

Steel Valley Dolphins

December 2019



The official newsletter of the
USS Requin Base of the USSVI
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

USSVI Creed:

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of 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."



Meetings held on the second Saturday of the month normally in BADen at the American Legion Post and quarterly meetings held around our membership area.

- **Make a difference, get to a meeting!**

----- Pride Runs Deep -----

Next Meeting: 1230 11 January at the American Legion in Baden Pa.

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----- Pride Runs Deep -----



Binnacle List

Virginia Sutherin



ers Column:

ay luncheon went extremely well. It was held at the German Club on
side of Pittsburgh. The food was out of this world and we also had a
t sang Franky and Dean holiday songs. We had close to 65 members,
s and guests. It was so great to be able to spend some quality time with
nhipmates, this is what it is all about.

ch, had Cd's made up for each individual and families Linda Gaylor,
dy favors for both sailors and shipmates. Jill Campisi helped with the
KUDOS to all you ladies for such a fine job.

ected our December Base meeting as well. With Rick Elster doing an
ng job on the MIA-POW service. KUDOS to Rick.

MEMBERS:

cCullough qualified in 1966 on the USS DACE SSN607 as a MM3(SS). He
vy in 1991 as a MMC(SS). He lives in Alliance, Ohio with his first mate
ase e-mail Richard and welcome him aboard – rs57chevy@att.net

urrah qualified in 1963 on the USS CARP SS338 as a ETSN(SS). He left the
67 as a ETR2(SS). George lives in Rayland, Ohio with his first mate
lease e-mail George and welcome him aboard –
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nger qualified in 1997 on the USS RHODE ISLAND SSBN740 as a
He left the navy in 2016 as a MMC(SS). Josh lives in Chicora, Pa with his
Krissy. Please e-mail Josh and welcome him aboard –
r@hotmail.com

nett qualified in 1971 on the USS USS ANDREW JACKSON
(Gold) as a LTJG. Dave left the navy in 1979 as a LCDR. Dave lives in
WA with his first mate Dorothy. Dave has offered to assist us on our
verdale in Jan. Please e-mail Dave and welcome him aboard
e@gmail.com

ason qualified in 1975 on the USS BATEFISH SSN681 as a FTG2(SS). He
vy in 1979 as a FTG2(SS). Ed lives in Ellwood City , Pa. Please e-mail Ed
me him aboard – masonedward165@gmail.com

Kyle Lacey qualified in 2001 on the USS PHILADELPHIA SSBN690 as a LT. He left the navy in 2013 as a LCDR. Kyle lives in Gibsonia, Pa with his first mate Beth Klebache. Please e-mail Kyle and welcome him aboardkdlacey@hotmail.com

James Mears qualified in 1961 on the USS TROUT SS566 as a EM (SS) He left the navy in 1967 as a EM1(SS).James lives in Greensburg Pa with his first mate Michael. Please e-mail Jim and welcome him aboard - jim711@comcast.net

Rick Flaugh qualified in 1982 on the USS Tinoso SS606 as a EM3(SS). He left the navy in 1987 as a EM1(SS). Rick lives in West Mifflin, Pa with his first mate Mary Beth. Please e-mail Rick and welcome him aboard – flaughre@comcast.net

Brian Peltier qualified in 2000 on the USS ANNAPOLIS SSN760 as a officer. He is on active duty at Bettis and serving as a LT. Brian lives in Leechburg, Pa with his first mate Lola. Please e-mail Brian and welcome him aboard – opspirt@aol.com

Luke Walters qualified in 1982 on the USS ETHAN ALLEN SSN608 as a MM2(SS). He left the navy in 1998 as a MM1(SS/SW). Luke lives in the Crafton section of Pittsburgh close to his sister Cathy. E-mail Luke and welcome him aboard - lukew2184@gmail.com

WITH THIS BATCH OF NEW SHIPMATES ABOVE, THE REQUIN BASE HAS **BROKEN** THE RECORD OF NEW MEMBERS IN ANY ONE YEAR SINCE 2010. KUDOS SHIP-MATES AND THANK YOU! The old record was 18 and the new record is 21!!

BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARIES

MEMBER

FIRSTMATES

Robert Clark 1/14/52	Jennifer May 1/13	Carl & Carol Benson 1/20
Jeff Iliff 1/09/68	Kelly McKinney 1/15	Bob & Kim Bittner 1/06
Larry Iden 1/16/30	Sandra Morgan 1/10	Bob & Lynn Gourley 1/08
Art Kalimon 1/01/45	Tina Siege 1/15	Dave & Dianne Howton 1/27
Bill Kielar 1/16/30	Cynthia Weaver 1/07	Fred & Carmen Nelson 1/26
Mike Markel 1/15/41	Barbara Farina 1/09	John & Susan Sutherin, Jr 1/08
Robert Moore 1/08/48	Joan Hughes 1/08	Richard & Karen Keys 1/29
Angelo Naso 1/27/42	Shiela McCullough 1/19	
Fred Nelson 1/29/44		Carl & Gosia Humes 1/18
James Phelan 1/20/38		

Dan Phelps 1/06/62
Bob J Schmidt 1/15/61
Brian Siege 1/23/66
Thomas Strang 1//21/42
Paul Wassenberg 1/22/34
Herb Wise 1/13/39

Requin Base Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2019
Pittsburgh, PA

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

Attendees: Eric & Marge Bookmiller, Lee & Patsy Bookwalter, Clair & Nancy Bouts, George & Cindy Brown, Tom & Deneen Calabrese, Joe & Jill Campisi, Huey & Edie Dietrich, Rick & Judy Elster, Gerry & Linda Gaylor, Dick & Beverly Geyer, Bill & Donna Greenlee, Lou Hamill, George & Barbara Harrah, Kyle Lacey, Charles & Nancy Loskosh, Bat & Kim Masterson, Jim & Sandra Messer, Bob & Jude Myers, Brian Peltier, Dan Phelps, Chuck & Debbie Shrump, Jeff & Eileen Simon, George & Sandra Stass, Carl & Mom Stigers, Jack & Jenny Sutherin, Chad & Judith Underkoffler, Mike & Tina Wyckoff

Base Commander Huey Dietrich gave the quote of the day: "He who loses his head is usually the last to miss it."

Requin History On December 1, 1948 the USS Requin left shipyard with new radar equipment and reported to New London CT for duty in Submarine Squadron 8. On December 3, 1968 USS Requin was decommissioned and on December 20, 1971 USS Requin was struck from the Navy Register.

Base Commander Huey Dietrich: Let us at this time, with a moment of silent prayer, remember our Shipmates who made the supreme sacrifice that we may gather here in Peace. We dedicate this meeting to our Shipmates on Eternal Patrol, to perpetuate their memories in our lives and to honor our Shipmates on active duty in the service of the first line of defense of our Nation.

Boats Lost:

USS CAPELIN (SS 289)	December 2, 1943
USS SEALION (SS 195)	December 10, 1941
USS F-1 (SS 20)	December 17, 1917
USS S-4 (SS 109)	December 17, 1927

Let us also remember our fellow shipmates of the Requin Base, Calvin Boring, Wilfred Carlton, David Chatlos, Henry Collings, George Denny, Robert LaLonde and Dan Robbins, who were lost in December. Finally let us remember all the brave submariners who died performing their duties aboard submarines, some individually and some in groups, but where the submarine itself was not lost.

Chaplain Carl Stigers gave the Invocation.

Secretary Jeff Simon led the Base in the Pledge of Allegiance.

A motion to suspend normal meeting activities was approved by the members present.

MIA/POW ceremony was performed.

Chaplain Carl Stigers gave the blessing of today's meal.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Baden PA American Legion Post 641 at 1230 hours on January 11, 2020.

Navy Beards

Update 01: CNP Willing to Consider Allowing Ashore in the Future

Sailors might someday be able to get a jump start on the popular veteran-beard look. The Navy's top personnel leaders said 24 NOV that they're open to considering allowing sailors to sport beards, at least when they're not at sea. "We're getting a lot of feedback from sailors, we're talking to senior leaders and it's not a dead issue," Fleet Master Chief Wes Koshoffer with Manpower, Personnel, Training and Education said during a Facebook live event. While the grooming standard is not under formal review, Chief of Naval Personnel Vice Adm. John Nowell said they're willing to consider allowing beards ashore in the future. Beards have been banned in the Navy since 1984. "We know it's a hot topic, we know many of you want it," Nowell said. "And I'll be quite honest with you, I get it even within my family from some service members."

Navy leaders announced last month that the service would be ending permanent shaving waivers for sailors who struggle with razor bumps. Nowell stood by that decision, citing safety studies the service has done that show any amount of facial hair can compromise the seal on oxygen breathing apparatuses. But he assured sailors that no one will be kicked out over pseudofolliculitis barbae, which leads to inflammation that makes shaving daily tough on some men's skin. "That's a medical issue -- you don't choose to have that, and we get that," Nowell said. "We're going to make sure that if you have that, we work with you to go ahead and get your medical treatments." Those treatments range from special creams to special razors to even laser procedures. "We're not going to kick anybody out," Nowell added.

Enforcing the same standards ashore is a matter of uniformity, good order and discipline, and looking sharp, Nowell said. But both leaders acknowledged that beards aren't likely to create the same safety concerns ashore. Nowell invited sailors to join a bi-monthly uniform focus group if they want to make the case for beards. He warned sailors, though, against arguing that beards should be allowed because women can wear ponytails. "I have to be honest, it drives me crazy when a sailor says, 'You gave women ponytails and different fingernail polish. Why won't you give me beards?'" he said. "That's not the argument you use with me to go ahead and start that discussion. ... It's not a quid pro quo." [Source: Military.com | Gina Harkins | November 26, 2019 ++]

Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

Update 02: Microbial Pests Have Learned To Fight Back



Doctors prescribe sick patients antibiotic drugs with the specific intent of knocking out the viral, bacterial or fungal infections that put them under the weather. But new research shows microbial pests have learned to fight back. During a 13 NOV telephone briefing for news media, both Dr. Robert R. Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Michael Craig of the agency's Antibiotic Resistance Coordination and Strategy Unit, outlined the situation at hand. Each year, more than 2.8 million infections related to antibiotic resistance take place. More than 35,000 people die from those infections. Redfield and Craig spoke of the CDC's newly published white paper on the subject, which reports that nearly 3 million Americans "face an antibiotic-resistant infection."

The report, titled "Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States," identifies 18 known antibiotic-resistant pathogens that must be dealt with before they can proliferate and spread untreatable illnesses. The latest statistics, Redford and Craig said, indicate the problem is far more serious than researchers believed when they prepared the last such report in 2013. Improved measuring methodology has shown that the number of deaths back then was actually twice as high as they believed at the time. "CDC uses the best data, but [estimates were] conservative at the time," Craig said. "It threatens our nation's health and our global security," Redfield said. "The good news is we know how to protect ourselves. We're seeing progress nationwide." Related hospital deaths have declined by 18 percent overall and by 30 percent in hospitals alone, Redford said, through the implementation of comprehensive strategies throughout the human and animal health-care professions and agriculture as well.

The CDC is taking a five-pronged approach toward a solution. It entails: infection prevention and control; tracking and sharing data; improving the appropriate use of antibiotics; investment in vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics; and close monitoring of the environment and sanitation practices. Within the Military Health System, and particularly at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, researchers are also taking the issue of antimicrobial resistance seriously. "Over the last few years we have actively been studying the epidemiology and the outcomes associated with antimicrobial resistance infections in military hospitals," explained Dr. Allison Malloy, assistant professor of Pediatrics, and a member of the Infectious Disease Faculty, USUHS. "Consistent with the CDC findings, we have found a high mortality associated with some of these infections."

Across the Department of Defense facilities, we have implemented programs to help control these infections including active surveillance, rapid pathogen identification and targeted treatment, and data-driven antibiotic stewardship programs." For example, the Multidrug-Resistant Organism Repository and Surveillance Network (MRSN), under the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, coordinates analysis and management of antibiotic resistance across the entire military health system. This helps military

treatment facilities share information, optimize standard practices for infection control and patient safety, identify an outbreak of a pathogen earlier, and make more appropriate antibiotic selections for patients.

MRSN is part of a DoD-wide effort, Antimicrobial Resistance and Monitoring Research Program (ARMoR), which includes DoD hospital laboratories, clinicians and infection control staff; public health reporting groups; Navy and Air Force public health data collection programs; and national policy groups, with the common goal of managing Service programs monitoring antibiotic-resistant bacteria. “We will continue to monitor for infections and seek to improve the quality of healthcare provided to military members, their families and retirees,” Dr. Malloy said. While medical community researchers and clinicians are taking action to counter the bad effects of antibiotic resistance, the CDC offered practical advice that would help average citizens mitigate the risks they face. Here are some:

- When visiting a doctor to treat sickness, ask what could make you feel better rather than request antibiotics specifically. If prescribed antibiotics, use them in the manner in which your provider asks.
- Follow good hygiene practices. Wash your hands, be careful when handling food or caring for animals.
- Get vaccinated.
- Practice safe sex.
- Be vigilant when traveling abroad.

Health care providers can do their part as well, the report said, by following good infection prevention and control practices and being more vigilant when prescribing antibiotics. Providers also should take note of infections and resistance patterns where they work and in their communities. [Source: Health,mil | November 15, 2019 ++]

Cancer Q&A

191116 thru 191130

(Q) How do vitamins impact on cancer?

Answer. Because people are interested in the possible links between specific foods, nutrients, or lifestyle factors and specific cancers, research on health behaviors and cancer risk is often reported in the news. No one study, however, provides the last word on any subject, and single news reports may put too much emphasis on what appear to be conflicting results. In brief news stories, reporters cannot always put new research findings in their proper context. Therefore, it is rarely, if ever, a good idea to change diet or activity levels based on a single study or news report. The following address common concerns about vitamins in relation to cancer:

- *Does vitamin A lower cancer risk?* Vitamin A (retinol) is obtained from foods in 2 ways: it can be taken in as vitamin A from animal food sources, or it can be made in the body from beta-carotene or other carotenoids in plant-based foods. Vitamin A is needed to maintain healthy tissues. Vitamin A supplements have not been shown to lower cancer risk, and high-dose supplements may, in fact, increase the risk for lung cancer in current and former smokers.
- *Does vitamin C lower cancer risk?* Vitamin C is found in many vegetables and fruits, especially oranges, grapefruits, and peppers. Many studies have linked intake of foods rich in vitamin C to a lower risk of cancer. But the few studies in which vitamin C has been given as a supplement have not shown a reduced risk for cancer.
- *Does vitamin D lower cancer risk?* Growing evidence from studies that observe large groups of people suggests that vitamin D may help prevent colorectal cancer, but so far the evidence does not support links to other cancers. Large studies are now under way, but the results will not be ready for several years. The Institute of Medicine recently increased recommendations for the daily intake of vitamin D, based on levels required for bone health, from 400 to 600 international units (IU) for most adults, and to 800 IU per day for those aged 70 years and older. The upper daily limit of what is considered safe was increased from 2000 IU to 4000 IU.

Vitamin D is obtained through skin exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation; through diet, especially products fortified with vitamin D such as milk and cereals; and through supplements. But many Americans do not get enough vitamin D and are at risk of deficiency, especially people with dark skin, those with little sun exposure, the elderly, and exclusively breast-fed babies.

- *Does vitamin E lower cancer risk?* Alpha-tocopherol is the most active form of vitamin E in humans and is a powerful antioxidant. In one study, male smokers who took alpha-tocopherol had a lower risk of prostate cancer compared with those who took a placebo. This led to a large study (known as SELECT) that looked at the effects of selenium and vitamin E supplements on prostate cancer risk. But the study found that these supplements did not lower the risk of prostate cancer. If anything, the men taking vitamin E supplements may have had an increased risk.

Another large study (known as HOPE) looked at the risk of cancer and heart disease with vitamin E supplements compared with a placebo. No difference was seen in cancer rates or heart disease rates between the vitamin E supplement and placebo groups. Heart failure rates were actually higher among those taking vitamin E supplements. Vitamin E supplements are not recommended to try to lower the risk of cancer or chronic diseases, although foods containing vitamin E, including nuts and some unsaturated oils, can be healthy and have been shown to lower the risk of heart disease.

[Source: American Cancer Society | November 30, 2019 ++]

Vet Suicide

Update 40: FCC to Move Forward on Proposed 988 Hotline

A lifeline that could save countless veteran lives is one step closer to finally happening. This week, the Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai proposed the FCC move forward with establishing 988 as the national suicide prevention and mental health services hotline. "This crisis is disproportionately affecting at-risk populations," Pai said. "Twenty veterans die by suicide every day. Between 2008 and 2016, there were more than 6,000 veteran suicides each year." The FCC's official recommendation to create the three-digit hotline was originally made this past August, following a report that showed a three-digit number would improve access for those in crisis. The number's similarity to 911 hopes to significantly increase the hotline's effectiveness.

With the 19 NOV announcement, Pai's proposal was shared with FCC colleagues for review in preparation for a December vote. For veterans, the hotline also provides access to specialized help, thanks to the FCC's coordination with the Department of Veterans Affairs. "This is absolutely our number one priority within VA — to prevent veteran suicide, to work with veterans and their families, and we are very grateful to the FCC and to Congress and everyone else who has worked on this national 988 proposal," said David Carroll, executive director of the Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention at VA. "It's a terrific opportunity to provide ease of access and, as several speakers have said, clarity in that moment of crisis so someone can easily reach out and get help. We look forward to the opportunities that this presents for us."

Just like with the current suicide prevention hotline, veterans can press 1 after dialing 988 for specialized support and counseling including text and chat functions. That same line currently answers an average of 1,800 to 1,900 calls a day — 3.5 million calls since it was launched in 2007. The 988 could also help to make these specialized resources more widely available to other disproportionately affected populations like the LGBTQ community. "When we make it easier for people in need to seek help, many will do so," Pai said. For more information on potential warning signs of suicide, click [here](#). [Source: ConnectingVets.com | Elizabeth Howe | November 19, 2019 ++]

Medal, Decoration & Award Replacement

How To do It

The military recognizes that military medals are often a cherished part of family history and makes replacement medals, decorations, and awards available to veterans or their next of kin if the veteran is no longer living or able to make the request on his or her own behalf. Requests for replacement medals, decorations, and awards should be made to the veteran's respective branch of service, with the exception of Army and Air Force (including Army Air Corps) veterans; requests should be sent to the [National Personnel Records Center \(NPRC\)](#) in St. Louis where the records will be reviewed and verified. The NPRC will then forward the requests to the respective service where the medal, decoration, or award will be issued.

Who Can Request Replacement Medals or Decorations?

The military won't issue replacement medals or awards to just anyone. You typically need to be the veteran or next of kin to receive a replacement medal or decoration. When it comes to military records requests, there are three categories of people who can make a request. They include the veteran, Next-of-Kin (NOK), and the general public. It is important to note that Next-of-Kin doesn't include all familial relationships. According to the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), NOK includes:

- For the Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps & Coast Guard, the NOK is defined as: the un-remarried widow or widower, son, daughter, father, mother, brother or sister.
- For the Army, the NOK is defined as: the surviving spouse, eldest child, father or mother, eldest sibling or eldest grandchild.
- If you do not meet the definition of NOK, you are considered a member of the general public.

How to Submit a Request

You can request replacement military medals, decorations and awards via form SF 180, Request Pertaining To Military Records. This form can be downloaded from <http://www.va.gov/vaforms>. Each request should be filled out neatly, and should include the veteran's branch of service, social security number, dates of service, and it should be signed by the veteran or the next of kin if the veteran is incapacitated or deceased. Supporting documentation such as discharge paperwork or the veteran's DD Form 214 or other military records can help speed the process. Additional information on where to send the form and who is eligible to make the request can be found at the NPRC website.

How Much Does it Cost?

In general, military records requests made by the veteran are fulfilled at no cost. This includes requests made by family members who have the signed authorization of the veteran. There may be an associated fee for requests made by next of kin, especially if the request involves archival records (records are considered archival records 62 years after the veteran's date of separation from military service). Members of the general public may be able to request a copy of the servicemember's military records, but are not able to receive a medal issued by the service. However, they would be able to purchase these from commercial sources (see below for more information on where to buy replacement military medals, rank insignia, and other military decorations).

Where Can I Get Copies of Other Military Records?

Your military personnel file is part of your legacy. It is recommended maintaining a copy of your military records forever. This can help you prove your military service, help you support a VA disability claim, serve as a record of when and where you served, and provide your family with something to commemorate your military service. Most military records are maintained at the National Archives. These records include your service contracts, separation paperwork, records of military awards, decorations, and medals,

records of your duty stations, and possibly more. The following links offer additional references for obtaining these military records:

- Request copies of military records or perform historical research (click this link for more information about pictures of servicemembers in uniform).
- Request copy of DD Form 214.
- Get a Veterans ID Card.

Where Can I Purchase Replacement Medals, Ribbons, Rank Insignia, or other Military Items?

If you are a servicemember or retiree, you can purchase them at your base clothing sales store. Everyone else should look at military surplus stores, or any of the many online stores that specialize in military rank, insignia, medals, ribbons, uniform items, and similar military gear. A quick online search should bring up many results. It's always a good idea to shop around for quality and price. A good place to start is USAMilitaryMedals.com, which guarantees the quality of the products they sell.

What about replacement dog tags? The military, the VA, and the National Archives do not reissue dog tags to veterans. The military does issue them to currently serving military members. Refer to <https://themilitarywallet.com/replacement-dog-tags> to learn how to proceed to obtain them.

[Source: The Military Wallet | Ryan Guina | November 13, 2018 ++]



Showdown: This Is the Story of the Only Submarine vs. Submarine Battle

On February 5, 1945, the U-Boat *U-864* slipped from its quay in Bergen as it departed on a secret mission known portentously as Operation Caesar.

siles and two Japanese technical experts. *U-864* also carried more than sixty-seven tons of liquid mercury, carried in 1,857 steel flasks. The mercury had been purchased but not entirely delivered from Italy in 1942, and was a key material for manufacturing explosive primers.

Capt. Ralf-Reimar Wolfram's mission was to sail the long-range submarine north around Norway, then across the Arctic Circle past Soviet territory to deliver the goods. Germany was only months away from falling, but Berlin hoped that the technology and materials would allow Japan to stay longer in the fight and divert Allied combat power.

U-864 was a Type IXD2 "cruiser submarine," and at 87.5 meters long was larger than the more common Type VII U-Boat. It was designed for long-range transoceanic patrols, and the -D2 model in particular was even bigger to accommodate enlarged cargo compartments. Before departing, *U-864* had been modified with a piece of technology then unique to Germany—a snorkeling mast, allowing the submarine to sip air from the surface while shallowly submerged.

Despite this formidable advantage, Wolfram's mission proved ill-omened from the start. *U-864* initially set off from Kiel on December 5, 1944, but ran aground while transiting through the Kiel canal. Wolfram decided to have the ship undergo repairs in Bergen, Norway. But in Bergen, its armored pen was hit with twelve-thousand-pound Tall Boy bombs dropped by British Lancaster bombers on January 12, 1945, causing even more damage.

Unfortunately for Wolfram, the United Kingdom had long ago cracked the Enigma code, which German U-Boats used to communicate with the Naval headquarters. By February, the British Navy had decoded messages relating *U-864*'s mission, and decided to set a trap.

HMS *Venturer*, the first of the new V-class submarines, received orders from the Royal Navy Submarine Command to hunt down and destroy *U-864* off the island of Fedje, Norway. The smaller, shorter-range British submarine carried only eight torpedoes to *U-864*'s twenty-two, but it was nearly 50 percent faster underwater, at ten miles per hour.

Venturer arrived at its station on February 6. Its skipper, twenty-five-year-old Lt. James S. Launders, was a decorated submarine commander, who in addition to sinking twelve Axis surface ships, had dispatched the surfaced submarine *U-711* in November 1944.

Though he disposed of an ASDIC active-sonar system that offered greater detection range by emitting sound waves into the ocean, which could be tracked when they pinged off submerged ships, Launders elected to rely on shorter-range hydrophones. This was because the ping from ASDIC could be heard by adversaries from even further away.

But Launders didn't realize he was engaged in a hopeless hunt. *U-864* had slipped past him.

Back to Bergen

Many war stories tell of protagonists who avoid horrible fates out of sheer coincidence and dumb luck. More or less the opposite happened to Captain Wolfram.

U-864 was safely out of range of the *Venturer* when its diesel engine began noisily misfiring, hampering acoustic stealth and threatening to break down entirely. Only a few days out from port, Captain Wolfram decided he should play it safe by returning to Bergen for repair. He could not have known he was leading his submarine straight back into danger.

On February 9, the hydrophone operator on the *Venturer* overheard a contact that he at first believed was coming from the diesel motor of a fishing boat. Launders moved his submarine closer to the sound pickup, and spotted on the periscope what appeared to be another periscope in the distance. This was actually most likely U-864's snorkel. Running submerged on batteries, Launders slipped the *Venturer* behind the German submarine and began tailing it.

He was waiting for U-864 to surface before launching his torpedoes, but thanks to its snorkel, *U-864* could operate underwater for extended periods of time. The German submarine began zigzagging side to side, likely having detected the British sub.

After three hours of pursuit, the *Venturer* was running short on battery and would soon have to surface itself. Launders decided he would simply have to attack *U-864* while it remained submerged. He calculated a three-dimensional intercept for his torpedoes, estimating his adversary's depth by the height of the snorkel mast protruding above the water. However, he knew the enemy submarine would quickly detect a torpedo launch, and planned his firing solution to account for evasive maneuvers.

At 12:12, *Venturer* ripple-fired all four of its loaded torpedoes in a spread, with 17.5 seconds between each launch. Then the British submarine dove to avoid counterattack.

The U-Boat immediately crash dove as well, then swerved evasively. After four minutes, it had managed to duck under three of the incoming torpedoes. But Launders had launched the second pair of torpedoes at lower depths. The fourth torpedo struck *U-864*, breaking it in two; the gruesome sound of popping rivets and cracking metal filled the *Venturer's* hydrophones. The U-Boat fell 150 meters to the bottom of the ocean, taking with it all seventy-three onboard and sinking Operation Caesar along with it.

More than a half century later, the wreck of *U-864* was found in 2003 by the Norwegian Navy, two miles off Fedje. It was discovered that the cargo of poisonous liquid mercury had been slowly seeping from the flasks into the surrounding ocean. After spending fifteen years evaluating the risks of raising the wreck and its dangerous, unexploded torpedoes, in February 2017 the Norwegian government finally "entombed" the broken submarine with a half-meter of sand and 160,000 tons of rocks to prevent further contamination, thus forming a cairn for the German submarine that had met its terrible fate under unique circumstances.

Sébastien Roblin holds a Master's Degree in Conflict Resolution from Georgetown University and served as a university instructor for the Peace Corps in China. He has also worked in education, editing, and refugee resettlement in France and the United States. He currently writes on security and military history for War Is Boring.

Source URL: <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/showdown-story-only-submarine-vs-submarine-battle-34652>