

American Submariners Inc.
Silent Sentinel
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave
San Diego CA 92120-3404



Non-Profit Org.
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The Silent Sentinel

January 2008



Our Creed

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation towards greater accomplishment and patriotism to the United States of America

Contracts

defenselink.mil, 20 December 2007

Electric Boat Corp., Groton, Conn. is being awarded a \$132,026,873 modification to the previously awarded cost-plus-fixed-fee (with performance incentives) contract (N00024-05-C-2103) to exercise options for continuation of engineering efforts associated with their role as the Lead Construction Yard for Va. Class Submarines. The contract provides Lead (Construction) Yard engineering support that will maintain, update and support the Va. Class design and related drawings and data for each Va. Class submarine, including technology insertion, throughout its construction and Post Shakedown Availability (PSA) period. In addition, the contract provides Va. Class Development Studies and Design efforts. Work will be performed in Groton, Conn. (94 percent); Quonset, R.I. (5 percent); and Newport, R.I. (1 percent) and is expected to be completed by Sep. 2008. Contract funds will not expire at the end of the current fiscal year. The Naval Sea Systems Command is the contracting activity.

President [of Taiwan] again thanks U.S. for submarine sale

The China Post (Taiwan), 19 December 2007

KAOHSIUNG, Taiwan – President Chen Shui-bian again thanked the U.S. government yesterday for approving the sale of eight diesel-electric submarines to Taiwan. Chen made the remarks while addressing a celebration held at the Tsoying naval base in the southern port city of Kaohsiung to mark 20 years of service by two improved Zwaardvis-class submarines. Chen noted that the two Dutch-made submarines were delivered to Taiwan in 1987 and 1988, respectively, and commissioned at the Tsoying naval base. However, Taiwan was only able to acquire the vessels after numerous, almost unbelievable hardships, including a financial crisis facing the Dutch shipbuilder that drove it to the brink of bankruptcy and almost forced it to close down its production line, according to Chen.

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

Base Commander

Bob Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen Street
Spring Valley, CA 91977
(H) 619-644-8993
(CELL) 619-251-7095

Senior Vice Commander

Fred Fomby
11085 Avenida Del Gato
San Diego, CA 92126
(H) 858-578-1366
(CELL) 858-735-0026
mfomby@san.rr.com

Junior Vice Commander

Jim Bilka
310 E. Bradley Ave., Apt 42
El Cajon, CA
92021-8929
619-277-5758

Secretary

Manny Burciaga
MannyBurciaga@pointloma.edu

Membership -- Change of Address

Membership Book Editor

Ron Gorence
2563 Roseview Place
San Diego, CA 92105
Home--(619) 264-6995. Cell: (619) 264-3327
mgorence@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor

Mike HYMAN
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunessofwar.com

Base Storekeeper

Mike Hyman
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunessofwar.com

Chief of the Boat/Chaplain

CJ Glassford
(858) 483-7355

Treasurer

David Ball
davidball@cox.net
619-225-0304



The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from \$3700 to about \$1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

Robert Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen St.
Spring Valley, CA 91977-3748

USSVI Base Commander
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

Commander's Corner

Wishing that all of you had a Merry Christmas and that the New Year brings nothing but good health, financial success, and happiness.

8 Jan – E-board meeting at the VFW 6pm

8 Jan – Monthly meeting at the VFW 7pm

12 Jan - Satellite get-together at the HUB on Sub base at 10am

Bob Bissonnette

Do not Miss Movement!

All submittals for the next Silent Sentinel must be received by the date indicated on page four. Entries received after the due date will be printed in the following month's issue, space permitting.

Mike Hyman, Editor

SEE OR CALL MIKE HYMAN, 619-980-0846, FOR ALL YOUR SUBMARINE STORES NEEDS. ASK ABOUT THE SPECIAL OF THE MONTH. SHIPPING IS AVAILABLE FOR "ANY" SIZE ORDER. Mike

ALL INPUTS FOR THE FEBRUARY 2008 SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND BY THE 20TH OF JANUARY! IT HAS TO BE RECEIVED BY ME BY THIS DATE. I CANNOT ACCEPT SUBMITTALS FOR THE FEBRUARY ISSUE ANY LATER, SO GET THEM IN EARLY. MIKE

***Check us out on the World Wide Web
www.ussvisandiego.org***

January Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next one is on January 8th. The post is located one half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting starts promptly at 1900. The "E" Board meets one hour earlier (at 1800).

HAVE FUN AND HELP SUBVETS SAN DIEGO AT THE SAME TIME!

HELP COLLATE THE SILENT SENTINEL IN ORDER TO KEEP COSTS DOWN.

THE FEBRUARY 2008 EDITION ***SILENT SENTINEL COLLATE PARTY WILL BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 2nd, 0900, AT THE TWAIN AVENUE VFW.***

Chaplain's Report

On the Binnacle list are Joe McGriby, Mike Hyman, T. Michael Bircumshaw & Larry Freske These are the only members I know of at the present time. Please say a Prayer for their speedy recovery and return to good health.

I wish all a Merry Christmas and a very healthy and happy New Year--DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE!!!!

This concludes the Chaplain's Report. If you know of any one of our members or their families in need of assistance, Please call CJ at (858) 204 8323



“ SUBMARINE LOSSES “
“ DECEMBER “

SEALION (SS 195) - Duty Section on Board:
Severely Damaged, on 10 December 1941, by Two Bombs, During Japanese Air
Attacks, on Cavite Navy Yard, Philippine Islands. Later Scuttled on 25 December 1941 :
“ 4 MEN LOST “

SEADRAGON (SS 194) - Duty Section on Board:
Slightly Damaged, on 10 December 1941, by a Bomb, During Japanese Air
Attacks, on Cavite Navy Shipyard, in the Philippines :
“ 1 MAN LOST “

GRAMPUS * Later (A – 3) -
Main Engine Fuel Explosion, on 10 December 1910 :
“ 1 MAN LOST “

F – 1 (SS 20) - 19 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 16 December 1917, after Collision with USS F - 3 (SS 22), Off the
Coast of San Diego, California :
“ALL HANDS LOST “

S – 4 (SS 109) - 39 Men on Board:
Rammed and Sunk, on 17 December 1927, by Coast Guard Cutter Spaulding,
Off Provincetown, Massachusetts, * Later Salvaged:
“ALL HANDS LOST “

MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL ((SSN708) – 110 Men on Board:
Heavy Seas, on 29 Decemer 2006, Washed 4 Crewmen Overboard in Plymouth,
Sound England, while exiting Devonshire, England, on the Surface, After a Port of Call :
“ 2 MEN LOST “ – “ 2 MEN RESCUED “

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“ MAY THEIR SOULS REST IN PEACE “



Submitted by C J Glassford

The 2009 Convention Committee is looking for someone to coordinate Fundraising and sponsorships for the convention. Contact Mike Hacking: mrhacking@san.rr.com

Checking Account Balance @ 10/31/2007	\$ 3,178.98
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INCOME for NOVEMBER 2007

Scholarship Fund	5.00
Booster Club	50.00
50/50	58.00

Membership	532.00
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Scholarship Income for November	0.00
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Total Income for November (per Bank Stmt)	\$ 645.00
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EXPENSES for November 2007

July Silent Sentinel Mailing	47.00
September Breakfast Expense	164.00
September Breakfast Menu Sheets Expense	38.23
USSVI August / September Membership	155.00
November Silent Sentinel Printing / Mailing	200.00
USSVI October Membership	255.00
USSVI Annual Convention (for Base Cdr)	1,343.00
Flag Pole Carrying Belts for Parades (4)	133.40

Total Expenses for November (per Bank Stmt)	\$ 2,335.63
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Checking Account Balance @ 11/29/2007	\$ 1,488.35
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ASSETS

Base Checking (11/29/07)	\$ 1,488.35
Base Savings (11/29/07)	9,303.82
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Savings	195.00
Convention Account (11/30/07)	3,977.74

TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 14,769.91
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Minutes: Submarine Veterans Meeting of December 19, 2007

1900 Meeting of the Submarine vets of San Diego was called to order by the Base Commander. Introduction of former base commanders and special guests were conducted by Junior vice commander.

Base commander read our Creed, all hands came to attention for the Pledge of Allegiance. The Chaplin's prayer and Tolling of the Boats lost this month of December.

All Hands observed a moment of Silent Prayer.

It was noted the all Eboard members were present.

Secretary reported 25 members present and 1 visitor. It was noted that the notes for the last meeting have been published and if there are any questions on the notes we will answer any questions. No questions on the meeting notes and notes stand as published.

Chaplin: Binnacle list.

Joe McGrievy – In hospital, Joe fell in parking lot.

Mike Hyman – Mike us unable to see at night. If any one lives close to Mike he would like a ride.

Parade report.

C J presented Certificate of Appreciation to all the attendees who participated in the parade.

A Certificate of appreciation was presented to the Base.

Membership committee Chairperson report.

The base has Lost 7 members and gained 7 new members. Total membership stands at 333 members.

The payment of annual dues are scheduled to be paid by 31 December.

We presently have 69 sub sailors who want The Silent Sentinel delivered by email. We have a total of 198 members with email accounts.

To new members, if you did not get base patch please let me know.

Buzz Lee, who qualified in 1939 on the USS Nautilus, sent me a letter describing the Nautilus sinking a Japanese ship and information on the sinking of the USS Growler during WWII.

Scholarship committee.

The committee needs applications for children and or grandchildren of members to apply for scholarship funds. You can get additional information on The National Scholarship fund website on the internet. Base Scholarship funds are also covered on our website. A reminder that all applications must submitted by 01 April 2008.

2009 convention

committee chairperson Mike Hacking informed us that meetings are already being held and we need more participations and more committee members. Some things are just in need of people to take charge of doing these jobs. We need folks to volunteer for different jobs. On the website.... Link 2009 Convention has a basic schedule posted. We need to get coordinator... some input on side trips desired, such as padre game, zoo, tours to Sub Base, or a submarine tour. A dinner cruise.... The Town and Country Hotel will sponsor a welcome aboard party.

This information has been presented to scamp base, and we have some names, but we need additional volunteers to set up a budget.

Base Commander stated the due to holidays our next breakfast, March 30....

Nomination committee.. Charlie Marin

We need volunteers to run for offices that will be open next year.

positions open are: Senior Vice Commander. and Junior Vice Commander.

Unfinished business:

Dave Ball is still seeking bike donations for The San Diego Children Center.

Christmas party is this Saturday night. There will be a no host bar with dinner following, There will be door prizes and entertainment. We are trying to get a least 50 people for this party.

It was noted that a printer was donate to the organization by Point Loma Nazarene University.

1925 Base Commander call a Break for 50/50 drawing.

1935 Base Commander called to order:

New Business:

Base commander requested we return to Christmas party and a motion was made to donate 200 dollars for door prizes. Motion second and passed.

Mike Hyman is the newsletter editor, but Mike is very sick and needs help to publish the newsletter. We need some one to volunteer to help Mike and take some of the load. Jack Kane volunteered to assist Mike.

It was suggested by Eboard member that two 20 dollars poppy boards be purchased from the VFW. Poppy boards are done by veterans in VA hospitals and all the money goes into a fund for people in need, it cannot go to any organizations. A motion was made , second and the motion passed.

Good of the order:

CJ made a presentation for group suggesting we are fortune to have Joe McGrievy aboard. He read and old news report from his home town newspaper showing him receiving the Navy Silver Star crediting him in helping to sink 9 Japanese vessels.

VFW has reported that Submarine Patrol pins now makes you eligible to join the VFW. All you will need is a page 4 entry showing you patrol dates.

2000 meeting adjourned.

Sailing list:

RON GORENCE	DENNIS MORTENSEN
CJ GLASSFORD	RAY FERBRACHE
TOM POLEN	JIM TREGURTHA
MANNY BURCIAGA	BILL EARL
CHARLIE MARIN	DENNIS MCCREIGHT
DAVID BALL	
BOB BISSONNETTE	
JOE DUBOIS	
JOHN CAMERON	
BOB OBERTING	
ED FARLEY	
MIKE HACKING	
JOSEPH T. POWERS	
TOM WERNER	
JIM BILKA	
JACK KANE	
CHUCK BABCOCK	
BOB FARRELL	
JOE ACAY	
MATT BAUMANN	

Candidates for Base Offices

Senior Base Commander - C.J. Glassford

- Bill Earl

Junior Base Commander - Jim Bilka

Base Secretary - Manny Burciaga

Base Treasurer - Dave Ball

There will be another call for candidates at the January meeting. Voting for candidates will be conducted at the February meeting and installation of newly elected officers will be held at the March 2008 meeting.

Charlie Marin, Membership Chairman

More on the Menhaden

As I read Shipmate Jim Pope's USS Menhaden WestPac 57-58 "Sea Story" it brought back lots of memories about that trip and my Pub Crawl with Jim in Hawaii several years later. Anyway; back to that WestPac story. Jim left out the tale of a 1st Class Quatermaster (who shall remain Nameless to protect the guilty) so I thought it best to pass it on as a foot note to Jim's Sea Story We had just pulled into Yokosuka from a 90 day "Training Cruise" and we all hit the beach for fresh milk and other liquid refreshments and a hot bath at the Grand Palace. After about 2 or 3 days; it's still a little foggy in my mind from all that milk and other liquid refreshments, I made it back to the Boat with out falling overboard.

I was standing topside at the After Battery hatch trying to decide if I was able to go below without breaking my neck; when the Shore Patrol Truck arrived with the above mentioned QM1 in cuffs and somewhat out of uniform. The Shore Patrol requested that the Office of the Day sign for our QM1 and all the charges they had made for his less than statelier performance that night.

Our QM1 went below and got cleaned up and came back on deck in a clean Dress Uniform and with the OD's blessing he got the Shore Patrol to give him a ride back to town to finish what he had started several days before. The White Hat and Starlight Bars made a lot of money on that trip.

We also had another 1st class that made a name for himself in Mochizuki on that trip. Again he shall remain nameless to protect the guilty. I will refer to him as O.C. Anyway O.C. had a way of talking that reminded you of a Sumo Wrestler in looks but sounding like W.C. Fields. The fact that he was able to make it thru the hatch surprised everyone. This was in the days before the Navy had Physical Fitness test requiring us to do X number of Pull Ups, Push Ups Run a 50 yard dash etc.

I hope O.C. was able to retire before that came about as I am sure he would have had a heart attack trying to run. As for Pull ups he would have bent any pipe or vent handle that he may have tried to practice with.

O.C. Was some what of a prankster with an evil twist. AS an example at the end of WW2 He was sent to see the base personnel office to be reclassified. When the PN asked him what his job was on a submarine he told him he was a Hot Shellman on a 16inch gun. The PN being a nubile put that in his Service Record. Another thing he did that was a bit too much was to request a baked Alaska for his Birthday. The cook made it just right and present this to O.C., he took one bite and said yes that's a good Baked Alaska and dumped it in the Trash. That's why there was a dent in the door into the After Battery Berthing compartment from a meat cleaver.

Back to the 57-58 WestPac Trip. O.C, a Chief, and another 1st class got a room at one of the Hotels and proceeded to empty several bottles of liquid refreshments until O.C. passed out after taking a hot bath. Several days later The XO at morning quarters informed us that one our shipmates had distinguished himself above and beyond the call of duty + a lot of other glowing phrases. The XO presented O.C. with a Plaque, held up a picture of O.C. in his birthday suit. While he was passed out his 2 shipmates had paid 2 Ladies of the Night sit either knee of O.C. for the picture. The Chief presented O.C. with a Kimono that had been embroiled with = His Name Stud of The USS Menhaden

On our trip to New Castle Australia all the Polly Wogs became Shell backs and we all made it with out going thru the After Deck Garbage Bag; with one exception of a QM Striker that made it thru 2 times. Each time he was hosed off with a fire hose EN1 Charlie Chinn had ready, and its a good this he had hold of the hose because a rogue wave thru Charlie overboard and the fires hose a full blast and the wave put him right back on deck. that was really something to see. It all happened as fast he was back before we could yell man overboard.

Five days in New Castle was heven and worth not having the AC Blowers in the After Battery, they both were pulled when the Monerving Room blowers went. That was one rough time on the 30 days down and 30 days back. One of the Sonormen I stood watch with biched all the way to Austraila. When we got underway I asked him hope he felt about the trip now, he replied, I another 30 days in Hell for one more day in New Castle.

Another story about O.C. and his "Dark Side" While we were in the ship yard at hunters point we lived in the barracks up on the hill. We had the top side of the building and another boat was down below.

One of the young seamen on the other boat liked "Country & Western" and being a true "S - - T Kicker" he had to turn the volume up high; real high on his new High Fi counsel.

One evening this kid came back to the barracks after the evening meal and for some reason his Record Player would not work and the radio would not turn on. He checked the plug it was plugged in. So he pulled the back off this new unit. It was a real surprise to see what a pair of Dikes can do to wires inside a radio/phonograph.

O.C. had a smile on his face that night, and was there for several days until this same kid got a Guitar that he was played every night until O.C. Found it adrift and tried to make that Guitar into a snow shoe. I guess the moral of the story is do not try to sing to a Fat Boy from Brooklyn with Gene Autry songs.

Robert (Doc) Coates HMC(SS) USN RETIRED

Has the SD Base Left Town?

I am sitting here re-reading the November Silent Sentinel and I don't really know what has been happening with in the base meetings. The editor can only make a newsletter about the membership if the membership is willing to help out.

Outside of the standard items that the Editor puts in every issue of the newsletter, there was a picture of our Membership Book Editor getting his Holland Club Membership. Plus a directive about the upcoming Veterans Day Parade, by CJ. The rest of the issue was made up of items that the Editor seeks out and uses as fill in to make the newsletter come out to an even number of pages.

Surely something must have occurred somewhere in the time between last newsletter and the November issue that is worthy of a member of the Base to submit a little note to the Editor to keep the rest of the members informed as to what is going on around them.

Did some one run into your car that was parked in front of your house? Did a stranger stop you on the street and ask you where he could find a building that holds meetings for WWII Submariners, Cold War sailors, active duty sailors, or where in town is there a submarine base? I think any items such as these two could be a point of interest to a few members and worthy of getting into the newsletter.

The notice about "Newt" sailing on his last patrol is probably of interest to many of us, a lot of us knew Newt. This is a item of interest to all of us, much more so than "US. Military Technology Being Exported Illegally is a growing concern" or "Divers take the plunge." I think most of us would rather read what is going on in getting ready for a picnic, or Thanksgiving Dinner, or what about Christmas? *[Never say that I do not believe in free speech or say that I do not print what you guys submit on time--Mike Hyman]*

Surely some of us out there have a little joke or a little story to tell about when I was a seaman first class and first reported to my first submarine, I was at a loss as to where to go, or who to talk to, until the COB came up to me and said, "Get you butt up on topside and I will be right up there to put you to work".

Now that I got that off my chest, I would like to tell those who did not attend the last meeting, a little story I forced the attendee to listen to. I showed them my first submarine qualification badge. It was engraved by the CSN HUNLEY. Now they all know how old I am so maybe they will show me a bit of respect for my age.

Then I read them a piece about a Quartermaster Spy Glass. A tremendous amount of research went into this report, two and one quarter pages worth. It started when this Glass was first issued to the Commanding Officer of the USS Constitution. It has been with us ever since. Howard SMAY did a lot of research to get all the dates and ships to coincide with the story of the Long Glass. I am the owner and possessor of the long glass. A gift from Howard SMAY. Thank you, Howard. Of, course he gave it to me over two years ago. I just got around to telling the membership the story of the long glass. Very interesting.

I will cut this short, for the Holidays are upon me, and I know you are all busy making sure that you have all your presents lined up

I will try to do better in the next issue.

Joe McGrievy

A bittersweet tribute

Agent Orange victims recognized at last

By **JUSTO BAUTISTA**
STAFF WRITER

HACKENSACK – Navy Lt. Al Weigel wasn't thinking about Agent Orange in 1969, when he was discharged from the service.

Weigel just wanted to leave Vietnam, where he served on gunboats in the Mekong Delta, and get back to civilian life. He was in his mid-20s, 6-foot-4 and 200 pounds, with the attitude: "Agent Orange? Bull—."

These days, Weigel, 64, of Hackensack, has a hard time carrying grocery bags. He has diabetes, walks with a cane, has hear-

From Page L-1
America.

The award ceremony comes on the same day that a U.S. appeals court is scheduled to hear a lawsuit filed by the Vietnam Agent Orange Victims Association, which is seeking compensation from Agent Orange manufacturers.

Coincidentally, President Bush and Vietnamese President Nguyen Minh Triet are expected to discuss Agent Orange hot spots in Vietnam when Triet visits Washington this week.

The Silver Rose medal was the creation of Mary Marchand, a Virginia woman whose father, a Vietnam veteran, died from cancer in 1997 as the result of his exposure to Agent Orange.

Marchand mistakenly believed her father, Navy Chief Frank Davis, was entitled to a Purple Heart, awarded to soldiers wounded or killed in combat. He, like other Agent Orange victims, was not.

Instead, ~~see way to honor her~~ father, she presented him with a plastic rose plated with silver Mylar.

"All Mary Elizabeth [Marchand] wanted was a line on his military record, DD214, showing that he was a hero and that his cancer was as sure a sign of gallantry as a wound of war, as sure as any injury he would have received on the battlefield," said Weigel, a member of VVA Chapter 800.

Weigel now compares himself to a "town crier," urging his 'Nam

ing problems and is classified as 100 percent disabled by the Veterans Administration due to his exposure to Agent Orange, the defoliant used by the U.S. military in Vietnam from 1961 to 1970.

Tonight, Weigel will be among the first Vietnam veterans from Bergen County to receive the Order of the Silver Rose medal, designed to honor veterans suffering from the effects of Agent Orange.

The ceremony at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 809, on Main Street in Little Ferry, is expected to draw about 100 people and is sponsored by Bergen County Chapter 800 of the Vietnam Veterans of America. See **VETS** Page L-3

brothers and sisters who were exposed to Agent Orange to get help.

"There are guys out there who are paying for their service, and they don't know they can be helped," he said. "These guys can get CAT scans for free at the VA. If they do that, they can lengthen their lives because this [Agent Orange effects] will creep up on them."

More than 200,000 New Jerseyans served in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975 – and 1,560 were killed. The Veterans Administration now recognizes 43 cancers and other illnesses resulting from exposure to Agent Orange.

The Silver Roses are catching on – more than 4,000 have been awarded nationwide.

"Now," Weigel said, "guys are saying, 'Hey, can you get me a rose?'"

Equally heartening, he said, is the fact that Vietnam veterans now are assisting Iraqi war veterans.

"These guys don't know what they deserve," Weigel said. "Iraqi veterans coming home after their discharge, many times they don't know what to do, and many of the Vietnam veterans are helping them."

Vietnam veterans seeking information about the Order of the Silver Rose can visit the Bergen County Chapter 800 Web site at vva.chapter800.org or call 201-457-0048.

E-mail: bautista@northjersey.com

Silver medalists

Vietnam veterans receiving the Silver Rose medal tonight:

- Al Weigel, Hackensack
- Dennis Moran, Paramus
- Francis Carrasco, Lodi
- Patsy DeLaura, South Hackensack
- Cornelius Reyngaardt, Hasbrouck Heights
- Douglas Sanopoli, Rutherford
- Bruce Partyka, East Rutherford
- John McBride, Saddle Brook
- Bill Harris, Fair Lawn
- Ignazio Valente, Hasbrouck Heights

Good morning Mike.

Columbus Base Past-Commander **Jim Morton** passed the following information to our Columbus Base shipmates. Maybe it's "old news" to some of you "old salts", but it's something I wasn't aware of... and could be useful to others who are considering retirement in the next few years. Do you think it might be worthy of mentioning in *American Submariner*? If so, I'll gladly put it in a short Word document if you want.

Please share this with anyone who's had active duty service prior to January 2002 and planning for retirement. In a nutshell it boils down to this:

You may qualify for a higher social security payment because of your military service, for active duty any time from 1940 through 2001 (the program was eliminated for service after January 2002).

Up to \$1200 per year of earnings credit (see below website for more detail) credited at time of application... which could make a substantial difference in social security monthly payments upon your retirement.

You must bring your DD-214 to the Social Security Office, and you must ask for this benefit to receive it!

Soc Sec website: <http://www.ssa.gov/retire2/military.htm>

Virginia-Class Welding Issue Investigation Expanded

Geoff Fein, Defense Daily, 21 December 2007

The investigation into welding issues at Northrop Grumman's [NOC] Newport News (NGNN) shipyard that initially led to the tying up of the first three Virginia-class submarines earlier this month has been expanded to include other subs and aircraft carriers, the Navy said.

The Navy, NGNN, and General Dynamics [GD] Electric Boat are conducting a detailed assessment of completed welds through record reviews and additional inspections.

The discovery of the weld weaknesses and the resulting inspections have impacted operational testing of the USS Virginia (SSN-774) and pre-commissioned unit North Carolina Sea Trials (Defense Daily, Dec. 10). The USS Texas (SSN-775) was in port at the time.

The scope of the long-term investigation includes Virginia-class submarines, Los Angeles-class submarines, aircraft carriers and in-service surface ships built or maintained by NGNN from 2000 to 2007, according to Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA).

"In the aircraft carrier business, this is a very important finding. NGNN knows they have to understand what this means to the aircraft carriers," Rear Adm. William Hilarides, program executive officer submarines, said in an interview with Defense Daily earlier this month.

"We are currently in the process of assessing what ships could be potentially affected, and we anticipate completing our assessment in early January," Jennifer Dellapenta, an NGNN spokeswoman, said yesterday.

The investigation is the result of a process deficiency at NGNN, which potentially enabled improper weld filler metal to be used on non-nuclear piping systems over an extended period of time, the Navy said. NGNN has revised its procedures and is retraining its workforce on the new procedure. Both NGNN and the Navy are providing additional deckplate oversight to monitor the revised process, the Navy added.

"The Navy continues to work closely with NGNN to ensure that Navy vessels are built to the highest technical and safety standards. All vessels constructed by or maintained by NGNN since 2000 will undergo a technical assessment of non-nuclear piping systems," according to NAVSEA.

The internal piping systems under review transport air, water and hydraulic fluid inside the hull of the vessel. Neither the hull nor any nuclear components are affected, the Navy said.

The Navy will complete an initial assessment of near-term concerns regarding critical welds in late December. The Navy is committed to ensuring the safety of our crews and ships.

In spring 2008 the Navy and NGNN will complete an analysis of the long-term effects of the weld problem and identify the specific steps to be taken to address the issue. Specific actions may include reworking some welds and conducting routine monitoring or testing of the welds, the Navy said.

"The Navy will better understand the long-term effects of this problem and associated costs when the investigation is complete," NAVSEA said. "This issue and resulting investigation has had minimal impact to naval operations."

Oops! American missile to replace Trident is too big for Britain's nuclear submarines

Rob Edwards, Sunday Herald (U.K.), 26 December 2007

THE US nuclear-armed missile that the Westminster government is hoping will replace Trident may not actually fit into British submarines, creating a "major headache" for UK weapons designers.

The Sunday Herald has seen evidence that US designers are contemplating new missiles too big to slot into the tubes that house Trident's current D5 missiles.

Tenders to bid for a test-bed for future underwater-launched nuclear missiles issued by the US navy last month specify a missile diameter of up to 120 inches. The diameter of Trident's D5 missile tubes is 87 inches.

The former prime minister, Tony Blair, won the support of the House of Commons in March this year for his controversial decision to renew Britain's nuclear weapons by replacing the four Trident submarines, currently stationed at Faslane on the Clyde.

Blair's plan - apparently endorsed by his successor, Gordon Brown - is to start arming the new submarines with the existing Trident missiles but then to replace them with new missiles being designed by the US.

That is why Blair exchanged formal letters with US president George W Bush on December 7, 2006. "The United Kingdom wishes to ensure that any successor to the D5 system is compatible with, or is capable of being made compatible with, the launch system for the D5 missile, which we will in the meantime be installing into our new submarines," Blair wrote.

Bush replied by inviting the UK to take part in the D5 replacement programme or to discuss extending the life of the missiles. "In this respect, any successor to the D5 system should be compatible with, or be capable of being made compatible with, the launch system for the D5 missile," he wrote.

Earlier this month defence secretary Des Browne confirmed that UK and US officials had met three times since March to consider missile designs. "Concept studies for the development of a new underwater-launched missile system have been discussed by officials at these meetings," he said.

But critics are now saying that Bush appears to be reneging on his promise to make sure any new missiles would be compatible with existing D5 launch systems. In November the US navy issued a notice inviting companies to bid for a new test-bed for "development testing of underwater-launched missile systems".

The notice said the test-bed should be able to support missiles up to 120 inches in diameter and 200,000lbs in weight, although Trident missile tubes have a diameter of 87 inches and the missiles weigh 130,000lbs. This was because "concepts for future submarines may have missile tubes larger than 87 inches in diameter", the notice said.

John Ainslie, co-ordinator for Scottish CND, said this would go to give the engineers in Barrow responsible for designing Britain's new submarines a big problem. "Common sense would suggest that if you are designing a submarine you must know the dimensions of the missiles it will carry," he said.

"But common sense has no place in the government's plan to build a new nuclear weapon system. The rushed programme to replace Trident could set a new benchmark for ineptitude at the Ministry of Defence MoD.

"Gordon Brown should call a halt to this absurd waste of taxpayers' money."

Ainslie argued it was not credible to arm the new submarines with Trident D5 missiles throughout their life because the US would cease maintaining them. The US navy is planning to withdraw Trident completely by 2042, but the UK wants to operate its new submarines until at least 2055.

He also pointed out that when the UK first bought Trident missiles in the early 1980s, it had to change its order to fit US timescales.

“They will be keen to purchase an underwater-launched missile system. But designing a submarine for an unknown missile will be a nightmare.”

A spokeswoman for the MoD said: “We are satisfied the exchange of letters between the previous prime minister and the US president provide us with the necessary assurances that any US successor to the D5 missile should be compatible, or can be made compatible, with the launch system to be installed in our new submarines.”

Russia test-fires two missiles on Christmas Day

Ctv.ca (Canada), 25 December 2007

Russia test-fired two separate missiles, including one capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads more than 7,000 kilometres, and launched three satellites into orbit on Christmas Day.

The RS-24, an intercontinental ballistic missile, was launched from a facility in northern Russia on Tuesday. Its warheads successfully hit targets at the Kura testing range on the Kamchatka Peninsula almost 7,000 kilometres away.

It is intended to replace an aging missile system established during the Soviet era.

Strategic Missile Forces spokesman Alexander Vovk would not confirm how many test warheads the missile held, but the Interfax news agency said the RS-24 can carry at least three.

The Strategic Missile Forces released a statement saying the missile was launched from a mobile launcher and was built by Moscow’s Heat Technology Institute.

“This missile is being created using scientific and technological solutions from the Topol-M missile which allows to significantly reduce time and cost of its development,” the statement said.

Topol-M missiles currently in use can carry one nuclear warhead about 10,000 kilometres. The RS-24 was first test-fired successfully in May.

Also on Tuesday, a Navy spokesman confirmed a ballistic missile launch from a nuclear submarine in the Barents Sea.

That missile, designated the RSM-54 Sineva, is capable of carrying four nuclear warheads up to 8,800 kilometres.

President Vladimir Putin has earmarked much of Russia’s oil revenues to update and modernize its military arsenal. He has vocally opposed the U.S. plan to establish missile defence sites in nearby Poland and the Czech Republic.

Moscow said the U.S.’ missile defence system would pose a security threat, and has promised to take counter-measures.

On the same day, Russia’s Federal Space Agency launched three satellites intended to boost the country’s space navigation system, used for both military and civilian purposes.

They were sent into orbit by a Proton-M rocket from the Baikonur launch pad in Kazakhstan to join Russia's Global Navigation Satellite System – similar to the U.S. Global Positioning System.

The satellite system was established during the Soviet era, but since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union it has declined from its 24-satellite heyday.

Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov said Tuesday the three new satellites would bring the fleet to 18 – enough to provide navigation services across Russia. He had previously said the service would reach 24 satellites and be available worldwide by 2010.

Brazil May Work With France on Nuclear Submarine

Jeb Blount, bloomberg.com, 21 December 2007

Brazil may team up with a French company to build a nuclear-powered submarine, part of plans to rearm the country's military, Defense Minister Nelson Jobim said.

France is the most likely candidate to help Brazil develop military ship-building techniques to create submarines that can be fitted with a Brazilian-designed naval nuclear reactor, Jobim told reporters at the Angra dos Reis nuclear power station outside of Rio de Janeiro.

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Brazil is seeking new warships to protect its expanding offshore oil reserves, resources that have transformed Brazil from an oil importer into an oil exporter, Jobim said. State-controlled Petroleo Brasileiro SA said in November its Tupi offshore field may hold as much as 8 billion barrels of oil, one of the largest finds in the last 20 years.

“France is the most-likely candidate because they are willing to transfer technology to Brazil so we can build up our own defense industry,” the minister said. “Defense is something you need to do on your own; if you depend on others, it can be cut off when you need it.”

The minister will discuss the submarine plan, which envisions building facilities to construct most of the submarine in Brazil, when he meets with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in January, he said.

Jobim will also speak with U.S., Indian, Russian and Chinese defense contractors about military technology transfers in coming months. Brazilian companies such as Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica SA, or Embraer, the world’s fourth-largest aircraft manufacturer, are expanding their defense-contracting businesses.

Brazil would likely build a conventional submarine first, learning the naval construction techniques needed to build underwater craft, before building ships capable of using the Brazilian Navy’s home-grown nuclear reactors, and locally enriched nuclear fuel to power the craft.

Brazil, which abandoned its nuclear weapons program in 1990, has no intention of arming the submarine with anything but conventional weapons, the minister said.

Most of Brazilian Navy is more than 25 years old. On Christmas Day 2000, Tonelero, a 1972 submarine built for Brazil by the U.K.’s Vickers Ltd., sank in 9 meters of water at its dock in Rio de Janeiro. Sailors on the \$150 million vessel had left a valve open, creating toxic gasses and forcing them to abandon ship before they could stop the flooding.

Cruise missile sub

Bill Gertz, Washington Times, 21 December 2007

The Navy this month completed its fourth conversion of a U.S. nuclear ballistic missile submarine into an extremely powerful, conventionally armed cruise missile launcher and covert transporter of U.S. special operations force.

The last converted missile sub the USS Georgia is now being readied for deployment around the world at its home port of Kings Bay, Ga., said skipper, Cmdr. Rodney E. Hutton.

The conversion of the nuclear missile submarines into Tomahawk-firing submarines is one element of a new Pentagon strategy of building up forces to be ready to counter any emerging threat from China. Cmdr. Hutton said the Georgia will operate in the Pacific, as well as other oceans and can swap out its entire crew at Guam, a major strategic U.S. military hub in the Pacific.

In a telephone interview from the submarine, Cmdr. Hutton said the new Tomahawk submarines are “extraordinary force multipliers.” Two of the submarines, each equipped with 154 long-range cruise missiles, can provide the same firepower as all the Tomahawk-firing ships in the 2003 Operation Enduring Freedom, as the Iraq invasion is called. “I see the SSGN becoming one of premier platforms for any conflict today or in the future,” said Cmdr. Hutton, using the Navy’s term for nuclear-powered guided-missile submarines.

More Submarine News on Front Cover