

Base 51 Blast

Base 51
Las Vegas, NV
Part of the
United States
Submarine
Veterans, Inc.



**If you are you
Qualified to wear
these, then...**

- **Please, come
join your
"Brothers of the
Phin!"**



February 2016

Issue 11



From the Bridge...

Greetings from the Bridge,

In keeping with our Base 51 ByLaws, every two years we hold our Base Officer elections, these elections to be held during our February meeting. The candidates were:

Base Commander:	Merle Hendricks Barry Katz
Vice Commander:	Rob Baker
Secretary:	Rod Stark
Treasurer:	Steve Christenson
COB:	Barry Katz

Since there was no opposition to the single candidate offices, the vote was unanimous for these positions. The vote went to Barry Katz for Base Commander.

I congratulate Barry, Rob, and Steve on their elections/reelections.

The new officers will be installed at our March meeting.

It has been a good run these last two years. We accomplished quite a bit including the installation and dedication of the Lost Boats Memorial and participating in community events including parades and a special presentation at the Nevada State Museum. We also combined the Base Constitution and Base ByLaws into one document while forming the result into single document much more readable, understandable, and useful for the Base. We welcomed new members and lost a few. Those we lost to Eternal Patrol were especially heart-felt.

Zero Bubble,

Merle

**Merle Hendricks
Base Commander**

From the Editor—New Look, Same great newsletter!

Shipmates,

The look of the Base 51 Blast has changed a bit. Publishing the newsletter in MS Word was difficult and time consuming. Using MS Publisher is much easier and quicker to get the word out. Hope you like the

new look. I was hoping to limit the publication to 4 pages of news from the base and the fleet. In the past, it was difficult to get pictures and sea stories for those features.

Now, with the base election results in, I'm

just going to publish this one issue and call it quits. Hopefully the new base secretary will take over and continue publishing the newsletter but that is for us to see. As for me... I enjoyed the ride; now I'm outta here! — Rod Stark

USS Nevada (SSBN-733)



USS Nevada (SSBN-733) off the United States East Coast on her commissioning day, 16 August 1986.

Career (US)	
Namesake:	The U.S. state of Nevada
Ordered:	7 January 1981
Builder:	General Dynamics Electric Boat, Groton, Connecticut
Laid down:	8 August 1983
Launched:	14 September 1985
Sponsored by:	Mrs. Carol Laxalt
Commissioned:	16 August 1986
Homeport:	Bangor, Washington
Motto:	Silent Sentry
Honors and awards:	Both Crews: Battle Efficiency Award (Battle "E") 2006 Blue Crew: Battle "E" 2007 Gold Crew Engineering "E", Supply "S", Tactical "T", Medical "M", Deck "D", 2006 and 2007
Status:	in active service, as of 2014
Badge:	

Shell Back by Gem Bulos — Base 51 Member

At last! I'm a SHELLBACK. After wiggling around as a slimy polliwog, I managed to sneak into the realm of King Neptune's Kingdom. I became an official Denizen of the Deep without the dreaded rituals of the rites of Passage. I cross the Equator on a cruise ship. The crew and some actors went through the initiations for us. They did not have the greasy Royal baby to kiss. They had to kiss a slimy giant Red Snapper instead. Despite the absence of the week old garbage polliwogs have to crawl through, it was fun to watch. I'm emailing from the deck of the Royal Caribbean's Legend of the Sea, with itineraries including the usual ports we visited during our deployment in the Western Pacific.

Hong Kong is a bustling megalopolis now. A far cry from the refugees littered city I first visited in 1960 aboard the USS BLUEGILL SS242. Susie Wong and her gang who used to paint our two engine rooms, are gone. So are the libraries and museums we frequented that time. The all-business and no-play tradespeople who come to fetch and take us to their shops, take our foot sizes and suit measurements and expect every order to be finished the following day, are now occupying those high rise buildings as board members of the biggest financial centers of the world. The money the seventh fleet and R&R Vietnam heroes spent here lost their significance including our role as benefactors. Life goes on. Kinabalu, Malaysia and Bali, Indonesia shows significant change but the same hustling taxi drivers. Manila had advanced to mega malls but the same menacing kamikaze drivers. Palawan, Philippines is starting to attract tourist interests. Boasting the best diving place in the world, fantastic colorful coral reefs, an underground river with its resident Bats who enjoy depositing their excrement on your hat or shoulder. Lots of sun and sand. Enjoyable island hopping rides. We are on our first itinerary at Darwin Australia. I'm disappointed to find out Perth, our forward submarine base in Australia is out of range of our tour buses.

My main disappointment this cruise is missing a visit to Vietnam. Vietnam was the most significant part of my first WEST PAC cruise. It was laced with drama, tragedy slap/stick comedy and history. Viet Cong (Charlie) had made a few running incursions to the South at that time but no major engagements. We were in the process of training S. Vietnam military to be able to defend their own country under the administration of President John F. Kennedy. Our only interest then was to discourage farther incursions until the S.Vietnamese are ready to go toe to toe with the determined Vietcong. We were ordered to traverse the waters of Vietnam to show the Flag and let the North know that South Vietnam was an ally and we Recognized Ngo Dinh Diem as the President. The original plan was supposed to be full of goodwill and tidings for S. Vietnam. It started to be that way when we stationed the Maneuvering Watch.

Up to today, very few people would believe the USS BLUEGILL SS242 and her crew, actually navigated the Mekong River up to the front of the America Embassy in Saigon. A convenient Liberty take off point and also a walking distance to the Ambassador Hotel where the action is, and where our military advisors were lavishly quartered, drawing pro-pay and able to afford a couple of live-in lovelies. I meant that literally.

(Continued on page 4)



Tolling of the Boats — US Submarine Losses February

USS Barbel (SS-316)

Lost on Feb 4, 1945 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 4th war patrol. Based on Japanese records, she was bombed near the southern entrance to the Palawan Passage. The day before, she reported she survived 3 depth charge attacks.

USS Shark I (SS-174)

Lost on Feb 11, 1942 with the loss of 59 officers and men on her 1st war patrol. Shark was the 1st US submarine sunk by enemy surface craft in the Pacific. She was most likely sunk by depth charges.

USS Amberjack (SS-219)

Lost on Feb 16, 1943 with the loss of 72 officers and men on her 3rd war patrol. Off Rabaul, she was attacked by a Japanese patrol plane, attacked by a torpedo boat and then depth charged by a subchaser.

USS Grayback (SS-208)

Lost on Feb 27, 1944 with the loss of 80 officers and men on her 10th war patrol. She appears to have been caught on the surface in the East China Sea by a Japanese carrier plane whose bombs made a direct hit. During this patrol she sank 4 ships totaling 21,594 tons and was tied for 11th in the number of ships sunk.

USS Trout (SS-202)

Lost on Feb 29, 1944 with the loss of 81 officers and men on her 11th war patrol. She was sunk by escorts in the middle of the Philippines Basin after sinking a passenger-cargoman and damaging another in a convoy. She carried out several notable special missions, including carrying over two tons of gold bullion out of Corregidor in February 1942.

We will never forget!



Minutes of Base 51 Meeting on February 10, 2016

1830 Call to Order by Base Commander; Pledge of Allegiance; Invocation. A quorum was established so that all base business may move forward.

Tolling of the Boats Ceremony describing US Submarine Losses this month. A **Moment of Silence** followed.

Recognition of Dignitaries and Base Officers: Merle Hendricks, Base Commander; Rod Stark, Secretary; Steve Christenson, Treasurer; Barry Katz, COB/Chaplain

Introduction of Visitors & Guests: Alber Vasser and Stan Isquith, guests, were introduced, as was returning guest, Jack Adas.

Short break taken to buy 30/30/30 tickets and purchase embroidered polo shirts from Rod Stark.

Unfinished Business:

- Warren Hollis has been appointed Base Storekeeper
- Bylaws amendments are on hold as National works to revise the National constitution and bylaws.
- Randy Lemster and Barry Katz have visited the paver company. New pavers are \$75 each (a \$25 saving per paver). The company indicated they will fix the broken paver when the new ones are installed. Since the money for the pavers has been approved, they were given the go ahead to get the pavers done.
- Barry is working on the Memorial bench inscriptions. He had no additional information as he had been involved in a car accident earlier in the day.
- The event's coordinator is sick and could not make tonight's meeting; however, Barry announced that Friendly Ford will donate the use of as many pickups as needed for a parade to carry base members. Barry wishes to donate the smaller trailer to the base; however questions arose as to the cost of licenses and insurance the base would now be responsible to pay. Nothing was settled in this respect. The float is currently being stored in Rob Baker's garage. —Thank you, Rob.

New Business:

- The E-board has approved the printing of 500 new business cards. Samples were handed around. Rod will get the new cards made.
- Election of new base officers: Nominations were again opened for the base officer positions. There were no additional nominations so the Commander proceeded with the election. The Base Commander position was the only contested position. Current Base Commander, Merle Hendricks, and current COB, Barry Katz were the candidates. Barry Katz received the most votes and it was determined he is the next Base 51 Commander. Immediately following the results of the election, Base Secretary, Rod Stark, resigned as secretary. Asked if he would take the Base Secretary job, Merle Hendricks said, "No." Therefore the positions of Base Secretary and COB are now open. If interested, contact Barry.

Good of the Order: Guest Albert Vasser announced that the reunion for the Caiman will be held in New Mexico.

1920 Meeting Adjourned

News from the Fleet—NAVSEA Commander: Navy is 10 Subs below its Needs

The Navy's submarine force is not large enough to meet the needs of the nation, according to the Navy's top ship acquisition admiral. Moderating a panel on shipbuilding Jan. 14 at the Surface Navy Association National Symposium, Vice Adm. William H. Hilarides, commander, Naval Sea Systems Command, said the submarine force is "10 ships below what's absolutely required to do the nation's business."

Hilarides noted that he was a submarine program manager when the decision was made in 2002 to maintain a build rate less than what could sustain the size of the force. He said that with the coming Ohio Replacement ballistic-missile submarine (SSBN) construction program there would not be funds enough to sustain the current rate of building two Virginia-class attack submarines (SSNs) per year.

He also noted that the Ohio Replacement will be the first U.S. Navy nuclear-powered submarine production class built with an electric drive propulsion system. Also speaking was Rear Adm. Michael E. Jabeley, the Navy's program executive officer for submarines, who said that between fiscal 2019 and fiscal 2035, the Navy expects to build five Virginia-class SSNs without the Virginia Payload Module (VPM), 15 with the VPM and 12 Ohio Replacement SSBNs, along with the first two next-generation SSNs. Along with the necessity of fielding the Ohio Replacement on patrol by 2031, Jabeley said the Navy must meet the challenge of the retirement of the four Ohio-class guided-missile submarines in the late 2020s, which will take 40 percent of the Tomahawk cruise missile launchers from the force to be replaced by the missile launchers in the VPMs in the Block V of the Virginia class.

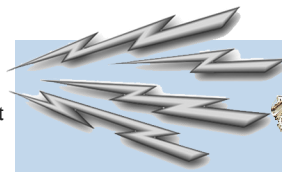
We were on our maneuvering watch stations the whole eight hours! For the first couple of hours we were manning the rails but after couple of hours, a few started drifting and end up frolicking on deck. Few went below to grab their cameras and started taking pictures, laughing and waving at people on either side of the river. It was an adventurous and happy occasion with one minor aspect of the whole situation overlooked. While cruising, it never occurred to us that we were within range of an AK 47 from either side of the river. We did not get the scare of our lives until we went bar hopping in town. While enjoying a few drinks the guys who were stationed there volunteered a tidbit of information about our joy ride up the river that made us stop drinking. They said, a couple hours before we entered the river, a squad of hardened S.Vietnamese marines suffered heavy losses while clearing and guarding our route. They gave us this bit of information while they were laughing! We didn't find it very funny! On our way back, you wouldn't find single soul topside. All what is on the bridge were a couple of lookouts with helmets on and armed with M1 rifles, the OOD and the Captain with side arms.

While in Saigon, President Ngo Dinh Diem was guest of our Captain for lunch in the Wardroom. Before lunch President Diem awarded Dolphin to each of the three last hardcore non-quals on a dockside ceremony. The people enjoyed the dunking ceremony shortly afterwards. President Diem took time to mingle with us. We'll forever remember him as a piously pleasant man. A proud Catholic. The right person but in the wrong country. The visit wasn't all that tragic. There is a major public relation gimmick that was meant to impress people but it went haywire. The people we meant to impress did not notice it but it was a major embarrassment to our engineering Officer.

People in the states would not believe it but people in Saigon did not believe that cylindrical black object can actually submerge and go underwater. On the morning of our departure our Captain decided to demonstrate how it can actually be done. We were shoved away from the pier and at the middle of the river, sounded the diving alarm, flooded the ballast tanks and boila! We went down like a rock. Hit bottom..HARD...damaged our active Sonar.... What happened asked the Captain? Nobody can give him the answer until our diving officer who is also the engineering officer turned around, red-faced and with a sheepish smile, said "it's the compensation..Captain. I calculated the compensation in seawater, not Mekong River fresh water. Needles to say the snickering in COC did not die down for quite a while.

We are on the second to the last leg of our cruise which is here in Cairns, Austratia. Where in the hell is Cairns? I guess this is the main reason why Royal Caribbean is conducting these cruises. To show the world there is such a place on the very bowels of the world. It is just their bad luck to be overshadowed by the Great Barrier Reef, the size of it is almost as expansive as Australia. It has been theorized that human life on earth began from these reefs. These reefs are the spawning area of the microscopic size fish called plankton that is the first link of the FOOD CHAIN. These tiny plankton are food for the fish higher in the food chain. They are actually the main dish for the whales. If you believe Darwin, the four legged amphibian that crawled from the ocean then walked on two legs, in theory, actually fed off the smaller fish that fed off these tiniest plankton. So there we are! You are probably wondering by now what I am doing cruising instead of going to meetings and other activities. To tell you the truth, I am hiding from my Kaiser Doctor in California. In the last couple of months, years actually, I have been subjected to a battery of tests and exams. Tests on Lungs, pulmonary, heart, liver, kidney, everything except sex change. I finally had my fill and refused to take the last prescription they gave me. I have enough prescription to expand my life span over a hundred years. Who wants to live this long. Stop the world. I want to get off!

**JOIN US... Base 51 meets the Second
Wednesday of each month, 1830 hours, at
the Elks Lodge, 4100 W Charleston, LV.
Come early @1800 and join the group
chatting at the bar before the meeting.**



Base 51 Active Duty Report



Geoff Davis, IT3(SS), had graduated from IT school and, after a few weeks at home in Pioche, has PCS'd to his new duty station in Bangor, WA. Since his boat is on patrol (Gold Crew) he has reported in to Blue Crew barracks at Bremerton, WA for training until his boat returned. Geoff had to report in on Super Bowl Sunday!

While home on leave, Geoff assisted in saving his father's life. Bob Rollins had back surgery in Scottsdale, AZ with Linda (his wife and Base 51 Associate Member) and Geoff doing the driving both ways, to and from the surgery location. Sent home with some powerful meds, Bob rested while Linda and Geoff were away in town. While they were gone, Bob had a severe reaction to the meds and by the time Linda and Geoff it had become a medical emergency. Geoff help his mother get Bob in the car and they rushed to the emergency room, arriving in time for life-saving assistance. Who says being a boat sailor is a breeze!

The Last Word

- 1 * Accept the fact that some days you're the pigeon, and some days you're the statue!
- 2 * Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.
- 3 * Always read stuff that will make you look good if you die in the middle of it.
- 4 * Drive carefully... It's not only cars that can be recalled by their Maker.
- 5 * If you can't be kind, at least have the decency to be vague.
- 6 * If you lend someone \$20 and never see that person again, it was probably worth it.
- 7 * It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.
- 8 * Never buy a car you can't push.
- 9 * Never put both feet in your mouth at the same time, because then you won't have a leg to stand on.
- 10 * Nobody cares if you can't dance well. Just get up and dance.
- 11 * Since it's the early worm that gets eaten by

- the bird, sleep late.
- 12 * The second mouse gets the cheese.
 - 13 * When everything's coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.
 - 14 * Birthdays are good for you. The more you have, the longer you live.
 - 16 * Some mistakes are too much fun to make only once.
 - 17 * We could learn a lot from crayons. Some are sharp, some are pretty and some are dull. Some have weird names and all are different colors, but they all have to live in the same box.
 - 18 * A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.
 - 19 * Have an awesome day and know that someone has thought about you today.
- AND MOST IMPORTANTLY**
- 20 * Save the earth..... It's the only planet with chocolate!*
- Be the kind of person that when your feet hit the floor each morning the devil says~~ "Oh Crap, they're up!"

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