



The "MidWatch"



November 2008
Volume 14 - Issue 11

What's "Below Decks"
in the Midwatch

The monthly newsletter of
Perch Base - USSVI
Phoenix, Arizona

<http://perch-base.org>

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Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

NOVEMBER ETERNAL PATROLS

USS Albacore	SS218	Nov. 7, 1944	86 men
USS Growler	SS215	Nov. 8, 1944	85 men
USS Scamp	SS277	Nov. 9, 1944	84 men
USS Corvina	SS226	Nov. 16, 1943	82 men
USS Sculpin	SS191	Nov. 19, 1943	63 men
USS Capelin	SS289	Nov. 23, 1943	78 men

NEXT MEETING

American Legion Post #44
7145 E. Second St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(see map on page 4)

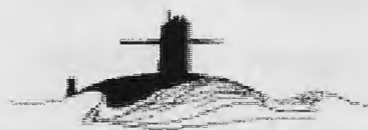
2008 Booster Club

Perch Base, USSVI, cannot support its operation on dues alone. Nor does the Base have any other successful source of income. The Booster Club is a list of those individuals who contribute extra money to keep the Base solvent.



Jerry Allston, David Anderson,
Ted Asbell, Reynaldo Altos,
Gary Bartlett, Kenneth Becker,
Richard Bernier, Ron Beyer,
Walt Blomgren, Ed Brooks,
David Carpenter, Roger Cousin,
George Crider, George Debo,
Jim Denzien, Butch Deshong,
Jim Edwards, Harry Ellis, Joe
Errante, David Fledderjohn,

Tom Fooshee, Charles Greene, Billy Grieves, William Grissom,
Michael Haler, Robert Hanson, Dave Harnish, Ed Hawkins,
Harry Heller, Glenn Herold, Les Hillman, Stephen Hough,
Davy Jones, Mike Keating, Denny Kerton, Jack Kimball,
Darrell Lambert, Al Landeck, Doug LaRock, Burtis Loftin,
George Long, George Marions, Raymond Marshall, Sandy
Martin, Terry Martin, Bob May, Alan Miller, Paul Miller,
Roger M. Miller, Tim Moore, Bob Nance, Jim Nelson, James
F. Newman, James W. Newman, Joe Orteba, George
Petrovitz, Royce Pettit, Wayne Pettes, Stan Reinhold, Robie
Robinson, Stanley Rud, Mel Rycus, Ken Schonauer, Emil
Schoonejans, Garry Shumann, Rick Simmons, Wayne Kirk
Smith, Adrian Stuke, Jim Thomson, Turk Turner, William
Tippett, Jim Wall, Forrest Watson, Donald Whitehead, Ed
Wolf, Jerry Yowell, John Zaichkin.





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Sailing Orders

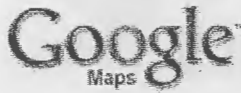


VETERANS DAY PARADE
*Meet at the Margret T. Hance Park
(1-10 tunnel deck park)
between Central and 3rd Avenue
0700 hours - meet to organize and
decorate
coffee and donuts before
pizza and soft drinks after*

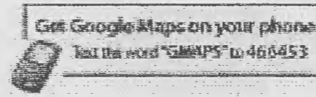
NOVEMBER MEETING
*The November Perch Base meeting
will be at the American Legion
Post #44, located at 7145 E.
Second St., Scottsdale, AZ
85251 Phone: 480-941-0130 or
623-932-4960.
(See map on the next page)*

*Bergquist
Awards } 24 Jan @ 105
Dec 20th }
Jan 10th } 105*

(E-MAIL)



Address **7145 E 2nd St**
Scottsdale, AZ 85251



©2008 Google

Map data ©2008 Tele Atlas



ETERNAL PATROL PREPARATIONS

Shipmates, while we hope your day and those of your shipmates is far off in the future, we must nevertheless prepare. Please copy this notice and place it with your will or important papers.

IMPORTANT

In the case of my death, please immediately notify the U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc., (USSVI) at 877-542-3483 or 360-337-2978 and give the person on duty the information regarding my death, funeral, and burial arrangements, plus who they can contact for follow-up and support.

Please ask them to contact my local chapter's Base Commander with this information as well (they can look it up in their membership records).

This information can alternatively be E-Mailed to the National Office at office@ussvi.org.

Still Recovering - Jim Nelson

Shipmate Jim Nelson underwent a setback in his recovery from abdominal surgery when, towards the end of last week, a blockage was detected by the doctors. Jim went back into surgery and is in recovery again. When this newsletter went to press, Jim was not yet allowed visitors, but when they are allowed, Ray Samson will send out a "blast" e-mail to let shipmates know.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Jim and his wife Nancy.

Need a Ride to a Meeting?

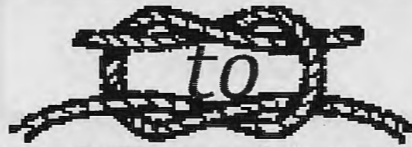
If you ever need a ride to a meeting, don't kiss off the meeting. Contact the Base's Chaplain, Howard Doyle to arrange a ride. Howard can be reached at:

(623) 935-3830 - home

(602) 228-2445 - mobile

d-hdolye@msn.com

Shipmate



Shipmate

Shipmates,

Once again it's time to *renew your membership* with USSVI and Perch Base. You may be a Holland Club member, Life Member in both USSVI and Perch Base or you may have signed up for multiple years in USSVI. If this is the case, please let this letter remind you that without your donations the base's survival would be questionable. I am – of course – talking about the Booster Club. Please show your support by sending a contribution and remember, no matter what the amount, it is appreciated. If you would like to make this a tax deductible contribution, please make your check out to: Arizona Submarine Veterans, Perch Base Charitable foundation.

For the year 2008/2009 your base has undertaken several new projects. We are building a new float to be used as a static display as well as in parades and as of this writing is ready for launching. The annual awards banquet is being planned for the January/February time frame as well as the 2009 induction of our Holland Club Members.

Please take an active interest in your base. There are many activities and positions but few stepping up to help. This is your base – make it the best there is.

Send your check made out to the base or its charitable foundation to the Base Treasurer at:

Dave Harnish
6509 West Devonshire Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85033-3350

Enhanced VA Mortgage Options Now Available for Veterans

Of Potential Benefit to Those in Financial Distress

Veterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. These new options are available as a result of the Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act of 2008 (PL 110-389), which the President signed into law on October 10, 2008. Veterans in financial distress due to high rate subprime mortgages are potentially the greatest beneficiaries.

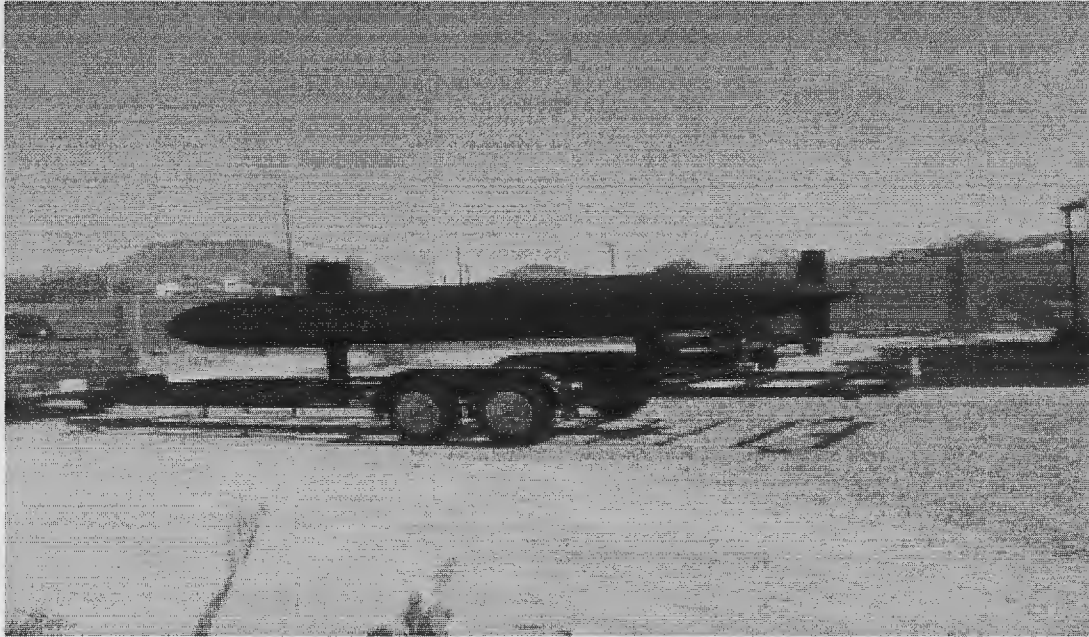
VA has never guaranteed subprime loans. However, as a result of the new law VA can now help many more veterans who currently have subprime loans. The new law makes changes to VA's home loan refinancing program. Veterans who wish to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so for up to 100 percent of the value of the property. These types of loans were previously limited to 90 percent of the value.

Additionally, Congress raised VA's maximum loan amount for these types of refinancing loans. Previously, these refinancing loans were capped at \$144,000. With the new legislation, such loans may be made up to \$729,750 depending on where the property is located. Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount will allow more qualified veterans to refinance through VA, allowing for savings on interest costs or even potentially avoiding foreclosure.

Originally set to expire at the end of this month, VA's authority to guaranty Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) and Hybrid ARMs was also extended under this new law through September 30, 2012. Unlike conventional ARMs and hybrid ARMs, VA limits interest rate increases on these loans from year to year, as well as over the life of the loans.

For more information, or to obtain help from a VA Loan Specialist, veterans may call VA at 1-877-827-3702 or visit www.homeloans.va.gov.

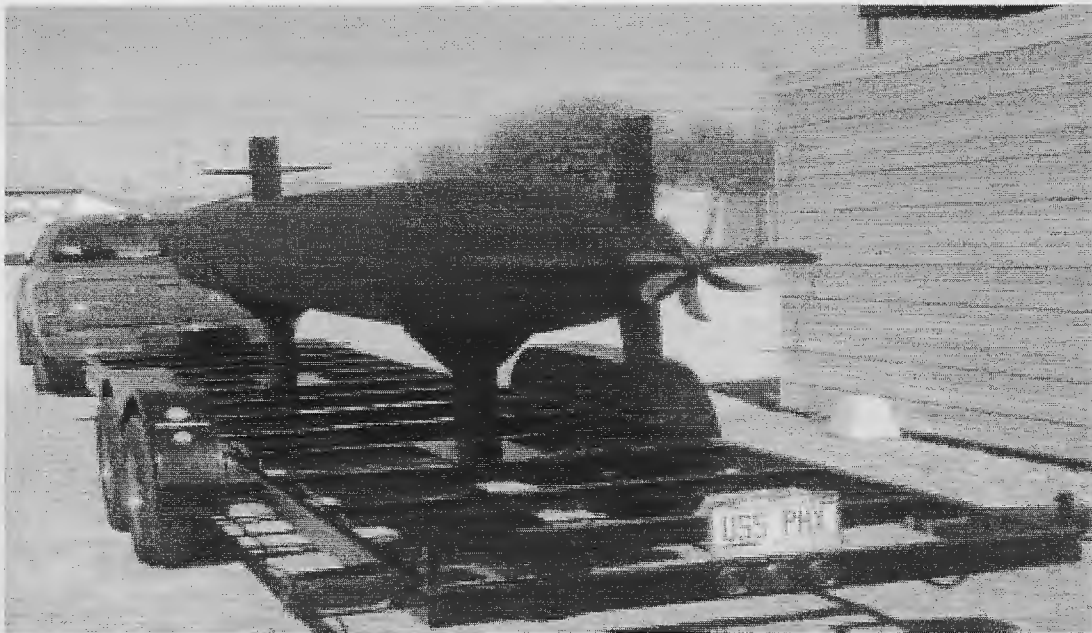
Ready for Launch !



Lacking only the final decals for the hull numbers, draft marks and plimsoll lines, the Perch Base, 1/15 scale model of the USS Phoenix (SSN-702) stands ready for action!

While other bases have submarine models as floats, to the best of our knowledge, this will be the only scale model of a Los Angeles-class boat as a float anywhere. Major "Bravo Zulus" to Howard Doyle, Jim Denzien, Tim More and others.

Note the way-cool license plate on the trailer.



Paul Newman was World War II Navy veteran

Most Americans know that actor Paul Newman had an Academy Award to his credit, but few know his list of awards also includes a Navy Combat Action Ribbon and the coveted Combat Aircrew Wings he got while serving as an aviation radioman and aerial gunner during World War II.

Newman, 83, died Sept. 26 after a long battle with cancer.

According to information provided by Navy Personnel Command and from Newman's biography at the Naval Historical Center, the blue-eyed future actor enlisted in the Navy on Jan. 22, 1943 – four days before his 18th birthday – with the hopes of becoming an officer and an aviator flying off carriers. His hopes for a commission and pilot's wings were dashed four months later after a flight physical discovered he was colorblind.

Newman reported to the Navy's boot camp at Newport, R.I. Graduating three days after Christmas, he was selected to train as an aviation radioman and reported to the Naval Air Technical Training Center in Jacksonville, Fla., on Jan. 8, 1944. He also qualified as an aerial gunner.

Aviation Radioman 3rd Class Newman spent a few months at Naval Air Station Miami before transferring to NAS Barber's Point, Hawaii, where he served in three Pacific-based replacement torpedo plane squadrons: VT-98, VT-99 and VT-100.

Serving off Saipan in May 1945, Newman and others from his TBM Avenger squadron were ordered to the Essex-class aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill (CV 17), operating off Okinawa. But Newman's pilot got sick, grounding the aircraft and crew until he could recover.

Days later, on May 11, two Japanese kamikaze aircraft hit the ship within 30 seconds and, in the resulting fires and explosions, 346 sailors were killed (?) among them, the entire contingent from Newman's squadron.

Returning home after the Japanese surrender, Newman served with Carrier Aircraft Service Unit 7 in Seattle until his discharge on Jan. 21, 1946.

Along with his air crew wings and Combat Action Ribbon, Newman also received the Good Conduct Medal, American Area Campaign Medal, Asiatic Pacific Campaign Medal and World War II Victory Medal.

(Editor's note: This article was reprinted from the Oct. 6 Navy Times. Donating more than \$250 million to charities during his lifetime, Newman helped several organizations that support military families with "Newman's Own" awards.)



Grunion Site Official

PEARL HARBOR, HAWAII- Oct. 2, 2008)

Commander, Submarine Forces Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC), Rear Adm. Douglas McAneny announced today that a sunken vessel off the coast of the Aleutian Islands is in fact the World War II submarine USS Grunion (SS 216).

I am honored to announce that, with records and information provided by the Abele family and assistance from the Naval Historical Center, USS Grunion has been located, said McAneny, "We are very grateful to the family of Grunion's Commanding Officer Lt. Cmdr. Mannert L. Abele for providing the underwater video footage and pictures that allowed us to make this determination. We also appreciate the efforts of the USS Cod



Submarine Memorial for their assistance in this matter. We hope this announcement will help to give closure to the families of the 70 crewmen of Grunion."

The submarine Grunion arrived at Pearl Harbor on June 20, 1942. The vessel completed pre-patrol training before departing on its first war patrol June 30. Grunion's commanding officer, Lt. Cmdr. Abele, was ordered to proceed to the Aleutian Islands and patrol westward from Attu on routes between the Aleutians and the Japanese Empire. On July 10, Grunion was reassigned to the area north of Kiska. Over the next 20 days, the submarine reported firing on an enemy destroyer, sinking three destroyer-type vessels, and attacking unidentified enemy ships near Kiska. Grunion's last transmission was received on July 30, 1942. The submarine reported heavy antisubmarine activity at the entrance to Kiska, and that it had 10 torpedoes remaining forward. On the same day, Grunion was directed to return to Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base.



There was no contact or sighting of the submarine after July 30, and on August 16, Grunion was reported lost. Abele was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for heroism. A destroyer, USS Mannert

L. Abele (DD 733), was commissioned in his honor, and was later lost in action off Okinawa in 1945. Japanese antisubmarine attack data recorded no attack in the Aleutian area at the time of Grunion's disappearance, so the submarine's fate remained an unsolved mystery for more than 60 years.

After discovering information on the internet in 2002 that helped pinpoint USS Grunion's possible location, the sons of Grunion's commanding officer, Bruce, Brad, and John Abele, began working on a plan to find the submarine. In August 2006, a team of side scan sonar experts hired by the brothers located a target near Kiska almost a mile below the ocean's surface. A second expedition in August 2007 using a high definition camera on a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) yielded video footage and high resolution photos of the wreckage of a U.S. fleet submarine.



From the Wardroom *Base Commander's Message*

Dear Friends and Shipmates,

On Thursday October 23, 2008 at 5:40 p.m. in the Phoenix City Council Chambers, 200 West Jefferson Street, Phoenix, AZ, 85003 the City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Review Board approved the proposal presented by the Phoenix Commission to locate the sail and rudder from the USS Phoenix (SSN 702) in Steele Indian School Park as a cold war memorial and tribute. This will be the first sail and rudder from a decommissioned submarine that would be located in its namesake city. The location of the sail and rudder as proposed would be adjacent to the VA Medical Center and the Arizona Veterans Home, 650 East Indian School Road, Phoenix, AZ 85012. The City of Phoenix Parks & Recreation Review Board passed the proposal unanimously.

Thank you to all the members of USSVI that we had present for this important decision. A special "thank you" to Jack Messersmith, Western District 1 Commander for being there to support Perch Base. Our next project is to work on the resurrection of the 702 Society and its data base of supports. We have a short window of opportunity to raise a lot of money to sustain this worthwhile project. But knowing what submariners can do never ceases to amaze me and I know we will rise to the challenge and get it done.

We are putting the final touches on the USS Phoenix float project and a lot of work has been done in a short time by the members of Perch Base. Jim Denzien has a photo book with a lot of pictures from the original tanks in Walt Blomgren's back yard to Frank Bono (welder) and Bob Snedaker (fiberglass) working on the details.

We plan to debut the USS Phoenix float in the Anthem Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 8, 2008; and then take it to the Phoenix Veterans Day Parade on Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2008. Please join us at the assembly area at Margaret T. Hance Park at 7:30 a.m. that morning.

Our next meeting is November, 15th 2008 @ 11:00 AM at American Legion Post #44, located at 7145 E. Second St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251 Phone: 480-941-0130 or 623-932-4960.

Our guest speaker for the November meeting will be John Dudas, a Regional VA Representative for the State of Arizona. Mark your questions down, as John is very versed in the workings of the Veterans Administration. John is also a Life Member of USSVI and Gudgeon Base

Fraternally,

Stan Reinhold, Commander – Perch Base USSVI

October Meeting Minutes

The regular monthly meeting of the Arizona Submarine Veterans, Perch Base was convened at the American Legion, Post 61, Avondale AZ at 1257 hours on 18 October 2008. Stan Reinhold, Base Commander, called the meeting to order.

The membership was led in a prayer of invocation by Chuck Emmett, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a standard ceremonial opening. A moment of silence was observed for shipmates on eternal patrol and the tolling ceremony for boats lost in September was conducted.

According to the sailing list, there were twenty-two members and guests present. New member Barry Bowers was welcomed as was guest Herb Herman for Blueback Base. Minutes from the September 2008 regular meeting as published in the MidWatch were approved. Treasurer Dave Harnish reported the Base's financial status as of the first day of October 2008. A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as read. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

Reports of Officers and Committee Chairmen

Base Commander - Stan Reinhold reported that shipmate Jim Nelson was in the hospital at Banner Thunderbird and had had emergency intestinal surgery.

Vice Commander – Jim Denzien had nothing to report.

Chief of the Boat – Jim Edwards had nothing to report.

Chaplain – Howard Doyle was not present.

Webmaster – Ray Samson had nothing to report.

Membership Chairman – David Fledderjohn was not present.

Newsletter Editor – Chuck Emmett commented on the lack of a table of contents in the last newsletter as a computer glitch.

Storekeeper – DeWayne Lober had nothing to report.

Past Base Commander - Tim Moore was not present.

Old Business

Vice Commander Jim Denzien reported on the following issues: He gave a report on the status of the new float construction and stated that it was nearing completion. He also reported on the status of the "Save Our Sail" project. All hands were reminded of the presentation to be made to the Parks and Recreation Review concerning the placement of the USS Phoenix (SSN702) sail and rudder in Steele Indian School Park. This presentation will be made on Thursday, October 23rd at 1700 in the Phoenix City Council chambers. Members are requested to attend wearing vests in



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Mailing address: 245 N. Litchfield Road

since 1957

support of the project. Information was provided for the two parades we are participating in for Veterans Day. We will also be participating in Navy Week activities in March 2009.

New Business

Vice Commander Jim Denzien showed the new base flag that will be used on our parade float. Commander Stan Reinhold stated that the base is seeking a replacement as the Membership Chair. He also stated that we are also seeking additional assistance for Public Relations for the Base since it is turning into a much bigger job and requires almost 24/7 work.

Good of the Order

Shipmate Dave Harnish corrected his comments from last meeting on the information for the 2009 combined convention in San Diego. The Submarine Veterans World War II will not be attending. He also reiterated that USSVI annual-memberships lapse on December 31st. He added that USAA has opened its membership to all retired Navy members.

50/50 Drawing


The 50/50 drawing was won by Shipmate Ray Samson.

Adjournment

All the outstanding business having been concluded, it was moved and seconded that the meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote. Chuck Emmett offered the closing prayer and the meeting was adjourned.

Jim Denzien, Vice Commander

FAIRINGS - ETC



Bob Snedaker

623-536-0951 (business)

623-203-9795 (cell) bob@fairings-etc.com

<http://www.fairings-etc.com>



From the Desk Of the Sea Hag

Perch Base SubVettes

The "Fabulous Float" will be premiered at the Veteran's Day Parade in Anthem on Saturday, November 8. The staging area is at the parking lot for Cross of Christ Lutheran Church and School, 39808 N. Gavilan Peak Pkwy. We have to be there with the float at 8 a.m. Parade starts at 10 a.m.

To get there, take I-17 North, Exit 222, right on Daisy Mountain Road and immediately get in the far left lane as you will be turning left as though you were going to Circle K. It is drop-off only! Long term parking is at Fellowship Church.

We are invited to a picnic following the parade. Beer garden and food vendors for all.

The Phoenix premier of the "Fabulous Float" will be Veterans Day, Tuesday, November 11. We are meeting at Margaret T. Hance Park (same place as last year). Meet at 7:30 a.m. to prepare the float for a 8:30 a.m. transport to parade staging area. Judging of the parade entries begins at 9 a.m. (I vote the Fabulous Float #1). 11 a.m. - Parade Begins. After parade, back to Margaret T. Hance Park for pizza and drinks.

On November 15, the meeting will be at American Legion Post #44, 7145 E. Second Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85251. Social time will begin at 11 a.m with meeting time at 1 p.m. Guest speaker, John Dudas, Regional Veterans Administration Representative will be speaking to the men (we are strongly encouraged to join them) bring your questions as John is very versed in the workings of the Veterans' Administration.

Stan will not be providing lunch for this meeting. They have a kitchen there where they sell food and drinks. I, personally, can always eat a cheeseburger.

A quick update on Jim Nelson. As of 11/30/08, he has had a second surgery and is in guarded condition at this time. All your thoughts and prayers for him and Nancy are needed at this time.

SUBVETTES MEETING MINUTES
October Meeting

Present: President Mary Denzien; Secretary Carolyn Newman, Treasurer Jane Reinhold, Jacque Hawkins, Sheila Galloway; Linda Wall; and Muriel Grieves. President Mary Denzien called the meeting to order at 12:01 PM. Pledge of Allegiance was said in unison and the Minutes were approved as written in the MidWatch.

Treasurer's report was read and approved. As reported, the balance was \$3,091.56.

Old Business:

There will be no Christmas party this year. This was discussed in an attempt to help the men out, but no solutions were reached.

Open forum for new activities for our group was postponed until the first of the year.

Pop tops for Mary Lou Nance. All agreed we would continue to save them. Sheila took the tops to give to her niece who would use them for her school. The tops will be alternated between Mary Lou and anyone else who can use them for helping an organized function; i.e. Ronald McDonald.

New Business:

The November meeting will be held in Scottsdale at the American Legion Hall, 7150 E 2nd Street at 11:00am. A representative from the VA will be the guest speaker.

Jane informed the group the difficulty she was having with the National with getting the membership correct. Also, she has sent two checks for dues and they have not been cashed nor has she heard from them. The problem was discussed at length. Jane will try to get the check situation corrected and Carolyn will write the National a letter asking what their responsibility to the SubVettes Perch Base is, and what does our dues cover.

Mary announced that there had been no one has submitted a request for the Scholarship money. Jane suggested we advertise it again. Mary will put it in the Midwatch.

After discussion, it was decided that we would take one thousand dollars from our account to use for helping military families. Sheila suggested Operation Home Front. These are military men and women who have been deployed or just returning to the states. Sheila made a motion that we do this. Jane seconded. Sheila informed us that all the money that is on the gift card stays on the card until spent. It cannot be used for liquor, cigarettes, or for gambling (lottery tickets). Sheila will use stickers on the cards that will prevent those type purchases. Jane will get the gift cards; Sheila will deliver them to Brandi Shannon, who, in turn, will handle getting them to the families in need.

For the Good of the Order:

Mary read the October birthdays. Marygrace Veek (Prescott) 10-1: Orene Waid (Prescott) 10-9: Helen Haskell (Yuma) 10-29: Nancy Nelson 10/31.

50/50 Drawing

Jackie won the 32-dollar 50/50. She donated her winnings back to the Scholarship Fund.

Wellness:

Sandy Bernard cannot drive. She has a bad back. Jim Nelson, Nancy's husband, is in the hospital.

Closing:

Jane made the motion to close the meeting. Jackie second. Motioned carried. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM

Carolyn Newman, Secretary



Larry Harker's
AUTO REPAIR INC.
BOB & ELLEN FRISBY
Owners
(602) 278-5558
(602) 278-5550 (FAX)
3845 West Indian School Rd.
Phoenix, AZ 85019



Eternal Patrol November 7, 1944

Editors Note: Less we forget, each month, one boat on eternal patrol will be highlighted in this newsletter. Sailors, rest your oars.

The Final Patrol

Lord, this departed shipmate with dolphins on his chest
Is part of an outfit known as the best.
Make him welcome and take him by the hand.
You'll find without a doubt he was the best in all the land.
So, heavenly Father add his name to the roll
Of our departed shipmates still on patrol
Let them know that we who survive
Will always keep their memories alive.



USS Albacore (SS-218)
Nov. 7, 1944
86 men



The Gato-class submarine was the state of the art in American design at the start of World War II. Using the previous Tambor-class submarine as a basis, Gatos incorporated improvements to increase their overall patrol and combat abilities. Modifications to the diesel engines and batteries increased patrol duration over Tambors, and internal alterations provided more amenities for the crew. The class is named after its lead ship, USS Gato (SS-212).

Displacement: 1,526 tons surf., 2,424 tons sub.
Length: 311ft 9 in, Beam: 27 ft 3 in, Draft: 15 ft 3 in
Test depth: 300ft, Speed: 20 knots surf., 9 knots sub.
Armament: 10 x 21 in torpedo tubes (6 forward, 4 aft, 24 torpedoes)
1 x 3/50 cal AA gun, 2 x .50 cal, and 2 x .30 cal machine guns
Crew: 80 – 85 officers and men
Powerplant: 4 x 1350 hp 16 cyl GM 278A diesels
(except SS228-239 and SS275-284 10 cyl Fairbanks-Morse 38D-1/8),
2 x 1370 hp GE electric motors
(except SS228-235 Elliott Motor or SS257-264 Allis-Chalmers),
two 126-cell Exide main storage batteries
(except SS261, 275-278, & 280 Gould)
Range: 11,800 nm at 10 knots surf., 100nm at 3 knots sub.
Submerged Endurance: 48 hours

USS Albacore (SS-218) was a Gato-class submarine which served in the Pacific Theatre during World War II, winning four Presidential Unit Citations and nine battle stars for her service. During the war, she was credited with sinking 13 Japanese ships (including two destroyers, a light cruiser, and the aircraft carrier Taihō) and damaging another five; not all of these credits were confirmed by postwar JANAC accounting.

Operational history

Albacore was the second ship of the United States Navy to be named for the albacore. Her keel was laid on 21 April 1941 by the Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. She was launched on 17 February 1942 (sponsored by Mrs. Elwin F. Cutts, the wife of Captain Cutts), and commissioned on 1 June 1942, Lieutenant Commander Richard C. Lake (Class of 1929) in command.

First Patrol

Following shakedown, the submarine proceeded via the Panama Canal to Pearl Harbor and, from that base on 28 August 1942, began her first war patrol, to waters of the north and northeast pass through the coral reef which surrounds Truk. On 13 September, Albacore sighted two cargo vessels in column and prepared for her first combat action. She made a submerged approach and fired three torpedoes at the leading ship and two at the second. One or two torpedoes hit on the first ship; none struck the second. Albacore claimed to have damaged the leading vessel.



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Her next enemy contact came on 1 October when she made a night surface attack on a Japanese tanker. She expended seven torpedoes and scored two hits. Although the tanker appeared to be low in the water, she was still able to leave the scene under her own power. On 9 October, Albacore spotted a Shōkaku-class aircraft carrier escorted by a heavy cruiser and a destroyer, but the submarine was depth charged by the escorts and forced to break off her pursuit. The next day, she attacked a freighter. One torpedo hit the mark and, 12 minutes after firing, the sound of two heavy explosions caused the submarine's crew to presume they had downed the vessel.

Beginning on the mid-morning of 11 October, Albacore was depth charged numerous times. At 15:48, the conning officer finally spotted the Japanese attackers, two submarine chasers and an airplane. A third ship equipped with sound gear joined the group and continued the hunt. The ships crisscrossed over Albacore, close enough for propeller noise to reverberate throughout her hull and compelled her to proceed at silent running, with her ventilator fans shut down. After a chase of nearly seven hours, the Japanese ships disappeared astern, and Albacore then surfaced to clear the immediate area. The next day, Albacore headed for Midway Island. Although she had several opportunities to score during the patrol,

Albacore was not credited with any damage to Japanese shipping. The submarine arrived at Midway Island on 20 October and commenced a refit.

Second Patrol

With her refurbishing completed and a new 20 millimeter gun installed, Albacore sailed on 11 November 1942 for her second patrol. Her assigned areas were the Roger St. George's Channel, New Britain, along the east coast of New Guinea to Vitiāz Strait, and the Dallman Pass off Madang harbor. On 24 November, the submarine spotted a convoy of two cargo vessels. Albacore maneuvered into position and fired two stern tubes, but neither torpedo found its target. Two days later, on 26 November, Albacore herself became the quarry. Two Japanese destroyers depth charged her and the explosions caused numerous small leaks around the cable packing glands in the pressure hull.

After a two-hour chase, the Japanese retired, and Albacore shifted her patrol area to Vitiāz Strait. Another golden opportunity arose on 13 December, when Albacore found three Japanese destroyers. She released a three-torpedo spread but again was unsuccessful. On 18 December, Albacore was stationed off Madang. The submarine discovered what seemed to be a transport and a destroyer.

Albacore torpedoed the "transport," and it exploded in a mass of flames and sank. Albacore had in fact downed the light cruiser Tenryū (3,300 tons), and the second Japanese cruiser sunk by an American submarine in World War II. Albacore put into port at Brisbane, Australia, on 30 December 1942.

Third Patrol

After an overhaul of her engines, Albacore got underway on 20 January 1943 to begin her third patrol. Off the north coast of New Guinea, she spotted 11 targets in as many days. The first group, encountered on 20 February, consisted of a destroyer and a frigate escorting a minelayer. Albacore fired ten torpedoes and believed she had sunk the destroyer and damaged the frigate. In the following days, Albacore attacked one tanker, several freighters, and another destroyer. Of eight torpedoes expended during these actions, all missed their targets. When Albacore ended her patrol at Brisbane on 11 March, she was credited with sinking one destroyer and a frigate for a total of 2,250 tons.

Fourth Patrol

Albacore was briefly dry-docked for repairs and underwent refresher training before sailing for a fourth patrol on 6 April 1943. This time, her area was around the Solomon Islands and Bismarck Islands and off the north coast of New Guinea.



While she sighted several convoys, she recorded no hits. Albacore returned to Brisbane on 26 May. While Albacore was being refitted at that port, Lieutenant Commander Oscar E. Hagberg relieved Lieutenant Commander Lake in command of the submarine.

Fifth & Sixth Patrols

On 16 June 1943, Albacore was underway for her fifth patrol and waters surrounding the Bismarcks and Solomons. During this patrol, she sighted three separate convoys and attacked two. Albacore claimed to have damaged a transport on 19 July but the submarine failed to sink any vessels. Albacore arrived back at Brisbane and began a refit alongside Fulton (AS-11).

On 23 August, Albacore left to patrol roughly the same area as on her previous assignment. She spotted a Japanese submarine on 31 August but was unable to press home an attack. On 4 September she encountered a two-ship convoy protected by two escorts and sank one of the ships, Heijo Maru, with three torpedo hits made shortly after the initial contact. The submarine then pursued the other vessel for the next two days but was able to inflict only minor hull damage on her target. She terminated her patrol at Brisbane on 26 September.

Seventh Patrol

Albacore's seventh patrol began on 12 October 1943. She fired six torpedoes at a large merchant ship on 25 October but recorded no hits. On 6 November, she received a report of a convoy which had been spotted by Steelhead (SS-280), and began to search for it. On 8 November, the submarine found the convoy and started to track it. However, a plane from the Fifth Army Air Force bombed her and caused her to lose contact with the Japanese ships. The submarine sustained no damage.

Albacore was again bombed by American aircraft on 10 November. This time, the submarine suffered considerable damage. All auxiliary power was knocked out, and the submarine was plunged into total darkness. The main induction valve went under water before it was shut, and it began filling up with water. Albacore plunged to a depth of 450 feet (140 m) before her dive was checked. For the next two and one-half hours, she bounced between 30 feet (10 m) and 400 feet (120 m) while at various attitudes. She finally managed to return to the surface with her trim almost restored. The submarine re-submerged, and it was decided to continue the patrol while simultaneously making necessary repairs.

Eighth Patrol

Following this ordeal, Albacore received orders to locate and attack light cruiser Agano, which had been hit and damaged by Scamp (SS-277). Albacore found Agano on 12 November 1943 and tried to attack, but Japanese destroyers held the submarine down with a four-hour depth charge barrage.

On 25 November Albacore sank Japanese army transport Kenzan Maru.

On her return to Brisbane on 5 December, Lieutenant Commander James W. Blanchard replaced Hagberg in command.

Albacore departed Australia on 26 December 1943 to patrol north of the Bismarck Islands. She spotted her first target on 12 January 1944 and sank cargo vessel Choko Maru with two separate torpedo attacks. Two days later, in company with Walter Ebert's USS Scamp (SS-277) and "Bub" Ward's USS Guardfish (SS-217), she blew up the destroyer Sazanami (flushed by Guardfish) with four shots from Albacore's stern tubes. Another destroyer pinned Albacore down and delivered fifty-nine depth charges, leaving Scamp and Guardfish free to pursue the three tankers; they succeeded in sinking one each. Following more than a fortnight of uneventful patrolling, the submarine headed home. She made brief fuel stops at Tulagi and Midway Island before reaching Pearl Harbor on 22 February. After three days of repairs to get her ready for the voyage, Albacore continued on to the Mare Island Navy Yard in Vallejo, California, for overhaul.

Ninth Patrol

Albacore left Mare Island on 5 May 1944 and held training exercises with Shad (SS-235) en route to Hawaii. Albacore reached Pearl Harbor on 13 May and spent the next two weeks on final repairs and training. Albacore began her ninth patrol on 29 May and was assigned waters west of the Mariana Islands and around the Palau Islands. During the next few days, she made only one contact, a Japanese convoy which she encountered on 11 June. But before the submarine could maneuver into attack position, a Japanese aircraft forced her to dive and lose contact.

The Sinking of Taihō

On the morning of 18 June, two days after American forces began landing on Saipan, Albacore shifted from her position west of the Mariana Islands to a new location 100 miles (160 km) further south. Admiral Lockwood (COMSUBPAC) ordered this move in the hope of enabling the submarine to intercept a Japanese task force (under command of Admiral Jisaburo Ozawa) reportedly steaming from Tawi Tawi toward Saipan. At about 08:00 the next morning, 19 June, Albacore raised her periscope and found herself in the midst of Ozawa's main carrier group. Blanchard allowed one Japanese carrier to pass unharmed and selected a second one for his target. Once inside 5,300 yards (4,800 m), the submarine's

torpedo data computer (TDC) started giving false information. To maximize the odds of a hit, Blanchard fired all six bow tubes. The carrier was in the process of launching an air strike, and one of the pilots intentionally dove his plane into a torpedo, setting it off early. Three Japanese destroyers immediately charged Albacore. While the submarine was diving to escape, her crew heard one solid torpedo explosion. About that same time, 25 depth charges began raining down on the submarine. Then Blanchard heard "a distant and persistent explosion of great force" followed by another.

One of Blanchard's torpedoes had hit the carrier. It was Ozawa's flagship, Taihō, 31,000 tons, the newest and largest in the Japanese fleet. The explosion jammed the ship's forward aircraft elevator; its pit filled with gasoline, water, and fuel. However, no fire erupted, and the flight deck was unharmed. The one torpedo hit on Taihō caused little concern on board. Ozawa still "radiated confidence and satisfaction" and by 11:30 had launched raids Three and Four. Meanwhile, a novice took over the damage-control work. He thought the best way to handle gasoline fumes was to open up the ship's ventilation system and let them disperse. When he did, the fumes spread all through the ship. Unknown to anybody on board, Taihō became a floating time bomb. About 3:30 that afternoon, Taihō was jolted by a severe explosion. A senior staff officer on the bridge saw the flight deck heave up. The sides blew out. Taihō dropped out of formation and began to settle in the water, clearly doomed. Though Admiral Ozawa wanted to go down with the ship, his staff prevailed on him to survive and to shift his quarters to the cruiser Haguro. Taking the Emperor's portrait, Ozawa transferred to Haguro by destroyer. After he left, Taihō was torn by a second thunderous explosion and sank stern first, carrying down 1,650 officers and men.

No one on Albacore thought Taihō had sunk, and her skipper was angry for "missing a golden opportunity." After this action, Albacore was assigned lifeguard duty for planes striking Yap and Ulithi. On 2 July, Albacore shifted over to intercept traffic between Yap and the Palau Islands. The submarine spotted a wooden inter-island steamer loaded with Japanese civilians. Albacore decided to stage a surface gun attack. After insuring the ship was afire, Albacore dived to avoid an airplane. The submarine surfaced soon thereafter and picked up five survivors.

Albacore put in to Majuro on 15 July. She was praised for an aggressive patrol and received credit for damaging a Shōkaku-class carrier. American codebreakers lost track of Taihō after the Battle of the Philippine Sea and, while puzzled, did not realize she had gone down. Only months later did a POW reveal her sinking.

Tenth Patrol

After a refit alongside Bushnell AS-15), the submarine began her tenth patrol on 8 August 1944. Her assignment was the Bungo Suido-Kii Suido area, and, during this period, Albacore was credited with sinking two Japanese vessels, a cargo ship and a submarine chaser. The patrol ended at Pearl Harbor on 25 September.

Loss

Albacore left Pearl Harbor on 24 October 1944 (with Hugh Rimmer, Class of 1937, in command), topped off her fuel tanks at Midway Island on 28 October, and was never heard from again. According to Japanese records captured after the war, a submarine (presumed to be Albacore) struck a naval mine very close to the shore off northeastern Hokkaidō on 7 November 1944. A Japanese patrol boat witnessed the explosion of a submerged submarine and saw a great deal of heavy oil, cork, bedding, and food supplies rise to the surface. On 21 December, Albacore was presumed lost. Her name was stricken from the Naval Vessel Register on 30 March 1945.

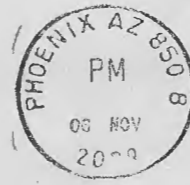
Albacore won nine battle stars for her service and the Presidential Unit Citation for her second, third, eighth, and ninth patrols during World War II.



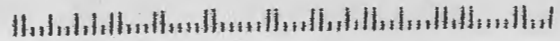
Return To:

U. S. Submarine Veterans, Perch Base
13210 N. Lake Forest Dr.
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