



# SubVets Scuttlebutt

Albany-Saratoga Base Newsletter  
Spring/Summer 2006 Volume 1 Number 2

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."*

## HAPPY 6<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY ALBANY-SARATOGA BASE BASE FOUNDED MAY 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2000

### 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

June 10 - Flag Day Parade - Saratoga  
June 21 - Regular meeting  
July 8 - Steamboat Fulton's Picnic  
July 19 - Regular meeting  
August 6 - Schuylerville parade  
August 16 - Regular meeting

**Don't miss JOE BUFF's latest article beginning on page 2 of this issue.**

### Commanders Log

Happy Birthday to Albany-Saratoga SubVets Base. We were 6 years old as of May 16<sup>th</sup>. A WELL DONE to the people who 6 years ago

put out the effort to get us underway. Also a "well done" to those of you who have continued to support and upgrade our organization. In these short six years we have accomplished quite a bit for a small group. We have spread the Submarine Story via displays and lectures at schools, libraries, special presentations on Submarine day and various other ways. We have supported our communities and other organizations such as the VFW, American Legion, and the Elks by participating in parades. From what others have said we were the sponsors of the best Sub Vets Convention yet. Our most recent project of building a Submarine Memorial for NYS Submarine Vets who gave their lives and for all Submariners will be a top-notch memorial when completed. All who have contributed to the above efforts can be proud of themselves for it has been no small feat to get to this point. We need to keep up the good work and get more people involved. Our membership has been steadily increasing over these six years and with any luck it will continue. Again Happy 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday and many happy returns.

### Welcome new Base Members

On behalf of the Albany-Saratoga Base I'd like to welcome our newest Base members.

Pride Runs Deep

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

Craig Parvu from Vernon, NY and Robert Currier from Greenwich, NY. Welcome aboard.

## SMARTEST "FISH" IN THE SEA

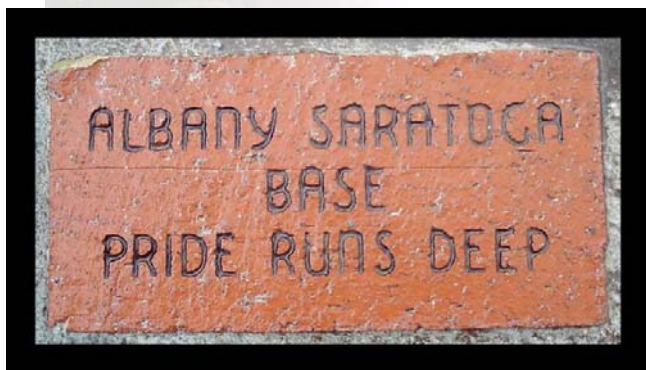
By  
Joe Buff

### USS Lapon SSN 661 Sail Memorial

Last July the Ozark-Runner Base dedicated a memorial using the sail of the USS Lapon.



Albany-Saratoga Base purchased one of the bricks that can be seen in this photo. Some of the other photos that are posted on the Ozark-Runner web site are images of a few of the individual engraved bricks. I see the web master has chosen an excellent example of how the bricks look after they have been engraved. It looks great, doesn't it?



Remember we will be looking for supporters to purchase similar bricks for our memorial when the time comes.

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

Over the whole past century, America's Silent Service has succeeded because of two constants. One is the greatness of the men who crew the boats in each generation. The other is the use of torpedoes ("fish") as one of any attack sub's key armaments. Torpedoes, like people, pass through generations as decades pass. The smartest fish in the sea, today and tomorrow, is unquestionably the U.S. Submarine Force's brand-new Mod 7 of the Mark 48 Improved Advanced Capability (ADCAP) heavyweight, wire-guided torpedo.

But first, let's look at the alleged competition.

Lately there's been a brouhaha over the Russian 300-knot rocket propelled torpedo, the Shkval. Variants are now in the hands of China and Iran. Against a surface ship, a Shkval could be a formidable weapon. But against a U.S. Navy sub, these ultra-fast torpedoes don't really cut it. The basic design is a throwback to the late 1960s, when the Soviet weapons were nuclear armed. As such, Shkvals lacked any target homing sensors in the modern context. Recent attempts by the Kremlin to introduce a conventionally armed and properly guided, updated mod of the Shkval face serious engineering and tactical obstacles. For homing sonar to work, the Shkval must slow down to regular torpedo speeds, making it vulnerable to standard U.S. submarine countermeasures, evasive maneuvers, and the coming miniaturized ATT - the anti-torpedo torpedo, for which working test models already exist. Worse, the shape of a rocket torpedo, needed to achieve its "supercavitating" underwater high speed, is poorly suited for mounting sonar suites; the

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Shkval is a long cone which comes to a small and sharp point. Its own velocity blinds the Shkval, making it in practice a pretty dumb weapon.

Now let's check out the Mark 48 Mod 7. Its nose is a sizeable acoustically-transparent window, behind which are active and passive sonars of remarkable sophistication. The latest improvements to the sonars allow a much wider frequency range for simultaneously taking in broadband and tonals that give away a lurking or fleeing targeted enemy sub, even a quiet diesel. Just as important, the Mod 7 has been given a whole new computer brain, to interpret those sonar inputs and make brilliant autonomous decisions while in the race to catch and kill its prey. This was done by moving to "open architecture software," a fancy way of saying that it's easy to update the fish's programming in general, and quite simple to load in detailed instructions for a specific type of attack mission. Reportedly, a single crewman with a laptop and a connector cable could reconfigure a torpedo room full of Mod 7s in barely an hour. One available configuration of crucial interest indeed is a littoral-optimized combination of sonar signal processors and artificial intelligence. The Mod 7 is still wire-guided, except now the wire is a fiber optic cable, allowing a quantum leap in bandwidth (data rate) for communication between weapons techs on the parent sub and their units in the water.

All this goes to make the latest generation Mark 48 by far the smartest "fish" anywhere in the sea.

### USSVI 2006 National Convention

This year the 2006 USSVI National Convention is scheduled to be held from September 5 - 10 in Little Rock, Arkansas.



Convention Chairman Ray Wewers and Co-Chairs Barbara Wewers, and Bob & Mary Christians are assuring everyone that the Convention will be a good one. So make your plans to attend.

### Bob "STEAMBOAT" Fulton's Picnic



On Saturday July the 8<sup>th</sup>, STEAMBOAT'S Picnic will be held at his mountain estate. All shipmates are welcome. Bring a dish to share,

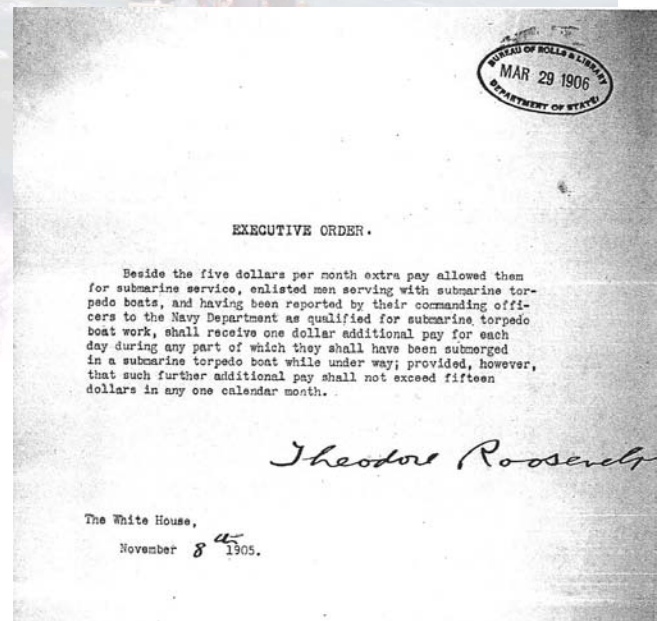
the beverage of your choice, and folding chairs. Come and meet Hudson Valley Base members. A good time will be had by all. Directions: Take I-88 west to exit 23 which will be Route 30A. Turn left onto RT-30A for about 0.9 miles which will then become RT-30. Go for about 7.6 miles and then make a slight left onto NY-145. Go for another 6.0 miles and then make a right onto Gates Hill Road East. Go about 1.2 miles and look for the signs.

## Submariner Pay and Teddy Roosevelt

by Barry Monroe from Sharkhunters KTB

Teddy Roosevelt was a man of many firsts. He was the first President to ride in a car and fly in an airplane. He was also the first American President to board a submarine and make a dive. Onboard USS Plunger (SS-2) on 25 August 1905, he ventured off Long Island Sound for this historic cruise (this was during the time when he was helping to negotiate an end to the Russo-Japanese War, which would earn him the Nobel Peace Prize, another Presidential first). During the cruise, the submarine remained beneath the surface (which was being lashed by a heavy rain) long enough for the President to watch fish swim past his window. Then, taking the controls, Teddy conducted several maneuvers himself, including one which brought the boat to the surface, rear end first. USS Plunger was the second submarine in the US Navy and was commissioned in September of 1903. Because of this "patrol", Teddy was instrumental in submariner's pay and he was always known for getting things done. The Navy did not consider submarine duty either unusual or hazardous, but classified it as nothing more than ordinary shore duty. This meant that the sailors on board earned 25% less pay than sailors received for duty on a destroyer, cruiser, etc. After the two hours that Roosevelt had spent on the submarine, he considered this to be unfair. He found submariners to be trained to

the highest standards and that their work was both strenuous and dangerous. Shortly after returning to shore Teddy decided that there must be a change in the pay structure for the men serving on submarines and issued an Executive Order for the pay change. He directed that submarine officers be paid the same as those on surface ships, while qualified enlisted men should receive an extra \$10 per month in addition to the normal pay of their rating. They were also to receive an additional \$1 per day for each day the boat was submerged while underway. Unqualified enlisted men received an additional \$5 per month. So, the next time you think back on the extra money you earned in the sub service, remember to think about the man that made it happen.



## 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

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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.

### **A note from H.C. Commander Bill Britt**

Shipmates,

This letter is to inform you of my decision to request relief of my duties as Holland Club Commander.

In order to - facilitate selection of my replacement. I will be sending notice to all base commanders requesting they notify all members of the Holland Club of my decision and to allow the opportunity to any Holland Club member to volunteer to be considered for nomination.

I will continue to execute the duties of my office until closing of the Annual Holland Club meeting 9 September 2006 - At which time I will conduct nomination and election for Holland Club Commander. It has been a distinct pleasure and a great honor serving the members of the Holland Club.

Pride Runs Deep  
William E. Britt

**This is an architectural concept drawing of how our New York State Memorial will look upon its completion.**



We are going to need a lot of help in many areas including planning, fundraising, and actual construction. Past Base Commander Bob Ondek is the Chairman of the memorial

committee, contact him at 393-6944 or see him at an upcoming meeting to find out how you can help.

### **American Submariner:**

The national magazine is now available on the internet in it's 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)

### **First Ever 598 Class Boat Reunion**

August 24 - 27, 2006 at the Groton Motor Inn and Suites located on Route 184 just off Interstate 95 on the Groton side of the Gold Star Memorial Bridge. Individual Boat Coordinators are as follows:

Ken Szablewski 598 Boat

(860)376-5238 E-mail: [gwash598@juno.com](mailto:gwash598@juno.com)

James Q. Warrick 599 Boat

(435)635-7659 E-mail: [jwarrick@infowest.com](mailto:jwarrick@infowest.com)

Jim Irwin 600 Boat

(518)383-2481 E-mail: [jirwin1@nycap.rr.com](mailto:jirwin1@nycap.rr.com)

Tim VeArd 601 Boat

(321) 722-9919 E-mail: [tveard@ssbn601.com](mailto:tveard@ssbn601.com)

Doc McCance 602 Boat

(860) 464-6758 E-mail: [11doc@comcast.net](mailto:11doc@comcast.net)

If you are interested or would like more details contact Jim Irwin

### **Veterans Health Care**

Veterans continue to be more satisfied with their health care than the average American, according to an annual report on customer satisfaction that compares the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system with private-sector health care.

The ratings came in the annual American Customer Satisfaction Index, which ranks

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"customer satisfaction" with various federal programs and private-sector industries.

The latest findings mark the sixth consecutive year VA's health care system has outranked the private sector for customer satisfaction.

Health care is just one of many potential benefits available to those who served in our nations armed forces. If you served, or know someone who did, check on eligibility for benefits and services from the VA at: <http://www.va.gov> or call 1-800-827-1000.

### USS Holland (SS-1) underway



Could that be Ed Luther at the helm?

### HOW BIG IS A BILLION?

Don't take my word for it, get your calculator out. Here's some thought provoking info: The next time you hear a politician use the word "billion" in a casual manner, think about whether you want the "politicians" spending your tax money. A billion is a difficult number to comprehend, but one advertising agency did a good job of putting that figure into some perspective in one of its releases:

- a.. A billion seconds ago it was 1959.
- b.. A billion minutes ago Jesus was alive.
- c.. A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age.
- d.. A billion days ago no-one walked on the earth on two feet.
- e.. A billion dollars ago was only 8 hours and 20 minutes, at the rate our government is spending it.

## Al Singleman

Support Albany-Saratoga Base member Al Singleman who is running for the office of National Secretary. Make sure you vote!

### Mini Sub Program Involving USS Greenville Canceled



Since 2004, the USS Greenville, SSN 772, has been carrying a minisub on its rear deck. This minisub, designated ASDS-1 for Advanced SEAL Delivery System, is part of a program that has been in development for 12 years. ASDS-1 is the only such minisub actually in the fleet. The Navy announced earlier this month that it was canceling the program. This leaves the future of ASDS-1 and its association with the USS Greenville unclear. (U.S. Navy Photo)

### Albany-Saratoga Base WWII SubVets

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

Gentlemen - Thank you for a job well done!

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

## Greenboard Enterprises



Preserving The Memory

Frank P. Dorchak, Jr.

P.O.B. 172 • MALONE, NY 12953

(518) 483-6272 • ss572dbf@aol.com

Cell (518) 651-5494 • www.greenboardsir.com

### VFW Eligibility Requirement Revised

If you are interested in joining a VFW they have revised their eligibility requirements. Now includes the Afghanistan Campaign Medal (ACM), the Iraq Campaign Medal (ICM), the Air Force Expeditionary Service Ribbon with Gold Border (AFESR w/GB), the Combat Action Badge (CAB), and the **SSBN Nuclear Deterrent Patrol Breast Insignia**. If you are a Boomer you are now eligible. Get application at you local VFW post.

**Congratulations to Base member and Newsletter editor Jim Irwin show here with Eastern Regional Director George Boyle after being sworn in as the new ED-5 Commander**



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### Let's preserve the memory!

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.

At the monthly SubVets meeting in May it was brought to our attention that many older veterans and especially WWII Vets have received their final orders and have departed on eternal patrol. Many, if not most of these men have a collection of memorabilia and even on occasion they may have one of a kind items. The Albany-Saratoga Base would greatly appreciate donations of any and all items for future display in our memorial.

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.

### Theft of important Veterans information

With the theft of computer data that contained important personal information of over 26 million Veterans there has arisen a justifiable level of concern. The letter that follows contains details of types of information stolen and appropriate courses of action that can be taken to address your concerns. As of the date of this newsletter there has been no evidence of improper use of the stolen information.

## VA's Notification to Veterans

Dear Veteran:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has recently learned that an employee took home electronic data from VA, which he was not authorized to do and was in violation of established policies. The employee's home was burglarized and this data was stolen. The data contained identifying information including names, social security numbers, and dates of birth for up to 26.5 million veterans and some spouses, as well as some disability ratings. As a result of this incident, information identifiable with you was potentially exposed to others. It is important to note that the affected data did not include any of VA's electronic health records or any financial information.

Appropriate law enforcement agencies, including the FBI and the VA Inspector General's office, have launched full-scale investigations into this matter. Authorities believe it is unlikely the perpetrators targeted the items because of any knowledge of the data contents. It is possible that they remain unaware of the information which they possess or of how to make use of it.

Out of an abundance of caution, however, VA is taking all possible steps to protect and inform our veterans. While you do not need to take any action unless you are aware of suspicious activity regarding your personal information, there are many steps you may take to protect against possible identity theft and we wanted you to be aware of these. Specific information is included in the attached question and answer sheet. For additional information, VA has teamed up the Federal Trade Commission and has a website ([www.firstgov.gov](http://www.firstgov.gov)) with information on this matter or you may call 1-800-FED-INFO (1-800-333-4636). The call center will operate from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (EDT), Monday-Saturday, as long as it is needed.

We apologize for any inconvenience or concern this situation may cause, but we at VA believe it is important for you to be fully informed of any potential risk resulting from this incident. Again, we want to reassure you we have no evidence that your protected data has been misused. We will keep you apprised of any further developments. The men and women of VA take our obligation to honor and serve America's veterans very seriously and we are committed to seeing this never happens again. Sincerely, R. James Nicholson Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Sincerely,  
R. James Nicholson  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs

That's all for this issue. For all you fathers and grandfathers out there have a:



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