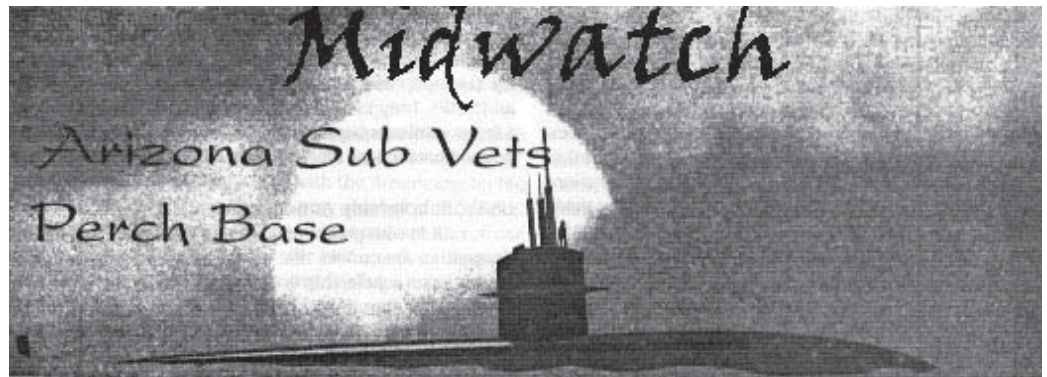





July 2004
Volume 10 - Issue 7



<http://perch-base.org>

*What's "Below Decks"
in the Midwatch*

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Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

JULY ETERNAL PATROLS

USS S-28	SS133	July 4, 1944	52 men
USS Robalo	SS273	July 26, 1944	81 men

NEXT REGULAR MEETING - July 17, 2004
American Legion Post #62
11001 N. 99th Ave.
Starts at 1200 hours
Lunch provided at \$3 a head

A Father Can't Ask for More . . .

**Brent Nelson, MM2(SS)
aboard the USS Salt Lake City SSN-716
somewhere in WestPac.**

Hello dad,

I know you might be getting this a little late, but better late than not at all. I am here to tell you happy fathers day. Happy fathers day to my best friend. I might be nine thousand miles away, but I thought you might still like to hear it.

I like to thank you for all the pats on the back you have given me: for the discipline, the leather on my hands, and the grit in my voice. What I am trying to say is thank you for being a father, instead of just a dad.

I would not have made it as far as I did with out you, thank you.

Happy Father's Day, dad.

**From your son, love,
Brent**



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Sailing Orders



Beginning with this next meeting, on July 17, 2004, all future Base meetings will move to the 3rd Saturday of each month. This will begin joint sessions with the WW II "Pigboaters."

**2004 National Convention
Albany-Saratoga, NY
Sept. 15 - 19, 2004**

From the Wardroom

Shipmates,

We are looking on the down side of 2004. We had a great meeting in Snowflake: Jim Clewett and his wife Lorraine were the best host and hostess anyone could ask for.

The turnout of our bunch from Perch Base was well represented. Jim and his fellow submariners from the White Mountain area also had a good turn out. We met a number of new shipmates that I would like to get to know better. Enough to get a new Base started!

By the time you read this, they should have their new officers elected, and up and running. They plan to have their next meeting at Dick Jarenski's hanger, in Overgaard, AZ, after the July 4 Parade (actually on Saturday July 3.) That should not confuse you too much. Sunday is the fourth and some groups prefer celebrations on other days of the week.

Everyone should have received my letter that out spelled the base's position on what is not to be in our newsletter. I would like everyone to know that our newsletter editor took this job on, with no instructions at all, as to what kind of input could be used or not used in the newsletter. Chuck has done an outstanding job with the newsletter, and has asked for your input, at almost every meeting. If you find a item somewhere that you believe would be of interested to our base please send it on to Chuck, or call him and let him know about it. Keep in mind that politically slanted material of any position is "verboden." We stand a good chance to win the award for best newsletter for a base our size this year.

(see "WARDROOM," page 8)

June Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the members of the Arizona Submarine Veterans Perch Base was convened at the home of Jim Clewett in Snowflake, Arizona on June 12th, 2004.

The meeting was convened and called to order by Base Commander – Glenn Herold at 1308 hours.

Ed Brooks led the members in a prayer of Invocation. The members were then led in the "Pledge of Allegiance" followed by a reading of the "Purpose of the Organization", Dedication, a Moment of Silence for our departed shipmates and the "Tolling of the Boats" ceremony for submariners lost during the month of June.

According to the sailing list, there were 15 members and numerous guests present at the meeting. Those present welcomed the guests and new members— Shipmates Kelly McLaughlin, Dick Garenski, William Castle and Frank Nagle. Members also welcomed guests including Mrs. Jim Clewett,

Nancy Nelson, Karen Tilley, Mary Peters and Bernice and Mr. Roberge.

The members also thanked Bernice Roberge for providing a special cake for the noon meal.

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes from the May meeting be approved as published in the Base Newsletter "The MidWatch." The motion carried by voice vote.

The Treasurer Report of the Base financial status as of the first day of June, 2004 was read by Ed Brooks.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as read. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

REPORTS BY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Base Vice Commander – Tim Moore did not attend the meeting.

Base Chief of the Boat – Bob Gilmore announced that the American Legion Post 62 will start construction of its new facility on June 21st, barring any holdups.

Base Chaplain – Warner Doyle did not attend the meeting. However, Glenn Herold informed the members that Shipmate Chuck Chapman was in the hospital and the members were encouraged to visit Chuck at the Dell Webb Hospital in Phoenix.

Membership Chairman – Ramon Samson did not attend the meeting.

Newsletter Editor – Chuck Emmett apologized for the late mailing of the June "MidWatch" and explained the causes for the delay.

OLD BUSINESS

Ed Brooks – Coordinator for the US Submarine Veteran's Charitable Foundation fund drive 2003/2004 reported on the progress with raising funds.

Ed was also asked to report on the USSVI District 8 meeting held May 14th and 15th in Denver Colorado. Ed described the memorial service held at the Grayback memorial and the results of the District Business Meeting.

Glenn Herold reminded everyone of the 2004 USSVI National Convention being held 13 through 18 September in Saratoga Springs, New York.

Glenn also described the Memorial Day Services held at the National Cemetery in Phoenix and encouraged members to attend the ceremony held there each year.

NEW BUSINESS

Jim Clewett addressed the members and guests explaining the plans to establish a new USSVI Base in Snowflake, AZ area. Jim also indicated that he and others were running

(see "MINUTES," next page)

From Beyond the Wardroom Perch Base SubVettes

Hope everyone is having a great summer. The men's Meeting in Snowflake went very well. They will also, possibly, start a SubVettes organization at some point.

Our July meeting WILL be held at the Americana Restaurant, Saturday, July 17 at noon. Hope you all can attend. It will be our first combined meeting with the WWII Dolphinettes. We should have a big crowd.

This 4th of July was memorable one at the Parade in Heber/Overgaard. Thank you to Karen Tilley's husband Tom, for hauling the Perch Base float "UP THE HILL".

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY

Bobbie Landeck – 7/10

Betty Weber – 7/22

With fond regards
Nancy Nelson, President
SubVettes of Perch Base



("MINUTES" continued from previous page)

ads in the news papers and on radio in the Snowflake area trying to contact other Submarine Veterans living in the area.

It was also announced that the community of Heber was holding a Independence Day Parade on July 3rd and asked to use the USS Bang Parade Float in the parade. It was felt that the float and the SubVets participation would attract more attention to recruiting new members to USSVI and specifically the new Base.

Glenn Herold added that arrangements were in process for storing the Perch Base (USS Bang) float in the Heber area and towing it up from Phoenix would initiated that process. The members all agreed that those that could would participate in the Heber Independence Day Parade in support of the recruiting effort in the area.

An Ad Hoc committee was formed composed of Jim Clewett and Dick Garenski to coordinate the arrangements associated with the Heber parade.

Tom Tilley offered his construction skills to help the new Snowflake area Base to construct their own float if they are inclined.

Jim Nelson proudly announced that he had been invited to participate in a Tiger Cruise where he would join his son Brent on the USS Salt Lake on a trip from Pearl Harbor to San Diego. Everyone cheered Jim and the great experience he would have on the cruise.

Glenn Herold reminded the members that this will be the first year where members can vote the USSVI national ballot on the Internet. However, members need to log-on and make sure their personal data, in the national data base, is current and correct. The on-line voting will save the membership thousands of dollars.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Nothing was offered for the good of the order.

50/50 DRAWING

The 50/50 drawing was held and Chuck Emmett was the winner. Ed Brooks made a motion that the Base share of the drawing be turned over to Jim Clewett as compensation for providing the lunch meal and the use of his home for the June meeting. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote. Jim Clewett then indicated that he would deposit the funds in the new Base's Treasury.

ADJOURNMENT

All the outstanding business being concluded, it was moved and seconded that the meeting of the Arizona Submarine Veterans - Perch Base be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote.

The closing prayer was offered by Ed Brooks and the meeting was adjourned at 1358 hours.

Signed: Edgar T. Brooks, Base Secretary

WWII - Boats

Short Facts

U.S. torpedoes contained only 20% of the explosive power of Japanese ones. Japanese "fish" were built with warships as the primary target in mind, where as our torpedoes were built for use against merchant ships.

USS Flasher holds the record for tonnage and is the only boat to sink over 100,000 tons.

Eternal Patrol July 4, 1944

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

U.S.S. S-28 (SS-133) 52 men lost



dp. 854 tons (surf.), 1062 tons (subm.); l. 219.2'; b. 21.7'; td. 200 ft.;
s. 13k (surf.), 9k (subm.); a. 1-4/50", 4-21" tt fwd.;
cpl. 4 officers - 34 enlisted men; cl. "S"

Keel laid by the Fore River Shipbuilding Company, Quincy, MA 16APR19;
Launched 20SEP22; Sponsored by Mrs. William R. Munroe;
Commissioned 13DEC23 with Lt Kemp C. Christian in command;
Lost after foundering on 4JUL44 off Hawaii while operating with USCGC RELIANCE

Following shakedown exercises off the southern New England Coast, USS S-28 (SS-133) moved south in March 1924 to join SubDiv11, in the final exercises of that year's winter maneuvers in the Caribbean. In April, she return to New London with her division and commenced local exercises which occupied the remainder of the year. With the winter of 1925, she moved south again; transited the Panama Canal; and, after the conclusion of Fleet Problem V — conducted in the vicinity of Guadalupe Island —

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she arrived in the Hawaiian Islands for a month's stay. In June, she moved east, to San Diego, where her division replaced another which had been transferred to the Asiatic Fleet.

Into 1931, the submarine operated primarily off southern California deploying for fleet problems in the Panama Canal area in 1926 and 1929; for summer maneuvers in Hawaiian waters in 1927 and 1930; and for regularly scheduled overhaul periods at Mare Island Navy Yard throughout the period.

She departed the west coast for Hawaii in mid-February 1931 and, on the 23rd, arrived at Pearl Harbor, whence she operated for the next eight and one-half years. In mid-1939, she was transferred back to San Diego, where she was based until after the United States entered WWII.

On 7 December 1941, S-28, then a unit of SubDiv41, was undergoing overhaul at Mare Island. On 22 January 1942, the work was completed, and she returned to San Diego, where she resumed her prewar training activities for the Underwater Sound Training School. She continued that duty into the spring; then was ordered north, to the Aleutians, to augment the defenses of that Alaskan island chain which rimmed the north Pacific.

On 20 May, S-28, with other submarines of her division, departed San Diego. Five days later, they topped off at Port Angeles, then continued on toward the newly established submarine base at Dutch Harbor, Unalaska. On the 29th, however, as preparations were made to minimize a two-pronged Japanese thrust against Midway and the Aleutians, the S-boats were directed to proceed to their stations, bypassing Dutch Harbor.

During a quickly extinguished fire in her port main motor on the morning of 1 June, S-28 suffered minor damage. That evening, she parted company with her sister ships and their escort; and, the next day, she entered her assigned area and commenced patrolling the approaches to Cold Bay on the tip of the Alaskan Peninsula. On the 3rd, the Japanese bombed Dutch Harbor to open the war in the Aleutians; and, within the week, they had occupied Kiska and Attu. On the 12th, S-28 arrived at Dutch Harbor; refueled; took on provisions; and headed west to resume her War Patrol.

On the 15th, she crossed the 180th meridian; and, on the 17th, after a two-day storm, she sighted Kiska and set a course to intercept enemy shipping between there and Attu. On the 18th, she fired on her first enemy target, a destroyer, and was in turn attacked. Eight hours later, sounds of the destroyer's search faded out to the south. S-28 had survived her first encounter with Japanese anti-submarine warfare tactics.

Poor weather soon returned and storms raged during eighty percent of her remaining time on station. On the

(continued on next page)

28th, she moored in Dutch Harbor and commenced refit. On 15 July, she got underway and again headed for the Kiska area. On the 18th, she reconnoitered Semisopchnoi, then moved on to Segula. Finding no signs of Japanese activity, she continued westward. On the 20th, she was ordered to take station on an 85-mile circle from Sirius Point prior to sunrise on the 22nd, at which time the enemy's facilities on Kiska were to be bombarded. The bombardment was delayed, and S-28 remained on that more distant station until the 30th when she was ordered back into the Kiska area. On 18 August, having been unable to close any of the targets sighted during the latter part of her patrol, she returned to Dutch Harbor.

On her third War Patrol, 16 September to 10 October, S-28 returned to the Kiska area. She operated to the north of the island until the 25th; then, with the discovery of the enemy's development of Gertrude Cove on Vega Bay, she shifted to the island's southern shore. On the night of 6-7 October, she turned toward Unalaska; and, on the morning of the 10th, as she prepared to fire on an unidentified vessel, a ground in her fire control circuits caused an accidental firing from the #1 tube.

That afternoon, S-28 arrived back in Dutch Harbor, whence she headed for home. She reached San Diego on 23 October; and provided training services for the West Coast Sound School and for the Amphibious Forces Training Group from 26 October to 13 November. Then, during an overhaul, she received a fathometer, a Kleinschmidt distilling unit, and SJ radar. On 9 December, she again sailed north. On the 16th, she reported by radio to TG 8.5; and, on the 21st, she returned to Dutch Harbor.

Six days later, S-28 departed on her 4th War Patrol. On 3 January 1943, she crossed the International Date Line and, on the 5th, she entered her assigned area in the northern Kuriles. Moving down the Paramushiro coast, she patrolled in Onkotan Strait; then headed north again and, on the 20th, passed Shumushu, whence she set a course for the Aleutians.

During her 5th War Patrol, from 6 to 28 February, the WWI-design submarine remained in the western Aleutians, patrolling across the Attu-Buldir-Cirius Point route and along the coast of Attu, particularly off Holtz Bay, Chichagof Harbor, and Sarana Bay. Poor weather and lack of speed, however, impeded her hunting.

On her return to Dutch Harbor, S-28 was ordered south; and, on 4 March, she got underway for Esquimalt, B.C., where, from 15 March to 15 April, she conducted sound tests and anti-submarine warfare exercises with Canadian Navy and Air Force units. She then continued on to the Puget Sound Navy Yard for overhaul and superstructure modification work. On 27 June, she started back to Alaska; and, on 13 July, she departed Dutch Harbor to return to the northern Kuriles for her 6th War Patrol.

Again she patrolled off Paramushiro and in the straits to the north and south of that island. Again she was hindered by the weather, obsolete design, and by mechanical failure. On 14 August, she headed east; and, on the 16th, she moored in Massacre Bay, Attu, and commenced refit.

The late arrival of needed spares from Dutch Harbor delayed her readiness for sea; but, on 8 September, S-28 departed the western Aleutians to return to the northern Kuriles. On the 13th, she entered her patrol area. On the 15th, severe smoking and sparking from her port main motor necessitated fourteen hours of repair work. On the 16th, she transited Mushiru Kaikyo; and, on the afternoon of the 19th, she closed an unescorted freighter off the island of Araitto. Her torpedoes missed their mark. The "freighter" turned and within minutes had delivered the first of two depth charges of a ten-minute attack. The Japanese ship searched the area for an hour, then departed.

S-28 reloaded and continued her patrol. At 1916, she contacted a second unescorted enemy vessel. At 1943, she fired a spread of four torpedoes. At 1944, two of the four exploded. The target took on a 30 degree list and began to do down by the bow. At 1946, the 1368-ton converted gunboat sank, bow first, her stern vertical in the air. Five loud underwater explosions followed her disappearance. S-28 went deep and rigged for a depth charging which did not materialize.

Into October, S-28 hunted just north of Araitto and off the coast of Kamchatka. On 5 October, she moved through Ocekotan Strait and continued her patrol on the Pacific side of the Kuriles. On the 10th, however, a serious personnel injury occurred, and an appendicitis case developed. The submarine turned toward Attu one day ahead of schedule.

On 13 October, she moored at Attu. The next day, she departed for Dutch Harbor, whence, in November, she headed south to Hawaii. She arrived at Pearl Harbor at mid-month and, after overhaul, commenced training duty. For the next seven months, she remained in Hawaiian waters, providing training services.

On 3 July 1944, S-28, in accordance with orders from ComDesPac, got underway from the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, to conduct a week's normal operations. During the day on 3 July, S-28 acted as a target for antisubmarine warfare vessels until about 1700 local time. At that time she made two practice torpedo approaches on USCG RELIANCE. On 4 July, S-28 again carried out sonar exercises as on the previous day, and at 1730 again undertook a practice approach on RELIANCE.

At 1730 S-28 dived about 4 miles distant from RELIANCE. At about 1805 RELIANCE made sound contact with S-28 at a range of 1700 yards. The range decreased to

(continued on next page)

about 1500 yards and then steadily increased, as the bearing drifted aft. Although sound contact was temporarily lost by RELIANCE at 3000 yards, she picked up the submarine again at 3200 yards. At 1820, with range 4700 yards, RELIANCE permanently lost sound on S-28. At no time during the approach or the ensuing sound search were distress signals from S-28 seen or heard, nor was any sound heard which indicated an explosion in S-28.

When, by 1830, S-28 had not surfaced or sent any signals, RELIANCE retraced her course and tried to establish communication with her. Although previous tests had shown that no difficulty would be experienced in exchanging messages by sound gear at ranges up to 2000 yards, RELIANCE was unable to contact S-28. The Coast Guard vessel called in other vessels from Pearl Harbor at 2000, and a thorough search of the area was instituted, lasting until the afternoon of 6 July 1944. A slick, which was unmistakably made by diesel oil, was the only sign of S-28.

The Court of Inquiry which investigated the sinking determined that S-28 sank shortly after 1820 on 4 July, 1944, in 1400 fathoms of water. Because of the depth of the water, salvage operations were impossible. The Court recorded its opinion that S-28 lost depth control "from either a material casualty or an operating error of personnel, or both, and that depth control was never regained. The exact cause of the loss of S-28 cannot be determined." The Court found, further, that, "the material condition of S-28 was as good or better than that of other boats of her class performing similar duty," and that, "the officers and crew on board S-28 at the time of her loss were competent to operate the boat submerged in the performance of her assigned duties." It was stated that the loss of S-28 was not caused by negligence or inefficiency of any person or person.

S-28 was awarded one battle star for her services in WWII.

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Shipmate Howard Doyle's mother is recovering from a series of strokes, but doctors are very optimistic for a near full recovery. To be able to give her care in her rehabilitation, Howard has taken early retirement for his Palo Verde job with APS.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you and your mother, Howard.

Do you have know of any shipmate who's sick or the wife or family member of a shipmate? Contact the Base Chaplain, Howard Doyle:

(623) 935-3830
d-hdoyle@worldnet.att.net

(continued from "WARDROOM," page 4)

The Parade in Overgaard and Heber went over with flying colors. It was the biggest turn out that they have ever had. Our float was one of the best; we had people saluting, cheering, and kissing us. That's no lie on the kissing, ask me and I will tell you more. We have some fine photos of the float and the parade. Special thanks to Tug Boat Tilley, for bringing the float up the hill as the wind was blowing down the hill. He said it was like pulling a sail backwards.

Although at the first meeting of the White Mountain Base, they did not have enough people to elect their new officers, I was able to present Jim Clewett with a bell for "Toiling of the Boats". We had a great time and have several nice photos taken in the hanger, hope we have room for them in the newsletter.

I'm looking forward to seeing a good turn out at our meeting on the July 17 (THIRD Saturday) of this month.

Fraternally yours,

Glenn Herold



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Submarines in History

Personal Experience - Submarines During WWII



WWII DIESEL BOAT ERA

by Michael Skurat

mskurat01@snet.net

Member - Groton Base USSVI & Central CT Chapter of SubVets WWII

There have been many major changes in the U.S. Navy Submarine Service since the WWII Diesel Boat Era. It might be interesting historically to note some of them.

Initially there were only seven pay grades (actually eight). They ran from one to seven with Apprentice Seaman (AS) as one, Seaman Second Class (S2/c) as two, Seaman First Class (S1/c) as three, Petty Officer Third Class (e.g. MM3c) as four and Petty Officers Second and First Class as five and six.

Chief Petty Officers were initially promoted to "seven A" for one year (Acting Appointment) and then to Chief Petty Officer as pay grade seven. There were no Master or Command Chief, etc. The "C" for Chief Petty Officers preceded the rate designation, for example CMM not MMC as today.

For all of the seaman ratings there was a comparable Fireman (F) The Officer's rank structure has remained consistent with minor exceptions. During WWII a five star Fleet Admiral rank was added and bestowed on Nimitz and King. No one promoted to that rank since WWII. Another thing there was no Commodore rank utilized.

Officers were promoted from Captain to Rear Admiral (lower half) and hence to Rear Admiral (upper half). The Rear Admiral (Lower Half) replaced the Commodore rank. As it is custom to call any Commanding Officer Captain it also was custom to call a Submarine Squadron Commander Commodore.

Before WWII an Apprentice Seaman's pay was \$21.00 per month. Pays increased in WWII with Apprentice Seaman to \$50.00 per month and to around \$120.00 per month for a Chief. All personnel on Submarines got 50% submarine money and 20% sea duty pay. When added together added up to about 80% extra pay.

If you were married and/or had dependents your pay was reduced by \$28.00 per month the U.S. Navy supplemented another \$22.00 and your dependent was sent a monthly check for \$50.00. Consequently, an Apprentice Seaman would get \$22.00 per month. However, enlisted personnel below pay grade four could not marry without the permission of their Commanding Officer. This breached more often than observed and obviously many entered the service married.

At one time the Navy Paymasters would pay personnel with \$2.00 bills so that when spent it would indicate to the local economy the impact of the service. Also when being paid by the Paymaster onboard a tender you would line up with your "pay chit" to draw your pay. When you reached the pay desk you would salute the Paymaster, put your fingerprint on the "pay chit" and draw your money.

There was a posted pay list indicating what you had on the "books" and you could draw all or whatever amount you desired Submarine and sea pay were a real boon especially when sea store cigarettes at six cents a pack and a bottle of beer on Bank St. was twenty-five cents. Later when you came in off patrol you would have that back pay and be really flush.

Due to rapid expansion of every aspect of the U.S. Navy, if you could cut the mustard, promotions were forthcoming. Many a serving enlisted person commissioned (called mustangs) or advanced in rating because of the enormous need to fill billets in new construction and replace casualties. Classes at the U.S. Naval Academy graduated early. Personnel with special qualifications were coming into the service rated and/or commissioned. You could see a Chief Petty Officer with no hash marks. These ratings were derided and called "slick arms" (no hash marks) and/or "Tojo" ratings by the old-timers.

Some enlisted personnel were commissioned as regular line officers, Warrant Officers and Limited Duty Officers (LDOs) in specific areas. Such commissions initially were consid-

(Continued on next page)

(continued from previous page)

ered temporary with reversion back to their permanent grades at the conclusion of hostilities. Many specialty ratings were created.

In their "Crow" specialty designator was a diamond with a letter inside, e.g., the letter "A" would be for a coach or professional athlete who would conduct physical conditioning, etc. Most, if not all, of these ratings ceased to exist with the end of the war. Some referred to these as "square knot" rates.

There were right and left arm rates. Right arm rates were considered "Sea Going Rates" (BM, QM, GM, SM, FC, TM, etc) and the "Crow" was worn on the right arm. Left arm rates were ancillary and were MM, Y, EM, RM, MoMM, ET, etc. Right arm rates were senior to left arm ratings.

There was no Boatswain Mate Third Class they were called Coxswains. Seamen and Firemen wore a "watch stripe" round the right shoulder - white for seamen red for firemen. There were other colors of "Watch Stripes" for aviation, CBs, etc. Indication of rate was on uniform cuffs with one white/red stripe for AS/FA, two for S2c/F2/c and three for S1/c and F1/c.

The present diagonal 1, 2, or 3 stripe(s), in color was originally for WAVE uniforms and after WWII were adopted for the present enlisted uniform and the watch stripe was eliminated.

The "T-Shirt" a part of the enlisted uniform initially served two purposes. (1) It was to be worn without the Jumper on work details, especially in tropical locations. (2) It was meant to have the high white neckline to show in the "V" of the Jumper. Some personnel, to enhance the appearance would cut the tab off and wore the "T-shirt" backward for a better appearance especially if, with age and washings, it seemed to sag.

The popularity of the T-Shirt expanded into wide public acceptance after WWII and is now utilized, not only as an undergarment but as outerwear with various designs, logos, etc.

There were no Silver Metal Dolphins for enlisted personnel. Dolphins for enlisted personnel consisted of embroidered "patches" (white for blues and blue for whites) sewn on the right forearm. Silver Metal Dolphins for enlisted personnel was authorized after WWII.

All enlisted personnel wore embroidered "patches" as distinguishing marks e.g., if you were a designated striker you could wear the insignia for that specialty on the left upper sleeve. Other distinguishing marks for enlisted personnel were "patches" on uniforms, e.g., an Expert Look-out "patch" binoculars, a diver a divers helmet (M for Master. with degree of qualification indicated on the chest section of the helmet. These worn on the right upper sleeve and there were many of them.

One "perk" that has persisted is the wearing of gold rating insignia and hash marks for those with 12 years of good conduct. Chief Petty Officers merely pinned their fouled anchor hat insignia to the front top of their hat covers. The black band and background for the insignia was initiated after WWII.

Officers did wear Gold Metal Dolphins as they do today. Unknown today was also the fact that there was a dress white uniform for enlisted personnel. The collar and cuffs were blue and were adorned with piping. What is worn today are "undress whites". Pictures of them are in old "Bluejacket Manuals". Officers wore swords for ceremonial occasions as they do today but back before WWII Chief Petty Officers had a cutlass for ceremonial dress occasions.

Another uniform item that is now passé is the flat hat. Once the ribbon had the name of your ship but this discontinued for security reasons and all flat hats merely had U.S. Navy in gold on the ribbon.

In boot camp all of your uniform items were stenciled with your name and service number. There were no doors on lockers and each item had a prescribed method of folding and stowing. It was even prescribed as to how you would pack your seabag.

Originally, the entire submarine base was literally below the railroad tracks. Later as the base expanded it was called "lower base". Most of the upper base buildings, i.e., Morton Hall, Dealey Center, etc., were constructed for WWII.

The road from the present main gate past the golf course was the Groton-Norwich road. About half way up the road was an overhead railroad bridge. The entrance to the base was under the bridge and the Marine guard stationed there in a guard shack.

The base commander's office was housed in a small brick building about half way between the training tower and the Torpedo Shop. Submarine School lasted six weeks for enlisted and three months for officers. Of some 250,000 men who applied for submarine duty less than 10% made it to Sub School and many of those washed out.

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Submarine School was the sole tyrannical domain of one Chief Torpedoman Charles Spritz. Submarine School was called "Spritz's Navy". He ruled with an iron hand and was feared by instructors and students alike. He had little regard for rate whether you were a Seaman First Class or a Petty Officer First Class. To call him eccentric was a gross understatement. He did not smoke, did not drink and was single.

It is open to debate as to if he ever even pulled a liberty. His total devotion was to the Submarine School. It was universally conceded that he had gone "asiatic", not 100% stable and perhaps as a youngster he might have been dropped on his head.

He insisted that personnel, at all times, be properly and neatly attired in the regulation "Uniform of the Day" without exception. No tailor made's, proper rolled neckerschief down to the "V" in the Jumper with immaculate white T-Shirt showing, shoes well shined, etc.

He did not permit smoking nor any type of horseplay. He demanded that all personnel move at a fast pace. Chief Spritz had the uncanny ability to be everywhere at all times and pity the poor individual who crossed his path. His discipline was swift and sure. He felt it was his personal mission to ascertain that anyone leaving sub school for submarine duty was in every respect ready.

He had many axioms but his favorite was "There is room for anything on a submarine except a mistake". Sub school students were not "boots", many, if not most, had time in the U.S.Navy and were rated.

There is an article in POLARIS issue of August, 2000 (Submarine Saga segment) which delves into more detail relative to Chief Spritz and is briefly incorporated here as it is a definite part of the Diesel Boat Era. Sub Vets of WWII in recognition of respect, and a fealty obligation to this once feudal lord and master, wear a "Spritz's Navy" patch on their vests.

It would seem that the screening at Sub School served us well. Friction between members of the crew was unbecoming and unacceptable. If an individual demonstrated an inability to "get along" he could be transferred to another boat. If the same conduct prevailed there he would be transferred out of submarines.

The training tower caused many a wash out for both physical and mental reasons. If a person could not "pop" his ears it could cause pain and even bleeding from the ears. Your voice changed dramatically to a high pitch under pressure.

All personnel had to qualify from the 100-foot lock with the Momsen Lung. Right after the war it was noted that some German submariners had made emergency escapes using free ascents. A number of crews from boats went to the tower and made free ascents.

We had less pomp insofar as the ceremony observed when a member of the crew qualified than is apparent today. The

individual, thrown over the side then sewed dolphins on his uniforms and wore them with pride. They have always been, and always will be, a badge of honor regardless of manner in which bestowed.

There was less reverence on some other occasions also, e.g., when a "Good Conduct Medal" was awarded to a member of the crew it would be given by the Captain (or perhaps the Exec) at quarters amid "hoots and hollers" with cries of "Undiscovered Crime". There was also a bonus system for awards ranging from \$1.00 per month for the Good Conduct Medal to \$5.00 per month for the Congressional Medal of Honor.

"Tailor Made" dress blues were the uniform of the day for liberty. The jumper was skin tight with a zipper in the side so that it could be taken off. Accentuated bell bottoms were mandated. The inside of the cuffs were decorated with embroidered color decorations, usually dragons, etc., and were only visible when the cuffs were turned up.

When you made Chief you initially bought the cheapest hat you could find since it was also considered appropriate and properly respectful to have all of the crew urinate in your first hat. Sad to note in this day and enlightened age all of the military services of the United States were segregated during our era.

The practice abolished by President Truman over 50 years ago. Stewards, at that time, recruited from America territories and from American minorities. Even in such a tight knit group as American Submarines two racks in the Forward Torpedo Room hung off the overhead beneath The Torpedo Loading Hatch were reserved for the Stewards. Rated Stewards wore uniforms similar to Chiefs.

The submarine sailor was a very irreverent individual with an avid distaste for regulations, etc. The average life span of a submarine sailor was four patrols (about a year). Despite bravado, that thought prevailed to varying degrees depending upon the individual. That premise however, was unsaid but used as an excuse for hell-raising.

Rarely mentioned in tales of WWII submarine lore was the fact that going through minefields was as apprehensive as being depth charged.

Submarine Officers and crews were very young - anyone past thirty was a very old man. Admiral Charles Lockwood (Uncle Charley) ComSubPac was most forgiving, as were Skippers and Execs, of transgressions of both Officers and men. Returning from patrol crews were treated extremely well. Another "perk" of the submarine force was that any record of "minor" disciplinary action that a member of the crew suffered would be entered into the "page 9" of his service record.

Virtually all disciplinary action was handled internally on the boat. However, both the original and carbon copy

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(BuPers Copy) retained in his jacket. When transferred, the original and copy, removed by the Yeoman to be deep sixed. Unless there was a serious offence personnel transferred with a clean record.

Many friendships were formed in sub school, plus other training and schools and transfers were not uncommon due to the needs of new construction, promotions, etc. Consequently, the force became even more closely knit. It was the rare boat that did not have personnel whom you knew.

Submariners were very independent and resourceful, both individually and as a group. Needs (and desires) of the boat as prescribed by the U.S. Navy, did not always coincide with what was considered neither proper nor adequate. Therefore, a system of "midnight requisitioning" and "midnight small stores" developed to enhance efficiency. This avenue of acquisition considered a solemn duty in promoting the war effort. Those proficient and innovative in this endeavor were greatly admired. It was an art as well as a science executed individually or as a group cooperative effort.

Some of these escapades took great ingenuity as well as "brass balls". As a term of affection they were called "scroungers" and/or "dog robbers". If a Skipper or Exec made an "innocent" passing remark that some particular thing might be "nice" it would appear mysteriously in due time.

On board an informal, but professional, attitude prevailed. Although we had an evaporator to make fresh water, battery watering was primary. In the design and scheme of things, personal hygiene or washing of clothes did not seem to be considered. One Engineering Petty Officer, called the "Water King" ran the evaporators. Personal hygiene or washing of clothing was an afterthought. The use of after-shave lotions, deodorants and especially talcum powders prevailed. Large cans of "Lilac" were the norm, purchased inexpensively and sprinkled liberally.

To the unacquainted it could appear that the rapport between Officers and men was quite informal and to a degree it was but it in no way detracted from efficiency, military courtesy, tradition or discipline. There was a strong mutual respect. "Aye-Aye, Sir," "Very Well" and "Well Done" were accorded as appropriate. The vast majority of the crew was rated and competent in their skills. Obviously so were our officers.

There was no such thing as stenciled ratings on dungaree shirts so a person coming aboard a submarine at sea would have a difficult time determining any individual's rate. Also there was an axiom that in submarines "you left your rate on the dock". Ability was the hallmark.

When conditions approached that of a Chinese garbage scow junk with an over flowing head and the crew in dire

need of fumigation, the Skipper might decide to allow showers piecemeal by sections. You lined up to enter the shower, the Chief of the Boat turned on the water for 2 seconds and shut it down while you soaped down. You were then allowed a correspondingly brief rinse.

Each member of the crew was allotted one locker which measured about 12" high, 18" wide and about 18" deep. You kept your uniforms under your mattress. Your rack had a plastic zip around cover. Your mattress was encased in a "mattress cover" which was akin to a oversized pillow case. Able to be turned over once and some even turned them inside out and got two more uses. Less the uninitiated be stunned by that you must be cognizant of lack of water for regular laundry.

Internal communications on board were conducted by the 1MC and 7MC phone and speaker systems. To reenter a submarine after handling lines etc. when returning to port was a shocking revelation. It was impossible to believe that you had survived that malodorous environment. Politely put the atmosphere was conducive to a shanty town house of ill repute that also was inundated by a back up of its sewer system. Pity the poor relief crew that had to come on board and make the boat shipshape again.

You could immediately identify an Electrician on a submarine. He was the individual with the most shredded moth eaten dungarees. Ribald humor was the tenor of the day. No topic or human frailty was off limits. Nothing was sacred. Horseplay and trickery were the order of the day. The antics and demeanor of the crew, both at sea and ashore, would not be socially acceptable nor politically correct nowadays.

I fear that the late Admiral Rickover would have been aghast. One real advantage was food, especially when you first went out. Although they were ridden without mercy the cooks did an excellent job of feeding the crew. We ate family style off china plates. Our officers ate exactly what the enlisted personnel did. The stewards would come back to the After Battery Galley and fill their serving plates and bring it to the Forward Battery for the Wardroom.

When leaving port rations were stored in every conceivable space (including the shower since it wouldn't be needed). However, as supplies diminished the cooks were hard pressed to come up with varied favorable menus. All boats had "open icebox" so you could prepare and cook anything you wanted at any time as long as you cleaned up after yourself.

The After Battery "Mess" was for chow, off duty recreation, meeting space and a hang-out. This is a collective attempt at recollection after the passing of a half-century so any errors or omissions hopefully forgiven as "senior frailties". Much of this is collective memory and is a compilation of boats in general. There is no pride of authorship so any

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comments, additions, corrections and/or deletions are welcome and appreciated. This is merely a historical comparison as best one can do and is in no way a negative reflection between "then and now."

GOD BLESS ALL SUBMARINERS - Past, Present and Future

Michael Skurat

Central Connecticut Chapter

U.S. Submarine Veterans World War II

Contributed

YNCS Don Harribine, USN(Ret)



Initial Weekend Meeting



It "ain't" a meeting unless we get to eat! Jim and his wife Lorain were the perfect host and hostess.



Cmdr. Glenn Herold opens the first ever meeting on the Colorado Plateau. Jim Clewett's garage is the meeting hall.



For the meeting, we had a beautiful cake presented to us by Bernice Roberge. And, it tasted as good as it looked.



Most of the gang that came "up the hill" stayed the night and we found a great small Italian restaurant. Do we look well satisfied?

Now . . . It's a Base (almost)



Perch Base Cmdr. Glenn Herold presents the official USSVI Ship's Bell to the new members of the White Mountain Base during the July 4 weekend. Unfortunately, they didn't have the required five members present to make the meeting official.

Return To:

U. S. Submarine Veterans, Perch Base
13210 N. Lake Forest Dr.
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<http://perch-base.org>



NEXT REGULAR MEETING - July 17, 2004
American Legion Post #62
11001 N. 99th Ave.
Starts at 1200 hours