

AGENT ORANGE AND VA CLAIMS UPDATE

Much information about Agent Orange exposure and finding out if any diseases or health problems Sabalo sailors have contracted is related has been included in past issues. However, some basic questions still are being asked, so I am including some of the basic stuff for review. Unfortunately, many men have passed on from maladies that are now being presumed to have cause relating to exposure. Many, including your editor, are fighting to get recognition for VA disability claims under the specificity of the law.

The first act of Congress recognizing Agent Orange exposure is The Blue Water Navy (BWN) Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 (PL 116-23 [LINK](#)) extended the presumption of herbicide exposure, such as Agent Orange, to Veterans who served in the offshore waters of the Republic of Vietnam between Jan. 9, 1962 and May 7, 1975. These waters are specified via numerous lines of demarcation which are basically 12 miles from the eastern coast of VN and as much as 30 from the southern coast.

The Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxins (PACT) Act. is Part of USC Title 38 Part 3 [LINK](#). The PACT Act is a law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits, Agent Orange, and other toxic substances. For a complete explanation of benefits [use this link on the VA site](#).

The reports of Sabalo vets I have heard from is that men from the deployments of 1962, 1965 & 1970 have been approved for disabilities. One man has provided an excerpt from his claim approval that also indicates visits to Thailand were approved, but it is not clear of the date. In the latter case this would also seemingly include the visit in 1969, but my claim was just recently denied again. [-ed.]

READERSHIP REVIEW — ARE YOU AWOL ??

If I haven't heard from your in a long time, **please take a minute to send an email or call.** Possible readership has dropped below 200 and less than 130 have had any message communicated that they receive and read Clever Boy. [-ed.]

Sabalo Sailing List Stats -as of 11 Dec 2024	
Total shipmates listed	1453
Known Deceased	927
Known USPS address	309
Receives Clever Boy by email or hard copy & contact since 2018	193
AWOL- Not heard from since 2018	64
Known address but has declined or does not receive Clever Boy	54
Lost Contact—last known address NG & unable to relocate	13
Never located	204



USS SABALO SS-302

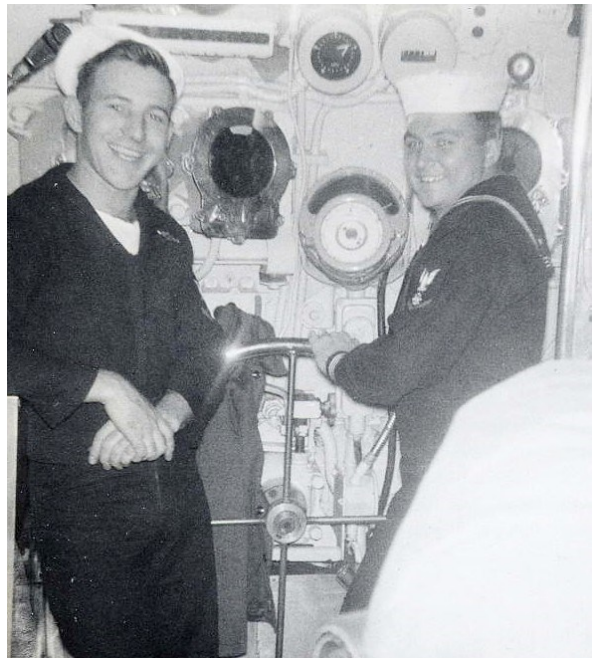
**BALAO (SS-285) CLASS DIESEL-ELECTRIC SUBMARINE
IN COMMISSION: 1945-46 & 1951-71**

A Proud Workhorse of the Fleet

*She made her missions.
We did our best.
We served our country.
This has been done.*



SHIPBOARD LIFE 1959 Men in these pics from 'Dutch' Schultz are not identified—pls send names if you do
U.L.-After Battery Movie U.R. Crews Mess L.L.-Head Call L.R.-Minding the Helm





Vol. III No. 18 December 2024

CLEVER BOY is a privately authored and published newsletter of the **USS Sabalo Association**, an informal group for the preservation of the history of the U.S. Navy Submarine, USS Sabalo SS-302, and including the assemblage of the list of all who served in her, chronicling her exploits and missions, and celebrating the memories of those who manned her.

"Clever Boy" was the radio call sign for Sabalo, and NXYO was her flag identification code.

CB is currently distributed via online and hard copy to 187+ veterans of the sub.

📄 Online viewers—Follow the links with each item for the full story.

📄 Hard copy readers only get the first two pages in color. On the Sabalo web site all pages have color possible.

WEB SITE: <http://ussabalo.org> For more information about the men who served in her, the ship's details and exploits, and copies of past *Clever Boy* newsletters beginning from 2009

Editor: Jeff Owens

ETN2(SS) Aboard Mar 67-Aug 69
273 Pratt Hollow Rd
Nicholson, PA 18446-7866
570-942-4622 owensj@epix.net

Editor Emeritus:

Ronald D. Gorence, QMC(SS), Ret.
Abd 302 Jul66-Feb70 (Final Patrol-Apr 2018)

PLEASE NOTIFY THE EDITOR OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS EITHER USPS OR EMAIL.

If you can no longer receive email, please remember to communicate so that you can be switched to receive a hard copy. The cost of those who receive hard copies is supported by donations.

If you have no interest in this newsletter, please communicate so funds can be conserved.

THANKS TO RECENT DONORS

(with rank/rating & dates aboard 302 -may have been higher later)

Burtner, Ken YN1(SS) Nov61-Aug63

Losby, Harold ENC(SS) Dec65-Feb70

Needham, Bruce TM3(SS) Nov66-Feb68

Reilly, David ET2(SS) May58-Sep62

An extraordinary memorial donation amount has been received from Ed Markovich, USMC Veteran, to honor Sabalo vet Gregory Wendell LaBrache who deceased 4 Nov 2024.

Ed says: "We have been close friends since 1974 when we were neighbors in Woodland Hills, CA. Greg loved his family, his Country and he was very proud of his service on the Sabalo. Greg and Hope were graduates of the University of Washington. Greg made friends easily and he was well respected and admired by those who knew him. We were as close as brothers and will miss him terribly."

See MEET YOUR SHIPMATE pg 7 for bio of Greg

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions"

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions is an idiom or proverb. It is about the difference between what someone intends to do and the outcome of their actions." [Wikipedia](#) **

This issue of Clever Boy was originally planned to be issued in September. As time passed that deadline, and then with the passing of the following months, it became clear that I am seriously behind schedule.

An explanation of my delay for health problems is found in my short entry on the 'Binnacle List' on page 5. I continue to suffer with symptoms yet undefined by VA doctors and tests—a much frustrating situation. There seems to be no expediency in the system, a situation which drew some political attention a few years ago with men in numerous VA regions suffering and dying with long wait times for appointments and treatment. This certainly seems to be the current problem here in northeast Pennsylvania.

Accordingly, I offer this issue as a Xmas issue, although it will be late for even that date for many readers. My apologies for being late.

** *Even maybe more eloquently phrased: "...my epistolary good intentions are gone to Macadamise, I suppose, "the burning marle" of the infernal regions.*"^[4] "

FROM OUT OF THE TOMATO BOX

By Editor Jeff Owens

Not a day goes by, in which my mind doesn't slip away to those days on the Sabalo.



FLAG ETIQUETTE—EDITORIAL by editor

During the summer Olympics I observed a complete ignorance by two beach volleyball women. They were using a US flag to towel down their sweat and sand during breaks. Not a red and white striped towel or other tri color symbols, but an actual flag. While realizing that such an event is a place to show colors, and many instances of athletes draping their shoulders or letting the flag touch the ground may occur innocently. These women showed total disrespect.

Another pet peeve is the use of the flag as an advertising symbol or logo. So many examples can be found from large flags to patches on hats.

For a quick review of the correct protocols see: <https://www.military.com/flag-day/flag-etiquette-dos-and-donts.html> Or [4 US Code Chapter 1](#)

Marking Time

1969—Zip...And just like that, it's 55 years ago.

The secret to aging gracefully is simple. Just have a good attitude. Enjoy who you are. Remember that life is a wonderful thing.

...Mitzi Gaynor, actress, 1931-2024



I can't even believe I've lived long enough that I'm being fact checked by 20 year old boys with man buns, skinny jeans & nose rings that don't even know who bombed Pearl Harbor.

I'm So Old

That I've actually dialed a rotary phone before, while listening to an 8 track, next to a black & white TV with aluminum foil on top of its rabbit ear antennas!

Free Cruise Tickets Available for Veterans and Active-Duty Military — In its "Heroes Sail Free" program, veterans, active-duty troops, first responders and educators who are verified through the GovX ID system can get free passage on select two- to seven-night sailings through 2026. ,, free three-day, two-night cruise aboard Margaritaville at Sea, a 1,680-passenger cruise ship that sails from the Port of Palm Beach, Florida, to Freeport, Grand Bahama Island. <https://www.military.com/discounts/want-free-cruise-tickets-vets-and-active-duty-military-can-get-them-upgraded-ship.html>

A Man and a Woman-

"It's not about what someone can do for you, it's who and what the two of you become in each other's presence." ...Ronald _____ Sharp

If you had to choose between your significant other and five million dollars, what is the first thing you would buy?

**MAILBAG**

[rank/rating as aboard, may have diff later]

RECENT CHECK-INS over past few months:

19Jun Chace, Alden LT Jan63-Jun65

18Jun Meggison, Earl ETN3(SS) Apr60-Aug62

15 Jun Brower, Dave RM2(SS) Oct68-Dec70

15 Jun Gross, Daniel EM1(SS) Feb70-Apr71

14 Jun Moore, Connie TM1(SS) Jun66-Feb68 reported some health problems

22 Jun Reilley, David ETN2(SS) Apr59-Dec62 (new home add in Everett, MA))

11 Dec Don Derbigny EN2(SS) Apr65-2q68 is still active as an entertainment promoter. His latest gig is a New Years celebration : <https://loopnla.com/eblast/2024nyeresolution.html>**RECENT TELCONS** (

16 Oct– Terry Gwaltney, RM3(SS) Oct66-Jan68, reptd in from Pahrump, NV where is is living quietly and in good health.

BINNACLE LIST *Send your health reports so shipmates can know how you're doing.*

14 Jun Baggett, Ed has severe Parkinson's

22 Jun—Bill Towery reports he has been diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and has a new email address—ck the web site,

15 Oct—Warrie Leeke reports he has had a defibrillator for some time and is rated 100% disabled. Otherwise doing ok at 84.

24 Oct Don Derbigny reports by eml he has prostate cancer and is pursuing a disability claim with the VA.

29 Oct Don Nelson telcon- he has been having some balance and leg strength problems, but his TAVR and 'pig valve' are doing ok.

21 Nov eml fm Jim MacLean who has a VA claim for Hypertension and Type 2 Diabetes submitted.

2 Dec Fm Jeff Owens, CB editor: "The month of November has been lost to me. I was in VA emergency room 4 times and had 3 other doctor visits. All of which kept from any of my daily routines of email, etc. Now feeling a little better, but still without firm diagnosis. In addition to a nasty and very painful case of shingles, it may be possible hidden cancer, some more tests in the near future."

MESSAGE FROM EDITOR -- EMAIL GLITCH

Due to an exasperating move by my ISP, access to my old email files has been cut off. Hopefully, this can be overcome, but I may have to hire some technical help.

This has caused the inability to include some material submitted by shipmates I had stored, and also reports from men reporting medical news.

If you communicated over the past 6 months or so, please check in again if your don't see mention of something you may have sent.

**2026 USSVI Convention Announced** Corpus Christi, Texas 6-12 Sep-
REUNION ANYONE ! Duh -probably not.

Terry Bolen, Sabalo vet (May-Dec70 LTjg, later Capt.) is Boat Reunion Natl. Coordinator for any boats planning a reunion. Maybe if a dozen guys would come , we might get a hospitality suite.

2024 USSVI Convention — Cleveland 19-24 Aug, hosted by the Cod Base.Go to <https://www.facebook.com/codbaseussvi/> Or <https://subvetconvention.org/>

[I received no reports. Pls Let me know if you attended, and I'll post a list on the website. —ed.]

HEADLINE NEWS

Follow links for full story
FEEDBACK NEEDED—Your editor searches far and wide for topical info to pass along. **If you see some cool stuff, send it in for inclusion.**

Wildfire Damages Navy Base on Remote California Island; Live Fire Suspected

For nine decades, **San Clemente Island**, the southernmost of the eight Channel Islands, has been owned by the Navy and is largely inaccessible to civilians. Throughout this time the volcanic isle's sprawling shoreline and rolling hills have served as a crucial military training ground where U.S. troops detonate grenades and fire heavy artillery. It's also the Navy's last live-firing range for ship-to-shore bombardments. The conflagration left 13,000 acres of the southern end of the island charred, and numerous Navy buildings without power.

More: <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/05/wildfire-damages-navy-base-remote-california-island-live-fire-suspected.html>

Submarine Built for a Mixed-Gender Crew

The USS New Jersey, a Virginia class, was commissioned on 14 September. Reported to be the first designed from the beginning for mixed-sex crews, she is an extension of the mixed crew policy started in 2010. **Currently there are 609 females serving in subs.** <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/10/us-navy-about-launch-submarine-built-mixed-gender-crew-first-of-its-kind.html>

Ever wonder what [BuildSubmarines.com](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/12/navy-pays-nearly-1-billion-company-behind-buildsubmarinescom-bid-pump-industry.html) on a NASCAR race car means?

Navy Gives Company a \$1 Billion Contract to run ads and website — <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/12/navy-pays-nearly-1-billion-company-behind-buildsubmarinescom-bid-pump-industry.html>

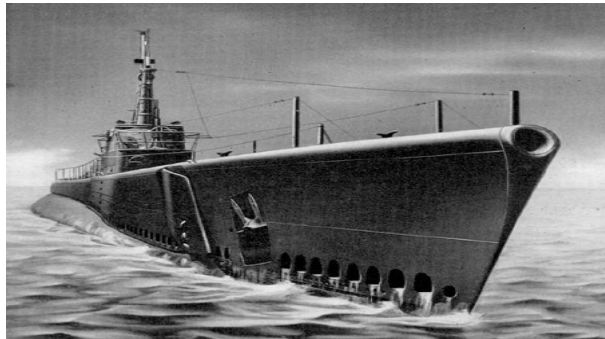
Sailor Shortage Is Undermining Navy's Ability to Keep Ships Combat-Ready

"The GAO said the sailor shortage mostly stems from the Navy's efforts to reduce costs by closing Navy ship repair facilities and reducing the size of crews. The agency referred to an earlier report in which it found that 70,705 enlisted sailors were available to collectively operate aircraft carriers, surface ships and submarines in November 2023. That was 13,674 sailors below what the Navy said was needed. The problem is being exacerbated by the difficulty the Navy is having meeting recruiting goals."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/17/sailor-shortage-undermining-navys-ability-keep-ships-combat-ready-watchdog-says.html>

and

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/09/20/new-us-submarines-running-17-billion-over-budget-lawmaker-says.html>



THE OLD BOATS

Of all the branches of men in the forces, there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners.

... Sir Winston Churchill

We shall never forget that it was our submarines that held the lines against the enemy while our fleets replaced losses and repaired wounds.

... Adm Chester Nimitz



NAVAL HISTORY
 AND HERITAGE COMMAND
 SABALO RELATED PHOTOS

<https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/search.html?q=uss+sabalo>

988 Veterans Crisis Line

988, this three-digit number is used to access both the National Suicide Hotline and Veterans Crisis Line. Veterans can also call the Veterans Crisis Line directly, at 877-267-6030, or call any VA facility and press 7 to reach the Veterans Crisis Line. VCL text messaging (838255) and Live Chat are also available.

MEET YOUR SHIPMATE

LaBrache, Gregory Wendell

Greg was born 21 July 1939.

He was Received For Duty on Sabalo 14 Dec 57 from NTC San Diego CA as SN (USNR). He was age 18 1/2 at that time.

On 24 Sep 58 He Qualified in submarines and changed designation to SS. Like many eager sailors, he worked hard and became an integral member of the crew. As one of younger men among the crew, he became the leading seaman in the deck gang.

After 20 months aboard, and at the rank of TMSN(SS), he was Transferred 26 Jul 59 to Recruiting Station San Francisco CA pending release to inactive status.

His bio submitted 2005 for the 302 website: "My shipmate and buddy, Jeff Stockton* and I went to Roosevelt High School in Seattle together, and I was the guy who talked him into joining the Submarine Service after graduation. (I don't think he ever forgave me for that one.) We went to boot camp and Sub school together, and both got assigned to the Sabalo in Pearl Harbor. We went through all the fun stuff of the boat's ops in the Cold War in the 1950's together. We graduated from Sabalo and went to the University of Washington together...and actually joined

the same fraternity house on campus. We drank a lot of beer together, and did many unspeakable things to coeds together."



College Yearbook pic 1963

"After graduation, I went to South America (beautiful Cali, Colombia, a garden spot of riots, violence and Communist guerilla activity) under a one year contract with the USIA.

After Cali, I went to Barcelona for about a year and a half, then came back to CONUS as a newspaper reporter in Southern California."

He later worked in Public Relations with several major oil companies.

Greg died 4 Nov 2024 in Bainbridge Island, WA from cancer. He is survived by his wife, Hope, who he married in April 1968, and sons Kyle and Cameron and their wives and children.

He was a member of USSVI in the USS Parche Base.

*Also, Check the bio entry on the [Sabalo web site](#) for Stockton (d. 2005)

MEET YOUR SHIPMATE

Joslin, Lester Merel 'Joz' 'Les'

b. 30 May 1924 - Grizzly, Jefferson Co., OR

d. 17 Nov 2007 - Crestview, Okaloosa Co., FL

was a WWII vet with other naval service before coming aboard Sabalo. He was originally a Signalman, and converted to QM when the Navy stopped using SM's for sub duty.

Enlisted at Portland, OR -6 Jan 1942

Recd abd USS Tennessee BB-43 -12 Jan 1943 and was aboard until the end of the war.

~ '46-58 unk ~

This is his record from 1958 until his retirement

Sabalo SS-302 Jan 58 - Dec 60 QM1

Thomas A. Edison SSBN-610B Jan 61 - Aug 63 QM1

John Marshall SSBN-611G May 65 - Oct 66

Sea Wolf SSN-575 Oct 66 - Jan 67

Skate SSN-578 Jan 67 - Sep 71 QMC COB

Flying Fish SSN-673 Sep 71 - Oct 73 COB

Guided Missile Sch, Dam Neck, VA Sep 63 - Apr 65

SUBDEVGRU2, New London Nov 72 - Apr 76

Retired QMCS(SS)

Lester Joslin Receives Award for Services

Word has been received in Prineville [OR] this week that. Lester Joslin, Signalman 3/c, United States Navy, has received a citation "for excellent service". Mrs. Joslin is the former Virginia Eaton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. D. Eaton of Prineville.

The citation follows: "USS Tennessee, c/o Fleet Post Office, San Francisco, California. The commanding officer commends Lester Merel Joslin, Signalman Third Class (T) V6, United States Naval Reserve, for service as set forth in the following citation: For excellent service in the line of duty during an air attack, on 12 April 1945, in which a Japanese suicide plane crashed into his ship. By his prompt and efficient action, he contributed materially in minimizing the damage to his ship by fighting and extinguishing fires in the damaged areas. 'His conduct gives evidence of his value to the naval service.'"

Pub. Date unk—Found at: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/64256841/lester-merel-joslin>

Cave Facility In Norway That U.S. Navy Submarines Could Soon Operate From

(Dated Oct 2020)

<https://www.twz.com/37043/this-is-the-cave-facility-in-norway-that-u-s-navy-submarines-could-soon-operate-from>

OLAVSVERN - A naval cave facility in Norway

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Olavsvern>

The base has an inside area of 270,000 sq. ft., beneath 899 ft of hard rock, including 140,000 sq ft of housing, and 32,000 sq ft of deep-water dock. There is an internal dry dock capable of accommodating 6 submarines simultaneously. The base further consists of workshops, offices and ammunition depots. The base also has external docks capable of accommodating larger ships, among other US Navy SSN's and SSBN's. The entrance to the facilities consist of a tunnel that is more than 3,000 ft long.

Did Norway Sell a Secret Military Base to Russia?

The claim that Norway sold the military base to Russia is disinformation. In 2013, the Olavsvern military base was decommissioned, and the facility was bought by a Norwegian private investment group. Realizing the future importance of the facility, it later came back under government cognizance and about 2020 secret plans and utilizations began by the U.S.

U.S. Submarine Force and other nation's navy interests.

<https://mythdetector.com/en/did-norway-sell-a-secret-military-base-to-russia/>

A short on YouTube describing the base:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/D3jGZQHokNg?si=xviMoFUU7FCDCk25>

MORE ON SUB PENS

HELGOLAND SUB PENS

A similar facility was built by the Germans in WWII on Helgoland, an island off the coast of Germany. Helgoland (spelled Heligoland with the 'i' by the British, has a lot of fascinating history. Google it for lots to learn. It was destroyed after the war. {I had occasion to visit the island, now a tourist destination, and view the area in 1966 while on a NATO North Atlantic exercise while serving on destroyer DD-881 prior to serving on Sabalo. - ed.]

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/19/naval-installations-blown-up-in-heligoland-1947>

Video of the explosion: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LtatVS-Tk3c>

Current tourist info: <https://www.helgoland.de/en/service/tourist-information/>

History: <https://www.helgoland.de/en/thats-helgoland/history/>

WHAT THE FOREIGN NAVIES ARE DOING

China's Latest Nuclear Submarine Under Construction Sinks in the Yangtze River, Becoming an Epic Joke

Originally thought to be a conventional type, in September it was reported to be one of the smaller *Orca* class nukes, specifically, the first in the class.

The surmise, or possibly from intelligence reports, indicate the probable cause was a result of a high center of weight during the outfitting stage it was in, and it listed, flooded, and sank at its mooring.

This vid, with actual overhead shots, is 18 1/2 minutes and includes some additional info about Chinese submarine building, and capabilities in general. It also contains some images erroneously inserted showing Russian boats.

https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=1r_9J6h_bpg



Movie Night in the After Battery

The Best World War II Movies, According to Service Members and Veterans

(In no particular order)

A Bridge Too Far (1977)

A Walk in the Sun (1945)

Battle of Britain (1969)

Battle of the Bulge (1965)

Casablanca (1942)

Das Boot (1981)

Fury (2014)

Go for Broke! (1951)

Greyhound (2020)

Hacksaw Ridge (2016)

In Harm's Way (1965)

Letters from Iwo Jima (2006)

Midway (1976)

Red Tails (2012)

Sands of Iwo Jima (1949)

The Best Years of Our Lives (1946)

The Dirty Dozen (1967)

The Great Escape (1963)

The Longest Day (1962)

They Were Expendable (1945)

Tora! Tora! Tora! (1970)

Saving Private Ryan (1998)

Not a Movie, But an Honorable Mention:

Band of Brothers (2001)

A few I haven't heard of. Check the web site below for a summary and trailer. Google for more info and where to view. —Maybe you have an addition to the list. Send it in for inclusion in next issue.—ed.

<https://www.military.com/off-duty/movies/best-world-war-ii-movies-according-service-members-and-veterans.html>

* * *

5 Submarines Against the Nazis

“On 18 June 1940, Charles de Gaulle's appeal was heard as far as the depths of the oceans. It is here that one of the War's most important resistance movements came into being: The Maquisards de la Mer. Heading it up was the submarine "Rubis". This film gives a voice to the forgotten members of the Resistance by means of unpublished testimonies and rare texts written by the Rubis' crew members.”

Documentary 2020 | Duration: 12+ min. | available on just about all of the streaming services |

[I just watched this on Netflix - a lot of info on a little known subject about the French Navy in WWII.—ed.]

Trailer: https://www.zed.fr/en/catalog/inside-the-submarines/screening_room/2401

* * *

Submarine Command—Submarine commander Ken White reminisces about his WWII years aboard submarine USS Tiger Shark and struggles with feelings of personal guilt. w/William Holden, Nancy Olson & William Bendix. 1951 B&W 1 1/2 hrs <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yTKx1CwLVjc>

SURFIN' SUBMARINER

US Submarine Cooks Handle Rush Time Inside Narrow Kitchen

https://youtu.be/K9_UAo5e2Wc?si=HCjFM0wxNw3z3V05

Nukes, Nubs And Coners: The Unique Social Hierarchy Aboard A Nuclear Submarine

<https://getpocket.com/explore/item/nukes-nubs-and-coners-the-unique-social-hierarchy-aboard-a-nuclear-submarine>

A description of a nuke's personnel structure and duties, and the process of “qualification in submarines”. [Seems like a glaring error in the spelling of "coner".or "cone" when referring to the "conn" ([Wikipedia](#)), or as more fully called, the control room. But, I ain't no nuke. I tried Googling "coner", and there is no reference.—ed.]

SHIP'S STORE

Sabalo Patch

\$ 11 includes 1st Class Mail



Battle Flag Posters—
REDUCED PRICE \$20 includes shipping (16 1/2" x 21" fits std 16x20 frame) - *a number of you guys asked for these and never responded, so I am just trying to get back some of the money I spent to get them !*

- https://usssabalo.org/Ship's_Store.html See web site for other current items available. If you are looking for something specific, not on the web site, please contact me.



T-SHIRT

Submariner

noun. Sub-mah-ree-ner

1. someone who operates stuff you can't.

*** * * Hurry! LAST CALL! * * ***

Still taking orders to get enough for a batch of a dozen. If you want one or more get on the list **ASAP**. Design is borrowed from similar found on the 'net. Planning for **2 variations**: white lettering on navy blue or on [Rothco blue digital camo](#) (similar to the Navy blue-berry camo) Expected price ~\$20 +shipping



VA NEWS

HEADLINE NEWS — Two Veterans Will Argue to Supreme Court that VA Disability Claims Aren't Getting 'Benefit of Doubt' 15 Oct 2024 In the case *Bufkin v. McDonough*, the plaintiffs challenged decisions by the VA and the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims denying benefits for health conditions. They argue that the Veterans Board of Appeals, and later, the appeals court, failed to apply a "benefit-of-the-doubt" rule that should have resulted in disability compensation awards. By law, veterans are entitled to receive the benefit of the doubt when the presented evidence, either for or against approval, is close. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/10/15/supreme-court-hears-case-questioning-vas-commitment-favoring-veterans-benefits-decisions.html> **The court heard verbal arguments 16 Oct 2024. —ed.**

Some clickable links—call if you want a hard copy of the info

Apply for VA health care- <https://www.va.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction>

<https://vaclaimsinsider.com/va-disability-rating-calculator/>

[Retirees, Civilians, Want to Live in Base Housing? Yes, You Can!](#)

{From what I read—on many bases who would want to? Lack of maintenance, mold and old age have made many units unlivable.—ed.]



ON THE SUBJECT OF WOKE B.S. —

"Modern science has transformed the treatment of HIV, and this court has already ruled that asymptomatic HIV-positive service members with undetectable viral loads who maintain treatment are capable of performing all of their military duties, including worldwide deployment," Judge Leonie Brinkema wrote in a 38-page opinion in the Eastern District Court of Virginia. Brinkema is the same judge who ruled in 2022 that the military could not deny commissions to HIV-positive service members who sought to become officers or discharge those with HIV.

The cases included two airmen facing discharge as a result of their HIV-positive status and an Army National Guard soldier who deployed to Afghanistan and Kuwait while in law school and wanted to become a member of the Army Judge Advocate General Corps.

Shortly after Brinkema released her 2022 opinion, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin issued a memo to commanders saying they no longer would be allowed to involuntarily separate troops with asymptomatic HIV; restrict them from deploying; or prevent enlisted personnel, cadets or midshipmen with HIV from seeking a commission as an officer.

Improvements in antiretroviral therapy have made it possible for patients with the virus to keep their viral loads to low or undetectable levels. At such amounts, HIV-positive persons don't transmit the virus through sex or needle sharing, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and it cannot be spread through saliva, tears or sweat. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/08/23/military-cant-keep-hiv-positive-americans-enlisting-federal-judge-rules.html>

[Remember that at some point early on, it was told that even touching HIV infected persons was enough to get infected?

What's at question here is not whether "science" is correct, but whether civilian courts should rule over military policy in matters that may affect military morale, readiness or opinions of others within the ranks.—ed.]

* * *

'Don't Ask, Don't Test:'

The Military Needs a New Policy for Marijuana Use

"Accepting lower entrance exam scores is hardly the only compromise: The Navy is also experimenting in [reducing high school and GED requirements](#), [lowering fitness requirements](#), and [relaxing up-or-out policies](#) (keeping underperforming sailors around). "

"Navy is piloting [accepting recruits with lower ASVAB entrance exam scores](#), down to the 10th to 30th percentiles.

"

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/opinions/2024/08/28/dont-ask-dont-test-military-needs-new-policy-marijuana-use.html>

Navy's Innovative Programs Pay Off as It Meets Recruiting Goal for First Time in Years

"It started offering exceptions over tattoos, single parent status, and positive drug and alcohol tests. Last winter, the Navy even raised the maximum enlistment age to 41 and loosened entry exam rules to allow the lowest-performing academic category of applicant to join the service. It teamed those efforts with pre-boot camp schools that would either have recruits work out in order to boost their physical fitness scores or take academic courses to raise test results."

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/08/29/navys-innovative-programs-pay-off-it-meets-recruiting-goal-first-time-years.html>

VA Secretary Intervenes After Top Officer Orders Iconic World War II Kiss Photo Removed for Being 'Non-Consensual'

RimaAnn Nelson, the VA's assistant secretary of health for operations, sent the Feb. 29 memo calling for the prompt removal of the photo saying it

was "inconsistent with the VA's no-tolerance policy toward sexual harassment and assault." [https://](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/03/05/va-order-remove-iconic-world-war-ii-kiss-photo-facilities-reversed-secretary-mcdonough.html)

www.military.com/daily-news/2024/03/05/va-order-remove-iconic-world-war-ii-kiss-photo-facilities-reversed-secretary-mcdonough.html



Army Division Bars Leaders from Bothering Their Soldiers After Work Hours

One of the [Army's](#) highest-profile divisions has set a ban on most work-related cell phone usage after work hours. Maj. Gen. David Doyle, commander of the [Fort Carson](#), Colorado-based 4th Infantry Division, [issued a memo](#) last week barring leaders from texting or calling subordinates between 6 p.m. and 5 a.m. -- with some caveats, including communications for health or safety reasons, or personal communications. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/04/29/army-division-bars-leaders-bothering-their-soldiers-after-work-hours.html>

On Eternal Patrol



SAILORS
REST YOUR OAR



Brown, Kenneth Lee, d. 8 Feb 2023, ag 76, El Mirage, AZ, was CS3(SS) in 302 Nov66-?70
Obit w/pic: <https://everloved.com/life-of/kenneth-lee-brown/>

Drost, Louis Charles, d. 11 Sep 2023, ag 83, Grand Junction, CO, was RM2(SS) in 302 '70-71
Obit w/pic: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/grand-junction-co/louis-drost-11475111>
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/louis.drost.7>
LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/louis-drost-697466a/>

Elger, Elroy Burton "Al", d. 31 Jul 2022, ag 81, Silverdale, WA, was EM2(SS) in 302 Feb63-Jun63; later LT, Ret.'80;
was also in 214, 417, 641, 657
Obit w/pic: <https://www.dignitymemorial.com/obituaries/bremerton-wa/elroy-elger-10871643>

LaBrache, Gregory Wendell, d. 4 Nov 2024, ag 85, Bainbridge Island, WA, was TMSN(SS) in 302 Dec57-Sep59
See pg 8 for bio and pic

Lackey, Royse Lee, d. 27 Jul 2002, ag 63, Dumas, TX, was aboard 302 in 1957
Bur: https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/121632743/royse_lee_lackey

Lorenzo, Thomas (n), Sr., d. 29 Aug 2022, ag 97, Sarasota, FL, was WWII vet; in 302 Sep45-Mar46
Obit w/pic: <https://www.cantonrep.com/obituaries/pwoo0306668>

Nonato, Alfred Monatiaque, d. 12 Jul 2023, ag 96, Ft Washington, MD, dates in 302 unk, later EM1(SS), Ret.
Bur. Arlington Natl Cem, Obit w/pic: <https://www.mcphersonfuneralservicesandcremations.com/obituaries/Alfredo-Nonato/#!/Obituary>

Proffer, Roger Albert, d. 8 Sep 2022, ag 83, Grayslake, IL, was MM2(SS) in 302 Jan6-Sep61; later MMCS(SS), Ret.
Obit w/pic: <https://www.strangfh.com/obituary/roger-proffer>

Seyler, Ralph Edward, d. 14 Jun 2019, ag 74, Linn, OR, was SN(SS) in 302 Aig63-?64
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/205399027/ralph-edward-seyler>

Slocum, Richard Gene, d. 20 Jan 2023, ag 80, Kennewick, WA, was MMFN in 302 Aug61-Oct 61; later MMCM
(SS), Ret.'79 w/29 yrs serv.; also in 584, 609, 595, CVN-65
Obit w/pic: <https://www.sunsetgardencities.com/obituary/2023/01/richard-gene-slocum/>
Service Info w/pic: <https://navylog.navyememorial.org/slocum-richard>

Smith, Malcolm Graham, d. 25 May 2002, ag 77, Gold Hill, OR, was TM3(SS) in 302 Jun-Nov 45, WWII vet quali-
fied on SS-169 USS Dolphin ca. 1943. [info recently discovered]

Smith, Victor Jay, d. 16 Aug 2024, ag 78, Golden Valley, MN, was YNSN in 302 Nov65-?66
Obit w/pic: <https://neptunesociety.com/obituaries/golden-valley-mn/victor-smith-11943863>



Are my testicles black?

A suspected COVID, male patient is lying in bed in the hospital, wearing an oxygen mask over his mouth and nose. A young student female nurse appears and begins to give him a partial sponge bath.

"Nurse," he mumbles from behind the mask, "are my testicles black?"

Embarrassed, the young nurse replies, "I don't know, Sir. I'm only here to wash your upper body and feet."

He struggles to ask again, "Nurse, please check for me. Are my testicles black?"

Concerned that he might elevate his blood pressure and heart rate from worrying about his testicles, she overcomes her embarrassment and pulls back the covers.

She raises his gown, holds his manhood in one hand and his testicles gently in the other. She looks very closely and says, "There's nothing wrong with them, Sir. They look fine."

The man slowly pulls off his oxygen mask, smiles at her, and says very slowly,

"Thank you very much. That was wonderful. Now listen very, very, closely:"

Are - my - test - results - back?"

Navy Lingo- Gun Decking is naval slang for fabricating or falsifying something. Some say the origin of the term dates to the practice of painting images of cannon ports on the side of a ship to make it appear to have more guns than it actually did, and thereby convincing any adversaries that they were outgunned, forgoing engagement.

One modern example of this is **Pencil Whipping**, meaning to approve any form or document without proper testing, review or knowledge that the task or equipment should be approved. In other words, you're approving something you don't know is up to standard.

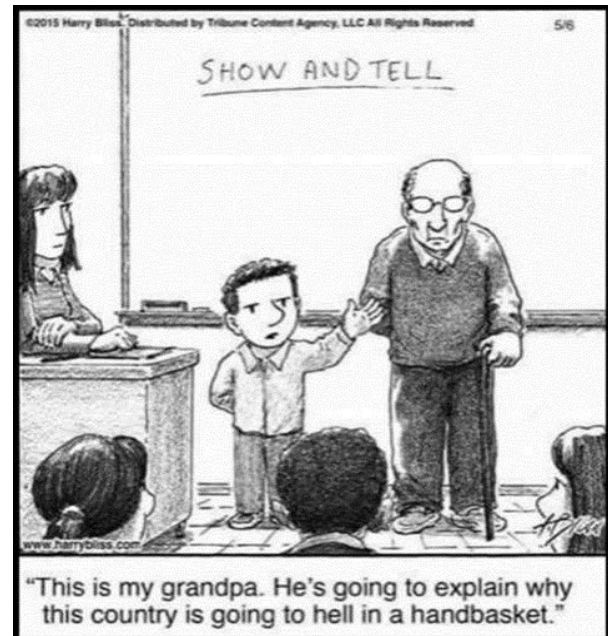
"America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves."

... ABRAHAM LINCOLN

"I've always loved quiet people; you never know if they are dancing in the daydream or if they are carrying the weight of the world."

JOHN GREEN

"Rank does not confer privilege or give power. It imposes responsibility." ...Peter Drucker



⇒ **On the subject of — Internet B.S.**

September 10, 2001

DONALD RUMSFELD HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE REVEALING THAT THE PENTAGON IS MISSING \$2,3 TRILLION, **BUT THE NEXT DAY SOMETHING HAPPENS**, AND EVERYBODY FORGETS ABOUT IT.

The disclaimer:

Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld did not reveal that the Pentagon had lost \$2.3 trillion the day before the September 11, 2001, attacks, contrary to posts shared online that misrepresent his remarks about missing financial audit trails. The figure had been mentioned by the Department of Defense more than a year earlier.

<https://www.reuters.com/fact-check/rumsfeld-did-not-reveal-loss-23-trillion-day-before-911-2023-09-14/>

<https://apnews.com/article/fact-check-us-government-trillions-lost-sept-11-670264168912>

[OH YEAH ! That surely saves Rumsfeld's reputation. And the number is surely preposterous, but try to do some specific research for audit numbers that indicate just how much was and continues to be "lost".by the Pentagon.—ed.]

Just in case you haven't figured it out yet, the main stream media is paid-for-propaganda, and the fear mongering is nothing more than orchestrated chaos to gain control through fear ..

LEFT IN THE WAKE

ON THE SUBJECT OF: THANKSGIVING

The World is Mine

Today, upon a bus, I saw a very
beautiful woman
And wished I were as beautiful.
When suddenly she rose to leave,
I saw her hobble down the aisle.
She had one leg and wore a crutch.
But as she passed,
she passed a smile.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two legs; the world is mine.

I stopped to buy some candy.
The lad who sold it had such charm.
I talked with him, he seemed so glad.
If I were late, it'd do no harm.
And as I left, he said to me,
"I thank you,
you've been so kind.
It's nice to talk with folks like you.
You see," he said, "I'm blind."
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two eyes; the world is mine.

Later while walking down the street,
I saw a child I knew.
He stood and watched the others play,
but he did not know what to do.
I stopped a moment and then I said,
"Why don't you join them dear?"
He looked ahead without a word.
I forgot, he couldn't hear.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine.
I have two ears; the world is mine.

With feet to take me where I'd go..
With eyes to see the sunset's glow.
With ears to hear what I'd know.
Oh, God, forgive me when I whine.
I've been blessed indeed,
the world is mine.

*This is just a simple reminder that we have so much
to be thankful for.*

Poem published in
November 2011 *American Submariner*

Have you contacted a buddy lately?

When you see a brother stand at attention while the Captain pins on the fish he worked so hard to earn, you understand the meaning of pride.

When you retire and they pipe you over the side for the very last time, you understand the meaning of great sadness.

When your eyes grow dim and your strength ebbs with age, and you see a submarine getting underway, you understand the meaning of envy.

When a shipmate from a time so long ago passes on and people say so many things they wish they had said before they departed, you understand the meaning of regret.