



# SubVets Scuttlebutt

Albany-Saratoga Base Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2006 Volume 1 Number 4

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

- December 13 - Christmas party meeting
- January 17 - Regular meeting - induction of 2007 Base Officers
- February 21 - Regular meeting
- March 21 - Regular meeting

### Welcome New Base Members

- Shawn Patrick - Richmondville
- G.A. "Joe" Kuehn - Saratoga Springs
- Margaret Koch - Warrensburg

### Albany-Saratoga Base brings home three awards from the 2006 Convention



Shown above are Base Commander John Cook holding the Robert Link Award (Most exemplifies USSVI's motto "Pride Runs Deep", Paul Hartnägél, Base webmaster for winning Class III Base website award - 4<sup>th</sup> runner-up, and newsletter editor Jim Irwin holding the 3<sup>rd</sup> place award for Class III Base newsletter. Congratulations to all for a job well done.

Don't miss Joe Buff's latest article on the 688 Boats keeping "Up To Date" beginning on page 3

Pride Runs Deep

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

## 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.

## HAPPY 231<sup>ST</sup> BIRTHDAY - U.S. NAVY

On Friday, October 13, 1775 in Philadelphia, the Continental Congress voted to fit out two sailing vessels, armed with ten carriage guns, as well as swivel guns, and manned by crews of eighty, and to send them out on a cruise of three months to intercept transports carrying munitions and stores to the British army in America. This was the original legislation out of which the Continental Navy grew and as such constitutes the birth of United States Navy.

## A NOTE FROM THE BASE CHAPLAIN

Please contact our Base Chaplain to notify her of any members who are sick or otherwise incapacitated so she can send a card. You can

send her an email at [ijanet1@hotmail.com](mailto:ijanet1@hotmail.com) or call her at 383-2481 and leave a message.

## Congratulations to the newly elected 2007 Albany-Saratoga Base Officers

Commander - Al Singleman

Senior Vice Commander - Fritz Feldhaus

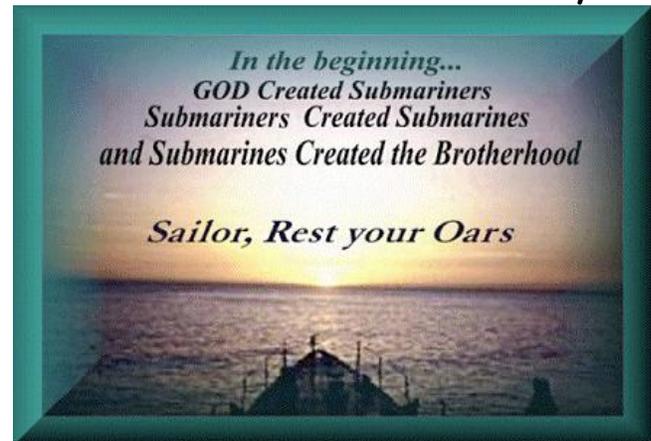
Junior Vice Commander - Ray Koch

Secretary - Mike Lynett

Treasurer - Fred Carlson

They will be installed and assume their new duties at the Base meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup>.

The Albany-Saratoga Base mourns the loss of our shipmate Robert Ondek who passed away on December 2, 2006. Bob was one of the founding members of our base and was a driving force behind the efforts to build a NY State Memorial for all NY State submariners who lost their lives in service to their country.



## Commanders Log - CDR John Cook

It is on a very sad note that I make my last entry into the Commanders Log.

We have lost a true Shipmate in Bob Ondek and even thought the Base will survive and probably prosper it will not be the same without Bob. He was one of our founders, one of our Officers, one of our friends. He has done more for this Base than will ever be recognized and he will be sorely missed. Our

Memorial efforts are in jeopardy. Bob has been the force behind the Memorial efforts along with many other things. He was one of the reasons the 2004 Convention came off as well as it did. He was very instrumental in obtaining Joe Buff as a speaker and then as an associate member of our base. I could go on and on but most of you know what Bob has accomplished for our Base.

He is now out there on eternal patrol and watching over the Base and his fellow shipmates. God help us if we don't bring about the Memorial.

To our dear departed shipmate, Sailor rest your oar.

To my shipmates, I have enjoyed being your Commander and I know the Base will go on and improve with every meeting and every year. I ask, no I beg of you all, please step up to the bar and put all the efforts you can in every way that you can, to carry on in the same tradition that our shipmate Bob Ondek did. We desperately need your help if we are to fulfill the dream of the Memorial that Bob has worked so long for and to keep our Base strong.

Fair winds and following seas in the year ahead. God Bless you all.

### **Submarine Crew in the Spotlight**

We would like to recognize all of our Shipmates onboard USS MEMPHIS (SSN 691). USS MEMPHIS completed a deployment to WESTPAC late last year. This deployment consisted of operations in both the Atlantic and the Pacific, as well as two transits over the polar ice cap. In January USS MEMPHIS was selected to receive the Battle E for SUBDEVRON TWELVE.

Then in the spring MEMPHIS was tasked for a surge deployment as part of the Global War on Terrorism. After recently returning home from this deployment the Officers and Crew

were recognized by being awarded the Battenburg Cup. This is an award given to the best Ship or Submarine in the entire Atlantic Fleet. This honor has only been given to a Submarine Crew one other time. So to all of our Shipmates onboard USS MEMPHIS (SSN 691), congratulations on your accomplishments as a team. You are definitely our Crew in the Spotlight.



USS MEMPHIS SSN-691

### **688's KEEP UP TO DATE**

By  
**Joe Buff**

I was recently privileged to visit the LOS ANGELES-class fast attack sub USS SAN JUAN, SSN 751, at the New London Naval Submarine Base in Groton, CT. SAN JUAN's executive officer was my escort for the dock tour. The ship was commissioned in 1988, back while the Cold War was still being fought. But the more the XO talked, and the more things he showed me, the more I saw proof that SAN JUAN and her sisters are indispensable capital ships of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each of the LOS ANGELES boats still in service has received repeated major upgrades and refits during her lifetime. It's not exaggerating much to say that these magnificent vessels have little in common today with what they were like when first

launched, except maybe for their pressure hulls and framing.

As a case in point, America's newest commissioned SSN, USS TEXAS, second in the transformational VIRGINIA-class, happened to be tied up next to SAN JUAN during the tour. SAN JUAN's XO said that his own ship's combat systems (sonar signal processors and displays, weapons control, etc.) were actually of a more advanced generation than what TEXAS was built with - TEXAS would get the new system installed while she was in Groton.

Other significant enhancements to the L.A.-class include much better secret quieting technology and improvements to the propulsion plants. Major leaps forward in sensors include retrofitting the TB-29A "thin line" towed array, more sensitive and versatile than the earlier "fat line" TB-16D. Reportedly, the revolutionary sonar wide-aperture arrays of the SEAWOLF and VIRGINIA classes have been or will be mounted onto the L.A. boats, starting with SAN JUAN and including all her 22 newer sisters. These wide-aperture arrays allow instant ranging of detected targets. No more the seemingly endless "polishing the cannonball" of a target motion analysis to get a good firing solution on an adversary!

Just as important as the LOS ANGELES platforms are the fish and cruise missiles they carry. This includes the latest mod of the Mark 48 Advanced Capability torpedo, which with open computer architecture and C-BASS littoral-capable sonars is the active-duty American submariner's weapon of choice. The Tactical Tomahawk, which can loiter in flight and be re-directed toward fleeting high-value targets of opportunity, fleshes out the L.A.-class armaments suite.

Developmental off-board, remote controlled and retrievable mine reconnaissance

probes are gradually becoming operational in L.A.-class torpedo rooms. The dry-deck shelters that can be mounted topside aft of the sail, to support SEAL operations, are perhaps more relevant now in the War on Terror than ever before. Nor is active defense neglected; the pods on dihedral fins at most ships' sterns, used to deploy towed arrays, are being modified to also hold ejectors for 5-inch countermeasures, supplementing the smaller ones that can be fired from internally.

The best proof of all that LOS ANGELES subs remain fully capable warships of tomorrow is that LOS ANGELES herself, SSN 688, just celebrated her 30<sup>th</sup> birthday. Yet in 2007 she and her crew will head out on deployment once more, to the vital and volatile nautical arena of the Western Pacific.

### Base Birthdays

**October** 1 - George Gasser, 7 - Ron Diodati, Ray Koch, 15 - Thomas Miller, 16 - Joseph Nokes, 17 - Thomas Nolan, 20 - Fred Miller, 21 - Harry Terzian, 27 - Charles Norton, 31 - Robert Jensen

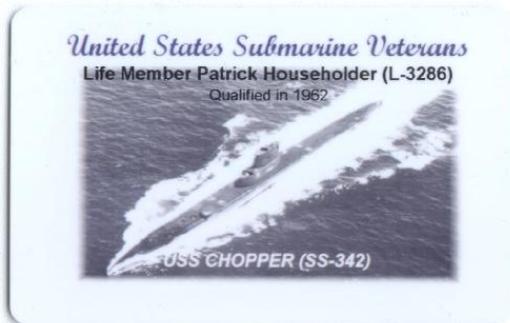
**November** 3 - Ronald Moore, 4 - John Mishoe Sr., 6 - Ed Luther, James Bussen, 7 - Robert Currier, 9 - Fred Nardacci, 11 - Mike Lynette, 12 - James Williams, 15 - Bob Walsh, 18 - Janet Irwin, 19 - Tom Ondek, 26 - Walt Taylor

**December** 7 - Brian Pantola, 9 - Mark Murray, 11 - Tom Glenn Jr., 14 - Phil Griffith, Michael Markham, 18 - Claudio Barrera, 19 - Paul Hartnägel, 20 - Edward Gradwell, 22 - Richard Hoag, 29 - Patrick Cummings, 31 - Daniel Corrigan

**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.

### **Humor - The Chief gets a Haircut**

In a small town near Washington, DC, a young barber opened his shop for business. A young enlisted Marine came in to get a "high and tight". The barber asked the young Marine about his service and a lot of small talk took place.

After the haircut was complete, the Marine opened his wallet and the barber said, "It's on the house, Marine. Thanks for your service to this great nation". The next morning when the barber opened his shop there was a box on his doorstep with a note of thanks and a "SEMPER FI" bright red T-shirt.

Later that same morning a young Army G.I. comes in for a haircut. The same story

happens - they talk about the Army. After the haircut is complete, the G.I. stands and reaches for his wallet. The barber says, "No thanks, son. It's on the house. Thank you for your service to our country." The next morning as the man is opening his shop, on the doorstep is a box with an Army ball cap and a thank you note.

That same day, a Chief comes in for a haircut. He is decked out in his full dress blues. The barber is impressed and again, the same things happen... small talk about the service. When the Chief goes to pay, again the barber says, "Not required, Master Chief, it's on the house. Thanks for your service to this great nation." You guessed it, the next morning, there on his doorstep were.....

**three more Chiefs!**

### **"SEAS OF CRISIS" WINS 2006 ADMIRAL NIMITZ AWARD**

Base member Joe Buff was pleased to announce that his latest (sixth) novel, SEAS OF CRISIS, has received the 2006 Admiral Nimitz Award for Outstanding Naval Fiction from the Military Writers Society of America. The award itself, an engraved lucite sculpture trophy, was scheduled to be presented at the MWSA's annual "Salute to the Military" convention dinner in San Diego on Saturday, October 14.



### **The End of an Era**

USS Dolphin (AGSS-555) completed her final cruise Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> when she tied to the pier at Space and Naval Warfare Systems Center, San Diego.

During the underway, the diesel-electric powered test and research submarine made her 1,560<sup>th</sup> and final dive to a depth exceeding 3000 feet.

The submarine was commissioned in 1968 and is the sixth oldest ship in the fleet. Dolphin was designed for research, development, test and evaluation and is one of the world's deepest diving submarines with a maximum operating depth in excess of 3000 feet.



USS Dolphin (AGSS -555)

### 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.



### A SPECIAL ONE-TIME TAX CREDIT ON YOUR 2006 TAX RETURN

When it comes time to prepare and file your 2006 tax return, make sure you don't overlook the federal excise tax refund credit. You claim the credit on line 71 of your form 1040. A similar line will be available if you file the short form 1040A. If you have family or friends who no longer file a tax return AND they have their own land phone in their home and have been paying a phone bill for years, make sure they know about this form 1040EZ-T.

What is this all about? Well the federal excise tax has been charged to you on your phone bill for years.

It is an old tax that was assessed on your toll calls based on how far the call was being made and how much time you talked on that call. When phone companies began to offer flat fee phone service, challenges to the excise tax ended up in federal courts in several districts of the country. The challenges pointed out that flat fee/rate phone service had nothing to do with the distance and the length of the phone call. Therefore, the excise tax should/could not be assessed.

The IRS has now conceded this argument. Phone companies have been given notice to stop

assessing the federal excise tax as of Aug 30, 2006. You will most likely see the tax on your September cutoff statement, but it should NOT be on your October bill. But the challengers of the old law also demanded restitution. So the IRS has announced that a one time credit will be available when you and I file our 2006 tax return as explained above. However, the IRS also established limits on how BIG a credit you can get.

Here's how it works: If you file your return as a single person with just you as a dependent, you get to claim a \$30 credit on line 71 of your 1040. If you file with a child or a parent as your dependent, you claim \$40.

If you file your return as a married couple with no children, you claim \$40. If you file as married with children, you claim \$50 if one child, \$60 if two children. In all cases, the most you get to claim is \$60 - UNLESS you have all your phone bills starting AFTER Feb 28, 2003 through July 31, 2006 (*don't use any bills starting Aug 1, 2006.*), then you can add up the ACTUAL TAX AS IT APPEARS ON YOUR BILLS AND CLAIM THAT FOR A CREDIT.

Now if you have your actual phone bills and come up with an ACTUAL TAX AMOUNT, you cannot use line 71 on your tax return. You have to complete a special form number 8913 and attach it to your tax return.

Individuals using the special form 1040EZ-T will have to attach this form 8913 also.

One final point - this credit is a refundable credit. That means you get this money, no matter how your tax return works out. If you would end up owing the IRS a balance, the refund will reduce that balance you owe. If you end up getting a refund, the credit will be added and you get a bigger refund by that \$30 to \$60, depending on how many dependents are on your return.

## SUBMARINE REACTOR COMPARTMENT GRAVEYARD - TRENCH 94

Did you ever wonder how they dispose of the reactor compartment of a recycled US Naval Submarine? After decommissioning the boat enters a dry dock and the center section (the Reactor Compartment) is removed and the unused fuel is recovered. After de-fueling, the Reactor Compartment is treated like low level waste (LLW in Radiological contamination terminology) It is handled differently than the rest of the boat. Since it is radioactive waste, and now separated from the ship, it leaves the dry dock, and is not recycled. It is transported by a series of special vehicles to the Hanford Reservation, a 500 square mile facility located northwest of Richland, WA. Here the reactor compartments are brought to an area of the Hanford Reservation designated 200 East and eventually placed in a disposal trench called Trench 94.



In 1986 the reactor compartment of the ex-USS Patrick Henry SSN 599 became the first on placed in Trench 94. Once full, the trench will be filled with dirt and buried. The compartments are expected to retain their integrity for more than 600 years.



Floor of Trench 94

### USS Honolulu SSN-718 returns home from her final cruise

PORT ORCHARD, WA -- Los Angeles class fast-attack submarine USS Honolulu (SSN 718) passes the Manette Bridge and the decommissioned Destroyer USS Turner Joy (DD 951) as she heads towards Naval Base Kitsap Bremerton, October 28, 2006. The Honolulu, the 24th ship of her class, returned home this morning from her final patrol.



### The Sailor's Christmas

**Twas the night before Christmas, the boat was out  
steaming,**

**Sailors stood watch while others were dreaming.**

**They lived in a crowd with racks tight and small,**

**In a 80-man berthing, cramped one and all.**

**I had come down the snorkel with presents to give,**

**And to see inside just who might perhaps live.**

**I looked all about, a strange sight did I see,**

**No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.**

**No stockings were hung, shined boots close at hand,**

**On the bulkhead hung pictures of a far distant land.**

**They had medals and badges and awards of all kind,  
And a sober thought came into my mind.  
For this place was different, so dark and so dreary,  
I had found the house of a Sailor, once I saw  
clearly.**

**A Sailor lay sleeping, silent and alone,  
Curled up in a rack and dreaming of home.**

**The face was so gentle, the room squared away,  
This was the United States Sailor today.**

**This was the hero I saw on TV,**

**Defending our country so we could be free.**

**I realized the families that I would visit this night,  
Owed their lives to these Sailors lay willing to fight.**

**Soon round the world, the children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate on Christmas Day.**

**They all enjoyed freedom each day of the year,  
Because of the Sailor, like the one lying here.**

**I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone,  
On a cold Christmas Eve on a sea, far from home.**

**The very thought brought a tear to my eye,**

**I dropped to my knees and started to cry.**

**The Sailor awakened and I heard a calm voice,**

**"Santa, don't cry, this life is my choice."**

**"Defending the seas all days of the year,**

**So others may live and be free with no fear."**

**I thought for a moment, what a difficult road,**

**To live a life guided by honor and code.**

**After all it's Christmas Eve and the ship's underway!**

**But freedom isn't free and it's sailors who pay.**

**The Sailor say's to our country "be free and sleep  
tight,**

**No harm will come, not on my watch and not on this  
night.**

**The Sailor rolled over and drifted to sleep,**

**I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.**

**I kept watch for hours, so silent, so still,**

**I watched as the Sailor shivered from the night's  
cold chill.**

**I didn't want to leave on that cold dark night,**

**This guardian of honor so willing to fight.**

**The Sailor rolled over and with a voice strong and  
sure,**

**Commanded, "Carry on Santa, It's Christmas, and All  
is Secure!"**

**Merry Christmas**

**&**

**Happy New Year**