



May 2023

## COMMANDER'S SCUTTLEBUTT

I woke up this morning wondering if I'm a woke or not. So, I spent a little time querying ChatGPT, which is Microsoft's Artificial Intelligence on-line website. Well, according to ChatGPT, I may not be a "woke" but I could fall into the category of concern by "wokes" as I could be marginalized somewhat because I am senior citizen bubble head. ChatGPT says that "being woke typically means being attuned to the experiences and perspectives of marginalized groups and recognizing challenging systemic oppression and discrimination. However, being a former submariner may provide a sense of camaraderie and support within a community of fellow veterans, which could help to mitigate feelings of marginalization." So, I owe my thanks to all you bubble heads for keeping the wokes away. Here's what ChatGPT says when you ask what is a bubble head: "Bubble head is a slang term used to refer to submariners, particularly those who serve on submarines that have a spherical observation dome, or bubble, on the top of the vessel. The term is thought to have originated during World War II when submariners would use the term to describe themselves and each other as they were constantly submerged underwater, living and working in a bubble-like environment. The term is often used affectionately by submariners to refer to themselves or their colleagues and is not generally considered offensive."

Greg "Hawkeye" Baer, Commander

## TOMMY COX

Sadly, our Shipmate Tommy Cox departed on Eternal Patrol 2-19-2023. Tommy was a CTICS(SS) (SPOOK) that qualified on the USS Lapon, SSN 661 in 1969. Throughout his Cold War career, Tommy rode 12 different submarines, doing whatever "Spooks" do. Additionally, Tommy was a Master Balladeer, writing and singing Submarine Ballads, of which, "Big Black Submarine" was his most famous. Tommy also published CD's of his songs. Thank you, Tommy, for your service to your country, your Shipmates, and the Submarine Service. Sailor, Rest Your Oar.

## REUNION TOUR

Since San Diego has become so expensive, the board has decided that the tour we normally hold on the Wednesday of the reunion will not happen this reunion. The cost of a bus and the entrance fee of any event in San Diego plus the cost of a hotel room and food will be enough of a drain on our wallets. This will make Wednesday a free day for you to pick your own entertainment. There will be free information at the hotel for all the activities around San Diego. This will allow the adult supervisors to determine where each shipmate would like to visit. The hospitality room will be open so beer, coffee and sea stories plus stimulating conversations with your shipmates will be available.

## REUNION May 6-9 2024

Dings and I are back from Planning CAIMAN's tenth reunion. We only located one hotel that would allow us to bring in our own drinks. This reduced our expenses considerably. The hotel we agreed on is the Handlery on Hotel Circle. We have signed the contract and paid the deposit. Rooms are \$139.00 plus California's room tax of 12.7% which equals \$151.65 a night. This is the most we have ever had to pay at a reunion. California is expensive. The room rate is good for three days prior and three days after the reunion. We agreed on 50 rooms and needed to commit to 85% or CAIMAN pays the difference. We can acquire more rooms without a problem. The hotel is centrally located to many of the activities available in San Diego. Uber is available for those without transportation. Dinning is limited at the hotel, so we plan to have a list of restaurants in the nearby area. The reunion registration form will be in the January 2024 FLAMIN CAIMAN TALES.

## USS ALBACORE

The wreckage of a U.S. submarine found off the coast of northern Japan has been identified as the USS Albacore. The boat is believed by the Navy to have struck a mine and sunk during the heart of World War II. The [Naval History and Heritage Command made the announcement](#) Thursday after several months of examining Japanese surveys conducted of the site in 2022.

Dr. Tamaki Ura and a team from the University of Tokyo used a remotely operated vehicle to obtain video of the wreckage site, which is believed to be hundreds of feet under the sea. Visibility was limited during excursions due to strong currents and marine growth in the region making analysis challenging.

"As the final resting place for Sailors who gave their life in defense of our nation, we sincerely thank and congratulate Dr. Ura and his team for their efforts in locating the wreck of Albacore," Samuel J. Cox, a retired U.S. Navy rear admiral and NHHC director, [said in a statement](#). "It is through their hard work and continued collaboration that we could confirm Albacore's identity after being lost at sea for over 70 years."

The USS Albacore (SS-218) was only in service for just over two years when the vessel disappeared off one of Japan's northernmost islands.

The last time the crew of more than 80 was heard from was reported to be in late October 1944, during stops at Pearl Harbor and the island of Midway.

Just over a week later, a Japanese patrol boat reported seeing a great deal of oil amidst a debris field near to Hokkaido, Japan.

The Albacore was a Gato class submarines, and the vessel was credited by the U.S. Navy for sinking at least ten enemy vessels.

"Six of the ten enemy sinkings were enemy combatant ships, ranking her as one of the most successful submarines against enemy combatants during World War II," the Naval History and Heritage Command stated.

## WWII MISSING SUBMARINES

There is more than one organization that has located submarines that were lost in WWII. Here is a list of lost WWII submarines that have been located. Since more than one organization is looking for our lost WWII submarines, I expect we will be learning of more locations.

USS R-12  
USS Albacore SS-218  
USS Golet SS-361  
USS Grayback SS-208  
USS Grunion SS-216  
USS Kete SS-369  
USS Pickerel SS-177  
USS Pompano SS-180  
USS Runner SS-275  
USS Scamp SS-277  
USS Swordfish SS-190  
USS Trigger SS-237

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## FREE ENTRANCE TO NATIONAL PARKS FOR GOLD STAR FAMILIES AND VETERANS

The Interagency Military Pass covers entrance fees and standard amenity fees (day use fees) at lands managed by the National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and US Army Corps of Engineers for current US military members and dependents of current military members, US military veterans, and Gold Star Families. In recent years, they were able to receive annual passes. The new interagency Military Lifetime Passes will be available starting November 11, 2022.

The free Military Pass waives entrance fees and does not cover expanded amenity or user fees for activities such as camping, transportation, special recreation permits, reservation fees or special tours.

**Cost:** Free Available for: Current US military members and their dependents in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, and Space Force, as well as Reserve and National Guard members. US military veterans Gold Star Family members.

**How to obtain: In person:** Find a location to obtain this pass at a federal recreation site - <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/pickup-pass-locations.htm>. **Online:** Order this free pass from <https://store.usgs.gov/MilitaryPass>. There is an additional cost of \$10 for passes obtained online. (Check requirements at <https://store.usgs.gov/faq#USMilitary> before arriving, such as showing a Common Access Card (CAC) or Military ID (Form 1173) or exchanging a Gold Star Voucher.) Passes may not be issued as gifts since eligible recipients must present proof of eligibility.

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## REUNION TEES

It is time to start designing a tee shirt for the reunion. If anyone has an idea for a reunion tee, please contact me. The design needs to include the CAIMAN and a San Diego logo, theme, or one of the San Diego attractions. An example could be the CAIMAN visiting Sea World, or the San Diego Zoo, or maybe Ballast Point showing the "nukes" real submarine sailors.

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## AUSTRALIA TO BUY US-MADE NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBS

Australia will purchase U.S. manufactured, nuclear-powered attack submarines to modernize its fleet, a European official and two people familiar with the matter said, amid growing concerns about China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region.

The purchase agreement for up to five Virginia class submarines will be announced when President Joe Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak meet in San Diego for talks on the 18-month-old nuclear partnership known by the acronym AUKUS.

The secretly brokered deal included the Australian government's cancellation of a \$66 billion contract for a French-built fleet of conventional submarines which sparked a diplomatic row within the Western alliance that took months to mend.

The submarines, which cost \$3 billion each, are built at shipbuilding plants in Virginia and Connecticut.

Under the terms of the agreement, subs would eventually also be built in the U.K. and in Australia with U.S. technology and support, one of the people familiar with the matter said. The initial plans called for all the subs to be constructed in Adelaide, Australia. The U.S. would also step up its port visits in Australia to provide the country with more familiarity with the nuclear-powered technology.

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## SMALL INCREASE OF VETERANS IN NEXT CONGRESS

According to the Pew Research Center, the new (118th) Congress that will be sworn in on January 3, 2023, will have two more veterans than the previous Congress. That share of lawmakers is still near a record low. The House will have 80 members who are veterans (18.4 percent) compared to the previous session where the House had 75 members (17.2 percent) who have served. The partisan breakdown of veterans in the House will be 62 Republicans and 18 Democrats. The number of veterans in the Senate will remain the same at 17.

Between 1965 and 1975, at least 70 percent of the members in each chamber had military experience reflecting the mass mobilizations for World War II and the Korean War.

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## ETERNAL PATROL

We have lost another great shipmate and a dear friend. Luce, John EN1(SS) (60/66) 23 March 2023

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## SAILING LIST

I have not located any more of our lost shipmates.

Located shipmates	1376
Hopefully at the next reunion:	390
Eternal Patrol:	986
Lost List:	38

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## S.Q.U.I.D. SUBMARINE QUALIFIED UNTIL I DIE.

## Reunion Reservation Detail

The hotel has opened reservations for our reunion for 6 – 9 May 2024. We can book reservations via this link: <https://reservations.travelclick.com/98118?groupID=3912846> or can call in directly at 619-298-0511 or 1-800-676-6567 and speak with the reservations department. They are currently open 7 days a week from 9am -5pm. You need to reference USS Caiman SS-323 Reunion when calling in to receive the discounted room rate of \$139 a night.

Guest room rates do not include local taxes and fees, currently 12.7%. This is subject to current rate. Group rates are available three (3) days prior to or three (3) days following our reunion dates, based upon hotel availability. Check-in time is after 3:00 pm and check-out time is 11:00 am. Discounted overnight parking is at \$5 with in and out privileges. The cut-off date is Saturday, April 6, 2024.

This is an older hotel but the only hotel we found in San Diego that met our requirements. The hotel is two stories and it does not have an elevator. They have king beds, double beds, or twin beds. When you make your reservation be sure to mention if you need a first-floor room and which size bed you prefer.