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VOL. 2026 #3

MARCH 2026

USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER

Association Officers & Board of Directors 2025 - 2027

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Other Positions 2023 - 2025

<b>HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN</b> <u>Larry [Linda] Knutson</u>	<b>WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER</b> <u>Nick [Linda] Nichols</u>	<b>CHAPLAIN</b> <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]:**

CJ and I are welcoming the spring weather and happy that the severe cold and snow of this winter are behind us. Not that I am suggesting violence, but if anyone is soliciting funds to sponsor a hit on a certain groundhog – give me a shout!

At the end of the newsletter is an article on the USS Thresher I (SS-200) 1940-1947. Some interesting reading if you like WWII submarine history.



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

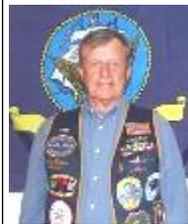
For great is your love, Higher than the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Psalm 108:4

As we are Marching through the new year, may we remember that love is the greatest thing in the world that we can hold on to. If it is raining things are good. If it is sunny things are good. But if we love each other things are great.

They say this month is a good month to fly a kite. I say that this is a great time for all

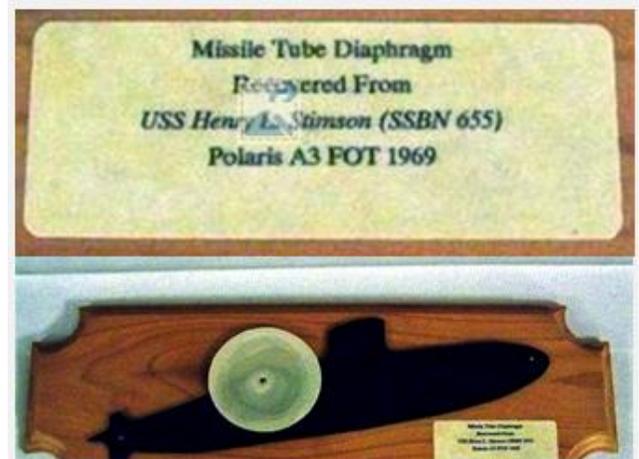
Submariners and families to show love and care for each other.

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]:**

Another picture 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 requested a copy of your check-in card. If you were on the Gold Crew



## CERTIFICATE

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](mailto:655webmaster@ssbn655.org)

**Another good month to receive qual cards. There were two more added.** It would be great if any of you can send me an email with copies of your SS qual cards and pictures of getting your dolphins. Check out the **SS Qual Card & Certificate** webpage. When you find your card either scan it or take a good picture and send it to me at [655webmaster@ssbn655.org](mailto: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.

### Qualification Cards of Stimson Sailors



### Stimson Shipmates on Eternal Patrol.

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**None reported this month**

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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 or information has been updated on our Sailing List. Please 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 who are on our Sailing List be without an email address.

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### **IC3(SS) Harold C. Amaker G 74-78**

[updated by member]

### **LCDR Vernon Watson G 85-86**

USSVI Hawkbill Base

[updated by member & USSVI]

### **MM3(SS) Douglas Allen Binenti ? 91-92**

USSVI Central Texas Base

[updated by USSVI]

### **LCDR Thomas Keaney B 93 Decomm ENG**

USSVI/Holland Club Central Oregon Base

[updated by USSVI]

### **Understanding Engineers**

To the optimist, the glass is half-full.

To the pessimist, the glass is half-empty.

To the engineer, the glass is twice as big as it needs to be.

**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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### **Bob 'Doc' Dougherty [MM1(SS) G/SY1/G 70-74]**

Cards to: 2600 Eberly Street, Hatboro, PA 19040

**2.26.26: Email from Gretchen Glaub:** Robert 'Bob' 'Doc' Dougherty is in the hospital in Pennsylvania with Pneumonia and AFib. He as been moved to the ICU step-down unit. Thoughts and prayers would be greatly appreciated.

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### **Tom Lawson [FTCS(SS) G 80-81 COB]**

Cards to: 116 Columbia Dr Ladson SC 29456-3202

**2.5.26:** Tom has severe breathing issues and is on 24/7 Oxygen. He has been placed on home hospice care

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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

**2.7.26: Email from Ken:** Diane has had some post chemo (treatment #1) complications that we're working through with the help of friends from church who have gone through similar treatments.

*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.*

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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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**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

**2.26.26: Email from Vicki:** Surgery went well.

Doctor said the knee was really bad. Lots of pain right now but they did have me stand and move a little sideways. Will have me walk tomorrow.

Thank all of you for your prayers.

*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.*

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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

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### Understanding Engineers

The graduate with a science degree asks,  
"Why does it work?"

The graduate with an engineering degree asks,  
"How does it work?"

The graduate with an accounting degree asks,  
"How much will it cost?"

The graduate with an arts degree asks,  
"Do you want fries with that?"

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### **DID YOU KNOW??**

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**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.

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**3-second tech genius:** Buying a secondhand phone? Dial **\*#06#** to see its IMEI number. Then enter it on **Stolen Phone Checker** to find out if it's been reported stolen or blocked by a carrier.

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**Cast your PC to a smart TV:** On **Windows 11**, you can connect your desktop to your TV wirelessly if both are on the same network. If your PC doesn't have Wi-Fi, get an **adapter**. Press **Windows key + K** to open the **Cast** menu, select your TV and choose how to display it.

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**Know what files really are:** Windows hides file name endings like .jpg, .pdf and .mp4 by default. That's risky, since a malicious file you accidentally downloaded could look like a photo but is actually an .exe (malware). Stay alert: Open File Explorer, click View in the top row, scroll to Show and tick File name extensions.

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### **GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH**

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**655 Association Website**

**[www.ssb655.org](http://www.ssb655.org)**

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Submitted by Trin Rios [LCDR B NAV 76-78, SV-HC

Tri-State Base]

### **Status of the US SSBN Fleet**

This short video provides a good report on the status of the current SSBN fleet and a look at the future SSBN fleet in 2026.

The Ohio class is the backbone of America's nuclear deterrence. A 558-foot nuclear submarine built not to fight — but to disappear. In this episode of Future War Tech, we break down how the Ohio class achieves extreme acoustic stealth, how Trident II D5 missiles enforce second-strike deterrence, why four boats became SSGNs carrying 154 Tomahawks, and what the 2026 transition to the Columbia class means for U.S. undersea power.

### **The Ohio Class: America's \$28 Billion Doomsday Ghost**

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### **How Navy Submarine Cooks Feed 150 Sailors At Sea**

USS South Dakota

**[https://youtu.be/vDr74\\_wV3qo](https://youtu.be/vDr74_wV3qo)**

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### **LIFE ABOARD a US NAVY NUCLEAR SUBMARINE - Full Tour USS INDIANA**

Barefoot Vlogger

Go inside and see what life is like in a US Navy Nuclear submarine: USS Indiana on a full tour guided by Commanding Officer. Interviews include the ONLY female officer and crew member. Watch me board the sub and crawl through a torpedo tube. Full walking (and crawling) tour of the sub with Commanding Officer and crew. Update: Apparently I was NOT the first person to do a torpedo tube crawl. Smarter Every Day did it a while back. Thanks to all who pointed this out. Lesson learned. When you're about to crawl into a nuclear submarine torpedo tube, don't assume no one ever filmed it on YouTube. It certainly was a first for me though and my crawl was the longest for what it's worth. Anyway, it was quite an experience.

**<https://youtu.be/AI7DqK0f8II>**

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### **Your Health**

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### **Is it heartburn or a heart attack?**

If you've ever had chest pain, you may have wondered whether it was heartburn or a heart attack. Here's how to tell the difference between

the two.

Chest pain can be confusing and may signal heartburn or a heart attack, making it important to recognize the warning signs and seek care when needed.

Having any kind of chest pain can be unsettling. More than 6.5 million Americans go to the emergency room for chest pain each year. Fortunately, most cases aren't serious. But how can you tell the difference between a heart attack and other conditions that cause chest pain?

**[Read More Here](#)**

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**Diabetes and your heart: Why blood sugar affects your arteries**

Blood sugar and atherosclerosis make diabetes a major risk factor for heart attack and stroke. People who have diabetes may develop heart disease at a younger age.

Diabetes and heart disease are closely linked. People who have diabetes have twice the risk of heart disease as people who don't have the condition. What's the connection?

Diabetes affects the body's ability to convert glucose (sugar) into energy. Normally, the body makes a hormone called insulin in the pancreas to take glucose from the blood and turn it into energy. In diabetes, the body either doesn't make enough insulin, or it is unable to use insulin effectively (insulin resistance). This causes glucose to build up in the blood.

While the body needs sugar to make energy, too much sugar in the blood can cause damage to the blood vessels and nerves in the heart. High blood sugar may promote cholesterol deposition in the walls of arteries. This cholesterol deposition is called atherosclerosis and may lead to narrowing of blood vessels. Diabetes is associated with the development of high blood pressure, heart failure and other cardiovascular complications.

**[Read More Here](#)**

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**Why doctors are screening for depression during checkups**

To help meet the challenge of rising depression rates, doctors are recognizing the importance of screening for depression during regular medical checkups.

Routine depression screenings during medical

checkups can help identify mental health concerns early and connect patients to timely care.

Depression is on the rise in the United States, with 29% of U.S. adults reporting that they have been diagnosed with depression at some point in their lifetimes. Nearly 18% of American adults also reported currently being treated for depression or having been treated in the past.

To help meet the challenge of rising depression rates, doctors are increasingly recognizing the importance of screening for depression during regular medical checkups. Screenings can help identify depression early, allowing patients to be treated sooner.

**[Read More Here](#)**

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**Understanding Engineers**

Normal people believe that if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Engineers believe that if it ain't broke, it doesn't have enough features yet.

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**theleansubmariner**

***The Lean Submariner***

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

**<https://theleansubmariner.com/>**

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**Cold War Stories – Prepare to Snorkel**

By Mister Mac on January 23, 2026

When the word is passed "Prepare to Snorkel" on a submarine, a number of actions need to be taken immediately. The boat has to be at the correct depth, valves need to be adjusted and of course, the diesel operator needs to do some preliminary actions. The snorkel mast is raised and the control room party is keenly aware of depth control in order to keep the snorkel mast head in a position that it will allow air to flow to the monster below.

The sea state can be a tricky thing since the boat's position in relation to the surface can be affected and the mast may dip below the waves. Once the diesel is running, any interruption to the flow of air means the diesel will need to take a suction on the inside of the boat. There are safety devices which prevent the diesel from taking too

great of a suction. That would impact the crew in a very negative way as well as impact other equipment.

I do not remember doing very many snorkel operations underway on my first boat which was a boomer. The use of the diesel did come in quite often when we were tied up next to the Proteus. In port, we relied on shore power but more often than not, we would lose shore power, and the diesel would be needed to provide power. The memory I have is that when it lit off, black smoke mixed with oily water would come shooting out of the exhaust and it happened with the whole off duty crew topside in whites and in formation waiting for change of command. Wonderful timing.

[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories: The Atomic Bomb – “I think it’s dreadful of the Americans to have done it. I think it is madness on their part.”**

By Mister Mac on January 17, 2026

As one war was coming to an end after so many years of senseless bloodshed, another one was in its germination. The period commonly known as the Cold War had its beginnings in the days leading up to the end of the conflict in Europe. The two future opponents were already racing to scoop up the deadliest secrets of the German Wehrmacht and gain an advantage over the other side. Stalin had already demonstrated his true nature in one failed treaty after another and his quest for global influence would override any temporary alliances he had made with the west.

The secrets of controlling the basic elements that make up the universe had been uncovered by various scientists around the world. During World War 2 the Americans and allies’ goal was to discover a way to harness atomic power before the enemy did. In the massively expensive and expansive Manhattan project, scientists raced to develop a weapon that had only been imagined before. One of the core beliefs in the highest levels of the government was that the Nazi’s were racing to develop their own version of the bomb.

In May of 1945, a secret operation was put in place to race into Germany and capture the scientists that were suspected of the research.

***Operation Epsilon*** was the codename of a program in which Allied forces near the end of World War II detained ten German scientists who

were thought to have worked on Nazi Germany's nuclear program. The scientists were captured between May 1 and June 30, 1945, as part of the Allied Alsos Mission, mainly as part of its ***Operation Big Sweep*** through southwestern Germany.

[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories – Sharing Atomic Secrets in 1946**

By Mister Mac on January 25, 2026

Even prior to the formation of the United Nations organization in 1945, the shifting sands of power around the globe were creating doubts about the visions of the founders. Franklin Roosevelt had made the formation of this new organization one of his highest priorities. He had witnessed firsthand the failure of the world to accept the previous attempt at a governing body. The League of Nations was championed by one of his predecessors, Woodrow Wilson but failed to gain acceptance by the congress and ultimately the American people.

The failed League had been partially responsible for many of the circumstances that led to an even more catastrophic global conflict and leaders like Roosevelt felt that only a global organization like the United Nations could prevent World War 3.

While Roosevelt would not live to see his vision achieved, Truman and others would carry the mission forward.

[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories – Homecoming 1946**

By Mister Mac on January 27, 2026

Nearly eight million men and women served in the United States Armed Forces during the second world war. Many recent articles in various news outlets and television stories highlight the hundred plus years the few remaining survivors are celebrating this year. But the numbers are diminished greatly with the passing of time. They were called the Greatest Generation since so many of them were responsible for pushing back the dark forces of totalitarianism.

My dad was one of them as was my grandfather from my mom’s side. Selfless patriots that raised their hands in times of trouble and quietly went about the business of serving the nation. I

watched him proudly march down the streets of my hometown every year until I finally joined myself. It seemed like the right thing to do and I do not regret the sacrifices all of us were called upon to make.

LEAD Technologies Inc. V1.01

My dad entered the war in March of 1945 and was later stationed in the Philippines. His role was to help prepare the supplies needed to support the planned invasion of Japan. Of course, the use of atomic bombs helped to bring the war to an end and then the entire focus changed. One of the changes was that we had no need for so many men and women to be overseas so a method to bring them home as quickly as possible needed to be developed.

### **Operation Magic Carpet**

Operation Magic Carpet was the post–World War II operation by the U.S. War Shipping Administration (WSA) to repatriate over eight million American military personnel from the European (ETO), Pacific, and Asian theaters. Hundreds of Liberty ships, Victory ships, and troop transports began repatriating soldiers from Europe to the United States in June 1945. Beginning in October 1945, over 370 United States Navy ships were used for repatriation duties in the Pacific. Warships, such as aircraft carriers, battleships, hospital ships, and large numbers of assault transports, were used. The European phase of Operation Magic Carpet concluded in February 1946; the Pacific phase continued until September 1946.

Since dad had entered the war in March of 1945 and did not see combat, his ride home would have to wait. There was a point system developed that prioritized who would get to go home first. Dad did not get to come home until September of 1946. Back home, labor conditions were deteriorating. The war was over, but the labor movement was trying to level up the pay and benefits that they had held steady during the war.

[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories – The next war will be fought on our own soil**

By Mister Mac on January 31, 2026

In 1984, there was a fictional movie called Red Dawn that portrayed an invasion of the United States. It was a very interesting look at what would

happen in the country if an enemy was successfully able to bypass all of our defenses and take over a large portion of the continent.

From the promotion: “Red Dawn (1984) unfolds in an alternate Cold War reality where Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan forces invade a small Colorado town, prompting a group of teens to form a guerrilla resistance. Mixing teenage survival drama with war action, it quickly immerses viewers in high-stakes battles and themes of resilience. While dated in tone, it's remembered as a tense, patriotic cult classic worth a watch for its unique premise and place in 1980s cinema history.”

As I remember the eighties, there were a number of movies that depicted Cold War scenarios including one that depicted a nuclear attack on the USA. That movie showed our own missiles already being launched as incoming USSR missiles were on their way. It was a graphic movie that showed how everyday life was changed forever by the explosions. All of the horrors of a post nuclear world were brought to life in the course of the movie including the struggle that the survivors would have faced once the explosions were over.

[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories – From Blind as a Bat to Eyes like an Eagle; The Evolution of Drones and Missiles**

By Mister Mac on February 2, 2026

**It has been fascinating to watch the application of drones and guided missiles over the past twenty years in various conflicts.**

The evolution of microelectronics has changed the way wars are fought in ways that mirror science fiction at its finest. I was reading an article about ENIAC earlier today and it reminded me about the size of the earliest computers.

ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Computer) was the first programmable, electronic, general-purpose digital computer, completed in 1945. Other computers had some of these features, but ENIAC was the first to have them all. By the end of its operation in 1956, ENIAC contained 18,000 vacuum tubes, 7,200 crystal diodes, 6,000 relays, 70,000 resistors, 10,000 capacitors, and approximately 5,000,000 hand-soldered joints. It weighed more than 30 short

tons (27 t), was roughly 10 ft tall, 3 ft deep, and 100 ft long, occupied 300 sq ft and consumed 150 kW of electricity.

The computer I have sitting on my desk is probably more capable than the inventors probably ever dreamed ENIAC would lead to,  
[Read full BLOG here](#)

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### **Cold War Stories – “The atomic age is here to stay. The question is: Are we?”**

By Mister Mac on February 12, 2026

**General Omar Bradley is known for saying, “Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants. We know more about war than about peace, more about killing than we know about living.”**

Bradley would go on to become the head of the joint chiefs before retiring from the Army. The turbulent times after the second world war included the planting of the seeds which would grow into a full-fledged arms race. The scientists that developed the bomb were already concerned that only one country possessing such a terrible weapon would grow in power and potentially use the weapon for nefarious purpose. That translated into discussions about sharing the secrets with the major countries that had been allies during the last war.

Evidence now proves that spies were active in many countries but particularly in the Soviet Union. The soviets were still recovering from a costly war and their doctrine of world domination had never really diminished. The desire to protect themselves from external forces added to their distrust of all things western and developing their own nuclear program was a strong driving force.

### **Behind the scenes, fear of unbridled nuclear power was growing**

Searching through the newspaper archives of the postwar period, articles were being written about what could happen in a world where atomic weapons could be used with impunity. One of those was written by a writer named Margedant Peters. She has an interesting background including a relationship with Stalin’s estranged daughter. But that is a story for another day.

This article is typical of what many people saw as a dark future. Frankly, as I read it the first time, I could actually see this as something that would make for an apocalyptic screenplay for a movie.

### **[Read full BLOG here](#)**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Cold War Stories – We just wanted to change the world... Earth Day 1970**

By Mister Mac on February 21, 2026

### **Earth Day is observed every year on April 22.**

That observance has occurred every year since 1970 and has grown to a global observance. According to many sources, the first earth day was observed by 20 million Americans. I was one of the many people who participated in one of the local demonstrations as we walked out of high school on that beautiful spring day. I am pretty sure that all of the organization for the event was done by word of mouth and the fact that it spread from school to school with the only mechanism being telephones that were attached to a wall is pretty amazing. There were no personal computers, definitely no cell phones and even if we did have access to media, it was a very competitive time for media attention. The Vietnam war was still raging; civil rights groups were clamoring for attention and the women’s rights movement was in full swing. It’s stunning that something like the environment could gather any traction at all.

### **[Read full BLOG here](#)**



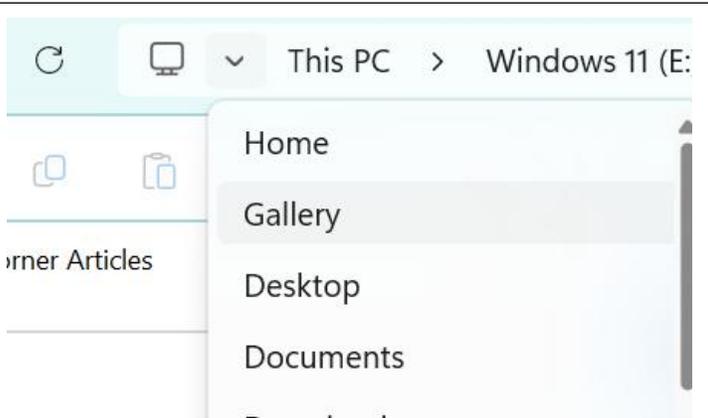
### **The Computer Corner**

**By: George Birmingham [ET1(SS)  
G/SY1/G 69-74, Assoc. Life  
Member, USSVI/Holland Club  
Carolina Piedmont Base]  
Windows File Explorer has some  
new features you may find useful**

Welcome back, shipmates! This month we will take a look at some features of Windows File Explorer that we may not have noticed, but may be useful in your File Explorer use. File Explorer now feels modern and efficient, with a sleek gallery view for photos and browser-like tabs for managing multiple folders.

**Gallery view for photos** - A sleek new way to organize your memories

You will find the Gallery view by clicking on the “>” item next to the “terminal” icon in the location bar, as shown below. The Gallery option is second in the drop-down list:

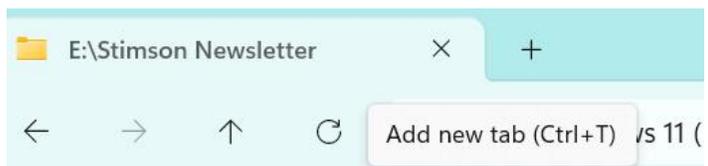


When you make this selection, after a brief delay as pictures and movies are retrieved for display, all of your photos will appear in a framed display. If you have photos from multiple years in the folder, then the right margin of the window will allow you to select a specific year of interest. Right clicking on a picture will provide a drop down for printing, picture rotation and other picture operations.

**Browser-like tabs** - Manage multiple folders without clutter

If you perform file movement operations from folder to folder or to attached disk storage, you will love this new feature. In prior versions of File Explorer, it seems we often needed to have two File Explorer windows open for drag and drop, or copy and paste, operations to move files. Now it's an easy operation to perform by just opening a new tab with the "+" tag as shown below, or by pressing Ctrl+T to open.

*(Note that an uppercase T is required for this option):*



Now you can move files between tabs easily. No more multiple window juggling needed. And the CTRL-Tab Key will move you between your open tabs. CTRL+W will close an open tab.

**The Home tab** - Your most important files, front and center

And finally, the Home page. We have all seen the Home icon in the left margin, and perhaps you are familiar with its content. The Quick Access section contains frequently accessed files and folders and was the primary page in prior versions of File Explorer. But now we have some new sections available:



The **Recent** tab in the **Home** tab shows your 20 most recently accessed files, working much like the old Quick Access panel. It's perfect for quickly reopening a document you were just working on or finding a photo you downloaded earlier.

**Favorites** work as the name suggests. You can right-click any file on your PC and choose **Add to Favorites**. This way, your most important items are always a click away. The **Shared** tab shows any files you may have shared with others.

As always, shipmates, comments and suggestions for future topics are welcomed. Contact me at [subvet\\_ssb@bellsouth.net](mailto:subvet_ssb@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] Passkeys – What you should know about using them**

This month we will take a break in our AI journey for a discussion of something we have probably all seen appearing more frequently in our digital travels – Passkeys.

What exactly are Passkeys? A google search on the topic provides the following summary:

“Passkeys are a modern, passwordless authentication method that replaces traditional passwords with cryptographic keys, using your device's biometrics (face/fingerprint), or a PIN, to securely log you into websites and apps. They were created for the purpose of offering superior phishing resistance, ease of use, and strong security by eliminating the need for shared secrets. Their design was intended to make them immune to keyloggers and data breaches. They work using public-private key pairs, where a unique public key stays on the server, and a private key stays on your device, syncing securely across your devices.”

The following video link provides a complete and understandable explanation of Passkeys: [\*\*Say Goodbye to Passwords: Passkeys Explained Simply\*\*](#) (around 20 minutes to view completely)



veterans with their own service-connected eligibility.

[Read More...](#)

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**VA Launches Plan to Expand Dental Care Access for Veterans**

As reported February 16 by Brandon Wile for Military.com, the VA is looking to overhaul how dental care is delivered to eligible veterans through the community-care program. The VA posted a request for proposals Feb. 10 for a new dental care administrator to build and manage a nationwide network of community dental providers. The contract, once awarded, is intended to expand access to general and specialty dental care, preventive services, and pharmacy support for the roughly 2.3 million veterans who currently qualify for VA dental benefits. Proposals are due by March 16. The RFP, posted on SAM.gov, calls for a vendor to serve as a third-party administrator responsible for recruiting, credentialing, and maintaining a national network of licensed dental providers and practitioners.

[Read More...](#)

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**Veterans Health Shake-up, Reforms to Get Underway in Coming Months**

As reported January 30 by Patricia Kime for *Military Times*, the planned reorganization of the Veterans Affairs health system should result in improvements to VA medical facilities, increased oversight of hospitals and clinics, and better access to care at the VA and with civilian providers in the department’s community networks, VA officials said during appearances before Congress this month. In what will be the largest reorganization of the Veterans Health Administration since the 1990s, the VA plans to restructure VHA’s administration, realign staff and resources, and invest in medical facilities. At the same time, the VA will award new contracts for community care — its program that covers medical care for eligible veterans at civilian facilities — using a new structure the VA hopes will give the department better flexibility to choose and change contracted provider networks. According to VA Secretary Doug Collins, the restructuring will “eliminate the glut of VA administrative overhead” and put more resources

directly into VA facilities and community care.

[READ MORE](#)

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**VA Reorganization Projected to Cost at Least \$312 Million**

As reported February 11 by Patricia Kime for *Military Times*, a planned restructuring of the Veterans Health Administration will cost an estimated \$312 million over five years and require an initial investment of \$521 million, according to a top congressional appropriator. The reforms, known as the Restructure for Impact and Sustainability Effort, or RISE initiative, are expected to begin this year with an aim to reduce the VHA’s administrative overhead and improve hospital services and clinical care. Initial VA briefings to congressional lawmakers did not include the potential costs of the restructuring, but Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) said Wednesday she initially was told it would be “cost neutral.

[Read More..](#)

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**Why Some Disabled Vets Can't Get Both VA Disability and Military Retirement Pay**

As reported February 5 by Brandon Wile for Military.com, servicemembers who medically retires with 19 years of service receives either military retirement pay or VA compensation, but not both in full. A servicemember who reaches 20 years gets both without offset through concurrent retirement and disability pay (CRDP). Before CRDP existed, military retirees receiving VA disability compensation had their retirement pay reduced dollar-for-dollar by their VA payments. The *2004 National Defense Authorization Act* changed this.

[READ MORE](#)

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**Your VA health and benefits on your phone**

One mobile app makes it easy to manage your health care needs

Did you know that there’s a mobile app that lets you easily refill prescriptions, review appointments, apply for travel pay, and so much more? Find out what else you can do with the VA: Health and Benefits app.

[Learn more](#)

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**When you need CPAP supplies**

If you use a CPAP or BPAP machine, it's important to regularly replace certain parts of the machine to keep it working properly.

[Learn how VA makes it easy to order supplies online](#)

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### **Do you know your medicines?**

Taking medicines incorrectly can be harmful to your health. Review these tips to ensure your treatment is safe and effective.

[Read the Veterans Health Library guide to know your medicines](#)

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### **Support mental health at home**

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. Now you can stay connected to your VA mental health provider without leaving home.

[Learn about the MHA for Veterans app](#)

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### **Don't miss a message from VA**

#### **Review and update your information all in one place**

My HealtheVet on VA.gov is our new health portal for managing your health care online. With this change, we'll start to use the email address listed in your VA.gov profile to send you any health care notifications. Learn how to review and update your VA.gov profile so you don't miss a notification.

[Learn more](#)

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### **Review 2026 copay rates**

2026 copay rates for VA and VA-approved health care are now available. Use this helpful guide to understand if you may be exempt from copays.

[Review 2026 copay rates on VA.gov](#)

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### **VA mobile apps for a healthy new year**

The start of a new year is a great time to build healthier habits. But we all need a little help to stay on track. VA has tools to help you make a plan and stay motivated.

[Check out these mobile apps](#)

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### **It's not too late for a flu shot**

If you haven't gotten your flu shot this season, it's not too late. Our flu vaccine decision aid can answer any questions you may have and help you

make an informed decision.

[Try the flu vaccine decision tool](#)

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### **VA to Formally Rescind Controversial Disability Ratings Rule**

As reported February 26 by Patricia Kime for *Military Times*, a regulation that would have required VA medical examiners to include the effects of medication in assigning disability ratings was rescinded formally today. In the notice, VA officials said that while the rule was meant to clarify existing policy, "stakeholders have expressed uncertainty" about its impact on claims, and leaving the rule in place during the codification process "could undermine confidence in the benefits system." The rule, published Feb. 17, generated significant backlash from veterans, advocacy groups, and lawmakers who said the proposal could have financially penalized veterans who adhere to medical treatment or encourage those seeking a disability rating to forego medications prior to a compensation and pension exam, putting their health at risk. The VA said the regulation simply formalized a practice that has been in place since 1958. Officials said it was needed because a 2025 court ruling, *Ingram v. Collins*, decided the VA must discount the positive impact of medication when issuing a disability rating. The rule stated that the methodology dictated by the courts set a standard that was "unquantifiable, hypothetical [and] unwarranted."

[Read More...](#)

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### **Navy Announces 13 Fiscal 2026 Ship Retirements**

(*SEAPOWER 26 FEB 26*) ... Richard R. Burgess

The U.S. Navy has announced its plan to retire 13 ships during fiscal 2026. In a Feb. 20 message released by Rear Admiral M. D. Behning, acting deputy chief of naval operations for Warfighting Requirements and Capabilities, the planned retirements included six warships and seven auxiliary ships. .

One Los Angeles-class attack submarine, Newport News (SSN 750), was inactivated in January. Its inactivation will be followed in August by that of USS Alexandria (SSN 757), leaving the fleet with 18 Los Angeles-class boats. The submarines will be scrapped.

## **A FAREWELL TO SUBMARINE GROUP SIX**

***CDR G.E. Hendrich, USN***

After more than 34 years of service to the U.S. Navy and the nation, Submarine Group Six was deactivated on 3 September 1994 in ceremonies in Charleston, South Carolina. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, Submarine Group Six was the largest submarine group in the U.S. Navy, with the operational responsibility for five submarine squadrons and more than 50 nuclear powered submarines, including both fleet ballistic missile, fast attack and one of the last diesel submarines in the U.S. Navy.

Submarine Group Six was originally established as Submarine Flotilla Two at Norfolk, Virginia on 1 March 1960 under the command of Captain J.W. Williams, USN. With headquarters on the submarine tender USS ORION (AS 18) in Norfolk, Submarine Flotilla Two was tasked with responsibility for submarine operations on the South Atlantic seaboard of the United States stretching from Key West, Florida northward to approximately Annapolis, Maryland, including the Gulf of Mexico. Submarine Flotilla Two initially included the surface and submarine units of Submarine Squadron Four in Charleston, Submarine Squadron Six in Norfolk, and Submarine Squadron 12 in Key West.

On 29 March 1960, Submarine Flotilla Two's responsibilities expanded to include the newly commissioned Polaris Missile Facility, Atlantic (POMFLANT) at the Naval Weapons Annex, Charleston. The mission of the Polaris Missile Facility was to provide missile maintenance and replenishment for the new fleet ballistic missile (FBM) submarines then coming into service. In August 1960, Submarine Flotilla Two moved to Charleston when headquarters were shifted to USS HOWARD W. GILMORE (AS 16). A new era of strategic deterrence began on 15 November 1960, when USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSBN 598) departed Charleston for the first operational SSBN deterrent patrol, carrying 16 tactical Polaris A-1 missiles, each with a 1200 nautical mile range.

Over the next several years, additional submarines, especially SSBNs, were added to Submarine Flotilla Two's growing responsibilities. On the first of April 1962, Submarine Flotilla Two was redesignated as Submarine Flotilla Six; then in February 1963, Submarine Flotilla Six assumed additional duties in support of the FBM submarine program. These duties included the stateside off-crew training, personnel detailing, logistics and pre-deployment operations for the FBM submarines scheduled for the newly formed Submarine Squadrons 16 and 18. During 1963, five new FBM submarines of the Lafayette Class were commissioned and assigned to Submarine Flotilla Six in preparation for future transfer to Submarine Squadron 16. As the year 1963 ended, USS LAFAYETTE (SSBN 616) was loading missiles in preparation for her first patrol.

In January 1964, Submarine Flotilla Six shifted administrative headquarters to the Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine Training Center in Charleston. During the remainder of 1964, 12 more new FBM submarines, including the SSBN 627 Class, reported to Submarine Flotilla Six for predeployment training. Because test firings for all new and post overhaul SSBNs were and still are conducted from the Atlantic Ocean near Port Canaveral, Florida, virtually every SSBN came under Submarine Flotilla/Group Six operational command while conducting these demonstration and shakedown operations (DASO) test firings.

On the first of August 1964, Submarine Squadron 18 was activated with headquarters in Charleston. Submarine Flotilla Six assumed additional duty as Commander of that Squadron until its Squadron Commander arrived on 16 November 1964. Also in 1964, USS POLLACK (SSN 603) and USS HADDON (SSN 604), newly constructed fast attack submarines, joined the Flotilla as the first nuclear powered fast attack units of Submarine Squadron Four.

1965 saw continued growth and expansion of Submarine Flotilla Six's responsibilities. During 1965, the first three of the Benjamin Franklin Class FBM submarines were commissioned and reported to Submarine Flotilla Six for predeployment training. Also, during 1965 the FBM submarine tenders USS SIMON LAKE (AS 33) and USS CANOPUS (AS 34) reported to the Flotilla for shakedown. Upon completion of shakedown, USS SIMON LAKE joined Submarine Squadron 18.

Submarine Squadron 16, previously reporting directly to Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, was placed under the administrative control of Submarine Flotilla Six in August 1965. Then in September 1965, the Flotilla Commander moved from the Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarine Training Center to his new headquarters in Building 646 where headquarters remained until deactivation in September 1994.

Continued growth of responsibilities came with 1968. In early 1968, HMS RESOLUTION (SSBN 01), the first of the British SSBNs arrived in Charleston for loadout and DASO, followed by departure in March for the first British SSBN deterrent patrol. In May 1968, tragedy struck the Submarine Force when USS SCORPION (SSN 589), a Flotilla unit attached to Submarine Squadron Six in Norfolk, was lost at sea with all hands. In December 1968, USS WHALE (SSN 638), the first of the 637 Class nuclear powered fast attack submarines reported to Submarine Squadron Four.

As the new decade of the 70s dawned, modernization of ships and weapons systems became the focus, as the first of the nuclear submarines began overhauls and weapons conversions. In August of 1970, the first submerged launch of a Poseidon missile was successfully conducted from USS JAMES MADISON (SSBN 627). The firing was observed by a Soviet ship, LAPTEV, whose crew was unsuccessful in attempts to recover closure plate segments from the water after launch of the missile.

On 1 September 1972 the first torpedo Mk 48 Training Certification Program (TCP) team for the Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, was established at Submarine Flotilla Six. The team acted as professional and technical advisors to the Flotilla Commander and as instructors and coaches for ship's commanding officers, attack parties, and other weapons and sensor teams. Submarine Flotilla Six was redesignated in July 1973 as Submarine Group Six.

As the 70s drew to a close, new ships and weapons began to emerge. In January 1977, USS LOS ANGELES (SSN 688) completed her initial Mk 48 torpedo certification while assigned to the group and on 2 July 1979, Submarine Squadron 16 shifted from Rota, Spain to a new site at Kings Bay, Georgia in preparation for the new Trident SSBNs.

In 1979, additional growth in the SSN force resulted in forming the new fast attack Submarine Squadron Eight in Norfolk, Virginia, to supplement Submarine Squadron Six, thus bringing Submarine Group Six to five subordinate submarine squadrons.

Throughout the 1980s, Submarine Group Six was the largest submarine group in the U.S. Navy, and one of the largest in the world, including five submarine squadrons in three home

ports with five submarine tenders, more than 50 submarines and more than 18,000 active-duty members. In 1981, construction of an expanded off crew office and training space was completed as Building 646 Annex was dedicated, more than doubling the training and off crew office space available for Submarine Group Six. This was necessary to keep pace with the growth of the Charleston submarine community to more than 12,000 active-duty members. On November 11, 1981 the first of the new Trident submarines, USS OHIO (SSBN 726), was commissioned and placed under the operational command of Submarine Group Six.

In March of 1983, Submarine Group Six was awarded the first of two Meritorious Unit Commendations for significant contributions in resourcefully managing the largest submarine community in the U.S. Navy and in bringing the new Trident submarines successfully on line. In September 1986 USS SAM RAYBURN (SSBN 635) completed a 12–112-month dismantlement availability at Charleston Naval Shipyard and commenced duties as the first moored training ship at the Charleston Naval Weapons Station.

Submarine Squadron 20 was established in 1988 in Kings Bay Georgia, as the first East Coast Trident submarine squadron, bringing Submarine Group Six to a peak of six subordinate submarine squadrons. This remained the situation for a year until the establishment of Submarine Group 10 in Kings Bay and the transfer of Submarine Squadron 20 to that Group.

The Fall of 1989 was disastrous as Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston on September 21, 1989. Submarine Group Six provided strong leadership in the organization of disaster assistance teams, working with home repair, distribution and Red Cross teams to provide around the clock recovery needs. In recognition of their actions well above and beyond the call of duty, personnel assigned to Submarine Group Six were awarded the Humanitarian Service Medal.

In August 1990 Submarine Group Six was awarded a second Meritorious Unit Commendation recognizing the significant contributions in bringing additional Trident SSBNs and the new 05 Trident missile on line.

The end of the Cold War and the necessary military downsizing that came with the 1990s resulted in a significant reduction in the Submarine Force, including plans to deactivate the remaining submarines of the original *41 for Freedom* and a major portion of the older SSNs. Submarine Group Six was also selected to be deactivated. In May 1992 Submarine Squadron 18 was deactivated and Submarine Group Six was notified that all SSBNs remaining in the group were to be accelerated in their deactivation process by up to four years. In late 1992 Submarine Squadrons 6 and 8 in Norfolk, Virginia were transferred to Submarine Group Two in New London, thus beginning the downsizing and ultimate end of Submarine Group Six.

Submarine Squadron 16 was deactivated in June 1994, Submarine Group Six was deactivated on 3 September 1994, and Submarine Squadron 4 will be deactivated on 31 March 1995. Thus, ends more than 34 years of service by Submarine Group Six and nearly half a century of submarines in Charleston at Submarine Squadron 4.



January 2026

Dear Friends,

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! We are reaching out to you on behalf of the Capital Campaign Committee and the Board of Directors of the St. Marys Submarine Museum. The Museum has been dedicated to preserving and sharing with the public the rich history of the 'silent service' for nearly three decades since our doors opened on 30 March 1996. We were privileged to have a true hero from WWII, RADM Eugene Fluckey, Commanding Officer of USS BARB (SS 220) and recipient of the Medal of Honor, as our Commissioning Speaker.

In the early 90's a group of citizens led by Sheila McNeill and John Crouse, community leaders, retired military folks, elected officials and base leadership banded together for a common goal and fantastic vision of establishing what we have today. This has been an amazing 30-year partnership between the City of St. Marys and the Museum. Our Museum has been a vital resource for our community and the Kings Bay Submarine Base, offering programs and services that enrich the lives of our residents, visitors, veterans and our active duty Sailors, Marines and Coast Guardsmen that call Camden County home during their time of duty here.

Built on the success of that partnership and the generosity of City Leadership, we are moving to a new location in the center of St. Marys. We will be next to what is becoming the new City Hall complex and Senior Citizen Center. This will double the size of our current location affording us the opportunity to grow and expand exhibits, display artifacts currently in storage, have plenty of parking, and be closer to the Submarine Base and Interstate 95.

We have engaged the services of an architect to design the facility and to assist in selecting a General Contractor to create and construct the new space in this 9000 square foot warehouse area.

***We invite you to be part of this effort by becoming a Plankowner of the new Building and help make a difference in our community. Your support is crucial to helping us achieve our goal. Enclosed you will find more information about our project and how you can contribute.***

Thank you for considering our request and together we can build a brighter future for our community while saluting the Silent Service. For any questions or further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your time.

William A. Carriera, President  
Board of Directors

Brenda Spencer, Chairperson  
Capital Campaign Committee

Keith F. Post, STSCS(SS)(USN-Ret)  
Executive Director



SUBMARINE MUSEUM ST. MARYS, GA. CONCEPT SKETCH



## BECOME A PART OF HISTORY HERE IN ST. MARYS!

We invite you to become a Plankowner of the new ST. MARYS SUBMARINE MUSEUM. Please fill out this form and send it with your donation to the Museum, or call us at 912-882-ASUB(2782) to make a donation over the phone. We appreciate your support!

### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN DONATION FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

### DONATION LEVELS

Plankowner Certificates will be issued in the following levels for those who donate the minimum or more in the respective category. Certificates will be issued following the ribbon cutting of the new Museum, tentatively set for November 2026. All donations of any kind and size are welcome!



**Turtle - \$100**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_



**WWII Fleet Boat - \$500**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_



**USS NAUTILUS - \$1000**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_



**USS VIRGINIA - \$5000**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_



**USS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - \$10,000**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_

**Other Amount:**

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ . \_\_\_\_\_

Direct donations with a credit card call 912-882-2782 or by check mail to:

**St. Marys Submarine Museum**  
**ATTN: CAPITAL CAMPAIGN**  
 Post Office Box #5640  
 St. Marys, GA 31558-5640

The St. Marys Submarine Museum is a 501C3 non-profit entity.  
 All donations are tax deductible as allowed by law. Our EIN is 58-2179402.

## USS Thresher I (SS-200) 1940-1947

I first looked at the USS Thresher I (SS-200) because she was launched in the month of March. However, reading about her fifteen war patrols, I realized she provided an excellent snapshot of submarine service in the Pacific during WWII. *Thresher* was operating out of Pearl Harbor when war began in the Pacific on 07Dec41 and when it ended on 15Aug45. Her war patrols provide an amazing summary of the myriads of activities that American submarines experienced during that war.

*Thresher* was laid down on 27Apr39 and launched on 27Mar40 from Electric Boat, Groton, CT. She was commissioned on 21Aug40. *Thresher* was a Tambor-class submarine displacing 1,475-ton surfaced with a maximum speed of 20-knot (kt) and 2,370-ton submerged with a speed of 8.7-kt. The ship was 307-feet (ft) long with a beam of 27-ft and draft of 15-ft. Her electric-drive propulsion system was provided by 4-General Electric 1,375-shaft-horse-power motors with two motors paired through a reduction gear to each of the twin shafts. Four General Motors 1,535 brake-horse-power diesel generators provided electric power.

After completing her engineering trials and shakedown cruise under the command of LCDR William L. Anderson, *Thresher* operated along the east coast until May41. She then transited the Panama Canal and arrived at Pearl Harbor on 31May41.

Accompanied by her sistership Tautog (SS-198), *Thresher* left Pearl Harbor on 21Oct41, with fully armed torpedo warheads for a simulated war patrol near Midway. On 07Dec41, she received a message that Pearl Harbor was under attack and to begin her first war patrol. While returning to port, on 06Dec, a rogue wave slamming into the ship had gravely injured Sea2c William D. Grover. LCDR Anderson had arranged to drop the seaman off at Pearl before commencing their war patrol. Surfacing to rendezvous with the escort ship, she came under fire by an American mine sweeper (DM-15) and had to dive. *Thresher* successfully entered the harbor the next day, but Sea2c Grover died before she docked.

She left Pearl Harbor enroute to the Mariana Islands, on 30Dec41, for her 2nd war patrol. After damaging a small freighter off Guam on 04Feb, she moved north to an area between Rota and Tinian Islands for the last few days of her patrol. While returning to Pearl Harbor, she evaded an attack by a USN plane and arrived, undamaged, at Pearl Harbor on 26Feb42.

After an extensive refit, she departed Pearl Harbor on 23Mar42 for her 3rd war patrol for an area near Japan's home islands. During this patrol, she collected meteorological data to support the launch of the Doolittle B-25 squadron from the USS Hornet (CV-8). In addition, she provided an advance screen for the *Hornet* task force looking for any enemy craft that could potentially spot the bombers flying overhead and warn of the bombing raid. Continuing her patrol, *Thresher* missed one freighter and sunk a second. Subsequently, she experienced a loss of depth control casualty during a depth-charge attack. Three days later while recharging batteries, *Thresher* took a high wave over the conning tower resulting in multiple short circuits and water in the battery well.

On her 4<sup>th</sup> patrol off the Marshall Islands, after sinking a tanker, she suffered 3-hours of depth charging and bombing from Japanese vessels and airplanes. A few days later, after sinking a Japanese tender, she found herself under both a depth charge attack and a Japanese attempt to capture her with a large grapnel hook. Several minutes of high-speed maneuvers cleared her from the hook, but she then had to survive more than thirty depth charges. A few days later, she attacked a Japanese "Q"-ship off Ambon. The two torpedoes, she fired at the ship failed to detonate resulting in her receiving an 8-depth charge pattern from the "Q"-ship. *Thresher* finally completed this patrol, on 15Aug42, in Fremantle, Australia.

Following refit, she began her 5th war patrol on 19Sep42. During this patrol, she completed one of the first mine plants by a submarine in the Pacific war. This occurred in the Gulf of Siam. Subsequently, in the Java Sea, using her deck guns, she sank a Japanese tanker that was aground on a reef near Kapoposang Island.

*Thresher* left Fremantle for her 6<sup>th</sup> war patrol, on 16Dec42. She slipped into a convoy of freighters, which were escorted by two destroyers and multiple submarine chasers. From within the convoy, she

launched five torpedoes toward the three leading freighters, sinking one and damaging a second. She escaped undetected. Four days later, on 29Dec, she fired a spread of torpedoes at a freighter with no success. When the freighter subsequently tried to ram her, she outmaneuvered the ship and scored multiple hits with her 5-inch deck gun. This attack left the freighter dead in the water allowing *Thresher* to sink her with a single torpedo.

After a fifteen-day refit, *Thresher* began her 7<sup>th</sup> war patrol from Fremantle on 25Jan43. Off Java, she unsuccessfully launched two torpedoes at a Japanese I-Class submarine. On 17Feb43, *Thresher* photographed docks, phosphate-loading areas, and gun emplacements in Flying Fish Cove, Christmas Island. She attacked two escorted troop transports in the Flores Sea, on 21Feb43, sinking both and survived thirteen-depth charges. After sinking another tanker on 02Mar, she returned to Fremantle on 10Mar43.

*Thresher's* 8<sup>th</sup> war patrol (04Apr-23May43) was uneventful and unsuccessful. Using radar for a surface attack on 30Jun43, during her 9<sup>th</sup> war patrol, she avoided an escort destroyer and sunk a 5,300-ton freighter.

– **Note:** When subs began being refitted with more effective radar systems, nighttime surface attacks became the primary approach method among the more aggressive CO's for the remainder of the war.

This same patrol, *Thresher* delivered 500-pounds of stores and 40,000 rounds of ammunition to Filipino guerrillas off Negros Island. She returned to Mare Island at the end of this patrol for a major overhaul.

Commencing her 10<sup>th</sup> war patrol from Pearl Harbor on 01Nov43, she sailed to the seas off the Carolina Islands. Although she tracked a 5-ship convoy for several hours and fired torpedoes at two different freighters, she failed to hit any targets this patrol and returned to Pearl on 30Nov.

She departed on 26Dec43 for her 11<sup>th</sup> patrol with a new CO, LCDR Duncan MacMillan. At 38, he was the oldest submarine CO at the time (his expertise in diesel engines resulted in his career being side-tracked after his 1939-40 XO tour). LCDR MacMillan contradicted the wide-spread belief that older CO's were too cautious to be successful submarine captains. On 15Jan44, *Thresher* tracked a 4-ship convey, with one escort, in the Luzan Straits for several hours. She surfaced and fired four torpedoes from stern tubes at one freighter and three torpedoes from bow tubes at another resulting in confirmed sinking of both. Subsequently, she survived a 20-depth charge attack. Eleven days later, *Thresher* attacked a small convoy and sunk two additional freighters. She ended this patrol at Pearl Harbor on 18Feb44.

On her 12<sup>th</sup> war patrol (18Mar – 08May45), she provided air-sea rescue during American carrier strikes on Truk Island.

*Thresher* participated in a 6-submarine wolfpack on her 13<sup>th</sup> war patrol in the Luzon Strait during which she was credited with sinking two freighters (7,700-tons.) She ended this patrol at Midway Island in late July.

She began her 14<sup>th</sup> war patrol from Midway Island on 23Aug44. Enroute to the East China Sea, she was battered by waves up to 50-feet high and experienced a 53-degree roll. Over a period of 9-days, conducting surface attacks, with radar, she sunk three freighters (9,200-tons.) This patrol ended at Pearl Harbor on 12Oct44.

*Thresher* began her 15<sup>th</sup> and final war patrol on 31Jan45. She had no success during this patrol encountering little activity off Luzon, Philippines. Although, she did successfully conduct a shore bombardment of Basco Harbor, Batan Island. This patrol ended at Pearl Harbor on 24Apr45.

Following a refit, *Thresher* provided target training services out of Pearl Harbor and Eniwetok until the war ended on 15Aug45. She left Pearl Harbor on 26Sep and arrived at San Francisco on 04Oct. Leaving on 31Oct, she transited the Panama Canal on 10Nov and reached Portsmouth, N.H. on 18Nov45. The *Thresher* was placed out of commission on 13Dec45. She was recommissioned on 06Feb46 to travel to Bikini Atoll for use as a target during atomic bomb testing. During refurbishment it was decided that she was beyond economical repair and work was stopped. The *Thresher* was decommissioned on 12Jul46; stricken from the Naval Register on 23Dec47; and, sold for scrap on 18Mar48.