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**OUR CREED**

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of 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 BOATS IN APRIL**

- USS Snook (SS-279) Lost on April 8, 1945
- USS Thresher (SSN-593) Lost on April 10, 1963
- USS Gudgeon (SS-211) was lost on April 18, 1944
- USS Grenadier (SS-210) Lost on April 22, 1943.
- USS Pickerel (SS-177) Lost on April 3, 1943

**LOST BOATS IN MAY**

- USS Lagarto (SS-371) Lost on May 3, 1945
- USS Scorpion (SSN-589) Lost on May 22, 1968
- USS Squalus (SS-192)
- USS Stickleback (SS-415) Lost on May 30,

**SAILOR, REST YOUR OAR.**

**Meeting Dates to Remember:**

- |                                 |                                     |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Saturday, May 24 <sup>th</sup>  | Memorial Day Ceremony & Parade 11AM |
| Friday, May 30 <sup>th</sup>    | Memorial Day Ceremony & Parade 3PM  |
| Saturday, June 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Holland Club Induction – New London |
| Saturday, June 21 <sup>st</sup> | Base Barbecue                       |

**5/3/2025 Meeting Attendees:** Barreca, Fanelli, Schmitz, Courtien, Casulli, Zavadil, Brooks, Burns, Jacob, Albright, Evans

**Old Business**

**2025 Dinner/Auction**

The dinner/auction was again a success. Special thanks go to Matt Schmitz, Jim Farinelli, Eric Zavidil and others for their dedication in making this event work.

Both the auction and dinner took in \$1,050 of which \$150 was sent to National for their scholarship fund.

And thanks to all of you who attended for supporting our Base.

**Base Memorial Cleanup**

As of now the date for the Memorial cleanup is uncertain. I will post the date as soon as it is determined. Some painting is needed.

**Plattekill Memorial Day Parade**

The Plattekill Memorial Parade is scheduled for Saturday, May 24<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at 10 AM at the Town Hall where you will park your car and the bus will take us to Memorial Field.

**Memorial Day Ceremony and Parade:**

Friday, May 30<sup>th</sup>. Ceremony at 3:00 PM at the VFW to be followed by the parade at 5:00pm thru New Paltz. Uniform is dark trousers, dark shoes, White shirt and dark tie, vest and white hat.

**Base Barbecue**

Saturday, June 21<sup>st</sup> there will be a Base Meeting at 11AM followed by a Base Barbecue at 12:00. Everyone is invited.

**New Business**

**Honor Flight Donation**

A motion was passed to donate \$100 to the Hudson Valley Honor Flight in support for all they have done to help our veterans.

**Holland Club New London:**

On Saturday, June 7<sup>th</sup> there will be the Holland Club induction in New London. Contact Matt Schmitz if you are interested in attending. He will be able to set up the security clearances for you to be able to get on the base and also arrange a carpool to get there.

**Mrs Paige Work Party**

Tom Brooks is organizing a work Party for Mrs. Paige's deck to be pressured washed and stained. She is the widow of one of our departed members, Cliff Paige. Contact Tom Brooks for more details [trb40eliz@gmail.com](mailto:trb40eliz@gmail.com) or 845-728-5241.

## Good of the Order

### USS Lagarto SS-371

**Tom Brooks gave us another excellent presentation on one of the lost boats in May, the USS Lagarto SS-371.**

Fifty-two submarines of the United States Navy were lost while on patrol during World War II. The circumstances surrounding the losses of some of these have been well documented. For others, their locations and the events that led to their sinkings have been shrouded in the proverbial fog of war.

For one of those submarines on eternal patrol, the book is now closed. Assumptions are confirmed, and after six decades of uncertainty the families of 86 sailors know the final resting place of their loved ones. USS Lagarto (SS 371), a Balao-class submarine on patrol in the Gulf of Thailand, was last heard from on May 3, 1945, as she prepared to attack a Japanese convoy.

In 2005, a British diver reported discovering the wreckage of a submarine sitting upright in 225 feet of water off the coast of Thailand. While it appeared very likely that the Lagarto had been located, the U.S. Navy endeavored to make its own positive identification. A great deal of research and preparation, including a visit to the USS Torsk, a sister of Lagarto that is now a floating museum in the Inner Harbor of Baltimore, were undertaken before the salvage ship USS Salvor headed to the site. During six days of diving, 500 digital photographs and 10 hours of video of the wreckage were taken.

Divers had been briefed to look for a twin five-inch gun mount, a starboard anchor, and the propeller where the name of the submarine might be engraved. They found the gun mount and the anchor hanging to starboard. In addition, after scraping away decades of coral and marine growth, the letters "LA" were revealed on the propeller.

Lagarto was one of 28 submarines built in Manitowoc, Wisconsin, and the city's name was completely visible on the propeller as well. Three other Manitowoc-built submarines, USS Golet, USS Kete, and USS Robalo, were lost during the war. None of these was in action near the location of the wreck.

Navy records indicate that the USS Lagarto left Subic Bay in the Philippine Islands on April 12, 1945. Her skipper, Commander F.D. Latta, received orders to proceed to the Gulf of Thailand on April 27. This was the second war patrol for the submarine, having operated against Japanese picket boats in the Nansei Shoto islands. On her first sortie, Lagarto had sunk the Japanese submarine RO-49 on February 24, 1945, and participated with the submarines Haddock and Sennet in attacks against enemy surface ships—sharing credit for sinking two of them.

On the fateful morning of May 3, 1945, Lagarto made contact with another submarine, USS Baya, to coordinate an attack against the enemy convoy which included at least one tanker, an auxiliary vessel, and two destroyers. Persistent attacks were driven off by radar-equipped escort vessels. Baya withdrew, and there was only silence from Lagarto. Japanese records indicate that the minelayer Hatsutaka reported sinking an American submarine in the area, and it can be concluded with certainty that this attack was the one that doomed Lagarto.

Initially, a wreath was dropped into the ocean above the wreck site. On the final day of diving, a brass plaque was affixed to the submarine's capstan. Crewmen of the USS Salvor conducted a memorial service and read letters from family members of the lost Lagarto sailors.

"We owe a great debt to these men, and to all of the World War II submariners," remarked Rear Admiral Jeffrey B. Cassias, commander of the U.S. Pacific submarine force. "In the world's darkest hour, they faced the greatest risks and demonstrated the most noble courage to preserve the freedom of our nation."

The final resting place of Lagarto and her crew is one of many war graves scattered across the globe. Certainly, there are many more such dark and silent locations, on land and sea, that are yet to be discovered.

[John P. Craven \(October 30, 1924 – February 12, 2015\)](#)

John P. Craven, a top scientist for the Navy during the Cold War, who oversaw many undersea weaponry and research programs, including efforts to retrieve a missing hydrogen bomb and to spy on the Soviet Union, died Feb. 12, 2015 at his home in Honolulu. He was 90.

He had complications from Parkinson's disease, his daughter, Sarah Craven, said.

Craven, who served as an enlisted sailor during World War II, went on to spend more than a decade as chief scientist of the Navy's Special Projects Office. He had key roles in the development of the Polaris, the first intercontinental ballistic missile to be launched from a submarine, and in underwater exploration and reconnaissance efforts carried out by submarines.

He began his civilian career with the Navy in 1951 at the David Taylor Model Basin, in Carderock, Maryland, a leading design and testing facility for Navy ships. He participated in some of the early work on nuclear submarines before he was named chief scientist in 1958 of what was then called the Special Projects Office.

Under the general supervision of Navy Vice Adm. William Raborn, Craven led a team that, in 1960, successfully fired a Polaris missile from a submerged submarine. It was considered a landmark military development of the Cold War, but it was only one part of Craven's innovative work with the Navy.

"I had five or six programs going," he told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin in 2002. "One was multiheaded, so highly classified that nobody on it could tell relatives or anybody. They couldn't even speculate who else was involved in the program. It was a special top-secret program, which meant it didn't exist."

After the nuclear submarine USS Thresher sank in 1963 with 129 sailors on board, Craven was put in charge of a new program called the Deep Submergence Systems Project.

"The purpose was to provide the Navy with the capability of essentially locating and picking up from anywhere in the ocean anything of military significance," he told the Star-Bulletin. "That included atomic bombs."

In 1966, an Air Force B-52 collided with a tanker during mid-air refueling near the southern coast of Spain, killing seven U.S. airmen. The B-52 was carrying four hydrogen bombs at the time, and three were found on land. Craven and other scientists plotted the probable spot where the bomb had come to rest on the sea floor. It was recovered several months later.

In 1968, Craven helped find the USS Scorpion, a nuclear submarine that disappeared in the Atlantic Ocean. He examined oceanographic research records to pinpoint the location where an explosion caused the submarine to sink. He believed a torpedo accidentally exploded inside. The submarine's wreckage has been photographed, but the Scorpion and the 99 sailors on board remain entombed at the bottom of the sea.

Meanwhile, Craven also oversaw the modification of an attack submarine, the USS Halibut, into a reconnaissance and recovery vessel that was relaunched in 1965. It contained a vast array of electronic equipment, including miles of cable that could be lowered to the ocean floor, well below the depth that a manned submarine could reach.

The Halibut found a Soviet submarine that disappeared in the Pacific in 1968, about 750 miles northwest of Hawaii. Remote-controlled cameras took close-up photographs of the wreckage, which included nuclear-armed missiles and torpedoes, giving U.S. officials their first detailed view of a Soviet submarine.

In other missions, the Halibut discovered and sometimes retrieved many items of military interest from the ocean floor, including sunken ships, airplanes and weapons. It also tapped into underwater Soviet communication cables, which proved to be a major source of clandestinely acquired intelligence during the Cold War.

Craven also was in charge of the Navy's experimental Sea Lab projects of the 1960s, in which divers lived in underwater habitats for long periods. The effort was abandoned after one diver died.

One of Craven's final Navy projects was the NR-1, a nuclear-powered submersible vessel used for research and underwater recovery. Among other things, it explored ancient shipwrecks and recovered parts from the space shuttle Challenger after it exploded in 1986.

John Pinna Craven was born Oct. 30, 1924, in Brooklyn, New York. His father was a musician and stock analyst. He later changed his middle name to Piña, the original spelling of his mother's middle name.

After serving aboard a battleship in the Pacific during World War II, he entered a Navy officer training program at Cornell University, from which he graduated in 1946. He received a master's degree in civil engineering from the California Institute of Technology in 1947 and a doctorate in mechanics and hydraulics from the University of Iowa in 1951.

He graduated from George Washington University law school in 1958 and was, in addition to his scientific expertise, an authority on ocean and maritime law.

After leaving his Navy post in 1969, Craven taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for a year before becoming dean of marine programs at the University of Hawaii. He later served as director of the Law of the Sea Institute at the university's law school.

He lost a Democratic primary race for Congress in Hawaii in 1976 and, in the 1990s, launched a company that developed methods to harness the ocean for agriculture and electricity. One of his longtime friends, whom he met while working in the Pacific, was actor Marlon Brando.

In 2001, Craven published a book detailing his experiences with the Navy and in underwater technology, "The Silent War: The Cold War Battle Beneath the Sea."

"Without the shield of a strong silent deterrent," he wrote, "or the intellectual sword of espionage beneath the sea, that war could not have been won."