



Sculpin Base POD

USSVI Class 4

Newsletter of the Year-2024

1st Quarter 2025

The Sculpin Base POD is a quarterly publication of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI) Sculpin Base.

USSVI CREED AND PURPOSE

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 toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

Sculpin Base Officers

Commander—	Bret Cortright	913-710-7860	rm3ss584@yahoo.com
Vice-Commander —	Keith Jeffers	785-309-6956	kljeffers46@yahoo.com
Secretary —	E. Dale “Moe” Moses	980-422-2749	donutdad53@gmail.com
Treasurer —	Colleen Moses	980-422-2749	donutmom53@gmail.com
COB —	Dennis Mosebey	620-341-7322	dennismosebey@gmail.com
Base Chaplin —	Lamont Schmidt, Jr.	620-364-2447	mnteaks@embarqmail.com



[USSVI Website](#)

[Sculpin Base Website](#)

Lost Submarines—First Quarter

January

USS Scorpion (SS-278)

Lost sometime after January 5, 1944 with the loss of 76 men while on her 4th war patrol in the Yellow Sea off China due to unknown causes. It is assumed she was sunk by a mine.



USS Argonaut (SS-166)

Lost on January 10, 1943 with the loss of 102 men while on her 3rd war patrol southwest of New Britain. While attacking a convoy, she torpedoed a Japanese destroyer who along with two other destroyers depth charged her. As she tried to surface, the destroyers sunk her by gun fire.



USS Swordfish (SS-193)

Lost on January 12, 1945 with the loss of 89 men while on her 13th war patrol by a possible Japanese surface attack or mine somewhere near Okinawa.



USS S-36 (SS-141)

Lost on January 20, 1942 while on her 2nd war patrol when she ran aground on the Taka Bakang Reef in the Makassar Strait, east of Borneo and radioed for help. The entire crew was rescued by a Dutch launch boat after she was scuttled.



USS S-26 (SS-131)

Lost on January 24, 1942



with the loss of 46 men while on her 2nd war patrol in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light. She was rammed by the USS Sturdy (PC-460) and sunk within seconds. The CO, XO and one lookout on the bridge were the only survivors.

February

USS Barbel (SS-316)

Lost on February 4, 1945 with the loss of 81 men while on her 4th war patrol during a Japanese air attack near the southern entrance to the Palawan Passage.



USS Shark I (SS-174)

Lost on February 11, 1942 with the loss of 59 men on her 1st war patrol after receiving orders to proceed to Makassar Strait via the north coast of Celebes. Shark was the 1st US submarine sunk by enemy surface craft in the Pacific.



USS Amberjack (SS-219)

Lost on February 16, 1943 with the loss of 72 men while on her 3rd war patrol when she was attacked by a Japanese patrol plane and surface craft off Rabaul in the Solomon Sea.



USS Grayback (SS-208)

Lost on February 26, 1944 with the loss of 80 men while on her 10th war patrol when she was attacked by Japanese air and surface craft off Okinawa.



USS Trout (SS-202)

Lost on February 29, 1944 with the loss of 81 men on her 11th war patrol during a Japanese surface attack southeast of Okinawa in the Philippine Sea.



March

USS Perch (SS-176)

Lost on March 3, 1942 with no immediate loss of life while on her 1st war patrol. After two severe depth chargings in less than 200 feet of water by three Japanese destroyers, the crew abandoned ship and scuttled her. Of the 59 men taken prisoner, 6 men died as POWs, and 53 survived the war. Her wreckage has been located off the coast of Java.



USS Grampus (SS-207)

Lost on March 5, 1943 with the loss of 71 men while on her 6th war patrol. She was lost after engaging two Japanese Destroyers in Vella Gulf near the Solomon Islands.



USS H-1 (SS-28)

Lost on March 12, 1920 with the loss of 4 men as they tried to swim to shore after grounding on a shoal off Santa Margarita Island, off the coast of Baja California, Mexico. Vestal (AR-4) pulled her off the rocks on the morning of March 24th, only to have her sink 45 minutes later in some 50 feet of water.



USS Triton (SS-201)

Lost on March 15, 1943 with



the loss of 74 men while on her 6th war patrol when she was sunk during a fight with three Japanese destroyers north of the Admiralty Islands, which are north of New Guinea.

USS Kete (SS-369)

Lost on March 20, 1945 with the loss of 87 men at the end of her 2nd war patrol between Okinawa and Midway, cause unknown. May have been sunk by a Japanese submarine that was subsequently lost.



USS F-4 (SS-23)

Lost on March 25, 1915 with the loss of 21 men after she foundered 1.5 miles off of Honolulu. Acid corrosion in the battery tank let seawater into the battery compartment, causing loss of control. F-4 was the first commissioned U.S. submarine to be lost at sea. She was raised in August 1915.



USS Tullibee (SS-284)

Lost on March 26, 1944 with the loss of 79 men while on her 4th war patrol. It's believed she was a victim of a circular run by one of her own torpedoes north of Palau. The lookout was the only survivor and he survived the war as a Japanese prisoner.



USS Trigger (SS-237)

Lost on March 28, 1945 with the loss of 89 men while on her 12th war patrol. She was lost during a combined attack by Japanese antisubmarine vessels and aircraft in the East China Sea.



Tails from the Engineroom Upper Level

Looking out the window of my home office on January 5th as I type, I see the cold Kansas wind in this blizzard conditions. Hope we're all thawed by the time you read this.

I only knew the coldness that the ERLI could bring as I was a newly qualified ERLI watch for the second sea-trails out of Kittery, ME. I had to wear my work jacket while on watch and still it was cold. I never was a topside or line-handler, and by the time the boat came back to our home port of New London, I was an EWS and stood ERS for the trip up the river to Groton.

Thank you shipmates that had to be in that cold weather topside. I am better with heat than the cold. We were all young and did as we were told. Civilians just don't understand that we could not quit.

But looking out at the cold weather, with nothing else to do, I can use my time to write this article. Do you have some time? Just sit down and start typing. The spell checker will check your spelling, and the grammar checker will help too. Guys, what I'm saying is that it is not hard. In just minutes you can come up with a great story to tell the rest of the Base.

Hey, save that story on a thumb drive for your grandkids. They won't "give a crap" now, but someday they will. Bet you wish you had some of your Grandfathers and Fathers stories to read.

What to write about? Anything; your bestie on the boat, the worst meal, your first time out, etc.. The subjects are limitless. And have your spouse's (if you were married at that time) experiences; or have her write it.

Just sitting between the TG's just a thinking. (15 minutes gone by)

The "POD" Piping Tab:

Lost Boats for the first quarter	<u>2</u>
Commander's page	<u>5</u>
Vice Commander Keith Jeffers	<u>6</u>
Secretary/Treasurer Moe/Colleen Moses	<u>7</u>
Chief of the Boat Dennis Mosebey	<u>8</u>
Base Chaplin Monte Schmidt	<u>9</u>
Sculpin Base Memorial Bench project	<u>10</u>
USSVI School	<u>11</u>
Fun Flag Facts	<u>12</u>
Veterans Day in Gage Park - Steve Alfrey	<u>13</u>
Trailblazers: The Golden Thirteen	<u>14</u>
Everyone loves a Sea-story	<u>15</u>
Sculpin Base Funny Page	<u>17</u>
GEDUNK from the Net	<u>18</u>
Eternal Patrol Notices	<u>19</u>

Other BS scattered like first "Angles and Dangles" on the first sea-trials out of the yard.



The "[Sculpin Base POD](#)" is the

[Quarterly Newsletter of the](#)

[Sculpin Base - United States Submarine Veterans.](#)

Newsletter Editor:

Ellis Dale "Moe" Moses
118 Sunset Ct.
Ozawkie, KS 66070

Your Sea Stories and
Input are always
WELCOME!!

Next Deadline is 3 May 2025





Base Commander— Bret Cortright

.Well, here I go. This being my first Sculpin Base POD column as the Base Commander,

I ask that you be patient with me and hope that I improve with time.

Sculpin Base ended 2024 on a pretty good note. We conducted a base election and actually have new officers, well at least different roles. Best of luck to all who have assumed a leadership role within the base.

We also completed our first significant project. The Submarine Memorial Bench which we worked on for a considerable amount of time was finally completed. The bench was installed at the Veteran's Park in Gage Park, Topeka and formally dedicated along with a complete Tolling of the Boats. It was a couple of "firsts" for Sculpin Base with hopefully more projects to follow.

That being said, Sculpin Base has the opportunity to bring the sail of the USS Topeka to the City of Topeka upon its decommissioning in 2025. Some preliminary work has been done to get the wheel rolling. Many thanks to Steve Alfrey for establishing contact with the elected officials in Topeka who have indicated they are on board with this project. We will be discussing this further at our next meeting on February 15th. I am hoping for a large turnout so we can get everyone's opinions and ideas regarding this undertaking.

Our next meeting is February 15th at the Air National Guard Museum located at Forbes Field in Topeka. This is not the same location we previously met at. Directions will be forthcoming.

I wish each of you and your families a most Blessed 2025 and I look forward to hopeful growth and success for Sculpin Base.

Stay warm, hope to see each of you at our February meeting. - Bret

Storekeeper

(former M-Div RPPO)

Shipmates, I have taken over the duties of Base Storekeeper. I need your feedback of what items you'd like to see in our stock. We currently have Base ballcaps and patches. Would you like to see Base coffee cups, base stickers, USSVI stickers, etc.? I can always order items for an individual also. Email or call. Contact info is on the front page.

-Moe(SS)



Can you host a meeting in your area?

Our area is large and to be fair to all members we agreed to have a "travelling base". This means that we move our meeting to different cities and towns in our membership area.

Unlike other Veterans groups that might own a building, the USSVI does not own property (w/e of Groton). We meet at restaurants, VFW's, American Legions, etc.. Membership is encouraged in these organizations. Can you host a meeting in your area? If so, let one of the Officers know.



Base Vice Commander Keith Jeffers



Hello everyone. I'm your new Base Vice Commander. Here is a little about me.

I served in the U.S. Navy Submarine Service for 6 years with 4 years on the U.S.S. William H. Bates, SSN-680 Fast Attack Nuclear Subma-

rine where I qualified in Submarines. I was a Sonar Technician First Class. The Bates was a special operations and testing submarine. My Navy service was from 1980 to 1986.

I qualified as Sonar Supervisor and on all systems on the submarine. I qualified as a Navy Supply Petty Officer and Level 1 Sub-Safe Quality Assurance technician. I was also leading Petty Officer for a ship-wide Logistics Overhaul while the boat was in a 3 month dry-dock upkeep, finishing the overhaul in that period 9 months ahead of a normal schedule.

I made three Western Pacific Deployments, including time in the Indian Ocean during the Beirut – Lebanon Conflict. We were awarded the Navy Expeditionary Medal during a special operation.

After leaving the Navy, I was a Quality Assurance Inspector / Tech Writer for Datatape Inc., in Pasadena, California which is a Kodak company that builds black box recorders. I worked on a project that provided recorders for F-16 jets and Trafalgar Class British submarines. Following that, I was a Title Insurance Officer. I moved to Kansas in 1994 to open an electronics repair business. I have served as the Executive Secretary/CFO for the Scottish Rite Masons in Southeast Kansas in 1998. I became an Emergency Manager in Bourbon County, Kansas in 2008. I also worked as a Training & Exercise Specialist for Kansas Emergency Management. I now serve as the Emergency Manager for Jefferson County,

Kansas since 2015. I have been married to my wife Liz for 25 years. My son Graecin, age 20 leaves with us in McLouth. I have other family members in Kansas, Colorado, Michigan and California.

The Circle Flies.....(filler, because you didn't submit anything!)

An old farmer was hauling a load of manure when he was stopped by a state trooper.

"You were speeding, and I'm going to have to give you a ticket."

"Yep" says the farmer as he watches the trooper shoo away several flies.

"These flies sure are terrible," the trooper complains. "Yep," says the farmer. "Them are circle flies."

"What's a circle fly?"

"Flies that circle a horse's ass," says the farmer. "Them are circle flies."

"You wouldn't be calling me a horse's ass, would you?" the trooper asks.

"Nope... I wouldn't do that" the farmer says. "I have too much respect for law and policemen to even think about calling you a horse's ass."

The trooper says, "Well that's a good thing," and goes back to writing the ticket.

After a long pause, the farmer says, "Hard to fool them flies though."



Base Secretary "Moe" Moses



First of all, I want to thank you all for your support while I was your Base Commander. We have accomplished much, but can do more.

Bret and I basically switched jobs with exception of Base Treasurer, whom I see every day. So I am your Base Secretary, Membership chair, Store Keeper and Senior Toilet Bowl cleaner (lol).

As Base Storekeeper, what items would you like to have as "in-stock" and available at the meeting for purchase? We have Sculpin Base hats and patches current in stock. Do you think we need more? Just email me with your ideas.

National has come out with an incentive for us to recruit new members. If we increase our membership by 10% (3 members for Sculpin) this year, the Base will receive \$30.00 for each member. We all know someone that wears Dolphins and is not a member of our Base.

I guess I'm still the Newsletter Editor. We have won the Newsletter of the Year for our class (<31 members) for 4 years straight. I need your input to go for number 5 and maybe the Over winner of the NLOY award. You all have stories, write one down.

Do you have a place in mind for our May meeting? If so let one of the Base Officers (listed on the front page) know. We are always looking for a place to meet.

The 2025 Parade Schedule will be decide at the February meeting. Do you have input? Let someone know.

Base Treasurer Colleen Moses



Dale joined the Navy in December of 1971. I married him the following May. We been married almost 53 years.

I was a navy wife for 8 1/2 years. We lived in the eastern U.S. for most of our many years. We have two daughters and five grandchildren, all in Kansas.

I attended Emporia State University and earned a Bachelor of Science in elementary education, and went of to obtain a Masters as a reading specialist. I was a substitute teacher for 14 years in Emporia, KS and Liberty, MO.

I willingly accepted the office of Sculpin Base Treasurer. I have been and Associate for going on 5 years. I believe I am honest, trustworthy, and capable of the Treasurer's position and will account for all of your income and expenditures.



What is this going to be?



Sculpin Base Chief of the Boat Dennis Mosebey



Well, we put to sea for a New Year! I hope your Christmas and New Year holidays were full of good cheer and that God will grant you many blessings this year.

I struggle this month to think of a constructive topic to write about. One thing that does concern me is that our aging boomers scheduled to come out of service when new Columbia class goes into service may be falling behind schedule due to production costs on Virginia class attack boats. The article I read indicated that the Navy was not sure how to proceed with this issue. That is all I know right now but I shall endeavor to keep you informed as I come across updates.

We had a great 2024 with our parade participation and of course our Memorial Bench was completed, and we had a very nice commissioning ceremony for it. When you are in Topeka go to the Gage War Memorial Park and check it out. Pictures do not do it justice.

Finally, we welcome Bret as our new Commander and Colleen Moses as our new Treasurer. So let us support them and our base into the new year.

If you have an interest, you would like me to write about in these columns, please send it to me. It will be a big help.

The COB



Seal Team 6 aboard the USS Nevada -(Steve Alfrey)



This Space is Intentional Blank.

Why? Because you did not contribute. We need your stories, jokes, memes, etc..

Send them to donutdad53@gmail.com

The next deadline is May 3rd, 2025. Help us out.



**Base Chaplain
Lamont “Monte” Schmidt**

Hope everyone had a Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, and a Happy New Year.

I have recently been reading a book entitled “The Case For Christ”,

Lee Strobel. It is pretty good; he started out to prove that Christ was possibly a real person but not God. By the end of the book, he proves himself wrong. He talks with several different scholars about the Bible, primarily the New Testament. In 2nd Timothy 3:16 Paul tells Timothy that all scripture is God inspired and good for teaching, reproof, and correction (my paraphrase). The scripture that Paul is referencing is the Old Testament. The Old Testament (i.e. TANAKH for our Jewish members) is the foreteller of the New Testament. The reliability of both testaments has been proven over the years by the discovery of ancient manuscripts, (Dead Sea Scrolls, one example).

We are instructed by Jesus to place our faith in Him alone and not trust to works Ephesians 2:8 (my paraphrase). Somewhat no matter we think we know or do it is not sufficient gain us Gods grace.

I think that I included this link in a previous news letter. It is on YouTube.

arkencounter.com/beans A little levity:
I went to the doctor the other day, I thought that I was developing arthritis. After several test and labs and exams he came back and told me I did not have Arthritis.

His diagnosis was early onset rigor mortis!

- Monte Schmidt, Scuplin Base Chaplain

**February 15th Meeting
will be held at**

Air National Guard Museum 125

**SE Airport Dr,
Topeka, KS 66619**

Lunch at Noon

Sandwich and chips (donation)

**A head count is SUGGESTED, so
we can purchase food. Please**

RSVP to Bret

rm3ss584@yahoo.com

Meeting starts at 1 PM

Bring a new member

Free Admission



Sculpin Base Memorial Bench Project - Complete!

This project was started several year ago, but the location in Gage Park in Topeka was tabled due to the restriction they impose on the bench design. Last year Steve Alfrey, working with the Gage Park Memorial Committee, came up with a suitable plan to honor those who lost their life in the service of our Great Nation and honoring all that have served. This while keeping all the benches the same with engraving only on the rim of the bench.

As a Base we came up with the over \$3700 needed to make and install the bench. This was done with your efforts and largely with the funding of some donors which wish to remain anonymous. Thank you all!

The bench was in place by Veterans Day, but since other organizations were conducting ceremonies on that day and our quarterly meeting was taking place a week later, it was decided to hold the bench dedication prior to our business meeting on the 16th.

A complete Tolling of the Boats was conducted honoring all Boats and Shipmates lost since the inception of the US Submarine Service. Bret Cortright, Dennis Mosebey, Steve Alfrey, and Ellis Moses took turns reading the names of the Boats, the date they were lost and how they were lost. The COB tolled the bell after each reading; one for loss of ship and twice for lost of ship and life. This is a great ceremony. Each USSVI member should witness at least one of these. It will make you think and be thankful you made it home safely. To all those we lost, "Sailors, rest your oar". And my their spirits look down on us as our Base does good things.



Lardner Monuments workers set the bench in place.



Left to Right: Bret Cortright, Steve Alfrey, Chuck Sibley, Ellis Moses, Ed Taylor, . Back row: A fellow subvet (non-member), Jim Stambaugh, and Dennis Mosebey.



Front view of our bench, the back reads "TO ALL THOSE DEDICATED SAILORS WHO DEFENDED OUR COUNTRY DURING WAR FROM THE DEPTHS OF EVERY OCEAN".



USSVI School (refresher training)

Learn more about our organization - a repeated subject, but necessary

Question: How often do we elect National Officers? **Answer:** National Officers and Region Directors are elected by the Membership on even-numbered years, District Commanders are elected by their District Membership on odd-numbered years. The election is managed by the Election Master and election results are announced at the National Convention.

So this being an even-numbered year, there will be an election of National Officers. **Question:** What does that mean here in our Central District One? **Answer:** Since we are in the Central Region, we will be able to vote for a Central Regional Director, The National Commander, National Senior Vice Commander, National Junior Vice Commander, National Secretary, and National Treasurer.

Question: Why should I vote when the candidate is running un-opposed? **Answer:** Bottom line, to show your support. In the 2020 election only 11.6% of the eligible USSVI membership voted. I'd like to see 100% of our Sculpin Base voting this year.

I was elected in 2023 to be your Central District One Commander. I ran un-opposed. I got 11 votes out of about 350 CD1 members. Please vote. It takes two minutes and it's done on-line. VOTE and that includes local, state, and national elections also. It's not only your right, but you served to protect that right for others.

Other items often on the ballot are changes to the National Bylaws. Please read these changes over.

On these wintry days, have you ever gone to www.ussubvets.org and looked around? You may

find a lost shipmate living or on the Eternal Patrol list. It's your organization, run by the people you put in place. Ranks are not important; although we do have fun with each other on Rates.

What do you know about the USSVI programs? If you attend Base meetings, your Base might be here about some of them, but you need to look at that website and click on a tab or two. And if you have never attended a Base meeting, what is stopping you? I challenge (double-dog dare) each of you to attend at least one Base meeting or event (parades or whatever) this 2024 year.

Read the Creed and the Base will succeed. Our Creed says it all; from perpetuating the memory of shipmates we knew and the ones we did not, to gathering for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. As CD1 Commander, I attend base meetings throughout our District. **BTW, who is in our Central District One?** I'll answer that by having you go to the website listed; clicking on "Find a Base"; then on Districts.

Lastly, the new Awards manual will be out soon on the website. Any member may submit another member for various awards, excepting the Newsletter Award. Many of my CD1 have members deserving, but are never submitted. There are awards for Bases also. Take a look.





Welcome
New
Members

There are no new members since the last issue. Understandable, because everyone I asked was in the "Holiday Mode". So I'll keep asking. Will you do the same? Reminder, National dues have gone up for 2025. Most of you paid prior to December 31st, so thank you.

Fun Flag Facts

The Flag can be displayed for all 24 hours.

While it is Federal law that the flag should be displayed from sunrise to sunset (unless there's inclement weather), there are measures that can be taken to show the flag for all 24 hours. All that needs to be added is proper illumination of the flag so it can be seen in the dark. The light can be a porch light, street light, or other as long as those passing by can see that it is a flag.

The current Flag is the only one to have lasted more than 50 years.

As stated above, there have been many changes to the design of the American Flag. But the one we currently observe is the longest running iteration of the symbol, likely because no states have been added to the union since 1959, but the star is added the following year on Independence Day (7/4/1960)

.Flags should be disposed of in a "dignified manner."

If an American Flag is damaged beyond repair

and you need to dispose of it, you can burn it with dignity. Many municipalities around the country conduct flag burnings on Memorial Day or the Fourth of July where you can participate.

The Flag can touch the ground and still be used.

There is a myth that once a flag touches the ground it needs to be burned or disposed of. That's not entirely true. If a flag is soiled or touches the ground, it can be washed and dry cleaned and continue to be used.

Six American Flags have made it to the moon.

You have probably seen Neil Armstrong on the moon with an American Flag, but he is not the only one to plant one on the surface of the moon. Five additional Apollo missions, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17, ended with an astronaut placing a flag on the moon.

.A snippet of the Flag the Star Spangled Banner was written about was sold in 2011.

The flag that flew at Ft. McHenry, immortalized by Francis Scott Key, is still around. A 2" x 5" swatch of it was sold at an auction in 2011 for a whopping \$38,000. The rest of the flag is on display at Smithsonian's National Museum of American History.



Veterans Day in Gage Park

As a Vietnam Veteran I felt obligated to attend the Veterans Day dedication of the Vietnam Memorial at Gage Park. The War Memorial area is the same place where our Submariner's bench is located. The Gage Park War Memorial board have been raising funds for the Vietnam war Memorial for years. The total cost for the Vietnam Memorial was \$36,000. The Gage Park War Memorial board members are Bill Ripahn (Shawnee County Commissioner), Roland Mayhew (Vietnam Veteran and Commander of Kansas Vietnam Veterans of America), Richard Thomas (Vietnam Veteran) and Darlene Lillo. Guest speakers were James Gartner (current Kansas State senator) and Terry Knowles (Vietnam Veteran). Darlene Lillo advised me the next project for the Gage Park Memorial board is to raise money for a monument representing America's fight on the Global War on Terrorism. Here are some photos of the event:



The Vietnam War Memorial Stone

Other groups took place in the event including AL Post 400, the Prairie Band Veterans, Washburn Rural and Topeka High JROTC, and the Prairie Band We-Ta-Se Drummers. It was a pleasure attending the Vietnam Memorial dedication on Veterans Day and reminiscing with some old friends and fellow Vietnam Vets. Not to mention enjoying a free breakfast at HyVee's, a free car wash At Eagle,

a free lunch at Hooter's and an evening meal at Texas Roadhouse. It was a great day for all veterans!



My friend Gilbert Ramirez, Vietnam Vet Seabees



My friend, coworker at AT&T Duane Supple
Vietnam Vet 24th Army Corps Phu Bai, Vietnam

Steve Alfrey RM2(SS)
Vietnam Veteran



Base Historians Tina and Al Anguish

This article is from the newsletter of the Courtney-Spalding Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, January 2025.

Trailblazers: The Golden Thirteen National Defender Jan/Feb 2025

With the odds stacked against them and strong feelings that African Americans could not succeed as officers, 16 Black enlisted men would assemble in January 1944 at the U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois, for officer training. Expected to complete the course in 8 weeks when it normally finished in 16, they helped each other succeed by studying and drilling late into the night, with all passing their exams. The Navy had expected a 25% attrition rate, similar to that of white officer candidates. The final test scores –with some exams taken twice because they were thought to have been cheating– yielded the highest average of any Navy class at that time, 3.89 out of 4. Despite the fact that they all passed the course in March 1944, the Navy commissioned 75% of the men as officers, plus a 13th as a chief warrant officer, hence the moniker “The Golden Thirteen.” The other three men were sent back to the enlisted ranks without explanation.

While overshadowed by the heroics of the Tuskegee Airmen and Patton’s Panthers, the Golden Thirteen’s success as candidate and as Naval officers changed what was once thought impossible for African American sailors who had been limited to cooking and cleaning. Because President Franklin D. Roo-

sevelt had insisted, thousands of Black men would train as quartermasters, machinists, and electricians, learning skills that would boost their employment and prosperity after the war.

While the first 16 selectees did not believe Black officers would actually be allowed in the Navy, each man swore to give it his all, and they became more demanding of each other than even the toughest of their instructors. The Great Lakes Naval Training Station did not allow integrated training, so they lived in their own barracks, drilling and eating separately from the rest of the personnel. After receiving their commissions, they lived off base, were not allowed in the officer clubs, and would not be commanding white men in battle. But they held their heads high while representing the hopes and aspirations of Blacks in the Navy, understanding the power of opportunities for Black Americans if they succeeded, and the consequences if they failed.

With the odds stacked against them and strong feelings that African Americans could not succeed as officers, 16 Black enlisted men would assemble in January 1944 at the U.S. Navy Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois, for officer training. Expected to complete the course in 8 weeks when it normally finished in 16, they helped each other succeed by studying and drilling late into the night, with all passing their exams.

At the initial reunion in 1977 for the surviving members of the first 13, the men saw their legacy for the first time in the dozens of black faces there, from lieutenants and captains up to an admiral, and were recognized as and celebrated for being the amazing trail blazers they were. They were determined to be the first, and not the last. And they succeeded.





The Golden Thirteen, photographed on 17 March 1944. Top row: John Walter Reagan, Jesse Walter Arbor, Dalton Louis Baugh, Frank Ellis Sublett. Middle row: Graham Edward Martin, Charles Byrd Lear, Phillip George Barnes, Reginald E. Goodwin. Bottom row: James Edward Hair, Samuel Edward Barnes, George Clinton Cooper, William Sylvester White, Dennis Denmark Nelson.

Description (picture on left): On board USS Kidd (DDG-993) in April 1982. They are (seated, left to right): Jesse W. Arbor; Dalton L. Baugh; William S. White; Samuel E. Barnes; (standing, left to right): George C. Cooper; James E. Hare; John W. Reagan; Graham E. Martin; Wesley A. Brown; Frank E. Sublett. Brown was the first African American graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy. The others were members of the Golden Thirteen, the first African American Navy officers, who were commissioned in 1944. Courtesy of Surface Warfare Magazine, 1982. U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Everyone loves a sea-story

We all love a good sea-story, but since you slackers won't write them down and email them to me, I found a few on the "net". Enjoy these, then write yours down.

I'll add a boredom story. We took an empty kleenex box, stuck an empty plastic coffee creamer can in it, and wrapped that up in red duct tape to resemble an anvil with the word ACME written on the side. A string was tied to it, tossed over a pipe, and was suspended over the passageway outside maneuvering with the throttleman holding the string. A 3 hole puncher was emptied of its contents to create a small pile on the deck below the anvil. All the way from the reactor compartment tunnel door aft through machinery two and into engine room upper level, a series of yellow stickies said "bird seed

ahead" just like in the old Road Runner cartoon. Next to the pile of paper dots on the deck was a note that said "Bird Seed - Turn Note Over For Prize." The first person from the on-coming watch who reached down to turn the note over would then get an anvil dropped on his head Wile E. Coyote style. It seemed like the best plan ever until the first person to come aft for the midwatch was the engineer himself.

We were on a SSBN patrol in the North Atlantic in the fall of 1991. An oxygen generator explosion burned a dude badly enough to require medivac. We were under a hurricane, so helicopter lift wasn't an option. Eventually we met a tug out of Bermuda for surface transfer, nearly losing an ELT overboard in the process. After the transfer was complete, a swell dropped the tug on top of our missile deck, busted the hinges for tube 2, cracked the plastic tube cover, and flooded the tube with seawater. The tug suffered a cracked keel and one broken prop shaft but made it back to Bermuda (I heard that she sank at the pier but I can't confirm that). Due to the broken and unknown condition of the missile and warheads in tube 2, we had to send a Navy Blue Broken Spear and were ordered to surface transit to Kings Bay at safest speed. Round hulls are not comfortable on the surface, especially in a hurricane, so the transit was unfortunately memorable. We arrived at Kings Bay to find the place completely deserted, and after tucking us into one of the big barns upriver, even the tugs left at high speed. We found out later on that the base had conducted a "drill" to see how fast the base could evacuate in an emergency along with the ships at Mayport. Apparently somebody was concerned that the warheads might accidentally blow up, but if so then I don't think they knew much about how warheads

work and how impact and flooding affect them. Nobody was allowed off farther than the pier until a bunch of civilian defense contractors had crawled all over everything and hauled the missile away.

What began with innocent enough cheap squirt gun battles (the little clear plastic ones that probably cost about a buck or less and maybe had two oz of water in them) between the ERL and ERF watch on half-way night escalated over the course of the remainder of the deployment until the two discovered they could take old, failed EBA lines that had one end cut off to prevent accidental use, as a single-shot super-soaker. At one point, the CO came down the ladder to see ERF decked out in a set of samurai water war armor made of green poly sleeving. He looked him up and down for a moment, then, "Carry on." and continued his tour. It wasn't until one of the academy grad JOs accidentally got blasted that the feud came to an abrupt end.

Our fast boat had riders on a quick op. They were writers for a movie about submarines, I was on watch in sonar when the writers/directors made an hour or so visit to our 637 class SSN Sonar Shack while underway. I will never forget one of their questions... One of them chuckled and then pointed to our Roll Of Toilet Paper that was hanging between two sonar consoles... And he asked why there was toilette paper. YES, the roll of toilette paper made it into the movie.

The above authors are unknown, or maybe you were there. All I know is that you may have better stories, write them down. It just takes a few minutes and we all would like to read them and...

That's a No SH*TER!



The Sculpin Funnies

Flawduh A Florida senior citizen drove his brand new Corvette convertible out of the dealership. Taking off down the road, he pushed it to 80 mph, enjoying the wind blowing through what little hair he had left. "Amazing," he thought as he flew down I-95, pushing the pedal even more. Looking in his rear view mirror, he saw a Florida State Trooper, blue lights flashing and siren blaring. He floored it to 100 mph, then 110, then 120 Suddenly he thought, "What am I doing? I'm too old for this!" And pulled over to await the trooper's arrival.

Pulling in behind him, the trooper got out of his vehicle and walked up to the Corvette. He looked at his watch, then said, "Sir, my shift ends in 30 minutes. Today is Friday. If you can give me a new reason for speeding--a reason I've never before heard -- I'll let you go."

The old gentleman paused then said: "Three years ago, my wife ran off with a Florida State Trooper. I thought you were bringing her back."

"Have a good day, Sir," replied the trooper.

Jawjuh The owner of a golf course in Georgia was confused about paying an invoice, so he decided to ask his secretary for some mathematical help.

He called her into his office and said, "Y'all graduated from the University of Georgia and I need some help. If I wuz to give yew \$20,000, minus 14%, how much would you take off?"

The secretary thought a moment, and then replied, "Everthang but my earrings."

Mississippi The young man from Mississippi came running into the store and said to his buddy, "Bubba, somebody just stole your pickup truck from the parking lot!"

Bubba replied, "Did y'all see who it was?"

The young man answered, "I couldn't tell, but I got the license number."

Sow Kahlina A man in South Carolina had a flat tire, pulled off on the side of the road, and proceeded to put a bouquet of flowers in front of the car and one behind it. Then he got back in the car to wait.

A passerby studied the scene as he drove by, and was so curious he turned around and went back. He asked the fellow what the problem was. The man replied, "I got a flat tahr."

The passerby asked, "But what's with the flowers?"

The man responded, "When you break down they tell you to put flares in the front and flaares in the back. I never did understand it neither."

Tennsee A Tennessee State trooper pulled over a pickup on I-65.

The trooper asked, "Got any ID?"

The driver replied, "Bout whut?"

Texus The Sheriff pulled up next to the guy unloading garbage out of his pick-up into the ditch. The Sheriff asked, "Why are you dumping garbage in the ditch? Don't you see that sign right over your head?"

"Yep," he replied. "That's why I'm dumpin' it here, 'cause it says: 'Fine For Dumpin Garbage.' "



GEDUNK from the Net

World War II submarine at a Manitowoc museum is heading to Door County for work!

[Article](#)

SECNAV Del Toro Names Future Columbia-class Submarine SSBN-82

[Article](#)

Marine Corps' Famous 'Oorah!' Mantra Started in a Submarine

[Article](#)

India launches submarine, warships to counter China in Indian Ocean

[Article](#)

Canada wants 12 new submarines to bolster Arctic defense

[Article](#)

US submarine makes stop in Gibraltar after personnel transfer

[Article](#)

Scandal in Royal Navy: British nuclear submarines equipped with sw designed in Belarus

[Article](#)

The Navy's Columbia-Class Submarines Costs \$348,000,000,000

[Article](#)

Russians Reopen Underground Submarine Base in Temporarily Occupied Crimea

[Article](#)

Sain S-81 Submarine participates in major naval drills

[Article](#)

Challenge Coins

[Article](#)

This Happens When Navy Sailors "DO IT" on a Nuclear Submarine

[Article](#)

North Korea's Nuclear Submarine is a Nightma

[Article](#)

Hey! Visit the Sculpin Base Website

[Article](#)

Got Links? Please share with our Sculpin Base Shipmates!

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” - Martin Luther King





Lastly, this newsletter will honor those members and non-members from our Base and our Sister Bases, Dorado and Topeka-Jefferson City; who wore Dolphins by listing those who went on Eternal Patrol. We learned much of what we know of submarines from those who were ahead of us and guided us. We did the same. The Silent Service is a proud service. We know the sacrifices that we made and those made by our past shipmates, those we taught, and those they taught.

None to report as of publishing date.

