

Arizona Sub Vets Perch Base

Midwatch

August 2000
Volume 6 - Issue 8

Arizona Sub Vets, Perch Base

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August Eternal Patrol Days

USS GRUNION (SS216)	01 August 1942 70 men lost
USS COCHINO (SS345)	04 August 1949 1 man lost, 7 men lost off USS TUSK (SS426) in rescue attempt of USS COCHINO
USS BULLHEAD (SS332)	06 August 1945 84 men lost
USS FLIER (SS250)	13 August 1944 78 men lost
S39 (SS144)	15 August 1942 0 men lost
USS HARDER (SS257)	24 August 1944 78 men lost
USS POMPANO (SS181)	29 August 1943 76 men lost

Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

August's meeting will be held 12 August
2000 at American Legion in Glendale

From The Ward Room:



By the time you read this, the July meeting in cool Prescott will have become a memory. I want to thank all of you and your ladies who made that outing so successful. I also wish to thank the women of the Prescott American Legion who volunteered their time in making our luncheon so memorable . . . especially Eleanor Mason who worked tirelessly in her efforts. With summer now at full bore, many of our members are seeking the high ground where the days are milder and the nights cooler. I hope, however, that our monthly meetings will not suffer too drastic of a change, as I know so many of us look forward to it as a "happening". At any rate, I look forward to being with you at our regular meeting in August.

And now, a little bit of submarine history. With the advent of the Motion Picture "U 571", great excitement has been reestablished regarding the undersea war during World War 2. Hundreds of books have been written on the subject and Hollywood has played it up to the hilt. Americans have just about gone to war with the likes of John Wayne fighting his way through the Pacific, on land, in the air, at sea; and even below the sea. We submariners, young and old, have seen them all, and have come away just a little bit prouder than when we went in.

All of us are familiar with American submarine heroics and of their losses during those epic days in the Pacific; 52 boats lost over 3450 United States Submariners never to return. But in the Atlantic, a far different but none the less devastating submarine war was being waged. One that had unbelievable consequences to submarines, submariners, and to the shipping lanes they were given the task to control. These were of the enemy . . . the German Undersea Navy. Most of us former American Submariners know little or nothing of this Atlantic Ocean Naval War. But, to me at least, not any longer. U-571 has perked my imagination enough to do a little investigating and one of the books I researched, "Iron Coffins", was written by a German U-Boat Commander, Herbert Werner. Let me quote a few paragraphs from his introduction.

Because I was one of the few U-boat commanders who fought through most of the war and who managed to survive, I felt it was my duty to my fallen comrades to set the record straight. Very much to the point, duty was the first and last word in the lexicon of the U-boat men and, remarks to the contrary notwithstanding, we did our duty with a gallantry unsurpassed in any branch of service on either side.

We were soldiers and patriots, no more and no less, and in our dedication to our lost cause we died in appalling numbers. But the great tragedy of the U-boat Force was not merely that so many good men perished; it was also that so many of our lives were squandered on inadequate equipment and by the unconscionable policies of U-boat Headquarters. In retrospect, the crucial importance of the U-boat Force is unmistakably clear.

Whether or not Germany could have won the war, she was certain to lose it if the gigantic production of American factories reached England in sufficient quantity. On this proposition the lines were drawn for the epic "Battle of the Atlantic" in which the U-boats served as the vanguards of Germany's defense. No less an authority than Winston Churchill declared, "The battle of the Atlantic was the dominating factor all through the war. Never for one moment could we forget that everything happening elsewhere, on land, at sea, or in the air, depended ultimately on its outcome, and amid other cares we viewed its changing fortunes day by day with apprehension." It is significant that Churchill, who knew all too well the ravages of the Luftwaffe and of Germany's V-1 and V-2 rockets, also wrote: "The only thing that really frightened me during the war was the U-boat peril." As viewed from the other side, Germany's fortunes in the war closely paralleled the rise and fall of the U-boat Force. The connection grew ever more obvious to me each time I came ashore after a long patrol.

The outbreak of hostilities in September 1939 surprised the German Navy; the U-boat Force in particular was caught fully unprepared. This state of affairs was dictated by a treaty, entered into between Germany and Great Britain in 1935, which limited German naval strength to 35 per cent of Britain's in order to maintain the tenuous balance of power that existed at the time. Germany in 1939 had just 57 commissioned U-boats, of which 52 were of small displacement and capable of only short coastal missions. The other five U-boats were larger craft designed for long range patrols lasting eight weeks. Out of the total of 57, however, 18 U-boats were set aside for the training of new crews. Thus only 39 operational U-boats were available to take on the mighty British Navy, the huge British merchant fleet, the navies and merchant fleets of England's Allies, and an inexhaustible number of neutral ships that sailed under contract to the Allies. Nonetheless, the first year of the U-boat war was extremely rewarding for Germany. Though the Force lost 28 boats, it destroyed one British aircraft carrier, one battleship, five cruisers, three destroyers, two submarines and 438 merchant vessels totaling 2.3 million gross-weight tons. Moreover, in the summer of 1940, after the surrender of France, our U-boats were gradually relocated southward to French ports on the Bay of Biscay. This move shortened our routes to and from the Atlantic and signaled a new phase of the war at sea - the great battles of the convoys. Simultaneously, Admiral Karl Doenitz, Commander-in-Chief of the U-boat Force as of 1935, launched an ambitious program to construct the largest fleet of submersibles that the world had ever seen.

The most preferred U-boat of that time, Type VII, became the standard Atlantic U-boat; it had a displacement of 770 tons and a cruising range of 9,000 nautical miles. In the course of the war, 694

boats of this type were built and updated periodically with new improvements; they accounted for some 60 percent of Allied shipping losses. In addition, more than 200 larger U-boats were constructed to lay mines, to attack Allied shipping lanes in distant areas, to transport critical war materials and, most important, to resupply the combat U-boats at sea with fuel oil, torpedoes, and provisions. Great Britain soon felt the sting of this stepped-up building program. Unrestricted U-boat warfare against the North Atlantic convoy routes resulted in the destruction of 310,000 tons of shipping in one four-week period in the fall of 1940. Allied losses rose to 142 vessels totaling 815,000 tons in a two-month period in the spring of 1941, and a year and a half of U-boat warfare cost the Allies more than 700 ships totaling 3.4 million tons. Churchill wrote of England's darkest hour: "The pressure grew increasingly, and our shipping losses were fearfully above our construction. Meanwhile the 'wolf-pack' tactics, were rigorously applied by the redoubtable Captain Prien and other tip-top U-boat commanders."

In May 1941, when I saw the first of my U-boat battles, our attacks on the shipping lanes were one-sided triumphs; Allied countermeasures - the use of radar, aircraft surveillance and new-type destroyers and convoy escorts - were still in their infancy and posed no serious threat to our raiders. This situation was not changed by the addition of 50 U.S. destroyers to the British fleet as part of the Anglo-American lend-lease agreement. By the end of 1941, our confident assumption of total victory seemed to lie within easy reach: combined allied losses that year alone amounted to over 1000 merchant vessels totaling over 4 million tons.

Shortly after the United States entered the war, the U-boats extended their activities to the American East Coast and raided shipping there with devastating results. During the first six months of hostilities against the United States, our boats sank 495 vessels totaling 2.5 million tons. Besides patrolling our North Atlantic and Caribbean hunting grounds, U-boats prowled the South Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea and a few even showed up in the Pacific. In 1942, the most successful year in U-boat history, more than 1,200 Allied ships - nearly 7 million tons - were sent to the bottom.

In March of 1943, which brought the U-boat war to the peak of success, also heralded disaster. That month the U-boat Force sank over 650,000 tons of Allied shipping - and suffered a sharp and puzzling increase in losses. This unexpected turn of events was the opening gun of a carefully prepared allied counteroffensive. The Allies had developed many new weapons, including fast escort vessels, small aircraft carriers, and a much-improved radar device. They had produced and assembled great numbers of escorts, carrier-based attack aircraft, and long-range land-based bombers. Bringing all of these

elements into conjunction in April, the Allies struck back with such overwhelming numerical and technical superiority that fully 40 percent of our U-boat force was destroyed within a few weeks. The Allied counteroffensive permanently reversed the tide of battle. Almost overnight, the hunters had become the hunted, and through the rest of the war our boats were slaughtered at a fearful rate. The U-boat Force tried desperately to counter the counteroffensive, but to no avail. In 1943, when I was Executive Officer of U-230, we were losing boats faster than we could replace them. By the summer of 1943, our toll of Allied shipping had fallen to a monthly average of 150,000 tons - this at a time when the Allies' shipbuilding capacity reached 1 million tons per month.

The plain fact of the matter was that the U-boat had become obsolete. Too long she had remained essentially a surface vessel that submerged only occasionally to remain unseen while launching an attack or escaping a pursuer. Headquarters did develop the Schnorkel, a device that permitted the U-boat to gape for air and recharge her batteries while staying submerged throughout her patrol. But the Schnorkel did not come into general use until March 1944, 10 fatal months after the Allied counteroffensive. Five more months passed before the life-preserving device was installed in all older U-boats. It was not until August 1944, when I sailed on my fifth U-boat, the second under my command, that a Schnorkel relieved me of the constant life-or-death game of surfacing for air, only to crash-dive minutes later before sophisticated attacks by Allied airplanes and destroyers. Moreover, the Schnorkel alone was far from an adequate answer to the Allied aircraft and hunter-killer groups. The U-boat was still dangerously slow and highly vulnerable in general, and deaf and defenseless in particular while using the Schnorkel.

The only real solution was a radically new U-boat. Several such types had been on German drawing boards for years, they were designed to sail submerged for hours at higher speeds than a destroyer, to shoot from a safe depth, and to carry twice as many torpedoes as the conventional U-boat. These underwater wonders were constantly promised to the Force. But they were not put into production until the collapse of the U-boat war, and very few of them were commissioned in time to see action. So the U-boat Force fought with what it had and, in the last year of the war, it accomplished little but self-destruction. One by one, our crews sailed out obediently, even optimistically, on ludicrous missions that ended in death. The few veteran commanders still in action were decimated despite their experience in the arts of survival. New captains, even with veteran crews, stood virtually no chance of returning from their first patrols. When hostilities finally ceased in May 1945, the ocean floor was littered with the wreckage of a U-boat war. Our boats had destroyed 2,882 merchant vessels totaling 14.4 million grossweight tons; in addition, U-boats had sunk 175 Allied warships and

damaged 264 merchant ships totaling 1.9 million tons. In return, we had paid an incredible price. Our total of 1,150 commissioned U-boats met the following fate: 779 were sunk, two were captured, and the rest were either scuttled or surrendered as ordered at war's end. Out of a total enlistment of 49,000 men, the U-boat Force lost 38,900 men killed and 5,000 taken prisoner. This represents 85 percent casualties. Yet even these figures do not reveal the full extent of the U-boat disaster. Since only 842 U-boats saw battle duty, and since 793 of these were lost, 95 percent of the operational U-boat Force was wiped out. In concrete terms, the toll seems even more shocking.

Our tremendous U-boat Force on the Atlantic Front was reduced to a mere 68 operational boats by the time that the Allies invaded France in June 1944, and only three of these boats were still afloat at war's end. One of the three survivors was U-953, which I commanded as her last captain. I have yet to see any published reference to a shocking order issued by U-boat headquarters just before the Allied invasion of Normandy. It ordered the commanders of 15 U-boats to attack the vast invasion fleet and, after their torpedoes were spent, to destroy a ship by ramming, by committing suicide." Can you fathom the immensity of these accounts? It's also interesting to note that in 1939 the Germans lost 9 U-boats. In 1940, they lost 22; in '41 they lost 35; in '42 they lost 96; in '43 they lost 237; in '44 they lost 241; and in 1945, when hostilities ended on May 5th, another 153 were lost, for a grand total of a whopping 793. On that day in 1945, Admiral Doenitz, now the Fuehrer as well as Commander-in-Chief of the German Navy and who had led the U-boats in glory and to disaster, issued the following proclamation:

"My U-Boat men, six years of war lie behind you. You have fought like lions. An overwhelming material superiority has driven us into a tight corner, from which it is no longer possible to continue the war. Unbeaten and unblemished, you lay down your arms after a heroic fight without parallel. We proudly remember our fallen comrades who gave their lives for Fuehrer and Fatherland. Comrades, preserve that spirit in which you have fought so long and so gallantly for the sake of the future of the Fatherland. Long live Germany."

Your Grand Admiral

To this, Captain Werner writes in his epilogue:

This was the message that put an end to the suffering. It admitted defeat for the first time. The murdering had finally come to an end. Henceforth we would be able to live without fear that we had to die tomorrow. An unknown tranquillity took possession of me as I realized fully that I had survived. My death in an iron coffin, a verdict of long standing, was finally suspended. The truth was so beautiful that it seemed to be a dream.

Commanders Comments:

Cdr. Werner states that 39,800 Submariners lost their lives aboard their U-boats. I've also read that this number could have exceeded 45,000. Exact figures vary widely. The amount of tonnage they sank is likewise mind-boggling, more than 14,500,000 Tons.

This also made me recall an interesting summary of one of our Perch Base member's application that I came across some time back when I first became Commander and was sifting through Membership Applications of our crew in order to better acquaint myself with my shipmates. I hurriedly re-read it, contacted him and asked if he would expound on his experiences. He graciously obliged and this is his story.

My Submarine Career on a German U-Boat
by **Ken Becker**, USN FN (SS)

The movie U-571 has no doubt generated a certain amount of interest in WW-II German U-boats, particularly within the ranks of American Submariners. That is perhaps why our Perch Base Commander, Roger Cousin asked me to relate my experience aboard submarines.

Upon graduating from Sub School at New London in 1946, six of us were assigned to the **USS ex U-2513** (ex as in ex wife), a captured German U-boat. The boat was based in Key West, Florida. It had been taken on the high seas just prior to the end of the war in Europe. The boat was one of the type XXI Schnorkel U-boats. The Germans intended on building an astonishing number of 2,300 of these. This class of submarine was designed solely to sink ships and was being built by Belgian slave labor. During construction the workers were sabotaging the boats at any opportunity. Also, by this time in the war, because of raw material shortages the steel used was like pig iron and not compatible with sea water. Corrosion and rust were a problem to both the Germans and to our American crews. There was plenty of cursing and banging with wrenches and hammers when a valve needed to be opened or closed.

Externally, there were no deck guns, and, surprisingly, the interior configuration of the boat was not much different from that of our fleet subs. It had two battery compartments and very tight living quarters. There were two heads including one for officers. Dining was done in the after battery compartment. The interior was always hot as there was only one small air conditioning unit located in the pump room. Other than that, there was only one engine room housing two 1,200 HP Diesel engines, "Hungry Helen" and "Flip Silly Millie". Another difference was that there were no torpedo tubes in the after-room. As I recall, the room contained the crew's head, some rudder mechanisms and was not manned. There were six tubes forward. We carried 14 fish. Air, trim, hydraulics, and other basic systems were not significantly different either. In fact, qualifying was not difficult.

The Germans had developed the "Schnorkel" which we later copied. It allowed the engines to operate at 60 feet with air being pulled in and exhausted by the engines through tubes approximately 10 inches in diameter. This greatly increased the submerged running capability. A solenoid on the air intake activated a valve which closed when water hit it causing the pressure in the boat to change suddenly. This suction throughout the boat, of course, caused many very worthwhile suggestions and comments to be made by crewmembers.

Flank speed of the Type XXI boat was in excess of 21 knots submerged on battery power. Perhaps more when snorkeling. I don't recall the exact surface speed, however, it was impressive. The boat carried 9% positive buoyancy so when tanks were flooded it dove very quickly. It was designed and built to dive to 1,300 feet. However, there was never any intention of the U.S. Navy or at least our Skipper to take it that deep. However, on one occasion when I was aboard, we did get to 900 feet because of a "miscalculation" on the part of the diving officer. That wasn't too much fun.

There were two main reasons why the Navy was operating the U-boat. As a result of the research being done on the sub, the Navy installed the "Snorkel" capability on several of the old fleet submarines which were being designated as "Guppies". Much of the technology and engineering was derived directly from the U-2513. The other reason was that at the time, the American SONAR gear was not receiving accurate returns from the boat because of the streamlined or teardrop shape of the Type XXI hull. Many hours were spent playing "hide and seek" with Destroyers and DEs in their attempt to locate our position and depth. This resulted in the streamlining of future US Submarines.

My old home now rests on the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean, somewhere off the East coast, a victim of one well placed U.S. torpedo. I still kind of miss her. Of special interest to me is the fact that since I started writing this account, I saw a History Channel Documentary dealing with the German submarine force near the end of WW II. The program included a recent interview with the German ex-skipper of the **U-2513**, a gentleman by the name of Erich Topp. There also was a film clip of the boat while in the German Navy. The title of the documentary was "Suicide Missions". It was appropriately titled.

Perch Base Lottery:

As you have noted, there was an insert in last month's *Midwatch* with tickets attached. Shipmate **Luis Tejera** has donated a color, limited edition action print of a fleet type submarine in a pre-Guppy configuration with guns mounted and underway on the surface. This beautiful painting is already matted, ready for framing and is signed by the artist, none other than CDR Pete Bucher, former XO of the **USS**

Ronquil (SS396), and later Captain of the famous USS *Pueblo* when the North Koreans seized and imprisoned him and his crew in the incident that is so familiar to us all. Pete is now a famous artist living in California. **Lou** is making this print and a copy of the hard covered, 577 page dramatic accounts of 'Submarine Operations in World War 2' available to our members through a raffle which will be drawn at the September meeting. Winner need not be present to win. This book is a must for any former or current submariner's library. If you wish to participate in this drawing, (your chances are a hell-of-a-lot better than Vegas and it has been voted on by the membership that all proceeds go to either a destitute submariner, if we know of one, or to a fund set up at Luke Air Force Base here in Arizona to benefit active AF military families stationed there who do not have the means to give their families a holiday meal or small Christmas/Hanukkah gift of a toy or piece of clothing. . . and yes, there are many of these cases at Luke and in today's military), then fill out the information on the ticket subs provided. Each ticket costs \$2.00 (3 for \$5), retain your half, and send your check (made out to Perch Base USSVI, indicating "Lottery" or "Military Holiday Fund") along with hopefully your winning ticket, to Roger Cousin, 13754 Via Montoya, Sun City West, AZ 85375-2053. If additional tickets are desired (or if you just wish to help these very needy military families with your check this holiday season), contact, or send your check to Roger, address, phone and email is on front cover under Base CMDR & Chaplain. Good Luck!

P.S. If you threw away last month's *Midwatch* and still wish to get involved in the lottery, contact me for tickets. Please be sure to include your check for the total amount of tickets you wish to purchase. Those that truly need, Thank You.

Year 2000 USSVI Ballots and Elections:

Each of you has by now received USSVI Ballots for this year's election of National Officers and Amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws. There are 14 proposed amendments being considered, the text of which can be found in the June edition of *American Submariner* along with the names of the nominees. It is not necessary for you to sign the ballot but for the purpose of insuring that only one vote is cast by each member, and that member is a member in "good standing" (dues paid), it is required that all envelopes have the name of the member and that you send or hand your completed ballots to your Base Commander (address on front cover), no later than 20 August 2000. (Commander must tally and send the ballots to National Nominations and Resolutions Committee no later than 1 September 2000.)

Lost Boats and Crews for August:

USS GRUNION (SS216) Launched December 22, 1941
Sunk August 1, 1942, 70 men lost.

USS GRUNION departed Pearl on her first war patrol on 30 June 1942. Her orders were to patrol an area North of Kiska and on 10 July, **USS GRUNION** made her presence felt. She attacked and sank two Jap patrol boats and seriously damaged a third. On 22 July, **USS GRUNION** and three other subs formed a wolf pack. Her mission was to guard the exits from Kiska. Sighting the enemy, **USS GRUNION** fired two torpedo's but endured a retaliatory depth charge attack. On 30 July, **USS GRUNION** reported increased ASW activity in her area and indicated that she had only ten torpedoes left. She was never heard from again. Only one month after beginning her first war patrol, **USS GRUNION** was gone, taking with her a crew of 70.

USS COCHINO (SS345) (Launched April 4, 1945) Sunk August 17, 1949 0 men lost.

The story of the **USS COCHINO** is sketchy at best. She was launched at EB in April of 1945, but it was too late for the boat to go on station against the Japanese, the war was all but over. After the war she patrolled America's Atlantic coastline. She then was converted to Guppy in early 1949. While on operations off Northern Norway in early August 1949, in very rough seas, she dove to rid herself of pitches and rolls and took the opportunity to test out her new snorkel. In the heavy sea the intake valve on **USS COCHINO's** snorkel was automatically closing to keep out the water, but at the same time it was forcing the diesel to suck in air from the interior of the boat. This interrupted the ventilation system at a time when the batteries were charging. The resulting hydrogen gas, normally vented to the outside under pressure, began to combine with the air inside the submarine and caused an explosion that rocked the ship. A relatively small explosion then took place. The **USS COCHINO's** captain, Commander Rafael Benitez, Puerto Rican born veteran of the submarine war in the Pacific, raced up into the conning tower as his executive officer donned gas mask and rubber gloves to enter the battery compartment, which seemed the source of smoke and fire. If possible, he would disconnect electrical circuits. The officer's bravery, however, was for naught. Another, more severe explosion tore off his clothing. For hours, a dual battle was fought by the crew to save both the submarine and the life of the burned XO. Her sister craft, **USS TUSK (SS426)**, lost a civilian electrician and six men in the foundering of a raft in which they were attempting to cross the rough seas to aid the **USS COCHINO**. The attempt to rescue the rest of the men still aboard **USS COCHINO** continued. Finally, a narrow piece of planking was stretched from the deck of the **USS TUSK** across to her sinking sister. The Artic Sea below swirled wildly as every man, including the XO made it across safely. Within minutes, the **USS COCHINO** slid under the sea

for her last dive.

USS BULLHEAD (SS332) (Launched July 16, 1944) Sunk August 6, 1945, 84 men lost.

USS BULLHEAD's career began late in the war, in spring of 1945. During her first two patrols **USS BULLHEAD** sank four enemy ships and damaged three others. She also rescued three American fliers from a downed B-29 following an air strike on the China Coast. On 31 July, **USS BULLHEAD** left Australia for the Java Sea to begin her third war patrol. That same day, preparations were underway on the Island of Tinian for the first atomic bomb mission against Japan. The war was drawing to a close. For the crew of the **USS BULLHEAD**, however, peace came too late. On 6 August, the same day that the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, a Japanese plane spotted **USS BULLHEAD** north of Bali. The enemy plane dropped depth charges and soon oil and air bubbles surged to the surface as **USS BULLHEAD** went down for the last time. On 13 August, American submarines in the Pacific were ordered to cease fire and return to base. All of the submarines acknowledged the message, except **USS BULLHEAD**. Two days later, Japan accepted terms of surrender, making **USS BULLHEAD** the last U.S. submarine lost in WWII.

USS FLIER (SS250) (Launched July 11, 1943) Sunk August 13, 1944, 78 lost, 8 survived

During her first patrol west of Luzon in June 1944, **USS FLIER** sank four enemy freighters and damaged a fifth as well as a tanker for a total of 33,000 tons. **USS FLIER's** second patrol ended in disaster and a grueling struggle for survival. In early August, **USS FLIER** set out through the perilous Balabac Strait where **USS ROBALO (SS273)** had been lost to a mine just three weeks earlier. On 13 August, the submarine was rocked by a terrific explosion. Oil, water and debris deluged the bridge. The ship's XO was blown through the opened Conning Tower hatch onto the bridge as crewmen poured out behind him. Within seconds, **USS FLIER** vanished beneath the surface. Only the Commanding Officer, the XO, and 13 other crew members were able to escape the sinking ship. Adrift in the darkness, without a raft, eight of them had the strength to stay afloat for 17 hours and managed to swim to Manangule Island. There they built a bamboo raft and sailed to Palawan. On 31 August, the survivors were picked up by **USS REDFIN (SS272)** and taken to Australia. 78 of their shipmates had perished.

S-39 (SS144) (Launched July 2, 1919) Lost August 15, 1942; 0 men lost.

On her 5th and final war patrol on 10 August 1942, **S-39** was sent to the Southeast coast of New Ireland to deter enemy ships from supporting the

Japanese troops in that area. At that point in the war, this old boat had already been credited with sinking a Jap freighter and tanker and damaging several other vessels, and had earned two battle stars. Two days after departing for her final patrol, **S-39** surfaced and within minutes struck a submerged reef off Russel Island and was hard aground. The heavy seas pounded her, pushing her further upon the rocks. Her crew fought desperately to free her from the grasp of the reef. At day break 15 August, she lost all power and was at the mercy of the furious sea. She rolled over, splitting her tanks open by the rocks and began to flood. The crew abandoned ship for the relative safety of the reef. Later that day, an Australian vessel responded to **S-39'S** distress call and the entire crew was rescued just as their boat slipped beneath the surface for the last time.

USS HARDER (SS257) (Launched October 16, 1942) Sunk August 24, 1944 78 men lost.

Aware that the Japanese Navy was critically short of Destroyers by mid 1944, **USS HARDER'S** skipper, the famed Commander Samuel Dealy, chose to deliberately tangle with these deadly vessels. Jap destroyers were fast, maneuverable and their sonar devices greatly outperformed ours. In mid 1944 in what was hailed as one of the most brilliant submarine patrols of the war, **USS HARDER** sank five enemy destroyers in five short-range torpedo attacks. For this unprecedented achievement, Dealy was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. During her fourth patrol, **USS HARDER** was called to rescue a Navy pilot who had been shot down and washed ashore on an enemy held island. Dealy maneuvered his boat close to a reef and three volunteers rescued the pilot in spite of Japanese small-arms fire. **USS HARDER'S** career, however, came to a tragic end during her sixth patrol. She and **HAKES** were charged by a Japanese minesweeper. Dealy steered between **HAKES** and the enemy and as she dove beneath the surface to avoid surface contact, she was pounded by deadly depth charges and was never heard from again. The "Destroyer Killer" and her entire crew were lost.

USS POMPANO (SS181) (Launched September 11, 1937) Sunk August 29, 1943 76 lost.

USS POMPANO is presumed to have been lost while engaged in a war patrol in enemy waters, in those brief words is written the epitaph for **POMPANO** and her crew. In six war patrols she sank or damaged more than 60,000 tons of shipping desperately required by the Japanese. **USS POMPANO'S** career began on 18 December 1941, just after the attack on Pearl Harbor. For three years **USS POMPANO** fought her way through the Pacific, doggedly pursuing enemy encounters with pending

disaster. Undaunted by defective torpedoes, **USS POMPANO** often surfaced to fight her battles using her deck guns and actually sank her targets. She also suffered through many barrages of depth charge attacks for hours at a time. She earned 7 battle stars and in August 1943, set out on her 7th patrol in the dangerous waters off Honshu where both **USS PICKEREL (SS177)** and **USS RUNNER (SS275)** had vanished only a few months earlier. Like those ships, **USS POMPANO** disappeared without a trace. Presumably she too fell victim to an enemy mine.

Commanders Comments:

Various military and organizational documents differ on dates of many losses: e.g. Sub Vets, Inc., Calendar 2000 states **USS COCHINO** was lost September 26, 1949. The Submarine Library and Museum gives the date as August 1949. The "Lost Boats" web site says 26 August 1949 is the correct date. I'm sure there are many other discrepancies, but whatever; the main thing is that we give these ships and their crews the honor they deserve.

Chaplain's Corner:

From announcement in Church Bulletin:

"Thursday night - Potluck supper. Prayer and medication to follow."

I'm happy to say that shipmate **Gary Patterson** seems to be doing quite well on his super chemotherapy. Keep him in your prayers. Another shipmate who could also use your prayers is **Joe Bernard**. He, too, has been going through cancer therapy. We are all with you guys and just ask if you need us. On a more somber note, **Don Wannamaker** and his wife **Judy** suffered the sudden loss of **Judy's** mother on July 4th. Perch Base shares their grief and offers its prayers. I learned from shipmate **Tom Fooshe** that **Bobby Moore** had been in the VA Hospital Nursing Facility for the past 3 weeks. **Bobby** is in very serious condition receiving chemotherapy for lung cancer and radiation therapy for 4 cancerous brain tumors. This was the first I heard of **Bobby** being in the hospital although I understood when I spoke to him today that he let a member know weeks ago. I never heard from that person. Please guys, when you hear of a shipmate in distress, call me, that's why we have a Base Chaplain. I sent **Bobby** a card from the Base, but another from you would be most appreciated. A call wouldn't hurt either...the hospital # is 602-277-5551. His home # is 623-846-1093. His address is 4601 N. 75th Lane, Phoenix, 85033.

As Chaplain and Commander of Perch Base, I received the following e-mail from Groton Base. A 13 year old boy is dying of cancer and had the opportunity to tour the aircraft Carrier USS John Stennis in Australia. And although this young boy is dying, he has corresponded with the captain and told him that after

he dies, he will be the guardian angel for this vessel. Unfortunately, from what I can gather, we are fighting the clock. Let's all join together and show this boy what submariners are about, and how he has touched us. For a 13 year old to face death in this way shows a lot of bravery and courage. Here's his name and address: James Terrence John Crofts, 45 Fieldgate Square Balga, Perth, Western Australia, 6061 For those that have computers, here is his email. Tell him hi! .. jcrofts@hotmail.com.au I think that a letter or card with two .33 Submarine Stamps or whatever the postage would be to Australia would be great. Let's show him how brave he is, and that his spirit for life has not only reached the carrier guys, but it has reached us down here at 400 feet as well. To CDR Gonzaleas, this e-mail was blind copied to 435 members of U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., Groton. It was also sent to all the Base Commanders of USSVI across the country. So, hopefully, in true Submariner style, the many shipmates this e-mail reaches will be corresponding with this young man, and letting him know what a hero he is. Maybe we can all put a smile on this young man's face in his final time on earth before he assumes the duties of Guardian Angel for USS John Stennis, CVN74.

This was my reply in a letter on behalf of our Base. I hope you agree with it. Hi James, we former United States Submariners who belong to Arizona Perch Base here in America have heard through our network that you've decided to one day make yourself the Guardian Angel for the Aircraft Carrier USS John Stennis CVN74. Well, we must say you picked one great ship to align yourself. But submariners must not allow themselves to be outdone. Therefore, we are making you, James Terrence John Crofts, Guardian Angel of the United States Submarine Veterans, Arizona Perch Base as well. We pray this does not over burden you, but sometimes, we submariners need a lot of help too. God be with you Jamie. You are an inspiration to all of us. For Arizona Perch Base Submarine Veterans Roger Cousin, Commander/Chaplain

On the Lighter Side:

A nuke seaman meets an old World War II submariner in a bar, and they take turns recounting their adventures at sea. Noting the old submariner's peg-leg, hook, and eye patch the nukie asks, So, how did you end up with the peg-leg? The old salt replies, We were caught in a monster storm off the coast of Japan. I was on lookout when a giant wave swept me overboard. Just as they were pullin' me out, a school of sharks appeared and one of 'em bit my leg off. Cripes! said the nukie. What about the hook? Ahhhh mused the old man, we were boarding a junk, guns blasting, and in the fracas my hand got chopped off by the Japanese cook. The cook? Damn, remarked the young nuke. And how about your eye patch? A seagull droppin' fell into me eye, answered the old salt.

You lost your eye to a seagull dropping? the

nuke asked. Well, said the old submariner, it was my first day with the hook.

For Your Health:

Former submariners always seem to be a bit forgetful but an occasional instance of misplacing your car keys is not an early sign of Alzheimer's Disease. We all forget our keys occasionally, but people with Alzheimer's forget what the keys are for. Little is known about preventing Alzheimer's, but doctors do know something about dementia in general. Key preventive measures. Regular strenuous exercise. A brisk 30 minute run each day - outside or on the treadmill for example, offers some protection. Using your brain. The more we former submariners use our minds, the less likely we are to develop dementia. The more synapses we develop, the larger "usable" area of the brain we have. This provides some cushion against deterioration from age. So don't worry.

Perch Base Calendar of Events for 2000:

- 12 Aug Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, lunch served 1200-1300
- 09 Sep Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, lunch served 1200-1300
- 14 Oct Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, lunch served 1200-1300
- 11 Nov Meeting @ American Legion, Glendale, lunch served 1200-1300
- ?? Dec Perch Base Christmas/Hanukkah Party Date and Location TBD.

Interesting Dates in August:

- (2nd) 1776 formal signing of Declaration of Independence,
- (6th) 1945 Atom Bomb dropped on Hiroshima,
- (9th) 1974 Nixon resigns as President. Ford becomes 38th President.
- (11th) 1971 "Last" U.S. Troops leave Vietnam.
- (13th) 1961 Construction of Berlin Wall begins.
- (15th) 1914 Panama Canal opens.
- (21st) 1959 Hawaii becomes 50th State.
- (22nd) 1864 Geneva Convention signed.
- (24th) 1814 British Army captures and burns Washington D.C.
- (27th) 1939 1st jet flight - German Heinkel He-178.
- (30th) 1645 Dutch and Manhatt Indians sign peace treaty in New Amsterdam N.Y. City.



Perch Base Booster Club for 2000:

I wish to thank the following members for their above and beyond financial assistance to our Base: **Jerry Allston, Ken Anderson, Joe Bernard, Jerry Becker, Wayne Braastad, Mike Brietner, Tom Burke, Jim Clewett, Roger Cousin, Earl Crowley, Steve Day, Jeff Duncan, Doug Eddy, Tom Fooshee, Billy Grieves, Lee Graybeal, Warren Grossetta, Dave Harnish, Glenn Herold, Steve Hough, Jim Johns, Davy Jones, John Lang, Hubie Maxey, Bob May, Jim Michaud, Roger Miller, Bob Mitchell, Bob Moore, Joe Mullins, Jim Nelson, Jim Newman, Joe Otreba, Tom Patterson, Royce Pettit, Ray Perron, Scott Protero, Ray Samson, Frank Rumbaugh, Joe Schwartz (Deceased), Tyler Smith, Adrian Stuke, Lou Tejera, Don Wannamaker, John Wilson, Don Whitehead, Bob Wonsley, George Woods, Jerry Yowell.** Thanks to all of you who realize the financial burden of running this organization and for giving that extra financial support to help our Base.

Complaint Department:

Do you have any gripes pertaining to our Base? Call me, or e-mail me. Let's talk about it. What would you like to see in *Midwatch* that would improve it? Let me know. My address and email is on the front. Roger Cousin

Collision of Two U.S. Nuclear Submarines on March 19, 1998:

U.S. attack submarines are technically incapable of conducting protracted trailing operations against modern Russian strategic submarines."

Continuing covert activity of U.S. submarines in the vicinity of Russian naval bases undermine the attempts of both countries to build mutual partnership. Moreover, such dangerous operations can lead to considerable environmental accidents. The evidence of these conclusions made by the Center For Arms Control was again demonstrated by a relatively recent collision of two U.S. Submarines, that occurred on March 19, 1998 off Long Island, NY. At the moment of collision the **USS KENTUCKY (SSBN737)** (Ohio class ballistic missile submarine) was at the surface, and the **USS SAN JUAN (SSN751)** (Los Angeles class attack submarine) was submerged. According to U.S. Navy official data, the submarines suffered minor damage and returned to Groton naval base for extensive checks. There were no casualties. Though most probably the collision was caused by crew error of both submarines, this incident again reveals the fact of limited technical capabilities of the acoustical means of detection. An on-board sonar turned on in a passive mode provides the only means to observe outer environment around the submerged submarine, when the latter operates covertly. The submerged submarine can "see" surrounding targets such as surface ships or other

submarines, provided that these targets generate enough noise, and the weather conditions are favorable. Otherwise, the detection distance of the submarine sonar against quiet targets is so small, that the submarine can only find a target when it runs into it.

The recent incident suggests, that the **USS SAN JUAN** did not detect the **USS KENTUCKY**, in spite of the fact that the latter was sailing surfaced and generating much more noise, compared to those created by the **SSBN** moving with the same speed fully submerged. When a quiet target is submerged and operates covertly, detecting it becomes very difficult, not speaking about tracking the target. The collisions of submarines with surface ships and other submarines are not rare events. On February 11, 1998, a U.S. Attack submarine sank a South Korean fishing boat. The accident happened just off the South Korean coast. At shallow waters, especially where the relief of the bottom is complex, a submarine sonar detection range against a quiet target, such as a fishing boat or a modern "dead in the water" submarine, drops to a few kilometers even at the most favorable weather conditions. Collisions of submarines with surface ships can be attributed to those of an accidental nature. An entirely different situation is created when a submarine attempts covertly trail another submarine, though the technical capabilities of its sonar are not adequate to accomplish this task. These are dangerous operations that U. S. attack submarines conduct off the Russian coast. As an example, the **USS BATON ROUGE (SSN689)** made an attempt to trail a Russian Sierra class attack submarine, and this attempt resulted in a collision in February 1992. This incident is also notable, because it occurred in an area, which Russia considers within its 12 miles territorial zone. Russian submarines based at Motovski and Kola Bays routinely pass the collision region, as they go to sea and return from their patrols. Acting jointly, such factors as a short sonar detection range, a constrained area, an intensive shipping and, most importantly, covert behavior of submarines, lead to a high probability of collision incidents.

Another collision of U.S. and Russian submarines occurred in March 1993. That was the **USS GRAYLING (SSN646)**, attempting to trail Russian K-407 SSBN of Delta-4 class (project 667BDRM). Fortunately as well as in the previous incident, this collision in the Barents Sea did not result in casualties. The Russian submarines suffered damage of their outer hulls, and were subsequently repaired. As to the U.S. submarines, the U.S. Navy decided that decommissioning the submarines would be a cheaper option. However, had the collision of the **USS GRAYLING**, and K-407, occurred twenty seconds later, it could have resulted in the crushing of one or more of the submarine's missile compartments. Such a collision could have caused a deflagration event that

could have most likely resulted in the loss of both submarines. Two submarines with uncontrolled reactors and at least 64 nuclear warheads would have sunk to the bottom. All of the crewmembers of both submarines would have been lost. Russian naval experts do not exclude the possibility that K-219 SSBN of Yankee class, sank in the Atlantic Ocean in October of 1986 because of a collision with a U.S. submarine. A few days after the death of the K-219, the attack submarine **USS AUGUSTA (SSN710)**, arrived to its homeport revealing its damaged hull. A collision with a U.S. submarine could have also been a cause of the death of "K-129" SSB of Golf II class in the Pacific in 1967. There are forcible reasons for these assumptions, but there is no persuasive proof. However, what is not in doubt and what already has much supporting evidence, is the continuing activity of U.S. submarines against Russian submarines. These operations are covert and aggressive by nature and mostly dangerous in the vicinity of Russian naval bases.

One of the recent incidents provides the confirmation of such activity. This incident occurred on December 3-4, 1997, when SSN20 SLBMs were eliminated above the Barents Sea. The missiles were fired from a submerged SSBN of "Typhoon" class (project 941) and blown up at an altitude of 1.5-2 kilometers. The destruction procedure was performed in strict compliance with START I treaty procedures, and an invited delegation from U.S. On-Site Inspection Agency was observing the procedure aboard a Russian hydrographic vessel in the area of firings. Nevertheless, an SSN of Los Angeles class was in the area as well. According to the information from the Main Staff of the Russian Navy, the U.S. submarine was maneuvering dangerously close to the Typhoon SSGN, so that the distance between the submarines was less than 4 kilometers. The Russian antisubmarine forces monitored the U.S. submarine for five hours and made numerous attempts to communicate with the boat. When the latter failed to respond to Russian requests to clear the area, explosive grenades were dropped. Only then did the submarine leave the area. In spite of the end of the cold war and warning of political climate, 2 or 3 U.S. attack submarines are operated off Kola Peninsula and a similar number off Kamchatka, i.e., at the places which the Russian SSBN have to pass when they sail on their patrol routes. Similarly as during the cold war years, the U.S. submarines make attempts to trail the Russian submarines exposing themselves and the targets to unjustified risks of collision. Such an activity became senseless in the end of the 1970's, when the Soviet Navy obtained quiet nuclear submarines of the third generation. By the way, U.S. Navy officials constantly underscore the difficulty of detection of modern Russian submarines. The Russian side raised protests many times and suggested that U.S. and Russian navies would work out an agreement on limiting this dangerous activity. Nevertheless, the U.S. Navy keeps ignoring the protests and refuses to sit at a negotiating table.

Two far-reaching conclusions can be drawn from the recent collision incident. An opinion about overwhelming capabilities of U.S. attack submarines against Russian strategic submarines, which is still widely shared by the Russian public, does not correspond to the actual situation. The incident of March 19, 1998 shows again that the noise level of modern submarines is too low to allow U.S. attack submarines to constantly track the targets in a wide variety of weather conditions. This is especially true when a quiet Russian SSBN operates covertly. The more detailed analysis shows that deployment of strategic weapons at sea meets the criterion of survivability much better than other options. Survivability is becoming the most important feature of strategic forces in the future. Covert activity of hostile submarines must be restricted at the vicinity of submarine bases and SSBN patrolling areas. Such dangerous operations may result in collisions of submarines with undesirable outcomes such as loss of boats, deaths of crewmembers and considerable environmental accidents. An agreement between the U.S. and Russia on limiting submarine covert operations, in certain areas, could be a substantial addition to the bilateral agreement on the prevention of incidents on, and over the high seas. Such an agreement was signed at the peak of the cold war in 1972 and put in force in 1973. If all would comply, such a step would correspond to the spirit of time and contribute to building confidence between the U.S. and Russia.

Importance of Submarines Likely to Rise:

Submitted by Shipmate, **John Redding**.

In addition to the Navy's current high-tech priorities, such as the DD21 new destroyer and the CVNS new aircraft carrier, the service is likely to increase its investment in and reliance on submarine forces, according to Navy Secretary Richard Danzig. I am interested in the submarine force. My sense is there is a large body of opinion in the Navy that submarines should be more numerous and more valued, especially after an analysis of intelligence requirements from the Joint Staff. Danzig yesterday told reporters at a Defense Writer's Group breakfast meeting. We will see more investment in submarines in the future but I don't think it will be so extraordinary that we won't be able to meet it. The Joint Staff recently released a study on submarine force structure that said as many as 68 submarines would be needed to meet foreseeable sea-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) requirements (Defense Daily, Feb. 11). A force level of 55 submarines was endorsed by the study to meet at least the minimum ISR requirements of current naval forces. In this year's version of the five-year defense plan, the Navy has programmed funding that could be used to refuel enough Los Angeles-class to meet the minimum force level of 55 boats. The Navy has planned \$1.2 billion for refueling enough submarines to get to 55. We've put money where our commitment is, Danzig

said. Current refueling schedules have been designed with an eye toward increasing the service life of submarines to 33 years. In effect, that's like increasing force structure by 10 percent he noted. The Navy has also included provisions for new programs that would support the expanded roles for submarines of the next decade. One such option is a plan to convert four of the Navy's Ohio-class Trident ballistic missile subs into the SSGN strike and special warfare variant. Under the SSGN program, for about \$500 million, the Navy could modify the four Tridents into ships capable of shooting 154 Tomahawk missiles, almost as many as were shot during Operation Allied Force over Kosovo or Operation Desert Fox in the Persian Gulf.

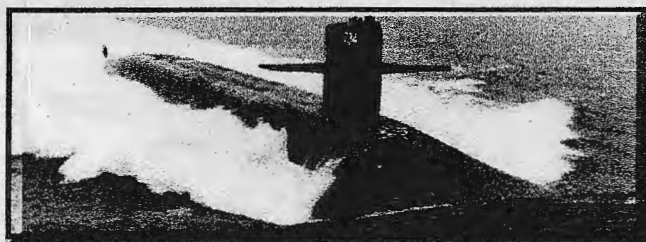
The Trident conversion is an example of another way to get more value out of our subs, Danzig said. "\$500 million investment would offer 22 years of additional capability through the SSGN program. With four such boats we could keep one on station all the time around the world. But the SSGN program would have significant political hurdles to overcome. For \$500 million the Navy could insert sleeves in the current Trident missile tubes and adapt them to fire the Tomahawk. But arms control treaties such as START II would view that modification as reversible, effectively counting the SSGNs as nuclear ballistic missile submarines to 14, down from the current fleet of 18 Ohios. For the follow-on START III treaty, the issue would be a very serious problem, because of further missile restrictions, Danzig said. However, as surveillance capability becomes increasingly linked with precision strike - such as the Global Positioning System and the proliferation of missile rate offered by the Tomahawk-equipped SSGN - the utility of combining those capabilities in proven stealth platforms like submarines may temper hesitation over treaty limitations. The decision process on whether to approve SSGN would be "ripe" in FY '01, Danzig said. The Navy could defer the decision based on the need to answer questions over how SSGN affects the arms control process, and what happens with the budget. Other DOD arms control challenges will have to be resolved before the military can make a solid decision on the SSGN. For example issues over the National Missile Defense Program and its significance in START III and the ABM treaties.

Danzig views the emerging prominence of submarines as part of a greater shift toward increasing the projection of power inland. New artillery rounds like Raytheon's Extended Range Guided Munitions, and the Navy's theater and area ballistic missile defense programs, coupled with submarines, highlight a transformation of the Navy. With these weapons, the Navy can project regional power as well as provide a defensive envelope of protection inland. When you look at the Tomahawk strikes against Afghanistan (in 1998), this was the first time the Navy is routinely looked upon to project power inland, so we are entering a more dramatic era for naval power, Danzig said.

A Parting Word of Thanks:

As most of you know, I put the Newsletter together and am solely responsible for it's content, good or bad. Shipmate **John Wilson** is our Editor/Printer and is responsible for the task of checking my written content, keeping me on the straight and narrow, preparing any fill-ins, and ultimately getting it to our homes on time. But there is a third member of the team who has never gotten kudos. This man takes my email copy and assures that it is put into the format that **John Wilson** finds easiest for printing. That man is shipmate **Ray Samson**. This recognition is long over due.... Thanks **Ray!** and Thanks to you **John!**

Roger



**USS TENNESSEE
(SSBN734)**

Displacement - 16600 tons (surf.), 18750 tons (subm.)
Speed - 18k (surf), 26k (subm)
Armament - 4-21" tt, fwd, 24 missile tubes.
Compliment - 15 officers, 142 enlisted men (each in 2 crews)
Class - Ohio
Keel laid down by Electric Boat Div., of General Dynamics Corp., Groton, CT 9JUN86
Launched: 13DEC86; Sponsored by Mrs. Landess Kelso;

Commissioned: 17DEC88 with Capt D. Witzenburg (B), Capt Kenneth D. Baker (G) in command. **USS TENNESSEE (SSBN-734)** has been developed based on extensive considerations of all aspects of survivability and capability required in a sea-based deterrent system designed for operations through the next century. **TENNESSEE** incorporates the new, quieter machinery that cannot be installed in other fleet ballistic missile submarines because of space and weight constraints. It has an advanced sonar system, comparable to that developed for the United States Navy's newest attack submarines, capable of providing long-range detection and a more effective tracking technique. Improved maintainability, reliability, and availability resulting from modular replacement concepts of major equipment, improved design, and incorporation of integrated logistics support are key features of **TENNESSEE**. **TENNESSEE** has additional growth potential to accommodate future technology as it becomes available, both in ship systems and in larger missiles. Higher patrol speeds will greatly increase ocean operating area, providing the ability to avoid potential enemies, thus enhancing survivability.

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