



How much more winter will there be?



VOL. 2026 #2

FEBRUARY 2026

USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER

Association Officers & Board of Directors 2025 - 2027

PRESIDENT <u>Jerry [CJ] Blevins</u>	VICE PRESIDENT <u>Paul [Margaret] Clark</u>	SECRETARY <u>Nick [Linda] Nichols</u>	TREASURER <u>Ken [Diane] Meigs</u>	PAST PRESIDENT <u>Tom [Marie] Krauser</u>
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Other Positions 2023 - 2025

HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN <u>Larry [Linda] Knutson</u>	WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER <u>Nick [Linda] Nichols</u>	CHAPLAIN <u>Bruce [Vicki] Stefanik</u>
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From the Association President - Jerry Blevins [LT(SS) B 76-79, USSVI Groton Base, Assoc Life Member]:

Both winter weather and the significant spread of the flu presents a danger to all our shipmates. CJ and I pray that all our shipmates and their families are safe and well.

On a historic note, Germany announced in the famous Zimmerman telegram that unrestricted submarine warfare would resume on 01 Feb 1917. This combined with the Germany offer to assist Mexico in reclaiming Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico that was also a part of that telegram were the predominate reasons behind Wilson's 02 Apr request for a declaration of war against Germany.



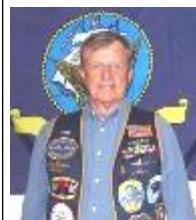
Chaplain's Corner - Bruce Stefanik [MS1(SS) B 73-77, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI/Holland Club USS Asheville Base]:

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever.
Psalm 107:1

It is once again time for chocolate, hearts and flowers. Love and kindness is also in the air.

This is a great time for all Submariners to give our hearts to each other. It took all of us to operate the boat. It takes all of us to care for each other.

May you and your families be blessed as we think of each other this month.



Ship's Historian - Larry Knutson [MMCS(SS) B 79-81 USSVI/ Holland Club Charleston Base]:

Some of you have asked us to use pictures of our historic items. As you may remember, many items were stolen from our storage locker back in Nov 2020. Pictures that are shown may not still be in possession.



Many of you still haven't asked for a copy of your check-in card. If you were on the Gold Crew during the time when Bob Weeks was the CO you had to complete a check-in card for him. If you're interested in receiving your card please mail the secretary 655webmaster@ssbn655.org.

complimentary service. The reputation of MyLegacyWill is above reproach, and you will find that you can go at your own pace as you establish your Will. This flexibility allows you to take control of the process, with available guidance within the application once you begin the process. You can consult your attorney any time you wish, giving you the power to make informed decisions about your Will. The Charitable Foundation is pleased to offer this free service for the convenience of all USSVI members and their families. As the owner of your estate, you are the best judge of any actions you take. Your circumstances are unique to you, and if you ever feel uncertain about how to proceed, we encourage you to consult your attorney. Please note that neither the Charitable Foundation nor USSVI assumes any liability for using this service or any outcomes resulting from its use.

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THERE ARE NOW 191 USSVI Members on our Association Sailing List. This quarter there were 2 new members added who qualified on the Stimson. The Sailing List has been updated:

- James Michael Dickerson LCDR G 86-98 qualified 655 in 1990 San Diego Base
- Willian 'Bill' Sanner Jr. [ETN2(SS) B 73-77] qualified 655 in 1973 Cowtown Base

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SHARING PICTURES WITH SHIPMATES:

If anyone has pictures you would like to share with your shipmates please either email them to me or contact me and I will send you directions to upload to our Stimson Dropbox file.

655webmaster@ssbn655.org

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SUBMARINE QUALIFICATION CARD & CERTIFICATE

There were another two qual cards added to the page this month. Take a look around and see if you can find your card. Check out the [SS Qual Card & Certificate](#) web page. When you find your card either scan it or take a good picture and send it to me at 655webmaster@ssbn655.org.

Your name will be added to the new page with a link to your certificate. This is for all Stimson shipmates, not just the ones who qualified on the 655. No matter what boat you qualified on if you were on the Stimson send me a scan or picture and it will be added to the website.

You can include any item related to your SS qualification: Qual Certificate; Qual card, picture receiving your dolphins; etc.

In addition to the qual card page, I am now adding your qual year (if I have it) to the online Sailing List. This can be whether you qualified on the Stimson or another boat. Take a look at the list and if your qual date is missing send it to me with the qual year and command info to 655webmaster@ssbn655.org



Stimson Shipmates on Eternal Patrol.

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EMCM(SS) Elam Mauk B 65-69—COB 66-68

Eternal Patrol 5 January 2026

Plank Owner - Association Life Members - USSVI/ Holland Club USS Sailfish Base
EMCM(SS) Retired
[reported by John & Gretchen Glaub]

MM2(SS) Jeffrey Raymond Mires G 78-81

Eternal Patrol 15 February 2022

MMCS(SS) Retired
[memorial page info updated by Tom O'Connor
MM2(SS) G 77-79]

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The direct link to the Association Eternal Patrol page is: <http://ssbn655.org/eternal-patrol/eternal-patrol.html>



WELCOME ABOARD: Found & Updated

(Shipmate has been added/info has been updated on our Sailing List. Check the online Sailing List for shipmates contact info.)

NOTE: Don Ort [MM1(SS) G/SY1/G 69-74, CWO4 Ret], continues to locate our Stimson shipmates on our Sailing List without an email address.

ETC(SS) Larry Phillippe G 86-89

USSVI Charleston Base

[updated by member & USSVI]

BINNACLE LIST UPDATES: If you know of a shipmate who should be on the binnacle list please let me know. I will contact the shipmate for permission to add them to this list. I only add those who have given permission.

I am using the binnacle list as an ongoing story for each person on it. This way you will be able to understand the update better than if you do not remember what their health issues were.

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Hal Smith [MM2(SS) G 68-69]

Cards to: 12050 Grand Lakes Dr., Jacksonville FL 32258

1.19.26: Email from Hal: Feb 15 2024 was told to see a cancer surgeon by Dr. after colonoscopy. Went to Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center in Jacksonville, Fl. Oncologist said that biopsy indicated I have colon cancer of the type Goblet Cell carcinoma. A very aggressive type at stage 4. I had surgery and the tumor and 2.5 ft of my colon was removed including the appendix and 19 lymph nodes. I healed in 5 weeks and I began 2 different types of chemotherapy consisting of infusion and home chemo over a period of a year or so. CT scan indicated chemo was not working and we began Immunotherapy consisting of 2 nasty home meds and infusion. During all of this I had various side effects from it all such shortness of breath, tiredness, water retention which caused my legs and feet to swell. the swelling caused the water circulation to stop and collected in my legs, with water blisters which broke draining liquid down my legs constantly. I am going to wound care. I was having trouble breathing and was in the hospital for that and various other things for two days. I had a ct scan while in the hospital. I was released after 2 days. I was taken off the home immunotherapy meds because my kidney functions were not good. I continued with infusion therapy 2 more times. On my last Oncologist visit about 1.5 weeks ago, The Oncologist said that the Immunotherapy was no longer working and the last CT scan was showing that the cancer was spreading and at this time no other type of treatment would be effective and they would like to switch treatment to quality of life. I was told that I have about 6 months to live. I would like you all to keep me in your prayers.

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Diane Meigs [wife of Ken Meigs ETR2(SS) G Comm 65-70 Plank, SV MAL Base HC, Assoc. Treasurer & Life Member]

Cards to: 1537 Pebble Beach Ct Medford OR 97504

1.30.26: Text from Ken: They found more cancer in Diane. She started her 1st of 4 chemo treatments on 30 Jan hopefully will remove the cancer that was uncovered in a PET scan a couple of weeks ago. There will be a 3-week interval between each of the treatments.

Prayers are greatly appreciated as well as to keep her on the ship's binnacle list.

11.29.25: Text from Ken: In early November, Diane had some serious surgery. Many of you have been praying for her as she recovers. I'm happy to let you know that as of Thanksgiving Day she has left the hospital and was able to spend the day with her family in Idaho. As of Friday, 28 Nov, she is safely at home and prepared to complete her recovery. We really appreciated all of your prayers that have got us to where we are now. Praise the Lord!!! Your continued prayers are greatly appreciated.

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Kim Sanner [wife of Bill Sanner Jr., ETN2(SS) B 73-77, SV/HC Cowtown Base]

Cards to: 2009 Glenda Ave., Haltom City TX 76111

10.14.25: Text from Bill: Kim has moved to Medical City Rehab, 900 8th Ave, Fort Worth. Room 316. They expect her to be there for 1 to 2 weeks. Nice place, nice room.

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Isaac Drakin [grandson of Dave Violette, MM1 (SS) B 73-76, SV/HC Carolina Piedmont Base, Assoc. Life Member]

Cards to: 916 Lone Oak Ln, Mooresville NC 28115

1.24.26: Email from Dave: Update—Isaac had his 18th month cancer scans follow-up last week. All scans and x-rays came back clear. Another great start for a new year!

He will still be on an every 4 months schedule for scans and follow-ups for another 18 months. Then he'll shift over to 6-month follow-ups. So far though, he is doing great!

He and his twin brother are now in 6th grade and doing well. Such a big change from what things looked like back in 2024.

I'm so glad to be able and share this with you.

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Sandy Hastie [CAPT B 80 (Oct-Dec) CO-1 patrol]

Cards to: 75 Lambeth Dr., Asheville NC 28803-3425

12.29.25: Email from Sandy & Donna:

Dear Family and Friends,

We thank everyone who has faithfully prayed for both of us. 2025 has been a year of challenges; however, we also continue to find joy and gratitude each day and thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed on us. Here are our current statuses.

Donna continues to have severe chronic back and leg nerve pain. No doctors we have seen are able to offer a reliable solution, which is depressing but, as we understand it, is not an unusual occurrence. She saw the doctor that did her EMG and he thought a spinal epidural in the "hot spot" that showed on her EMG could provide some relief. He believes this spot is causing some, if not the majority of her pain. The injection is scheduled for early February, first available appointment. She is on the wait list in case an earlier appointment comes available. As often is the case, doctors are often booked up four to eight weeks ahead and that is the case here. The other option is a spinal stimulator, which has limited effectiveness and is not strongly recommended because of the metal rods in her back. However, that remains a possibility down the road.

Sandy has had some positive news. Specifically, for his heart, he was approved for a procedure to replace his aortic heart valve. This was done a month ago and has helped with his fatigue, dizziness, and lymphedema swelling in his legs. On Wednesday this week, we saw the doctor who did the procedure and he said Sandy's heart was working well – a very positive outcome! His fractured right collar bone from a fall a month and a half ago is healing well and he has almost 100% use of his right shoulder and arm – another positive outcome as this is the arm he uses his cane to help him walk. He had a PET/CT scan on 30 November and, although he will never be cancer free, the scan showed the Keytruda was controlling the cancer well except for two spots in his right hip that were growing slowly. He may have to go back on chemo at some time;

however, for now, that is not necessary – another positive outcome.

So, for now, Sandy will try to exercise more to maintain good health and we will continue to look for a solution or solutions to help Donna's challenges.

With love and thanks, Donna and Sandy

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Bruce Stefanik [MS1(SS) B 73-77, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI/Holland Club USS Asheville Base]:

Cards to: 50 Fairway View Dr., Etowah NC 28729

1.13.26: Email from Vicki: I [Vicki] am scheduled for left knee replacement surgery on February 26 with an overnight stay in the hospital.

11.11.25: Email from Vicki: Bruce had a good checkup at his ALS Clinic in October with only 2 very slight changes so he doesn't have to go back for another year.

I had an RFA ablation on lumbar nerves last week. It can take 6 weeks or more to fully take effect so I am in the waiting time. I also learned why I had such a difficult time with my knee during the reunion. We really like the new knee surgeon my PC doctor referred me to as he has had extra fellowship training in problem knees. It seems that my left knee has no ACL so I will need a replacement.

3.17.25: Email from Bruce: I am doing well. I am holding steady with no progression and do not see my ALS doctor again until October after the Reunion.

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George Stevens [MT2(SS) G 68-71]

Cards to: 3025 Winterhaven Dr., Lake Havasu City, AZ 86404

1.23.26: Email from George: Ann is doing better but still in pain - so no real change there. Me, I tried boron and it didn't help my arthritis but then I realized I was already taking it with my multivitamin. I did find that turmeric seems to help. My heart has been up and down. Was doing better after giving up chocolate but then started back with aFib again. Realized that I ran out of cayenne about the same time. Have started taking it again and my heart is doing better again.

11.11.25: Email from George: My heart is doing better since I gave up chocolate but having a lot of pain from arthritis/muscle/joints - everything hurts. Ann is going for a consult for her back -

pinched sciatic nerve.

9.22.25: *Email from George: Ann's back is worse and there's nothing the doctors can do. Shots don't work and surgery is not an option in her case. Me - not much more the docs can do for me either. I am increasing my cayenne intake and that seems to help.*

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John Cole [LT B WEPS 78-80, USSVI Member-at-Large, CDR Ret.]

Cards to: 5914 Ruby Dr Pearland TX 77581-8926

NO RECENT UPDATES

7.31.24: *Email from John: We pray that you and your loved ones are healthy and happy. Susan and I are doing well as we fight the continuing battle against Parkinson's, Left Shoulder Surgery and now my C1-C6 surgery as well. It just seems like all of the parts are wearing out as time seems to fly by faster and faster. The things I miss the most are hunting, hiking, gardening and just being in the mountains. I must be content with the flowers and a few pots of garden plants on our patio. Bye for now, Very Respectfully. John F. Cole Cdr., U. S. Navy Retired, 100% Disabled 05/12/1964 To 08/01/1994, E1-E9 & O1E-O5 Vietnam through Desert Storm*

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Ron 'RG' Hyson [STS1(SS) B 70-75 (STSCM Ret), Assoc. Life Member, USSVI/Holland Club Hampton Roads Base]

Cards to: 3425 MacDonald Rd., Virginia Beach VA 23464

No recent updates

3.26.2024: *Email from Jean: The results of Ron's evaluation on January 2024, compared to last year, scored significantly lower on a test of global cognition. His doctor reported that Ron has transition to the Moderately Severe Stage of dementia.*

Thank you for all the prayers, caring thoughts, cards, letters, pictures, and memories Ron has received. They really brighten his day.

Jean/Ron

DID YOU KNOW??

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3-second tech genius: Missed a special photo because your camera took too long to open? Here's a neat trick. On **Android**, double-tap the **power button** to launch the camera.

On **iPhone**, swipe left on the **lock screen**. Whoop whoop, no unlocking, no menus, just point and shoot.

3-second tech genius: The next time you need to print something, don't dig through menus.

On **Windows**, press **Ctrl + P** to open the print menu instantly. On **Mac**, press **Cmd + P**. This works in most documents, spreadsheets and web browsers.

PC running low on storage? If you need a few extra gigabytes fast, clear out temporary files. Go to **Settings > System > Storage > Temporary files**, select what you don't need, and click **Remove files**. Just look at your **Recycle Bin** and **Downloads** folders first, so you don't accidentally delete anything important.

Add emergency contacts: Make them visible on your phone's lock screen, so first responders know who to call. On **iPhone**, open **Health > Medical ID**, add your contacts, and enable **Show When Locked**. On **Android**, go to **Settings > Safety and emergency > Emergency contacts** and toggle **Show on Lock Screen**.

3-second tech genius: Here's a quick way to look better in photos. Never face the camera straight on. Turn your body about 45 degrees, shift your weight to your back foot and lean your torso slightly forward.

GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH

655 Association Website
www.ssbn655.org

Submitted by Dave Violet

Name a Virginia-Class Submarine after Medal of Honor Recipient Henry Breault

Not sure if you have seen this effort to promote naming a Virginia-class SSN after Henry Breault, the only US submariner to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.

I'm sending the link below just in case you have never seen this before and are interested in promoting this petition to have a future boat

named after him.

<https://c.org/jwrjqrJdPV>

This is really a good movie about the submarines role in WWII and also explains the different phases of the war as the Navy changed strategies and tactics. Lasts About 45 minutes.

<https://youtu.be/5sb4sU-4nQ4>

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What Japanese Admirals Said When They Realized Midway Was an Ambush

The shock, confusion, and dawning dread as Japan's naval leaders understood that their perfectly planned strike had walked straight into an American trap.

Inside the frantic bridge reports, bitter tactical arguments, and stunned after-action reflections that revealed how codebreaking and timing turned Midway into a disaster from the very first minutes.

WW2 history explained – Battle of Midway, Japanese Navy, Allied intelligence.

What Japanese Admirals Said When They Realized Midway Was an Ambush

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Submitted by

SEA STORIES, COMMENTS and JUST GOOD THINGS From Our Shipmates

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Submitted by a shipmate

Accident report

Dear Sirs:

I am writing in response to your request for additional information.

In block number three of the accident report form, I put "trying to do the job alone" as the cause of my accident. You said in your letter that I should explain more fully, and I trust that the following details will be sufficient.

I am a bricklayer by trade. On the day of the accident, I was working alone on the roof of a new six-story building. When I completed my work, I discovered that I had about 500 pounds of brick left over. Rather than carry the bricks down by hand, I decided to lower them in a barrel by using a pulley which fortunately was attached to the side of the building at the sixth floor.

Securing the rope at ground level, I went up to the roof, swung the barrel out, and loaded the

brick into it. Then I went back to the ground floor and untied the rope holding it tightly to insure a slow descent of the 500 pounds of brick. You will note in block number 11 of the accident reporting form that I weigh 145 pounds.

Due to my surprise at being jerked off the ground so suddenly, I lost my presence of mind and forgot to let go of the rope. Needless to say, I proceeded at a rapid rate up the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming down. This explains the fractured skull and broken collar bone.

Slowed only slightly, I continued my rapid ascent, not stopping until the fingers of my hand were two knuckles deep into the pulley. Fortunately, by this time I had regained my presence of mind and was able to hold tightly to the rope in spite of my pain. At approximately the same time, however, the barrel of bricks hit the ground and the bottom fell out of the barrel.

Devoid of the weight of the bricks, the barrel now weighed approximately 50 pounds. I refer you again to my weight in block number 11. As you might imagine, I began a rapid descent down the side of the building. In the vicinity of the third floor, I met the barrel coming up. This accounts for the two fractured ankles and the lacerations on my legs and lower body.

The encounter with the barrel slowed me enough to lessen my injuries when I fell onto the pile of bricks and, fortunately, only three vertebrae were cracked. I am sorry to report, however, that as I lay there on the bricks, in pain, unable to stand, and watching the empty barrel six stories above me, I again lost my presence of mind and I let go of the rope.

The empty barrel weighed more than the rope so it came back down on me and broke both of my legs. I hope I have furnished the information you required as to how the accident occurred.

The Lean Submariner

Here's the latest posts on the blog. Still going strong. The link to his blog is

<https://theleansubmariner.com/>

The Great Charleston Earthquake of 1886 and "The Summerville Sensation"

By Mister Mac on December 25, 2025
New beginnings - again

We made the move to South Carolina over a year ago to downsize from a house that was too big to take care of and find more reasonable winters. I had been stationed for a short while at the Charleston Naval base and Debbie and I had visited South Carolina and particularly Charleston a number of times over the years. Despite the fact that the heat is pretty oppressive during parts of the summer, we took the gamble that we could manage that part in exchange for warmer winters.

So far that has been working out. A little snow last year only lasted a few days and overall, we have been enjoying our time here. We have ventured out to a number of areas in between routine trips to the doctors and have loved discovering what makes South Carolina a wonderful destination. Even the nearby passing of a few hurricanes has been manageable, and we have continued our long-standing tradition of keeping a bug out bag handy and the gas in the car rarely goes below a half before getting topped off. I'm very happy about the lower cost of fuel here. Pennsylvania taxes the heck out of gas and property taxes and at our age, it's nice to have friendly relationships with lower prices on both.

I was checking out the Library of Congress's newspaper collection today looking for stories from 1925. It's one of my hobbies to mine the data in that collection. Anyone who reads my blog has seen that history is a great predictor of the future. It seems like the old adage from Proverbs remains sound: **There is nothing new under the sun.**

In the Washington Times for this date in 1925, a small snippet appeared as a filler on the editorial page.

Quite often, the news of the day was not enough to fill the page with new content so they would add pieces to fill the page.

[Read full blog here](#)

Truman's Decision – 1945

By Mister Mac on December 27, 2025

It seems a lifetime ago when I last sailed on a submarine.

I left the USS Ohio in December of 1984 after making my fourth patrol. It was a routine patrol with nothing special to report. Considering that we were conducting a strategic deterrent patrol, that is a very good thing. After having served on three other submarines, I was ready to come home from

the sea for a while and get fully reacquainted with my bride. Frankly, the last patrol seemed like it lasted way longer than it actually did in real time. I can remember being very happy to climb up the ladder for the very last time thinking that I wasn't sure I could ever climb back down another one.

Patrols gave you a lot of free time to think about life in general. I wrote most of my thoughts down and would keep them in a box which we carried around with our household goods every time we moved. All told, we moved about twenty-one times as a couple. Last year as we prepared for the move down to South Carolina, I finally opened the box for the last time and destroyed all of the notebooks I had written in. Shredded and burned. To be honest, most of the notes were really personal and I did not want my nieces and nephews to see that part of our life.

But the memories remain.

[Read on blog](#)

New Years Resolutions (and other thoughts)

By Mister Mac on January 15, 2026

Happy New Years

I know, it's already mid-way through the month, but I have been really busy since the actual new year and writing fell pretty far down my list of priorities. This is the calendar year where America turns 250 years, and I want to try and focus on that with stories unique to our country. For my foreign readers, I respect that you have great pride in your own country and hope that you will appreciate the soties and experiences I share about mine. I monitor my reader countries of origin and can say that in the past few years I have a dedicated following in countries as diverse as many European countries and quite a few hits from China. I'm sure having the word "submarine" in my subject line drives a lot of that traffic. Sorry to my Chinese friends that they will gain no strategic advantage to reading my stories.

But today is just a self-reflection. I belong to the writer's club at my resort, and I had an assignment for this afternoon's session. This is what I will submit:

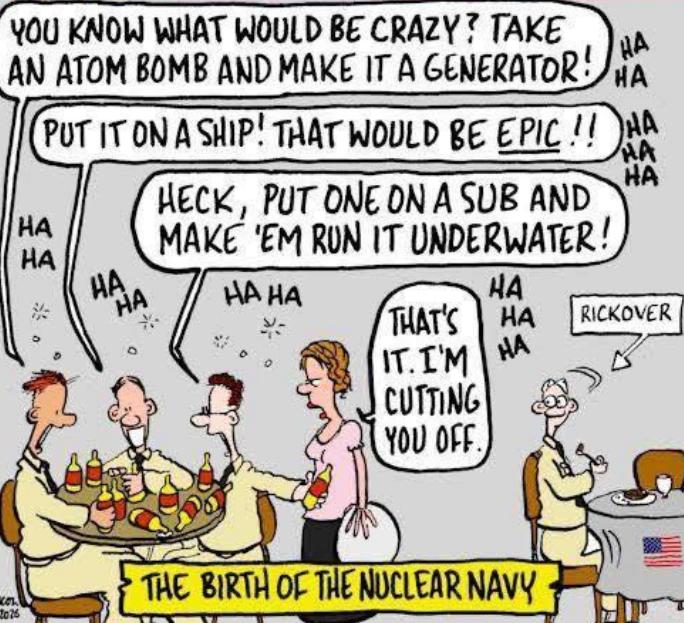
[Read on blog](#)

Cold War Stories: Atomic Submarines that could Dive Deeper than ever

By Mister Mac on January 19, 2026

1946

HAPPY HOUR, OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE



Most Mondays I get a chance to share stories with students from the Naval Nuclear Power Training Unit that are based at the Weapons Station in Goose Creek in South Carolina. The young people are the best and brightest of their generation and will someday man the ships and submarines that defend us. My portion of the day is talking about the Cold War which most experts agree lasted from 1945-1991. I give a presentation called **Steel Boats and Iron Men** which is a presentation I have been giving since I retired from the navy in 1994.

The presentation itself has grown and adapted over the years to include submarine development and operations. It's all unclassified so my Chinese friends can really gain nothing by lurking on the site. I keep an eye on who visits from around the world and they must have someone designated to visit me every once in a while, since I see an increase in visits from there when the tagged items include anything submarine.

[Read on blog](#)

Cold War Stories – The Importance of Greenland is Magnified

By Mister Mac on January 21, 2026

With all of the recent attention given to Greenland, it is important to note that Greenland has been a central focal point for more than a hundred years to the United States. What was once described as a giant iceberg with little value

to America, has suddenly regained its place in discussions around the world. No matter what your personal feelings about the discussion, some facts cannot be ignored.

- Fact number one is that we live in a world that is filled with people who want to extend their influence for political and ideological purposes. The desire is for them to gain strategic advantages over our country and any countries that are aligned with freedom loving principles.
- Fact number two is that technology has changed so radically in the past 126 years as to make America more vulnerable than ever before. When the century started in 1900, manned sustained flight was still something only imagined, submarines were limited to ranging near coastal bases, satellites and space travel belonged to novelist's imaginations and sailing ships still plied the oceans next to coal powered vessels that had limited ranges. A casual look around the globe shows that none of those limits exist any longer. Additional advances include a greater understanding of the natural resources that exist in once previously unknown areas and our ability to use them for the common good of mankind has grown exponentially. The need for rare earth minerals is no longer a convenience; it is a strategic necessity. Controlling access to those minerals will mean the path forward in our need to dominate AI and communications. If our opponents control those minerals, they control the future.

The potential that exists today in Greenland is immeasurable.

[Read on blog](#)



The Computer Corner

By: George Birmingham [ET1 (SS) G/SY1/G 69-74, Assoc. Life Member, USSVI/Holland Club Carolina Piedmont Base]

It looks like USB-C, but this symbol changes everything

By Gavin Phillips -- Published Dec 15, 2025

At first glance, a Thunderbolt port looks just the same as any old USB-C port. Same shape, same cable, same satisfying click when you plug something in. But that small lightning bolt symbol

next to the port signals something very different happening under the hood.

Towards the end of 2025, I bought a new laptop and was reminded of how incredibly useful Thunderbolt ports are, especially the latest iteration, Thunderbolt 5.

What's interesting is that, externally, nothing looks special. But in reality, that tiny lightning symbol unlocks faster speeds, extensive display support, and hardware options unavailable to a regular USB-C port.

Thunderbolt is one of those bits of tech that you might not know you're using, but when you do, you'll never want to stop. With that said, I have one major gripe with Thunderbolt that, for the life of me, I cannot understand why they don't fix! **It looks like USB-C, but it's way better**

The lightning symbol changes everything

The confusion between USB-C and Thunderbolt is understandable. All the tech goes through the connector, USB-C, but it doesn't actually completely explain what the port can do.

A basic USB-C port supports charging and data transfer, and can potentially handle high-speed data transfer and higher levels of power delivery. However, at a glance, the port typically doesn't tell you what you're getting; it's basically guesswork most of the time. And that's before you even consider the problems with USB-C roulette.

Thunderbolt is a standard built on top of USB-C. When you see the lightning symbol on a USB-C port, it shows that it conforms to a different, strict set of requirements. The standard covers speed, connectivity, display support, expansion cards, power delivery, and more.

[Read complete article here](#)

The Computer Corner Part 2

Fake CAPTCHAs and Error Message Scams!

By now we have all encountered the CAPTCHA challenges as we access websites in our digital travels. Cloudflare, a popular web hosting site provides this definition of CAPTCHA: "A CAPTCHA test is designed to determine if an online user is really a human and not a bot. CAPTCHA is an acronym that stands for "Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart." Users often encounter CAPTCHA and reCAPTCHA tests on the Internet. Such tests are one way of managing

bot activity, although the approach has its drawbacks. Although CAPTCHAs are designed to block automated bots, CAPTCHAs are themselves automated. They're programmed to pop up in certain places on a website, and they automatically pass or fail users."

Quite often they are just a check box to click, sometimes identifying specific items in a series of pictures or solving a puzzle. However, in late 2024 and early 2025 scammers devised a way to use this simple security check to infect your computer, most notably Windows PCs, but also Apple devices like the MacBook PCs. The following articles provide some insight to the problem:

Fake CAPTCHA websites hijack your clipboard to install information stealers (published 3/10/2025)

This CAPTCHA Test Can Trick Windows Users Into Installing Malware (published 9/13/2024)

Oh yes, remember our brief journey into the AI world? Those AI enabled browsers can fall for the CAPTCHA attacks for you automatically. How clever! This article from <https://thehackernews.com> site explains how they do it:

(In case you are concerned about the site name here, the publisher of this site is located in New York City, NY USA)

Experts Find AI Browsers Can Be Tricked by PromptFix Exploit to Run Malicious Hidden Prompts

(published 8/20/2025)

And finally, these steps will help you be more aware of, and perhaps defend against, CAPTCHA attacks:

To avoid CAPTCHA scams, follow these key strategies:

- Verify the Website:** Always check the URL to ensure it is legitimate. Look for secure connections (<https://>) and avoid unusual domains.
- Do Not Download Files:** Legitimate CAPTCHAs will never ask you to download software or extensions. Be cautious of any prompts to do so.
- Be Wary of Emails and Ads:** Many scams begin with deceptive emails or misleading ads that lead to fraudulent sites. Always verify the source before clicking links.
- Avoid Copying Text:** Do not copy and paste

- any text from CAPTCHA pages, as legitimate CAPTCHAs do not require this action.
- Do not scan QR Codes on your TV or in CAPTCHA pop-ups:** QR scams related to CAPTCHAs, known as "quishing", trick users with fake security checks (like QR codes or fake pop-ups) that look like real ones but instead lead to malicious sites to steal data, install malware, or capture login info, often disguised as delivery updates or service alerts. These attacks exploit the convenience of QR codes and email filters, making users vulnerable by directing them to fake login pages for sensitive information or tricking them into downloading harmful software.
- Beware of AI-enabled browsers:** AI-enabled browsers, especially those with autonomous "agentic" capabilities, introduce significant security and privacy risks that traditional security measures cannot address. Security experts and research firms like Gartner recommend caution or even blocking these browsers in sensitive environments due to the potential for severe data breaches and manipulation.

By staying vigilant, learning about this scam, and following these practices, you can significantly reduce the risk of falling victim to CAPTCHA scams.

As always, shipmates, comments and suggestions for future topics are welcomed. Contact me at subvet_ssbn@bellsouth.net. And if you have a difficult computer or network problem you need help with, contact me. I'm always glad to help out if I can. //George



The Security Corner
By: George Birmingham [ET1(SS)
G/SY1/G 69-74, Assoc. Life
Member, USSVI/Holland Club
Carolina Piedmont Base]

AI in Appliances

Welcome back! Last month we started our AI journey with an overview of AI technology in our digital world. The presence of AI in computers, both in desktops and laptops, and mobile devices like iPhones, iPads, Android phones, and Google phones is probably not unexpected.

But the advancement of AI is not limited to just what we recognize as traditional computers and mobile devices. Now they will be a part of your appliances, from smart refrigerators that will monitor your food supplies via built-in cameras (and even re-order for you), to laundry, and even (gasp!) your morning coffee routine! And the Internet of Things (IoT) devices we are probably still getting comfortable with are now beginning to include AI technology in their designs. Here is an article that provides an overview of AI in home appliances:

How AI is revolutionizing the home appliance industry

So now we have passwords to change for our home appliances as well. The article link below describes Samsung's approach to appliance security:

Samsung's AI-Powered Home Appliances Are Becoming More Secure with Knox Matrix

At this point we all probably have embraced the use of strong passwords, use of the newer passkey technology, changing passwords often, keeping our personal data out of cloud storage, and using apps that save sensitive data only to our devices. But what about security in a growing AI world? Here is an article that I think provides a good overview of AI and Cybersecurity. It's a bit lengthy, but worth the read:

AI in Cyber Security: Risks of AI

I hope this information enables you to be a wiser shopper at the appliance store on your next purchase. And when you go for that mid-night snack and open that AI-enabled refrigerator door, be sure to dress appropriately!

As always, shipmates, comments and suggestions for future topics are welcomed. Contact me at subvet_ssbn@bellsouth.net. And if you have a difficult computer or network problem you need help with, contact me. I'm always glad to help out if I can. //George

The Security Corner #2

How to rip out Copilot from Windows 11

Credit: Lucas Gouveia / How-To Geek | Microsoft

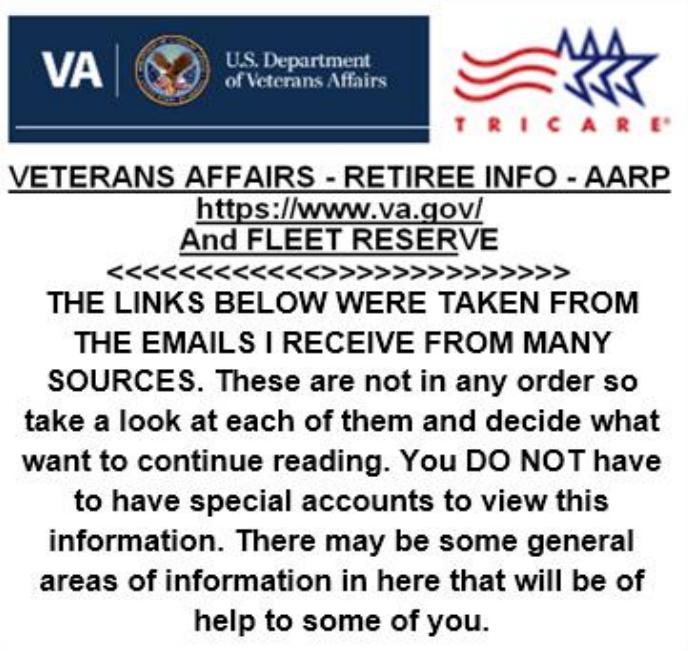
Typically, you can remove Windows features with one click. Copilot is a different story, however. There's no simple switch to remove Copilot from the entire interface. However, it is possible to rip out Copilot entirely from your

Windows.

Three simple steps to remove Copilot AI from a Win11 machine. There are other more technical steps toward the end of the article, but using these three will do the job.

- **Uninstall Copilot**
- **Disable Copilot's startup sequence**
- **Disable it in Microsoft Edge**

<https://share.google/rZZL8W11a5E4Su2pO>



One VA: one standard of excellence for Veterans

We're reforming VA health care to ensure there's only one standard across all 1,300+ VA medical facilities: the best possible care and outcomes for those who have worn the uniform.

Watch

VA hospitals recognized for reducing physician burnout

"We want all VA employees — especially physicians — to show up for work feeling motivated and go home feeling fulfilled each and every day," said VA Secretary Doug Collins. "This recognition is proof our efforts to continually improve the work environment across the department are succeeding."

[Learn more](#)

Understanding presumptive service connections

What is a presumptive condition and how does it impact your VA disability benefits? In this episode, the SITREP covers what a presumptive condition is, when applying for VA disability, and how it can impact your claim. Watch the current SITREP to learn more.

Watch

COLA Increase

The 2026 Veterans disability compensation rates are in! Starting Jan. 1, 2026, all compensation benefit rates have been increased by 2.8% to match adjustments made to Social Security benefits. This increase impacts disability benefits, clothing allowance, dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC), as well as other assistance programs.

VALife Program Celebrates Three Years

VALife is proudly celebrating its three-year anniversary, as well as a significant milestone. Since its launch in 2023, VALife has provided over \$2.2 billion in total coverage to more than 70,000 Veterans, offering peace of mind and financial protection to those who have served our country.

VALife offers up to \$40,000 of whole life insurance coverage to Veterans, with guaranteed acceptance for Veterans age 80 and under with a service-connected disability rating from 0% to 100%. There are no medical questions to answer and premiums do not increase. [Learn more and apply today.](#)

Increased Cost Grants

VA has increased building and materials costs grant amounts for severely disabled Veterans and Service members eligible for Specially Adapted Housing to adapt their homes. VA wants to ensure that Veterans maximize their benefit no matter when they decide to adapt their existing home or build or buy an adapted home. [Learn More.](#)

Enrollment verification for VA Education benefits required starting January 2026

Starting in January 2026, all Department of Veterans Affairs education beneficiaries, **including Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance (Chapter 35) students** will be required to verify their enrollment each

month to receive their benefit

payments. Please note that you must verify your enrollment for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to begin processing your monthly benefit. Once verified, payment processing can take five to seven calendar days.

You can learn more about the different enrollment verification methods in this video or [the Verify Your School Enrollment webpage](#). If you have questions about your enrollment, please contact your School Certifying Official. You can find their contact information listed on the [GI Bill Comparison Tool](#).

Russia's 'New' Amur-Class Stealth Navy

Submarine Summed Up in 1 Word

Amur-Class Submarine: What You Need To Know

Russia's Amur-class attack submarine is marketed as an export-oriented evolution of the Lada/Kilo design family, with two variants aimed at different missions. The smaller Amur-950 emphasizes a compact platform with vertical-launch cells for rapid missile salvos, while the larger Amur-1650 is framed as a longer-range option.

Promised advantages include AIP-enabled endurance, modern electronic warfare systems, and reduced acoustic signatures. Yet the program's core problem is credibility: no Amur boats have been built, the Lada lineage has faced delays and performance issues, and Western European alternatives offer proven delivery histories—complicating any export hopes, including rumored interest from Morocco.

[Read the entire story here.](#)

This New Swedish Submarine Has Russia Completely Outmatched

Sweden's new A26 "fifth-generation" submarine, that Poland just bought, is making Russia nervous, and in this video I break down why this stealth-focused Blekinge-class boat is already shifting the Baltic balance of power. This isn't marketing fluff. Sweden built a submarine designed for shallow water, drone-filled, sensor-heavy warfare, and it arrives exactly when

Russia is least prepared for it.

[View the video here.](#)

US Navy nuclear submarines get protection from weld cracking with neutron beams

Scientists have turned to neutron beams to help protect the US Navy's nuclear-powered submarines, which operate under some of the most extreme pressure and temperature conditions on Earth.

Nuclear submarines, which are vital to US national security, regularly dive beyond 800 feet (244 meters) below the ocean's surface, where external pressures exceed 50,000 pounds per square foot.

At such depths, even microscopic flaws in a submarine's steel pressure hull and its welded joints could pose serious risks to the crew's safety and the vessel's long-term structural integrity.

[Read the entire article here.](#)

The SSN(X) Stealth Nuclear Attack Submarine Is a Giant Headache for the U.S. Navy

SSN(X), the Navy's next-generation attack submarine, is positioned as a high-end successor to the Virginia-class, blending Seawolf-like speed and payload with Virginia acoustic performance and Columbia-style availability. The program remains in concept design and risk reduction, backed by hundreds of millions in FY 2026 research and development, including next-generation propulsion work.

The U.S. Navy's Next-Generation Attack Submarine program, [known as SSN\(X\)](#), is currently in early development – but it is set to define undersea and maritime warfare well into the mid-21st century.

[Read the entire article here.](#)

Be Prepared to Fly Your Flag Proudly

5 American Flag Half-Staff Days for 2026

Mark your calendar with these important American Flag Half-Staff dates...

Sun, May 3	National Fallen Firefighters	Sunrise to Sunset
Fri, May 15	Peace Officer Memorial Day	Sunrise to Sunset
Mon, May 25	Memorial Day	Sunrise to Noon
Fri, Sep 11	Patriot Day	Sunrise to Sunset
Mon, Dec 7	Pearl Harbor Remembrance	Sunrise to Sunset

CDR Lloyd M. Bucher – USS PUEBLO (AGER-2) Commanding Officer



Former submariner - Lloyd Mark "Pete" Bucher (1 September 1927 – 28 January 2004) was an officer in the United States Navy, who is best remembered as the captain of USS Pueblo (AGER-2), which was seized by North Korea on January 23, 1968.

From 1961 to 1964 he served on the submarine USS Ronquil (SS-396), rising from third officer to executive officer, after which he became an assistant operations officer on the staff of Commander Submarine Flotilla Seven in Yokosuka, Japan. Bucher loved submarines and his greatest desire was to command one. However, he was a conventional submariner not trained in nuclear power, and his career options became limited when the submarine force became increasingly populated by nuclear-powered submarines and nuclear-trained submarine officers effectively hand-picked by Admiral Hyman G. Rickover in the 1960s. As a result, when Bucher screened for command, he was slated for command of an auxiliary surface vessel outfitted for communications and signals intelligence (COMINT/SIGINT) collection, in this case, USS Pueblo (AGER-2).

While monitoring North Korea in January 1968, Pueblo came under attack by North Korean naval forces, two Soviet-era submarine chasers, four motor torpedo boats, and two Mig-21 aircraft. U.S. Naval officials and the crew have claimed the ship was in international waters all the time. North Koreans attacked and ultimately boarded the ship, killing one man and taking the ship and her remaining crew of 82 to the port at Wonsan.

For the next 11 months, Bucher and his crew were held as POWs by the North Koreans. The crew reported upon release that they were starved and regularly tortured while in North Korean custody. This treatment allegedly turned worse when the North Koreans realized that crewmen were secretly giving them "the finger" in staged propaganda photos, an action the crew had initially explained away as being a "Hawaiian good luck sign".

Bucher was psychologically tortured such as being put through a mock firing squad in an effort to make him confess. Eventually, the Koreans threatened to execute his men in front of him, and Bucher relented and agreed to 'confess to his and the crew's transgression.' Bucher wrote the confession since a 'confession' by definition needed to be written by the confessor himself. They verified the meaning of what he wrote, but failed to catch the pun when he said "We paean the North Korean state. We paean their great leader Kim Il Sung" ("We paean" sounds almost identical to "we pee on"). Following an apology, a written admission by the United States that Pueblo had been spying, and an assurance that the United States would not spy in the future, the North Korean government decided to release the 82 remaining crew members. On 23 December 1968, the crew was taken by buses to the demilitarized zone (DMZ) border with South Korea

and ordered to walk south across the "Bridge of No Return". Exactly 11 months after being taken prisoner, Bucher led the long line of crewmen, followed at the end by the executive officer, Lieutenant Ed Murphy, the last man across the bridge.

The U.S. then verbally retracted the ransom admission, apology, and assurance. Meanwhile, the North Koreans blanked out the paragraph above the signature, which read: "and this hereby receipts for 82 crewmen and one dead body" (Fireman Duane Hodges was killed by North Korean gunfire during the taking of Pueblo). Upon release, several members of the crew were crippled and nearly blind as a result of the brutality and malnourishment.

On December 23, 1968, eleven months to the day of capture, CDR Bucher led his crew, one every 15 seconds, across the Bridge of no Return to freedom and the opportunity to live the rest of their lives.

Bucher died on January 28, 2004. He was buried at Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery in San Diego, California. The Poway-Bernardo Mortuary, which was featured in the A&E reality TV series Family Plots at the time, handled the funeral services. One of the episodes of the series was dedicated to Bucher's funeral services.

AFTERMATH

It would be shown in 1999 on the History Channel. A number of PUEBLO crew members were interviewed and filmed about their experiences. When the show aired on Sunday night March 28, 1999 the crew was astonished to find that the producers had presented a conclusion that the USS PUEBLO was attacked and captured by North Korean forces at the behest of the Soviet Union. The sole purpose being to obtain a working KW-7, Orestes cryptographic machine.

This assertion was based on an interview with Oleg Kalugin a former high ranking KGB officer who defected to the US in 1995. The Soviets at the time of the attack on PUEBLO were receiving month old outdated Top Secret code key cards from US Navy Chief Warrant Officer John Walker. In theory, without a working KW-7, the key cards they were receiving via Walker were useless. CWO Walker began supplying the key cards in 1967 while he was a Registered Publications Officer at the Navy's Atlantic Fleet headquarters at Norfolk, Virginia. This was the first time the PUEBLO crew had heard this assertion. CDR Bucher was especially incensed in that he was never ever informed by CBS News Productions or the History Channel that a conclusion such as this would be put forth in the documentary program. CDR Bucher was never offered a chance to reply to the show's assertion.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lloyd_M._Bucher

http://usspueblo.org/Aftermath/Pete_Bucher.html

http://www.usspueblo.org/Aftermath/John_Walker_KW7.html

https://web.archive.org/.../www.../Prisoners/the_Farm.html

Lessons Learned: The Seizure of the USS Pueblo - YouTube Video -

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

JAMES GUTIERREZ GOES NAVY

When I was commissioned in June '64 my orders read, "Report to Com-Sub-Flot-Two, New London, Connecticut. We were sent to submarines or destroyers awaiting Nuke School in November.

I had heard it was best to report in on Friday. They would stamp your orders and tell you to come back Monday morning.

It worked out as planned and I met Ensign Ken Barker from Purdue University who was to be my running mate. We were sent to Portsmouth Naval ship yard in Kittery, Maine to meet the Clamagore. She was getting a new battery. As I walked on board there was a big hole cut in the pressure hull. Not a comfortable feeling for a brand-new Ensign.

Submarine sailors always find a way to have fun. We had a barge alongside and lots of spare time. The men were fishing off the back of the barge and pulling in some really ugly fish. They were giving the fish a shot of torpedo juice and throwing them back in the water.

Sea gulls are always hungry and noisy. You guessed it. The sea gulls would grab a fish and swallow it whole. Now sea gulls don't walk very pretty when they are sober.

These sea gulls were falling down drunk. You know how sea gulls like to walk up on the edge of tall buildings. Well, these gulls were falling off the ledge. Luckily, they would catch themselves on the way down.

Now I would like to talk about this shipyards involvement with the loss of the Thresher. She was built there, the lead ship of her Class. She returned to Portsmouth for a 6-month Post Shake Down Availability.

They went out into the Atlantic to do their test dive.

They were at test depth when they reported a flooding casualty in the engine room over the UQC. The Skylark, a submarine rescue vessel was on the surface.

They heard the pumps shift from slow to fast. PLAINS – ANGLE – SPEED.

She got up to 700 feet, and they heard the reactor scram. They tried to blow main ballast but a valve froze up on one side so they had an uneven blow.

They started slipping to the bottom stern first. Her calculated crush depth was 1900 feet. She imploded at 2900 feet. 129 Officers, men and yardbirds lost their lives.

They talked to her all the way down on the UQC.

It was later determined that the flooding causality in the engine room was caused by a 4 in. braised fitting that came loose in one of the seawater systems.

JAMES GUTIERREZ GOES NAVY

I know now that whenever you work of a piping system you have to hydro it. But that hydro is done in the ship yard. As you go down to test depth your hull compresses. Piping systems move around a little and the stress points change. The 4 in. braised was experiencing stresses it didn't see when hydroed in the shipyard.

We were all keenly aware of the dangers in submarines but when you're young you think you're invincible. This won't happen to me.

We were a New London boat getting a battery up in Maine. The sailors enjoyed the hospitality of the local girls. There was always the Monday morning debriefing in Control. Each guy in turn would talk about the girls they hung out with over the weekend. I would just listen.

Our battery replacement was completed and it was time to head back to New London. I drove my car down to the BOQ there and caught a train back to Portsmouth. As the train was getting ready to leave two attractive young ladies got on board. I asked them where they were going. They were headed to Boston. I was in civilian clothes so I told them I was a Naval Officer headed up to Portsmouth to meet my submarine. They were not impressed.

As we approached Boston, they went to the girl's room to put on some fresh makeup. When they got back to their seats, they took the Dolphins off of their purses and replaced them with Coast Guard Eagles. They got off the train with happy anticipation to meet their Coast Guard friends.

"Girls just want to have fun."

For our test dive off the coast we went down to our test depth of 416 feet and things went smoothly. We headed for New London.

The CO of the Clamagore was LCDR Stanley B. Neander. He was strange by submarine standards. He did not communicate well with his officers and they were afraid to ask him to clarify his orders. Try making a torpedo run with this guy.

He didn't talk much to the enlisted men but they didn't really care. It was not a happy boat. They had an OOC list a mile long. The Skipper of the Clamagore volunteered for a Northern Run.

The officers' galley was converted into a dark room and one of our officers had a quick course in developing and printing pictures. All under the tutelage of a Chief photographer's mate.

We went over to Block Island and did some timed - up scope, slap on the camera, click, and take off the camera as the scope goes down. All in a straight line, at a constant speed parallel to the coast line. We got some good panoramic pictures of the coast line.

JAMES GUTIERREZ GOES NAVY



Ken Barker and I were transferred to the Jallao so as not to interfere with our orders to Nuke School.

My best boat but I didn't know it at the time. You never know which one was your best boat until you step off your last.

We took a cruise down to Bermuda. Passing Montauk Point, we got into some heavy weather. I was standing watch on the bridge with a veteran submariner.

There's a hurricane in the North Atlantic. We couldn't see over the top of the swells. The Starboard lookout threw up over the starboard side. The Port lookout threw up over the port side. They rotated and the helmsman threw up in turn. For me it was like a roller coaster ride.

The helmsman had the need to have a bucket on his right side.

Now this didn't happen on our watch but when the next OOD was relieved and came down the ladder, he stepped in the bucket. This is what he said, "! @#\$%^&*%"

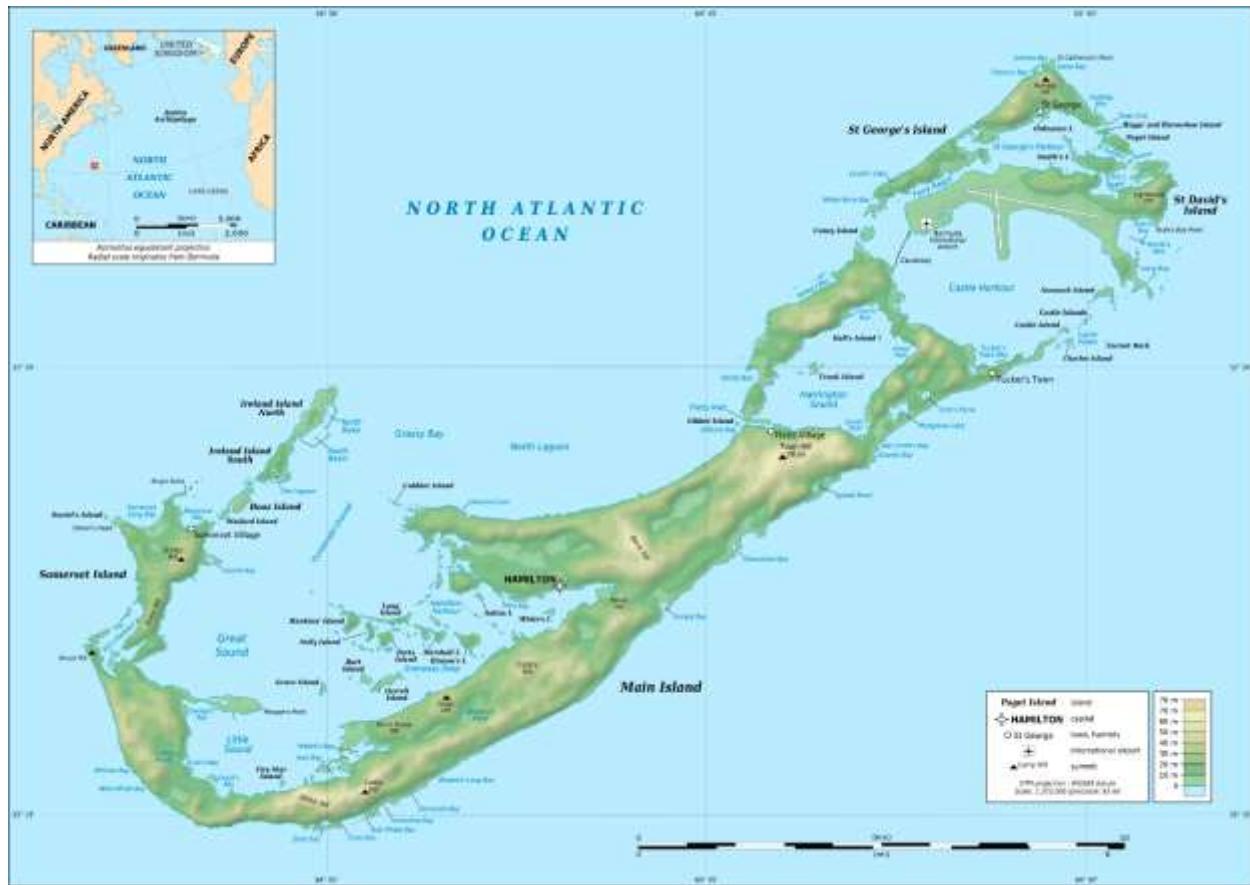
Headed for Norfolk to avoid the hurricane then they told us to stay out since they were sortieing the fleet. Road out the hurricane rigged for dive, snorkeling and popping the head valve.

Two years later I rode out another North Atlantic Hurricane on the Stimson during shakedown at 500 ft. Smooth as silk. We came up to 200 ft. and took 17 degree rolls.

We did other typical diesel boat stuff with the Dog Fish taking turns being the target and the attacking boat. A Mark 16 torpedo really does sound like a freight train as it goes by under your hull. It runs on steam you know.

Liberty was good in Bermuda.

JAMES GUTIERREZ GOES NAVY



Ken Barker was always broke. Ensigns didn't make much in those days, \$425 plus \$50 for Sub pay before taxes. He spent most of his money on a girlfriend in Pennsylvania who he later married. Once we got tied up and got ready to go on liberty he asked me, "How much money do we have?" I had \$15 but we made that go a long way. We rented bicycles and toured the Island. Lots off hills and bikes made it a lot like work. On the south side we looked down at all the fancy resorts. We had lunch in Hamilton. Never got used to the money. Ken went for the food while I found a place to sit. It was all open air. Very casual. He came back with two hot dogs and I asked him how much they cost. "I gave him two dollars and he gave me back this, showing some foreign paper and coins in his hand."

At the club martinis were 15 cents. At that price I took a liking to gin.

Jim Gutierrez 2026

Formatting Dates in Ancestry

Don Ort - Gold/SY1/Blue 69-74 and Tom Krauser - Blue 72-74

Dates get entered in your ancestry file from many different sources. The date formats are not always consistent, and the ancestry program does not usually convert them into your default format unless you actually click on the date field and select the suggested date format.

You can select the “default” date format in the ancestry program. The most common date formats are:

dd Mmm yyyy (Example: 11 Jan 2016) and Mmm dd yyyy (Example: Jan 11, 2026)

Sometimes for single digit days the format can be d Mmm yyyy (Example: 1 Jan 2016) which happens to be the default format that Tom and Don use for their dates.

For efficient sorting of records and other operations that look at the date fields, such as finding duplicate records, it is best if all the dates are converted to the default date format. Ancestry.com also appears to use the date field for Hints and we noticed that after the dates were corrected for a Profile that Hints suddenly appeared for that Profile.

Ancestry.com and Family Tree Maker 2024 DO NOT have a utility that will look at all the dates and automatically convert all of them to the proper format. Tom has complained to Ancestry.com that this should be a standard Tool but, as usual, Ancestry.com seems unwilling to listen to their users and make things easier for them.

In this paper we will suggest a process to update all the dates to the “default” format. It is important that as you enter new records or edit existing records that you make sure ALL the dates are in the default format before you save that record. If not sure just click on the Date field and accept the suggested Date.

This process is for all the records that are already in your tree to make all the dates consistent with the default date format.

Don and Tom usually edit in Ancestry.com and then **Sync** the tree to Family Tree Maker 2024 to make them consistent.

First open Ancestry.com to the tree you want to work with.

Click on the **Tree Search icon** (usually next to the tree name on the upper left) to open the **Find in Tree** option.

At the bottom of the pop-up there is an option for “**List of all people.**” Select this option to see all the people in your tree sorted by Last Name.

This will list ALL people in your tree “alphabetically” usually with 100 people on a page. For example, Tom has over 61,000 people in his trees so there are 613 pages of names to review.

The Names are in the 1st column, Birth dates in 2nd column and Death dates in 3rd column.

You may notice that there may be records with no last name entered. You should try to fix these records if possible by reviewing them to see if a last name can be determined. If the record shows a parent, add that to the last name. If the record shows a spouse, use “?-spouse last name” for the last name. If the record shows children with a Last Name (father of child) then use ?-child’s last name. Some records show the mother’s maiden name so Tom uses “?-M-mother’s maiden name” in the Last Name field.

In order for the dates to appear closer to each other horizontally (so they are easier to scan for dates not in the default date format), make the window fit in only the left side of the computer screen. This squeezes the dates closer together and makes them easier to read as you scan down the list of dates. You can slide the right side of the browser window to the left so the dates are horizontally closer to each other making them easier to read. You can also use **Ctrl-+** keys to make the font larger and easier to read.

The standard date format we will look for is dd Mmm yyyy (Example: 11 Jan 2026) but the “dd” could be a single day between 1-9 (Example: 1 Jan 2026). Acceptable abbreviations for dates could be Bef. (before), Aft. (after), Abt. (about) or ca (use Abt.). Sometime dates are shown as Bet. (between) (Example: Bet. 1900-1910). However, Ancestry does not seem to recognize this format. You could change it to Aft. 1900 for Birth dates and you can change it to Bef. 1910 for Death dates. This gives an estimate for the dates that are reasonable for the person’s life span.

Many times you may see ABT/BEF/AFT/BET in all caps which is not correct. They should be “Abt. Bef. Aft.” with a period at the end. Some sources show Death dates as “Unknown.” For these records we usually remove Unknown or any other text from the Death date.

You may also see the months in all caps (Example: JAN) which also is not correct and should be fixed. So all months should be three characters with the first letter in caps and two lower case letters (Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun, Jul, Aug, Sep, Oct, Nov, Dec). Any other version of the month should be fixed.

NOTE: As you cycle through all the records you have to opportunity to fix many other common errors. Some general rules you may choose to fix while you cycle through the records:

Do not use periods after initials, Sr., Jr., etc. So fix them as you go through the records.

Put nick names in quotes “” instead of parenthesis () since the search finds names in quotes but has trouble with ().

Any records missing Birth dates should have the Birth date estimated with Abt. yyyy as the estimated Birth date.

For records with UNKNOWN or DECEASED or any other text in the Death field, remove and leave it blank. If there is a Note such as “Killed in war” in the Death date then move that note to the Death place or somewhere else.

Do not put titles such as Dr., Rev., ranks (Col.), etc. in front of first names but in parenthesis () after the first name or you could also choose to put these titles in the Surname field. This way the names sort correctly by first name.

For hyphenated married names such as Smith-Jones, make a separate record for the spouse and then remove the hyphenated name from the record for the wife.

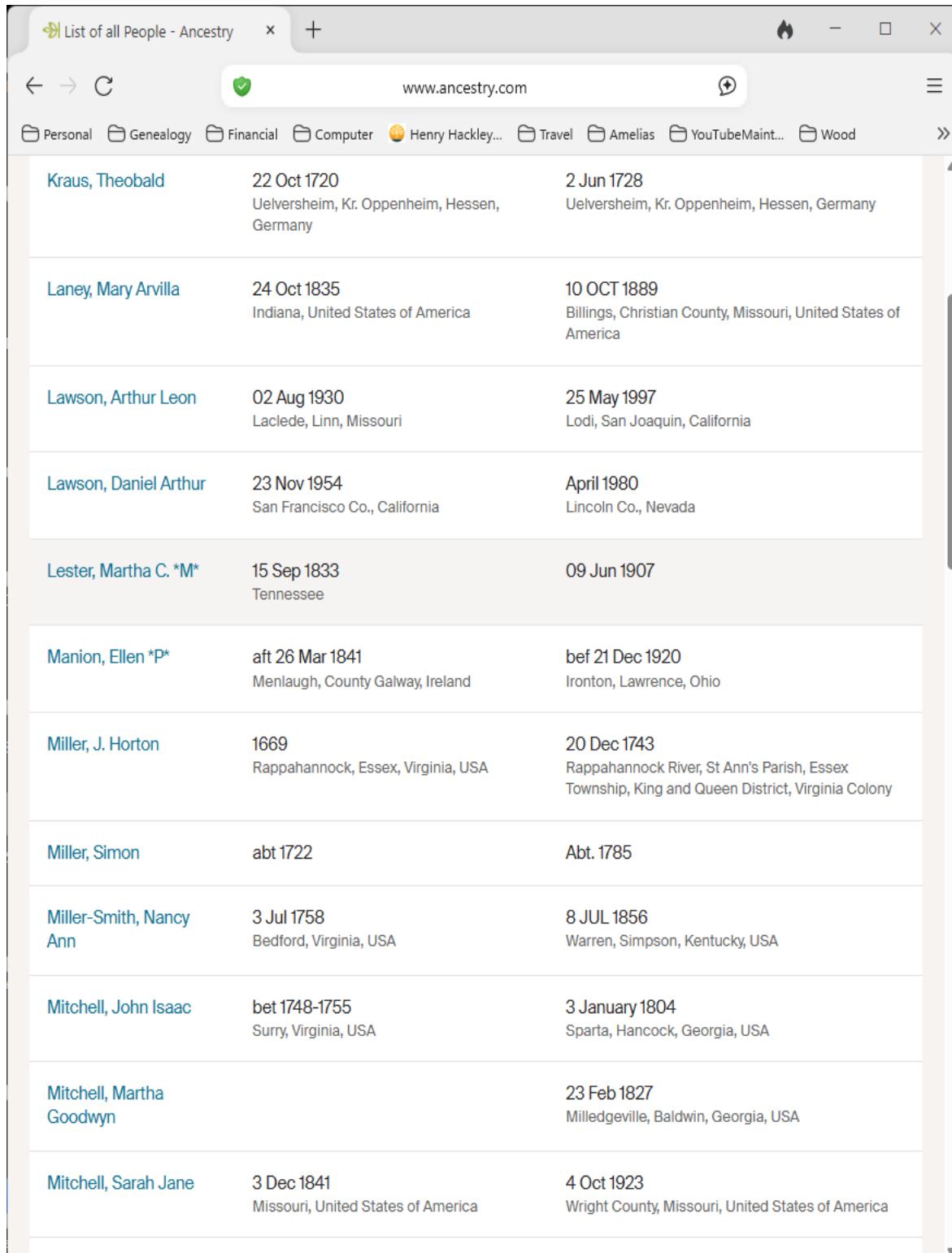
For names with all caps in the name fix the names to proper case (Example: SMITH to Smith).

If you find records where the sex is Unknown, try to determine the sex and fix it.

Ancestry recently changed the search feature to treat * as a wild card instead of a character so avoid using *’s to mark records. Tom used **** to mark records he wanted to come back to later but now the search no longer finds these records since the * is a wild card and the search finds any character in those positions. Tom switches these to ##### as he finds them for records he wants to return to later. If the record came from WikiTree and you want to

return to it later to continue up or down using WikiTree, you can put WT# in the Surname field so you can search for those records later. If you are using the FamousKin program and that person can be linked to your ancestors later, then put FK# in the Surname field so you can find it later and connect that person to your ancestors.

The following screen shows examples of most date record types and we will use it to explain how to correct the date formats.



Kraus, Theobald	22 Oct 1720 Uelversheim, Kr. Oppenheim, Hessen, Germany	2 Jun 1728 Uelversheim, Kr. Oppenheim, Hessen, Germany
Laney, Mary Arvilla	24 Oct 1835 Indiana, United States of America	10 OCT 1889 Billings, Christian County, Missouri, United States of America
Lawson, Arthur Leon	02 Aug 1930 Laclede, Linn, Missouri	25 May 1997 Lodi, San Joaquin, California
Lawson, Daniel Arthur	23 Nov 1954 San Francisco Co., California	April 1980 Lincoln Co., Nevada
Lester, Martha C. *M*	15 Sep 1833 Tennessee	09 Jun 1907
Manion, Ellen *P*	aft 26 Mar 1841 Menlaugh, County Galway, Ireland	bef 21 Dec 1920 Ironton, Lawrence, Ohio
Miller, J. Horton	1669 Rappahannock, Essex, Virginia, USA	20 Dec 1743 Rappahannock River, St Ann's Parish, Essex Township, King and Queen District, Virginia Colony
Miller, Simon	abt 1722	Abt. 1785
Miller-Smith, Nancy Ann	3 Jul 1758 Bedford, Virginia, USA	8 JUL 1856 Warren, Simpson, Kentucky, USA
Mitchell, John Isaac	bet 1748-1755 Surry, Virginia, USA	3 January 1804 Sparta, Hancock, Georgia, USA
Mitchell, Martha Goodwyn		23 Feb 1827 Milledgeville, Baldwin, Georgia, USA
Mitchell, Sarah Jane	3 Dec 1841 Missouri, United States of America	4 Oct 1923 Wright County, Missouri, United States of America

As we scan down the dates we notice that several dates have a “0” in the date but default format is a single digit day so we can correct those dates as follows:

Click on the person’s name to open that record in the next tab of the current browser window. Example: Click on Lawson, Arthur Leon and that Profile opens in the next Tab of the current browser window.

Click on “**Edit/Quick edit**” record (Pencil in upper right corner) to open **Edit person** pop-up.

Click on **Birthdate** field to view that suggested date is 2 Aug 1930. Click on this choice to replace the date.

If the other date is correct, you can leave it but we normally click on both dates to update them both at the same time while the record is open. Note that the changes should appear in the Date fields. Then click **Save** to update that Profile. Note that both Dates are correct for that Profile before closing the record.

After you **Save** the record and verify the dates updated in the record, click on the “**X**” in that **Tab** at the top of browser window to close that record leaving only the Search Tab (List of all People – Ancestry) open.

NOTE: You should close each person after you edit their record so only the Search Tab window is open for you to look for the next Date record to fix. Work down the records in the Search window from top to bottom.

NOTE: The search window WILL NOT SHOW the updates you made until another search is performed. Just continue scanning down the page to look for the next date to fix.

Notice that the month is spelled out in several records (Example: April, January) which should be fixed by opening those records as you work down the list, update them, Save the changes, then close that record (X).

Notice that several records show “aft”, “bef”, and a record shows “bet” so as you work down the list you can fix each date, save it, and close that record.

Since the “bet 1748-1755” record is in the Birth date field, you can change it to Aft. 1748 for this record. If it was in the Death field you could change it to Bef. 1755.

Notice that one record has NO DATE for that record. You should not leave Birth dates empty even if you have to “estimate” the Birth year. When you leave Birth dates empty, you have no idea even what century the record was from unless you look at records around it. When we open this record we look at the spouse/parents/children records for a clue to the Birth date. From this information we should be able to “estimate” a Birth date. We notice that the father was born in 1748 so a “reasonable” birth date would be Abt. 1768 for this record. If no marriage information is available, you can estimate about 20 years from the mother’s or father’s birth date for a child to be born. If a Marriage date is available, you could add a couple of years to the Marriage date. You could also use children or sibling Birth Dates if available.

After you get to the bottom of that page, click to go to the next page (>) and repeat the process to fix the next 100 records until you have been through all the pages of records.

NOTE: Since you may not be able to correct all pages of date records in one sitting. There are a couple of ways to keep track of where you left off. The first would be to write down the last page number you were on when you stopped. Another way is that when you click on **Tree Search** it shows the “**Last edited**” records, which may be the last record you corrected the date on so you can find that record in the list and continue from there.

Since we also use **Family Tree Maker 2024**, about every 10 pages (1000 records) (or whatever you are comfortable with), we usually **Sync** Ancestry with **FTM2024** to make these changes in Family Tree Maker 2024.

To **Sync** Ancestry and FTM2024, open **FTM2024**.

Click on **Sync** icon in the upper right corner of the **FTM2024** window.

Click **Sync Now** and follow steps to complete the Sync.

After the **Sync** has completed successfully, close **FTM2024** which makes a backup of the file.

NOTE: It is a good idea at this point to make a backup copy of FTM2024 files to your backup drive in the event FTM2024 becomes corrupted and you need to restore to a point where it worked correctly. We keep a backup of the entire FTM2024 folder on a separate external backup drive and also on a USB Thumb drive. You should use a 128GB or larger USB Thumb drive for this backup. Also, you may want to periodically **Compact** the FTM2024 file.

Also, as you look at records, you might notice that sometimes the female may have her maiden name and married name hyphenated in the Last Name field (Example: Miller-Smith, Nancy). Note that this record appears at the end of all the Miller records and not sorted to where it should as Miller, Nancy. In these cases you should eliminate the hyphenated name. You can open that record and create a separate record for the Spouse with the married name as the spouse's Last Name. For their Birth date you can use "Abt." and the birth year of the female. Then remove the married last name (-Smith) from her record and Save it. You should only keep the maiden name as the last name for females since they may have several married last names. Hyphenated names can cause searches and sorts to be wrong.

NOTE: This process does not fix other dates such as Marriage or Event dates so always try to use the proper date format when entering these dates before saving these records.

He never wore a uniform, BUT!!!

He never wore the uniform—but veterans call him their greatest hero. This is why. Walk into any VA hospital in America. Any military base. Any veterans organization. Mention the name Gary Sinise. Watch what happens next.

Eyes light up. Voices crack with emotion. Stories pour out like water breaking through a dam.

"He came to our base in Afghanistan when nobody else would."

"He built my brother a home after he lost both legs."

"He played for us on Christmas in Iraq—gave us hope when we had none."

The question everyone asks: How did an actor who never served a single day become the most beloved figure among those who served their entire lives?

It started in 1994 with a role that would change everything.

Gary Sinise played Lt. Dan Taylor in *Forrest Gump*—a Vietnam veteran who loses his legs in combat, drowns in bitterness, and fights his way back to redemption.

For most actors, it would have ended there. Another paycheck. Another role. Move on.

But something broke open inside Gary Sinise.

Playing Lt. Dan forced him to confront the struggles of disabled veterans—their invisible wounds, their shattered bodies, their fight to rebuild lives that war had destroyed.

These weren't movie characters anymore. These were real people. Real pain. Real sacrifices made for a country that too often forgot them.

And Gary Sinise made a decision that would define the rest of his life: Playing a veteran wasn't enough. He would spend the next 30 years serving the people who actually served.

While Hollywood moved on, Gary Sinise formed the Lt. Dan Band and started performing. Not for money. Not for his career. Not for fame.

For troops.

Free concerts at forward operating bases. USO tours to combat zones where mortars still fell at night. Holiday shows for service members who hadn't hugged their children in a year.

Since 2003: Over 50 USO tours. Performances at 174 military bases worldwide. Visits to 21 military hospitals.

Imagine it. An A-list actor spending his time off not on red carpets or beach vacations, but in 120-degree heat in Iraq, playing rock and roll for exhausted soldiers who desperately needed to remember what joy felt like.

But Gary Sinise was just getting started.

In 2011, he founded the Gary Sinise Foundation with one iron-clad mission: Honor America's defenders with action, not words.

The foundation builds specially adapted smart homes for catastrophically wounded veterans—homes with voice-activated systems, automatic doors, wheelchair-accessible everything. Homes designed to restore independence to warriors whose bodies were destroyed protecting freedoms they'll never fully enjoy again.

Each home costs hundreds of thousands of dollars. Each one is given completely free to a veteran who sacrificed everything.

But the foundation doesn't stop there. They support Gold Star families—parents, spouses, children of service members who never came home. They fund mental health services. They organize memorials. They show up when everyone else looks away.

The foundation raises tens of millions annually. Every single penny serves those who served.

And Gary Sinise doesn't just run it from a distance. He shows up personally.

He hands keys to wounded veterans at home dedications. He embraces Gold Star mothers drowning in grief. He sits with struggling veterans and listens—really listens—to their stories. He attends funerals. Rehabilitation centers. Hospital rooms.

He treats every service member like they matter. Because to him, they do.

The honors came flooding in—not because Gary Sinise sought them, but because the military community refused to let his service go unrecognized.

Presidential Citizens Medal from George W. Bush. Department of Defense Outstanding Civilian Service Award. The Sylvanus Thayer Award from West Point. Honorary Marine. Honorary Chief Petty Officer.

But ask Gary Sinise about these honors and he'll change the subject. He'll talk about the veterans. The families. The sacrifice.

He doesn't do this for recognition. He does it because it's right.

Here's what makes this story extraordinary:

Gary Sinise had zero obligation to do any of this.

He never served. He wasn't a veteran. He didn't lose a family member in combat. He didn't owe the military anything.

He could have played Lt. Dan, enjoyed the acclaim, and built a comfortable Hollywood career. Instead, he made serving veterans his life's purpose.

For 30 years. Through every administration. Through popular wars and unpopular ones. Through times when supporting the military was trending and times when it wasn't.

Gary Sinise showed up.

Not for cameras. Not for social media posts. Not for his brand.

Just to serve.

Veterans know the difference between someone who says they support the troops and someone who proves it. They can smell performative patriotism from a continent away.

And when they talk about Gary Sinise, you hear something sacred in their voices.

Genuine gratitude. Bone-deep respect. Love.

They call him "the real hero." They say he's "done more for us than anyone in Hollywood—maybe more than anyone, period." They describe his work as "a calling, not a career."

Military families share stories of how the Gary Sinise Foundation saved them when they were drowning. Veterans post photos from base visits that meant everything. The tributes flood social media—not because anyone asked, but because people can't help sharing what this man has meant to them.

The common thread in every single story: Gary Sinise showed up when it mattered most.

He showed up in war zones when it was dangerous.

He showed up in hospitals when it was heartbreakin.

He showed up for grieving families when everyone else disappeared.

He showed up for wounded warriors fighting to want to live again.

He showed up. Again, and again and again and again.

That's why veterans call him their hero. Not because he played one in a movie.

Because he spent three decades proving that the role was just the beginning of his real mission.

Gary Sinise never wore the uniform. He never took the oath. He never served in combat.

But he's spent more than half his life serving those who did.

And the military community doesn't just respect him for it—they love him with a depth that transcends gratitude.

Not because of what he pretended to be on screen.

Because of what he actually became in real life: A brother. A champion. A relentless voice for those who sacrificed everything and asked for nothing in return.

To Gary Sinise: You didn't have to do any of this. You chose to. For three decades. Without stopping. Without seeking applause.

Thank you for showing the world what supporting the troops actually looks like—not with bumper stickers, but with your life. Not for a moment, but for a lifetime.

You never served in the military.

But you've served those who did with everything you have.

And that's why you'll always be beloved.

Not because of Lt. Dan.

Because of Gary.