November 2026
VOL MMXXVI Issue 08

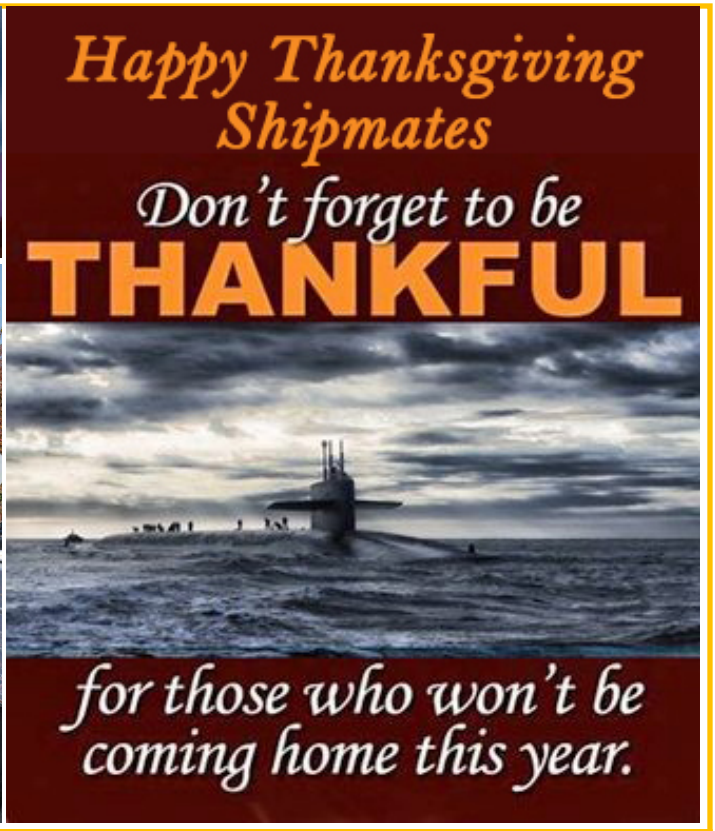
Clear The Baffles

USSVI GOLD COUNTRY BASE

Our purpose is "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.







Inside

Page 2-	Commander's Corner
Page 3-	Chaplain & Recreation Dir.
Page 4-	Happy Thanksgiving
Page 5-	Lost Boats - December
Page 6-	Base & National Officers
Page 7-8	Base Meeting Minutes - October
Page 9-	Birthdays, Lighter Side
Page 10	Booster Club, Vets Information
Page 11-12	Gold Country News & Events
Page 13-	USSVI National & Regional News
Page 14-	Shipmate's Bio Who We Are
Page 15-	Story of Interest
Page 16-	WWII Submarine News
Page 17-	US Navy Submarine News
Page 18-	Publishing Information

Now Hear This!

November 28th --Base Meeting Potluck @ 12 noon Meeting Starts 1pm Folsom Veterans Hall -1300 Forrest St., Folsom

December 7th -- Pearl Harbor Memorial 0700 (0900-1100) Discovery Park, Sacramento

December 8th -- **First Call to Morning Chow & Gift Exchange** 0900 Denny's Restaurant 1000 N. Sunrise, Roseville

December 19th --Holiday Lunch and Awards Ceremony 1100 -- 1400 McClellan's Officer's Club 3410 Westover St, Sacramento

COMMANDER'S CORNER



Shipmates, Elections were conducted at the October Base Meeting. I would like to congratulate our newly elected Gold Country Base Commander – Steve Thomas and I also would like to congratulate Bill Signet who agreed to continue in the role of Gold Country Base treasurer. Thanks to both of these Gold Country Base members for their leadership commitment to support the growth and numerous projects of Gold Country Base supporting our fellow Submarine Veterans.

The Veterans Day parade in West Sacramento was well attended by a large contingent of Gold Country Base members. Thanks to all that showed up, set-up and rode the float. The sparsely attended parade was not as well attended as some of our others such as Lincoln, and Folsom. A good time was had by those who watched and those who participated in the parade.

Some of our Gold Country base members attended an honor ceremony after the parade in the lobby at Bass Pro Shop. Chuck Jamison played the songs of the different branches of the armed forces on the bagpipes and those sounds echoed through those high ceilings of the Bass Pro Store.

A group of nearly 50 plus veterans, store personnel, and store customer joined me in a prayer for our veterans, those that didn't make it home, current service personnel, and their families here at home.

The holiday season is upon us and I want to wish all our Gold Country Base members and their families a Happy Thanksgiving and a joyful Holiday Season.

God Bless You All and Happy Holidays

Les Jamison - Base Commander

From Our Chaplain



. WHAT DOES BEING SAVED MEAN?

Being saved spiritually means our sins no longer count against us an eternal death sentence. Instead, our sins are forgiven by the grace of God and we are given the free gift of eternal life. Being saved does not spare us from earthly troubles, but it does spare us from eternal judgment.

Romans 4:7-8 "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those record the Lord has cleared of sin."

Sincerely,

Howard Grover, Base Chaplain

Hello Gold Country Base,



Hello again my friends. During the October meeting, I put out a signup sheet for two tournaments, Cribbage and Mexican Train Dominoes.

There are currently six people signed up for Cribbage; Barry, Chad, Pete, Ed, Gene, and Diana. Chad has already boldly claimed that we might as well give him the trophy. Are there two more people interested in competing for the right to be named the Gold Country Base Cribbage Champion? This first tournament will be single elimination. I would like to start the tournament in January.

I still do not have a good feel for how to run a Mexican train tournament. If any of you know how to run this tournament, please reach out to me.

Book readers if you are interested, I would like to start the book "The Measure", by Nikki Erlick this coming January, and discuss the book during our February meeting.

Alonzo Brewster

Thanksgiving With Shipmates



Thanksgiving has a way of bringing back memories of the people I've shared a table with. For some of us, that table was in the mess aboard a submarine, with the boat underway and someone due to relieve the watch. The cooks did what they could to make the day feel like a holiday. A good meal and a little time to sit with shipmates went a long way when home was far away.

Our families had their own Thanksgivings to get through while we were gone. They kept traditions going, took care of things at home, and saved up stories to tell us when we got back. As we give thanks for the people we served with, let's remember the people who carried on at home and made our homecomings something to look forward to.

I've been reminded in recent years how much it means to have a place at someone's Thanksgiving table. For the past three years, I've had the grateful privilege of sharing the holiday with a shipmate who knew about my personal loss and welcomed me into his home. I'm grateful for kindness shown by him and his family and for the time we've spent together.

This Thanksgiving, I'll be thinking of the men and women serving aboard our submarines today, especially those spending the holiday submerged and standing watch beneath the oceans of the world. We remember what it was like to be far from home, and we're thinking them and their families who miss them around the table. We're grateful for their service, and we wish them a safe return home.

This Thanksgiving, I hope you get to spend some time with people you care about. I'll be thinking of our shipmates and the family members and friends we have lost. If a shipmate comes to mind who you haven't heard from in a while, give them a call. They may be glad to hear your voice, and you may be just as glad to hear theirs.

Happy Thanksgiving to you and yours, shipmates.

J. Barry Wyatt
USSVI WD 5 Commander
Public Affairs Officer/Newsletter Editor
Gold Country Base



Lost Boats

December

USS Capelin (SS-289)

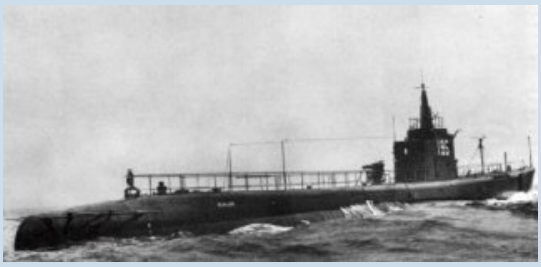
Lost on Dec 2, 1943 with the loss of 76 men. She was on her 1st war patrol, but her exact location, date and cause of loss remain a mystery. She may have been lost to mines or an operational casualty.





USS Sealion (SS-195)

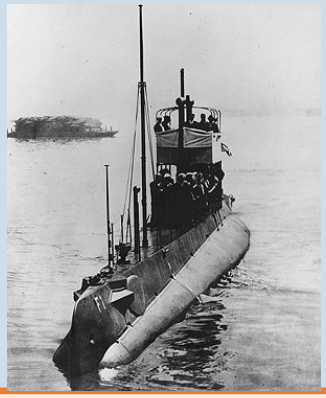
Lost on Dec 10, 1941 with the loss of 4 men. To prevent her from falling into enemy hands, she was scuttled in Manila Bay after incurring severe bomb damage during the initial Japanese attack. One other Sealion man was later captured and died in POW





USS F-1 / Carp (SS-20)

Lost on December 17, 1917 with the loss of 19 officers and men when it was sunk after collision with the USS F-3 (Pickerel(SS-22)) off San Clemente, CA.





USS S-4 (SS-109)

Lost on December 17, 1927 with the loss of 40 officers and men when it was sunk after being rammed by USCG Paulding. Salvaged in 1928 and recommissioned.





Gold Country Base Officers



Base Commander
Kaps4Kids Coordinator
Les Jamison
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USS Greenfish SS 351
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Mark Elftmann
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Life Member Holland Club
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Ed McCarthy
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Bergall SSN 667
Life Member
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USSVI Western
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Qualified 1980
USS Bergall SSN 667
Life Member
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USSVI-GOLD COUNTRY BASE E-BOARD MEETING MINUTES: October 24, 2026



CALL TO ORDER: Meeting called to order @ 1:00 pm by Commander Les Jamison.
INVOCATION: Base Chaplain Howard Grover gave invocation and prayer for our men and women in the Gulf as their service is extended.
TOLLING OF THE BELL: The Lost Boats for the month of September were read by Chad Clay. There were 5 lost boats in the month of September. Chief of the Boat Gene Ratto tolled the bell for each Lost Boat and one additional toll in memory of those shipmates on Eternal Patrol.
MEMBER INTRODUCTION: There were 21 members and 2 guests in attendance.

GUEST SPEAKER: Chad Clay
Our guest speaker for today had to cancel due to a traffic accident with her daughter.

FORMAL REPORTS:

BASE COMMANDER: Les Jamison
Motion by Barry to suspend the order of the meeting, 2nd and passed. Ballots handed out to members to vote for Commander and Treasurer. Elections voted for Commander, Steve Thomas elected unanimously. Elections voted for Treasurer, Bill Sugnet elected unanimously. Vice Commander Mark Elftmann has resigned his position of Vice Commander Chad nominated Ed McCarthy for Vice Commander. No other nominations.Ed McCarthy announced the bylaws are amended to include no life time membership to be added in the base. Those that have life membership will remain as life member.
SECRETARY: Diana Clay No report
CHIEF OF THE BOAT (COB) Gene Ratto
He was at the airshow and was very successful. We have about 3 potential members sign up.
TREASURER: Bill Sugnet
(The books are in balance. Any base member can request a report from the Base Treasurer via email.)We will now be using a new payment platform Zeffy which have no fees required. We will still be using Zelle which also has not fees.
MEMBERSHIP: Bill Sugnet We have 91 members.
HOLLAND CLUB: Leonard Lee - No report
PAO / NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Barry Wyatt
Western Region Roundup in 2027 will be in Denver. Western Region Roundup in 2028 will be TBD.
He is trying to get members from other bases to attend our December 7 event. Tim Spoon Achievement award nomination closes at the end of October. Brick laying ceremony plans are in process as there is a new director at the VA. They are working on the decision for who will be laying the bricks and such. It is intended for April 10, 2027. Input in newsletter requested. He would like to publish this next week. He would like a basic bio of the new members.
KAPS4KIDS: Mike Goble
Mike is working on getting the Kaps4kids going and attended a meeting to work on it. He is ordering more pink and blue teddy bears @ $6 each. Motion entered and approved to order and pay for these teddy bears. Suggestion to bring in old submarine calendars and sub magazines to use the pictures for the kids.
EAGLE SCOUT CHAIR: Gil Miller' No report
CHAPLAIN REPORT / BINNACLE LIST: Howard Grover
He has made some calls and had a request to have the float at the December 7 event.
BASE PHOTOGRAPHER: Bill Barron
He has pictures from the airshow for the newsletter.
NAVY YOUTH LIASON: Chad Clay No report ***(continued on next page)***

USSVI-GOLD COUNTRY BASE E-BOARD MEETING MINUTES: October 24, 2026 (continued)

HISTORIAN: Lenard Lee No report

WEB-MASTER: Ed McCarthy No report

STOREKEEPER: Jerry Wentland

Jerry did inventory. Sale on additional supplies. Rain jackets are available to order if wanted. (cost about $35) If interested in yellow base cap, contact Jerry for price. New calendars are in. He is almost out and will order more.

KEEPER OF THE BOAT: John Kelly He will have the float ready for the Veterans Day parade. The brakes were cut to be able to send it to the airshow.

EVENTS COORDINATOR: Ed McCarthy

Air Show, next airshow will be March 20 and 21, 2027. The Blue Angels will be in attendance. Veteran's Day parade will be in West Sacramento. Arrive between 8:30am and 9:00 am at 1100 Clarendon Street, West Sacramento, for the parade. After the parade there will be complimentary food for all the attendees. December 7 event is in the works. Is on a Monday. Tim Carlisle, Senior Vice Commander, will be main speaker. Chad will try to get the Sea Cadets to provide presentation of colors. December 8 is our breakfast and gift exchange, $20 amount. December Annual Base Holiday and Awards ceremony is lunch at the Officers Club. December 19, from 11:00 am– 3:00 pm. Saturday. After discussion, the cost will be $65 per person or $130 per couple. You may pay via payment format Zeffy. We will look into attending the State Fair next year. We will also look into attending a county fair.

GUEST SPEAKERS COORDINATOR: Chad Clay

Sea Cadet speaker anticipated for this meeting but her daughter was involved in an automobile accident today and unable to attend. We will give prayers for the family. Looking for a guest speaker for November.

WESTERN REGION DIRECTOR: Pete Juhos

National convention for 2027 is in Reno at Grand Sierra Resort, 8/22-27/2027. National convention for 2028 is in Grand Rapids, MI.

BASE ENTERTAINMENT: Alonzo Brewster

He is gathering some games for us to play after the meeting.

Good of the Order / Communications:

Motion to spend $150 to decorate a tree at the zoo and care for the animals. Approved. Dusty shared that you can go to privacy.ca.gov to remove personal information from the internet.

OLD BUSINESS:

Minutes from e-board meeting were approved.

SUBVET SUPPORT GROUP: Penny Jamison

December holiday event is at lunch time at the Officers Club. December 19, from 11:00 – 3:00. Saturday. After discussion, the cost will be $65 per person. We had a motion, 2nd and passed for this amount. Next meeting is November 28, 2026. We will have Thanksgiving dinner with Turkey from Ed, Stuffing from Chad, Mashed potatoes and green bean casserole from Suzanne, Sweet potatoes and corn casserole from Penny. Everyone else please bring a dessert.

First Call to Morning Chow: 11/10/2026 9:30 am @ Denny's Restaurant, 122 N. Sunrise Ave., Roseville, CA

E-board Zoom meeting: November 21, 2026 at 9:00 am

Next Base Meeting: November 28, 2026 12:00 for potluck lunch and meeting at 1:00

50/50: Won by $40 Gabe Hernandez

Sea Cadet donations: $57

Meeting adjournment:

Chief of the Boat surfaced @ 2:32 pm

Submitted by Diana Clay, Base Secretary

Birthdays

December

, Ted Armstrong Charles Betty

Gary English Howard Grover

Jim Hudson John Mannix



On The Lighter Side



Gold Country Base would not be able to continue to operate without the generous contribution from those Members, Wives and Friends who donate to

Gold Country Base Booster's

Bill Barron* Jerry Bowers

Alonzo Brewster* Anita Bronner

Chad & Diana Clay* Dusty Clark

Ken Earls* Mark Elftmann* Mike Goble

Dennis Hill Bill Hunt* Jack Everett

Howard Grover* Burna Jamieson

Les & Penny Jamison* Pete Juhos

John Kelly* Lenard Lee Alvin Lehman

Matt Lettau* James MacLean

Tom Moniz* Harry Pagett Roger Paul

Gene Ratto* Joe Ryan* William Sugnet

***Steve & Suzanne Thomas Jerry Wentland ***

Randall Wolley Barry Wyatt*

**** Multi-Year Donors***

VANEWS

VA proposes ending life insurance premiums for thousands of World War II, Korean War-era Veterans, saving them millions

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs today published a proposed regulation that would stop the collection of life insurance premiums from thousands of World War II and Korean War-era Veterans enrolled in certain VA National Service Life Insurance programs, including the Veterans' Reopened Insurance program.

The proposal, published today in the Federal Register, would enable about 10,000 Veterans to maintain their coverage under this insurance program for life while exempting them from all future premium payments. The change would save Veterans about $4 million over 10 years and save VA about $1 million in administrative costs over that same period. Under the proposal, no action is required of Veterans and all affected Veterans will maintain their existing coverage.

VA is able to exempt this cohort of Veterans from future insurance bills because of strong financial performance of the department's insurance funds under President Trump.

"This is a small way of saying 'thank you' to World War II and Korean War-era whose service and sacrifice continue to inspire us to this day," said VA Secretary Doug Collins.



Now Hear This!

Saturday November 28 9:00am Folsom Zoo Christmas Decorating Project - Folsom City Zoo Sanctuary 403 Stafford Street Folsom

We are doing a Christmas Tree decorating project to support the Folsom Zoo and we are gathering at 9:00 am at the Zoo main entrance. We will be spending 2 hours decorating our Christmas tree before we head to the VFW hall for our Thanksgiving potluck and monthly Base meeting. *(more information call Les (407) 509-7814*

Saturday November 28th --Base Meeting Potluck @ 12 noon Meeting Starts 1pm Folsom Veterans Hall -1300 Forrest St., Folsom

Monday December 7th -- Pearl Harbor Memorial Arrive at Discovery Park at 7:00am for set-up. Please let other Veteran Groups know about this honored event. *(more information call Ed (916) 995-5196 eddie105@yahoo.com)*

Tuesday December 8th First Call to Morning Chow & Gift Exchange 0900 Denny's Restaurant 1000 N. Sunrise, Roseville. The value of the gift is $25. Come and enjoy, exchange and even steal somebody prized gift selection.

Saturday December 19th Holiday Party and Awards Ceremony 11:00 am to 3:00 pm at McClellan's Officer's Club 3410 Westover St, Sacramento. The price is $65 per person or $130 per couple. Purchase tickets online https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/annual-awards-luncheon-and-holiday-party or bring a check to the meeting. *(more information call Penny Jamison at 352-598-9611).*

Annual Base and National dues for 2027 are due. You should have received a notification from the Base Treasurer in the past week. Please submit your payment to continue your active commitment to USSVI and Gold Country Base. Contact Bill Signet (916) 934-9277 billsugnet@icloud.com if you have questions regarding your annual base or national dues.

Gold Country News & Events









USSVI National & Regional News



Registration Is Open

REGISTRATION IS OPEN for the USSVI Western Region Roundup scheduled for April 15 – 17 2027 at the Marriott Westminster in Denver, Colorado. The Roundup is being hosted by USSVI Rocky Mountain Base and Southern Colorado Base. https://wrroundup.com/



Scholarship News

The USSV Charitable Foundation (USSVCF) Scholarship Committee announces the 2027-28 Academic Year USSVCF Scholarship Program for USSVI members and the children, grandchildren, stepchildren, and legal guardian children of USSVI members (including Associate members of 2 years standing). Scholarship funding is also available for trade, technical, career education and apprenticeship programs at accredited institutions. The USSVCF Scholarship application website is:
https://subforcescholarships.smapply.io/prog/ussvcf_scholarship_2027-28/

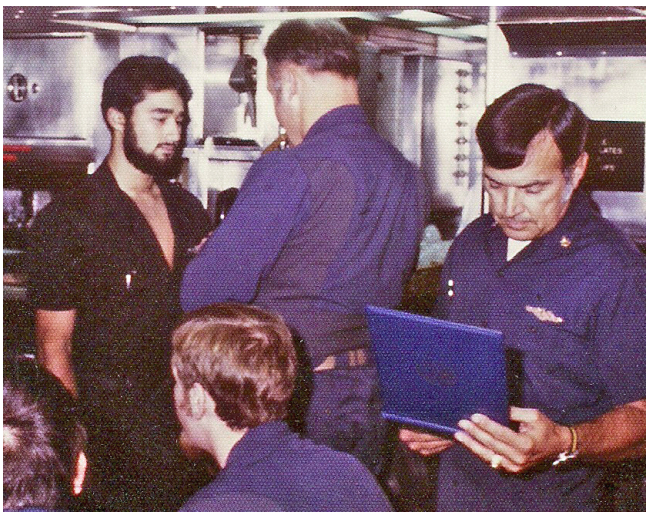
All applications must be completed and submitted via this website no later than 11:59 PM on May 19, 2027. Current / previous recipients, previous applicants and first-time applicants are all welcome to apply.

Go to our website and click on the scrolling quiz on the HOME page to find information about our Career Education program and useful resources.

Shipmate's Bio Who We Are

Gene Ratto RN2(SS) Gold Country Chief of the Boat

The bio below was submitted by Gene in 2016. He recently sent in an update see it below.



Born Aug 23,1957 in San Mateo, CA. Lived in the bay area until I was 12 when we moved to Truckee, CA where I went to high school. I went to Sierra Jr College for one year but decided not to go back the following year to work in Reno. Not long after that I joined the Navy. Signed papers on Dec. 7th, 1976, and went in on April of 77. Volunteered for Subs at boot and went to Sub school after boot. I went to Radioman school in San Diego after that and off to my first boat the Abraham Lincoln SSBN 602 in Pearl Harbor HI. Made two patrols on her but she was going to be decommissioned so I wanted to move on and received orders to the Hawkbill SSN 666. I was a KWR37 crypto tech going to school at Mare Island. Finished up my tour up in Bremerton WA and got out in 1981. I moved back to the San Francisco bay area to start my new life.
Since I got out of the Navy I have been working in the Telecommunications industry, working for Pacific Telephone, County of Santa Clara, and a few other private telecom companies. I presently work for Sutter Health in Sacramento area and plan on staying here till I retire. I have been married to my wife Tina for the last 20 years, have a daughter in college and two boys who are 11th graders at Folsom High School. I enjoy time with my family especially watching them all play soccer since they were young and they still continue to play now. One of my hobbies I love to do is playing golf.



Update

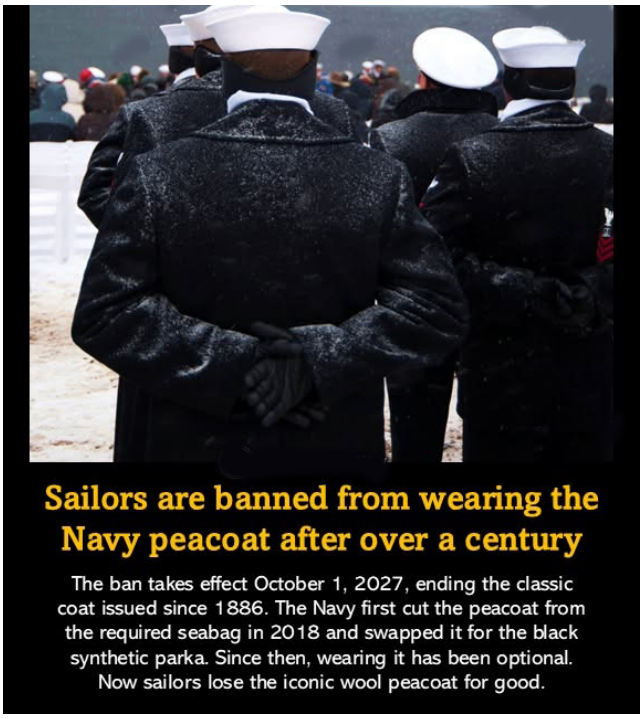
I have been retired from Sutter Health since November of 2022. I have been keeping busy with doing handyman jobs around my neighborhood, helping friends and family for what ever they need me for. I have done volunteer work for Big Brothers'/Sisters organization, Wildhawk golf course, and helped a good friend start up a new business by getting his new warehouse facility setup for operation. I have also been setting up and taking down audio equipment for one of my best friends who has a band that plays around the Sacramento area. This has been a busy year with one of my sons getting married and my daughter having our first grandson, also having celebrated our 30th wedding anniversary with my wife Tina. I have had a blessed life and look forward to the rest of my retirement with my family.

Story of Intrest



The Navy is officially ending authorized wear of the wool peacoat on October 1, 2027, closing out a uniform staple that became standard for enlisted sailors in 1886. After leaving the required recruit seabag in 2018 for cold-weather parkas, the coat stayed on the books as an optional item. Now optional wear is ending altogether alongside broader uniform changes, including ending the acrylic V-neck sweater next October, shifting formal wear toward the dinner dress blue jacket, phasing out the gold and blue PT uniform for a blue version, and retiring the Type II Navy Working Uniform.

Across Navy communities on Reddit and military news threads, reactions are loud and divided. Many sailors are frustrated, pointing to the Lone Sailor statue and backing a petition that drew nearly 1,000 signatures in a week to save the coat, arguing that uniform updates keep chipping away at naval tradition and costing sailors money. At the same time, plenty of sailors are blunt about why it is going: many say they loved how the coat looked or felt proud putting it on in boot camp, yet barely wore it once it became optional. Others point out that heavy wool gets waterlogged in rain and mist, feels bulky or restrictive next to newer synthetic gear, smells bad in bad weather, takes up locker space, costs a lot, and is a hassle to clean.

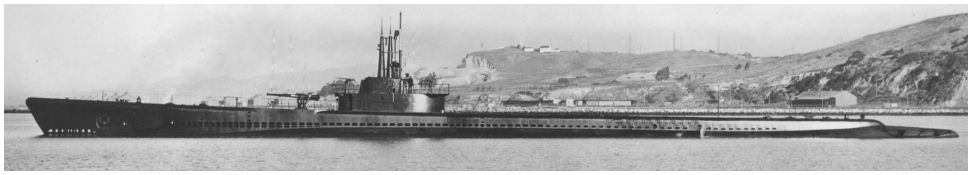


The Navy says the decision reflects sailor feedback on weight, appearance, and discomfort when wet. Officials also note the coat has been out of standard issue for eight years, makers stopped producing it, and Military Times reported that sailors bought 67 peacoats in 2025 and only 15 this year.

WW II Submarine News

USS TANG (SS-306)

Lost on Oct 25,1944 with the loss of 78 men in the Formosa Strait. Tang was on her 5th war and last patrol during which she fired twenty-four torpedoes in four attacks. Twenty-two torpedoes found their mark in enemy ships, sinking 13 of them; one missed, and the last torpedo, fired after a careful check-over, sank TANG. Nine of the crew were taken prisoner, including CDR. O'Kane and five who had gained the surface from her final resting place 180 feet below. All survived the war, and CDR O'Kane was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. This vessel was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation twice during her career. Commander O'Kane has been called the Submarine Force's most outstanding officer; he served as Executive Officer of the very successful WAHOO before taking command of TANG.



In her five patrols, TANG is credited with sinking 31 ships, totaling 227,800 tons and damaging two for 4,100 tons. This record is unexcelled among American submarines. In her first patrol, spending February 1944 west of Truk and Saipan, she sank three freighters, a large tanker and a submarine tender. TANG's second patrol was in the area west of Palau, east of Davao and at Truk. She made no ship contacts worthy of attack, but at the latter island she rescued twenty-two Navy airmen during a carrier-based strike at Truk on 30 April-1 May 1944. This vessel's third patrol was in the East China and Yellow Seas. Here she sank six freighters, a tanker, and a large aircraft transport. She covered the waters along the southern coast of Honshu in August 1944. She sank a freighter, a large transport, a tanker and two patrol craft, while she damaged another freighter and small craft.

Tang was assigned to Florida and was dedicated by the Basil Pearce Chapter of the Submarine Veterans of WWII, and her monument can be found in Palatka, FL.

http://www.oneternalpatrol.com/uss-tang-306.htm



Rescued Airmen Aboard the USS Tang 1944

US Navy Submarine News

Navy Briefs Congress on USS South Dakota Incident

The Navy has provided Congress with new details on the status of the USS South Dakota and the incident that led to the Oct. 14 dismissal of the submarine's command triad.

In a statement on Tuesday, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, said "briefings at a classified level" have begun as Navy officials seek to repair their rapport with Congress after failing to notify the House and Senate Armed Services Committees about the dismissals and a possible grounding at sea.



Earlier this month, The Day revealed that the South Dakota encountered an "immediate navigational hazard" when it descended toward the ocean floor in September, according to the Navy's certification of a commendation medal awarded to a South Dakota submariner and an account by the sailor's family.

The sailor received the medal on Oct. 6, just days before the Navy relieved the ship's commanding officer, executive officer and chief of the boat.

On Nov. 12, after learning about the dismissals from The Day, Courtney and the U.S. Rep. Adam Smith of Washington sent a letter to the Navy demanding transparency about the South Dakota's condition.

The congressmen set a deadline of Nov. 20 for Acting Secretary Hung Cao and the chief of naval operations to disclose whether the South Dakota experienced a grounding and provide details on potential damage to the vessel, injuries to crew and anticipated maintenance schedules.

Courtney said Cao replied to the letter late last week. "Consultation with Congress with briefings at a classified level has begun," Courtney said. "Despite Acting Secretary Cao's initial obfuscating, senior Navy leadership's recent engagement with the Committee demonstrates a return to past practice of notification and accountability. The Committee will continue the process of accountability when Congress convenes next week."

According to a copy of the response, Cao said he directed the chief of naval operations to provide a classified briefing that is "tailored to address the specific questions raised" by Courtney and Smith and provide members of Congress with a "full understanding of the underlying incident and the rationale for the personnel changes."



2016



2017



2018



2019



2020



2021



2022



2023



2024



2025

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