

Steel Valley Dolphins

August 2020



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 12 September at the American Legion in Baden Pa.

Base Officers

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Commanders Corner:

It is very troublesome that once again, we had to cancel another base meeting. I will be keeping close eyes on our schedules to find some way to re-schedule.

GREAT NEWS, our next base meeting will be September 12, 2020.

Where: American Legion Post 641- Baden, Pa

Time: 12:30

The following rules of the Legion are as follows:

1. Masks to be worn when entering and leaving the building/ going to the head.
2. Masks can be removed while sitting down. (room can be divided if you want to keep your mask on – masks or no masks).
3. No seating at the bar.
4. If ordering alcohol, you must have food in front of you.
5. We will have a tab at the bar for soft drinks.
6. We will supply coffee and water.
7. There is a limit between 30 and 35 of our group.

BASE RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Base will provide food – Masterson & Stigers have volunteered. Edie will be sending cupcakes.
2. Base members have until September 5th to notify us, if planning to attend.
3. From September 6th, first mates can notify us if planning to attend, until we reach our quota of 35.
4. Jeff Simon will be hosting a Zoom meeting -the meeting link will be sent out to the membership who cannot attend.

This is very hard to plan while not offending anyone-trust me, that is the last thing we want to do.

Edie and I have been busy as bees. We have made, Strawberry, peach apricot and Salsa. They are donated to the base for fund raisers. They are available for a donation of \$5.00 per jar – first come, first serve. If you want me to save any for you, please let me know.

BIRTHDAYS

ANNIVERSARIES

Member

Burdin, Tom 9/29/45
 Carman, Sandra 9/20
 Dietrich, Huey 9/19/44
 Elias, Phil 9/04/50
 Everly, Patty 9/25
 Gasparovic Mike 9/15/66
 Harrah, George 9/08/40
 Howton, Dave 9/25/55
 Klemz, Dan 9/25/45
 Krautstrunk, Bob 9/18/24
 Kuhn, Blaine 9/25/46
 Mason, Ed 9/19/52
 McCarthy, Richard 9/27/57
 Nichols, David 9/24/80
 Powers, Brian 9/07/57
 Riley, Earl 9/17/45
 Sawin, David 9/25/43
 Sills, Harry 9/19/45
 Small, Keith 9/26/49
 Swords, Jim 9/26/49
 Watson, Bob 9/21/25

First Mate

Alters, Kelly 9/02
 Bence, Beverly 9/4
 Boutelle, Barb 9/13
 Cochenour, Carol 9/05
 Harrah, Barb 9/25
 Klemz, Eileen 9/06
 Ladrie, Christine 9/19
 Larson, Judi 9/18
 Lucas, Pamela 9/01
 Koppenhaver, Pat 9/23
 Meyers, Jude 9/01
 Small, Connie 9/09

Bob & Jacqueline Hall 9/20
 George & Barb Harrah 9/17
 Mark & Adriana Hoag 9/20
 Scott & Eva Holzwarth 9/29
 James & Joan Hughes 9/30
 Bob & Pat Koppenhaver 9/23
 James & Karen Lewis 9/27
 Ed & Sandra Morgan 9/28
 John & Lois Stewart 9/13
 Underkoffler, Chad & Judy 9-5
 P & Linda Von Rabenau 9/08

PSNS & IMF capitalizes on lessons learned to streamline Pittsburgh inactivation

By Max Maxfield, PSNS & IMF Public Affairs | PSNS & IMF | Aug. 7, 2020



USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720), a Los Angeles-class fast-attack nuclear submarine, is moved to the Mooring Alpha storage area after completing its inactivation process Aug. 5, 2020, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Bremerton, Washington. (PSNS & IMF photo by Scott Hansen) **(Photo by Scott Hansen)**



Shipyard workers prepare to move USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720) to the Mooring Alpha storage area after the Los Angeles-class fast-attack nuclear submarine completed its inactivation process Aug. 5, 2020, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility in Bremerton, Washington. (PSNS & IMF photo by Scott Hansen) **(Photo by Scott Hansen)**

BREMERTON, Wash. —

Lessons learned from a series of projects in recent months resulted in process improvements and a streamlined availability for USS Pittsburgh (SSN 720), which completed its inactivation process Aug. 5, 2020, almost a month earlier than scheduled, at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility.

These numerous improvements have reduced the cost and time of inactivations, which has also allowed highly trained submarine Sailors to return to the fleet earlier than before, to accomplish the Navy's mission.

According to Lt. Jamison Fiebrandt, military deputy project superintendent, Pittsburgh entered Dry dock 1 here, July 25, 2019, to begin the inactivation process, and was moved to Mooring Alpha yesterday, to await recycling at some point in the future.

As with the recent inactivation of USS Buffalo (SSN 715), the sonar dome was removed and the sonar transducers were harvested during the inactivation phase, rather than waiting until the recycle phase, which allowed members of the ship's force to assist with the work.

Fiebrandt said removing the sonar dome during inactivation will not only mean the vessel will take up less space at Mooring A, but more importantly this will also decrease the length of time it will take to recycle the vessel in Dry dock 2 later on. Removing the sonar dome during the inactivation phase does not add any time to the overall length of the project.

The Pittsburgh project team took advantage of recently developed efficiencies as well as implementing new process improvements of their own.

Inactivation project teams worked with Code 250, Structural Engineering & Planning; Code 106, Safety Engineers; and Code 138, Welding Engineers, to reduce requirements associated with heat-controlled welding. Also, Code 2310, Reactor Engineering; and Code 1010, Reactor Systems Product Line, implemented new tools to improve removal of parts of the submarine's structure. Finally, Code 1050, Corrosion Control and Repair Product Line; and Shop 11, Shipfitters, used innovative cold-cutting techniques to reduce the time it took to remove the mud tank.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic starting to take hold as the project was finishing defueling operations, Fiebrandt said everyone pulled together to work around the challenges and keep the project on track.

"Our team's perseverance and knowledge of the work allowed them to work through resource shortages to finish defueling without delays and then release the crew and decommission the ship 35 days early," Fiebrandt said. "The team quickly adopted safe work practices such as social distancing, disinfecting needed areas, and they took full advantage of the current IT capabilities to support teleworking."

Fiebrandt said the project was successful from both a time and personnel standpoint.

"Inactivations are a great training ground for employees and are a good time to try out new procedures and tools," Fiebrandt said.

"Many people were successful in first-time positions on this project. This resulted in some promotions, while other folks were able to complete qualifications."

Fiebrandt also credited one employee for contributing to the overall success of the project.

"Our team's [mentoring] coach, Margo Myers did a great job of mentoring people," Fiebrandt said. "She got the team to look not just at the work, but also to look at how we could interact as a team and what we could do collectively to make it better."

Pittsburgh's keel was laid April 15, 1983, in Groton, Connecticut; was launched Dec. 8, 1984, and then commissioned Nov. 23, 1985.

The Pittsburgh crew completed their last deployment Feb. 25, 2019. Then the boat and her crew made their first arctic transit for a final homeport change from Groton to Bremerton, Washington, arriving May 28, 2019, to commence the inactivation and decommissioning process.

Suicide Postvention

Helping Survivors Work through Emotions

Veterans have a significantly higher suicide rate than other adults in the U.S. This means Veterans are also more likely to have known someone who took their own life. Uniting for Suicide Postvention (USPV) helps make sense of a suicide loss. The program connects survivors with resources to help them work through powerful and unique emotions specific to this type of grief.

Compared with many other kinds of loss, suicide can be particularly challenging for survivors. Specifically, they must wrestle with the difficult moral, societal and religious implications. Shock at the suddenness of the death may compound their grief. Or they may feel a mix of shame, anger, guilt and, sometimes, relief. Some survivors blame themselves for not noticing warning signs, even though such signs may not have been obvious. And the effects extend beyond close family members. Even first responders, who never personally knew the deceased person, can be affected emotionally by the suicide scene. USPV provides postvention information and resources to assist survivors as they navigate their healing journey, both immediately after the loss and in the months and years that follow.

Suicide prevention aims to avert the incident, while postvention fosters healing afterward, for those touched by the loss. With tens of thousands of suicides every year in the U.S., coping with the aftermath is an unfortunate reality for more people than some might think. For every suicide, an estimated average of 135 people are affected. Beyond the immediate circle of grieving family members and friends, those who regularly interacted with the person who died also can be affected. This includes coworkers, doctors, neighbors, bus drivers or a regular waitress at a favorite restaurant. Quality postvention can facilitate survivors' healing. It helps them understand and address the complex thoughts and emotions that make coping after a suicide loss particularly challenging. USPV offers a safe space where loss survivors can explore painful and challenging emotions. It strives to create a community of shared healing by improving education about postvention and access to support and resources.

VA's Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention supports USPV. However, most USPV resources support anyone who has been touched by suicide loss regardless of their military, Veteran or military family status. At the heart of USPV is a website (<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention>) that features multimedia resources designed to promote open dialogue. The site is structured to meet the needs of community members, health care providers and workplace colleagues. It offers videos, infographics and podcasts related to connecting and healing.

How is suicide postvention part of prevention?

Experts consider exposure to suicide a risk factor for suicide. Survivors are at greater risk for substance use disorders and mental health issues than those who haven't experienced such a loss. This includes including thoughts of suicide. Those exposed to suicide in the workplace are 3.5 times more likely than others to take their own lives. In a military unit with five or more suicide attempts in a year, the risk for another attempt is double that of units that had no attempts.

Grief after loss can be so intense that it prevents survivors from seeking help at a critical crossroad. But by helping survivors heal after a suicide, postvention reduces the risk of additional suicides in the deceased person's circle. In that way, postvention healing is a vital component of prevention. Postvention is so important that the Rocky Mountain Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) has established USPV as part of VA's mission to develop, disseminate and implement a comprehensive prevention program. To learn more about USPV at the Rocky Mountain MIRECC, visit <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/postvention>.

If you know someone grieving after a suicide loss, you may wish to read about ways you can help and talk to them. To learn about mental health support for Veterans, visit [mentalhealth.va.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov).

- If you or someone you know is in crisis, don't hesitate to get help.
 - Call 9-1-1 immediately.

- Contact the Veterans Crisis Line, which connects service members and Veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends, with qualified, caring VA responders. Call 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text to 838255, or chat online at net/Chat.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 741741.
- The Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) provides free, compassionate care and survivor support services for the families of America’s fallen military heroes. Services include peer-based emotional support, grief and trauma resources, grief seminars and retreats for adults, Good Grief Camps for children, casework assistance, connections to community-based care, online and in-person support groups and a 24/7 resource and information helpline for all who have been profoundly affected by the death of a military loved one. For more information, visit taps.org or call the toll-free information helpline at 1-800-959-TAPS (8277).

[Source: Vantage Point | Sarra Nazem & Laurel Gaeddert | August 18, 2020 ++]

USS Bullard (SS-332)

Loss Overshadowed by Atomic Bomb

As dates go, Aug. 6 is especially important in the 75th anniversary commemoration of the end of World War II. On that day in 1945, the American bomber Enola Gay dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, Japan, thus setting in motion the steps that would lead to the surrender of Japan. Less well known is the fact that the U.S. Navy suffered an important loss on that same date. Just after 8 a.m. Aug. 6, at roughly the same time that Enola Gay was beginning her bomb run, a Japanese plane on patrol off the island of Bali caught an American submarine on the surface of the Java Sea. The pilot attacked, his bombs found their mark, and the sub sank with all hands.



The USS Bullhead (SS 332) turned out to be the last of 701 U.S. Navy ships lost in World War II. The loss of an entire submarine crew at the end of a long and awful war was a sad story in its own right, yet the submarine has never rated more than a footnote in the history books. As storylines go, it’s hard to compete with the atomic bomb. Eighty-four brave sailors perished when Bullhead sank. One of those was Lt. j.g. Paul Austin Gossett from Haywood County. He was one of nine officers aboard Bullhead. Gossett, the son of JH and Ethel Gossett, graduated from Clyde High School in 1934 and worked for a few years at American Enka before joining the Navy.

When the war came, Gossett volunteered for submarine duty and was eventually assigned to the crew of Bullhead in July of 1944. The following month, he made his last trip home to marry Catherine Moody of Waynesville. War correspondent Martin Sheridan accompanied Bullhead on her first war patrol in the spring of 1945 and got to know Gossett. He found the “short, affable Southerner” to be good company and enjoyed the stories he told of his family in the mountains of North Carolina. Waynesfield’s local paper (The Mountineer) reported on the loss of Bullhead and Gossett’s status as missing — it took time for the crew to be classified as presumed dead — on Aug. 30, 1945. The story was surrounded by articles about the Japanese surrender and plans for local victory celebrations.

Gossett's wife, parents, and siblings had to deal with the disconnect of processing their shock and sorrow amid the jubilation that accompanied the end of the war. As with other Bullhead family members, they were on their own, victims of bad timing as much as their loved ones on the submarine. It was a lonely place to be. To make matters worse, the secretive and unique nature of submarine warfare meant that the location of the wreck would remain unknown. There would be no remains to repatriate and no grave to visit. Paul would never come home.

Among those most grieved by Gossett's death was his close friend Sam McCrary, also of Haywood County. McCrary served in the Navy as well, and upon returning from the war eventually married Gossett's widow and became a well-known businessman in Maggie Valley. But he never forgot the memory of the man who had looked after him "like a little brother." Another young sailor with Bullhead ties would eventually make his home in Waynesville. Warren Kitts entered the Navy upon graduation from Knoxville High School in 1943. Following boot camp, he volunteered for submarine service and trained as a torpedo operator. In early 1945, Kitts was assigned to Submarine Division 302 in Fremantle, Australia, the unit responsible for Bullhead plus five of her sister boats.

Word eventually came down to Kitts that Bullhead needed a torpedo man and that he should prepare to join that crew. But fate intervened when he injured his hand on a training dive. The gash was deep enough to prevent him from getting an active assignment until his hand healed, and so he was shuffled back into the deck of the relief crew. Kitts' number came up again later, this time to join the crew of USS Becuna (SS-319), another one of the boats operating out of Fremantle. It was on that submarine that the young seaman finally got into World War II. He had just completed a war patrol and disembarked Becuna at Subic Bay when the war ended. It was there that he learned that Bullhead had gone missing.

Submariners are a tight-knit group, and Kitts' time in Fremantle had put him into direct contact with Bullhead and her crew. Moreover, some of the guys he had been with since sub school had been assigned to the submarine as replacements and were aboard when she went down. Kitts mustered out of the Navy after the war, became a dentist courtesy of the GI Bill, and married his hometown sweetheart. The couple moved to Hazelwood in 1955, where he opened his practice. The remainder of his life revolved around family, church, and his beloved garden. But through it all, he remembered friends who had died aboard Bullhead, and he carried the weight of that loss in his heart until his death in 2004.

So as we remember Aug. 6, let's pause and remember the submarine that sailed out of Fremantle and into eternity 75 years ago. Let's remember Sam McCrary, Warren Kitts, and the hundreds of other local citizens who saw the war through to its conclusion. Above all, let's remember Lt. Paul Gossett and the other sons of Haywood who gave the last full measure for country in history's largest conflict. [Source: The Mountaineer | Ken Kitts | August 10, 2020 ++]