



# SubVets Scuttlebutt

Albany-Saratoga Base Newsletter

Summer/Fall 2006 Volume 1 Number 3

Jim Irwin - Editor



## USSVI 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 toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States Government."*

Qualification in submarines is a daunting task. However, once finished you become part of a fellowship that can only be understood by those who have done it themselves. That can only be truly recognized by the very small and special group of men that have the pride and honor of calling themselves SUBMARINERS.

### 2006 Albany-Saratoga Base Officers

Base Commander - John Cook

Sr. Vice Commander - Fritz Feldhaus

Jr. Vice Commander - Ray Koch

Secretary - Bill Preece

Treasurer - Fred Carlson

### Meeting Schedule

Base Meetings are held at the American Legion Adirondack Post 70 located on West Avenue in Saratoga Springs, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of every month beginning at 7:00pm. Put those dates on your calendar.

### Upcoming Events

September 20 - Regular meeting

October 18 - Regular meeting - Base Officer nominations from the floor

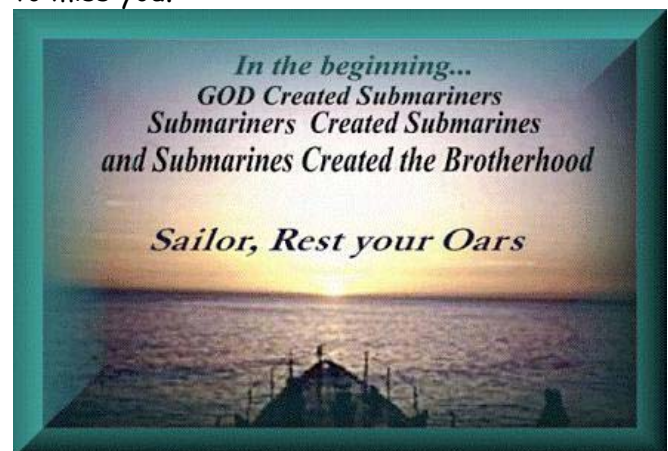
October 27-28 D2/D5 meeting in Reading PA

November 15 - Regular meeting - Elections

### Ralph E. Folger Sr.

Ralph received his final orders and departed on Eternal Patrol this past June 25<sup>th</sup>. Ralph was a U.S. Navy veteran of World War II, serving in the Pacific with the submarine fleet as a Motor Machinist Mate 2nd Class from

1942-1945. He served on board the USS Permit SS-178, qualifying in 1944 and the USS Springer SS-414. During his 39 years of naval service, he received several medals and honors, including the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with two Battle Stars, American Theatre Submarine Combat insignia with three gold stars, World War II Victory Medal, Navy Unit Commendation, Navy Conspicuous Service Ribbon, Submarine Dolphins and the Submarine Combat Patrol Pin. He retired from the U.S. Naval Reserve in 1983 at the rank of CWO4. Ralph was a member of SubVets of WWII and a member of our Base. Ralph, we are all going to miss you.



Pride Runs Deep

<http://www.albanysaratogasubvets.com/>

**Don't miss Joe Buff's latest article on the USS Hawaii (SSN-776) on page 3**

### **In Search Of!**

Let's preserve the memories. As most of you are aware the Albany-Saratoga Base's planned NY State Memorial will include a library and museum area. Although we are still in the early planning stages and are several years from its completion, we are always on the lookout for potential museum display and library items.

We are looking for real submarine artifacts from the attic. Remember that item you saved from the decommissioning shipyard scrap man? Don't let it go into the hometown landfill now. We need to preserve our history.

Please get the word out in any way you can think of that we are interested. Talk with friends and relatives, other Veterans groups, members of other Bases, Church groups, anyone you can think of and let them know that we are looking for any Submarine related material. We don't want these valuable items ending up in a landfill or being sold on e-Bay. We want them to be preserved for everyone to enjoy and to appreciate.

Please contact Memorial Committee Chairman Bob Ondek at 393-6944 if you have any questions.

### **Commanders Log - CDR John Cook**

Where has the year gone? Summer is nearly at its end and the days are getting shorter. It has been a busy summer with the base responding to five parades request and as usual the saltwort members responded to the call.

We have seen many changes in our organization. Al Singleman was designated District 5 Commander and as usual jumped in with both feet and got the ball rolling only to be asked to find a replacement because he was asked to run for National Secretary. Our own

Jim Irwin stepped up to the bar and answered the call. So Congratulations to both Al and Jim. Both have done an excellent job to date. Let's not forget Jim's wife Janet, for volunteering for our Chaplin position when the need arose.

Our September meeting will feature the nomination of a slate of Base Officers for next year and October will bring nominations from the floor. The next thing you know it will be time for the Christmas Party.

By the time this newsletter is published there will be a new slate of National Officers. Our turnout at the polls was not good. Hopefully we can get a better response next time.

Bob Ondek has worked tirelessly on our Memorial Plans only to be slowed by the bureaucracy. He has enlisted the help of Fred Miller, another base member and they are both going at it with flank speed and all torpedoes armed and ready.

On a sad note we lost our shipmate Ralph Folger this year but we know he is now on patrol watching over us. Sailor, rest your oar.

I have, in a way, summed up our past year in this newsletter because I want everyone to only look forward as we bring this year to an end. We have a great group of people and if we put our minds and our efforts into it we can accomplish more than we ever have before.



### **Base Member in the Spotlight**

Each issue we would like to feature a Base member. If you have a suggestion please contact the editor.

This month the member we've chosen was a driving force behind the formation of Albany-Saratoga Base. He was the first Base Commander and the Co-Chairman of the 2004 USSVI National Convention held in Saratoga Springs, NY.

Walter John Bydairk enlisted in the Navy in November 1945. He attended "Boot Camp" in Great Lakes, IL during which he volunteered

for Sub School. After completing Boot Camp boarded a train to New London on which the train conductor when he read Walt's orders moved him out of the "cattle car" and up to a First Class compartment. While still attending Sub School Walt was assigned to the pre-commissioning crew of the USS Halfbeak SS-352. Once aboard Halfbeak, launching, sea trials, commissioning were followed by a trip to South America for shakedown. Nassau gave Walt his first introduction to Rum and Coke! Walt qualified on board Halfbeak in November 1946. Sometime later a "Friend" signed Walt's name which "volunteered" him to attend ET school. After attending "A" School Walt was sent to Bethesda, MD for "B" School and high frequency radio equipment.

In July 1949 Walt was sent to Navy Instructor School in Norfolk and then rode his motorcycle to Great Lakes to share his knowledge with others. It was here that he met a WAVE named Lois and after teaching her to drive his motorcycle he talked her into marrying him.

In July 1953 he was transferred to the USS Angler SS-240 for a short time and he then volunteered for Nuke School. Walt said the hunting and fishing was so good in Idaho that after he finished school he elected to stay on for a while and teach. In July 1955 Walt joined the crew of USS Nautilus SSN-571 during which time he made Chief. He went on to serve on USS Skate SSN-578 where he served as leading reactor control member. In December 1958 he transferred to USS Halibut SSGN-587 out of Vallejo, CA. Walt had a few scary moments on Halibut where during sea trials the boat went into a 53° degree down bubble and recovered. Halibut went on to make some of the very first "Cold War" patrols. In 1962 Walt requested shore duty and came to West Milton as an instructor. He qualified on the S3G reactor as

an engineer and stood three years of rotating shift work. In 1965 he was selected for Warrant Officer which he declined. He opted to enroll in college and finish his degree. In August 1965 he was assigned to the Fleet Reserve. He attended SUNY Albany where he received his BA and MA and went on to teach at MT. Pleasant High School for the next 20 years.

## **AMERICA'S NEWEST "WAR CANOE"**

**By Joe Buff**

On Saturday, 17 June 2006, my wife Sheila and I were privileged to join the huge crowd at the Christening of the third revolutionary VIRGINIA-class fast attack submarine, USS HAWAII, SSN-776. This historic event took place at General Dynamics Electric Boat's shipyard in Groton, just south of the New London Naval Submarine Base.

The Christening had a very "Hawaiian" feel from the moment we arrived. Just past security, all guests were handed leis. Ours were orange plastic, but the ship's crew and their families wore really beautiful ones made of white and purple orchids. The center of attention, HAWAII herself, sat in a flooded dry-dock, decorated from stem to stern with signal flags, a special platform erected behind her sail. A Navy band played rousing patriotic music for about half an hour, before the ceremony began at 1100. The weather was perfect, sunny with high, scattered clouds. A cool breeze wafted in from the Thames, just strong enough to stir all the flags large and small and giving lively movement to the festive bunting everywhere, red and white and blue.

We knew this would be no ordinary Christening when a tall figure dressed in traditional Hawaiian warrior robes climbed up to the quarterdeck platform and wordlessly sprinkled the sail with big palm fronds dipped into a dish of water. He withdrew, and the



National Anthem played. The list of distinguished speakers included the presidents of HAWAII's co-builders, GDEB and Northrup Grumman Newport News, plus congressmen, admirals, and the Secretary of the Navy. The Hawaiian warrior appeared again. He was introduced now by Linda Lingle, Governor of Hawaii, as Master Sergeant Raymond Ganotise of the Hawaiian National Guard. He proceeded to conduct an emotionally moving bilingual and multi-faith Blessing of the Ship. Ganotise fluently recited or sang Hawaiian chants and hymns, anointing the ship again with his palm fronds and water. He repeated these same words in English translation, often calling HAWAII a "war canoe." The audience sat and listened in rapt silence. The vessel's skipper and crew stood at proud attention atop her hull, their bright white uniforms contrasting with HAWAII's menacing black. After the Master Sergeant gave a further benediction in English, Governor Lingle stepped forward and smashed the bottle of champagne against the rear of HAWAII's sail. Wild applause broke out. Again, the Navy band played.

But beneath the celebratory feeling, everyone present knew HAWAII would soon go into harm's way. And one cursory glance proved she's a genuinely new type of submarine. With advanced photonic imagery masts, her sail is extremely far forward, greatly improving stability at shallow depth in hostile littorals. Instead of anechoic tiles, she wears one continuous coating, its formula secret, for much better stealth. (The transformational features HAWAII sports below the waterline, and the startling improvements inside her, are even more amazing.) Truly, America's newest "war canoe" and her men will capably help defend our country against all comers in the increasingly volatile 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## USS TUCSON SSN-770 Model Float

BEFORE



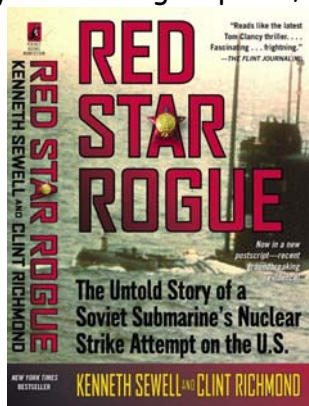
Members of the USS Tucson 770 Club, a civilian based organization, got together with members of the U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc to create the pint size model of the USS Tucson SSN 770. The model submarine was made in an attempt to educate the public and make them aware that our military needs their support. Carle Blackwell (above) who was the Project Chairman and also a USS Tang SS-563 shipmate of Fred Carlson and Bob Ondek reported the project took about 6 months to complete at a cost of \$9300.00.

AFTER



Looking for some good reading material?  
How about - **RED STAR ROGUE?**  
One of the great secrets of the Cold War,  
hidden for decades, is revealed at last.

Early in 1968 a nuclear-armed Soviet submarine sank in the waters off Hawaii, hundreds of miles closer to American shores than it should have been. Compelling evidence, assembled here for the first time, strongly suggests that the sub, K-129, sank while attempting to fire a nuclear missile, most likely at the naval base at Pearl Harbor. We now know that the Soviets had lost track of the sub; it had become a rogue. While the Soviets searched in vain for the boat, U.S. intelligence was able to pinpoint the site of the disaster. The new Nixon administration launched a clandestine, half-billion-dollar project to recover the sunken K-129. Contrary to years of deliberately misleading reports, the recovery operation was a great success. With the recovery of the sub, it became clear that the rogue was attempting to mimic a Chinese submarine, almost certainly with the intention of provoking a war between the U.S. and China. This was a carefully planned operation that, had it succeeded, would have had devastating consequences. During the successful recovery effort, the U.S. forged new relationships with the USSR and China. Could the information gleaned from the sunken sub have been a decisive factor shaping the new policies of détente between the Americans and the Soviets, and opening China to the West? And who in the USSR could have planned such a bold and potentially catastrophic operation? *Red Star Rogue* reads like something straight out of a Tom Clancy novel, but it is all true. Today our greatest fear is that terrorists may someday acquire a nuclear weapon and use it against us. In fact, they have already tried.

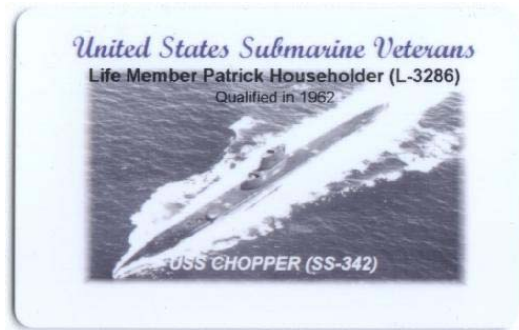


The author of this book is Ken Sewell, a nuke MM1 (SS) who spent 8 years in the Navy and served onboard USS Parche SSN-683. He is a member of Columbus Base USSVI. Autographed copies of this book are available from Columbus Base.

**SUPPORT THE USSVI'S CHARITABLE FOUNDATION. DONATE NOW.**

**Life Member Personalized Membership Card Program**

In FY 2002 USSVI initiated a new fundraising program to benefit the US Submarine Veterans' Charitable Foundation General Fund. This program offers the USSVI Life Members the opportunity to have a personalized membership card. The card will include a picture of the submarine of your choice.



**Example**

A \$50.00 donation to the Foundation General Fund is a requirement to obtain this card. In the event that you are not presently a Life Member, you may update your membership at the same time by including the dues payment according to your age group with your request. To find out the Life Membership fee for your age group please contact the USSVI National Office for details.

**Work or Play...**

At a command picnic, a bunch of officers were standing around talking. A Lieutenant said, "I think that making love is 80% fun and 20% work."

A Commander responded by saying, "No, I think that making love is more work than that. I would say that it is 60% fun and 40% work."

Then a Captain said, "No, making love is definitely way more work than that. I would say that it's more like 20% fun and 80% work."

They continued to discuss the matter for several minutes until a Submarine Chief Petty Officer walked by. The officers called the Chief over to ask his opinion.

The Captain said, "Chief, we're having a discussion, and we'd like your input. The Lieutenant says that making love is 80% fun and 20% work. The CDR thinks that making love is 60% fun and 40% work. I say that making love is 20% fun and 80% work. What's your opinion?"

The Chief scratched his chin and said, "Sir, I think you're all wrong. Making love must be 100% fun, because if there was any work involved, **you'd have an Enlisted man doing it for you!**"

### **Congratulations to the newly elected slate of National officers:**

**National CDR - Tom Conlon**

**SR. Vice CDR - Jim Foote**

**Jr. Vice CDR - Pat Householder**

**Secretary - Al Singleman**

**Treasurer - Jon Jacques**

**Eastern Regional Director - John Carcioppolo**

**Holland Club Commander - Bill Britt**

### **2006 D-2 & D-5 Meeting in Reading PA**

This years D-2 & D-5 combined meeting will be held in Reading PA on October 27 & 28, 2006. This year's meeting is being hosted by Reading Base, USSVI. Arrangements have been made with the Hotel to set up a Hospitality room for Friday's get-together. Snacks and Beverages will be available in the Hospitality room. The Business meeting will be held on Saturday at the Central Fire Company firehouse in

Laureldale. See Base Commander John Cook if you are interested or for additional details.

### **Steamboat's Picnic report**

On Saturday July 8<sup>th</sup> Steamboat's picnic was held at his mountain estate and was well attended. There were members of Hudson Valley Base, Albany-Saratoga Base, and WWII SubVets in attendance. The food was plentiful and delicious, lot's to drink, paddleboat rides provided by Ed Luther's grandson, and even a few (or maybe a lot) of sea stories. A joint meeting of the SubVets was held along with a meeting of the SubVettes from Hudson Valley. A grand time was had by all.

### **Storekeeper's Corner**

Base Storekeeper Diane Singleman would like to remind everyone that she has a wide assortment of items available for purchase. They include sweatshirts, golf shirts, ball caps, and garrison hats all professionally embroidered with USSVI and Base information. She also has a wide variety of miscellaneous pins and patches. You can contact Diane at 355-2119 or by Email at [diane@awards4sailing.com](mailto:diane@awards4sailing.com) or you can normally catch up with her at Base meetings.

### **SUB VETS LICENSE PLATES**



Show them who we are. Would you like a Sub Vet License Plate? In New York State, if you are a member of USSVI in good standing you are eligible for an Organizational license plate. It will display the Sub Vets logo and identify you as a United States Submarine Veteran. If you are interested or you would like additional information you can contact Mike Carmody from Long Island Base at 631-669-6967.



**American Submariner:** The national magazine is now available on the internet in its entirety at: <http://americansubmariner.us> Also, members may elect to just get *American Submariner* from the internet, saving the organization printing and mailing costs. The magazine is well done and it is a good product. If you would like to get the magazine on-line and not mailed, contact Mike at [subvetseditor@yahoo.com](mailto:subvetseditor@yahoo.com)

### Albany-Saratoga Base WWII SubVets

Walt Bydairk  
Charles Carson  
Lou Drapalski  
Gene Harvey  
Ray Koch  
Bill Whitney

Gentlemen - Thank you for a job well done!

**Frank Dorchak - not only a member of our Base but a supporter. Contact him for you Submarine related needs.**

## Greenboard Enterprises



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*Frank P. Dorchak, Jr.*

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### New Navy Amphibious Assault Ship Being Built With WTC Steel

With a year to go before it even touches the water, the Navy's amphibious assault ship USS New York has already made history twice. It was built with 24 tons of scrap steel from the

World Trade Center, and it survived Hurricane Katrina.



USS New York is about 45 percent complete and should be ready for launch in mid-2007. Katrina disrupted construction when it pounded the Gulf Coast last summer, but the 684-foot vessel escaped serious damage, and workers were back at the yard near New Orleans two weeks after the storm.

USS New York is the fifth in a new class of warship designed for missions that include special operations against terrorists. It will carry a crew of 360 sailors and 700 combat-ready Marines to be delivered ashore by helicopters and assault craft. The ship's motto: **NEVER FORGET!**

### Al Singleman

**Congratulations to USSVI's new secretary, Base member Al Singleman. We wish you the very best and we know you'll do a great job.**

### New Escape Training Tower Planned for the US Naval Submarine Base in Groton

The Navy has broken ground on a new, \$17 million dollar submarine escape trainer at the Naval Submarine Base and anticipates the high-tech training facility will be ready in the summer of 2008 to train submariners.

Pride Runs Deep

<http://www.albanysaratogasubvets.com/>

The new escape trainer will complement the base's existing submarine escape immersion equipment. The escape trainer will include a 36-foot-high "Rapid Ascent Tower," which will be used for officers and sailors at the Naval Submarine School as well as for pre-deployment training for Groton-based submarine crews.

The new escape training facility which will hold 82,500 gallons of water will allow sailors to experience the physical and psychological effects of a pressurized escape from a submarine. It also will help sailors gain and build confidence in the Navy's escape equipment and its methodologies. Besides the actual trainer, the new facility will include additional training and administrative areas, medical offices, maintenance and storage.



CONSTRUCTION BEGINS FOR NEW ESCAPE TOWER

### 598 CLASS BOAT REUNION A BIG SUCCESS

August 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> saw the gathering of approximately 350 former crewmembers and

family of the 598 Class Submarines gather in Groton, CT for the 1<sup>st</sup> ever such reunion.



Those attending had an abundance of activities to keep us busy. We had a "chili and beer" welcome aboard party at the Groton SubVets clubhouse; we attended Sub School Graduation, toured the Sub School facilities including the damage control trainer and the control room diving trainers for the Seawolf class and for the new Virginia class boats. We had lunch at the Base mess hall, and got onboard tours of the USS Memphis SSN-691 and the USS Toledo SSN-769. All in all it was a wonderful event and the next one is already in the early planning stages and scheduled for either February or March 2008 in Cape Canaveral Florida.

### LITTLE ROCK CONVENTION REPORT

The Albany-Saratoga contingent consisting of Base members Fred and Sondra Carlson, Al and Diane Singleman, Ray and Margaret Koch, and Garrett and Marietta Smith are reporting that although the Convention is a good one it is not as good as our 2004 Convention in Saratoga Springs. They should have a full report ready for the September meeting.

**EXTRA, EXTRA, READ ALL ABOUT IT!**  
Albany-Saratoga Base Newsletter - **SubVets Scuttlebutt** has won third place in the USSVI's Base Newsletter of the Year contest.