



**MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



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UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS INC. NAUTILUS BASE

Ocala, FL

"The Ships Bell"

December
2011

<http://www.nautilusbase.us>

United States Submarine Veterans 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."

Lost Boat USS S4 SS-109

Keel laid down by the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Kittery, ME, 4DEC17; Launched: 27AUG19; Sponsored by Mrs. Herbert S. Howard; Commissioned: 19NOV19 with LCdr Percy K. Robottom in command; Lost 17DEC27; Salvaged: 17MAR28; Decommissioned: 19MAR28; Recommissioned: 16OCT28; Decommissioned 7APR32; Struck from the Navy List 15JAN36; Scuttled 15MAR36

Following acceptance trials and a visit to Havana, Cuba, from 14 to 19 January 1920, and subsequent operations along the Gulf and New England coasts, USS S-4 (SS-109) departed New London on 18 November 1920 to rendezvous with her assigned division, SubDiv12, and SubDiv18 off New Hampshire. The two divisions were about to embark on a historic voyage which, at that time, was to be the longest cruise undertaken by American submarines.

Assigned to SubFlot3 of the Asiatic Fleet at Cavite in the Philippine Islands, they sailed via the Panama Canal and Pearl Harbor and arrived at Cavite on 1 December 1921. S-4 operated out of the Cavite Naval Station, with occasional visits to Chinese ports, until late in 1924, when the two divisions were re-assigned to the west coast.

Departing Cavite on 29 October, they arrived at Mare Island, California, on 30 December. Remaining at Mare Island in 1925, she operated along the west coast through 1926, mainly at San Francisco, San Pedro, and San Diego. She departed Mare Island on 10 February 1927 and sailed to the Panama Canal Zone, where she operated through March and April, then proceeded to New London, arriving on 3 May. For the remainder of the year, she operated off the New England coast.

cont'd on page 2

Lost Boats for the Month

DECEMBER

*USS Sealion SS195	10 Dec. 1941
USS F1 SS20	16 Dec. 1917
USS S4 SS109	7 Dec. 1927
* First submarine lost in WWII	



Happy Birthday! December

Steve Chordas 15th
Bob Shouse 15th
Ed Schuele 17th

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~ Coming Events ~

Jan. 21, 2012 - 1100, Sheriff's Substation on 27/301/441 north of Belleview. Base Elections.

Feb. 18, 1100 - Sheriff's Substation on 27/301/441 north of Belleview.

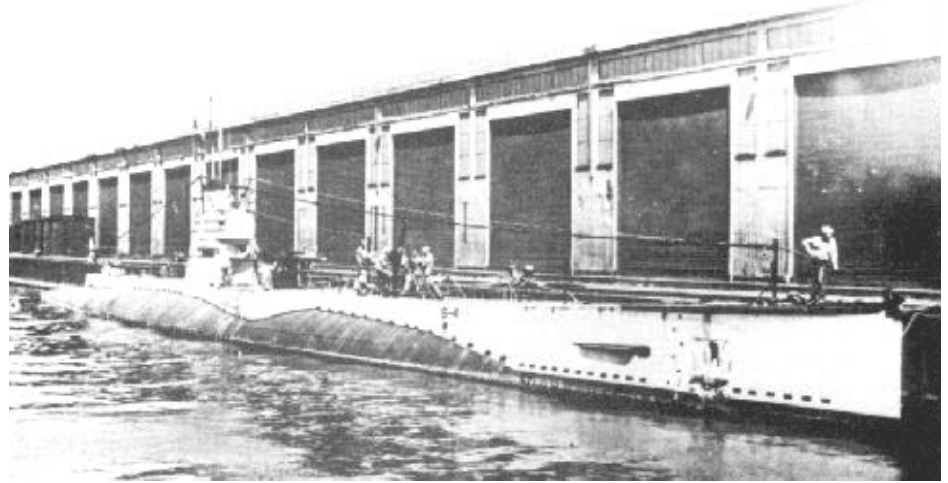
Mar. 17, 1100 - Sheriff's Substation on 27/301/441 north of Belleview.

Lost Boat USS S4 - SS-109

On 17 December 1927, S-4, having recently received extensive refitting at PNSY, was one of the Navy's most serviceable submarines, albeit an old one of WWI vintage. She had just completed her run of the measured mile prior to returning to the fleet and, having checked the surface for other vessels in her vicinity, her periscopes were housed as she planed up to be rammed by USCGC PAULDING, sending her back down to the oceans depths for the last time.

Paulding was making nearly eighteen knots when a lookout spotted the periscopes and shears of S-4 coming up close aboard on the port bow. The lookout reported and the OOD ordered the engines full reverse and the rudder hard to port, hopefully to pass to port over the still submerged stern of S-4. Paulding, however, struck S-4 at nearly the point of max beam half-way between the forward and aft Battery Compartment bulkheads about two feet above the battery well deck. The blow was somewhat glancing. The forefoot of the cutter telescoped and broke off in the hole torn in S-4's side. The hole in the the sub was nearly four feet long and two feet high in the ballast tank and two and a half feet long by a foot high in the Battery Compartment pressure hull. About three feet of the crumpled forefoot girder was stuck in the hole, not enough to stem the blast of cold water hosing through.

S-4 heeled far to port and started down by the bow. Paulding got on her radio and announced she had just collided with a submerged object, probably a submarine and gave her position. She then stopped and waited for the sub to surface. It didn't. The men inside the boat were thrown about by the impact. Some in the Battery Compartment started to jam whatever was handy into the stream of water to stem the flow. The inrush was, however, too great and it was readily obvious that the Battery Compartment would have to be abandoned. Six men were in the Torpedo Room and slammed the door shut, dogging it tight. The remainder of the crew that were in the Battery Compartment made their way up the steepening deck to the Control Room door and when all had made it through, the door was shut and dogged. The water continued to fill the Battery Compartment,



The USS S-4 was lost on 17 Dec. 1927 after a collision with a Coast Guard Cutter

compressing the air inside. The battery well held tight and did not leak too much. The pressure in the bubble of air in the upper aft end of the space rose to about 50 pounds per square inch flooding Control.

The initial stream of water spray and air had shorted sections of the switchboard throwing the entire boat into the dark. The commanding officer, ordered the space evacuated and when all the personnel in Control had made their way back to the Engine Room, he slammed and dogged the door. Now the crew was in serious trouble. There were fourteen men in the Engine Room with an additional fourteen in the Motor Room. The air was foul with chlorine, it was dark and getting cold fast. When at last, the noise of rushing water had stopped and the boat got quiet, it was obvious that access to Control Room was out of the question. There was no way to lift the stern of the boat as USS S-5 (SS-110) had done. The only thing left was to wait for help.

The rest of the story is a tragedy of divers struggling to save those left of the crew and failing. The boat was a pivot point in the story of submarine design. The first production model of a standard government design, she had a tragic accident which lead to better cooperation in navigation by setting aside areas for submarine operations and requiring other ships not transit these places.

The death of her crew of thirty-four and the painful inability of the Navy to be able to rescue them became the basis for an effort to make submarine escape and salvage a viable option. The men died but the legacy they left saved the life of at least forty-six others because they used the

devices invented and may have saved an untold number more because of the improved safety and navigation required after the accident.

S-4 was finally raised on 17 March 1928 and towed to the Boston Navy Yard for drydocking. She was decommissioned on the 19th. S-4 was recommissioned on 16 October, after repairs. She served at Key West, Florida, early in 1929 and 1930, and in the northeast during the remainder of those years. In 1931, she operated again at New London until departing there on 3 January 1932 for Pearl Harbor. Sailing via the Panama Canal, she arrived at Pearl on 29 August. On 7 April 1933, S-4 was decommissioned and laid up. She was struck from the Navy List on 15 January 1936 and destroyed on 15 March by sinking.

*Compiled from
"Dictionary of American
Naval Fighting Ships,"
and
"UNITED STATES NAVAL
SUBMARINE FORCE INFORMATION
BOOK"
-- J. Christley*



Dues Owed by You?

The following shipmates have not paid their dues for National or Nautilus Base at press time.

Please get your dues into the treasurer as soon as possible to avoid being dropped from the National or Base rolls.

Ray Aten
 Doug Baker
 ** Ernest Becker
 Leon Boyer
 Ernest Dohrn
 Daniel Dossin
 Peter McNiece
 ** Ed Milla
 ** Jim Moellentine
 ** Clifton Moody
 George Parker
 Tony Romiti
 Jim Schooley
 Ed Schuele
 ** Edwin Talbot
 Angelo Telesca

** These also owe National Dues of \$20.00, in addition to \$15.00 Base Dues.

Submarine Mississippi ahead of the game at EB

New testing strategy helps reduce construction time, keep costs under budget

by Jennifer McDermott

Groton - For the new submarine that will be christened Saturday, Electric Boat did not wait as it normally would to test the engine room until the boat was in the water.

Instead, the company leased a large boiler to create the steam it needed to test pipes and valves and run the generators that produce electricity while the submarine, the Mississippi, was still on the blocks in the main building shed.

The new technique shortened the construction time for the Mississippi by a month. EB now plans to buy the boiler to use for the rest of its subs, saying the move will save the program \$24 million.

On Saturday, Allison Stiller, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for ship programs and the ship's sponsor, will smash a bottle of champagne over the hull to christen the Mississippi (SSN 782), the ninth vessel in the Virginia class. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus will be the principal speaker.

The submarine will officially become

the USS Mississippi when it is commissioned next year.

EB is on track to deliver the Mississippi to the Navy in April - a year earlier than the contracted date - following a construction time of 62 months, John Holmander, EB's vice president who manages the Virginia-class program, said this week. EB and Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia build Virginia-class submarines under a teaming agreement.

The previous two submarines, the USS Missouri and the USS California, were each built in 65 months. The goal is to cut the construction time to 60 months.

EB and the Navy are also working to get the price of each submarine down to \$2 billion in fiscal 2005 dollars by next year - about \$2.6 billion in 2012 dollars. Holmander said the Mississippi is currently \$64 million under budget.

Testing the engine room in September while the Mississippi was still on land quickened the pace of construction by reducing the testing time to about two weeks instead of a month, Holmander said. Testing after the sub is in the water will also move more quickly, he added, since the steam testing is already complete.

Holmander said the project succeeded because of the innovation and teamwork that exists at the shipyard. "To pull off a change on a program like this really takes extraordinary teamwork on the part of people working throughout the organization," he said.

Newport News is reviewing the process to possibly implement it there.

Fifty EB employees - dubbed the "steam team" - developed and perfected the technique. They wear black jackets bearing the words "steam team," a thank-you from the company, to show their team affiliation.

The Navy's program executive officer for submarines, Rear Adm. David Johnson, and the Virginia-class program manager, Rear Adm. (Select) Michael Jabaley, both praised the technique in interviews at the Naval Submarine League's Annual Symposium this fall.

"You don't know what you're going to find the first time you put steam in the engine room. And if you find it months earlier than you would have otherwise, that gives you more time to fix it," said Jabaley, who has been selected for promotion to rear admiral. "Now, we didn't find anything that was a huge problem that took a lot of time to fix, but you never know if you're going to."

As an incentive to the Virginia-class submarine contract, the Navy will fund certain projects submitted by the shipyards that aim to reduce construction costs, in this case \$9 million to lease the boiler and build the connection to the sub. Fifty percent will be paid up

front; the shipyard receives the rest if the project is finished and actually saves money.

"It's a smart investment," Johnson said. "We both share in the reduced cost of that ship, and the Submarine Force community gets the ship that much earlier."

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Near miss with merchant ship led to submarine commander's firing

BANGOR —The USS Kentucky's commander was fired in October because the submarine got too close to a merchant ship, according to information the Kitsap Sun obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Cmdr. Joseph Nosse was relieved on Oct. 19 for shortfalls in professional performance — not personal conduct — that led to leadership's loss of confidence in his ability to command, said a Submarine Group 9 spokesman. The shortfalls included inadequate leadership and oversight of the crew in the areas of operations and administration. No further details were provided. A 15-page incident report from Nosse to Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, highly redacted, provides a sketch of what happened.

The date and location of the incident aren't provided. The report is dated Oct. 18, a day before the firing. The subject is "CLOSE CPA WITH b(1)" with b(1) representing redacted material. CPA means closest point of approach.

The USS Kentucky, based at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, came within a redacted number of yards of an inbound merchant ship. The sub was preparing to surface to conduct what the Navy calls a brief stop for personnel (BSP) — letting people on or off the boat.

"The root cause of the close CPA was inadequate command emphasis on and preparation for conducting the BSP safely," the report's summary states.

It appears the Kentucky crew thought the merchant ship was going away from them, but it was moving toward them. They stopped tracking it "which prevented other watchstanders from recognizing the ship was turning onto the track of a close aboard merchant," the report states. The merchant ship saw the sub's periscope and snorkel mast and veered to the left.

The report says Kentucky supervisors were too focused on the brief stop for personnel, distracting them from recognizing potential risks.

Nov. Meeting Summary

10 Dec. 2011 -Oasis House Ocala FL

OPENING

Invocation by the Chaplain. Margaret Sexton with a Christmas Theme.

Pledge of Allegiance. Base Cdr. Bill Woods.

Tolling of the Lost Boats for the Month. Vice.Cdr. Ken Nichols & COB Tom Davidson.

Introduction of guest, magician Brian DePalma.

GUEST SPEAKER / AWARDS

Cdr. Bill Wood presented Certification of appreciation to our COB Tom Davidson for his outstanding work in overhauling the Nautilus float. Tom was also presented a custom desk pen and pencil set with his own personal Nautilus Base business cards. Vice.Cdr. Ken Nichols, provided the custom business cards & plaque; Joe Hilchey presented the custom desk pen and pencil set.

A Christmas poem was read by Joe Hilchey, entitled "My First Christmas In Heaven". We have lost three shipmates this year, Leo Fochtman, Frank Holland and Thomas McGinn. A custom framed copy of this poem was presented to Annette Holland by Joe Hilchey.

OFFICER & COMMITTEE REPORTS

CDR Bill Wood opened the meeting at our annual Christmas party at Palm Cay.

VCDR Ken Nichols read the USSVI Creed.

SEC. The Sec. report as per Ships Bell, was accepted.

TREAS the Treas. report was read and accepted.

COB. Tom Davidson had brought the Nautilus float to the Christmas party for display.

Storekeeper. NA..

Editor NA.

Chaplain. Opened the meeting with a fine Christmas Prayer.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

The Annual audit will be conducted in January 2012 by shipmates Dan Connors and Capt. Jim Harvey.

Steve Chordas was sick and in the hospital and unable to attend.

**November 2011
Treasurer's Report****OPERATING ACCOUNT**

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$2,278.51
50/50	\$55.00
Booster	\$15.00
BASE DUES	\$255.00
NAT'L DUES	\$80.00
Misc.	\$336.00
FUNDS EXPENDED	(\$436.74)
BALANCE ON HAND	\$2,582.77

SUNSHINE FUND

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$57.84
FUNDS RECEIVED	\$29.00
FUNDS EXPENDED	\$0.00
BALANCE ON HAND	\$86.84

INVESTMENT FUND

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$2,116.62
FUNDS RECEIVED	\$1.35
FUNDS EXPENDED	\$0.00
BALANCE ON HAND	\$2,117.97

HONOR GUARD FUND

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$492.63
FUNDS RECEIVED	\$0.00
FUNDS EXPENDED	\$0.00
BALANCE ON HAND	\$492.63

SUMMARY

PREVIOUS BALANCE	\$4,945.60
FUNDS RECEIVED	\$771.35
FUNDS EXPENDED	(\$436.74)
BALANCE ON HAND	\$5,280.21

**Respectfully submitted,
Tony Baldwin, Treasurer**

The annual election of officers was read and accepted by all for the 2012 year.

Cdr. Bill Wood, VCdr. Ken Nichols, Treas. Neal Murray and Sec. Joe Hilchey.

We were informed that Angelo Telesca and Jim Schooley were out of the hospital and are now home and recovering. Give these shipmates a call; they would like to hear from you. Jim Schooley 352-245-5478, Angelo Telesca 352-489-1078 – get well.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Edwin Talbot who has informed us that he will not be paying his Base and National dues for 2012. We will be checking with him to see if he might need some help in staying onboard.

Base Cdr. informed us of the Thresher Memorial Dinner, from National, that Victoria Sallade, granddaughter of Charles Wiggins, is organizing a dinner for the former crew and families of those who served aboard

**2011 Base
Booster Fund**

Make a minimum \$5.00 donation or more and get your name listed here in each months issue of *"The Ship's Bell!"*

Booster donations go into the general fund to offset the costs of newsletter production, mailing and other base expenses.

Doug Baker
Tony Baldwin
Soupy Campbell
Ken Cole
Pete Clemens
Tippy D'Auria
Jerry Dickinson
Ernest Dohrn
Jim Harvey
Bill Haskins
Joe Hilchey
Wally Medhurst
Dan O'Dwyer
Jim Schooley
Angelo Telesca
Bill Wood

the USS Thresher SSN 593 to be held on 14 April 2012 in Portsmouth, NH, anyone interested in this program call Victoria at 609-519-1707 or email bobjs36@aol.com – this will probably be the next issue of the American Submariner.

DUES – Tony Baldwin informed us that dues are due by the 31 Dec. 2011 to stay current and not get dropped from the Base or National.

50/50 DRAWING

Total collected \$90.00; first drawing \$40.00 Mrs. Ruth Gibbs, second drawing \$5.00 Joe Hilchey, (gave to Nautilus base) Base received \$45.00.

CLOSING

Parting Prayer by the Chaplain Margaret Sexton.

Motion to close the meeting; Cdr closed the meeting at 16:50.

There were 33 members and ladies present.T

The next meeting will be at 11:00 hr at the Sheriffs SubStation on 21 January 2012, SR 41-301-27 Belleview, FL.

**Respectfully submitted,
Joe Hilchey, Secretary**

edited by Dan O'Dwyer

Navy christens submarine Mississippi in Groton

GROTON, Conn. - (AP) -- With the smash of a champagne bottle, the Navy christened its newest submarine on Saturday as the Mississippi, the ninth member of a new generation of attack subs hailed as the world's most complex pieces of machinery.

A Navy band struck up "Anchors Aweigh" as the submarine's sponsor, a deputy assistant Navy secretary, smashed the bottle against its sail. The uniformed crew stood atop the 377-foot-long submarine in a dock at a Groton shipyard as Navy admirals, Congress members from Mississippi and Connecticut and other officials addressed the crowd of roughly 5,500 who turned out for the ceremony.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus, a former Mississippi governor, said the submarine was designed for flexibility, with the ability to conduct surveillance in shallow waters and deliver Navy SEALs or other special forces without being detected.

"Mississippi is built to excel in traditional submarine areas of warfare: anti-submarine, anti-surface, strike warfare," Mabus said. "But she is also built to excel in nontraditional ones: special operations, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, irregular warfare."

The Mississippi is the latest in the Virginia class of submarines, which are built in partnership between Groton-based Electric Boat and Newport News Shipbuilding at a cost of about \$2.6 billion each. They carry torpedoes as well as Tomahawk missiles and have features including a torpedo room that can be refigured to hold Navy SEALs.

The submarine will be commissioned as the USS Mississippi in a June ceremony in Gulfport, Miss.

On behalf of Mississippi's 3 million residents, Gov. Haley Barbour said he was honored to claim the submarine as their own. He said it would continue the proud legacy of the four other Navy vessels to carry the name Mississippi, including the steam frigate that Commodore William Perry commanded when he opened American trade with Japan in the 1850s.

"The Mississippi will be an incredible platform for defending our shores and projecting our power," Barbour said.

The 7,800-ton submarine will carry a crew of 132 officers and sailors, led by Navy Capt. John McGrath, on standard deployments of six months. Its nuclear



The crew of the Virginia-class submarine Mississippi (SSN-782) walks off the ship at the end of the christening ceremony at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Groton, Conn., on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011. Photo - Abigail Pheiffer/The Day

reactor is designed to power the submarine for its service life of 30 years or longer, propelling the sub at speeds exceeding 25 knots submerged.

Mabus said the complexity of the submarine is a testament to the skill and dedication of America's ship builders.

"When you look at the ship, you know American exceptionalism will not only survive, it will prevail," he said.

Electric Boat expects to deliver the Mississippi a year ahead of schedule and \$50 million below the projected cost.

With the Defense Department facing potentially huge budget cuts as Congress looks to trim the national deficit, Navy officers and elected officials who spoke Saturday praised the Virginia-class program as a model example of how to find efficiencies with contractors. Rep. Joe Courtney and Sen. Richard Blumenthal, both of Connecticut, praised the work of contractors and shipyard employees involved in constructing the Mississippi.

"Its might and magnificence are literally as awe inspiring as the sea itself. It is our steel beneath the sea," Blumenthal said.

Construction of the Mississippi began in February 2007 and the submarine needs only sea trials, final outfitting and other tests before it is ready for delivery.

The ship's sponsor, Allison Stiller, held the champagne bottle over her head triumphantly after christening the sub.

"I endow her with my tenacity, compassion and love of family and friends," said Stiller, the deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for ship programs.

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Replica of historic submarine surfacing in Jacksonville

Calvin Hart just had to see the replica of the CSS Hunley once, and he was hooked.

Since then, for years, the Jacksonville man has been trying to get the full-scale replica of one of the world's earliest submarines to the First Coast, but the timing never worked out: Somebody else had gotten to John Dangerfield, the man who owns the replica, first.

"Every year I'd call him, and every year he'd tell me he's booked up," said Hart, commander of Kirby-Smith Camp No. 1209 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

In 2010, the weekend before Veterans Day worked out. The replica of the historic vessel was on display at Confederate Park. Admission was charged, with the money raised going toward the Wounded Warrior Project, a nonprofit organization that helps injured veterans and their families.

The Hunley, the first submarine to sink a ship in wartime, itself sank in the aftermath of that attack. The boat was raised from the bottom of Charleston Harbor in 2000, 136 years after it sank.

Before taking the replica on the road, Dangerfield worked with the team that refurbished the vessel, starting out with janitorial work and then helping in the lab.

The submarine captivated him for years before it was found. "I just find it fascinating that there was a submarine in 1863 going around shooting ships," he said. "If I was 20 years old, you'd have to fight to keep me off of it."

The replica is an exact duplicate of the doomed boat aside from having a side that opens up so visitors can see inside. What

cont'd on last page



U. S. Submarine Veterans, Inc.
Nautilus Base
"The Ship's Bell" Newsletter
1108 Bloomfield Dr. W.
Inverness, FL 34453-1237

Happy Holidays to everyone!

<http://www.nautilusbase.us>

Next Meeting

January 21st, 2011

At - 1100

Business Meeting,
Sheriff Substation

N. of Belleview on 27/301/441

Replica of historic submarine surfacing in Jacksonville

you can see is impressive, Hart said.

"For that period of time, this is pretty high tech," he said. "You've got to respect what they were trying to do."

The submarine display is part of a broader tribute to veterans, Hart said, building upon the allure of the boat.

"When I saw this thing at an exhibition, I was so impressed with it," he said. "It's a thing to build something around."

Accordingly, the Celebration of American Veterans also included an exhibition of military artifacts from the Revolutionary War to modern times. Among the items on display were World War I uniforms and a Florida flag that flew at a Marine base in Vietnam.

"It's kind of a throwback to the Veterans Day observation of older years — the time when World War I veterans marched down the street," Hart said. "We want to bring back respect for the sacrifices that those guys made."

by Timothy J. Gibbons

