

# The MidWatch

The Quarterly Newsletter

Perch Base, USSVI  
Phoenix, Arizona

[WWW.PERCH-BASE.ORG](http://WWW.PERCH-BASE.ORG)

Winter Quarter | Volume 4 Issue 1 | January 2018

## USSVI Creed:

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

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

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



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▲ Message from the

# Base Commander

Howard Doyle

commander@perch-base.org



From Snipes Castle:

Tis the season, and all of that; to each of you and your families a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. This year has seen some trying times for both USSVI and Perch Base, we made it thru and continue to follow our creed.

We made it thru the parade season with only minor tire problems on the people trailer and an award for the Phoenix Veterans Day Parade.

Looking into next year the awards dinner will start us off with a good turnout expected.

We have a new COB [Carl Miner] a new Vice Commander [Glenn Posniack] and a new Chaplain [Governor Joy]. Welcome them aboard and assist them in their new positions.

The new year also brings another Western Regional Roundup in Las Vegas and the convention this year is a Cruise; if anything like the last cruise [to Alaska] it will be among the best we've ever had.

As in the past if you have questions or new ideas do not hesitate to bring them to myself, the Vice Commander, or any Board of Directors member.





**The Vice-Commander**  
**Glenn Posniack**  
 vice-commander@perch-base.org




**"Member Mogul"**  
 Membership Chairman  
**JIM ANDREWS**  
 membership@perch-base.org



Currently we have 176 members in Perch Base. We are doing well with our current members getting prospective members to join. With the 2018 Membership Drive concluded, it is time to get back to the business of recruiting new members for Perch Base. Remember if you recruit a new member and he goes through the process, you will be entitled to a Lunch on the Perch base during one of our meetings. Once I verify the new member is officially a member of Perch Base, I will inform David Heighway and he will clear the way for the payment of your lunch.



**CHIEF-OF-THE-BOAT**  
*Carl Miner*  
 COB@perch-base.org





# Treasurer

David Heighway  
treasurer@perch-base.org



Happy New Year!

Thank you for your continued financial support of Perch Base. Your giving allows us to conduct many functions to execute the Creed of USSVI. Donations to our base were down this year due to the loss of the tax deductible status for USSVI under the 501c(19) tax code. This position is not likely to change in 2018. The donations and funds of Perch Base allow us to fund the costs of having our USS Phoenix float in parades and static displays throughout the year, fund the Base Annual Picnic in May, and provide scholarships to deserving youth. All finances of Perch Base are dedicated to meeting the Creed of USSVI.

It has been a hectic time during the last quarter as we conducted our annual renewal campaign. Thank you to those who got into the Early Bird. This helps us provide payment of National Dues to the National office prior to the December 31 deadline. If you have not paid your dues by this time, you are delinquent (dink). Reinstatement is possible, and all your fellow Submariners would enjoy your continued support of our Mission to uphold the memory of our Shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice in service to our Country.

January will see our Annual Banquet at which one of our members will be awarded "Shipmate of the Year". A Holland Club induction will be conducted as part of the festivities. A silent auction to benefit the Arizona Silent Service Memorial (ASSM) will be held. This banquet has a cash bar and dinner. Hope to see you there!

Here is to a great 2018!



# Chaplain

## Governor Joy

chaplain@perch-base.org





**Base Webmaster**  
 "Bits & Bytes"  
**DAN MARKS**  
 webmaster@perch-base.org



Please don't forget to visit our Facebook page, which can only be accessed by current members. If you want me to add you to our "Perch Base, United States Submarine Veterans Inc." Facebook group, you can either go to the group page and request to join the group, or you can send me an email and I will send back an invite.

Much of our website traffic is viewing event photos shortly after each event, such as parades. Some of the recent events you may want to visit are the three Veteran's Day parades we participated in, the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day pictures, and the photos at the Sierra Verde School.

Another page that gets a lot of views is our Glossary. If you haven't been there yet, it is a "hoot."

During the past 90 days, our Perch Base website page views were about 3,142 hits. About 84% of that traffic is from the United States, and about 51% of that traffic is from within Arizona, so I will assume that is from YOU.



**Communications Officer**  
*Chuck Luna*  
 communications@perch-base.org



The start of a new year! Kick it off right by making sure all your contact info is up-to-date and accurate. That way you won't miss any important Flash Traffics or the MidWatch.



## Event Coordinator

Don Unser

events@perch-base.org



## Secretary

BASE MEETING MINTUES

Marcia Unser

secretary@perch-base.org



## Storekeeper

Herb Herman

storekeeper@perch-base.org



We now have the Perch Base challenge coins in stock, and a new supply of silver dolphin caps. Also, I would like to thank those who supported the base with purchase of 2018 calendars.



## Sage Words of Wisdom . . . from the past Base Commander

Chuck Emmett

past-commander@perch-base.org



## U.S. Undersea Warfare News

### **Fond memories aboard USS Blueback submarine featured at OMSI\***

Christine Pitawanich, KGW News, December 19

PORTLAND, Ore. -- For former Naval officer John Towle, it's nice to be back on the USS Blueback.

The submarine was built in 1959 and decommissioned in 1990 before it was donated to OMSI. It has floated beside OMSI in the Willamette River since the mid-1990s. The sub is Towle's old stomping grounds, from more than 40 years ago.

"Very nostalgic to come back to this wonderful, wonderful boat," Towle said.

Towle, who is now 79, served on the submarine for a few months in 1970 when he was 32 years old. Just this year, he visited for the first time over Thanksgiving. He made another trip to the sub on Tuesday.

He did a lot in the few months that he was serving on the USS Blueback, but exactly what he did is a little unclear.

"It was classified. So that's about all I can say about that," said Towle.

While some of the details of his stint on the Blueback were off limits, he could talk about some of his fondest memories.

"I can talk about the camaraderie. Very special people, we had a lot of fun together. We joked a lot. That kind of takes away from the pressures aboard," Towle said.

There was substantial pressure, especially in such close quarters, and conducting clandestine operations.

"She did a lot of seal operations, a lot of intelligence gathering operations," explained Michael Stephens, a veteran who served in the Navy for 20 years. He's now OMSI submarine tour guide.

He said what sets the Blueback apart is its hull shape, which was cutting edge for 1959.

The tear drop hull shape allowed it to outperform the rest.

"[Submarines] could go deep and fast for long periods of time and then this thing came out and we could go deep and even faster," said Stephens.

The sub was also the last diesel submarine built for the U.S. Navy before submarines went nuclear.

While the Blueback's capabilities are impressive, what Towle treasures most is the camaraderie, cribbage, and hot meals he shared with crew mates. He hopes younger generations realize the important role submarines play in history.

"If you don't remember the past and don't study it, then you're destined to repeat it," Towle said. "You need to learn the lessons and mistakes of the past to make the future become meaningful."

Towle spent 21 years in the Navy. He said the captain of the USS Blueback was his favorite captain to work with.

The submarine has gone everywhere, from San Diego, to Hawaii, to Japan where Towle served for a time.

He said when he got his feet back on dry ground after serving on the Blueback, he only had a couple days to make it to Chicago for his wedding. Fortunately, he made it.

"I beat feet from Japan to Chicago, Illinois to get married," Towle said.

OMSI submarine tour guides say the Blueback has made a brief appearance in the movie "The Hunt for Red October," and it's also been in a TV show.

\*OMSI is the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry located in Portland, OR

# Previous Quarter Highlights

## Fourth Quarter events for Perch Base.

For more Pictures and details check out our [website](#).



Perch Base took the USS Phoenix (SSN-702) float for our second time to participate in the Billy Moore Days Parade in Avondale on Saturday, October 28, 2017.

Base COB, Carl Miner, and Base Commander Howard Doyle's granddaughter, Alanah Doyle, putting the "little sailors" on the USS Phoenix.





## Previous Quarter Highlights (cont.)

Perch Base took the USS Phoenix float to the Sierra Verde Elementary, a Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) school for a static display on Thursday, November 9, 2017 as they conducted a Veterans Appreciation Day program.



What a crowd!



## Previous Quarter Highlights (cont.)



We had a great turn out for the Phoenix, Arizona, Veterans Day Parade on Saturday, November 11, 2017 with the USS Phoenix float.

The COB still fits in his dress blues!



Perch Base attended the Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day event on 12/07/2017 at the Wesley Bolin Plaza by the Arizona State Capitol to place wreaths during the ceremony.



Perch Base Life member George Woods placed the wreath for the SubVets of WW2.

Perch Base COB Carl Miner placed the wreath for the Perch Base SubVets.



# Upcoming Events

## Saturday, January 13 Monthly General Meeting

At Dillon's KC Bar-B-Que restaurant

[20585 North 59th Avenue, Glendale, Arizona.](#)

(Left-click address, above, for a Google map to Dillon's.)

The official meeting starts at Noon but come join us at 1100 for lunch!

50/50 Raffle drawing (Must be present to win).

## Saturday, January 20 Perch Base Annual Awards Banquet

Doors open for the Perch Base Annual Awards Banquet at 1800 hrs. (6:00 PM for those retired and away from military time.) Dinner will be served at 1915 hrs. (7:15 PM).

The location is the same as last year, the Pebble Creek Tuscany Country Club in the Chianti Room.

[16262 Clubhouse Dr, Goodyear, AZ 85395](#) (Left-click address for a Google map.)

1. Take the I-10 westbound to the "Pebblecreek Parkway."
2. "Pebblecreek Parkway" northbound to "Clubhouse Drive." Left on "Clubhouse Drive."
3. You will come to a manned gate house. Tell the guard where you are going and you'll be allowed to pass.
4. Continue approximately ½ mile and you'll see the Pebble Creek Tuscany Country Club sign.
5. Turn right and you'll immediately see a parking lot on the right. Enter this lot and continue through towards the far end.
6. Park as available.
7. The building at the far end (north end) of this lot is where the banquet is held. We will have our Perch Base signs from the float placed to help locate the facility.



## Saturday, February 10 Monthly General Meeting

At Dillon's KC Bar-B-Que restaurant

[20585 North 59th Avenue, Glendale, Arizona.](#)

(Left-click address, above, for a Google map to Dillon's.)

The official meeting starts at Noon but come join us at 1100 for lunch!

50/50 Raffle drawing (Must be present to win).

## Saturday, March 10 Monthly General Meeting

At Dillon's KC Bar-B-Que restaurant

[20585 North 59th Avenue, Glendale, Arizona.](#)

(Left-click address, above, for a Google map to Dillon's.)

The official meeting starts at Noon but come join us at 1100 for lunch!

50/50 Raffle drawing (Must be present to win).

## Friday, March 16 Deadline for the Spring Quarter MidWatch

All input must be in to Chuck Luna, Communications Officer, to be included

In the next MidWatch Newsletter to be published on March 31, 2017.

# How a Super-Secret U.S. Navy Submarine Tapped Russia's Underwater Communications Cables

THE BUZZ | Kyle Mizokami | June 29, 2017

In 1970, Halibut was modified to accommodate the Navy's deepwater saturation divers\*. The following year, it went to sea again to participate in Ivy Bells, a secret operation to install taps on the underwater communications cables connecting the Soviet ballistic missile submarine base at Petropavlovsk on the Kamchatka Peninsula with Moscow's Pacific Fleet headquarters at Vladivostok.



**USS Halibut (SSGN/SSN-587)**

The taps, installed by divers and their ROVs, allowed Washington to listen in on message traffic to Soviet nuclear forces. Conducted at the bottom of the frigid Sea of Okhotsk, the Ivy Bells missions were conducted at the highest level of secrecy, as the Soviets would have quickly abandoned the use of underwater cables had they known they were compromised.

One of the most unusual submarines of the Cold War was named after one of the most unusual fish in the sea. Halibut are flatfish, bottom-dwelling predators that, unlike conventional fish, lie sideways with two eyes on the same side of the head and ambush passing prey.

Like the halibut flatfish, USS Halibut was an unusual-looking submarine, and also spent a considerable amount of time on the ocean floor. Halibut was a “spy sub,” and conducted some of the most classified missions of the entire Cold War.

USS Halibut was built as one of the first of the U.S. Navy's long-range missile ships. The submarine was the first built from the ground up to carry the Regulus II missile, a large, turbojet-powered cruise missile. The missile was designed to be launched from the deck of a submarine, with a ramp leading down into the bow of the ship, where a total of five missiles were stored. This resulted in an unusual appearance, likened to a “snake digesting a big meal.” Halibut also had six 533-millimeter torpedo tubes, but as a missile sub would only use torpedoes in self-defense.

Halibut was a one-of-a-kind submarine. At 350 feet long, with a beam of twenty-nine feet, she was dimensionally identical to the Sailfish-class radar picket

submarines, but her missile storage spaces and launch equipment ballooned her submerged displacement to five thousand tons. Her S3W reactor gave her an underwater speed of more than twenty knots and unlimited range—a useful trait, considering the Regulus II had a range of only one thousand miles.

Regulus II was quickly superseded by the Polaris submarine-launched ballistic missile, whose solid rocket fueled engine made for a more compact missile with a much longer range. The combination of the Polaris and the new George Washington-class fleet ballistic missile submarines conspired to put Halibut out of a job—Regulus II was canceled just seventeen days before the sub's commissioning.

Halibut operated for four years as a Regulus submarine. In 1965 the Navy, recognizing that a submarine with a large, built-in internal bay could be useful, put Halibut into dry dock at Pearl Harbor for a major \$70 million (\$205 million in today's dollars) overhaul. She received a photographic darkroom, hatches for divers to enter and exit the sub while submerged, and thrusters to help her maintain a stationary position.

Perhaps most importantly, Halibut was rebuilt with spaces to operate two remotely operated vehicles nicknamed "Fish." Twelve feet long and equipped with cameras, strobe lights and sonar, the "fish" could search for objects at depths of up to twenty-five thousand feet. The ROVs could be launched and retrieved from the former missile storage bay, now nicknamed "the Bat Cave." A twenty-four-bit mainframe computer, highly sophisticated for the time, analyzed sensor data from the Fish.

Post-overhaul, Halibut was redesignated from nuclear guided-missile submarine to nuclear attack submarine, and assigned to the Deep Submergence Group, a group tasked with deep-sea search-and-recovery missions. In mid-July 1968, Halibut was sent on Velvet Fist, a top-secret mission meant to locate the wreck of the Soviet submarine K-129. K-129 was a Golf II-class ballistic missile submarine that had sunk that March, an estimated 1,600 nautical miles off the coast of Hawaii.

K-129 had sunk along with its three R-21 intermediate-range ballistic missiles. The R-21 was a single-stage missile with a range of 890 nautical miles and an eight-hundred-kiloton nuclear warhead. The loss of the submarine presented the U.S. government with the unique opportunity to recover the missiles and their warheads for study.

Halibut was the perfect ship for the task. Once on station, it deployed the Fish ROVs and began an acoustic search of the ocean floor. After a painstaking search and more than twenty thousand photos, Halibut's crew discovered the ill-fated Soviet sub's wreckage. As a result Halibut and her crew were awarded a

Presidential Unit Citation, for “several missions of significant scientific value to the Government of the United States.” Halibut’s contribution to efforts to recover K-129 would remain secret for decades.

Halibut was decommissioned on November 1, 1975, after 1,232 dives and more than sixteen years of service. The ship had earned two Presidential Unit Citations (the second in 1972 for Ivy Bells missions) and a Navy Unit Citation. The role of submarines in espionage, however, continued: she was succeeded in the role of special missions submarine by USS Parche. Today, USS Jimmy Carter—a sub with a particularly low profile—is believed to have taken on the task. The role of submarines in intelligence gathering continues.

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## **The Second U.S. Navy Submarine involved the tapping of Russia's Underwater Communications Cables**

By H I Sutton | Sat 11 April 2015

USS Seawolf with the other famous special missions boat USS Halibut. At the time of this photo Operation, IVY BELLS was still a complete secret, and few observing these two boats would have realized their significance within the Cold War which was playing out at the time.



**USS Seawolf (SSN-575)**

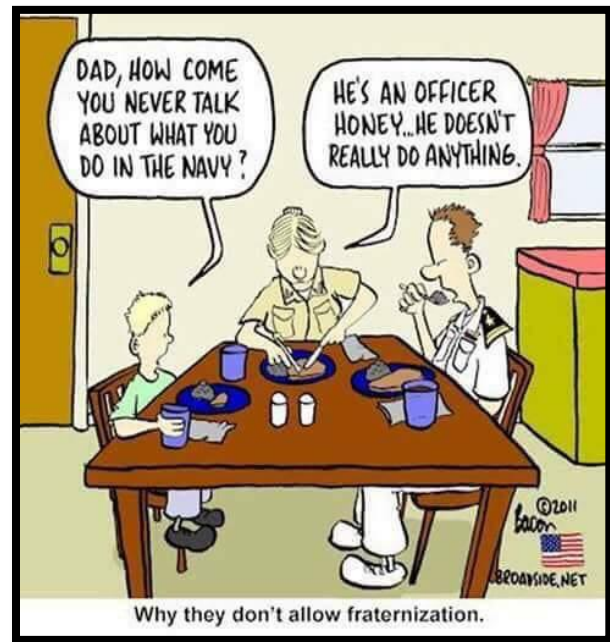
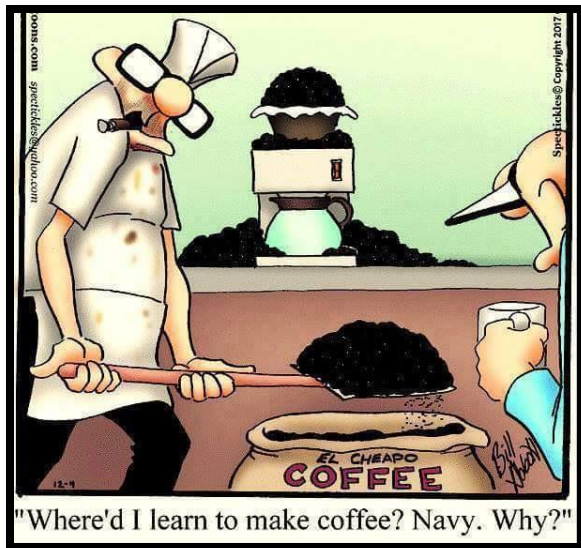
Seawolf served as an attack submarine until 1971 when she entered the dry dock at Mare Island Naval Shipyard for conversion to a 'special project platform', the term given to specially equipped spy subs. Her capabilities were to be similar to the US Halibut which had been converted a few years earlier. Unlike Halibut, however, she did not have a missile hangar to store the computer and extra kit, so she was lengthened forward of the sail to have accommodated the additional 'civilian' crew, sonar fish (variable depth sonar plus cameras towed beneath the submarine) and pressurization chambers for Saturation Divers\*. Like Halibut horizontal thrusters were buried in the casing but the result was a more low-key alteration of her appearance. The boats of Submarine Development Group One kept their secrets well, and few photographs or plans have yet revealed her underwater modifications.



^ A NAVY CHIEF IS WALKING...

A Navy chief is walking through the hallways in the pentagon, when an Air Force general, from behind, says, "Excuse me, sergeant."  
 The chief keeps walking.  
 The general repeats, "Excuse me, sergeant."  
 The chief keeps walking.  
 The general YELLS " EXCUSE ME, SERGEANT!" and grabs the chief by the shoulder. ...  
 The chief whirls around, and gives the general the stinkeye.  
 The general asks the chief, "Why didn't you respond when I addressed you?"  
 The chief replies, "Sir, I'm not a sergeant, I'm a chief petty officer."  
 The general then says, "Well, if you were in the Air Force, you'd be a sergeant."  
 Not missing a beat, the chief replies, "No sir, if I were in the Air Force, I'd be a general."

Contributed by Tim Moore



# First Quarter Birthdays

## JANUARY

3 Robert Hanson  
 5 Brent Nelson  
 7 Roger Cousin  
 7 Douglas Ewen  
 10 Eldon Hartman  
 12 John Schwab  
 14 Jerry Allston  
 16 Doug Newland  
 22 Jerry Pittman  
 23 James Denzien  
 26 Stephen Day  
 27 Henry Fernandez  
 29 Robert Warner  
 31 Frank Morris

## FEBRUARY

1 Royce Pettit  
 3 Mary Denzien  
 4 John Mosher  
 4 Darrell Keller  
 7 David Wickline  
 11 Dan Moss  
 13 Edgar Brooks  
 14 Jerry McKay  
 16 Michael Dahl  
 16 Steven Marcellino  
 24 Emil Schoonejans  
 24 Jim Mann

## MARCH

4 Bernard Fromm  
 9 Warner H. Doyle Jr.  
 11 Glenn Herold  
 11 Dennis McComb  
 12 Governor Joy  
 16 Marcia Unser  
 17 Lawrence Cummings  
 19 Burtis Loftin  
 20 Scott Strey  
 23 Karl Bergstrom  
 29 John Graves  
 29 Michael Hinderliter  
 29 Denny Kerton  
 31 David Metje

## Perch Base CLASSIFIEDS

Your chance to advertise for free! Items from Base Members to other Members, and almost anything is far game. Exceptions: alcohol, drugs, illegal, commercial items or anything in general poor taste. Send your ad to: [newsletter@perch-base.org](mailto:newsletter@perch-base.org)



*(This card is from the store that graciously gives us space to stage and park for the November Phoenix Veterans Day Parade. Give them a thought if you need tires or service.)*

**Classified Size Limit: Four lines of 10 pt Arial font, one column wide.** Pictures may be included -- and are encouraged -- but make the picture a separate "jpg" or "png" file. If we can't format your ad as a Word document, it won't run.



# LEST WE FORGET THOSE STILL ON PATROL



## Tolling of the Boats for January

|    |                        |      |                 |
|----|------------------------|------|-----------------|
| 5  | USS Scorpion (SS-278)  | 1944 | 77 men lost     |
| 10 | USS Argonaut (SS-166)  | 1943 | 102 men lost    |
| 12 | USS Swordfish (SS-193) | 1945 | 89 men lost     |
| 20 | USS S-36 (SS-141)      | 1942 | no loss of life |
| 24 | USS S-26 (SS-131)      | 1942 | 46 men lost     |

## Tolling of the Boats for February

|    |                        |      |             |
|----|------------------------|------|-------------|
| 4  | USS Barbel (SS-316)    | 1945 | 81 men lost |
| 11 | USS Shark (SS-174)     | 1942 | 59 men lost |
| 16 | USS Amberjack (SS-219) | 1943 | 72 men lost |
| 26 | USS Grayback (SS-208)  | 1944 | 80 men lost |
| 29 | USS Trout (SS-202)     | 1944 | 81 men lost |

## Tolling of the Boats for March

|    |                         |      |                    |
|----|-------------------------|------|--------------------|
| 3  | USS Perch (SS-176)      | 1942 | 6 men lost as POWs |
| 5  | USS Grampus (SS-207)    | 1943 | 71 men lost        |
| 12 | USS H-1 (SS-28)         | 1920 | 4 men lost         |
| 15 | USS Triton (SS-201)     | 1943 | 74 men lost        |
| 20 | USS Kete (SS-369)       | 1945 | 87 men lost        |
| 25 | USS F-4 (Skate) (SS-23) | 1915 | 21 men lost        |
| 26 | USS Tullibee (SS-284)   | 1944 | 79 men lost        |
| 26 | USS Trigger (SS-237)    | 1945 | 89 men lost        |

# ***2017 Perch Base Operations Supporters***

These are the Base members and Friends who donate monies or efforts to allow for Base operations while keeping our dues low and avoid raising money through member labor as most other organizations do.

|                      |                        |                     |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| Jerry N. Allston     | Eldon L. Hartman       | Richard Noreika     |
| Kenneth R. Anderson  | David Heighway         | Mike Olsen          |
| James C. Andrews     | Harry Heller           | Jim Paper           |
| Gary Bartlett        | Glenn A. Herold        | Bryan Pellegrini    |
| Richard Bernier      | Steve Hough            | Royce E. Pettit     |
| Ronald B. Beyer      | Theodore Hunt          | Glenn Posniack      |
| Edgar T. Brooks      | David L. Jones         | Stanley N. Reinhold |
| John Carpentier      | Mike Keating           | Louis Reynolds      |
| Roger J. Cousin      | Dennis Kerton          | Robie Robinson      |
| Eugene V. Crabb      | Richard F. Kunze       | Larry D. Ruggles    |
| Lawrence Cummings    | Douglas M. La Rock     | Russ Rutowski       |
| George Debo          | Robert A. Lancendorfer | Pete Sattig         |
| Donald Demarte       | Albert Landeck         | Donald Schafer      |
| James R. Denzien     | Brad Lawrence          | Edward Schafer III  |
| Mary L. Denzien      | DeWayne Lober          | Rick Simmons        |
| Howard Doyle         | Burtis W. Loftin       | Wayne Kirk Smith    |
| James Edwards        | Daniel G. Marks        | Lawrence Speight    |
| Charles Emmett       | Charles F. Marshall    | Steven Stanger      |
| Howard M. Enloe      | Raymond Marshall       | William M. Tippet   |
| James Evans          | Dennis McComb          | James Trail         |
| Douglas Ewen         | Angus H. McPherson     | Donald Unser        |
| Thomas J. Farley III | Kenneth Meeks          | Marcia Unser        |
| Fred Fuller          | Alan H. Miller         | Chris Urness        |
| David J. Fyock       | Frank S. Morris        | James L. Wall       |
| Tim Gregory          | John Mosher            | Forrest J. Watson   |
| Kelly Grissom        | Danny Moss             | George C. Woods     |
| Michael J. Haler     | Jim A. Nelson          | John G. Zaichkin    |
| Robert Hanson        | James W. Newman        | Ronald J. Zomok     |