



USS Virginia Base Deep Water Gazette

Fourth Quarter 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 fourth edition of our quarterly newsletter. I again want to thank John Mosticone for taking on this duty, which is very much

appreciated.

NATIONAL ELECTIONS

The national elections are over (finally) and we now know who our illustrious leaders are for the next two years. All of the winners were published by separate e-mail and are on the USSVI web site, and will be published in the American Submariner magazine - but I particularly want to congratulate our USS Virginia Base member Dick Kanning for being reelected as the Southeast Region Director - and by a landslide to boot: 61% to 38% - WELL DONE DICK!

Our Base also did quite well getting out the vote and we ended up with a 60.47% participation rate - which was significantly above the average for all Bases in our Region, which was 20.67%. WELL DONE MEMBERS!

BASE COMMANDER QUAL CARD

I've mentioned this before - but since I was recently taken out back to the woodshed for not knowing about a change to the Holland Club membership requirements (now simply 50 years qualified and paid up USSVI dues as of 4 years ago) - which is one of the items on the qual card - I urge you all to tackle this, regardless of whether or not you have any desire to be a Base Commander. Here's the web link to that card:

https://www.ussvi.org/Documents/Online_Manuals_Base_Cdr_Qual_Card_2014.pdf

11TH ANNUAL BASE PICNIC

New member Al Ptasznik and his spouse Mary Ann have offered to host our annual picnic and we voted at our September 13th meeting to officially change the venue for this from Bear Creek Lake State Park to their home, which is on Lake Anna. I have been coordinating the details with Al, along with John Lamsens who is handling the food menu, and I have published all of this information on our web site at this address: <http://www.ussvirginiabase.org/annual-picnic.html> I also sent out an e-mail about this on October 2nd but I'll include the basics here as follows:

DATE: October 18th;

TIME: 10:00AM to WHENEVER (Opening ceremonies at Noon immediately followed by chow down);

WHERE: Al & Mary Ann Ptasznik's home at 6721 Lake Pointe Drive, Mineral VA 23117-5007.

This event will be handled similarly to how Bill & Carol Wellner hosted them for ten years at their home, but this year the Base will be providing more food, along with some basic drinks such as regular and diet soda and water. Members are still encouraged to bring a side dish as before - with a focus on appetizers, salads, desserts and drinks of your choice (the drinks the Base provides are for those who didn't bring drinks). Side dishes such as potato salad, etc. would be welcome - but in addition to the pulled chicken barbeque, pulled pork barbeque and Texas-Styled

barbeque brisket - the Base will be also providing coleslaw and baked beans - all from Extra Billy's BBQ. Depending on how many attend, seating may be limited so bringing your own lawn chairs would probably be a good idea for those of us who have them. Lawn games and fishing off their pier (with a VA Fishing License) will be available and those who own canoes or kayaks are invited to launch them right from their waterfront.

Don't forget - this is a family event so family members, guests and prospective members are all invited to attend. We are expecting a few prospective members we made contact with at the Field Day of the Past event - plus our own member and active duty Master Chief Cary Carroll, his wife Cathi and their two daughters will be attending this picnic. Cary is the current COB on the USS Virginia (SSN-774) home ported at the Sub Base New London, Groton, CT and we always look forward to his visits. If you haven't already penciled this picnic in on your calendar I encourage you to do so and make a commitment now to attend. As I mentioned, more specifics and a map with directions and parking instructions has been posted on our web site.

DUES ARE DUE!

If you are not a USSVI Life Member you'll need to pay your \$20 annual USSVI dues along with your \$20 annual USS Virginia Base dues **NOT LATER THAN JANUARY 1ST, 2015** or you will be delinquent. The grace period has been reduced to just January 31st so if you haven't paid by then you are dropped from both USSVI and USS Virginia Base membership. Our Treasurer, Jim Lencalis, has already contacted everyone to let them know what their dues status is (i.e. both National and Base or just Base) and some of you have already paid. We all supposedly wear big-boy pants so please don't drag out your dues payment, which makes Jim's work all that more difficult. He always tries to finish everything up for his annual report to USSVI **BEFORE** the end of the year so your cooperation as soon as possible is both expected and appreciated!

2015 SOUTHEAST REGIONAL CONFERENCE, RECEPTION AND BANQUET APRIL 21-23

I've forwarded information on this already, but John included the flyer on this event at the end of this newsletter. I've attended two of these regional conferences in the past and I highly recommend them. I actually enjoyed both of the regional conferences I attended more than the National Conference I attended because although they have all of the elements of a larger National Conference there is more of a boat reunion flavor to them. I recommend you consider attending this one.

NEW MONTHLY MEETING DAY/TIME

Our new monthly meeting day and time is working out well and I feel that as more members get adjusted to the new schedule we may see a larger turnout. We're also beginning to make more/better use of the large screen flat panel TV in the banquet room at Anna's Restaurant & Pizzeria - so I encourage you to make sure all of your calendars and computer reminders are now set to the second Saturday of every month with lunch beginning at Noon and the meetings beginning at 1:30pm.

FIELD DAY OF THE PAST

Our Base, under the direction of Secretary Bill Anderson, purchased a space at the 2014 Field Day of the Past event in Rockville, VA September 19, 20 & 21. This was the second year that Bill proposed doing this and the Base voted to support him. Last year's effort yielded at least one new member (Todd Steadman) and it looks like we garnered good contact information for at least nine perspective new members this year. A hearty BRAVO ZULU goes out to "Team Anderson" - which is comprised of Bill, son Curtis (who is also an auxiliary member) and spouse Sandi. They set up their tents, the support equipment and the various submarine display items and photo boards the day prior to the event - AND were on hand throughout ALL three days - unpacking and repacking their trailer with all of the "stuff" every night and shutting it all down and loading up at the end of the last day. Our presence at this event required a lot of work and is very much

appreciated. A big WELL DONE also goes to the following members who “stood watch” and assisted Team Anderson as follows:

Thursday Setup – Bob Kutzenberger

Friday – John Mosticone and Kenn McDermott (with a surprise visit by Base Plank Owner Roger Warden)

Saturday - Doug Blaha, Pete & Jan Fortier and Al Ptasznik (member Todd Steadman stopped by)

Sunday – Bob Kutzenberger, Al Ptasznik, John Lamsens, and Bill & Carol Wellner

Bill said he would like to do this again next year and I wholeheartedly concur since this is not only a great membership recruiting strategy – but also a super way to educate the general public about the world’s finest undersea warrior service – the U. S. Submarine Force. I encourage all members to consider signing up to help Bill next year – you won’t regret it.”

May God bless you and your families, our Base, our Commonwealth and the United States of America!

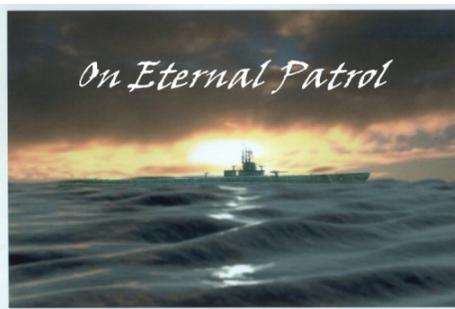
Greenboard/Straightboard!

Mac



LT, USN (Ret)

Boats Lost This Quarter



OCTOBER --

[USS O-5 \(SS-66\)](#) was lost on **11-Oct-1923** with the loss of **2 crew** when it was sunk after collision with SS *ABABGAREZ* (United Fruit) off Panama Canal.

[USS S-44 \(SS-155\)](#) was lost on **7-Oct-1943** with the loss of **56 crew** when it was sunk on 5th patrol off Paramushiru, Kuriles (Northern); One day out of Attu (**2 men were taken prisoner, both survived the war**).

[USS Wahoo \(SS-238\)](#) was lost on **11-Oct-1943** with the loss of **79 crew** when it was sunk in or near La Perouse Strait.

[USS Dorado \(SS-248\)](#) was lost on **12-Oct-1943** with the loss of **78 crew** when it was sunk in Western Atlantic, possibly near Cuba

[USS Escolar \(SS-294\)](#) was lost on or after **17-Oct-1944** with the loss of **82 crew** when it was sunk somewhere east of 33° 44N; 127° 33E; heading for 33° 44N; 124° 06E.

[USS Shark \(SS-314\)](#) was lost on **24-Oct-1944** with the loss of **90 crew** when it was sunk in channel midway between Hainan and Bashi Channel; 20° 41N; 118° 27E.

[USS Seawolf \(SS-197\)](#) was lost on **3-Oct-1944** with the loss of **102 crew** when it was sunk just north of Morotai, between PI and Indonesia, by *USS Rowell*; 02° 32 N; 129° 18E.

[USS Tang \(SS-306\)](#) was lost on **25-Oct-1944** with the loss of **83 crew** when it was sunk in north end of Formosa Strait in vicinity of Turnabout Island. (**Nine of the crew were taken prisoner and survived the war**).

[USS Darter \(SS-227\)](#) was lost on **24-Oct-1944** when it became grounded on Bombay Shoal off Palawan then was destroyed. **All the crew were rescued by USS Dace**.

NOVEMBER --

[USS Corvina \(SS-226\)](#) was lost on **16-Nov-1943** with the loss of **82 crew** when it was sunk just south of Truk; (Attack at 151° 10E; 5° 50N)

[USS Sculpin \(SS-191\)](#) was lost on **19-Nov-1943** with the loss of **40 crew** when it was sunk north of Groluk Island near Truk. (**42 crew were taken prisoner, only 21 survived the war**)

[USS Growler \(SS-215\)](#) was lost on **8-Nov-1944** with the loss of **84 crew** when it was sunk in South China Sea.

[USS Albacore \(SS-218\)](#) was lost on **7-Nov-1944** with the loss of **86 crew** when it was sunk near 41° 49N; 141° 11E in channel between Hokkaido and Honshu.

[USS Scamp \(SS-277\)](#) was lost on **16-Nov-1944** with the loss of **83 crew** when it was sunk off Inubo Saki near Tokyo Bay.

DECEMBER --

[USS F-1 \[ex-CARP\] \(SS-20\)](#) was lost on **17-Dec-1917** with the loss of **19 crew** when it was sunk after collision with *USS F-3* off San Clemente.

[USS S-4 \(SS-109\)](#) was lost on **17-Dec-1927** with the loss of **34 crew** when it was sunk after ramming by *USCG Paulding*.

[USS Sealion \(SS-195\)](#) was lost on **25-Dec-1941** when it was scuttled in Manila Bay after damage at Cavite

[USS Capelin \(SS-289\)](#) was lost **on or after 1-Dec-1943** with the loss of **76 crew** when it was sunk off Celebes possibly off Kaeo Bay of a *US sub on 2 December. No reports from boat made after leaving Darwin around 17 November 1943. No declared lost date found. WDR date spread is 11-23 to 12-9-43*

District Commander Steve Bell



The National Convention is over and I must say I had a good time. But then again, I always do. The way things were set up with the hotel, some things were not the best. USSVI just did not have a good contract with them. The hotel facilities were pretty good but certain things just were not up to par. Even so, one can still enjoy themselves at such events.

The next National Convention will be in Pittsburgh, PA next year. Based on discussions with the Convention Chairman (also the Base Commander and District Commander, all one in the same person), things are looking good overall for that convention. And it is within relative easy driving distance for you folks. So plan early and come on out to it. I am sure you can enjoy yourself there. The thing lacking on this upcoming convention is parking and/or shuttle. Parking at the hotel is to be \$20/day. Last year they said other lots were close by at a cheaper rate. Also, the shuttle from the airport is \$30 round trip per person. Just not much they can do about that, but I am sure they are trying.

Summer is over and cooler temperatures are just around the corner for all of us. Take the time and make sure you are ready for the winter, both for your mobile transportation and your home. Do those little things to prevent a major headache in the winter. Never like to hear of a shipmate in distress.

If I remember correctly, your base should be having nominations and elections in the very near future. Again, I would like to remind everyone that these bases cannot function without people stepping up and taking these positions. There is nothing wrong with competition for a given position (as long as we don't get ugly about it). And at times, one can argue that "new blood" is good. At times, those that always seem to be the ones standing up for these positions could use a break. Not that any of the jobs are really hard, but one just gets tired and could use a breather. So please consider standing up for one of the positions. You surely are not going to make anyone mad because you run for their position.

I am sorry that again I will not be able to make your picnic this year as I have other obligations to meet. I know there is a lot of fun to be had by being the District Commander, but at times, one gets cut short due to actually having to do the job. I am sure it will be a good one and enjoyable for all.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of you a great Holiday Season. This seems early, but I want to cover the remaining Holidays for this year as the next edition of this newsletter is probably after the Holidays. Enjoy and please be careful. I look forward to visiting your base next year, probably to swear in the base officers (weather permitting).

Steve Bell
District One Commander

Meeting Minutes September 2014

Meeting was held at Anna's Restaurant & Pizzeria Lasagna, pizza and salad were on the buffet menu 14 members and 9 guest were present Bell Wellener won the 50/50 raffle and received \$40.00 The Ladies were excused.
At 1300 Base Commander Kenn McDermott called the meeting to order
Vice Commander Pete Fortier lead the Pledge of Allegiance, USSVI Creed and Tolling of the Boats, assisted by Base Storekeeper Bob Kutzenberger.
5 Boats were lost during the month of September with the loss of 262 crewmen
Birthdays for the Month of September
Mickey - Lost
Discussions
Bombardment of Fort McHenry which occurred 200 years ago day and a video of the National Anthem, sung by Whitney Houston at a Super Bowl game, was shown.
Annual USSVI National elections
60% of the USS Virginia Base members voted, which is much higher than the national average.
Member Dick Kanning was reelected to Regional Director
Annual base picnic. New member Al Ptasznik stepped up and volunteered to host the annual picnic at his home on Lake Anna. A motion was made to change the venue to his home at the date and time as previously approved. The motion was seconded and passed.
Kenn McDermott promoted the SE Regional Conference which is taking place in Cape Canaveral, FL on April 20 thru 23, 2015. Hotel cut off is March 20, 2015.
Treasurer's Report was read and approved.

Secretary's Report was read and approved.
A Bio round about was given.
Kenn McDermott gave the Submariner's Benediction.
The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2010
Respectfully
Bill Anderson
Base Secretary

TREASURER REPORT FOR August 2014 to September 2014

Balance as of 13 September:	\$4034.68
DEPOSITS:	
50/50 raffle from 8-9 meeting	\$ 35.00
1 new member base dues	\$ 20.00
1 new member USSVI dues	\$ 20.00
2015 USSVI dues collected	\$ 100.00
2015 Base dues collected	\$ 200.00
TOTAL:	\$ 375.00

EXPENDITURES:	
Holland Club presentation items	\$ 100.35
TOTAL:	\$ 100.35
Decrease for report period	\$ 274.65

PAYMENTS PENDING

Annual base picnic
(October meeting) **TOTAL: \$??.**

NOTE: Typo error on July – August report, balance should have been

\$3760.03 and not \$3884.03 as stated.

James C. Lencalis
James C Lencalis

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.



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
Sanford Harvey	1964 SS-488
Doug Blaha	1964 SSN-584
Bob Kutzenberger	1964 SS-214
Ron Irons	1959 SS-394
Al Ptasznik	1964 SSBN-610

Note: new member John Leonard will be scheduled as soon as possible for induction.

Welcome Aboard

Ron Irons

Al Ptasznik

John Leonard

Base Eternal Patrol

Jack Winn (founding Commander)

Sid Padgett (WWII sub vet)

Bob Mitchell FTC(SS), USN (Ret)

Crew Birthday's

Sam	Stanbery	10/12/41
Richard	Moore	10/14/41
John	Lamsens	10/19/45
Matt	Mathis	10/15/52
Alvin	Cormier	10/9/55
Roger A.	Warden	10/24/57
Jimmy E.	Bullock	10/22/60
Michael	Eggleston	11/15/46
Steve	DuBosky	11/15/46
William	Anderson	11/24/55



Upcoming Events

10/18 Base Picnic

Ships Store



Be sure to visit our Ships
at:

Store

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

Base Bulletin Board

Southwest Regional Conference

For info on the Southwest Regional Conference see the last page of this newsletter

Veteran Affairs Committee

On 26 AUG President Obama announced 19 executive actions aimed at improving mental health care for service members and veterans. Although many of the announced initiatives are already in place or have been under development for some time, there are several new initiatives focused on improving mental health treatment and support for currently serving and veterans and reducing the incidence of suicides in both the currently serving and veteran populations. The new initiatives include: Supporting a warm hand off from DoD to the VA by enrolling all service members receiving mental health treatment in the DoD's In-Transition Program to ensure they are connected to a VA provider; Altering the VA drug formulary to match DoD's to allow service members to continue using the same medications once enrolled in the VA; Expanding the popular mental health peer support programs to primary care settings in both VA and DoD; Providing all first responders on military bases and DoD locations with opioid overdose reversal kits.

Further, a conference will be held this fall focusing on brain research, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Traumatic Brain Injury. The VA and the Treasury Department will also partner to train volunteer tax preparers on mental health awareness. In spite of all of the efforts in place and in the works, suicide continues to claim the life of an active duty service member nearly every day and 22 veterans per day. Research reveals that combat deployments are not the only factor that leads service members and veterans to take their own lives. Personal relationships, financial problems, drug and alcohol use contributes significantly. Speaking on the risk of suicide, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno recently said, "I want to take the time to communicate to our Army family that this can happen to anyone, soldiers and

family members don't always wear their scars on the outside; we may never see the struggles that someone is going through unless we take the time to ask.

Reading Locker

Submarine Small Arms Stories

In the early 60's, I was duty officer aboard an SSN moored in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. In the wee hours of the morning, the Below Decks watch called me and said: "They are shooting at someone topside!"

I rushed topside as my Topside watch was loading his clip. From another boat moored astern we heard "There he is ...under the pier!". Similar calls came from the other submarines at the pier, but no one was actually shooting.

Apparently, a couple of nights earlier a smoke boat sailor swam across the slip and painted his SS Hull number at the waterline of a moored Destroyer. Tonight's guest was a DD sailor attempting to pay us back.

A few years later, aboard an SSBN moored in Holy Loch, Scotland, the US Tender was conducting a repel boarders drill in the early evening. There was lots of action aboard the tender, lights directed at the water, fire hoses manned, multiple 1MC announcements etc. Many of us watched from topside of our boomer. Perhaps ten or fifteen minutes into the drill we heard this 1MC announcement from the Tender. "Will the person with the key to the small arms locker please report to the Small arms locker!"

In the late 1970's, Admiral Isaac C. Kidd, Jr was CINCLNTFLT in Norfolk. His father, a Rear Admiral died on the bridge of the USS Arizona on December 7th, 1941. As a result, throughout his career he emphasized "being prepared". He watched the Russians like a hawk and was frequently way ahead of his staff to be ready for the worst.

Occasionally after wrestling with an overflowing "in basket", he would call his driver and tour the waterfront. Arriving totally unannounced at a Submarine or surface ship brow, he'd walk aboard and ask for the CO or Duty Officer. He then invited the current topside watch and his trusty 1911 pistol to join him in his car for a trip to the base pistol range. After handing over a rusty pistol many times in the rain, some of these small arms were not even functional. Worst yet, many of the topside watches were barely able to load their weapon and were not proficient in its use.

It didn't take too many of these visits before the entire submarine force and the Atlantic Fleet got the word and significantly upgraded their small arms proficiency.

He also occasionally picked up sailors hitchhiking in dirty dungarees and returned them to their ship and personally delivered them to the CO.

The Six-Pack

By Paul Benton © 1996

While plying my trade in a nuclear submarine submerged in 150 feet of the frigid North Pacific, I often considered the merits of the Working Man's Friend- the lowly beer. It's not that the accommodations aboard were that bad, after all if a submariner can take a shower every three days, and get his skivvies laundered and a clean fart sack once a week, then his living conditions have improved a quantum leap over the diesel boats. However, something was lacking at the end of a trek at the throttles in the Maneuvering Room, having to pay attention to all of those gages and listen to all of the fuckin'-nuke talk. It was enough to scramble your brains.

I always unwound after the night watches by sitting in the darkened after torpedo room and shooting the shit with the room watch before I hit the rack. During one patrol, after much philosophical discussion and analysis of our

situation, my Torpedoman shipmate and myself concluded that enjoying a beer during our discussions would be the epitome of relaxation in a submarine. We were so obsessed by this notion that it became the foremost subject of our conversations. We knew that some men may have smuggled whiskey aboard, or even drank Gilley mixed with bug juice; Christ what bad style. Whiskey has a lingering odor, and the powerful Gilley, in short order, will rob a person of sound judgment. But a can of beer is utilitarian, its container much sturdier than a whiskey bottle is nearly unbreakable; readily disposable after only one handy ration; and can be easily stowed in the pit. We also decided that one can of beer per day (as an unchangeable limit) wouldn't impair our judgment. We did not agree to do it, but we did arrive at a consensus on its merits.

Upon the boat's return to the land of the Menahunies, I was having such a good time catching up on lost everything and preparing for the next Arctic go-around, that I mislaid the beer plan in a little used corner of my mind. No matter it seemed like just a few weeks, because it was, that I was again plying my trade in 150 feet of 34 degree water.

Psst- Psst. My Torpedoman roomie eased up from behind, as I sat affixed to the main throttles, and got my attention with the Philippine love call. Then he whispered in my ear just loud enough for me to hear him over the machinery noise, but not to be heard by the three men sitting uncomfortably in the maneuvering room gawking at gray panels replete with gages and meters. My roomie suggested that I shouldn't tarry in the crews mess after watch, since he was "cooling" a six-pack aft for when we got off watch. Good man that roomie, I had completely forgotten about our beer scheme.

I'm here to tell you that I have partaken of strong drink from here to there and back again,

and all forms of alcoholic elixirs have held a certain excitement and some fond memories: Having drunk Manila Rum, where else but in Manila, with the Aussies from the Frigate HMAS Voyager (long since rammed and sunk with all hands). My first dram of Scotch Whiskey was drunk in the shadow of HMS Victory with members of HM's Navy. Sipping Botrys Brandy and strong coffee for breakfast with Greek fisherman on a chilly early morning in Rhodos (my treat, so they gave me a fisherman's cap, which I highly prized but later lost in a fist fight). Singapore Slings at the Raffles Bar. Gin and Tonics from a zombie glass watching a Spanish Sun rise above the Rambla. Singing opera (or humming along) and guzzling Dago Red at Umberto's until my lips turned purple with the stain. However, these memories pale in comparison to my recollection of the anticipation of the cold beer which awaited me in the after torpedo room.

I eased aft directly after I had been relieved trying to act casual until things settled down, since shipmates came and went as the watch changed. But I was fidgety as a wedding dick; I didn't want to appear too anxious, but my God how good that cold beer will taste. As I sat by the Jeep between the tubes aft rocking my chair on its back legs, my torpedo roomie said that we should have our beer before the 0100 housekeeping chores of ejecting garbage and blowing sanitariums. Soon the torpedo room would be quiet and he would get us a brew. I wondered aloud to my roomie just how he got enough ice to cool a six pack. Silly me! He reminded that with a 34 degree injection we could use sea water to cool the beer. But how? He explained that the diameter and length of the after pyrotechnic ejector perfectly held one six pack of Lucky Lager. The unit had been loaded to capacity one can at a time, flooded down, and had the outer door barely cracked to allow for circulation of the cold water. What a genius, and a Torpedoman at

that. He went to get us a cold suds. After he returned to the Jeep with empty hands and a sheepish grin, we both hurried to the pyro ejector to assess the situation. Although we had agreed on only one can each, my roomie decided that he should cool a few extras- just in case. He confessed that all had went well as each can was slid into the breech of the bronze cylinder, that is until can number six.

Once upon a time a submariner opened the breech door on a pyro ejector which he thought was clear. It was not- and as the pyro slipped out into the room the unpinned striker flipped and ignited the pyro. Locking this barn door, the Navy added a small spring loaded wedge shaped keeper of thin flat metal to the breech door seat. The keeper's wedge shape and its position in a narrow slot cut in the seat, allowed the pyro's round body to slide handily into the ejector, but once the pyro was snuggled up into the barrel past the spring loaded keeper, the sturdy little wedge sprung out of its slot into place slightly blocking the breech opening, ensuring a one way trip for the pyro. Since sailors and salt water can screw up anything, a pyrotechnic could be unloaded if necessary (after the striker arm was safely repined) by forcing the pyro toward the outer door, and barely off the keeper which is then held out of the breech with a flat blade while the pyro is slid past and back into the room.

The root of our dilemma was that six cans of beer in series is just a RCH longer than a regulation pyro's body. With beer can number six being sooo close to fitting, my roomie just couldn't resist forcing it slightly, then success as the preventer barely clicked into place against the can's rim. What a tight fit. So tight that the six beer cans could not be forced out of position enough to relieve the pressure on the keeper so that a cold brew could be extracted. Our time was

running out. Sonar had already requested and received a course change to clear the baffles, so housekeeping time was rapidly approaching as we weighed our options. All of our solutions involved being reduced in rate from Petty Officer to recruit, and thank Christ there weren't any Brigs in submarines. There was, however, one way (maybe) to empty the ejector.

The Lucky Lager had already been exposed to sea pressure without incident, so we were safe reflooding the ejector and opening the outer door. The flood valve had to be opened gingerly to keep the noise of air rushing from the vent as low as possible. The control room called and ordered number three sanitary tank blown to sea. I made the valve line up and as I opened the air valve to begin blowing the tank, my roomie began to slowly build up impulse air to the ejector's launching system. The high pitched hissing noises blended with no one the wiser.

Now the real noise maker was when impulse air pushed stuff out of the ejector. I would use a bit more air pressure to blow sanitary causing a louder rumble than normal as the tank emptied and blew air. Simultaneously with the rumble the errant Torpedoman would use the high pressure impulse air to eject the six pack. Again we figured that the blended noises, although louder than normal, would mask each other and not arouse the suspicion of either Sonar or Control.

Our greatest trepidation was the actual expulsion of the six cans of beer to completely clear the ejector. The diameter and length were near the same but would all six cans clear the bore without one fouling or jamming the outer door? If that happened we would have to put ourselves on report. I held my breath as the sanitary tank began to rumble. Then the Torpedoman pushed the air ejection lever. A great swish of air- then a low rumbling arose from the sea as the bulls eye glass

in the ejector's barrel flashed from dark to light indicating that something had cleared the ejector. We both sweat bullets for each turn of the wrench which cranked the muzzle door fully shut; and smiled broadly with relief as the door indicated fully shut. Our Naval career's had taken an upturn.

After assuring control that the unusual noise sonar reported was probably caused by using a little too much air in blowing sanitary, we hastily opened and inspected the ejector. All clear and no damage. Now two budding careers were back on track.

Since jettisoning the Lucky Lager I have sailed many miles in Naval vessels and never had an inclination to partake of spirits aboard (except in line of duty when I was the official medicinal whiskey taster in both Cascade and Piedmont). Even as a civilian aboard maritime tankers as the owners rep sailing with Italian crews, I never felt quite at ease drinking while in the ship.

All is well that ends well. The names were not supplied to protect the guilty

Dex Leaves Us A Message

Fellow SubVets:

It is fitting that, as we hear that bubblehead Dex Armstrong made his final dive on 8 July 2014, his words from the goat locker remain to ensure that we who read them do so perfectly confident that we are not left alone when that time comes for us. Read Dex's inspiring words and let them guide you from here on in.

"Sailor, rest your oar.

When your final dive is made, and your battery's running low, You'll know there lies a boat for you many fathoms here below.

With your annunciates jammed on full and your depth gauge needles bent, Your accumulator's dry of oil and your air banks all are spent, It's then you get to wonderin', 'Is my life's boat

rigged for dive?' Your guessing drill commences,
'Am I dead or still alive?'

You pace the flooded decks with scorn and curse
the flaws of man. Into realms of Rex you've
stepped, and here you'll make your stand,
To live your life, as sailors must, at the bottom of
the sea. There's one you'll have to reckon--that
one, my friend, is Thee.

Will your conscience do you justice when the final
muster's in? Did you lead the kind of life you
should in every port you've been?

The answers to these questions and many, many
more, Are locked in the hearts of sailormen from
Cannes to Singapore.

So, when your day for mast rolls 'round, the choice
is up to you. Sailor, chart your course of life right
now. Chart it straight and true.

Now's the time to flood your tanks and trim up
fore and aft. It's a trifle late when the klaxon
sounds to square away your craft.

Your final billet lies below, on 'old ocean's' floor.

So, be ready when that last word's passed.

Sailor, rest your oar!"

Chaplain Bill

Tarheel Base, USSVI

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The Commander of SUBRON 6 visits one of the Trident submarines under his command. While eating breakfast with the crew he was impressed to see the naval insignia stamped on every biscuit. He went to the Chief Mess Specialist to ask how this feat was done, so it could be used on other boats under his command. The Chief replied, "Well Commodore, after each one is cut out I just slap it here against my belt buckle which bears the insignia." Horrified the Commodore exclaims, "That's very unhygienic!" The Chief shrugs and replies, "If you feel that way sir, I suggest you steer well clear of the donuts."

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