

**USS HENRY L. STIMSON SSBN 655 Decommissioned
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard 5 May 1993**



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MAY 2026

USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER

Association Officers & Board of Directors 2025 - 2027

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HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN Larry [Linda] Knutson	WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER Nick [Linda] Nichols	CHAPLAIN Bruce [Vicki] Stefanik
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Here we see the unmarked graves of many sailors who never made it home. No flags. No ceremony. They gave all. Please remember them on Memorial day.



From the Association President - Jerry Blevins [LT(SS) B 76-79, USSVI Groton Base, Assoc Life Member]:

I want to congratulate Dick Young on the success of his years of effort and dogged determination. May 16 will be the

official grand opening of the USS Cincinnati (SSN-693) Peace Pavillon at the Voice of America (VOA) MetroPark in West Chester, OH.



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

Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them. Psalm 111.2

May is here. The trees with their new leaf-age have arrived. Flowers are popping up and life is good. May we share this with each other as we live through another time together.

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



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.

CWO3[SS] Brant 'Earl' Early ? 90-92 Chop
USSVI Cowtown Base
[updated by Bill Sanner]

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

4.17.26: Email from Elaine: Doc was admitted for the 3rd time this year on March 25 and discharged on April 7. He is on 24/7 oxygen. He continues to struggle with breathing whenever exerting any type of energy. Just going 2 or 3 feet is a struggle even with having oxygen. He is scheduled for an Ablation on May 21. This is usually an outpatient and also considered a low-risk operation.

However, with Doc's weakened condition this will be high risk and also involve at least an overnight stay in the hospital with the chance he might be in for 3-5 days. Hopefully this will help with his breathing problem although the doctor only gives it a 60% chance of helping. All prayers are greatly appreciated.

3.22.26: Email from Gretchen: from Elaine Dougherty: from Elaine: 'Doc' is Progressing slowly. Kidneys are back to normal. Liver taking a little longer but moving in the right direction. Doc is now able to take short walks but does get slightly tired but not out of breath. No swelling which is a good thing. He is on a low sodium diet with 64 oz of water/liquid allowed per day because of heart failure. Also, a low sodium diet which is taking him a while to get used to. Since the reunion he has lost almost 30 lbs. Next up is a nuclear test and possible scheduling of an ablation for the Afib.

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

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

No Recent Updates

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.
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

NO RECENT UPDATES

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

NO RECENT UPDATES

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

4.14.26: Email from Vicki: I had an excellent 6 week post-op with my surgeon yesterday. He is very happy with my progress. Thanks for all the prayers. Bruce is doing great. He was a wonderful nurse even setting his alarm for 3 am to make sure I took my pain meds. He doesn't see his neurologist until going to ALS clinic in October. We will know more then.

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

No Recent Updates

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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Before you pay for a TV repair or buy a new one, try this. Unplug your TV completely from the wall. Use the actual power cord. Wait a full 60 seconds. Then hold the power button on the TV itself, not the remote, for 30 seconds while it's still unplugged. Then plug it back in. This forces a full capacitor drain and hard reset that the on-screen restart option never actually does. It fixes frozen screens, dead pixels, audio sync issues, and apps that stopped loading. TV repair technicians call it a "hard discharge."

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3-second tech genius: Google Maps lets you download an entire city to your phone, so it works with zero internet. Open the app, search a city, tap the three dots in the top right, hit Download offline map. Road trips, international travel, dead

zones on the highway. Your maps still work. Your directions still work. The \$15-a-day international data plan does not spark joy. This does.

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3-second tech genius: Most routers broadcast two networks, 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz. Some devices default to 2.4 GHz because it has a longer range. But if you're in the same room as your router, 5 GHz is a ton faster with less interference. In your Wi-Fi settings, look for your network name with a 5G label and switch. Same password usually. No joke, your ping will drop, and your download speed will shoot up.

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Your camera roll is full of duplicates: Every time you edit a photo on iPhone, it saves the original AND the edit. Silently. For years. **Open the Photos app > Collections > Utilities > Duplicates > Merge.** Most folks find hundreds and free up GBs instantly. **Android?** Path varies, but try the **Gallery app > Menu > Clean out > Delete duplicate pictures.**

GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH

655 Association Website
www.ssb655.org

Submitted by James Gutierrez [LTJG G Comm 66-67 Plank]

American manufacturing vs German precise engineering

When German engineers examined a captured Sherman, disbelief turned to respect. They found no flaws — only precision mass production beyond anything Germany could achieve. For the first time, they understood why the Allies could fight everywhere at once. It wasn't just about tanks — it was about industry, logistics, and endurance.

[View Video](#)

The Lean Submariner

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

<https://theleansubmariner.com/>

Cold War Stories – That's a tall bomb you got there; does it work?

By **Mister Mac** on April 3, 2026

Like many people in America recently, I have been following the televised reports of bombings in Iran.

To be clear, Iran has brought the attention on itself over the course of the last 47 years by being a less than desirable neighbor. Since the radical islamists took over their country, they have killed too many citizens of every one of their neighbors, their own country and of course Americans. I am fully aware of the meddling that our country did in the early nineteen fifties, but the bloodthirsty regimes that took over in 1979 have far surpassed anything that may or may not have transpired generations ago.

But like all despotic regimes, force has been used to curtail their path forward towards developing nuclear weapons.

Or has it been curtailed?

During the early days of the Cold War, the armed forces of the US and other countries began assessing how successful their efforts were. We know for a fact that a combination of air, land and sea forces combined knocked the Germans out of the war. Herculean efforts and tremendous human sacrifice finally brought the Nazi regime to an end. Even as the war ended, serious questions came up about how well strategic bombing had met its goals.

[Read BLOG here](#)

Cold War Stories: Submarines: Past, Present And Future Of Silent Service (1962)

By **Mister Mac** on April 18, 2026

In April of 1962, I had not even turned ten years old. But I already had a fascination with submarines

But I was conscious of many of the things that were going on in the world. I read every book I could find in the library about the wars that came earlier in the century. In school, we drilled to prepare in case an atomic war came to our shores. I remember the desks that we all crawled under in some vain hope that the desks would protect us from flying nuclear debris.

As I would get older, I would follow with interest the loss of the Thresher and later the Scorpion. The newspaper headlines from the days of the Thresher must have been a tremendous shock to the country. I didn't know it at the time, but my Uncle Jack was an engineer with Westinghouse

and had been involved with both the Nautilus and the follow-on submarines.

But in 1962, the submarine service was still riding pretty high. The boats being built were faster and had more capabilities than any previous generation. The safety record was impeccable. Other navies struggled to just keep up with our development and any talk of the navy being second to any service was just simply bone-headed.

Every April is submarine month.

[Read BLOG here](#)

Cold War Stories: Navy Believes Destroyers Our Best Defense Against Soviet Submarine Threat (1961)

By **Mister Mac** on April 21, 2026

Before I joined the navy in 1972, my high school band was invited to participate in a parade in Norfolk Virginia.

Part of the trip included a trip to the Norfolk naval base. I will readily admit that most of the trip was focused on social events and spending time with the girl I was determined to marry when I got out of high school.

But we did get to tour the naval air station and later the actual naval station where a large number of ships were tied up. I'm fairly certain that seeing all of that hardware helped me to make a decision to sign up and set a new course for my life. There is a place on the base called the D&S piers. (To the untrained reader, that stands for Destroyers and Submarines). There were not that many submarines in the "S" part of the piers but there were a lot of destroyers. In 1972, the ones we saw would have been pretty common for their day. All were a mix of missile and gun carrying ships.

A few months later, I began my training on being a sailor and was given a book called the Blue Jackets Manual.

[Read BLOG here](#)

Cold War Stories – Periscopes off our Coasts: 1954

By **Mister Mac** on April 22, 2026

Did you ever get that feeling like someone is watching you?

No, I'm not talking about that natural paranoia some people feel in this modern age of electronic

snooping. Although we do have some reason for concern. After all, if you have a smart phone, how many times has something you have been discussing with someone suddenly showed up on your device in the form of an ad or article. You hadn't searched for the subject in any search engine. It just shows up like an unwanted relative at a Christmas party.

Well, in the beginning of the Cold War, we had many such intrusions. Sometimes those intrusions came from people on either side who sympathized with the philosophy or intent of the opposite side. The newspapers of the time were filled with stories about Russian spies who were citizens or recent emigres that fed information to the USSR. We were not innocent angels either. A healthy CIA program spread agents all across the globe in order to obtain knowledge and information that would give us an advantage on the world stage.

So, it should not have shocked anyone that using submarines to gather information would be a powerful tool. Up until the second world war, the USSR was limited in their blue water capabilities. The former enemy of the USSR, Germany, certainly had mastered the use of submarines in a global sense. Their later model submarines were technically advanced and could do extensive damage to a fleet or commerce. It took a tremendous effort to defeat them and frankly, without having access to their secret codes, defeating the newer type submarines would have been even more challenging.

By 1954, the unspoken presence was becoming more well known

[Read BLOG here](#)

Eyewitness to history: Who was Elton C. Fay?

By **Mister Mac** on April 22, 2026

Elton C. Fay, was an Associated Press reporter who covered the Pentagon from the days of World War II to the Vietnam War. His death was recorded in a common obituary and stated that he died at his Silver Spring, Md., home after a long illness. He was 81. (September 1, 1982)

I originally got interested about him when I found the article below about the hectic days before the Nautilus was completed. But the more I researched, the more I realized what an interesting life he had. There is not much available about his private life other than some social

events recorded in the newspaper archives. But it was his work with the military that made him such an interesting person.

[Read 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 Secure Boot security certificate expires in June – Are you Ready?

Welcome back, Shipmates! This month we will look into Secure Boot and an important event coming our way in June.

So, what is Secure Boot you might ask? Microsoft provides this definition: “Secure boot is a security standard developed by members of the PC industry to help make sure that a device boots using only software that is trusted by the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM). When the PC starts, the firmware checks the signature of each piece of boot software, including UEFI firmware drivers (also known as Option ROMs), EFI applications, and the operating system. If the signatures are valid, the PC boots, and the firmware gives control to the operating system.” It was first introduced with Windows 8 in 2011, and unless you tinker with your BIOS settings, you probably never noticed it was there.

Digital certificates are stored in the PC hardware and in this case are now 15 years old and expiring. So now they need to be updated to ensure that Secure Boot remains active and safeguarding your PC at boot time.

The following articles provide the information you need to make sure you are ready:

These articles contain information from Microsoft:

[Windows Secure Boot certificate expiration and CA updates](#)

[When Secure Boot certificates expire on Windows devices](#)

This article is from Makeuseof.com:

[A major Windows security certificate expires in June — check if your PC is ready](#)

You might want to run the quick process described in the paragraph “How to check if your PC is ready right now” in the article link above to see your Secure Boot status.

Another reason to run Windows Update regularly to make sure we are as protected as we can be.

As always, shipmates, comments and suggestions for future topics are welcomed. Contact me at subvet_ssbnet@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]**

What Are AI Scams? A Guide for Older Adults

Greetings shipmates! By now we have all experienced the constant stream of phishing e-mails, the instant messages that arrive unsolicited, and much more. In the early days of these attacks, we developed our own defenses to avoid getting scammed. This was primarily through detection of tell-tale clues left by the scammer. These included the use of poor grammar, unusual sender addresses or phone numbers, unexpected pop-ups on our PC screens, and outrageous demands or charges meant to scare us. And then there are the phone calls... But we learned to detect this and did our best to stay safe.

However, as the digital world we live in has rapidly embraced AI-technology, the game has changed. Grammar is nearly spotless and believable, images have become accurate and error free and much more.

Voice cloning makes the caller more believable. The following article describes things you should be aware of to keep your defense strong and hopefully prevent you from getting scammed by these new methods:

[What Are AI Scams? A Guide for Older Adults](#)

Veterans whose service made an existing condition worse. You may qualify for VA disability benefits for physical conditions (like a chronic illness or injury) and mental health conditions (like PTSD) that developed before, during, or after service. Find out how to apply for and manage the Veterans disability benefits you've earned.

VA Disability Compensation | Veterans Affairs

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VA education and training benefits

VA education benefits help Veterans, service members, and their qualified family members with needs like paying college tuition, finding the right school or training program, and getting career counseling. Learn how to apply for and manage the education and training benefits you've earned.

VA Education And Training Benefits | Veterans Affairs

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VA life insurance

VA life insurance can offer financial security for Veterans, service members, and their spouses and dependent children. Explore your options, manage your policy, and file claims to get the insurance benefits you've earned.

VA Life Insurance | Veterans Affairs

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5 exercises for balance

Strengthen your legs and hips with balance training exercises from a VA physical therapist.

Watch this video to get started at home

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VA resources for women's health

Women are the fastest-growing group of Veterans. Find the information you need about conditions and treatments specific to women.

Learn more about women's health on the Veterans Health Library

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DO YOU KNOW ABOUT VA HEALTH CONNECT?

This YouTube short explains how VA Health Connect allows you to speak with a nurse to determine the right course of action for non-emergency medical services. It is available 24/7 nationwide, and Veterans enrolled in VA health care automatically have access.

Watch

US Navy's Submarine Force Celebrates 126th Birthday

(STARS AND STRIPES 14 APR 26)

The U.S. Navy's Submarine Force celebrated its 126th anniversary on Sunday.

A birthday ball was held in Mashantucket, Conn., in the vicinity of Naval Submarine Base New London. General Dynamics subsidiary Electric Boat, a major submarine builder, is also headquartered in the area.

"If you can operate where others cannot, if you can see without being seen, if you can hold an adversary at risk without revealing yourself, you don't just participate in maritime warfare, you change it," said Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Daryl Caudle at the event.

Another ball will be held at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, Calif., on Saturday.

The origin of the force is dated to the Navy's purchase of the USS Holland on April 11, 1900, which was primarily used for experimental purposes. The U.S. deployed submarines to a limited extent in World War I, but they became a serious component of American maritime power from World War II onward.

Today's Submarine Force counts 69 submarines, all of which are nuclear-powered and 14 of which form the seaborne leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. The force continues to evolve: the Navy last week said it would decommission the long-idle submarine USS Boise, which had become a symbol of shipbuilding and maintenance dysfunction.

Earlier in the month, the White House proposed a \$1.5 trillion defense budget that called for the maintenance or increased procurement of "existing battle force platforms," with the priorities including amphibious assault vessels, Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines and Virginia-class attack submarines.

The request comes as China has built up its submarine fleet, though many of its new submarines use conventional fuel rather than nuclear power.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2026-04-14/submarine-force-126th-birthday-2026-21375949.html>

First Submarine Named After Massachusetts Joins The Navy Fleet

(ASSOCIATED PRESS 29 MAR 2026) ... Michael Casey

The USS Massachusetts officially joined the Navy fleet on Saturday after a commissioning ceremony, making it the first submarine named after the Bay State.

The newest Virginia-class fast attack submarine, which can dive to depths greater than 800 feet (240 meters), was christened on May 6, 2023, by the ship's sponsor, Sheryl Sandberg, the former COO of Meta. This is the 25th Virginia-Class submarine co-produced by General Dynamics Electric Boat and Newport News Shipbuilding and the fifth U.S. Navy vessel named after Massachusetts.

"To be able to take a ship from new construction and watch it be built together by the ship yard, train with our team and bring into Boston Harbor for the first time, it's very amazing," the sub's commanding officer, Mike Siedsma, a 21-year Navy veteran who has spent time on four different classes of submarines, said Friday ahead of the ceremony. "I looked at the history books. I don't think we've had a submarine in Boston Harbor since sometime in the late '80s or early '90s."

During Saturday's commission ceremony on the Boston Harbor, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey said the event showcases the state's "deep ties to our nation's maritime and military history, and we are proud to see that legacy continue with this next generation of service."

"The commissioning of the USS Massachusetts is a proud moment for Massachusetts and our country, especially as we approach the 250th anniversary of our nation," she said. "This ship carries forward a long tradition of service and reflects the strength and dedication of the sailors who will serve aboard it."

Siedsma did not say where the sub — which cost over \$2.8 billion, weighs about 8,000 tons and can carry 24 Tomahawk cruise missiles — is headed. A U.S. submarine sank an Iranian warship off the coast of Sri Lanka earlier this month in the war with Iran.

"The geopolitical situation is very interesting," Siedsma said. "What is important to remember is what we are doing is proving the power of the United States Navy."

The crew of 147 also includes 39 women, 16 years after a ban on women serving on submarines was lifted. The USS New Jersey, which was commissioned in 2024, was the first sub designed and built with modifications for a gender-integrated crew.

"The ship is intentionally designed to be served on by both women and men. That is pretty exciting. Twenty five percent of this crew is female," Sandberg said. "Those sailors just don't inspire me. They inspire every little girl out there to believe that she could do anything."

This is the fifth Navy vessel named after the state. The first was the USS Massachusetts, a steamer built in 1845. The last was USS Massachusetts, BB 59, commissioned in 1942 as a South Dakota-class fast battleship. Most of its time was spent in the Pacific during World War II.

For Sandberg, the commissioning also brought to mind the role the state has played in the founding of the United States and how "people are still fighting for the same freedoms that the original colonists were fighting for."

Reporters touring the sub on Friday were led past the control room, down into the torpedo room and into the dining hall. The ward room, where officers eat, also features a mug rack featuring wood from counties in Massachusetts. It was donated by "This Old House," the television home improvement show.

"It was an incredible donation. Very great connection to the state and the commonwealth," Siedsma said. "It's beautiful."

<https://apnews.com/article/uss-massachusetts-navy-boston-commissioned-e1f22f74d0ba90fb5a3557b62fb409ee>

Another Virginia-Class Submarine Enters Service With Commissioning Of USS Idaho (STARS AND STRIPES 25 APR 26)

The USS Idaho was commissioned in a ceremony at Naval Submarine Base New London, Conn., on Saturday. It is the 26th Virginia-class fast-attack submarine to be delivered to the service.

Although the submarine is the fifth Navy ship to be named for the state of Idaho, its commissioning comes over a century after that of the most recent naval vessel to carry the name, according to a Navy news release. The last Navy

ship named Idaho was a New Mexico-class battleship commissioned in 1919.

The ceremony was attended by Idaho's governor and one of its senators, as well as Connecticut Sen. Richard Blumenthal, Navy Adm. William Houston, the president of Electric Boat and Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao, among others. The service's acting leader formally placed the ship in active service. Cao assumed the position on Wednesday after John Phelan left the role.

The ceremony comes as the Pentagon proposes a substantial increase in the Navy's budget for the 2027 fiscal year, much of which is aimed at shipbuilding. The proposal includes full funding for two Virginia-class nuclear fast attack submarines and advance procurement for another four submarines.

The ceremony also came about a month after the commissioning of another Virginia-class submarine, the USS Massachusetts. It is the first submarine to be named for the state.

USS Idaho was co-produced by General Dynamics Electric Boat and HII-Newport News Shipbuilding. The submarine is 377 feet long and weighs about 7,800 tons.

<https://www.stripes.com/branches/navy/2026-04-25/uss-idaho-submarine-commissioning-ceremony-21484502.html>

The Seaside Town Trying To Reclaim Its Title As 'Submarine Capital Of The World' Groton, Conn., suffered after Cold War military spending dried up 30 years ago. It's being asked to deliver again.

(WALL STREET JOURNAL 18 APR 26) ... Owen Tucker-Smith

Thirty-five years ago, the end of the Cold War drained this hardscrabble coastal manufacturing town of its chief purpose: building America's submarines. Now the Navy needs the shipyard along the Thames River to rev its engines back into high gear.

The military's orders have left Groton with a high-stakes challenge: how to resurrect a bygone era of military might in a far-flung seaside town short on workers, homes and transit.

"It's amazing," said Martha Marx, a state senator, of the potential impact of the hiring push. "Except we don't have anywhere for these people

to live."

In its race against China's advances in maritime technology, the Defense Department is focused on upgrading its nuclear-submarine fleet, and it is the job of Groton-based manufacturer General Dynamics Electric Boat and a slew of local suppliers to keep up. After a string of delays, the Navy recently added \$16 billion in funding for Electric Boat to continue work on new submarines, stressing that timely construction is its top priority.

Electric Boat President Mark Rayha needs a workforce to match that demand. He told employees in a February memo that the contractor wanted to hire 8,000 workers by the year's end in Connecticut and another plant in Quonset Point, R.I.

The company is confident in its ability to find workers, Rayha said in an interview, adding that Electric Boat had received tens of thousands of applications in the past three years. A hiring event one recent weekend, at which the company made spot offers to Electric Boat hopefuls, drew a line around the building.

"The term we're using around here is 'wartime footing': doing all it takes to build submarines quickly," he said.

Groton's fortunes have for generations been tied to the nation's maritime ambitions. Electric Boat hired thousands of workers during the Cold War. Some, like Peter Baker, are still with the company, and they remember the days when droves of workers would spill out of the shipyard and fill the Gatehouse Tavern, a rustic shack across the street, where pre-filled pints of beer lined the bar waiting for them.

Then the Berlin Wall fell, Navy funds dwindled, budget cuts hit and the tavern emptied out. "All we had to do was throw a couple tumbleweeds in there and we would've had a ghost town," Baker said. Two local casinos—Foxwoods and the Mohegan Sun—mass hired, and Connecticut's manufacturing powerhouse morphed into a service economy.

Electric Boat's head count has steadily climbed over the past decade after the government in 2010 approved plans to build two nuclear-powered submarines a year. Production has ramped up at other facilities, specifically in Virginia and Rhode Island, but Groton has

remained the so-called Submarine Capital of the World.

The company fell behind its goals during the pandemic. Now it's playing catch-up, and the federal government is eagerly waiting. The prospect of 8,000 new jobs in just a year represents a dramatic acceleration of Electric Boat's expansion goals.

The company's recruiters are drawing from a shrinking pool. Connecticut's labor force is smaller than it was just before the pandemic, according to labor-department data, even as workforces in other New England states have grown. When Baker joined Electric Boat in 1983 as a firefighter, the state's median age was just below 33. Now it's 41.

Adding to the challenge is that Electric Boat went years without aggressively hiring, so the company's staff is mostly a mix of seniors and newcomers, Baker said. The shipyard's attrition of veteran staff means recruiters have to hire just to keep the company from shrinking, though Rayha said the company's attrition rate has dropped in recent years.

Groton is also isolated from the state's major transportation lines and limited by a declining population. Since its heyday in the '80s, the area's demographics have transformed: There are more households but fewer children, so shrinking families and the elderly are increasingly competing for a diminishing stock of small homes. More than 80% of the town's workers commute from surrounding areas, sometimes spending hours on the road while paying increasingly burdensome gas prices.

Officials in New London County, concerned about the area's housing and labor shortage, have increased programs that train adults and high-schoolers alike for the trade, while studying how the region can accelerate the construction of new homes.

Now, they need to do all of that even faster.

"If any of those pieces start to fall behind, it impacts our ability to meet our submarine production goals," said André Bumgardner, a state representative from Groton. "And the U.S. Navy has been very clear about that." Connecticut is betting on short-term training courses to fill the jobs, spending millions of dollars on no-cost classes in blueprint reading,

equipment usage, math, painting, welding and other tasks. The program has trained most of Electric Boat's new Connecticut trade hires in the past few years, said Michael Nogelo, chief executive of the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board. But it hasn't been able to meet the demand.

"Finding that number of people during a heavy hiring period is a challenge," Nogelo said. The program has looked to far-off cities like New Haven and Hartford in the hopes of training more workers. But those recruits then need to decide whether to make the cross-state trek to work or relocate; the latter option means staring down bidding wars, pricey homes and high rents. Area houses "became out of reach for a lot of people, really fast," said Jeff Davis of Horsley Witten Group, a consulting firm that Groton has hired to help tackle the housing shortage. The firm will soon present the town with its recommendations, which Davis said could include a proposal to allow the division of the town's outdated, sprawling lots into several "child lots," that include smaller units.

Just down the street from the shipyard, Groton resident Autumn Gardiner rents an apartment that she would love to pass off to a new Electric Boat employee after she buys a home. But after more than 10 failed bids of her own—and one heartfelt, pleading letter addressed to a seller—she has sworn off her own search for now.

Gardiner, 49, thinks the hiring push will be good for the local economy, but newcomers will face a tough housing market. "I wish them luck."

Stuck-in-place renters like Gardiner mean fewer rental opportunities for new Electric Boat employees like Joseph Pena Reyes, who was hired last summer to paint submarines the size of football fields and participated in the region's training program.

Growing up in Connecticut, Reyes used to look across the water at Electric Boat's operation when he was fishing, wondering what went on inside. Now, the 23-year-old gets to climb into the crevices of unpainted submarines. But he still can't live in Groton. Reyes, who lives in nearby New London, loves his job, but he wonders what will happen to the already squeezed market when the new hires come to town.

"8,000 people...it's just crazy," Reyes said.

“Finding a place to live is going to be really hard for a lot of people.”

Baker, 42 years Reyes’s senior at the company, hopes there is enough time for Electric Boat’s senior shipyard workers to train the ballooning crew of novices before they retire. But he knows the town, and its sagging economy, needs them. When he walked into the Gatehouse Tavern by the shipyard just before 5 p.m. on a recent Monday, the place was empty.

Baker sat at the bar with the former owner’s son, Shawn Arsenault, near the tavern’s dusty dart boards and outdated signage (“As of April 1, 2004,” one notice reads, “this establishment will be No Smoking”). The two men wondered aloud what thousands of new submarine builders would mean for Thames Street, once a bustling downtown and now a row of vacant storefronts.

As far as Arsenault’s concerned, the hiring boom can’t come soon enough. “They want these submarines yesterday,” he said. “Bring it on.”

<https://www.wsj.com/us-news/the-seaside-town-trying-to-reclaim-its-title-as-submarine-capital-of-the-world-60e23981?msocid=240778a2b8d7651e09636ddfb9476412>

‘Heavy Lift’ To Field First Columbia-Class Sub By 2028

(*NATIONAL DEFENSE MAGAZINE* 20 APR 26) ... Josh Luckenbaugh

The Navy has set a goal of fielding the first of its Columbia-class ballistic missile submarines by 2028, but doing so will be an enormous challenge, the service’s new manager of submarine programs said April 20.

The Columbia class will replace the Navy’s current fleet of Ohio-class submarines as the sea-based leg of the U.S. nuclear triad. Fielding the first Columbia-class boat by 2028 is an “all-hands-on-deck effort,” and it is “going to be a heavy lift,” said Vice Adm. Robert Gaucher, direct reporting portfolio manager submarines and program acquisition executive undersea.

Gaucher, who assumed his new roles in February, is also responsible for the Navy’s Virginia-class attack submarines and the U.S. contribution to the AUKUS agreement to help Australia acquire nuclear-powered subs. But he made it clear during a panel at the Navy League’s

Sea-Air-Space conference that the “priority is the Columbia class, without a doubt, unequivocally.”

“We have got to think, act and operate differently in order to get that ship deployed and out there operating,” he said. “We’ve got to get through all the first of class — I won’t call them hiccups — but there’s going to be things we learn, because we’ve never operated it before.”

While the Navy is doing all it can to deliver the first Columbia-class boat by 2028, “we will not do that at the expense of the class,” he said, “because I think even more important than getting the first ship out is getting on a one per year cadence.”

Along with the submarine itself, the Navy will need to bring online new training systems and maintenance facilities, he said. “And for a period, we’re going to have to operate Ohio maintenance and Columbia maintenance. So, that will be additional challenges.”

The service is also looking into life extension measures for the Ohio class, Gaucher said.

“We want to build that resiliency and build that margin now,” he said. “How do we make sure that we’re doing the proper unrestricted operations maintenance, the proper preventive maintenance now and the discovery now, so when we have to make those decisions in a decade, ideally, we’re saying we got Columbia fixed and everything’s out on time? But if it’s not, we have some trade space there.”

Vice Adm. Rick Seif, submarine forces commander, said the Ohio-class boats — the first of which was commissioned in 1981 — are “American classics.”

“These are very well-built submarines,” Seif said during the panel. “We have a very mature maintenance model. These are very well-maintained submarines, and we have incredible training and incredible crews.”

“The real asymmetric advantage, the thing that any adversary has no answer for and nothing would ever compare to, is the training and just the quality of our sailors and the quality of integrated training we provide,” he said. “You can rest assured that your SSBN force, your strategic deterrent force, is at sea today, delivering that credible deterrence, and we will into the future.”

Meanwhile, the Trident ballistic missiles that the Ohio class currently carries and the Columbia

class will bear are undergoing their second life extension, said Kelly Lee, director of plans and programs at the Navy's Strategic Systems Programs.

This life extension effort is more extensive than the first one, involving a lot more components, Lee said. The program recently completed Milestone B and is now in its engineering and manufacturing development phase, she added.

Using modern technology, the Navy will be able to insert capability more quickly into the weapons system and increase flexibility and adaptability to address emerging threats, she said.

The service is also developing a new warhead for the Trident system known as W93/Mk7 in partnership with the National Nuclear Security Administration, Lee said.

Scott Pappano, principal deputy administrator at the National Nuclear Security Administration, said NNSA let its nuclear weapons infrastructure degrade following the end of the Cold War, leaving it a "little bit behind the power curve."

"We have to go rebuild that capability for the 21st century," he said, bringing in modern design tools such as artificial intelligence and new materials to speed the manufacturing process.

"We can't have five and 10-year design cycles to go field weapons anymore, and we're driving that down," he added.

While fielding the Columbia class is his top priority, Gaucher said he gets "no relief" from the Navy's goal of fielding two Virginia-class boats per year, as well as the United States' AUKUS commitments.

"In some cases, they compete. In other cases, they don't compete, and you're able to push it forward," he said. "If you get this cadence right, then you can execute where you need to get to."

Improving that construction cadence will require growing the shipbuilding workforce, outsourcing parts of the assembly process to make it easier on the prime shipyards, and increasing visibility into the supply chain, Gaucher said.

"We have got to have better visibility well below the primes to understand where the bottlenecks are in advance," he said. "So, not looking at how did we do last week, [but] being able to see where am I in six months so you can actually take an action that will make a difference. And I think that's what we lack right now, where there's a

huge opportunity for us, and then that's what gets you the whole system working properly to be able to generate the hours you need to produce one [Columbia-class submarine] plus two [Virginia-class submarines] plus AUKUS."

<https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2026/4/20/heavy-lift-to-field-first-columbia-class-sub-by-2028>

Automatic Registration For Military Draft To Be Implemented By December

(STARS AND STRIPES 07 APR 26) ... Svetlana Shkolnikova

Automatic registration of men potentially eligible for the military draft will take effect by December, according to the government agency that maintains a database of who could be called up to serve in a crisis.

A proposed rule for the Selective Service System was submitted to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on March 30 as part of the process of implementing the change.

Most males between the ages of 18 and 25 are required to register with the Selective Service in the event that Congress and the president authorize conscription in response to a national emergency.

The new rule, mandated by defense policy legislation passed by Congress last year, will register men automatically rather than require them to register themselves within 30 days of their 18th birthdays. Late registration is allowed until a man reaches his 26th birthday.

Failure to register is considered a crime and can lead to disqualification from student loans, most federal jobs and U.S. citizenship for immigrants.

Lawmakers who championed automatic registration said it will cut government red tape and allow the agency, which spends millions of dollars reminding eligible men that registration is required by law, to save taxpayer money.

The Selective Service System said the change will result in a "streamlined registration process and corresponding workforce realignment," allowing the agency to transfer responsibility from individual men by pulling data from existing databases.

Registration rates for the draft have declined in recent years but remain high, according to the agency's most recent report to Congress. In 2024,

81% of eligible men registered — a slight decrease from the 84% of men who registered in 2023.

The strong compliance rate is driven by laws in 46 states and territories that automatically register men for the Selective Service when they obtain a driver's license, learner's permit or state identification card, according to the agency.

Women remain ineligible for the draft despite repeated legislative efforts to expand the registration requirement. In 2020, a commission appointed by Congress said including women, who became eligible for all combat jobs in 2016, would be a "necessary and fair step."

Lawmakers have been able to attach provisions adding women to the draft to various versions of annual defense policy bills in recent years, but the measures have all been scrapped before being put to a final vote.

The U.S. last activated the draft in 1973, near the end of the Vietnam War, and has since relied on an all-volunteer force. Former President Jimmy Carter reinstated the Selective Service registration requirement for men in 1980.

<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2026-04-07/automatic-registration-military-draft-21306855.html>

In May 1921, USS R-14's engines died while searching for the missing USS Conestoga. Hundreds of miles from land, no fuel, no radio, only a week's food. Lieutenant Alexander Dean Douglas and his crew stitched blankets, hammocks, and mattress covers into sails, rigged them to the periscope, and navigated by stars for five days. The submarine sailed 100 nautical miles to Hilo Harbor, Hawaii on May 15 — the only recorded U.S. submarine to sail under wind power.



There is a difference!

Armed Forces Day

The third Saturday of each May — Honors those **serv**ing.

Memorial Day

The last Monday of each May — Remembers those who **died while serv**ing.

Veterans Day

The 11th day of each November — Honors those who **serv**ed.



Submitted by Dick Young [SN(SS) G 69-71, Assoc. Life Member, SUBVET Cincinnati Base, Holland Club]

All Submariners in the Mid-West,

You are cordially invited to the Dedication Weekend of the Submarine Cincinnati Memorial which will take place during the weekend of May 15-17 at the Voice of America park just north of Cincinnati. The official dedication will be on Saturday May 16, time yet to be determined. This has been a 25 year project costing approximately \$10 Million. The memorial consists of an actual size (360 Ft) 688 class submarine using approximately 100 tons of the actual sub acquired from PSNSY in the state of Washington. These parts include the Sail, Upper Rudder, Diesel and Generator. We are starting off with a shell that you can walk under with various parts to be added such as a complete control room and maneuvering panels aft.

We have also built an Educational Building which will house a STEM-T (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math - Trades) program which will involve High Schools and local Universities. This building will also house memorabilia donated by the 693 crew. We will start with Kiosks in the sub that have a QR code to inform the public when Docents are not present, these will be eventually be replaced by AI interactive kiosks that will tailor the presentation to the age of the visitors. One unique feature will be the displays and site will be powered by Solar Cells (200 of them) that will also act as the upper hull. So this will be the only Nuclear, Battery, Diesel and Solar powered sub in the world!

You can visit our web site at www.subcincy.org for more information and to view our construction camera. If you assist us by donating our anonymous benefactor will match any donation up to \$500,000 until the dedication date. We are a 501(C)(3) entity and all donations are TAX DEDUCTABLE.

Thanks, Dick Young - Gold Crew 1970 usscincinnati693memorial@aol.com





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: _____

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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

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USS NAUTILUS - \$1000

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USS VIRGINIA - \$5000

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USS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA - \$10,000

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Other Amount:

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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.