

# Steel Valley Dolphins

November 2020



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

## USSVI Creed:

"To perpetuate the memory of our ship-mates 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 hours on December 12, 2020 at the American Legion in Baden Pa.

## Base Officers

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Asst. Holland Club - Dick Geyer	724 - 637-2995	<a href="mailto:dgdiving@gmail.com">dgdiving@gmail.com</a>
Technology-Chair - Lou Hamill	412 - 445-3998	<a href="mailto:itgeek8088@gmail.com">itgeek8088@gmail.com</a>
Eagle Scout Chair - Vince Metz	412 - 613-5554	<a href="mailto:vincemetz007@hotmail.com">vincemetz007@hotmail.com</a>

## **Commanders Corner:**

Hi Swabs:

What a great meeting we had this month. Believe it or not – there were thirty-five (35) members, first mates, guests and perspective members in attendance either in person or on Zoom. We had 2 new members and first mates, along with some perspective members in attendance. Captain Clark, who joined the base this year as both a life member of USSVI and Requin Base was welcomed to his first meeting and offered an invite to anyone to join the Navy League, as he is the President. Jeff Simon is doing an outstanding job on hooking us up to zoom and Booky puts us all in during the meeting. It was great to see shipmate Layton Gains on zoom from Massachusetts. He is one of our shipmates who sailed on the USS Requin.

Mayor Pete from Leetsdale attended and presented the American Legion's plan of having a memorial service in February, honoring the four (4) Chaplin's, who gave up their life vests to four (4) other sailors on the USS DORCHESTER. He extended an invitation to the Requin Base to participate and we gladly accepted.

Also in attendance was Adam Valente, who is a history teacher at Baden's high school. I met Adam at the German Club last summer and was impressed with his character and desire to learn about submarines and their crews. Adam plays the bag pipes and gave us a big treat by playing for us. He was so good that the members of the Legion, opened the doors to listen. Afterwards, he accepted an invitation to join the base and be our official bag piper at our memorial service and parades. Imagine – the Requin Base besides having our beautiful float, we now have a bag piper and a Navy goat to add together at our parades. Last year, if you remember, we won first place in the Canonsburg's Fourth of July parade!

The situation with Covid 19 seems to be getting worse and who knows how many of our shipmates have been or will be affected. The officers and members wish everyone happy days ahead and want each and every one, to have the best Thanksgiving possible under these trying times.

Ed Deer, who is one of our new members, was both happy and surprised that Joe Campisi, our Holland Club Chairman, and his assistant, Dick Geyer presented him with certificates, coin, membership card and Holland Club Hat – Kudos Ed

### **Birthdays**

Richard Bistyga 12-21-50  
Bob Bittner 12-24-64  
Dave Bonnett 12-01-40  
George Brown 12-10-47  
Steve Cuddy 12-18-89  
Dick Geyer 12-15-42  
Robert Hall 12-05-45  
James Hughes 12-17-39  
Fred Koppenhaver 12-29-43  
Kyle Lacey 12-16-73  
Bat Masterson 12-30-55  
Brian Peltier 12-07-78  
George Stass 12-05-38  
Chad Underkoffler 12-24-47  
Josh Wissinger 12-03-75

### **Anniversaries**

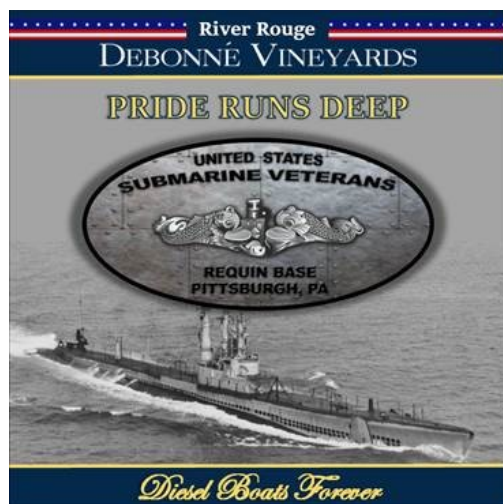
Marge Bookmiller 12-04  
Cindy Brown 12-07  
Roxane Crosby 12-13  
Erin Houpt 12-14  
Rita Ann Kalimon 12-14  
Louise Kieler 12-18  
Lisa McGinty 12-15  
Brenda Winters 12-24  
Dave-Kelly Alters 12-16  
Dick-Claudia Bistyga 12-31  
Dave-Dorothy Bonnet 12-28  
Dennis-Patricia Cantwell 12-16  
Ken-Roxane Crosby 12-01  
Jason-Michelle Deichler 12-19  
Lou-Sandy Hamill 12-29  
Jared-Jorden Lawrence 12-30  
John-Ginny Lukasik 12-07  
Ed-Carol Lyons 12-10  
Jack-Genny Sutherin 12-29  
Josh-Krissy Wissinger 12-18

**ANY ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS, PLEASE KEEP ME POSTED:**

I talked to our National Storekeeper yesterday and he was on his way home with the USSVI Calendars for 2021. I hope to receive them around thanksgiving. As soon as I receive them, I plan to ship them out to the members of the base along with your dues slip. Upon receiving your envelope, please don't set it aside. Open it and make out your dues check and return it ASAP! The schedule for paying your dues is pushed back, because of the late delivery of the calendars. It's getting very close to the Christmas holidays and it will be extremely taxing on our Treasurer, Booky, to process all the dues checks! He will have over 150 members to process in a timely manner, so the earlier you send in your check, the quicker Booky can finish. Remember this year, we instituted Requin Base LIFE membership. The only requirement to be a base life member is to be a National Life Member. There are currently 82 National Life Members with the Requin Base. Per National By-Laws, Associate members are not eligible for National life members.

The Base purchased a memorial brick with the navy logo from the Baden's American Legion along with 4 lottery tickets to support our home meeting post.

The Requin Base has set a goal of \$10,000.00 to support the crew of the USS IDAHO. We will be setting up fund raisers to help us reach our goal. Our first project will be having bottles of wine available with a submarine label. It has a picture of the original REQUIN, our submarine logo along with the saying "Pride Runs Deep" and in memory of shipmate Bernie – "Diesel Boats Forever".



The Donation requested for the various wines is:

Riesling – (sweet white) \$20.00

Rouge – (semi sweet Red) \$15.00

Chardonnay – (Dry) \$17.00

Red Blend – (Dry) \$16.00

Red  
Chardonnay –  
Red Blend –

The original small order has been placed and I hope to place another order by the end of November. It will be delivered, hopefully by Dec 7<sup>th</sup>. Please e-mail with your preference asap.

#### Requin Base Meeting Minutes

November 14, 2020

American Legion Baden, PA & Zoom

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

**Attendees:** Mike Allen, Willard Ashmore, Eric Bookmiller, Lee Bookwalter, Clair Bouts, George Brown, Joe Campisi, Tom Clark, Art & Debbie Davis, Ed & Mary Jane Derr, Huey Dietrich, Rick Elster, Lawton Gaines, Gerry Gaylor, Dick Geyer, Bob Gourley, Lou Hamill, John Held, Mark Hoag, Jim Kontier, Robert Lindsey, Chuck Loskosh, Bat Masterson, Vince Metz, Frank Nicotra, Brian

& Lola Peltier, Chuck Schrupp. Jeff Simon, Carl Stigers, Chad Underkoffler, Adam Valente

**Base Commander Huey Dietrich:** Quotes of the day: "Be ever questioning because ignorance is not bliss. You don't go to heaven if you die dumb. Be better informed learn from other's mistakes because you will not live long enough to make them all yourself."

**Requin History:** On November 13, 1945 Requin crossed the Arctic Circle.

**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 ALBACORE (SS 218)	November 7, 1944
USS GROWLER (SS 215)	November 8, 1944
USS SCAMP (SS 277)	November 9, 1944
USS CORVINA (SS 226)	November 16, 1943
USS SCULPIN (SS 191)	November 19, 1943
USS CAPELIN (SS 289)	November 23, 1943

We also wish to remember our shipmates of the Requin Base: Robert Garlock, Gary Gresh, Paul Hoffman, Arlow Julian Jr, Robert LaLonde, Don Roach, George Stefaniak, James Wilkes and Larry Wizeman. 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.

Members introduced themselves and the boats they qualified on.

**Base Secretary Jeff Simon** reported that Minutes of the previous base meeting were published in the SVD and on the Requin Base website. With no objections, the minutes were approved as published.

**Treasurer Lee Bookwalter** gave an accounting of base assets, expenditures, and deposits are available upon request. With no objections, the report was approved.

**Other Reports:**

Eternal Patrol: Marilyn Regits, Rosemary Covey, Al Murman, Frank Lambiase  
Membership stands at 201

**Storekeeper Frank Nicotra** reported on small stores.

**Shipmate Vince Metz** reported on Eagle Scout court of honor presentations.

**Memorial And Ceremonies**

All parades and ceremonies have been cancelled for the time being.

**Old Business:**

Calendars not ready which is negatively impacting our dues collection

Veteran's Day parade has officially been cancelled

Nominees for Base officers are Commander Huey Dietrich, First Vice Commander Carl Stigers, Second Vice Commander Rick Elster, Secretary Jeff Simon, Treasurer Lee Bookwalter. Members wishing to be nominated for any of these positions should contact Bat Masterson.

**New Business:**

Challenge coin for USS Hawaii is available for anyone who served on her.

Motion to purchase Baden Legion lottery tickets was approved by the members present

Motion to purchase Baden Legion brick was approved by the members present

**For The Good Of The Order:**

Shipmate Ed Deer was inducted into Holland Club

A budget of \$10,000 has been set aside for sponsorship activities for the USS Idaho.

Thank you note from Frank Hood was read.

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

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned.

**Next meeting:** American Legion Baden PA at 1230 hours on December 12, 2020



This virus is not a living organism. It is a protein molecule (RNA or DNA) covered by a protective layer of lipid (fat), which, when absorbed by the cells of the ocular (eyes), nasal (nose), or buccal mucosa (mouth), changes their genetic code (mutates) and converts into aggressor and multiplier cells.

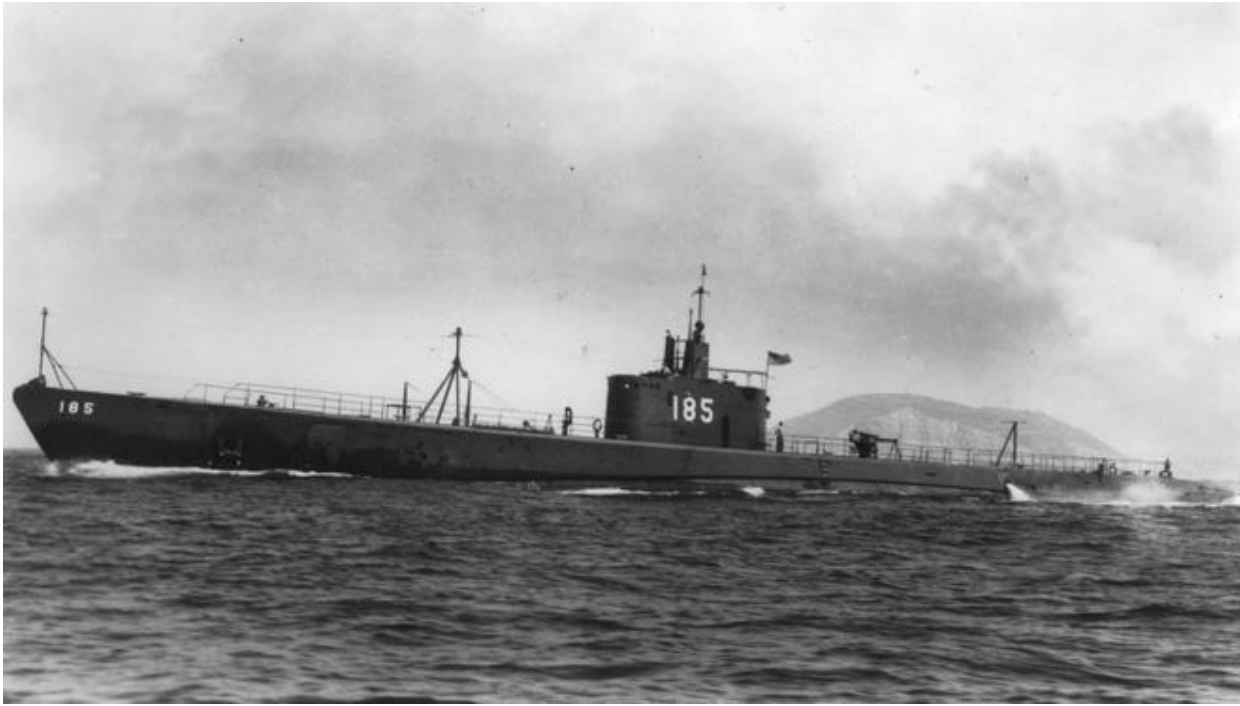
- \* Since the virus is not a living organism, but is a protein molecule, it cannot be killed. It has to decay on its own. The disintegration time depends on the temperature, humidity and type of material where it lies.
- \* The virus is very fragile; the only thing that protects it is a thin outer layer of fat, and that is the reason why soap or detergent is the best weapon. The foam CUTS THE FAT (that is why you have to scrub for 20 seconds or more, to create lots of foam). By dissolving the fat layer, the protein molecule disperses and breaks down.
- \* HEAT melts fat; this is why it is necessary to use water above 77 degrees for hand washing, laundry, and cleaning surfaces. In addition, hot water makes more foam, making it more effective.
- \* Alcohol or any mixture with alcohol over 65% DISSOLVES ALL FAT, especially the external lipid layer of the virus.
- \* Any solution with 1part bleach and 5 parts water directly dissolves the protein, breaking it down from the inside.
- \* Oxygenated water increases the effectiveness of soap, alcohol and chlorine, because peroxide dissolves the virus protein. However, because you have to use it in its pure form, it can damage your skin.
- \* NO BACTERICIDE OR ANTIBIOTIC WILL WORK, because the virus is not a living organism like bacteria; antibiotics cannot kill what is not alive.
- \* The virus molecules remain very stable at colder temperatures, including air conditioning in houses and cars. They also need moisture and darkness to stay stable. Therefore, dehumidified, dry, warm, and bright environments will degrade the virus faster.
- \* UV LIGHT on any object that may contain the virus breaks down the protein. Be careful, it also breaks down collagen (which is protein) in the skin.
- \* The virus CANNOT go through healthy skin.
- \* Vinegar is NOT useful because it does not break down the protective layer of fat.
- \* NO SPIRITS, such as VODKA, will work. The strongest vodka is only 40% alcohol, and you need a minimum of 65%.
- \* LISTERINE is 65% alcohol.
- \* The more confined the space, the higher the concentration of the virus there can be. The more open, or naturally ventilated, the less the concentration of virus.
- \* You need to wash your hands before and after touching any commonly used surfaces such as: door locks, knobs, faucets, switches, handles, remotes, cell phones, tablets, plastic cards, keys, watches, keyboards, mice, desk surfaces, etc., also when handling food and when you use the bathroom.
- \* You need to MOISTURIZE YOUR HANDS due to frequent washing. Dry hands have cracks and the molecules can hide in the micro cracks The thicker the moisturizer, the better.
- \* Also keep your NAILS SHORT so that the virus cannot lurk there

## October 1944 in WWII: May we never forget

James Regions

October 12, Columbus Day, is currently having a difficult time maintaining its historic significance. So are the exploits of the greatest generation of fighters of World War II. It would be interesting to know how many News-Leader readers know the commonality of the names Shark II, Escolar, Albacore, Tang and Seawolf. Yet, turn back history's clock two or three generations, and most newspaper readers would easily answer. They are the names of the five U.S. Navy submarines that were sunk in action in the Pacific Theater in October 1944, 75 years ago.

While school children my age were learning to swim in bayous, creeks and lakes across our nation, the brave sailors of the greatest generation were taking the war to the enemy, struggling for survival in the bloody waters of the Pacific — where 3,496 submariners were killed in action. Casualty numbers seldom included any wounded, as death was almost always guaranteed when their steel, coffin-like vessels were hit by enemy torpedoes, depth charges or mines.



They were often killed by retaliatory fire from the enemy that they had just bloodied. It was the nature of their warfare that when the submarines attacked, they knew that there would be a violent, deadly response to their provocation. No room for cowards here.

Submarines were named for fish, and the Shark II lived up to its namesake in its brief lifetime. Her first patrol was in April and May of 1944 and her second in July and August. Both patrols were highly successful, sinking several ships and rescuing downed airmen. Her third, and last, patrol ended on Oct. 24 with a radio transmission indicating that she was in pursuit of an enemy freighter. Postwar records report that she was sunk by a Japanese destroyer's depth charges following her sinking of the freighter. All 87 hands aboard perished beneath the seas.

The Shark II's history closed on another sad note as the last ship it sank was a Japanese troop transport, the Arisan Maru, loaded with Allied POWs. Geneva Convention rules required that transports carrying POWs be identified as such. It wasn't. Only nine of the 1,782 POWs survived the sinking. What a terrible price of perishing — almost 2,000 souls — was paid for our freedom on that one October night 75 years ago.



The escolar fish is a little recognized member of the tuna family. And so it is with the USS Escobar. Her 83-man crew — little known and largely unheralded — died without having recorded any sinkings of enemy ships or savings of downed airmen. On her first patrol out of Midway in late September 1944, moving into position with the two other members of a “wolf-pack,” she was last heard from on Oct. 17. Then, silence. Navy records’ best guess is that she hit a mine.

Her officers and crewmen’s fight for life, for those who may have survived the deadly explosive power of the half-ton mine, can only be imagined as they closed hatches and struggled to escape using the Momsen lung — designed to scrub carbon dioxide and allow some breathable oxygen — before succumbing to the waters that drowned them or to the deadly gasses from destroyed batteries. Perhaps it is better that we do not know the minutia of how horrible the price that was paid for us by those freedom fighters. For me, it is enough to know that they died so that I might live in freedom.

The albacore tuna is a sportsman’s dream as a fighting game fish. The Japanese navy found the submarine, the USS Albacore, to be an exceptionally game fighter as she sank and damaged numerous tankers, oilers and transports. And she held the distinction of destroying the most enemy warship tonnage, including a submarine chaser, a gunboat, two destroyers and a cruiser. And on her ninth patrol, she sank the newest, largest floating airbase in the Japanese fleet, the aircraft carrier Taiho with its complement of 1,650 officers and men.

From August 1942 through September 1944, she completed 10 patrols, winning nine battle stars and four Presidential Unit Citations. She survived hundreds of enemy depth charges and two friendly fire attacks by army air corps bombers; the last almost ended her career with the loss of all auxiliary power and the main induction valve, sending her 400 feet deep before she recovered. Wanting to continue to fight, she bandaged her wounds and continued the patrol. It seemed to be the norm for that generation of fighters.

After topping off her tanks on Midway and heading out to do battle again on Oct. 28, 1944, she was not heard from again. It is likely that she was destroyed by a floating mine near Hokkaido, Japan. Her entire crew disappeared in the depths of the Pacific. Those 86 young lives sacrificed for our freedom should never disappear from our memories.

The tang fish, nicknamed “surgeonfish,” is an omnivore, an assertive fish that feeds on small invertebrates, fish, algae and reef plants. You have seen her Disneyesque representative, Dory, in “Finding Nemo” with a cuteness that belies the true nature of the anything-but-timid tang. Her namesake, the USS Tang, was an aggressive submarine whose CO, Commander R.H. O’Kane, won three Navy Crosses and the Medal of Honor in leading her on five patrols, sinking 31 ships and damaging two, while evading dozens of enemy “search and destroy” missions of innumerable depth charges and torpedoes.

The Tang also rescued 22 pilots that had been shot down by the Japanese or ditched their planes due to lack of fuel in returning from missions. On her fifth — and last — patrol she sank 13 enemy ships. She was engaged in a surface night attack when her last torpedo circled and sank her. Her captain and eight other survivors were picked up by enemy ships and suffered indescribable hardships as POWs until the end of the war. The Tang’s end reminds us of war’s inhumanity and all of its attendant sorrows. And more of our indebtedness to warriors like Captain O’Kane and his valiant crew.

The seawolf is a solitary fish with strong, prominent teeth and projecting tusks that give it a savage look. The USS Seawolf was savage — in more than her looks. One of the first fighting units to respond to Japan’s attack on the Philippines, stationed at Cavite Navy Yard, she made 15 patrols between Dec. 8, 1941, and Oct. 4, 1944. She sank 27 enemy ships and damaged 13, delivered ammunition to Philippine guerrillas, made a photographic reconnaissance of Palau before the Marines landing in September 1944 and rescued numerous downed airmen.

She survived hundreds of depth charges beginning with the response to her first attack on Dec. 14, 1941. She was sunk by depth charges or by Hedgehog anti-submarine projector charges on Oct. 4, 1944, 75 years ago this month. Eighty-three officers and crewmen died along with 17 army passengers. As with most submarine sinkings, no bodies were recovered.

Sadly, she was sunk by friendly fire — failing to respond correctly to the recognition signal — by a destroyer escort, the USS Richard M. Rowell, which was looking for the Japanese submarine, RO-41, that had just sunk her sister escort, the USS Shelton. The next saddest thing that could happen to her would be for the nation under whose flag she fought — and for whom she died — to forget her. May we never forget.

*James Regions lives in Springfield.*

### **Vet Podcast** **“My Life, My Story”**

Imagine that you’re a patient in the hospital, maybe recovering from a knee surgery or pneumonia. You’re lying in bed, watching something boring on TV when you hear a knock at the door. “Come in,” you say, and a stranger walks into your room. The person is carrying a notepad and pen, and they ask if you’d like to be interviewed about your life. This happens every day at VA hospitals around the country. The strangers walking into the rooms are writers. The patients who choose to tell their stories are America’s Veterans. The program is called, “My Life, My Story” which can be listened to at <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/78619/welcome-life-story-podcast>

In the seven years since the program started, over 5,000 Veterans have been interviewed at over 50 VA hospitals. Veterans as young as 22 years old and as old as 108. Most of the interviews last about an hour. After that, we write up a story that’s about 1,000 words long. When we’re done, we read the story back to the Veteran and, once they’re happy with it, we put it in their medical record so that their doctors and nurses can read the stories, too. The goal is to make health care a little more personal, to help staff get to know their patients better. But one thing we’ve noticed about these stories: while it’s nice to read them on the page, they’re even better read aloud.



For Season One, we've selected a dozen of our favorites. In a few cases, the Veterans themselves will read their stories. For the others, we found voice actors or VA staff to read for us. Any or all of the following stories can be listened to at <https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/78619/welcome-life-story-podcast> unless otherwise indicated:

- Carl: Losing a Friend 09:28
- Zack: The Gambler 08:19
- Simon: When Work Is Your Hobby 09:26
- Harry: A Guard, a Donkey, and a Cart 08:48
- Bibiana: A Teenage Soldier 11:25
- George: A Voice To Be Heard 20:11
- Steve: Mein Freund 09:39
- Toby: We Knew What Love Was 10:28
- Hank: Getting Focused 09:52
- Tom: The Doctor Is In 08:01
- Jess: Talking About Trauma 10:36
- Charlie: I Don't Want Notoriety 08:20
- Robert: Captured 07:27 <https://vimeo.com/457792789>
- Brian: "My Life as a Foreign Country" 27:16 <https://youtu.be/GBALTWXIMFs>

[Source: Vantage Point | September 25, 2020 ++]

## Shipboard Fires

### Fourth Navy Warship since Mid-July

Yet another fire aboard a Navy warship has left more than a dozen crew members injured in the fourth blaze to strike Navy warship in just over two months. A "small fire" in the engineering space aboard the cruiser USS Antietam resulted in 13 crew members receiving minor injuries while the ship was in the Philippine Sea, U.S. 7th Fleet spokeswoman Cmdr. Reann Mommsen told Military.com. The crew quickly extinguished the blaze and the cruiser remains "fully operational," according to Mommsen. The cause of the fire is now under investigation.



Antietam



Kearsarge



Kennedy



Healy



Waesche

As Military.com notes, the Antietam fire is the latest in a string of conflagrations to strike Navy warships since 12 JUL, when an inferno aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard left the vessel all but crippled at a pier in San Diego, California. Just days after the Bonhomme Richard blaze was extinguished, Navy personnel responded to a "small" fire aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Kearsarge while it was undergoing maintenance at General Dynamics' National Steel and Shipbuilding Company shipyard in Norfolk, Virginia. A few days after that, Huntington Ingalls Industries responded to a "minor" fire aboard the aircraft carrier John F. Kennedy at Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia. Both the Kearsarge and Kennedy fires were quickly extinguished by Navy and shipyard personnel, as Task & Purpose previously reported.

The Navy isn't the only service forced to deal with shipboard fires in recent months: the Coast Guard has suffered two blazes on ships underway in the last several weeks. In late August, a major fire broke out aboard the Coast Guard icebreaker Healy that forced the vessel to cut short a research mission to the Arctic and travel to Washington state to repair damage to its propulsion system, as USNI News reported. Then, in late September, a fire broke out aboard Coast Guard Cutter Waesche while the ship was underway in the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations, as Navy Times reported. Quick action on the part of the Waesche's crew managed to save the ship from a potentially disastrous blaze. [Source: Task & Purpose | Jared Keller | September 30, 2020 ++]

## USS Bonhomme Richard

### Update 02: Navy Has No Good Options for the Fire-Ravaged Ship



In deciding how to move forward with the warped and carbonized hulk of the amphibious assault ship Bonhomme Richard, U.S. Navy leaders face a series of choices and all of them are bad. The Navy has not yet produced an estimate to repair the damage to the ship, which burned for five days in July. Assessing the full extent of the five-day fire that gutted much of the upper decks and levels of the ship will take some time yet. But no matter what the Navy decides, it will be painful. The bottom line? The Navy can either:

- Fix Bonhomme Richard at enormous cost;
- Replace her with a new LHA, a class of ship that Congressional Research Service says is running about \$3.8 billion per hull, further constricting an already squeezed shipbuilding budget;
- Try to pull an old big-deck out of mothballs and overhaul it for a few years of service; or
- Cut bait entirely and lose the capacity all together.

The service is facing a budget crunch, with the Columbia-class ballistic missile submarine slated to have an outsized impact on the service's budget for years. That means replacing the older Wasp-class amphibious assault ship (LHA) with a more capable and much more expensive America-class LHA would be challenging without a congressional largess. Officials who spoke on background said that the Navy's working assumption is that the repairs could cost as much as, or even exceed, \$1.5 billion, though that number is subject to change based on a full assessment of the hull that has not been completed yet. If the repair cost \$1.5 billion or thereabouts, it would roughly equal the original cost of construction. But that would still be significantly less than the cost of building a new big deck to replace the Bonhomme Richard.

In a phone call with Defense News, a Navy official who spoke on background said there were four ongoing investigations regarding the July Bonhomme Richard fire. Naval Sea Systems Command is conducting an investigation and a failure review board, geared toward safety and lessons learned. A command investigation delves into how the ship's chain of command handled the situation both prior to and during the catastrophe. And finally, a Naval Criminal Investigative Service investigation joined by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is also on scene. On top of everything else, the damage assessment team has to "take a back seat" to the criminal investigation while it is ongoing, the official said.

All the teams are trying to stay out of each other's way, but some spaces that a damage assessment team might need to access are inaccessible because the criminal investigators might be using them, for example, the official said.

This has hampered progress toward getting a fuller picture of what needs to be done and how much it will all cost to repair, the official said. All four investigations feed into one another and the official explained the best guess now is that the results may not be available until the end of the year, either in November or December. In all, the Navy believes it's possible to repair Bonhomme Richard, but the decision will ultimately be "a strategic one," the official said. He added that on the San Diego waterfront, which teamed up to fight the nearly week-long fire, sailors are hopeful that the ship will be repaired.

#### Options

The consensus among Navy analysts who have seen the damage to Bonhomme Richard in pictures and heard it described by the chief of naval operations in a July memo obtained by Defense News, is that large sections of the ship will need to be re-fabricated entirely. "You may have to just cut it off and rebuild it above the hangar deck," said Jerry Hendrix, a retired Navy captain and analyst with the Telemus Group. "Put her into dry dock and rebuild her from the hangar deck on up."

Industry officials who spoke on background said It may be possible to build sections of the ship at Huntington Ingalls Industries' shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, where the ship was built and float them through the Panama Canal to assemble on the West Coast. But it's unclear if Ingalls has the capacity to accommodate that kind of an interruption to the already jam-packed schedule with more than a dozen amphibious assault ships, dock landing ships, destroyers and Coast Guard National Security Cutters already either under construction or in the planning process, according to an Ingalls Shipyard fact sheet. It's also unclear if the West Coast's limited dry dock infrastructure, already strained to keep up with maintenance jobs and new ship construction, would be able to support a plan like that.

Likewise, the ship may be able to be towed through the Panama Canal to Ingalls Shipbuilding but the same capacity question arises, said Bryan Clark, a retired submarine officer and now a senior fellow at Hudson Institute. If the repair requires “Bonhomme Richard to go back to Ingalls, it is unclear if they have the space and manpower to support the job without significant growth in the workforce,” Clark said. Repairing, versus procuring a new America-class ship would have the added benefit of pulling money from a different pot of money than the already accounted-for shipbuilding budget. Instead, the money would come from the operations and maintenance fund. But that approach isn’t exactly a panacea for the Navy’s Bonhomme Richard problem, Clark said. “Additional O&M funds for BHR would come from existing O&M accounts that are already pressurized,” he said. “If the Navy doesn’t get additional funding from Congress, the repair may not be feasible.”

An alternative to a full repair would be to try a partial repair to return the ship to some usefulness, Clark said. “Wasp was used as a tech demonstration and concept development ship for several years in the last decade because it needed various upgrades,” he said. “Wasp is now back in full service, of course. BHR could, however, be returned to partial service, for example as a F-35 carrier, but the well deck could be left unrepaired if it is too hard to fix.”

### **Structural integrity**

But even that option may not be feasible, and the ship may be much more damaged than we know yet, said Sal Mercogliano, a former civilian mariner and maritime historian with Campbell University who studies the maritime industry closely. “I think Bonhomme Richard is a total constructive loss and they’re just not admitting it yet,” Mercogliano said. “The amount of damage done to her is difficult to assess because she burned and held all that heat for so long. “Even in a building that catches on fire, you immediately start worrying about the integrity of the structure. That’s magnified on a ship because you have all that steel that conducts all that heat throughout the structure. You would have to analyze every centimeter to see where the weaknesses in the steel are, let alone getting her underway and putting all those stresses on the hull. “She was cooked for six days. In the commercial industry, we’d write it off and get the insurance money.”

If the damage assessment team finds that the hull is too damaged to be salvaged, Hendrix suggests looking at one of the older classes of big-deck amphibians, such as the Tarawa-class ships. Both Peleliu and Nassau are in the reserve fleet. “I don’t know what that would cost, but I’m betting it would be less than what we’d spend on a Bonhomme Richard rebuild,” he said. The issue is that the old LHA class is likely incompatible with the F-35, said Mercogliano. “Even if you broke one of the Tarawas out, they still can’t do the F-35,” he said. “It doesn’t have the flight deck for it and it’s an open question as to whether the elevators could handle it.”

The Navy has cut bait entirely on a fire-damaged ship in the recent past. When a 2012 arson devastated the Los Angeles-class attack sub Miami, the Navy opted to decommission the ship after the repair bill rose to \$700 million. That was, however, at a time when the Navy was taking a huge financial hit from across-the-board budget cuts. The Navy took more than a year to decide to scrap Miami. For Mercogliano, if the Navy doesn’t want to lose the capacity, it may just have to bite the bullet and buy a new one from the shipbuilding fund. “You’d be better off spending the money to get a brand-new ship and getting 30- to 40 years out of it,” he said. [Source: DefenseNews | David B. Larter | September 30, 2020 ++]

## **Senior Vaccines**

### **Over 50? The CDC Says You Need These 4**

With summer now behind us, it’s time to prepare for what could be a difficult fall and winter. With the coronavirus pandemic still raging and flu season underway, staying healthy will be more challenging than in most years. If you are 50 or older, you are especially vulnerable to such health threats. That makes it extra important to consider scheduling vaccinations that can keep you healthy — and even save your life. The aging process weakens our immune systems, putting us at greater risk for several types of disease, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For this reason, the CDC recommends adults 50 or older schedule the following vaccines. Just talk to your doctor before getting any vaccine, as there are some exceptions to CDC recommendations.

#### **Flu shot**

The CDC recommends that all adults get a flu shot, but this is particularly important for older adults and those with chronic health conditions such as diabetes, asthma and heart disease. These people have a greater risk of developing serious complications if they catch influenza. While the flu might seem like a minor nuisance, it can be deadly. As the CDC reminds us: “Every year in the United States, millions of people are sickened, hundreds of thousands are hospitalized and thousands or tens of thousands of people die from the flu.” And this year, getting the flu shot is even more important.

#### **Shingles vaccine**

Around 1 in 3 Americans will develop shingles at some point, and the risk of getting the painful rash grows with age, according to the CDC. This painful condition can cause symptoms that last months or years. It can even cause permanent blindness, as we report in “This Cause of Blindness Is Soaring Among Seniors.” A newer vaccine, called Shingrix, is more than 90% effective in preventing shingles in older people, according to the CDC. But the vaccine has been running short for years. So, call your health care provider now to set up an appointment for the two-dose vaccine. Or, use the CDC’s Vaccine Finder tool or the Shingrix locator tool from GSK, the vaccine’s manufacturer.

#### **Tdap or Td vaccine**

The Tdap vaccine protects you against tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis. Chances are good that you have had this vaccine in the past. But if you haven’t, the CDC urges you to get it. The Td vaccine only protects against tetanus and diphtheria, and requires a booster every 10 years.

#### **Pneumococcal vaccines**

Pneumococcal vaccines help protect against pneumococcal disease, meaning infections caused by the *Streptococcus pneumoniae* bacteria. The CDC recommends all adults age 65 or older get both types of pneumococcal vaccines that are available in the U.S.: pneumococcal conjugate and pneumococcal polysaccharide.

[Source: MoneyTalksNews | Chris Kissell | October 7, 2020 ++]