

TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 3, No. 8

August 2007

Newsletter of Charleston Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.



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 Government"



Base web page: www.ussvich.org
National web page: www.ussvi.org

Base Meeting:

Thursday, August 9, 2007
Social hour 1800, General Meeting 1900

Location:

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 269, Low Country Home
99 Wisteria Rd.
Goose Creek, South Carolina. Phone 843-569-2962

Base Officers		Phone Number
Commander	Steve Nelms	843-563-7115
Vice Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Secretary	Ronnie Kerstetter	843-367-1026
Treasurer	George Lisle	843-559-4242

Special Officers		Phone Number
Chief of the Boat	Marty Sessler	843-871-1536
Public Affairs	Richard Cleeve	843-899-4563
Sub Vets WWII	Barnwell Chaplin	843-762-6945
Nuclear Historian	Ed Simokat	843-873-1709
Veterans Affairs	John Nichols	843-873-5897
Chaplain	John Nichols	843-873-5897
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	Bob Lowe	843-573-9045
Little David Project	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Roving Reporter	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Scholarship	Jim Yates	843-873-0246
Newsletter	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Storekeeper	Paul Viering	843-797-2623
Alcohol & Gaming	Dave Mueller	843-553-2775

Minutes of the July 2007 meeting

Attendance for the July 12, 2007 meeting was 98 plus 3 guests

Opening Ceremony: Base Commander, Steve Nelms, called the meeting to order. A Quorum was

Newsletter: Is everyone getting their newsletter? OK.

Alcohol & Gaming: We might have run out of chicken but we still had beer. Good evening, you are invited to our Wednesday night social, at The After Battery, your dinner is free you buy your own drinks and a five dollar charge for camaraderie.

present and the meeting was commenced at 1900.

Scholarship: Gregory Stabler, son of Bill and Dona Stabler, a graduate of Summerville high school with a GPA of greater than five, is the recipient of the Charleston Base \$500 scholarship for 2007. Gregory will be attending Clemson University, majoring in computer science. Congratulations on behalf of Jim Yates, the scholarship committee, and all members. Well done! The presentation was made by Julian and Carl.

Holland Club: Stacy Power, made the presentation to Danny Davis, qualified for more than fifty years. Danny qualified on the USS Sterlet SS392. We welcome you into the Holland Club and are pleased to award you this honor.

Introductions: Two new people were introduced; Scott Bullington, ET Nuke and Abe Jenkins, qualified in 1944 on the Guvina SS352. Abe made three war patrols and retired in 1951. Welcome aboard.

Secretary: Assistant Secretary Roger Gibson asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from last month. A motion was made and seconded. Minutes approved.

Treasurer: George Lisle gave the treasurer's report.

Storekeeper: Paul Viering reminded everyone "if you ordered something, pick it up".

Chaplain: If any of us know of some one who is sick we need to know about it, let the board members know!

Mike Mulkey's son, Charleston Fire Capt. Louis Mulkey, died in the line of duty on June 18th. The base sent the family a card offering our condolences and assistance if needed.

Also lost during the same fire was Charleston Fire Capt. Billy Hutchinson. Billy was well known to many of us who had our hair cut at William's Barber Shop in Goose Creek. The base sent cards to both the family and to the barbershop offering our condolences.

Jim Keller had cancer surgery on June 19th. It went very well and he is home recovering. The doctor has given him the OK to go on vacation. The base sent him a get-well card.

RADM Eugene Fluckey, Medal of Honor Recipient and skipper of USS BARB during WWII, passed away on June 29th. The base sent a card of

We play games and tell lots of lies, it takes you twenty minutes to get there, we would love for you to come. But not for the ones that watch Desperate Housewives. We operate separate from base finances, and have donated monies back to Charleston Base. In the last two years we have donated a sizable amount, and this is about two percent of the base members that participate.

This is a major means of support to our base. If any member has a question just ask Dave Mueller and you will get a tactful answer. Example, who would like to store the float at their house, I don't think so plus the maintenance.

Coolers for use at our functions each having drain plugs, please when you drag them don't destroy the drain plugs. Dave Mueller has a chart to assess the manpower needed to lift a fully loaded cooler, see him for this procedure. Torpedomen excluded, you must be able to read!

Last meeting there was an attempt to denigrate one of the base commander's appointee's. The base commander asked the head of gaming and alcohol to investigate.....report follows...

The two individuals were found out, Dave Rein and Clyde Peters, both officer's from the now defunct star program, made an attempt to over throw "Our Beloved Dave Mueller". This was nipped in the bud, their accusations were unjustified and were taken to the wood shed for a whipping. They now have repented, but as a further punishment all Makers Mark has been removed from The After Battery and the title of ticket tearing officer has been removed from Clyde Peters. In ending there was one other culprit involved, but for protection to his family his name will not be revealed, but he is a Quartermaster!

Vice Commander Report: At the last meeting the membership approved the purchase of a new PA system. It's on order and should be received next week.

Fleet Reserve: Dave Rein expressed apologies for the cards that were deactivated. We have control, they are only for the members of branch 269. You have to belong to the FRA. Cards issued to non-members were deactivated and your money will be refunded. Again, please accept our apology

Chief of the Boat: USS Ling petitions are being circulated on various tables. Please sign them so we can save the Ling at the naval museum. The

condolences to the family.

RMCS (SS) (Retired) Duane Anderson passed away on June 30th. On July 5th, five members from the Charleston Base held a short memorial service for Senior Chief Anderson at the funeral home. The base also sent the family a card offering our condolences and assistance if needed.

George Wells was diagnosed as having a small spot on his lung and was to see the doctor yesterday. The base sent a card letting him know we're thinking of him.

Ken Fuhr, who lives in Irmo, had an abdominal bypass operation today due to blood flow restrictions in both of his legs. He will be in ICU for 4-5 days and then several days in the hospital (Palmetto Health Richland-Richland County). The base sent him a card wishing him well.

Sue Peters, Clyde's wife, will be having lung surgery tomorrow, Friday, July 13th.

Patricia Stout, Jerry's wife, began her chemo today, Thursday, July 12th and is doing well.

Talked with Sharon Hardaway, Ben's wife, yesterday, she is at home and is continuing rehab. Sharon sends her grateful thanks for all of the cards, calls and offers of help. She's now using a wheel chair and walker and has some movement. She will have a post MRI in a couple of weeks. The base sent another card.

Talked with Sy and Connie Mabie yesterday. Connie is now in home care with tube feeding and outpatient rehab at Health South. Her speech is really good but she is still having swallowing problems. Sy is still having a hard time with the chemo. A week after the treatment he has bad muscle cramps. He's on additional meds to help with that and also to help with his shortness of breath from the chemo. The base sent them additional cards.

Talked to Bill Burke's wife Lynn yesterday She is recovering well from her cancer surgery and will be allowed to start driving again next week. The base sent another card.

Item Of Interest:

I have passed around a form with the heading of "Important Instructions":. Please read it and follow the directions on the form if you so desire. This would allow our base officers to know immediately in the case of your death and allow us to be there to assist your family if needed.

Dates To Remember:

land is being put up for sale to build high rises so the USSVI is asking for help.

For our social night the other night, thanks for not showing up, because we ran out of chicken! The officer in charge of social functions is now under investigation as he seems to have ran a-"FOWL" in the chicken department, there will be a board of inquiry.

The question was brought up, about having another party. Not until the membership comes up with monies for outdoor air conditioners: the last was too hot.

Serious note, good job Chaplain on the memorial service for Duane Anderson. Everyone was impressed on how it was conducted, good job. A set of dolphins in a wooden box with the inscription "Forever Qualified" was presented along with the eternal patrol certificate to his widow. Again, well done.

We are still working in The After Battery. Keep your eye out for e-mails on the when we need you for working parties. I don't think the project will ever end so plan to show up once a month.

Reminder: the waitress tip jar. A lot of time she delivers she doesn't get tipped so if you would, please remember her.

Base Commander: Serious note, WWII Veteran living in the Veterans home in Waterboro was sent to the hospital and is intensive care. His wife hasn't seen him and has no way to get there. Both are Filipino and live in Goose Creek, His name is Ricardo Clementa.

I'm looking for help, a visit once a week and she doesn't speak great English so I need some help, call me at home. Dave Rein would you check to see if he is a member of the Fleet Reserve, he is retired Navy.

District Commander: Took a couple trips, one to Groton, CT, to a conference with six fellow commanders, quite a bit of action items to do. Then to Mobile, AL to the Drum reunion then following the starting of two new bases. The vote, some have asked. The voting will end on 15 July and the results will be published 22 July.

Old Business: Stacy Power said for the flag folding detail we need four more people. At the next meeting Ed Simokat will hold a little school of the boat for us. See Stacy at the end of the

July 19, 1997 – First SEAWOLF class submarine Commissioned.

July 20, 1960 – First submerged missile shoot by USS GEORGE WASHINGTON SSBN 598

Public Affairs: Base Commander: Before Richard says anything I would like to thank him for all he has done for us and now he is going to get a little help from Larry Starland. Larry will help out in getting articles in the news paper and in the *American Submariner*.

Richard has an array of pictures of our various functions on a slide show for all to see, our thanks.

Sub Vets WWII: Lee Allison: Next meeting will be August 16th at Ryan's steak house in Summerville at 12 noon. We are looking for new members to help us out we also have WWII calendars 2008 this has all kinds of boats even the USS Bass which Jack was on. They are 6 dollars we also have some 2006 calendars which are free.

See you at Ryan's; and bring a present it is my birthday.

Reminder to all the Associate's...dues are due now!

Base Commander: for the benefit for the new members, you can join the WWII Sub Vets as an associate member.

Veteran's Affairs: Nick Nichols highlighted some items from the VA website. There is a big Red Cross computer scam by individuals trying to get social security numbers and personal information of people in the war zone from family members. TriCare is trying to raise fees again. Get your pneumonia immunization. This is generally recommended for people over age 65 and for anyone with chronic heart and lung illnesses or diabetes.

Membership: We have 276 members! A note about revised by laws: Dues are now due by 1 October 2007. If not paid by 31 December you will be drooped from national, there is no longer a grace period so please remember.

meeting.

Cap's for Kids, Tom Lufkin

The caps are in! We will present them next month but keep in mind that we have to limit the number of people due the fragile nature of these kids. We don't want to spread germs! I will get with Larry Starland for inputs to the newspaper and the American Submariner.

New Business:

Good Of The Order:

From Judy Highberger to Charleston Base, USSVI, a framed statement in regards to our veterans. The topic, "Please Remember Our Veterans". It will be on display in The After Battery. Our thanks for this gift thanks also to John Lookabill.

George Lisle gave some explanation on soft drinks and hard liquor, George, check your labels you must be in the hard stuff.

Mike Emerson (float and parades), since we have lost Mike Mulkey's son, I approached one of the Captains fire department about if they would like for us to display fire hats on our float and how we could get the hats, they will give us the hats it is up to us if we want to do this, let me know. Also we asked for help on the float, it would be nice to have more people to help, also we would like to see about getting in a few more parades. If you know any more that would be interested let us know. All we need is a little more participation.

Depth charge drawing # 271, the Neck got the luck of the draw, donated \$100 to The After Battery.

The Base Commander adjourned meeting at 1950.

**** End of the minutes for July 2007 ****

"Don't tell mom I'm a submariner, she thinks I play piano in a whorehouse."



Addington	Allison	Andersen, D	Cates
Chinn, R.	Cleeve	Daughtery	Davis, D.
Frelich	Gawronski	Graff	Hardaway
Hutchinson, C.	Ianuzzi	Irving	Kirby
LaRose	Larsen	Lowman	Morgart
Morrow	Mulkey	Nelms	Roberts
Turner	Wise	Young	

August Submarines Lost:

USS Grunion	SS 216	August 16, 1942
USS Pompano	SS 181	August 29, 1943
USS Flier	SS 250	August 13, 1944
USS Harder	SS 257	August 24, 1944
USS Bullhead	SS 332	August 6, 1945
USS Cochino	SS 345	August 26, 1949

*There is a port of no return, where ships
 May ride at anchor for a little space
 And then, some starless night, the cable slips,
 Leaving an eddy at the mooring place . . .
 Gulls, veer no longer. Sailor, rest your oar.
 No tangled wreckage will be washed ashore.*

Membership and Dues Information:

Remember!!! The bylaws changed. Dues are payable by 1 October. Pay early; avoid the rush. You can pay me at the meeting or send your dues to me. Not sure how much you owe? Just ask me. I'll have a list at the meeting.

We are still the third largest base in size. We have 277 members behind Groton (2,278) and San Diego (327). Keep on recruitin'!

If you have any changes to your membership info (address, phone, e-mail, etc.) you can make those changes directly on-line in the Sub Vets national database. If you want, I can make the changes for you...just let me know. If you have changes, please let me know at chasbasemembernews@sc.rr.com or carlc@sc.rr.com or call 875-3098. This is so we can keep our local information current and accurate. PLEASE send changes to me! I update the COB, Chaplin and others with contact/personal information.

From the Base Commander



Results of the District 4 Commander election are in. Everyone with e-mail should have already been informed. If your buddies don't have e-mail please let them know what's going on! Congratulations to Jerry Stout on his re-election as District 4 Commander! He will serve in this position for the next year.

On behalf of the entire membership I want to publicly extend a great big THANK YOU to our member, Gary Becker and his assistant Micah Mantooh for their dedication and hard work in The After Battery. Gary and Micah were out after their normal workday (until late at night) on a few occasions to do plumbing and carpentry work needed to help get The After Battery finished. They helped us move the water heater, move and re-plumb sinks and the ice machine. Thanks guys!!



Another big THANK YOU is extended to Larry Sims for his recent donation of \$200.00 to The After Battery!



August 9 – Regular meeting, 1900, FRA Branch 269

Terminology Trivia
“The Devil to Pay”

What ever happened to “Buddha Bucks”?

To pay the deck seams meant to seal them with tar. The devil seam was the most difficult to pay because it was curved and intersected with the straight deck planking. Some sources define the "devil" as the below-the-waterline-seam between the keel and the adjoining planking.

“Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea”

The devil seam was the curved seam in the deck planking closest to the side of the ship and next to the scupper gutters. If a sailor slipped on the deck, he could find himself between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Two Submariners Recall Their Days At Sea

By Ryan Smith

Ed. Note: *John Clarkin is a member of USSVI, Charleston Base. He lives in Conneaut Lake, PA*

Published in the *Meadville Tribune*, Meadville, PA, May 25, 2007

U.S. Navy veterans John Clarkin and Hal Tubbs are both part of that select company familiar with life and service aboard a submarine. Clarkin, now 83, served during World War II with the crew of the USS Piper, which completed various missions in the war’s Pacific theater.

“Between the sanity of the ‘civilian type’ world and the salt of the Old Sailor’s Home there lies a breed of men called Submariners.” — from the USS Halfbeak’s statement of purpose, Feb. 4, 1971.

U.S. Navy veterans John Clarkin and Hal Tubbs are both part of that select company familiar with life and service aboard a submarine. Clarkin, now 83, served during World War II with the crew of the USS Piper, which completed various missions in the war’s Pacific theater.

Tubbs, 57, served stateside during the Vietnam War era aboard both the USS Narwhal nuclear submarine, as it was first commissioned, and the USS Halfbeak. As part of its Memorial Day weekend coverage, the Tribune recently brought both men together for a conversation about their service.

Going below

Clarkin said he joined the Navy in June of 1941 at the age of 17. After serving on a destroyer ship charged with delivering supplies to England prior to the United States’ entry into the war and serving in Africa, he volunteered for submarine service in 1944. “Next stop, I’m out in Pearl Harbor. I didn’t see the states (again) until the war was over.”



USS Seawolf Makes New Home In Pacific Northwest

BREMERTON, Wash. -- During a small ceremony at Naval Base (NB) Kitsap Bremerton’s Delta pier, sailors welcomed the Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Seawolf (SSN 21) to the Pacific Northwest on July 22.

The submarine transferred from its previous homeport of New London, Conn., to permanently reside in Bremerton.

Today, we celebrate the arrival of the USS Seawolf to the great Pacific Northwest, said Capt. H.H. Butch Howard III, commander of Submarine Development Squadron 5. The first arrival signifies the vast expansion of the fast attack submarine presence here at NB Kitsap as well as adding about 213 more service members to our outstanding community.

Seawolf’s change of homeport is in line with the submarine force’s enhanced emphasis on Pacific Fleet operations, with 60 percent of US Navy submarine intended for permanent stationing in the Pacific Fleet, said Lt. Kyle Raines, Commander, Submarine Group 9 public affairs officer.

The submarine will join the aircraft carrier USS John C. Stennis (CVN 72) which is homeported in Bremerton, and eight Trident ballistic missile submarines homeported in NB Kitsap Bangor. The Navy is appropriately shifting its fleet to address the more serious threats in the Pacific, said Congressman Norm Dicks. It represents another indication of the growing importance of Puget Sound as a strategically-critical West Coast homeport.

The submarine was designed to operate autonomously against the world’s most capable submarine and surface threats, having the highest tactical speed of any United States submarine. Built in Groton, Conn., and commissioned in 1997, the 353-foot submarine was the first in its class, replacing the smaller Los Angeles-class submarine. The high-speed submarine will bring a 140 man

The Piper was directed to complete three missions during Clarkin's service. The first, he said, was a "wolf pack" duty where the sub served as a lifeguard for Allied ships that had been shot down in Japan and prevented Japanese forces from sending supplies to Iwo Jima. That was a 65-day-long patrol, he said. Following that mission was a trip to Japan's northern "polar region," joined by a Navy photographer, with the objective of scouting the area as a possible point for an Allied invasion. Action there, said Clarkin, included fog-covered skirmishes with enemy ships and the sub accidentally hitting a whale.

The third mission Clarkin was involved in found the sub's crew stationed in the mine fields of Japan's Yellow Sea. He was assigned look-out duty, and one evening the sub was rocked by a near-miss enemy charge. "I got hit bad by the force", he said. "They said I almost went overboard. I got out of look-out duty, anyway, before being put back into commission the next day."

Aug. 9, 1945: Nagasaki, Japan

Under the order of President Harry S. Truman, U.S. forces detonated nuclear forces over Nagasaki, Japan, on Aug. 9, 1945 — three days after nuclear-bombing on the city of Hiroshima.

"We were so close to Nagasaki, they dropped the second bomb and we were told, 'Go as deep as you can and stay down as long as you can until this thing blows over,' " said Clarkin. "We were probably too close for comfort."

'What are we gonna do with a girl?'

As the war in the Pacific approached its end, Clarkin said the Piper's crew received its orders to enter the Sea of Japan. It was there, he said, that the sub encountered and picked up two Japanese people from a sinking ship. One was thought to be a young girl. "What are we gonna do with a girl?" was the general question, Clarkin said, because standard prisoner-handling procedures at that time only addressed males.

It was only after setting up a sheet as a tent for her privacy and taking other measures, he said, that the crew realized the girl was, in fact, a young boy. Later that same day, the crew picked up four more Japanese prisoners, men who were floating at sea on a raft. "These guys didn't want to come on" board, he said. "They turned their backs, thinking we were going to shoot them."

As the post-war, idle weeks at sea wore on, Clarkin said the crew didn't forge friendships with the enemy prisoners — or vice versa — but the men did find in

crew as well as keep a continual supply of overhaul work and maintenance at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard.

For submariners in the area, the arrival of Seawolf represents much more, said Howard. With the fast attack presence, there comes an expansion of opportunity and a unique opportunity for our submarine Sailors. They will be able to expand their experience base, far beyond the traditional ballistic submarine structure that has been in place here for almost three decades.

Send a Marine an E-Mail

Ed. Note: Support as your conscience dictates.

"US Marine Colonel Simcock, the commander of USMC Regimental Combat Team 6 in Iraq, is asking for 6,000 positive emails to his Marines. That's one email for each Marine in his RCT command. COL Simcock is concerned about the effect of the negative barrage that those Marines are getting through the electronic media. I've attached an excerpt from an interview with him. So far, they've only mustered 2,000 emails. That's a crying shame compared to the amount of crap I get daily in email.

"This is a legitimate request. It's not one of the "little Johnny wants to break the world's record in Christmas cards" situations. It takes only 30 seconds of your time. Here's the address:

RCT-6lettersfromh@gcemnf-wiraq.usmc.mil

If you're reading this email, then you can probably click on the address, type a few words, and then hit "send" to be all done. It doesn't have to be the Gettysburg Address.

Something as simple as "Hello, Marine. We thank you for what you're doing. You are in a noble task. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise. Best wishes & get home soon" is more than sufficient.

Veterans Affairs Chief Nicholson Resigns

By Terence Hunt, The Associated Press, July 17, 2007

Veterans Affairs chief Jim Nicholson, who was forced to defend his agency's performance after revelations of shoddy health care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, announced Tuesday he is resigning to return to the private sector.

Nicholson has been head of the VA since February, 2005. Before that, he was U.S. ambassador to the

each other some reprieves to the general monotony of life aboard a submarine.

Clarkin said he and one prisoner occasionally took turns writing the same phrases in English and Japanese, respectively, on a Navy-issue handkerchief. The prisoner also drew on it a caricature of a Japanese warrior committing ritual suicide following defeat. That handkerchief was eventually given to the U.S. naval museum in New London, Conn.

'It was what you did'

Tubbs, who served in New London from 1968 to '71, didn't see war action but went out on numerous practice runs and maneuvers. He noted that he and both of his brothers — all Spartansburg natives — were in the service during the same period.

At a time when Vietnam War protests were common and occasionally quite visible, such events had no effect on the Tubbs' way of thinking. At least for the members of his family, service "was what you did." "There wasn't any question whether you were right or wrong, or what the policy of the United States was or anything else," he said — it was a simple matter of service to country.

Clarkin agreed, indicating that fighting in the war, for many, came without question. That being said, "none of us actually felt that we were going to survive the war. (Death in battle) just seemed inevitable. ... Every time we went out (on a mission), I said 'Hey, this is it.' "

'We're fading away'

Clarkin said that by the war's end, roughly 3,500 American submarine personnel had been killed in the line of duty, leaving around 7,000 veterans to be discharged from service. He said the last he checked, about 2,000 of those veterans are still living.

"So, we're fading away. We're dropping like flies." "But", he said, looking toward Tubbs, "they're the ones that are going to keep our legacy alive."



World War II vet John Clarkin talks in his home about his time spent on the USS Piper in the Pacific Ocean, including the time the submarine was ordered to dive down as far as it could go, for as long as it could stay down. Later he found out it was because an atomic bomb was being dropped on

Vatican.

Nicholson has overseen a vast network of 1,400 hospitals and clinics, which provide supplemental care and rehabilitation to 5.8 million veterans. Earlier this year, the VA was embarrassed by revelations of poor health care at Walter Reed for veterans wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Nicholson was named by President Bush to lead an interagency task force of seven Cabinet secretaries to determine what could be done immediately to improve veterans' care.

Nicholson defended the Veterans Administration, but acknowledged there is room for improvement.

'When you're seeing over 1 million patients a week, you have to be very good, and if there is any one patient who doesn't get the care that they deserve, that's unacceptable,' Nicholson said in March.

'The American people can feel very good about the health care system that their VA is providing to veterans,' Nicholson said then, 'but if there is a case where a veteran gets lost in the system, or suffers anxiety or their family does as a result of something we're not doing, that is unacceptable.'

Vietnam War Facts:

- 9,087,000 military personnel served on active duty during the official Vietnam era from 5 AUG 64 to 7 MAY 75.
- 2,709,918 Americans served in uniform in Vietnam which represented 9.7% of their generation.
- 240 men were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War
- --58,148 were killed in Vietnam. The first man to die was James Davis, in 1958. He was with the 509th Radio Research Station. Davis Station in Saigon was named for him.
- 75,000 were severely disabled of which 23,214 100% were disabled
- 5,283 lost limbs & 1,081 sustained multiple amputations
- Average age of men killed: 23.1 years. Of those killed, 61% were younger than 21, 11,465 of those were younger than 20 years old, and 17,539 were married
- Five men killed in Vietnam were only 16 years old. The oldest man killed was 62 years old.
- As of 15 JAN 04, there are 1,875 Americans still unaccounted for from the Vietnam War
- 97% of Vietnam Veterans were honorably



Reunion News

If you have information about a boat reunion that you want posted in the newsletter, please give me the details.

USS Lafayette SSBN 616 Reunion
October 24 – 27, 2007, Charleston, SC
Information: www.ssb616homestead.com

Uss Spinax SS 489 – 17-21 October – Charleston, SC
Terry Whitecar, 386-774-5873 – whitecar@iag.net

From the District Commander

Charleston Base Members:

The elections results are in and I have been duly elected as your District Commander. Thank you for your vote of confidence in performing the duties of District Commander. As the year moves forward, I will be completing all of the base visits. Yes, it has taken over a year to make every base meeting, however the geography is very large and Saturdays for me have been at a premium.

I visited First Coast Base, Jacksonville in July. They have their meetings on the third Saturday of the month at the American Legion directly outside the flyover for Mayport. That was my first time there. Their base is active in the boat sponsorship program and just recently entertained the USS Jacksonville when it made a port call in Mayport. The base has 52 members and had 29 members in attendance that day. I was welcomed as I am always with the depth charge drawing, and again was not the winner, however thoroughly enjoyed the group. I met a shipmate that knows Joe Funke, my COB on the Cavalla and Marvin (Maynard) Miller from the Skipjack. His friend told a bunch of lies about their liberty run in France. Marvin usually goes with me; however he had to see someone about a dog that day.

If you can make the Charter Ceremony for Piedmont Base, please do. It will be held on July 28th at 7:00 pm in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Bill Kennedy is already making plans to attend and I believe he has a joke to tell. If you need more information, please call me.

discharged

- 91% of Vietnam Veterans say they are glad they served
- 74% say they would serve again, even knowing the outcome
- Vietnam veterans have a lower unemployment rate than the same non-vet age groups.
- Vietnam veterans' personal income exceeds that of our non-veteran age group by more than 18%.
- 87% of Americans hold Vietnam Veterans in high esteem.
- There is no difference in drug usage between Vietnam Veterans and non-Vietnam Veterans of the same age group (Source: Veterans Administration Study)
- Vietnam Veterans are less likely to be in prison. Only one-half of one percent of Vietnam Veterans have been jailed for crimes.
- 85% of Vietnam Veterans made successful transitions to civilian life.

[Source: NM e-Veterans News 9 Jan 06 - Research accredited to Capt. Marshal Hanson, USNR (Ret.) & Statistical Source Capt. Scott Beaton]

The Things We Took For Granted... Civilians And Landlubbers Had No Idea!



The National Convention is coming up soon. I have seen that a few Charleston Members are making the cruise. I am not attending, however will send a representative in my place to attend the necessary meetings, so I can report back to the membership. The ship will be all Submariners, so the dress code has been relaxed and many of the activities have been organized specifically for USSVI.

I will close for now and in summary thank you again for the support in the past election. I promise to serve you and all district members to the best of my ability and to champion the issues that specifically affect our creed: *“To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the performance of their duties. That their deeds and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of constant motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States Government.”*

Jerry Stout, ERD4

MEDICARE/TRICARE Cuts Coming in January 2008

Stop MEDICARE/TRICARE Cuts of Physician Reimbursements; 10% Cut Scheduled for January 2008

With the Congressional August recess soon to be upon us, your elected officials will be in district for most of August. While they are nearby, please visit with them concerning the 10% MEDICARE (and thereby TRICARE) cuts in physician reimbursements automatically scheduled to take place in January 2008 as mandated by the Sustained Growth Rate (SGR) formula that has yet to be corrected by changing MEDICARE Law.

These MEDICARE cuts impact you as a military retiree in two ways:

1. TRICARE reimbursements are indexed as a percentage (max =100%) of MEDICARE Allowable Amount. Thus, even though you might not be MEDICARE eligible, your out of pocket medical expenses will increase.
2. Regardless of whether you have Basic TRICARE or TRICARE FOR LIFE, you might have difficulties finding a health care provider.

A recent American Medical Association survey of nearly 9,000 doctors shows that if the payment cut goes into effect:

- 60% of doctors would limit the number of new MEDICARE patients they accept;

Benefits Improvements Act of 2007

Please send the following message to your Senators

As a disabled career military veteran and your voting constituent, I ask for your co-sponsorship and active support of S. 1326, the Comprehensive Veterans Benefits Improvements Act of 2007, submitted by Senator Sanders.

The Comprehensive Veterans Benefits Improvements Act would make more than 25 separate changes to veterans' programs ranging from disability payments, to insurance premiums, to grants for disabled veterans to adapt their cars to make them easier to use. This legislation would address long-standing injustices in the VA and DoD benefit and retirement systems that veterans and their families have fought to correct for years. Among these changes are:

Repeal of the VA embargo of new enrollments of Category 8 veterans: Since January 2003, the VA estimates that more than 1.5 million category 8 veterans will have been denied enrollment in the VA health care system by fiscal year 2008.

Repeal of the prohibition against Concurrent Receipt which requires a dollar-for-dollar offset of military retired pay for disability compensation received from the VA. Retired pay is earned for a career of uniformed service and VA disability compensation is recompense for pain, suffering and lost future earning power due to service-connected disabilities. For that reason veterans should receive both payments and not have one offset the other.

Repeal of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation-Survivor Benefit Plan Offset: Under current law, the survivors of veterans who die as a result of service-connected causes are entitled to compensation known as dependency and indemnity compensation, DIC. In addition, military retirees can have deductions from their pay to purchase a survivors annuity. This is called the Survivor Benefit Plan, SBP. However, if the military spouse dies from service-connected causes his or her survivors will receive a SBP payment offset dollar for dollar by the amount of the DIC payment they receive. Like the offset between military retiree pay and VA disability payments, this SBP/DIC offset unfairly denies beneficiaries the full amount of 2 programs that are meant to compensate for different losses.

Improvement of the Veterans' Claims process and procedures: This legislation takes a new approach

- More than two-thirds would defer the purchase of needed information technology in 2008;
- 50% would reduce their staff; and
- 14% would stop treating patients entirely.

Scheduled SGR adjustments over the next nine years will amount to a 40% reduction in payments, while doctors' costs are expected to increase 20% during the same period.

In addition to asking for a reversal of the scheduled 10% cut, please ask your elected officials to eliminate the SGR formula.

- Please send the suggested letter to your elected officials.
- Please visit with them in August and provide them with your signed copy of this letter.

Find your elected officials here:

<http://capwiz.com/usdr/dbq/officials/>

Who is this handsome devil?



to improving the system for rating claims by creating an agency dedicated to electronically sharing clinical information between the VA and the DoD.

This legislation also amends other benefit programs important to veterans.

This legislation contains many other similar corrections and updates, bringing benefits into the 21st Century so that these programs are meaningful again. These are not controversial proposals. These changes are the least we can do to show our appreciation for those who sacrifice for their country.

This legislation should strengthen the current VA system so that it can fully provide for those veterans already in the system and those thousands more returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and all over the world that will soon come to the VA for care.

New how-to book just hit the shelves!

