



August 2021

Published Monthly

STEEL VALLEY DOLPHINS
USSVI REQUIN BASE NEWSLETTER



The USSVI Requin Base supports the National 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.”

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Meeting Information

Meetings are held on the second Saturday of the month, normally at the Baden PA American Legion. Quarterly meetings are held around our membership area.

Our next (informal) meeting will be

September 11, 2021 Following the parade

At Baden American Legion

Base Location



American Legion Post 641
271 State St
Baden PA 15005

From the Editor

Please send ideas for articles or copies of articles, with full credit information to me for consideration of submission in the SVD.

We are a SUBMARINE group. As such, the articles should be SUBMARINE or NAVY related.

Lou Hamill - itgeek8088@gmail.com

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, ATTEND A MEETING!

Our Website

For additional information about what is happening at **YOUR** base, go to

<https://www.requinbase.org/>



USSVI National Officers

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|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
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| Junior Vice Commander | Steven Bell | 704-824-3510 | usnret82@carolina.rr.com |
| Secretary | Raymond Wewers | 479-967-5541 | raywewers@gmail.com |
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USS Requin Base Officers

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|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------|--|
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| Treasurer | Lee M. Bookwalter | 412-795-8337 | booky143@verizon.net |
| Storekeeper | Frank Nicotra | 412-835-6540 | nicotrafrank@gmail.com |
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| Asst. Holland Club | Dick Geyer | 724-637-2995 | dqdiving@gmail.com |
| Technology Chair | Lou Hamill | 412-445-3998 | itgeek8088@gmail.com |
| Eagle Scout Chair | Vince Metz | 412-613-5554 | vincemetz007@hotmail.com |
| Awards Chair | Dick Geyer | 724-637-2995 | dqdiving@gmail.com |
| Master at Arms | Bat Masterson | 724-869-1938 | mastersoncf@aol.com |
| Public Affairs Chair | Ed Derr | 724-854-0781 | redde@gmail.com |



Binnacle List

Keith Small

Eric Bookmiller

Cathy Clark

Eternal Patrol



William "Bill" Hawk

In Remembrance

Robert Campbell

Frank Gogul

John Irons

Louis Kleinlein

Sam McGrew

Neal Sever

Edward Yoder

Boats Lost



Tolling of the Boats for August

USS Bullhead (SS-332)

Lost on August 6, 1945 with the loss of 84 crew members in the Lombok Strait while on her 3rd war patrol when sunk by a depth charge dropped by a Japanese Army plane. Bullhead was the last submarine lost during WWII.

USS Flier (SS-250)

Lost on August 13, 1944, with the loss of 78 crew members while on her 2nd war patrol. Flier was transiting on the surface when she was rocked by a massive explosion (probably a mine) and sank within less than a minute. 13 survivors, some injured, made it into the water and swam to shore. 8 survived and 6 days later friendly natives guided them to a Coast Watcher and they were evacuated by the USS Redfin (SS-272).

USS S-39 (SS-144)

Lost on August 13, 1942 after grounding on a reef south of Rossel Island while on her 3rd war patrol. The entire crew was able to get off and rescued by the HMAS Katoomba.

USS Harder (SS-257)

Lost on August 24, 1944 with the loss of 79 crew members from a depth charge attack by a minesweeper near Bataan while on her 6th war patrol. Harder had won a Presidential Unit Citation for her first 5 war patrols and CDR Dealey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. Harder is tied for 9th in the number of enemy ships sunk.

USS Cochino (SS-345)

Lost on August 26, 1949 after being jolted by a violent polar gale off Norway caused an electrical fire and battery explosion that generated hydrogen and chlorine gasses. In extremely bad weather, men of Cochino and Tusk (SS-426) fought to save the submarine for 14 hours. After a 2nd battery explosion, Abandon Ship was ordered and Cochino sank. Tusk' screw rescued all of Cochino's men except for one civilian engineer. Six sailors from Tusk were lost during the rescue.

Birthdays

Anniversaries

Member

Spouse

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Patricia Everly | 09/25/54 |
| David L. Howton | 09/25/55 |
| Daniel J. Klemz | 09/25/45 |
| Blaine N. Kuhn | 09/25/40 |
| David G. Sawin | 09/25/43 |
| Richard D. McCarthy | 09/27/57 |
| Thomas G. Burdin | 09/29/45 |

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Eileen Klemz | 6-Sep |
| Valerie Wendell | 25-Sep |

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------|
| Carol & Pete Poninsky | 12-Sep |
| Lois & John P. Stewart | 13-Sep |
| Judith & Chad A. Underkoffler | 5-Sep |
| Dolly & Paris vonRabenau | 8-Sep |





Our last base meeting was held a week early, due to the fact that we are marching in the Titusville parade on the 14th. In spite of the move, our base members and guests totaled over 40 in attendance – KUDOS SHIPMATES. There are a few items that I want to address:

1. New Members – Kudos to the new members who attended! They want to be active and not just dues paying members. Bistolos (Mercer), Derr (Sharon), Held (Irwin). Warren (Columbiana, Oh) and our new member from the Canonsburg parade, Wolbrueck, who is going to be an LDO very soon.

Also, our members from afar, Ellis (Murrysville), Held (Irwin), Johnston (Clarion), Greenlee (Titusville), Sutherin and Markel from Columbiana, Oh).

2. The following members met with Captain Jason – Huey, Hamill, C. Underkoffler, Campisi, Elster Held, Brown, Spencer and Clark. Shipmate Spencer served with Jason on the Pittsburgh.

It was great seeing Jason back in the burg and having a few brewskies with him at the German Club. We gave Jason two cases of TORPEDO beer. One twelve pack for him and the others for Admiral Seif and the Captain of the Idaho along with the COB.

3. And a BIG thank you to Edie and all the ladies on suppling such wonderful desserts at all the meetings, they all tasted so good that there were no left overs at all.

Sunday, after the meeting, 5 shipmates (Huey, Hamill, Derr, C. Underkoffler and Campisi, traveled to New Castle, Pa., to attend a memorial service for our friend Frank Lambiase. He was a WWII tank commander, under Patton, at the battle of the bulge. When we went to the church, a gentleman, with 3 kids, made his way through the crowd to talk to us. He mentioned that he just moved into the area and his wife was unpacking while he brought the kids to church. He introduced himself as Mike Tomon, as the commanding officer of the USS MAINE SSBN741 and was being assigned to CMU. He took our cards and said he would be in touch!

We also had a conversation with the New Castle Honor Guard! They told us that one of their members was a bubblehead. I later contacted him and he mentioned that his boat was the Archerfish??? I said what. He said Archerfish..... (Hee - Hee)

I quickly contacted Lou Hamill and notified him we had another Archerfish on the line. Lou talked to him for about 40 minutes and it looks like he is very interested in joining.

After the service, we traveled to Midland, Pa. We had scheduled to deliver our sub beer tap handle to the VFW in Midland. We made the arrangement with the VFW while we were in the Midland Parade, and the American Legion was an added sale.

Speaking of Beer Taps – We are making and selling them to Veteran Clubs to help us support the USS IDAHO fund. In addition, we also sell Coin Holders for Challenge coins. KUDOS to both Lou Hamill and Eric Bookmiller on making both projects successful.

The Idaho funds stands at \$10,301.00. There are 5 beer taps waiting to be picked up and 1 coin holder which hopefully put us close to \$11,000.00. We will be within \$4,000.00 of our new goal.

I want to conclude with many thanks to shipmate Tom Clark, who also is the President of the Navy League, for doing all the computer prep, for our webinar with Admiral Seif and Captain Jason. Tom also had his navy league members on board and participated. In addition, with all the help from Campisi, Bookwalter and Simon, the webinar lasted a good hour and half. Thanks for all the shipmates who attended. You can go on our web-site and watch it in its entirety.



If you would like to order a challenge coin holder or a Submarine Beer Tap Handle [with or without the stand] contact Huey Dietrich



Steve Brown from Midland American Legion Post 481 bought a beer tap handle and donated it to the club. BZ Steve.



Chuck "Bat" Masterson & Jeff from the Midland VFW Post 8168 with their new beer tap handle.





Month in Review

We had a great conversation with RDML Seif and CAPT Deichler on 7/27/2021 via Zoom.

To view the conversation go to:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-BRQPs3cbSk>



Photo opportunity from the last Base meeting on 8/7/2021

Titusville Parade on 8/14/2021

More parade photos and photos from other events can be viewed at

<https://requinbase.org/basephotos/>





Greetings to all my fellow Requin Base shipmates, spouses, and associate members.

Are you as a Christian believer ready to stand? Are you aware that around the world daily, Christian believers are being rounded up and imprisoned or executed? Have you seen and understand the daily attacks on Christianity in this country? We are rapidly approaching in this country the time where you will be made to make a choice. Already in a large number of workplaces you can find policies that single out Christians and purposely allow policies that infringe on your rights.

Paul in his writings in the NT clearly showed that these things must come to pass. But he also showed that they are not from people but from Satan.

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Indeed, we wrestle against the evil wiles of Satan's demonic kingdom. And his influences are used on other people. Paul again clarifies this in the next verse

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

So we know of the forces against us and we are not to be ignorant of them. But Paul writes from experience on how we are to fight against them.

13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Note that there is no armor for the back, if you turn to flee you will be hit and most likely taken down. Facing evil is the only choice we have.

James writes that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"

I encourage you all to stand, continue fighting and pray much.

I gave some scriptures that might help in times of stress in the last article and would like to make another Bible reading suggestion. Read the book of Ephesians and in the text place your name in every scripture you can. It shows just how personal our relationship is with God and may be a blessing to you.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters deployed in harm's way and for those other service members deployed overseas in combat or support areas. Pray for our Country and leadership. Please know that I lift all of you up in prayer much every day.

In His Service,

Carl Stigers

National Chaplain/ Requin Chaplain



Store Keepers Report

Please visit our online store at

<https://requinbase.org/shop/>

You can have your items shipped to you at home via USPS [for a small fee], or pick them up at the next USSVI meeting.





Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2021
Baden, PA

Base Commander Huey Dietrich called the meeting to order.

Attendees: Mike Allen, John Bistolos, Lee & Patsy Bookwalter, Clair & Nancy Bouts, George & Cindy Brown, Joe Campisi, Ed & Mary Jane Derr, Huey & Edie Dietrich, Sandy Ellis, Rick Flaugh, Dick & Beverly Geyer, Bill & Donna Greenlee, Lou Hamill, John Held, Mark Hoag, Jim Johnston, Chuck Loskosh, Mike Markel, Bat Masterson, Vince Metz, Bob & Judy Meyers, Frank Nicotra, Jeff & Eileen Simon, Carl Stigers, Jack Sutherin, Chad Underkoffler, Charlie Warren, Andrew Wolbrueck.

Base Commander Huey Dietrich: Quotes of the day: “Submariners are a bunch of intelligent misfits that somehow seem to get along, understand each other and work well together”

Requin History: August 24, 1944 keel laid at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. August 14, 1945 two weeks after her arrival and three days before starting her first war patrol, WWII ended and the Requin was recalled and ordered back to the Atlantic. August 1, 1952 Requin was back in European waters, during September she visited the United Kingdom, then in October the submarine transited the Straits Of Gibraltar for regular 6th Fleet duty. August 15, 1959 upon her conversion to fleet snorkel configuration, the Requin was given hull classification SS 481 and rejoined Subron 6 in Norfolk VA for operations as a normal attack submarine, a role she retained until her decommissioning. August 7, 1990 Requin left International Ship Repair in Tampa FL under tow to Baton Rouge LA. August 11, 1990 Requin was lifted onto barges and began her ride up the Mississippi River and Ohio River to Pittsburgh PA.

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 BULLHEAD (SS 332) | August 6, 1945 |
| USS FLIER (SS 250) | August 13, 1944 |
| USS S 39 (SS 144) | August 16, 1942 |
| USS HARDER (SS 257) | August 24, 1944 |
| USS COCHINO (SS 345) | August 26, 1949 |

We also wish to remember our shipmates of the Requin Base: Robert Campbell, Frank Gogul, John Irons, Louis Kleinlein, Sam McGrew, Neal Sever, and Edward Yoder.

Let us also remember 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.

Secretary Jeff Simon reported that Minutes of the previous base meeting were published in the SVD. With no objections, the minutes were approved as published.

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

Other Reports:

Binnacle List: Keith Small, Eric Bookmiller, Cathy Clark



Eternal Patrol: William Hawk
Membership stands at 197

Storekeeper Frank Nicotra new items available from BC Patch.

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

Memorial and Ceremonies

The following members met with Captain Jason at the German Club: Deitrich, Hamill, Underkoffler, Campisi, Elster, Held, Brown, Clark

Titusville parade will be held on August 14th

Base will participate in Coraopolis PA on September 11th. Abbreviated base meeting to follow the parade

Base will participate in St. Patrick's parade in Pittsburgh on September 18th

Application being made for Columbus Day parade in Bloomfield on October 9th

Possible attendance in Veterans Day in Pittsburgh parade date to be determined

Old Business:

Letter from Dan Bagley was read.

Webcam meeting with Admiral Sief and Captain Jason was discussed.

New Business:

Justin Crocker moving to King Of Prussia, PA

Art Davis moving out of the area.

Members will be attending memorial services for Frank Lambiase.

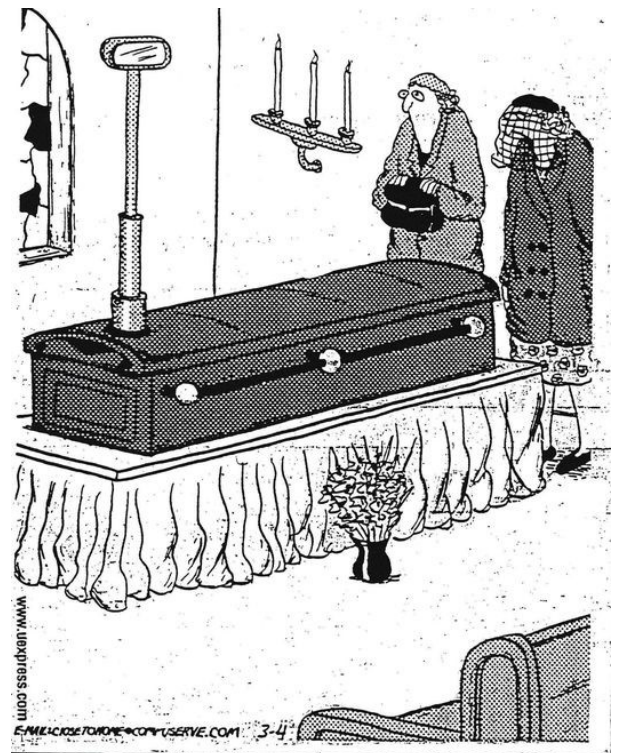
Good of The Order:

Float is being stored at Lou Hamill's house. Difficulties in procuring shelter for float were discussed.

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

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned.

Next meeting: Informal meeting after Coraopolis parade on September 11th.



"In the 42 years we were together, Rob never really let go of his Navy days."



Upcoming Events

Coraopolis Parade 9/11/2021 details to follow.

St. Patrick's parade in Pittsburgh 9/18/2021

Columbus Day parade in Bloomfield on 10/09/2021

Veterans Day parade in Pittsburgh parade date to be determined



Membership

| | | | | | |
|----------------------|------------|--------------|----|--------------------|----|
| Regular Members | 181 | Holland Club | 89 | USSVI Life Members | 75 |
| Associate Members | 13 | WWII | 5 | Base Life Members | 50 |
| Total Members | 197 | | | | |



New Members



Eagle Scouts

Please direct all Eagle Court of Honor requests to <https://requinbase.org/eagle-coh>

Congratulations to:

- Michael Brendan Walsh T-215
- Jeremy Ethan Blocklin T-215
- Carson Allen Hellerman T-215
- Brandon Kerper Smith T-215



Featured Boat

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Name | USS <i>Barbel</i> |
| Ordered | 24 August 1955 |
| Builder | <u>Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, Maine</u> |
| Laid down | 18 May 1956 |
| Launched | 19 July 1958 |
| Commissioned | 17 January 1959 |
| Decommissioned | 4 December 1989 |
| Stricken | 17 January 1990 |
| Fate | Sunk as a target 30 January 2001 |

General characteristics

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Class and type | <i>Barbel-class</i> <u>diesel-electric submarine</u> |
| Displacement | 1,744 <u>tons</u> (1,778 t) light <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,146 tons (2,180 t) full 2,637 tons (2,679 t) submerged 402 tons (408 t) dead |
| Length | 219 ft 6 in (66.90 m) overall |
| Beam | 29 ft (8.8 m) |
| Draft | 25 ft (7.6 m) max |
| Propulsion | 3 × <u>Fairbanks-Morse diesel engines</u> , total 3,150 bhp (2.3 MW) 2 × <u>General Electric electric motors</u> , total 4,800 bhp (3.6 MW) one screw |
| Speed | 12 <u>knots</u> (22 km/h) surfaced 25 knots (46 km/h) submerged |
| Endurance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 minutes at full speed 102 hours at 3 knots |
| Test depth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 712 ft (217 m) operating 1,050 ft (320 m) collapse |
| Complement | 10 officers, 69 men |
| Armament | 6 × <u>21 inch (533 mm) bow torpedo tubes</u> , 18 torpedoes |



08/01/1944

USS Puffer (SS 268) damages Japanese oiler, Sunosaki, northeast of Borneo.

08/03/1958

USS Nautilus (SSN 571) becomes the first submarine to cross the "top" of the world during Operation Sunshine when the boat passes under an arctic ice cap at the North Pole. "For the world, our country, and the Navy - the North Pole," declared the boat's commanding officer, Cmdr. William R. Anderson. The mission had been personally authorized by President Eisenhower as a response to the USSR's Sputnik program.

08/04/1943

USS Finback (SS 230) sinks Japanese cargo ship Kaisho Maru in the Java Sea off the north coast of Java while USS Seadragon (SS 194) damages Japanese transport Kembu Maru east of Ponape.

0/05/1944

USS Barbel (SS 316) sinks Japanese merchant passenger-cargo ship, Miyako Maru, off Tokuno Jima while USS Cero (SS 225) attacks a Japanese convoy off Minanao and sinks oiler, Tsurumi, in Davao Gulf.

08/06/1988

USS San Juan (SSN 751) is commissioned at New London, Conn. The Los Angeles-class nuclear-powered fast attack submarine is the third to be named after San Juan, Puerto Rico. The boat is assigned to Submarine Group Two

08/08/1942

USS Narwhal (SS 167) sinks Japanese crab boat, Bifuku Maru, southeast of Shiriya Saki while USS S-38 (SS 143) sinks Japanese transport, Meiyo Maru, at the southern entrance of St. George Channel, between New Britain and New Ireland. Also on this date, USS Silversides (SS 236) attacks a Japanese convoy emerging from Kobe Harbor and sinks freighter Nikkei Maru in Kii Strait.

08/10/1942

Off Kavieng, New Ireland, USS S-44 (SS 155) torpedoes and sinks the Japanese cruiser, Kako, as she retires from the Battle of Savo Island.

08/12/1944

USS Pompon (SS 267) and USS Puffer (SS 268) attack Japanese convoys and damage and sink Japanese destroyers.

08/13/1945

USS Atule (SS 403) sinks Japanese Coast Defense Vessel No.6 and damages Coast Defense Vessel No.16 off Hokkaido. Also on this date, USS Torsk (SS 423) sinks Japanese merchant cargo ship, Kaiho Maru.

08/14/1945

USS Spikefish (SS 404) sink the Japanese submarine (I 373), in the Sea of Japan. Also on this date, USS Torsk (SS 423) sinks Coast Defense Vessel (No.13), and Coast Defense Vessel No.47.

08/16/1944

USS Croaker (SS 246) sinks Japanese auxiliary minesweeper, Taito Maru.

08/16/1958

USS Seadragon (SSN 584) launches at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. USS Seadragon decommissions in 1984.

08/16/1986

USS Nevada (SSBN 733) is commissioned at Groton, Conn. The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine is the fourth named after the Silver State.

08/17/1942

The submarines USS Nautilus (SS 168) and USS Argonaut (SM 1) land more than 200 Marines on Makin Island, Gilbert Islands, in the first amphibious attack made from submarines.

08/19/1943

USS Finback (SS 230) sinks the Japanese auxiliary submarine chaser (No.109) off the eastern Celebes.

08/22/1944

Submarines Haddo (SS 255) and Harder (SS 257) encounter three Japanese escort vessels off the mouth of Manila Bay. Haddo sinks Sado 35 miles west of Manila; Harder sinks Matsuwa and Hiburi about 50 miles west-southwest of Manila.

08/23/1944

USS Haddo (SS 255) torpedoes Japanese destroyer Asakaze as the enemy warship is escorting tanker, Niyo Maru, 20 miles southwest of Cape Bolinao, Luzon, Philippine Islands. Asakaze later sinks near Dasol Bay after attempts at salvage fail. Also on this date, USS Tang (SS 306) attacks a Japanese convoy off Honshu, sinking cargo ship, Tsukushi Maru off Hamamatsu.

08/24/2020

USS Idaho SSN-799 Keel is laid.

08/25/1944

USS Picuda (SS 382), in attack on Japanese convoy at the western entrance to the Babuyan Channel, sinks destroyer Yunagi 20 miles north-northeast of Cape Bojeador, Philippines and merchant tanker Kotoku Maru.

08/26/1949

While operating in stormy seas off northern Norway, USS Cochino (SS 345) suffers a series of serious battery explosions that result in her loss. Though Cochino's crew is successfully rescued by USS Tusk (SS 426), the submarine loses seven of her own men during this difficult effort.

08/27/1944

USS Stingray (SS 186), after being depth charged and lightly worked over while reconnoitering the designated spot lands a party of one Filipino officer, 14 men and 60 percent of the supplies earmarked for delivery to guerilla forces at Saddle Rock, Mayaira Point, on northwest shore of Luzon. Heavy Japanese shipping in the vicinity compels Stingrays departure before all stores land.

08/29/1915

After pontoons are brought to Hawaii from the west coast, and following extensive additional diving work, the submarine USS F-4 is raised from the bottom and taken into Honolulu Harbor for dry docking. Previously, in March 1915, during a routine dive a few miles off Honolulu, F-4 sinks in 51 fathoms of water, with the loss of her 21 crewmembers.

08/29/1944

USS Jack (SS 259) attacks Japanese convoy H3 and sinks minesweeper W28 and army cargo ship, Mexico Maru, northwest of Menado, Celebes.

08/30/1929

At New London, Conn., 26 men test the Momsen lung to exit an intentionally-bottomed submarine. The device was created by Lt. C.B. Momsen following the failure to save surviving crew members trapped in USS S-4 (SS 109) that sank after a collision with Coast Guard cutter USS Paulding in 1927.



Barbel-class: The U.S. Navy's Last Non-Nuclear Attack Submarine

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2021/08/barbel-class-the-u-s-navys-last-non-nuclear-attack-submarine/>



Crew members man the rails aboard the attack submarine USS BARBEL (SS 580).

The last of the U.S. Navy's diesel-electric attack submarines, the *Barbel*-class submarines were among the most advanced boats of their time. But only three were ever built, as the *Barbel*-class was fast overshadowed by looming developments in nuclear propulsion technology.

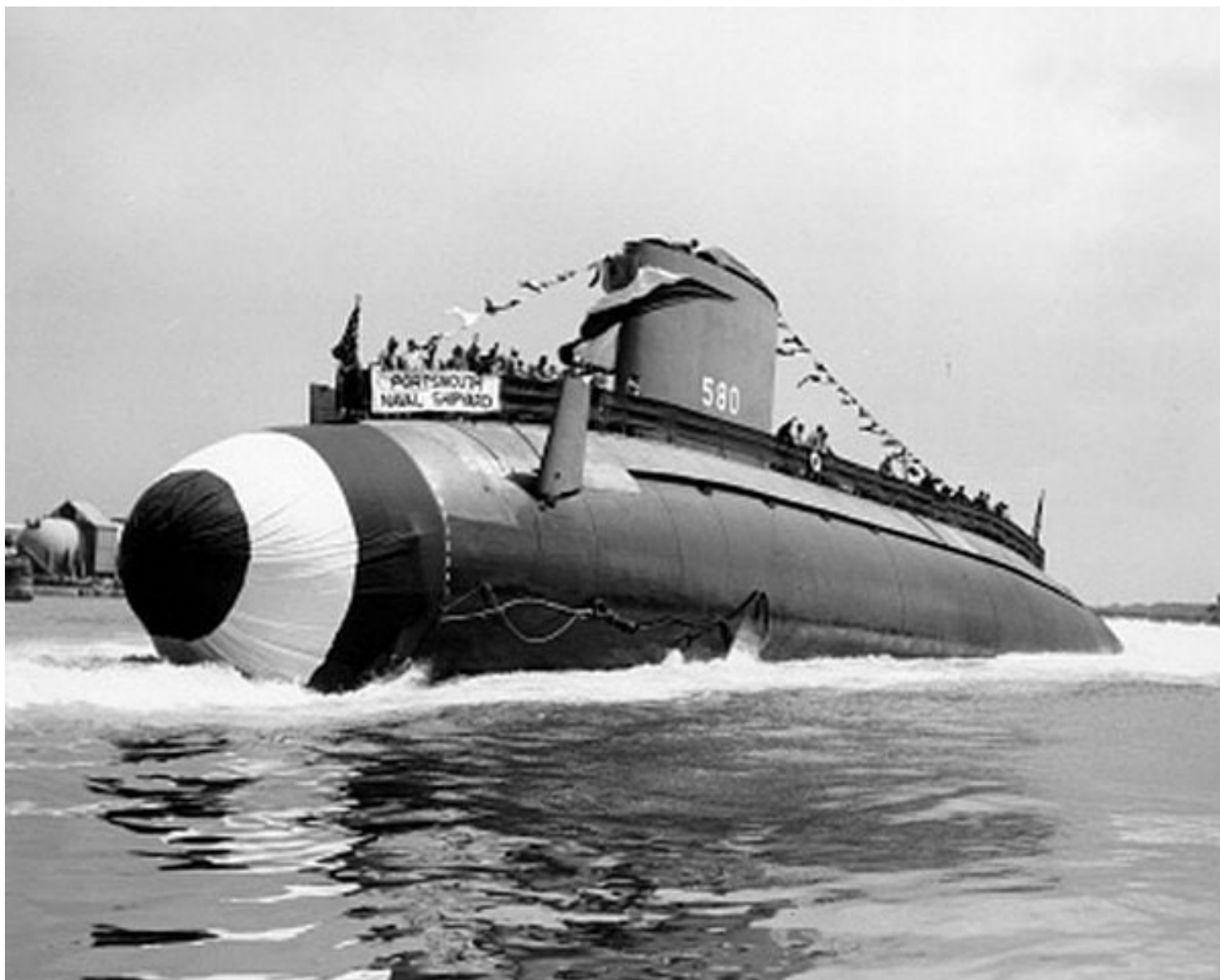
When the USS *Barbel*—the lead ship in what would become a line of three *Barbel*-class submarines—was commissioned in 1959, it served as a showcase of some of the advanced submarine technologies of its time. The *Barbel* boats were the first serially-produced submarines to feature the Albacore, or ‘teardrop’, hull design, which boasts an impressive range of hydrodynamic benefits: among them, higher speeds, a smaller acoustic signature, and potentially the more efficient use of internal space. The USS *Barbel*'s reinforced, double-steel hull is the serially produced product derived from the experimental USS *Albacore*, which was the first submarine to feature a teardrop hull design concept.

The *Barbel* came in at a displacement of 2,146 tons, with an 8.8-meter beam and 66 meters length. Its front bow housed a sonar, with the submarine being among the first to feature a centralized controls array, conning tower, and attack center layout. This forward-thinking design translated into a formidable performance package. The *Barbel* class boasted six torpedo tubes for a total of eighteen torpedoes, a range of 14,000-19,000 miles, and was capable of a respectable (though hardly record-shattering) top submerged speed of twenty-five knots.

The only red mark on what is otherwise the *Barbel*'s potent specifications sheet was its standard diesel-electric propulsion system. At the time, Diesel boat technology was a badge of honor—literally. The alternatives to diesel were so technologically ripe and unreliable in their early incarnations that many in the U.S. Navy's submarine force came to vastly prefer diesel technology, spawning the famous DBF pin: “Diesel Boats Forever.”

But nostalgia and reluctance to reinvent the wheel could not stop the inexorable march of progress in submarine technology: even as the Barbel-class boats were being laid down, naval engineers were making massive strides in nuclear propulsion technology. Building on the preliminary success of the USS Nautilus— the world's first nuclear-powered submarine— the Skipjack-class successfully combined the hydrodynamic benefits of a teardrop hull with a S5W nuclear-powered reactor. This made the Skipjack-class not only markedly faster at a top submerged speed of thirty-three knots but gave it the virtually unlimited operational range that is standard to nuclear submarines.

The decision was made not to pursue further Barbel-class models beyond the three that had already entered service: *Barbel*, *Blueback*, and *Bonefish*. The former two were decommissioned following a decades-long and relatively uneventful service life, while the *Bonefish* was taken out of service after a 1988 fire that led to the deaths of three crew members.



As aptly observed by submarine expert H I Sutton, the Barbel line is perhaps best seen as a contingency class of advanced diesel-electric submarines, produced in the off-chance that the development of nuclear propulsion became a technological dead end. That proved not to be the case, with the U.S. Navy going on to acquire an entirely nuclear submarine force by the turn of the twentieth-century.

Russia's Yasen-M Submarines vs. the Navy's Block-V Virginia-Class (Who Wins?)

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2021/08/russias-yasen-m-submarines-vs-the-navys-block-v-virginia-class-who-wins/>



Image: Russian Navy.

As the United States has once again shifted its focus to great power competition with near-peer adversaries, there is now a greater emphasis to “keep up with the Joneses,” and while the United States Navy continues to operate the largest number of aircraft carriers it is in submarines where Russia could have an edge.

Moscow Goes All-In on Subs

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was unable to match the surface fleet of the United States; however, the Soviet Navy maintained a significantly larger force of submarines. Now as Moscow has put renewed emphasis on its underwater cruisers the question has been asked how Russia’s latest submarines compared to those in service with the U.S. Navy.

Writing for *Naval News*, H I Sutton compared the Russian Navy’s advanced Project 885M (Yasen-M) nuclear-powered submarines with the U.S. Navy’s Block-V *Virginia*-class submarines. While the two classes of boats are similar – Sutton noted that the larger *Yasen-M* are essentially “cruise missile submarines” and thus are given the special vessel classification “SSGN” instead of the “SSN.”

Russia's Project 885M

Developed in the late 1980s, the *Yasen class* was initially intended to replace Russia's aging *Akula-class* nuclear-powered attack submarines. Upgraded after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Project 885M was heavily updated with design tweaks and performance upgrades. The submarines feature a submerged displacement of 13,800 tons and can reach a maximum speed of up to thirty-five knots. The *Yasen-M* also features revamped onboard electronics, a slightly reduced overall length, and reportedly a new KTP-6 reactor that is believed to reduce the submarine's noise levels.

The nuclear-powered submarines are armed with 3M14K Kalibr-PL (NATO Reporting name SS-N-30A Sizzler) and P-800 (3M55) Oniks (NATO Reporting name SS-N-26 Strobile) cruise missiles as their basic strike weapons, while the *Yasen--M* has thirty-two vertical tubes that can accommodate three missile types. Additionally, the boats could soon be armed with the 3M22 *Tsirkon* (Zircon) hypersonic anti-ship missile.



Image Credit: Russian Federation.

Currently, there are seven Project 885M submarines in various stages of construction at the Sevmash Shipyard in northwest Russia, and the newly floated out Krasnoyarsk is now on track to be commissioned into the Pacific Fleet sometime next year. That follows the acceptance of the Project 885M lead nuclear-powered submarine *Kazan*, which was handed over to the Russian Navy on May 7. She is now in active service with the Northern Fleet.

U.S. Navy's Block-V *Virginia-class*

The U.S. Navy's *Virginia-class* nuclear-powered cruise missile fast-attack submarines (SSNs) were developed to replace the more expensive *Seawolf-class* while still providing a capable boat to address nautical threats from near-peer adversaries in the 21st century. The boats were designed to operate in both the open-ocean and for littoral missions, including anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and intelligence gathering operations.

The Block V variants are larger than the previous versions of the *Virginia*-class, with the length increased from 377 feet to 460 feet, and with greater displacement from 7,800 tons to 10,200 tons. As a result, the Block V versions of the *Virginia*-class are the second-largest U.S. submarines produced behind only the *Ohio*-class.



Portsmouth, Va. (Aug. 25, 2004) – The nation's newest and most advanced nuclear-powered attack submarine PCU Virginia (SSN 774) passes the skyline of Portsmouth, Va., on its way to Norfolk Naval Shipyard upon completion of Bravo sea trials. Virginia is the Navy's only major combatant ready to join the fleet that was designed with the post-Cold War security environment in mind and embodies the warfighting and operational capabilities required to dominate the littorals while maintaining undersea dominance in the open ocean. U.S. Navy photo by Journalist 2nd Class Christina M. Shaw (RELEASED)

This included the addition of an eighty-three-foot section, which increased the number of missile launch tubes – increasing the number from twelve to forty, which in essence could triple the capacity of short targets for each boat. The boats can carry a total of sixty-six weapons in total.

To date, nineteen of the planned sixty-six *Virginia*-class submarines have been completed, while eleven more are now under construction. Ten of those are from the Block IV, while one is from the latest Block V – and that latter boat will feature key improvements that enhance the capabilities of the fast-attack subs.

Which is Better?

For now, it may be difficult to know which is truly the superior sub. As Sutton noted, “aspects such as sonar, sensors and stealth are harder to compare given the sensitive nature of these topics.” However, each of the classes is believed to be difficult to counter, and each has arsenals of weapons that should be seen as truly deadly.

How the U.S. Navy Learned to Kill Submarines (The Hard Way)

<https://www.19fortyfive.com/2021/07/how-the-u-s-navy-learned-to-kill-submarines-the-hard-way/>

By Sebastian Roblin Published July 21, 2021



The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) transits the Pacific Ocean during Annual Exercise (ANNUALEX 21G). ANNUALEX is a yearly bilateral exercise with the U.S. Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Adam K. Thomas/Released)

When Congress voted on April 6, 1917 to declare war on Imperial Germany, the task before the U.S. Navy was clear: it needed to transport and supply over a million men across the Atlantic despite the Imperial German Navy's ferocious U-Boat campaign, which reached its peak that month, sinking over 874,000 tons of shipping.

Indeed, Germany's decision to recommence unrestricted submarine warfare in February was one of the decisive factors driving the United States, and later Brazil, into finally joining "the war to end all wars."

While World War I submarines could only remain submerged for brief periods, they were highly successful at picking off unescorted merchant ships in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. Neither active sonar nor radar yet existed with which to track submarines, though the British had begun using hydrophones to listen for the noise of a submarine's diesel engine.

The most successful anti-submarine ships were agile "torpedo-boat destroyers," which sank U-Boats using deck guns and even ramming. Starting in 1916, Royal Navy vessels carried depth charge designed to detonate underwater, rupturing a submarine's hull. These proved

effective *if* the ship captains could guess the sub's position. Statistically, naval mines proved deadliest, accounting for one-third of U-Boat losses.

For years, the Royal Navy resisted instituting a convoy system to guard merchant ships, preferring not to divert warships from offensive missions and believing the decrease in throughput from adhering to a convoy schedule would prove worse than the losses inflicted by U-Boats.

But that April, U-Boats had sunk one-quarter of all merchant ships bound for the UK, leaving it with just six week's grain supply. Threatened with economic collapse, the Royal Navy finally instituted the convoy system. But the Brits had a problem: they could divert only forty-three out of the seventy-five destroyers required to escort convoys.

Naval liaison Rear Admiral William Sims convinced the navy to dispatch thirty-five U.S. destroyers to bases at Queenstown (modern-day Cobh), Ireland to fill in the gap. These began escorting convoys on May 24, usually supported by navy cruisers. In 1918, an even larger escort flotilla began operating out of Brest, France.

The U.S. Navy itself began the war with only fifty-one destroyers. It immediately faced a classic military procurement problem: politicians and admirals wanted to build more expensive battleships and battlecruisers, construction of sixteen of which had been authorized by the Naval Act of 1916.

But the Royal Navy already had the German High Seas fleet effectively bottled up in port with its larger force. While five coal-burning and three oil-burning U.S. battleships did join the blockade in 1918, they never saw action. Common sense prevailed, and battleship construction was halted in favor of building 266 destroyers.

More rapidly, the Navy commissioned hundreds of small 70-ton wooden-hulled "sub-chasers" equipped with hydrophones, 3" deck guns and depth charges. Civilian yachts were similarly converted. The Navy's eleven *L*-class and *K*-class submarines were also deployed to Berehaven (now Castletownbere), Ireland and the Azores respectively to hunt (surfaced) U-Boats, but none encountered enemy forces during the war.

Hundreds of twin-engine HS maritime patrol planes were also procured to scour the seas for submarines. Though the seaplanes sank few if any submarines, they disrupted numerous attacks by forcing U-Boats to dive and abort their torpedo runs.

The convoy system proved a dramatic success, cutting shipping losses to less than half their peak. U-Boats simply lacked unprotected targets and were more likely to be lost combating escorts. Shipping losses gradually fell to roughly 300,000 tons per month, while U-Boat losses increased from three per month to between five and ten.

However, submariner-hunting remained a dangerous business in which a hunter could swiftly become hunted. On Nov. 17, 1917, the destroyer USS *Cassin* was pursuing *U-61* near Ireland when the U-Boat counterattacked. Spotting a torpedo rushing towards the depth-charge launcher on the ship's stern, Gunner's Mate Osmond Ingram lunged forth to jettison the explosive charges but was caught in the blast that tore away the destroyer's rudder. The *Cassin* remained afloat and shelled *U-61's* conning tower, causing her to disengage. Ingram was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

The destroyer *Jacob Jones* was not so fortunate when she was struck in the rudder by a torpedo fired by *U-353* near Brest on December 6. Sixty-six crew perished abandoning ship as

her depth charges detonated. Gallantly, U-Boat captain Karl Rose rescued two of the crew and radioed the position of the other survivors.

U.S. sub-hunters did score some successes. On November 17, the destroyers *Fanning* and *Nicholson* forced *U-58* to the surface with depth charges, then engaged her with deck guns until her crew scuttled her. The converted yacht *Christabel* crippled a U-Boat with depth charges in May 1918 off the coast of Spain.

That month, the Imperial Navy began dispatching long-range U-Boat “cruisers” with huge 150 -millimeter deck guns to maraud the U.S. coast. These sank ninety-three vessels, mostly small civilian fishing boats. The Germans hoped this would spread panic, causing the Americans to withdraw assets in Europe for home defense.

Notably, on July 18 the boat *U-156* surfaced off the coastal town of Orleans on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and proceeded to destroy a tugboat, four barges and the nearby shoreline with its cannons. Nine Coast Guard HS and Model R-9 seaplane bombers scrambled from NAS Chatham and peppered the withdrawing U-boat with bombs—none of which exploded.

The following day, the armored cruiser *USS San Diego* struck a mine probably laid by *U-156* south of Long Island. The explosion flooded her engine room, causing the cruiser to sink with the loss of six hands—becoming the only capital ship lost by the navy. *U-156* proceeded to sink twenty-one fishing boats in the Gulf of Maine, and even commandeered a trawler to assist in its rampage. But though the navy instituted coastal convoys, it didn’t withdraw ships from Europe.

U-Boats were also active in the Mediterranean, and Gibraltar-based American subchasers—often little more than civilian yachts fitted with 3” guns and depth charges—twice clashed with them, sinking at least one.

Perhaps the Navy’s most swashbuckling episode of the war occurred on October 2, 1918, when twelve U.S. subchasers covered an Italian and British surface force raiding the Albanian port of Durazzo. Dodging shells from shore batteries, the subchasers cleared a path through the defensive minefield for the accompanying capital ships. They then hounded away the submarines *U-29* and *U-31*, heavily damaging both.

The navy’s deadliest anti-submarine measure was the North Sea Mine Barrage, a 230-mile-long chain of 100,000 naval mines between the Orkney islands and Norway. U-Boats seeking passage to the Atlantic had to wend through eighteen rows of Mark 6 mines concealed at depths of twenty-four, forty-nine and seventy-three meters deep, strung together with piano wire. Each of the horned steel spheres contained three hundred pounds of TNT. The barrage cost \$40 million (\$722 million in 2018 dollars) and required the deployment of eight large steamships. However, it sank between four and eight U-Boats—including the infamous *U-156*—and damaged another eight.

Ultimately, 178 out of 360 operational U-Boats were sunk during World War I. In return, the German subs sank 5,000 merchant ships totaling 12.8 million tons, killing 15,000 mariners. The U.S. Navy lost 431 personnel and five ships—its worst loss occurred when the collier *USS Cyclops* vanished with 306 crew in the Bermuda Triangle.

Despite its unglamorous duties, the U.S. Navy learned valuable lessons in the Great War about employing convoys, smaller submarine-hunters and maritime patrol planes that would save many lives in the even more destructive conflict that followed two decades later.



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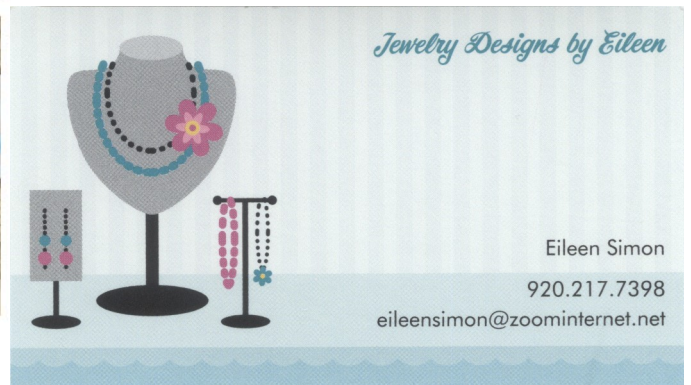
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