



USS Virginia Base Deep Water Gazette

Second Quarter – April 2014

The Little Base That ~~can~~ Does



**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.**

Base Commander

Greetings

fellow

undersea

warriors and

welcome to the second of our
new quarterly newsletters! I

again want to thank John

Mosticone for taking on this
project and I wish him well with

it - although I have not been
very cooperative in getting my
input to him in a timely manner
- sorry 'bout that John!



By the time you read this Della
and I will either be just getting
underway for, attending or just
returning from, the USSVI
Southeast Regional Conference
2014 in Cary, North Carolina
April 7-11. We're also going to
take a couple of days enroute
to visit a dear friend in
Greensboro, NC so we are very

much looking forward to this
trip. Although registration for
this particular conference has
already closed I would like to
take this opportunity to
encourage all members who are
able to travel to consider
attending an event like this
whenever possible. Although
similar to the larger National
Conventions in that they have
hospitality suites, sponsored
tours and a banquet dinner with
a guest speaker, these smaller
conferences have a "boat
reunion" type feel to them and
it's easy to get comfortable
right away with the attendees
and jump in with sea stories and
comparisons of your service
experiences. I'll be sure to let
you all know how it went when
we return - and will probably
put some of our experiences in
the next newsletter as well as
an e-mail. We'll be gone through
the week of our April meeting

so Vice Commander Pete Fortier has agreed to run the April 10th meeting - thanks Pete!

I recently added a "Meeting Minutes" section to our web site and have already posted the December 2013 minutes there. I have received the January and March meeting minutes from our Secretary, Bill Anderson, and will also get those posted as soon as I locate one of those Round Toit coins. Having our meeting minutes on our web site will be helpful for those of us who like to look back and check on what was said and voted on so we can be reminded to complete whatever action we committed to. John will also be publishing some or all of the minutes in the quarterly newsletters - which are also being posted to our web site - but by breaking the minutes out by month on the web site it will be easier to review them. As I like to say - "When in doubt, over route".

I sent an e-mail to All Base Members on March 15th, which

was a forward of Bill Andrea's message announcing a new USSVI sponsored document titled "Base Commander Qualification Card". Bill's message advised that the card was located at www.ussvi.org - and then click the "Documents" button, then the "Manuals" Button. I thought this was too geeky for our crowd so I downloaded it and attached it directly to my message for your convenience. I also plan on eventually posting it to our web site so it can be more easily accessed - but if you can't find the copy I sent out let me know and I'll get one to you. I bring this up again because I like the idea and it should help our members prepare to serve as Base Commander. As I've previously announced I intend for this year to be my last as your Base Commander. Seven years in the position is quite sufficient I think, although I'll continue as a member and attend as many meetings as I can. I took on this job without any special training and without a qualification check-list so

that's why I'm promoting this particular idea. Being qualified in submarines means we have all had to complete a check-list similar to this for the boats we qualified and re-qualified on. I still have my original qual card from 1962 and it brings back memories from those days of working on my quals aboard a Guppy IIA and trying to stay off the dink list. I later served as the Qualification Chief Petty Officer aboard USS John C. Calhoun (SSBN-630)(Gold) so I have a good understanding of the process from that perspective also. This card is designed to help you become more knowledgeable about your organization, how and when to accomplish some tasks, and where, if not listed here, to find answers. This card is a self-qualification card (you sign yourself off when items are completed), and is completely voluntary. You retain a copy and send one copy to the Base Commander Group Chairman, who will, in turn, send you a "BASE COMMANDER CERTIFIED" patch. This

process should be completed within the first 3 months of your election as Base Commander or by those seeking that position. Please consider taking on this task - even if you don't intend to seek the elected office position of Base Commander.

I'll sign off with another reminder that we'll be inducting three members into the Holland Club at our May 8th meeting - plus our District Commander, Steve Bell, will be joining us for that meeting. Our Holland Club class of 2014 consists of: Doug Blaha, Sandy Harvey and Bob Kutzenberger - who all qualified in 1964. Family and guests are always invited to these inductions - and bring your cameras so you can share the photos with the inductees.

Greenboard/Straightboard,
God bless and all the best!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen McDermott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Karen" being more prominent than the last name "McDermott".

LT, USN (Ret)

Boats Lost This Quarter



APRIL --

USS Pickerel (SS-177) was lost on **3-Apr-1943** with the loss of **74 crew** when it was sunk within lumen of Shiramuka Light off Honshu. (AKA Shiranuka Light)

USS Grenadier (SS-210) was scuttled **22-Apr-1943** after serious damage by aircraft near Penang, ~ 10 Miles West of Lem Voalan Strait **61 crew** were taken prisoner, **57** survived the war.

USS Gudgeon (SS-211) was lost on **18 April-1944** with the loss of **80 crew** when it was sunk off Saipan near Maug Island.

On 18 April. WDR date spread 4-7-44 to 5-12-44

USS Snook (SS-279) was lost sometime after **8-Apr-1945** with the loss of **84 crew** when it was sunk within 100 miles East of 18° 40N; 111° 39E, near Hainan Island

USS Thresher (SSN-593) was lost on **10-Apr-1963** with the loss of **129 crew and yard workers** when it was sunk while on sea trials near Isle of Shoals.

MAY --

USS Squalus (SS-192) was lost on **23-May-1939** with a loss of **26 crew**, **33** rescued when it flooded and sank off Portsmouth, NH.

USS Lagarto (SS-371) was lost on or shortly after **4-May-1945** with the loss of **88 crew** when it was sunk in off Malay Coast in or near the Gulf of Siam 7° 55N; 102° 00E.

The Lagarto has been located and the US Navy is aware of her location and the condition of the hull.

USS Stickleback (SS-415) was lost on **30-May-1958** when it sank off Hawaii while being towed, after collision with *USS Silverstein (DE-534)*. **All the crew were taken off prior to sinking.**

USS Scorpion (SSN-589) was lost on **27-May-1968** with the loss of **99 crew** when it was sunk while in transit from Med, West of Azores.

JUNE --

USS O-9 (SS-70) was lost on **20-Jun-1941** with the loss of **34 crew** when it foundered off Isle of Shoals, 15 miles from Portsmouth NH, 42° 59' 48N - 20° 20' 27W

USS S-27 (SS-132) was lost on **19-Jun-1942** when it grounded off Amchitka Island, 400 yds off island Near St Makarius Point (near Constantine Harbor), **all the crew were rescued.**

USS R-12 (SS-89) was lost on **12-Jun-1943** with the loss of **42 crew** when it foundered off Key West, 24° 24' 30N - 81° 28' 30"W

USS Herring (SS-233) was lost on **1-Jun-1944** with the loss of **80 crew** when it was sunk within shore battery range of Point Tagan, Matsuwa Island, in Kuriles.

USS Golet (SS-361) was lost on **14-Jun-1944** with the loss of **82 crew** when it was sunk near 41° 04N - 14° 13E

USS Bonefish (SS-223) was lost on **18-Jun-1945** with the loss of **86 crew** when it was sunk in Toyama Wan; Near Suzu Misaki; 37° 18N - 137° 25E;

District Commander Steve Bell



The Sailor of the Year event went very well this year. The only bump in the road for us was the doubling of the amount of sailors that were runners-up. That just cut in half the amount of a monetary gift that was given to them, but it still worked out okay. I would like to thank the USS VIRGINIA Base for their generous contribution.

Our National election is just around the corner for us. I ask each of you to take the few minutes needed to review the next edition of the American Submariner. It will have the biographies of those running for office. There is no competition for either of the Vice Commanders (so that becomes simple). The other offices, including our Regional Director, have two people running. I suggest that you review the biographies of each one and make an educated selection. Now that I have sat on the BOD

for a few months now, I have formed my own opinion regarding the National Commander, having seen each in action. There are also several proposed amendments that need to be voted on. I ask you to read them as well prior to your selection. More information regarding them will be in my forthcoming newsletter (which might be out before this newsletter). ***This is your organization so please take the time to do your homework and vote.*** It would be nice to see a large percentage of the district vote.

Spring should have sprung by the time you read this. I know many of you will be out doing yard work, washing vehicles, and all those things we refused to do during the winter. Even so, please keep your ear to the ground for new members. We as an organization have been flat for the last few years and we just need to grow. We all know other submarine sailors that are not part of USSVI. It is not really all that important if they cannot be a member of your base (but they can do that if they want anyway) but just get them in USSVI. We all know that one does not have to dedicate his life to the organization, but do whatever amount of effort they desire. We need the members, and in some case, new members can find something that they can enjoy, even if it is only periodically. Remember, *all of us are part of the Membership Committee*. Please help out your organization and maybe even your base.

I plan to be at your meeting in May. Seems we might be inducting a few members into the Holland Club. Always an exciting time. I look forward to seeing many of you at that time and enjoying the treats at your new venue. In the meantime, stay safe and stay healthy.

Steve Bell

District One Commander

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the Month of March 2014 On 3/13/2014

- February 2014 Meeting was cancelled due a Snow Storm
- Meeting was held at Anna's Restaurant & Pizzeria
 - Lasagna, pizza and salad were on the buffet menu
- 16 members and 5 guest were present
- Marie Padgett won the 50/50 raffle and received \$50.00
- The Ladies were excused
- At 1900 Base Commander Kenn McDermott called the meeting to order
 - Kenn McDermott gave the opening prayer and lead the Pledge of Allegiance, USSVI Creed and Tolling of the Boats, assisted by Base Storekeeper Bob Kutzenberger
 - 8 Boats were lost during the month of March with the loss of 425 crewmen
- Birthdays for the Month of March
 - Mickey loses
- Regional Director Dick Kanning gave a "BZ" to Jim Lencalis for his work on the End of Year reports required by USSVI
- Treasurer's Report was read and approved
 - January 2014 to March 2014

Balance as of 1/9/2014 \$4363.99

Deposits \$229.00

Expenditures \$738.83

Balance as of 3/13/2013 \$3845.16

- Secretary's Report was read and approved
- Due to Kenn McDermott attending the USSVI Southeast Regional Conference, he and Della will not be attending next month meeting. Pete Fortier will be leading the meeting
- More discussion on the newsletter

- Deadline for articles is March 21st
- New sections being added
 - Bulletin Board
 - Member Bio
- A discussion about the Hampton Roads Base mission to have a USSVI Virginia license plate
- Kenn McDermott gave the closing prayer
- The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2000

Respectfully
Bill Anderson
Base Secretary

COB's Locker

"Field days will continue until moral improves"
Our Base COB position is presently open and we are looking for an able body submariner to fill the position. Please contact the Base Commander if you feel you have a few minutes to contribute at the meetings.

Chaplin's Corner

Our base Chaplin position is presently open and we are looking for an able body submariner to fill the position. Please contact the Base Commander if you feel the calling to serve.



When God Created a Submariner

CAPT Jane F. Vieira
Chaplain Corps, United States Navy

When the good Lord created a Submariner, it was almost 2300 on the sixth day. An angel appeared and said, "You're having a lot of trouble with this one. What's wrong with the standard model?"

And the Lord replied, "Have you seen the specs on this order? It has to be able to think independently, yet be able to take orders; have the qualities of both a scientific mind and a compassionate heart; be able to mentor juniors and learn from seniors; run on black coffee; handle emergencies without a Damage Control Manual, respond competently to critical incidents, decipher cryptographic codes, understand pneumatics, hydraulics and sonar, have the patience of a saint and six pairs of hands, not to mention the strength of three its size."

The angel shook its head slowly and said, "Six pairs of hands - - No way!"

And the Lord answered, "Don't worry, we'll make other Submariners to help. Besides it's not the hands which are causing the problem. It's the heart. It must swell with pride when a Shipmate earns his Silver Dolphins - which above all else signifies the crew members trust it with their lives, sustain the incredible hardship of life at sea in a steel tube, beat on soundly when it's too tired to do so, and be strong enough to continue to carry on when it's given all it had."

"Lord," said the angel touching the Lord's sleeve gently, "Stop! It's almost midnight!"

"I can't," said the Lord. "I'm so close to creating something unique. Already I have one whose hands blend knowledge with skill to perform the most intricate procedures, yet are strong enough to patch a ruptured seawater pipe; whose ears can discern the sonar sounds of a myriad of ocean life, yet detect the slightest shift in ventilation; whose mind can practice the science of nuclear submarining, yet not lose sight of the art of teamwork; and whose eyes can peer through a periscope to identify a hull down

ship, yet search within to embrace and personify honor, courage and commitment."

The angel circled the model of the Submariner very slowly. "It's too serious," the angel sighed.

"But tough," said the Lord excitedly. "You cannot imagine what this Submariner can do or endure."

"Can it feel?" asked the angel.

"Can it feel! It loves Ship, Shipmates and Country like no other!"

Finally the angel bent over and ran a finger across the Submariner's cheek. "There's a leak," pronounced the angel. "I told you you're trying to put too much into this model."

"That's not a leak," said the Lord. "It's a tear."

"What's it for?" asked the angel.

"It's for joy, sadness, disappointment, pain, frustration and pride!"

"You're a genius!" exclaimed the angel.

The Lord looked pleased and replied, "I didn't put it there."

Filled with pride, the Lord continued, "Great things are planned for this Submariner. It will be one of many and together they will lead a legacy of excellence like none has known before."

And with that the Lord rested. It was the seventh day.

Elected Officers:

Commander – Kenn McDermott

kennmcd@pewterguy.com 434-286-2529

Vice Commander – Pete Fortier

p4tier@comcast.net

Secretary – Bill Anderson

ftb1ss@comcast.net

Treasurer – Jim Lencalis

j.lencalis@comcast.net

Appointed Officers:

Newsletter Editor - John Mosticone

jmosticone@gmail.com 540-672-4398

Ways & Means - John Lamsens

jlamsens@verizon.net

Nominating Committee - Thurman Register

thurman@tbrinc.com

Storekeeper - Bob Kutzenberger

kutzb@comcast.net 804-556-6932

Holland Club Members

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Paul Benton | 1958 SSR-269 |
| Dick Brown | 1959 SS-424 |
| Tom Chaffee | 1963 SS-331 |
| Bill Hiesley | 1957 SS-403 |
| Dick Kanning | 1962 SS-240 |
| Bill Lewis | 1963 SS-272 |
| Mickey Martin | 1957 SS-352 |
| Kenn McDermott | 1962 SS-385 |
| Richard Moore | 1960 SS-269 |
| Ron Randolph | 1963 SSBN-617 |
| Thurman Register | 1961 SS-523 |
| Pat Rodgers | 1951 SS-482 |
| Warren Rucker | 1951 SS-523 |
| "Doc" Smith | 1956 SS-476 |
| Bob Stolarz | 1962 SS-395 |
| Bill Wellner | 1961 SS-422 |

Note: We will be inducting Doug Blaha, Sandy Harvey and Bob Kutzenberger into the Holland Club on May 8th, 2014. Please join us for that meeting & ceremony.

Welcome Aboard

No new members last quarter.

Base Eternal Patrol

Jack Winn (founding Commander)

Sid Padgett (WWII sub vet)

Bob Mitchell FTC(SS), USN (Ret)



Crew Birthday's

Patrick E. Rodgers 4/22/29

Michael E. Martin 4/19/39

Thurman B. Register 4/12/40

William L. Besley 4/11/44

John M Mosticone 5/16/46

Robert Mayfield 5/23/54

Warren P Rucker 6/3/33

Douglas D. Blaha 6/22/38

Thomas Critelli 6/17/44

Peter E. Fortier 6/5/46

Cary L. Carroll 6/3/70

Upcoming Events

04/10 Base Monthly Meeting

05/08 Base Monthly Meeting

06/12 Base Monthly Meeting

Ships Store

Be sure to visit our Ships Store at:

<http://ussvirginiabase.org/ship-s-store.html>



Base Bulletin Board

| National Convention 2014 | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Welcome to the 2014 Golden Anniversary USSVI Convention in San Francisco. Download Plan of the Day and Registration form from the website linked below under "Registration" (The Download Forms link below does not work.) | September 1st to 7th, 2014 Hyatt Regency Hotel, Burlingame CA |  of meeting site | Contact: Steve Paganelli  |
| Visit website: http://www.ussvigoldenanniversary2014sf.org/ Download forms: http://www.ussvigoldenanniversary2014sf.org/uploads/2014_Convention_Final_b.pdf | | | |

Reading Locker

* Ever wonder about the origins of the DBF insignia?



This is the original DBF design that started the "Diesel Boats Forever" movement. Designed and drawn by Lee Figuerido. West Pac 1970

The Diesel Boats Forever Insignia was an unofficial uniform breast pin worn in violation of uniform regulations by some officers and men of the United States Navy's Submarine Service in the 1970s.

The United States Navy authorizes the Submarine Combat Patrol Insignia for war patrols in any submarine, and the SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia for any patrols in a nuclear ballistic missile submarine. However, there was no way for a diesel boat submariner to earn a recognition pin in peacetime, a situation that exacerbated the natural rivalry between the two groups of submariners. (Regulus missile patrols did not earn the SSBN patrol pin at that time.)

During the 1950s and 1960s, the early classes of nuclear submarines suffered reliability problems, and on occasion were unable to complete their various missions. In 1969, USS Barbel (SS-580) was ordered to Japan to relieve a nuclear attack submarine that suffered such

a casualty. As the crew celebrated the nuclear boat's misfortune, they held a contest to design a pin recognizing when a diesel boat needed to take a "broke-down nuke boat's" mission.

The winning design, submitted by former commercial artist ETR3 (SS) Leon Figuredo, showed a guppy submarine embraced by two mermaids (sea hags), along with the letters "DBF." Holes in the scroll allowed for stars to be added for subsequent awards.

Upon arrival at Yokosuka, the design was taken to "the Thieves' Alley" where a local craftsman made up one thousand pins, some gilt for the officers and some in natural (gray) color for the men. When the Barbels picked up their pins, they made the mistake of leaving the die with the craftsman.

The original intent of the Barbels was that the pin (and subsequent stars) would be awarded to the crews of diesel boats that relieved nuke boats. The Yokosuka craftsman, however, began producing and selling the pins to anyone who wanted one.

In 1970 a drawing was sent to the Navy Department for official approval, which was never given. Without official support, the "proper" display of the pin was impossible to enforce, even with the cooperation of lenient commanders. The original intent of "times a diesel relieved a nuke" was

lost, and the most common meaning of the stars became "number of diesel boats served on."

* NATIONAL OFFICER & REGION DIRECTOR CANDIDATES 2014

Submitted by: Tom Conlon
Natl Secretary & Nominations Chairman on 3/4/2014

NATIONAL COMMANDER
Al Singleman, Albany-Saratoga Base
Wayne Standerfer, Dallas Base

NATIONAL SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER
John Markiewicz, Cyberspace Base, First Coast Base

NATIONAL JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER
Bill Andrea, South Florida Base

NATIONAL SECRETARY
Ken Recoy, Batfish Base
Ray Wewers, Razorback Base

NATIONAL TREASURER
Paul Hiser, Tarheel Base
Byron Stratton, USS Oklahoma City Base

NORTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR
Mike Naughton, Capitol Base

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL DIRECTOR
Dick Kanning, Tarheel Base
Brian Steffen, Palmetto Base

CENTRAL REGION DIRECTOR
Dave Farran, Iowa Base
Jim Fox, Cowtown Base

WESTERN REGION DIRECTOR

*The Runaway Punt
by Paul D. Benton ©1997

Long before a high bridge spanned the bay between Coronado Island and San Diego, and before the Navy's last operating seaplanes stopped vying for space in the channel with ships and small boats- even before the submariner's elusive dream of pier space all their own, not to be shared with the skimmers, was fulfilled at Point Loma- Two Submarine tenders were moored to buoys in San Diego Bay. Then San Diego was a small "Navy town" with an aircraft manufacturing industry and the best weather in the 48 States. The weather has not changed.

The bow of both Nereus and Sperry were each moored to a permanent buoy, while anchors and ground tackle laid out aft kept the ships from swinging around their buoys, and in line fore and aft to each other. Nereus, with Submarine Squadron 5 embarked and several pig boats nested outboard to port, pointed toward Point Loma and the bay's entrance. Sperry and Submarine Squadron 3, also with its pig boats moored fast alongside to port, was a safe distance aft. Legend holds that submarines were dubbed "Pig Boats" because when alongside their tender, they resembled suckling pigs at the sow. The mooring buoys were close to the Coast Guard's seaplane ramp on the San Diego side, and in line with the NAS North Island's seaplane ramps. The tenders could be seen almost anywhere from the downtown Embarcadero area; however, there was a particularly good view for the tourists from the newly constructed Shelter Island.

The submariners rode in small boats every day, evening, and night to get on the beach from the nests and to return. If a sailor had an extra quarter in his pocket;

"Goofy", "Barney Googles", "Minnie Mouse" or one of the many other sleek covered launches of the United Water Taxi were the fastest way to the foot of Broadway. Their boats were fast, clean, and barring extremely foul weather- mostly on time. If a sailor did not have the fare, then the Navy's launches were free. But they were usually crowded; on a sparse schedule; strictly regulated; and sometimes made additional stops at the Sound Lab on Point Loma, or Coast Guard Landing before the 25 minute ride to the Fleet Landing- several blocks south of Broadway. Because of their extra pay, submariners could afford the 15 minute ride in the frequent water taxis, while most of the skimmers rode the Navy's boats.

Waiting at the water taxi terminal for a late shipmate or for a boat to be called away could be quite an experience. Often summertime tourists, who frequently strolled by sightseeing, would walk up and chat with the sailors about the Navy and the ships. Once they found a submariner they would bend an ear for as long as he was there. This wasn't a one way street either- most would offer to buy a round of cold drinks or other refreshments, and pass around cigarettes. These people were interested in our work and proud of their Navy, and were especially awed by Submarines- it was no trouble to talk with them and puff out your chest with pride in your boat and fellow citizens. However, there was some hi-jinx and Smoke Stacking in the wee hours, but the Shore Patrol CPO who frequented that part of Harbor Drive ran a tight watch and kept things in order.

There were, in regard to servicing boats alongside, arguable differences between the two tenders: One had a better electrical repair shop- the other a better Gyro shop. One had a better machine shop- the other a better torpedo shop. One would

let the sub-sailors pick up small items (nuts, bolts, tape, etc.) without a requisition- the other insisted on the correct paperwork for everything. There was, however, no argument over which tender had the best Gedunk. The Nereus' Gedunk was substandard. Pogeys, bait and canned soda were the only treats offered to the skimmers, and the occasional submariners who dropped in for a Coke. Sperry was another matter- anything which wasn't completely up to par, as far as services provided to the boats alongside were concerned- was redeemed by the excellence of her Gedunk. Once when Nereus was underway Sparky discovered this truth.

Sparky's boat had to moor in the nest alongside Sperry to finish a minor repair period. The gedunk area was near the double doors in the side of the hull where the submarine sailors regularly passed to cross the brow from the nested boats to get to the tender's Quarter-deck and the liberty boats. For Sparky it was love at first sight. This was not the run of the mill gedunk with canned soda languishing in the rusty tepid water of waist high steel ice chests; and with open boxes of assorted candy bars, pretzels, and potato chips strewn about on a small table behind the server at the counter. All most unappetizing. Sperry had a real soda fountain, where each frosty delight was concocted individually by an attendant wearing a white jacket.

Waiting in line for his turn at the counter, Sparky was overwhelmed by anticipation watching the master of the gedunk ply his expertise. This maestro of the soda fountain, could mix two sodas at a time: Pulling a lever on one of the two high curved spigots, which resembled draught beer dispensers, he directed carbonated water with the business end of a long handled mixing spoon, into tall paper cups of ice cream and flavoring set to either side of the spigots

mouth. First into the one cup, then into the other- spilling nary a drop. Simultaneously two steel cups full of fresh milk, hand dipped ice cream, and flavored syrup hung from green whirring- buzzing mixers- blending "milk shakes" for the Southern boys, or "ice cream frappes" for the Easterners. This was just like the Ice Cream Parlor in the Speckles Hotel over on Broadway. There were even benches to sit on while enjoying the confections; and tidbits neatly displayed in a glass case to tempt those waiting in line into spending an extra dime. This is what was on Sparky's mind that fateful day.

Previously, in other Sea Stories, I have explained that my shipmate Sparky had not always been a sparky. Having never met a job in a submarine which he didn't like, Sparky had worked in the boat's Operations Department as a Sonar and Radar operator. Later as a Nuke he was trained as an Electronics Technician. Then after sliding into disfavor with the fuckin'-nukes, he was salvaged by a wily old Master Chief Electricians Mate who knew that young men full of piss and vinegar needed purpose and direction. Thus he became a sparky. However, before ending his meandering down these various pathways, later to focus on a meaningful Navy career, Sparky was an apprentice seaman hard at work in the deck gang.

Submariners in the deck gang actually worked for the Weapons Officer, and usually a senior Gunners Mate left over from deck gun days. Their job was to do most everything which the other crew members were not assigned to do: Be lookouts and plainmen underway. Load torpedoes, small arms ammunition, and pyrotechnics. Man the two 50 caliber machine guns, the only crew served weapons aboard, and keep the topside areas in ship shape condition. The most important job topside was to fight rust and to

maintain the paint scheme. Generally parts of the boat, like the tank tops and planes, which might be visible from the surface were painted dull black, while the tall sail and sides of the superstructure above the tank tops were gray. The dull gray, darker than on the other boats, was especially suited for camouflage in Arctic operations.

Sparky and his mates actually did a good job, when they had the proper supervision. Notwithstanding, the time the tender filled their requisition with the wrong type of gray paint. Instead of flat gray paint, they had received enamel gray. In their trust and ignorance in the Navy's supply system, they dutifully spray painted the sail in record time. She shone like the Sun from dawn to dusk, until months later when she went into the shipyard for a sand blast and regulation paint job.

Actually it was the superiority of the Sperry's gedunk and the need to paint the boat which precipitated the incident of the punt. The boat was the furthest outboard in the nest. The gunners mate had gotten low pressure air blown into the main ballast tanks to raise her tank tops higher than usual out of the water; and also to list the boat first to one side- to be cleaned of light rust and grassy growth and painted- then listed to the other side for more of the same. To make the job easier and a bit safer for Sparky and his mates in the deck gang, the gunners mate had arranged to borrow the Nereus' paint punt from one of his old pals on the tender. The punt was a small flat bottom, slab sided, rude wooden boat about 12 feet long, and blunt on each end. Its purpose was to be drawn by ropes from the main deck around the ship's waterline, where its two passengers could clean and touch up the waterline paint job of the tender. Submariners did not normally use a punt for this work, but with a paint gun in one

hand and holding a rope tied about their waist with the other hand, swung like monkeys from the rope attached to the boat's deck. They rappelled in a wide arc with their feet while spraying flat black paint in the general direction of the tank tops. After moving to another spot they repeated this procedure until most of the tank tops were- sort of- painted. The problem was that the tank tops began to taper and narrow just forward of the sail and could not be painted in this fashion. Thence the gunners mate's innovation of using the Nereus' paint punt.

The gunners mate gave his troops their working orders, then he went on the beach early- as he said, "...to inspect yards and docks...". Pulling the workers around the boat's waterline in the paint punt was so much more efficient than swinging from monkey ropes that Sparky and the boys finished painting the outboard side that first afternoon. Since it was mid afternoon and the work was progressing so well, they decided not to mix a fresh pot of paint but do a quick clean up and finish painting the other side of the boat the next day. This by itself was not altogether a wrong decision.

It had been a beautiful Summer day on the San Diego Bay, calm with almost no wind, which helped in painting the waterline, but made the boys a bit warm after their hard day's work. The boys of the Deck Gang sat around the after torpedo room hatch sharing a pitcher of tart green "bug juice" and planning the next day's work, while solving all of the submarine force's perceived problems. During the bitching about Nereus and their lack of support for the Squadron's submariners, the inevitable comparisons were made with Sperry. Perhaps it was while gulping the tepid liquid that thoughts of Sperry's gedunk surfaced during the conversation. But how could they get to that repository of frosty delights? The major

obstacle to the fulfillment of their desires was not 1000 yards of the now placid San Diego Bay between them and Sperry, but the Officer of the Deck of Nereus.

The Watch Officer who was responsible to ensure that all manner of the ship's daily routine was not only announced to all hands, but also accomplished with alacrity and accuracy was the Officer of the Deck; in Navy parlance abbreviated OOD. When swinging from her moorings Nereus' OOD's watch station was the Quarter-deck. Here in front of the gangway, in addition to the ship's in port routine, he controlled the comings and goings of all persons transiting the vessel. This included the submariners from the nest, or elsewhere. The OOD watch was stood by the junior officers who were Junior Grade Lieutenants and Ensigns; and a cadre of Warrant Officers. Now most of the junior officers were decent sorts, who may just as well have been standing around on the quarter-deck for their four hour watch, as doing anything else in the ship. The Warrant Officers, however, were a different matter. They were all former enlisted men who had came up from the fo'c'sle, and had been recognized by the Navy for their exemplary leadership as sailors, and master tradesmen. Most were in charge of various divisions within Nereus, which were paramount to the ship's operation and the continued good repair and provisioning of the pig boats alongside. It isn't that they hated these four hour watches amidst their busy working day, they all understood their military obligation; but as key officers in the tenders mission, they had a heavy responsibility to both the ship and her submarines to provide the best services possible. However, when duty called they often had to leave important administrative matters or delicate priority work to a less experienced subordinate. This is why sometimes the Warrant Officers seemed,

shall I say- testy- while standing the OOD watch.

The one exception to this was the Ships Boats'n- he was testy all of the time. Sparky did not know this officer by name, but knew him by sight and reputation. The word was that this ex battleship sailor, the most senior of all the Warrant Officers aboard Nereus, hated submariners. That's why he hassled them, especially the unqualified junior men, about their wrinkled uniforms and dirty "white hats" as they saluted him to leave the ship on their way to the water taxi and liberty. If he saw genuine patent leather Hong Kong Wellington Boots instead of shined regulation Navy shoes during his quick once over, one could bet on missing that liberty boat too. He even hassled the rumpled working submariners in dungarees who tried to catch a boat to Sperry on business. Thus, the crux of Sparky's and his mates in the deck gang's, problem.

Once the boys of the deck gang had decided that a treat from the Sperry's gedunk was in order, they crossed each boat's brow with a spring in their step, on the way to the tender's Quarter-deck and a boat to Sperry. This trip was not unusual, since at one time or another most of the submariners in the group had rode one of the launches to Sperry on official business. Now they marched, in staggered single column, up the starboard side of Nereus' main deck. As they drew closer to the Quarter-deck, that white macramé and polished brass gateway to the gedunk, an officer suddenly stepped out of the fo'ard athwart ships passageway near the quarter-deck. He stood tall in immaculate dress whites, to face the rag tag group of submariners. It was the Ships' Boats'n replete with a face like a leather road map; a chest full of ribbons; and a brass Spy Glass, signifying his authority as the Watch Officer,

handily clamped under his left arm and held tightly in his left fist- old Navy style. He confronted the young submariners.

"What is your business here?"

They suddenly became aware of their own sweat soaked and paint stained dungarees, and the smudges of dirty fingerprints on their white hats. Knowing that the Boats'n would not let them off the ship, and wanting to avoid an ass chewing for trying- Sparky said coolly that they were heading for the Boat Deck and must have taken a wrong turn. The OOD gave them directions and watched bemused as Sparky and his mates retreated whence they had come.

Undaunted by this setback, Sparky suggested another tack. Why not use the punt? After all it was at their disposal. Sparky had ample experience handling row boats and canoes, and the bay was so calm that a dish would float atop it, it was "dish calm". Sparky persuaded two other of his mates in the deck gang to join him in the punt as crew. There were no regular paddles for the punt, but the motley crew improvised with some split boards which they had used to stir the paint, there were enough long ones for a two paddle power propulsion system.

The trip from outboard their boat to the outboard boat alongside Sperry went rather well. The nearly slack tide and just a hint of sea breeze aided their journey, and it only took a bit of vigorous paddling to come alongside the outboard boat and secure the punt. Imagine the amazement on the face of the topside watch when Sparky and his mates scrambled up the side of the submarine and asked him to keep an eye on their "boat". On to the gedunk!

The flawless trip from the Nereus' nest had emboldened the young submarine sailors, and they tarried awhile in Sperry while drinking their frosty milkshakes, returning again to the gedunk line for some extra pokey bait. Fully refreshed, with their spirits rejuvenated, they pushed off in their borrowed punt from its borrowed mooring. They had overstayed the tide. They didn't feel the full effect of the flood tide until they cleared the nest. Sparky in front and his mate astern both paddled "balls to the wall", as their passenger sat on the floor of the punt, keeping as low as possible. They were holding their own against the tide until the punt drew nigh Nereus' stern anchor mooring. Redoubling their paddling effort they made it to the anchor chain for a rest, and held on against the freshening breeze. Since they were more afraid of being exposed as imbeciles than of drowning, rather than trying to attract attention and get rescued, this tenacious crew made a final effort to reach their submarine. Their efforts were in vain. With the wind upon the tide the punt was set down between the two tenders- toward the Coast Guard landing a couple of miles (or so) across the now choppy bay.

Fortunately for the wayward punt and its struggling crew, time was nearing Liberty Call, and there were more ship's boats than usual standing off waiting their turn at the accommodation ladder. The coxs'n of a big 50 footer, who had just loaded passengers, was now headed for Nereus to top off with passengers before heading for fleet landing. He stood at attention on the stern deck with the boat's tiller clamped in his right hand, and loosely held the bell rope in the other. Before the 50 footer passed near the rude punt Sparky heard the coxs'n signal the boat's engineer, clang- clang- clang, to idle the engine lest their deep wake swamp the wayward punt. The punt's crewmen

realizing that this was their last chance to make the gangway of Nereus, rather than the first page of the local newspaper, began waving frantically at the closing boat. As the 50 footer drew within earshot they all shouted, "Throw us a line". The coxs'n motioned to his bowhook who ran aft and threw the stern painter, which had lain neatly flemished aft awaiting use, toward the wayward punt. His aim was good, but there was no way to make the line fast to the punt. So Sparky, sitting on the floor of the punt with both feet propped against the flat front boards, held on to the line with both hands.

The punt could now be clearly seen from both tender's Quarter-decks. However, the OOD's attention must have been diverted inspecting the liberty party and controlling the boats coming alongside. The daring rescue was unnoticed- and going well. The coxs'n slowly took up the slack in the tow line and headed toward Nereus. Holding tightly onto the tow line, but not overly straining himself, Sparky began to relax and banter with his mates. They assured themselves with bravado that this had been a good idea, and pitied their thirsty mates back on the submarine. They were home free.

The coxs'n, perhaps in his haste to get alongside Nereus and keep to his appointed schedule, must have forgotten about the punt astern. Clang- clang- clang- clang- Sparky and his crew clearly heard the bell's above the roar of the engine, order full speed ahead. As the big 50 footer increased speed, the wake from its powerful screw churned up deeper and deeper, until there was so much strain on the tow line that Sparky could barely hold on. They shouted to no avail to slow down, as the blunt ended punt was slowly being sucked into the trough of the 50 footer's wake. The coxs'n could not hear them. All in the punt was confusion: The roar

of the boat's engine; the unheeded shouts of its crew; salt water breaking over the blunt bow threatening to swamp the runaway punt; and Sparky, with aching arms and a wet ass, undecided whether to let go and be swamped while cattywampus to the wake, or to hold on and be sucked under. Suddenly Sparky's burden became lightened when his mate in the back end- whether through serendipity, or some latent knowledge manifest through their current predicament- had used a flat board paddle to steer the punt out of the wake's trough and up onto one of its wave tops, where the punt rose high out of the water and began to surf on its flat bottom.

Just about this time the Nereus' OOD noticed what- at first- looked like a punt trying to overtake a 50 foot utility boat. The Ship's Boats'n watched in amazement as the little punt surfed high on the boat's wake, with its blunt after end violently fishtailing and threatening to flip it, and its crew, back into the wake's trough. Overcoming his disbelief that something like this could ever happen on his watch, the senior Warrant Officer lifted a large megaphone to his lips and shouted.

Everything seemed calm and under control, at least momentarily, to the boys in the surf punt: They were no longer being sucked down into the wake; they were rapidly closing in on Nereus' accommodation ladder; and the pain in Sparky's hands and arms was now at least bearable. Then Sparky heard a bell clear voice above the mayhem. It was calm, forceful, and commanding, and seemed loud enough to be floating out to them in the ether.

"Let loose of that painter! Let loose of that painter!"

Sparky gave a fleeting glance toward the tender. Oh Christ! There he stood, the

meanest and most aggravating Warrant Officer in Nereus, in his immaculate white uniform shouting orders to him and the boys through a megaphone.

"Let loose of that painter! Let loose of that painter!"

Now the Boats'n was not using one of those new electric powered "Bull Horns" to hail the punt. He had a large megaphone, like cheer leaders used at football games. That voice now seemed even closer and more commanding than before. But after all of their trouble to get this far, Sparky was not about to let go.

"Screw you, Sir." He spoke low each time the Warrant Officer shouted. But Sparky was afraid to even look in the direction of Nereus and the Boats'n. He just winced and kept his head down. Amidst the Boats'n's shouts, the boat's coxs'n finally cut his engine. The surf punt shot by close aboard the 50 footer riding the crest of its dying wake.

"Coxs'n, take those men aboard and bring them here to me immediately." The agitated Warrant Officer ordered.

The three unfortunate submariners stood at attention in Nereus' athwart ships passageway while the Ships Boats'n- in today's parlance- verbally abused them. Sparky thought that he must have written the Navy Correspondence Course on how to chew ass, since his knack for use of Navy vernacular in describing the foolish actions of three young men lacked nothing. This Warrant Officer went to the head of Sparky's list of most accomplished ass chewers, and remained there until someone flattered a matured Sparky with that distinction (I'm sure that the old W-4 Boatswain had been long retired by then).

The runway punt's crew got their ass chewed out again the next day by the gunner's mate, not for stupidity, but because the paint punt would never again be lent to the submariners.

God damn! That Sperry had a great gedunk.

***RAO BULLETIN 15 March 2014** **Commissary Policy Changes Update**

► From Benefit to Business

Behind the plan to slash taxpayer support of commissaries is a concept Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel and his senior advisors have embraced that base grocery stores should operate as a business and not a benefit. This shift is candidly revealed in budget documents released 4MAR and in a legislative packet for implementing the funding cuts drafted by the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). The documents make clear that individual stateside commissaries will survive only if they produce enough revenue to cover operating costs. Hagel gave a softer summation to the Senate Armed Services Committee on 5 MAR. "We are not shutting down any commissaries. We recommend gradually phasing out some subsidies but only for domestic commissaries that are not in remote locations," the defense chief said. Because stateside stores "will continue to operate tax-and-rent free, they will still be able to provide people with a very good deal."

Resale industry officials and military associations dispute this and predict closure

of most stateside commissaries. Only stores overseas and at 25 remote stateside bases would be funded after fiscal 2017. DeCA's annual appropriation of \$1.4 billion would be cut by then to \$400 million. That's enough to offer shoppers savings of 10 percent off "high priced private grocery stores," the budget documents estimate. Savings would be even "more modest" in comparison to prices at discount grocery chains. "In the end, patron usage of the commissaries will determine the savings and their comprehensive advantage," explains the "overview" report from the Obama administration on its 2015 defense budget request. Commissary shoppers now save an average of 30 percent compared to prices for a range of private sector grocery stores, DeCA said. The hit to those savings would be felt "worldwide," budget documents explain.

The draft implementing legislation has a telling description of commissaries run as businesses. Criteria for opening and closing stores, it says, would make cost recovery "the primary factor for their existence, as opposed to the needs of active duty members and their families or the welfare of the military community." That statement captures what's ahead for a long prized benefit if Congress adopts the plan in the budget, said an industry official. He described the plan as carelessly conceived and devastating to the "ecology" of base stores, both exchanges and commissaries. There were no signals of stiff resistance from the Senate Armed Services Committee on Wednesday when Hagel and Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs, detailed the new budget with its

sweeping changes impacting commissaries and the Tricare program.

Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) called commissaries a "core benefit" that contributes "greatly to recruitment and retention, even though I am one of those who thinks [troops] may get just as good a deal at some other retail outlets around the country." Encouraging commissaries "to act more like a business...makes sense. I agree with that," Chambliss said. But the senator questioned whether changes to this benefit should be delayed until the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission make its report in FEB2015. He and Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.) have introduced a bill to mandate such a delay. Hagel and his comptroller Robert Hale explained that some savings from compensation reforms are needed now because budget cuts already are impacting training, troop support and overall readiness. Hagel noted that exchanges operate on the same business model and are successfully self-sustaining. So senior leaders, relying on "significant analysis," decided "we knew enough about where we thought we're going to have to eventually go with commissaries," Hagel said.

On 24 FEB, the day Hagel first unveiled highlights of the budget with its plan for commissaries, he recognized "senior enlisted leaders in each of the services for [their] help and input in crafting this budget." Two days later, however, some of those enlisted leaders told a House appropriations

subcommittee that their support for compensation reforms didn't extend to the deep hit on the commissary benefit. Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Micheal P. Barrett and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Cody noted that young families in particular depend heavily on the shopping discounts. Barrett called it "ridiculous that we're going to go after something that saves some young lance corporal, an E-3, \$4,500 a year." If that E-3 has two kids, he added, "and every time he shops it's \$240, well unbeknownst to him he just put \$80 worth of gas into his car." Base exchanges could also be at risk, say industry officials. Their profits already are stressed by base closures overseas, deep force cuts, and minimum wage hikes on service contracts.

The plan for commissaries would deepen these challenges by reducing shopper traffic on base and by allowing commissaries to offer products now sold only in exchanges. DeCA's implementing legislation shows commissaries would operate far different than they do today. A surcharge of at least 5 percent would still be collected on goods sold. But to capture more revenue, DeCA seeks authorities to run its stores like commercial supermarkets. That means a broader mix of products including beer and wine. Restrictions would be lifted on sale of generic or local goods to compete with brand names. A legal requirement to sell goods at cost would end so prices could climb as needed and would vary from store to store. DeCA could advertise to try to keep patrons and hire private contractors to operate specific store functions. It also wants relief from "socio-

economic" laws that dampen savings, including a requirement to buy certain supplies and services from nonprofit employers of persons who are blind or have other significant disabilities. [Source: Stars & Stripes | Tom Philpott | 7 Mar 2014 ++]

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