Scutro, Navy Times, October 29, 2009*

There is a kink in the nuclear propulsion training pipeline that is keeping new operators from flowing to the fleet, according to Adm. Kirkland Donald, head of the Navy's nuclear propulsion program.

Speaking Wednesday at the annual Naval Submarine League symposium, the admiral said his biggest training challenge is pumping nuclear-trained sailors onto subs and aircraft carriers because the Navy's four training reactors are "aging" and in need of replacement.

"The end result right now today is we have a backlog of students waiting to complete their training and as a consequence, a diminished throughput of operators to the fleet," he said.

The Navy operates two training reactors in upstate New York and two in Charleston, S.C.

In his comments, Donald had high praise for the undersea fleet, noting that its services are in high demand by combatant commanders, keeping submariners “exceptionally busy.”

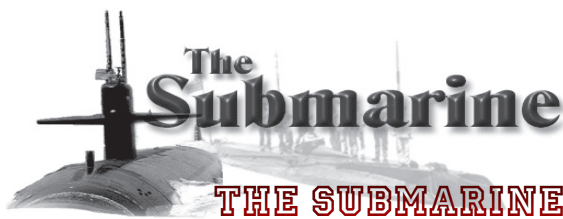
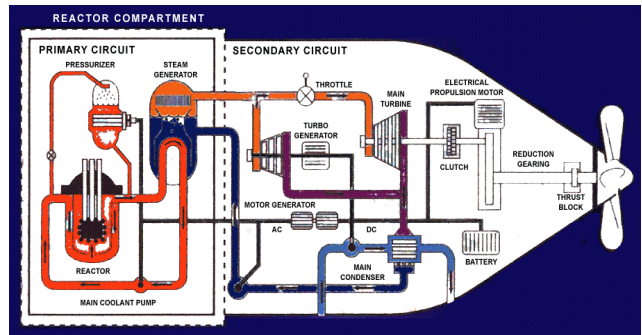
In speaking about integrity, he noted two recent scandals involving cheating among reactor-qualified sailors on the attack sub Hampton in 2007 and aboard the carrier Harry S. Truman in 2008 saying such lapses are “unacceptable” and that each “damages our reputation.”

Donald also addressed the recent news that some midshipmen at the Naval Academy would be forced to join the submarine force because not enough were applying. Donald personally interviews all nuclear officer candidates.

He said almost all those who did not choose nukes understand it’s a military reality. He also shared that a career aboard subs was not his top pick as a midshipman, either.

“I am the living proof that the second choice ain’t bad,” he said.

The Navy’s nuclear reactor program is notoriously tight-lipped and feared for its exacting standards especially during inspections. In telling an anecdote about how the baseball great Ted Williams refreshed his skills during slumps by reviewing the fundamentals and using a light bat, Donald joked that in the naval reactor realm, “we always found heavier bats worked better.”



## USN PEACOATS

### One of God’s Better Inventions

You remember them: those ton and a half monsters that took the annual production of thirty-five sheep to make. Those thick black rascals with black plastic buttons the size of poker chips. The issue coats that drove shore duty chief petty officers stark raving nuts if they caught you with the collar turned up or your hands in your pockets.

“Hey, you rubber sock, get those damn hands outta them damn pockets! Didn’t they issue you black leather gloves?” So, you took your hands out of your pockets and risked digital frostbite rather than face whatever the Navy had in store for violators of the ‘No Damn Hands In Peacoat Pockets’ policy. There is probably a special barracks in Hell full of old E-3s caught hitchhiking in sub-zero weather with hands in peacoat pockets

As for those leather gloves, one glove always went missing. “Son, where in the’ hell are the gloves we issued you?” We? I don’t remember this nasty, ugly so-n-so being at Great Lakes, San Diego, Orlando or Bainbridge when the ‘jocks and socks’ petty officers were throwing my initial issue sea bag at me and yelling, “Move it!!” As for the gloves, once you inadvertently leave one glove on a bar stool or on the seat of a Greyhound bus, the remaining glove is only useful if a tank rolls over the hand that fit the lost glove.

In the days long ago, a Navy specification peacoat weighed about the same as a flat carload of cinder blocks. When it rained, it absorbed water until your spine warped, your shins cracked and your ankles split. Five minutes standing in the rain waiting on a bus and you felt like you were piggybacking the Statue of Liberty. When a peacoat got wet, it smelled a lot like sheep dip. It had that wet wool smell, times three. It weighed three and a half tons and smelled like ‘Mary had a little lamb’s gym shorts.

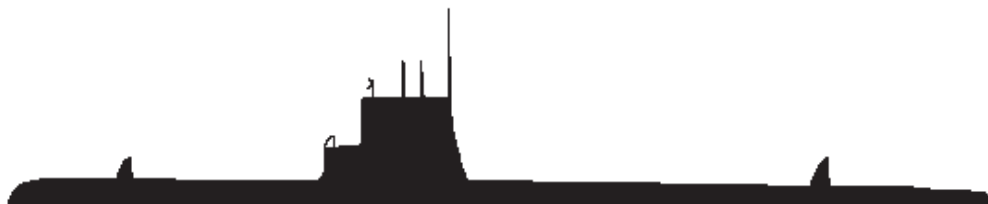
You know how heavy a late ‘50s pea coat was? Well, they had little metal chains sewn in the back of the collar to

hang them up by. Like diluted Navy coffee, sexual sensitivity instruction, comfortable air-conditioned bungalows, patent leather plastic-looking shoes and wearing white hats configured to look like bidets, the peacoat specification has been watered down to the point you could hang them up with dental floss. In the old days, pea coat buttons and grocery cartwheels were interchangeable. The gear issued by the U.S. Navy was tough as hell, bluejacket-tested clothing with the durability of rhino hide and construction equipment tires. Peacoats came with wide, heavy collars. In a cold, hard wind, you could turn that wide collar up to cover your neck and it was like poking your head in a tank turret.



The things were warm, but I never thought they were long enough. Standing out in the wind in those ‘big-legged britches’ (bell-bottoms), the wind whistled up your cuffs and took away body warmth like a thief. But, they were perfect to pull over you for a blanket when sleeping on a bus or a bus terminal bench. Every sailor remembers stretching out on one of those oak bus station pews with his white hat over his face, his head up against his AWOL bag and covered with his peacoat. There was always some ‘SP’ who had not fully evolved from the apes, who poked you with his Billy club and said, “Hey, you! Get up! Waddya think yer doin’? You wanna sleep, get a room!”

Peacoats were lined with quilted satin or rayon. I never realized it at the time, but sleeping on bus seats and station benches would be the closest I would ever get to sleeping on satin sheets. Early in my naval career, a career-hardened (lifer) first class gunner’s mate told me to put my ID and liberty card in the inside pocket of my peacoat. “Put the sonuvabitches in that gahdam inside pocket and pin the damn thing closed with a diaper pin. Then, take your heavy folding money and put it in your sock. If you do that, learn to never take your socks off in a cathouse.



# SUBRON SIX “THE SMOKE BOAT SISTERS”

(AND SUPPORT SHIPS)



The SUBRON SIX SMOKE BOAT SISTERS (SSSBS) comprises 23 diesel submarines that spent as few as 2 and as many as 23 years attached to Submarine Squadron Six - Norfolk, Virginia. We were all familiar with Pier 22, Bells Bar and Naval Tailors, the Orion (and later L.Y. Spear) and the Kittiwake.

SUBRON SIX originally formed from the old SUBRON SIXTEEN which operated out of Panama and had many returning WWII boats assigned to it while in Panama. However, in 1949 the squadron changed its base to Norfolk and is still very active today - but with a nuclear squadron. The last diesel submarine was decommissioned in Norfolk on June 1, 1972 - the USS Sirago (SS485). In 1973 the only midget submarine (experimental and research vessel) attached to the squadron was decommissioned – the USS X1 (X1). The decommissioning of these two last boats marked the end of the diesel era at Pier 22. In fact, there is no more Pier 22, no more Bells, Orion, Kittiwake, or even L.Y. Spear.

In the early 1950's SUBRON SIX put together a book called "Periscope Views" and the Squadron and the Nest of Boats at the time (about 15 diesel boats) re-designed their patches and mottos in accordance with their new Cold War "Run Silent Run Deep" missions. The logo above is designed after the very FIRST LOGO for SUBRON SIX used in that book.

In 2003 the USS Sirago (SS485) and the USS Sea Leopard (SS483) joined up for a 2-boat reunion in Virginia Beach and in 2007 those two boats plus the USS Cutlass (SS478) sortied in Mobile, Alabama for a 3-boat "Nest" and officially launched the SSSBS.

The mission of this newly formed SSSBS is to encourage all reunion coordinators for boats listed below to inform their reunion crews of SSSBS Joint Operations and, of course to conduct the Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) Games which will award the best boat with the Squadron "E". Currently, the USS Sea Leopard (SS483) is in possession of the "E" based upon their performance at the 2007 SSSBS Reunion.

We are holding these SSSBS Reunions in the Norfolk / VA Beach area every 4 years (think of it as the Wholly Smokes Olympics). The next two will be conducted in 2011 and 2015. The USS Sirago (SS485) has a good set of photos and also a good archive of newsletters on her site so you might want to catch yourself up with what's going on: [www.sirago.com](http://www.sirago.com).

If you have interest in this endeavor or if you are a reunion coordinator for any of the boats listed below, we would encourage you to email us at: [info@sssbs.org](mailto:info@sssbs.org) to get on our mailing list.



**The Next Page Lists the ships of SubRon Six**

## The Boats (and skimmers) of SubRon Six

**USS ORION (AS-18)** (1949 - 1969) (20 years); **USS L. Y. SPEAR (AS-36)** (1970 - 1973\*) (3 years); **USS KITTIWAKE (ASR-13)** (1949 - 1973\*) (24 years); **USS POMPON (SSR-267)** (1953 - 1959) (6 years); **USS ARGONAUT (SS-475)** (1955 - 1958, 1959 - 1968) (12 years); **USS RAY (SSR-271)** (1953 - 1958) (5 years); **USS RUNNER (SS-476)** (1949 - 1958, 1959 - 1969) (19 years); **USS REDFIN (SSR/AGSS-272)** (1953 - 1967) (14 years); **USS CUTLASS (SS-478)** (1952 - 1971) (19 years); **USS BURRFISH (SSR-312)** (1950 - 1956) (6 years); **USS MEDREGAL (SS-480)** (1957 - 1959) (2 years); **USS SEA LION (APSS-315)** (1949 - 1960, 1961 - 1967) (17 years); **USS REQUIN (SSR-481)** (1949 - 1968) (19 years); **USS BARBERO (SSG-317)** (1956 - 1959) (3 years); **USS SEA LEOPARD (SS-483)** (1949 - 1971) (22 years); **USS CARP (SS-338)** (1959 - 1968) (9 years); **USS SIRAGO (SS-485)** (1949 - 1972) (23 years); **USS COBBLER (SS-344)** (1949 - 1962) (13 years); **USS GRAMPUS (SS-523)** (1949 - 1971) (22 years); **USS CUBERA (SS-347)** (1952 - 1972) (20 years); **USS SAILFISH (SSR-572)** (1957 - 1959) (2 years); **USS TIGRONE (SSR-419)** (1949 - 1957) (8 years); **USS BARBEL (SS-580)** (1960 - 1962) (2 years); **USS TORSK (SS-423)** (1955 - 1968) (13 years); **USS X1 (SS-X1)** (1960 - 1973) (13 years); **USS TENCH (SS-417)** (1950 - 1955) (5 years).

\*NOTE: 1973 marks end of all Diesels in SUBRON SIX

## What Was the USS X-1?

X-1 served in a research capacity in rigorous and extensive tests to assist the Navy to evaluate its ability to defend harbors against very small submarines. Further tests conducted with the X-1 helped to determine the offensive capabilities and limitations of this type of submersible.

Originally powered by a hydrogen peroxide/diesel engine and battery system, an explosion of her hydrogen peroxide supply on 20 May 1957, resulted in the craft's modification to diesel-electric drive. On 2 December 1957, X-1 was taken out of service and inactivated at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Towed to Annapolis, Maryland, in December 1960, X-1 was reactivated and attached to Submarine Squadron 6 and based at the Small Craft Facility of the Severn River Command for experimental duties in Chesapeake Bay. In tests conducted under the auspices of the Naval Research Laboratory, X-1 performed for scientists who observed her operations from a platform suspended beneath the Bay Bridge, to learn more about the properties and actions of sea water.

Remaining in an active, in-service, status through January 1973, X-1 was again taken out of service on 16 February 1973, and, on 26 April, was transferred to the Naval Ship Research and Development Center, Annapolis. On 9 July 1974, the submersible was slated for use as a historical exhibit; and she was subsequently placed on display on the grounds of the Naval Station complex, North Severn, near Annapolis. In 2001, X-1 was transferred to the Submarine Force Museum in Groton, Connecticut where it is on display in front of the main exhibit building.



**Return To:**

U. S. Submarine Veterans, Perch Base  
7011 West Risner Road  
Glendale, AZ 85308

<http://perch-base.org>



**NEXT MEETING**

12 noon, Saturday, November 14, 2009  
American Legion Post #105  
3534 W. Calavar Rd., Phoenix, 85053  
(1/2 block northwest, 35th Ave. & Thunderbird)