



*World War II Submarine Veterans*



**"DEDICATED TO OUR SHIPMATES WHO SACRIFICED THEIR LIVES IN THE  
U.S. SUBMARINES DURING WORLD WAR II"**

**"CHARTERED BY THE U.S. CONGRESS - NOV 1981"  
SUBMARINE VETERANS OF WWII  
SWAMP FOX JOURNAL**



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Our next meeting will be at **Ryan's Family Steak House** 1314 North Main Street in Summerville, SC on **Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 1130 Summerville**. We look forward to seeing everyone at the meeting!

Invocation: Ed Stank; Robbie, Lunch: 1130-1215

Meeting Called to order: Ed Stanke  
Pledge of Allegiance: William Jones

Purpose of the Organization:  
Tolling of Lost boats: Ed and Lee

**ED Stank: President**  
No input

**Lee Allison: State Commander:**

To all of you that cant come to the meetings and would like a WWII Submarine Veterans Calendar , I can either mail one to you or stop by and bring it to you just let me know, my phone number is on the front page, for you widows of WWII let me know what wine

to bring, have the cheese and crackers at the ready... as you know the WWII Swamp fox chapter will stay the course even when WWII shuts down, as long as we have our associates willing to support us, and yes we wouldn't be here if we didn't have their support, from over 260 members we are down to 11 members at last count.

Summerville High school on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month "October" at the foot ball game will be honoring all WWII members, their combined ROTC will be hosting the half time show and want to honor the WWII Veterans. So far we have Lee, Willie, and John Hill and hopefully Stacy and possibly Pappy Henderson, this is on the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month... Don't forget the Kings Bay WWII memorial next month...

Oh I forgot on the WWII Calendars there will be a printing next year for the last issue, should be a special one. Don't forget about the Pig Roast at Short stay, no charge to WWII members *The Charleston Base Christmas Party will be on 3December 2011. It will be held at the same location as the past several years; Gatherings in beautiful downtown Dorchester, SC*

Lee

Minutes of the last meeting

Meeting WWII SS Aug 2011, Invocation and Blessing Roger Gibson;

Lee Allison informed every one about the death of "Panama" Jack Stevenson.

Lunch: 1200 Meeting called to order by George Scharf, VP, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Willie Jones. This was followed by silent prayer. Tolling of the ell ceremony was conducted for the boats sunk during July and August; Each Boat tolled was read by a Veteran of WWII. We also told the bell for the loss of Panama Jack.

State Commander Lee introduced all the WWII Sub-vets and their relatives. He stated that National will decide the closing date at the 2012 combined convention in Norfolk.. Lee told two sea stories, making 3rd class and baking a cake for a ships party that got him transferred because he bad mouthed a "Chief".

He mentioned the need to sell the calendars.

**THE CHRISTMAS PARTY WILL BE ON 8 DECEMBER AT RYAN'S STARTING AT 11:30.**

Robby gave the Minutes orally due to his lateness on giving them to the editor. Introduced two new WWII Sub-Vets Gary Williams and the COB Rich Sparger; Sparger Chef extraordinary?.

George gave the Treasurer report: financial report. Discussed COB! The Hog Roast will be at Short Stay Recreation Center, on Oct 20<sup>th</sup> All WWII Vets are free all others will be \$5.00.

Old Business Lee covered the importance of the Sale of Calendars as any profit will go towards the maintenance of the Amberjack/WWII Lost Submarine memorial.

New Business none: Good of the Order None, Benediction and meeting. Adjournment

**News letter editor, Roger**

A Herd of cows, A Flock of chickens...The English language has some wonderfully anthropomorphic collective nouns for various groups of animals. We are all familiar with a Herd of cows, a Flock of chickens, a School of fish and a Gaggle of geese. However, less widely known is a Pride of lions, a Murder of crows (as well as their cousins the rooks and ravens), an Exaltation of doves and, presumably because they look so wise, a Parliament of owls.

Now consider a group of Baboons. They are the loudest, most dangerous, most obnoxious, most viciously aggressive and least intelligent of all primates. And what is the proper collective noun for a group of baboons? **Believe it or not!**

**A Congress! I guess that pretty much explains the things that come out of Washington!**

### Sign In Front of a Business in North Dakota

We would rather do business with a 1000 AL Qaeda Terrorists then with one single American Soldier

This sign was prominently displayed in front of a business in North Dakota and you are probably outraged at the thought of such an inflammatory sign. However, we are a society which holds Freedom of Speech as perhaps one of our greatest liberties. And after all, it is only a sign, right? You may ask: "What kind of business would dare post such a sign?"

**Answer: A Funeral Home!** Who said morticians had no sense of humor? You got to love it! This proves that the context of the message is as important as the message.

**God Bless AMERICA and keep our Troops Safe and Well!**

SS 165 Bass



# Jack Stevenson Cob

## Submarine Veteran World War Two Swamp Fox Chapter Charleston South Carolina Base



### *USS BASS (SS-164)*

#### **FIRE IN THE AFTER BATTERY**

This is a recollection of a fire on the USS Bass (SS-164) told by BMC (SS) Jack Stevenson who served on her from 1940 till 1943. Jack is known to his friends and shipmates as "Panama Jack" and resides in Colorado. Jack served in the Navy from 1936 until his retirement in 1958 and had tours as a Chief of the Boat (COB) aboard the USS Cob (SS-164), USS Sennet (SS-408) and USS Sea Cat (SS-399). Jack is a member of the Submarine Veterans of WWII and the Submarine Veterans, Charleston Base.

The Bass (SS-164) was the first fleet type submarine built and was commissioned in 1925. She was 342' long with a displacement of 2,000 tons surfaced and 2620 tons submerged. She had a surface speed of over 19 knots and submerged speed of 9 knots. Her test depth was around 200' and had a range of about 6000 nautical miles with a crew of 50 enlisted and 6 officers. She had an unusual design as the engine rooms were split forward and aft which probably led to the severity of the fire. The forward engine room was used for power and drove the ships generators and the aft engine room was directly coupled to the shafts and was used for propulsion. After the fire she was converted to a cargo submarine and the after engine room was removed and the forward engine room was used to charge the batteries for propulsion. 1 In the summer of 1942 the USS Bass (SS-164) was deployed on her fourth war patrol from her base in Coco Solo, Panama. In the early morning of 17 August, 1942 with her batteries fully charged she made a trim dive. The electrician was taking readings in the after battery when he heard a gurgling noise coming from the battery blower. He shined his flashlight on the blower and saw smoke coming from the intake. He immediately shouted "Fire in the After Battery" and turned on the lights to alert the crew in the berthing area directly above the after battery. Batteries in the forward end of the compartment started exploding so he headed forward to the maneuvering room and sealing the compartment but shutting and dogging the watertight doors behind him.

There were about 16 men sleeping in the crew's quarters above the after battery and crew members were furiously attempting to wake them and send them aft. There was heavy smoke and fire in the after battery and the men evacuated the compartment heading to the after torpedo room. 2 remaining men evacuated the compartment through the fire to maneuvering room and continued to the control room to assist in damage control efforts. A single sailor was left not noticed and remained in the After Battery. The ship started to

blow fuel overboard and blew the ballast tanks to surface the boat. A rough ride to the surface ensued as the Bass had an unusual profile, with a bulbous, shark-like bow which was intended to add reserve buoyancy—a design which proved a miserable failure, as the "B" class submarines proved to be very poor sea keepers. Heavy smoke spread throughout the ship and crewmembers had donned Breathing Apparatus known as RBA'S. After surfacing the Commanding Officer, LCDR Anthony Dropp had the bridge manned and ordered the After Torpedo Room loading hatch opened to evacuate the crew. When the hatch was opened a lot of pressure was released due to the heavy smoke and fire in the aft compartments. Two crewmembers went into the After Torpedo Room and started dragging men to the bottom of the ladder where they were brought topside. A rotation of men was employed due to the heavy smoke, fire and high temperatures in the After Torpedo Room. A total of 27 men were evacuated and given Artificial Respiration and oxygen for several hours, but only two men were revived. Another sailor who was trapped in the After Battery was discovered after the fire was brought under control.

The boat was finally able to contact Pearl Harbor and was ordered to proceed back through the canal to Costa Rica. The 26 deceased men were brought below and placed in a small berthing compartment above the generators in the forward engine room. The next day the submarine tender *Antaeus* (AS-21) moored with the boat removed the deceased and replenished our CO2. The CO2 was needed as we were using the savage system and the CO2 to maintain a positive pressure in the After Torpedo to the After Battery due to the extensive damage the boat suffered and prevent a re-flash of the fire. The *Antaeus* (AS-21) escorted us until we reached the Gulf of Dulce, Costa Rica. The boat then transited to Balboa, Panama and remained there when she ordered to Philadelphia Naval Shipyard for repairs. The boat was unable to submerge so she traveled on the surface as part of a British Convoy until mooring in at the Bush terminal on the East River in Brooklyn New York. After a few days we proceeded to Philadelphia Navy Yard and converted to a submarine cargo carrier. The after engine room, all torpedo tubes and the deck gun were removed. The after engine room was made the main storage area. The conversion took about two years to complete due to many experiments. We lived in unbearable living conditions and suffered terrible experiences during this time. Finally, the navy gave up on this experiment and all three ships of this class were decommissioned in March of 1945 and scuttled off Block Island to serve as sonar target. The 26 young men who lost their life aboard the USS Bass (SS-164) were buried in Corozal American Cemetery, Panama. The legacy of the USS Bass was that during her 15 years of active service in a poorly designed boat that experienced many hardships was that her survivors provided wonderful training to the boats they served on during the remainder of the war.

*Jack*



Jack is on eternal patrol with his shipmates  
Rest your oar's shipmate, we have the watch