

January 2025

# CORVINA BASE NEWS



I am going to get with the times. No December newsletter. Will now be for the current month ED.

## **Our 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 of America and its Constitution.

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## BOOSTER CLUB

John Malloy  
 Terry Bolen  
 Frank Ely  
 Paul Young  
 Dave Aunkst  
 John Hulsey  
 Danny McHugh  
 Russ Hautzenrader



Kaps  
 Booster Club

## Shipmates on Eternal Patrol

### 2001

Harry Wellman CS1 (SS)

### 2002

Harry Sembagh EN3 (SS)  
 Stanley Blair ICC (SS)

### 2003

Melvin Phillips ET1 (SS)

### 2004

Boyd Tieslau TM3 (SS)  
 Russel Scofield TMCS (SS)

### 2005

Richard Burdette LT. (SS)  
 Robert Rich EN1 (SS)  
 Donald Campbell TM2 (SS)  
 Francis Signore CSC (SS)

### 2006

Harold Lister EN3 (SS)

### 2007

James Avitt RM1 (SS)

### 2008

Larry Garrelts ETCs(SS)  
 Melvin Schreckengost ET2  
 Charles H. Massie TM1 (SS)

### 2009

Wayne F. Garrett ET2 (SS)  
 Elvin L. Morrison FTC (SS)  
 Erick Bjorum CWO(SS)

### 2010

Norm Snyder EM1(SS)  
 Charles Hyman MM2(SS)  
 James T. Wright III  
 Gordon Lane RMC(SS)

### 2011

Edwin V. Schalbert TMC (SS)

### 2013

Chester E. MacDowell TMI (SS)  
 Gerald Stratton ENC(SS)  
 Jerry D. Noma MM2(SS)  
 Richard Ekenberg, ETC(SS)  
 Richard C. Barringer SOSN(SS)

### 2014

Lowell Wapelhorst MOMM2(SS)  
 Jack Quade SMSN(SS)

### 2015

Bert Skidmore YN2(SS)  
 Frank Kenyon EM3 (SS)  
 Walter Lewis IC1(SS)  
 Bob Heaps IC2 (SS)

### 2016

James Jordan TMSN (SS)  
 Herbert "Doc" L. Starmar: HMC (SS)

### 2017

Rudolph (Rudy) Massenzi  
 Don Brown FTGC(SS)  
 Joseph Casten EM3 (SS)

### 2018

Leonard (Lenny) Stefanelli QM1(SS)  
 Lionel Schmidt STS1(SS)

### 2019

Primo Quarisa EN3 (SS)  
 Dennis Wiley MMCM(MDV/SS/SW)  
 Raoul (Bill) Noland EM2(SS)  
 Taggart Rogers LT(SS)  
 Thomas Utley MM1(SS)  
 Delmar Schwichtnberg CWO3(SS)

### 2020

2021 Rod Friedline ST1(SS)  
 William G. Parsons RM1(SS)  
 Jack C. Ely QM2(SS)  
 Richard R. Dentino EM3(SS)

### 2021

Oscar Rambeau QM3(SS)  
 Dale Poe EMC (SS)  
 James L. Stuart MMC  
 Kenneth M. McCray EN1(SS)  
 James Weaver SK2

### 2022

Dan Fawcett

### 2023

L. David Craig ETC(SS)  
 Bob Lewis TMSN(SU)  
 James Gibson LCDR(SS)  
 Clyde Webber ETNSN(SS)

### 2024

Arthur C. Akerson LCDR(SS)



# Commander's Log

Dear Shipmates,

Another year has gone by and I'm the new commander **again**. **We had a great Luncheon, and the Nugget did a wonderful job!** I believe that we only had two plates that we had to pay for. We have been selected as 2027 National Convention! There will be a meeting at the GSR towards the end of January with Corvina Members who have shown interest in supporting this convention.

We now have a Facebook page! Please visit it at Corvina Base. I want to thank Paul's wife, Lisa, who showed me how to get the grease pencil off my computer screen LOL!

I wanted to share that I have volunteered to be on the USS Tang SSN 805 West Coast commissioning committee. I qualified on the second Tang SS 563 in 1973. Unfortunately, the commissioning will not be until 2029! Hopefully, I am still above grass by then.

I hope everyone had a nice Christmas and a calm New Years! My hope for this coming year is to increase recruitment of new members to share their experiences. It is a small community where we all are separated by less than six degrees!

**Danny**

**Base Commander**



# Secretary's Minutes



No minutes this month due to the Christmas Party at the Nugget. Eric needs a rest with all the writing he does each month to keep us up to date with base activities. Thank you.

## Boats Lost in January

### [USS S-36 \(SS-141\)](#)

lost on **20-Jan-1942** when it was destroyed after grounding on Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, Near Makassar City, the **crew were all rescued**.

### [USS S-26 \(SS-131\)](#)

lost on **24-Jan-1942** with the loss of **46 crew** when it was sunk after ramming by *USS PC-460* in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light.

### [USS Argonaut \(SS166\)](#)

lost on **10-Jan-1943** with the loss of **105 crew** when it was sunk off Rabaul

### [USS Swordfish \(SS-193\)](#)

lost on or after **12-Jan-1945** with the loss of **90 crew** when it was sunk near Yaku Island off Kyushu



# Treasurer's Report

1. All account balances are available at the Base Meetings.

2. Deposits for December:

Lunch Meeting Raffle Income	\$ 185.00
Christmas Lunch	280.00
USSVI/Base Dues	870.00
Booster Club	50.00

3. Checks issued in December:

USSVI/ 2025 Annual Dues	\$ 535.00
USSVI/ Base Rust Insurance for 2025	25.00
Nugget/Christmas Lunch	1794.18
Nevada DMV/ Float Registration 3 yrs	45.00
Nev Veterans Coalition/Honor Guard Donation	150.00
USSVI CF Brotherhood Fund (10% 2024 Raffles)	222.50

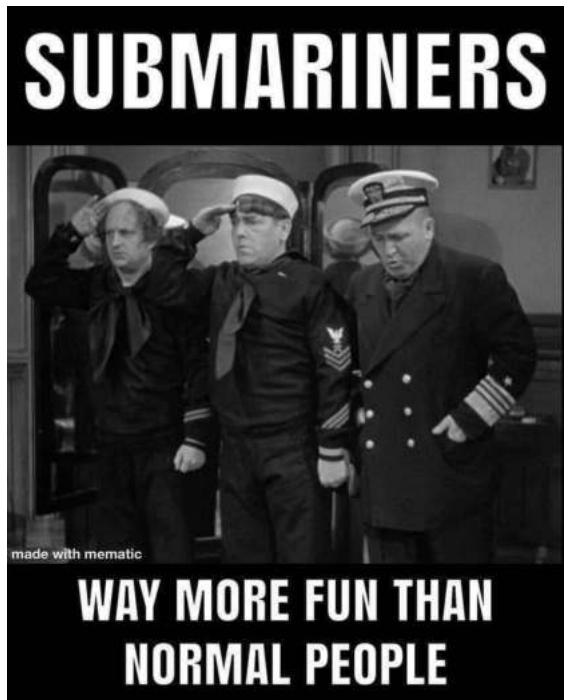
## DK Details:

Attention all annual dues payers, you should have received several renewal notices. All USSVI dues payments now will be at the increased rate. The final deadline to pay dues is January 31, 2025. After that, unpaid members will be dropped from active status.





# Corn from the COB



## How Sailor Poets Take Over U.S. Navy Deck Logs On New Year's Day

A longstanding tradition allows watch standers to use poetry to log their ship's activities in the wee hours of a new year.

The deck log of a commissioned U.S. Navy ship is generally not the place to mess around. In that humble book, a ship's officer of the deck (OOD) meticulously notes vital information on weather, sea state, status of the engineering plant, the ship's course and speed, along with other mission-critical factors.

But in the earliest hours of New Year's Day, during the mid-watch from midnight to 3 a.m. or 4 a.m., the OOD can let their respective poetic prowess shine through, and write their deck log entry in poem form.

The New Year's deck log entry is a tradition that dates back nearly a century, to 1929, according to the Navy. Sometimes, the OOD will hand the deck log poem duties to another sailor who has a bit more writerly flair.

It arguably reached its height during the Vietnam War, when deck log poems became so popular that *Navy Times* held an annual contest to feature the best of the bunch, according to the National Archives. But as writing increasingly takes a back seat to the phone and other electronic mediums, this Naval tradition has been in decline, and fewer than 20 ships in the nearly 300-ship fleet penned a mid-watch verse as of 2017.

But it's a cool tradition nonetheless, and we are glad to bring you a selection of deck log poems from Navy bridges over the years. Check out the U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command to read more New Year's Naval poetry from throughout the years too.

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### USS Thresher (SSN-593) 1963



**The submarine:** The first of its class, *Thresher's* story is a tragic one, as the boat sank at sea in April 1963, mere months after this deck log poem was written. All 129 officers, sailors and civilian technicians on board died. It was also the world's first nuclear-powered submarine to be lost at sea. To this day, *Thresher* serves as a grim reminder of how dangerous it is to serve in the Navy's Silent Service. Still, Lt. J.S. Lyman brought the sailor sarcasm big time at the top of his poem.

"This entry is dedicated to the unknown, unrated and unnecessary yeoman at NavPers who so faithfully and capably reads, notes, files and forgets my continuing and constant efforts through the year," Lyman wrote.

*Now read, good yeoman, and you shall see  
 How THRESHER met the best year yet and first of '63  
 The temperature was zero or maybe just below  
 And the winds whistled sharply, from stern to open bow.  
 The skies were clear, although to the waters west  
 Appeared a few broken clouds,  
 call it "Scattered" at best.  
 It hardly bears repeating – you must know as well as I  
 That THRESHER lies in Dry Dock just as high and dry  
 As on previous ~~days weeks~~ months  
 (Forgive the crossovers, please, yeo, just this once)  
 Not a soul is missing, we've mustered our whole flock  
 The ship still stands, with all hands, in #2 Dock  
 Or did you believe that we might leave  
 Our protected spot on New Years' Eve?  
 Still receiving AC power, as reported before  
 With miscellaneous services brought from the shore.  
 Units of the Fleets, Atlantic and Reserve  
 Are still joined with us in our private preserve.  
 At dock or on block, moored with wire or manila hemp  
 Spring line or breast line, we're all at PORTSMOUTH, New Hamp.  
 There has been no demotion, or significant promotion  
 In this misbegotten, all but forgotten corner of the ocean  
 And the most rank of us on AEOLUS is SOPA still you see.  
 (Lest you forget, the number yet, remains as ARC-3.)  
 Thus ends my missive for tonight, the very first this year  
 Through past performance indicates, not the very last I fear!*



## The Time Navy Lt. Jimmy Carter Was Lowered Into A Partially Melted-Down Nuclear Reactor

Geoff Ziezulewicz The Warzone

President Jimmy Carter's time as a U.S. Navy officer might have been brief, but it served to inform the rest of his days before passing away Sunday at the age of 100. Prior to his political career and Nobel Prize-winning peacemaking efforts, Carter stood at the side of the father of the nuclear Navy during its infancy, and even got lowered into a melted-down nuclear reactor as a junior officer. Decades later, the former president was stunned to learn of the capabilities carried by the secretive spy submarine that bears his name to this day. Ensign



James Earl "Jimmy" Carter graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1946, and applied to join the Navy's nuclear submarine community a few years later, according to the Navy.



Assigned to the experimental attack submarine USS *Barracuda* (SSK-1), Carter had served as executive officer, engineering officer and electronics repair officer by the time he crossed paths with then-Capt. Hyman G. Rickover, the future admiral widely credited with birthing America's nuclear sub fleet and ending a Navy practice of naming submarines after fish. Following that interview, Rickover soon tapped Carter to join the nascent effort. On temporary duty with the Naval Reactors Branch to help design and develop nuclear propulsion plants, the junior officer at times struggled to keep up with Rickover's demanding pace.

Nonetheless, Carter wrote in his 1975 presidential campaign tome "Why Not The Best?" about how Rickover left a stark impression on him, as historian Glenn Robins recalled for the U.S. Naval Institute:

"The young Carter was near the end of a two-hour interview with Rickover, which had come to function as a rite of passage for anyone seeking entrance to the Navy's nascent nuclear submarine program, when Rickover brought up the topic of Carter's standing at the U.S. Naval Academy. After Carter proudly announced ranking in the top 10 percent of the class of 1947, Rickover pointedly asked, 'Did you do your best?' Carter hesitated but answered truthfully that he had not. To which the captain queried, 'Why not?'"

Carter's interview with Rickover, and the revelation that he had not always done his best, became a transformational event for the president, according to Robins.

It prompted Carter "to undergo a life-changing period of self-reflection that compelled the young sailor 'to make the maximum ef-



fort in every single thing he did for the rest of his life,” Robins wrote. Rickover would go on to provide counsel to Carter on a variety of topics through the years.

After Carter joined the Navy’s nuclear efforts, the 28-year-old and his crew were sent to repair the Chalk Water nuclear reactor near Ottawa, Canada, in late 1952. The reactor had suffered a partial meltdown, and a team was needed to shut it down, take it apart and replace it. Carter and the rest of the team took a train up north and soon got to work.

“They built an identical replica of the reactor on an adjacent tennis court to precisely run through the repair procedures, due to the maximum time humans could be exposed to the levels of radiation present in the damaged area,” a Navy history recounts. “Each member of the 22 member team could only be lowered into the reactor for 90-second periods to clean up and repair the site.”

Official accounts don’t clarify whether Carter was in command during the mission, or his precise role. Still, the future president did his part, Canadian journalist Arthur Milnes later recounted.

“He was lowered into the building ... with his wrench, and he had to run over to the reactor casing and he had one screw to turn,” Milnes said after interviewing Carter about the incident. “That was all the time he had. And then, boom, back up.”

Carter and the others were regularly tested after the mission was finished to look for long-term health effects.

“They let us [crew members] get probably a thousand times more radiation than they would now.” Carter told *CNN* in 2008 while reflecting on the incident. “We were fairly well-instructed then on what nuclear power was, but for about six months after that, I had radioactivity in my urine.”

In his autobiography, “A Full Life, Reflections at Ninety,” Carter recounted the distinctive perils of being a submarine officer:

“Although some enlisted men could concentrate almost exclusively on their own fields of responsibility as engine men, electricians, torpedo experts, boatswains, quartermasters, gunners or operators of navigation and fire control equipment, every officer was expected to master all of these disciplines...we knew one mistake could endanger everyone aboard.”

Through much of 1953, Carter served as the engineering officer for the USS *Seawolf* (SSN-575), the Navy’s second nuclear submarine. But life soon happened, and following his father’s death in July of that year, Carter resigned his Navy commission and returned to Georgia to oversee his family interests. The onetime junior officer later entered local politics and was elected president in 1976, serving one term.

Decades later, the *Seawolf* class fast-attack submarine USS *Jimmy Carter* (SSN-23) was commissioned in 2005. The submarine’s commanding officer, Don Kelso, and a retired Navy admiral arrived at Carter’s Georgia home early that year to brief the 39th president on what the submarine could do, *The New York Times*’ John Ismay reported.

“He was in awe,” Kelso was quoted as saying. “He knew it was a special submarine, because he had some background there, but he didn’t know all the details before then of what it could really do.”

What the *Jimmy Carter* and its sailors have done on deployment remains a highly guarded secret within the Pentagon, and *The New York Times* cited an unnamed former senior Navy official as saying that just a few officers and a



Former President Jimmy Carter is piped aboard during his arrival at the change of command ceremony for the *Seawolf* class attack submarine USS *Jimmy Carter* (SSN-23) at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, Washing-



few dozen people on land actually know what missions the sub undertakes at sea.

*TWZ* has extensively reported on the *Jimmy Carter*, the other two submarines in its *Seawolf* class, and why the former president had reason to be awed when briefed on his namesake's capabilities:

“The Jimmy Carter is the last of only three Seawolf class submarines ever built, but its hullform is different than its sister ships. During construction, it had a large plug placed in the center of its hull, making the boat substantially longer than the other two Seawolf class boats.”

“This plug accommodates room for lockout chambers, underwater remotely operated vehicles, and cargo bays for delivering and retrieving outsized cargo. A slew of other modifications were also made to the vessel. You can read all about them, as well as about the Jimmy Carter in general, in this prior feature profile I wrote about the submarine. Suffice it to say that the USS Jimmy Carter's primary mission is espionage and spying. It can manipulate communications cables deep under the surface of the ocean and even locate and retrieve sensitive material sitting on the sea floor. It truly is America's ultimate spying tool, and it can still hunt and fight like a normal Seawolf class fast attack submarine if it has to.”



The ship's crest recognizes the influences on Carter's life. It features a presidential seal flanked by an atomic energy symbol and a wooden wheel. That wheel pays homage to Carter's surname, which came from a word meaning “wheel-maker,” according to *The New York Times*. The crest's bottom features the words “Semper Optima,” Latin for “always the best,” which was an acknowledgement of Rickover's formative words to Carter during his time in the sea service.

Carter visited his sub's crew in the summer of 2005, and got underway for an “overnight V.I.P. cruise” following the boat's commissioning, *The New York Times* recounted.

“He drove the ship,” *The New York Times* quoted Kelso as saying. “And I remember I was amazed because he must have been 81 at the time, and both he and Mrs. Carter climbed up a 25-foot ladder to get to the top of the submarine's sail and rode with us as we took the ship out to sea.”

“When we dove, he got to drive from the helmsman's station down below, and later he went down to the mess decks to meet with the ship's crew several times,” Kelso added. “And I think he had a ball.”

During his top-secret briefing that year on the *Jimmy Carter's* capabilities, *The New York Times* reported, the former president said his namesake could easily take out the *Nimitz* class aircraft carrier USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN-76), named after the man who beat Carter for the presidency in 1980.

Carter lived an extraordinary life, by all accounts. His time in the submarine community played a critical role in all that came after, and he remained a Navy man until the end.

“You and I leave here today to do our common duty—protecting our Nation's vital interests by peaceful means if possible, by resolute action if necessary,” Carter told the graduating class of Naval Academy midshipmen in 1978. “We go forth sobered by these responsibilities, but confident of our strength. We go forth knowing that our Nation's goals—peace, security, liberty for ourselves and for others—will determine our future and that we together can prevail.”

RIP President Jimmy Carter, 1924-2024