

Arizona Silent Service Memorial (ASSM) Dedication

Parks Remarks – 17 April 2021

Rep Sierra, Mayor xxxxx, xxxx, xxxxxx, xxxxxx, xxxxxx

...fellow submariners, shipmates, friends, and family...

**Good morning ... what a great day this is for the city of Phoenix,
the great state of Arizona, our great Nation, and most importantly
our submarine veterans.**

**It really is great to see so many bubbleheads in the same
place...a place which is NOT on a pier doing a stores onload!**

**I'd like to extend a special, warm welcome to Wayne Standerfer,
our National Commander of the United States Submarine
Veterans. He leads US Sub Vets with the singular mission of
"...perpetuating the memory of our shipmates who gave their
lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country..."**

And we're here today to do exactly that.

We're here to reflect on the men and women who have served in our force...its past and its present.

We're also here to reflect on the awesome technological machines that industry has provided us.

Let's put ourselves in the right mental place for this.

Ask yourselves these questions...

Why is this memorial so very important?

What does it mean to you? Personally.

What purpose does it serve?

What will we walk away with today?

What thoughts will permeate our minds as we sit with our friends and family in the days to come?

---- Pause -----

This setting is much different than where I held most of my discussions on submarining when I served on SANTA FE back in 2009...

In those days, then-Senior Chief Hensley would gather our crew on the pier every Friday just before lunch...always burgers...It was my chance to present awards to our shipmates, welcome new shipmates to our crew, pipe off departing shipmates, update our team on the ship's schedule (SSN schedules always change) and talk about the week...sometimes we'd award dolphins to a shipmate who qualified in submarines and in that ceremony we would read from the patrol reports of us submarine operations in the Pacific in WWII, memorializing the exploits of those that had come before us.

I would end each one of those talks with 3 key points...advice and direction to all of us...so I will repeat them here for old time's sake...

- 1. 8-hours to the shim switch**
- 2. Beware the shoal waters of your personal life**
- 3. Do NOT drink and drive**

The best and most powerful times in those gatherings were ALWAYS a dolphin pinning...it gave us a chance to reflect on our submarine force's history...our heritage...the Sailors who came before us and forged the path to where we are today...and what our future held.

Today is JUST like one of those times.

Give me a show of hands...who wears dolphins?

I want all of you to close your eyes and sit for a moment and recall your most fervent memory of your time at sea on boats...maybe a battle for our WWII submariners...maybe off the coast of country X or behind ship Y for our Cold War or War on

Terror submariners, or maybe a fire or flooding event which has burned itself into your mind.

Let that memory, and others like it, sit in your thoughts for the next 15 minutes or so.

It's been an incredible 121-year journey since the birth of our Nation's submarine force when John Holland delivered HOLLAND IV to our Navy on April 11th, 1900.

But we do have more than 121 years of submarine history...

Submarines...rather submersible vehicles...have been around a long, long time...first employed as early as Roman times...military strategists have long valued the maritime strike capability of a hidden vessel.

Our Nation's founding saw submariners fighting for freedom at the earliest stage of the revolution when TURTLE sailed in 1776 in the fight for American freedom...but designs and engineering for submarines were immature in those early days and she was lost at sea...

In all, we have lost 65 submarines and crew at sea in our pursuit of operational excellence and combat victory. Not an easy fact to think about and not one we often talk about.

In the American civil war, ALLIGATOR saw action but again she also was lost - in April 1862 off Cape Hatteras.

From 1900 thru the beginning of WWII, the US submarine fleet was in its infancy and was focused on developing capability...propulsion capability, faster speeds, better diving depths, SONAR improvements, torpedo capability, munitions and deck guns.

As design, engineering, and operations developed, sadly 9 submarines and crews were lost – to groundings, collisions, foundering on tow, battery acid casualties or while on test dives.

These were brave men who pushed themselves and the ships they manned to their limits...and beyond...in order to advance the capability of the Fleet.

Heroes...all of them.

Let's reflect on one of these catastrophes which, as often is the case, was the impetus for tactical and technological advances and which provided significant combat effectiveness in the coming world war.

In May 1939, SQUALUS sailed for sea trials off the coast of New Hampshire. On the 19th dive following 18 successful submerging events, she experienced a significant flooding casualty from her main induction system which sank her in 243FT of water. The failure of the induction hull valve caused flooding of the aft torpedo room, both engine rooms, and the crew's quarters, drowning 26 men immediately and stranding 33 others (32 Sailors and 1 civilian "tech rep") on the ocean's bottom.

Imagine...42 deg water temperature in a steel tube 240FT below the surface...nowhere to go...certainly doom, in the past...but here's where the innovation, persistence, and tenacity of our submariners wins the day...every day.

CDR Swede Momsen...and his innovative Momsen lung...saved these 33 souls anxiously working to return to the surface.

SQUALUS was raised and subsequently decommissioned. Then we learned...

and continued to improve systems, design and operations.

And then Navy recommissioned that submarine as USS SAILFISH. She conducted numerous patrols in the Pacific theater against the Japanese, earning 9 battle stars. Her conning tower remains on display at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. I first stood at her conning tower in late-2006...in awe of the accomplishments of that crew and the men who refused to give up on each other.

It was WWII, though, as the “battlefield that “cut the teeth” for our submariners”.

But that “cutting-the-teeth experience” laid significant cost to our Force of well-designed and well-operated submarines.

In that conflict, our nation lost 52 submarines, and crew, in combat. Sadly, we also lost 4 others to accidents, collisions and groundings.

During WWII, the US submarine force suffered the highest casualty percentage of any armed force...losing 1 in 5 submariners...not submarines...our shipmates...

That's a horrific, devastating loss percentage.

Of the 16,000 submariners who served in WWII, 371 officers and 3131 enlisted Sailors were killed.

Those losses were NOT in vain...these men have NOT been forgotten...and they will ALWAYS be remembered...for their service...for their sacrifice...and for the results of their effort.

It was the Submarine experience in WWII that catapulted the Force into what it is today...a force that has truly flourished as our Nation's defining Naval capability.

Revolutionary, in fact.

Since WWII, we have faced the Cold War...the War on Terror...and all manner of conflict and action in between.

The Cold War was a seminal period for submarines...lasting 40+ years...our Nation looked to the silent service to hold the Russian Navy, and others, at risk...

To defend our nation's interest in the Cold War

And to WIN the cold war...your Submarine Force was THE winning factor

Why? I offer to you three reasons:

--- Better platforms - Better payloads - Better personnel ----

First, Nuclear power – a revolution in propulsion that changed the way Navies operate and do battle

Second, better technology than the adversary and the incredible submarines that our Nation's industrial might produced

- The awesome LOS ANGELAS, SEAWOLF, and VIRGINIA-class SSNs**
- The US SSBN, OHIO today and COLUMBIA tomorrow, carrying nuclear submarine launched ballistic missiles – the**

ONLY hidden, and as a result, survivable, leg of the strategic triad

- **The 4 SSGNs converted from the OHIO-class SSBN and their incredible firepower and mission capability**
- **Incredible submarines, all of them, carrying and employing incredible payloads**

Third, the American Navy's Sailor

- **Incredibly trained**
- **Immensely motivated**
- **Tenaciously bold**

And today, with the Cold War over, a resurgence of the Russian Navy, and a growing Chinese Naval capability, our Nation finds itself in a Great Power Competition which stresses every dollar, every warship, and every Sailor.

Unfortunately, through the significant successes of the past 70 years our submariners have also suffered some heartbreaking setbacks.

COCHINO – lost in the Norwegian Sea in 1949 due to battery fire

**STICKLEBACK - lost in 1958 in a collision with a US Destroyer off
Ohau**

**THRESHER – lost in 1963 to flooding...it's from this tragedy that
we learned one of our most valuable lessons and developed THE
pinnacle of engineering program success - the SUBSAFE
program**

And SCORPION – lost in 1968 southwest of the Azores

**Let me add a 5th and a 6th event which illustrate the perils of a
submarine operating in an unforgivable ocean and the awesome
power of the Navy Sailor.**

**In April 1988, USS BONEFISH experienced an electrical fire which
almost sank her. 3 Sailors lost their lives that day. 15 years after
that tragic event I had the privilege to serve with Senior Chief
Ken Clements, who was a junior engineman onboard BONEFISH
on that fateful day. Never a day went by without Ken Clements**

teaching damage control and lifesaving skills to myself and our Sailors.

And in May 2002, our Nation almost lost a 66th submarine in DOLPHIN off the coast of San Diego. 43 men onboard...as a result of flooding and fires eerily similar to THRESHER, this time while snorkeling near the surface. The Commanding Officer and crew established the most stable conditions possible and then abandoned the ship and shut the hatch. All men survived. But before abandoning ship, it was Chief Petty Officer John Wise pumping seawater off the ship from a completely flooded pump room in 57-deg seawater that saved the ship. The Navy estimated DOLPHIN had about 2 minutes remaining until all positive buoyancy would have been lost...had that happened, she surely would have sunk.

In both these events, it was the actions of the crew that saved their ship.

When it comes down to it, through the years it has been the indominable character of the submariner that has been THE deciding factor between success and failure.

Friends...THAT is my message today...our Nation's submarine force history is not about JUST submarines and technology, no matter how good they are...mind you they truly are THAT good.

Our history, and our heritage, is about the SOULS who man our ships...who venture into harm's way...who make life and death decisions every day, whether they realize it or not.

Our Nation's submarine force and its success would not be what it is today if not for the Officers and Sailors who have led and battled for every success and through every failure.

Leaders the likes of:

John Holland, who in April 1900 delivered HOLLAND VI which was commissioned 6 months later as USS HOLLAND (SS-1).

Swede Momsen, who developed the MOMSEN lung, forever changing submarine rescue.

ADM Hyman G Rickover – the father of the nuclear Navy and the force behind so many of the rigorous engineering and tactical processes we see in today's Submarine Force as well as across the Navy.

RADM William Raburn – who led the development and employment of the 1st nuclear Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile and changed the character of war, forever defining today's deterrent value of the Naval force.

CDR Mush Morton and all of our tactical titans just like him

VADM Lockwood said of Morton - "When a natural leader and born daredevil such as Mush Morton is given command of a submarine, the result can only be a fighting ship of the highest order, with officers and men who would follow their skipper to the Gates of Hell... And they did. Morton lined up an impressive number of 'firsts' during the short ten months

that he commanded *Wahoo*: first to penetrate an enemy harbor and sink a ship therein; first to use successfully a “down the throat” shot; and first to wipe out an entire “convoy” single-handed.”

Mush Morton was just one of the many fierce warriors our Force saw in WWII. And their exploits were legendary. The crews of:

WAHOO

SPADEFISH

SAILFISH

GROWLER

HARDER

PARCHE

TIRANTE

TANG

BARB

Our 8 Medal of Honor winners:

- 1. TM2 Brault**
- 2. CAPT John Cromwell**
- 3. CDR Sam Dealy**
- 4. CDR Gene Fluckey**
- 5. CDR Howard Gilmore**
- 6. CDR Dick O’Kane**
- 7. CDR Lawson “Red” Ramage**
- 8. CDR George Street**

Every man and women I served with...every man and women you each served with.

Sailors like Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Joe Ashley, who lost his life onboard SAN FRANCISCO when she collided with an underwater mountain at maximum speed while deep and fast.

The designers, shipyards, welders, and ship-fitters who built submariners like SAN FRANCISCO well enough to survive a 35-

MPH head-on collision with an immovable underwater mountain...and then return home to sail again.

Sailors like then-STS2 Phillips onboard SANTA FE who when faced with the need for non-skid on the main deck of his submarine went out into town while overseas and scoped up some gravel off the ground, returned to the ship, mixed that gravel with paint, and spread that concoction on the main deck, enabling safe top-side line-handling in rough seas. This kind of innovative thinking and ACTION is what this force is made of.

Chiefs of the Boat like Marcus Hensley. We were off the coast of Maui in 2008 training for mission operations when we experienced flooding through our air induction system...and then fire. Senior Chief Hensley sprung to action extinguishing that electrical fire while standing almost hip-deep in seawater, turning the tide on a growing casualty which threatened the ship. We recovered from that flooding and fire because of the quick actions of Marcus and his crew.

Thank you for your actions that day, COB.

Today, our submarines provide SIGNIFICANT return on investment to the Nation...with relatively low numbers of crew members providing a high level of combat effectiveness.

In today's Navy, less than 10% of our Officers and enlisted Sailors are submariners...manning over one-third of the man-o-wars in our Fleet. That's an incredible return on investment for our Nation.

Don't just rely on my words of respect for those who forged our paths.

President John F. Kennedy, on the crew of THRESHER after their April 10, 1963 loss:

"The future of our country will always be sure when there are men such as these to give their lives to preserve it."

FLT ADM Chester Nimitz knew full well the value and impact the submarine force had on the US victory in WWII. His words:

“When I assumed command of the Pacific Fleet in 31 December, 1941; our submarines were already operating against the enemy, the only units of the Fleet that could come to grips with the Japanese for months to come. It was to the Submarine Force that I looked to carry the load until our great industrial activity could produce the weapons we so sorely needed to carry the war to the enemy. It is to the everlasting honor and glory of our submarine personnel that they never failed us in our days of peril.”

Winston Churchill:

“Of all the branches of men in the forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the submariners.”

Colin Powell:

“No one has done more to prevent conflict - no one has made a greater sacrifice for the cause for Peace - than you,

America's proud missile submarine family. You stand tall among our heroes of the Cold War.”

But I think Dr. Joyce Brothers’ 1963 assessment of the personality, motivations and character of submariners says it much better than most. Forgive me for the length of this, but please indulge me for 3 minutes more than I planned...

Here’s Dr. Brothers’ “Profile of a Submariner”, a testimony to our submariners and the bond we share.

The tragic loss of the submarine THRESHER and 129 men had a special kind of an impact on the nation.....a special kind of sadness, mixed with universal admiration for the men who choose this type of work.

One could not mention the THRESHER without observing, in the same breath how utterly final and alone the end is when a ship dies at the bottom of the sea....and what a remarkable specimen of man it must be who accepts such a risk.

Most of us might be moved to conclude, too, that a tragedy of this kind would have a damaging effect on the morale of the other men in the submarine service and tend to discourage future enlistment. Actually, there is no evidence that this is so.

What is it then, that lures men to careers in which they spend so much of their time in cramped quarters, under great psychological stress, with danger lurking all about them?

Togetherness is an overworked term, but in no other branch of our military service is it given such full meaning as in the "silent service". In an undersea craft, each man is totally dependent upon the skill of every other man in the crew, not only for top performance but for actual survival.

Each knows that his very life depends on the others and because this is so, there is a bond among them that both challenges and comforts them.

All of this gives the submariner a special feeling of pride, because he is indeed a member of an elite corps. The risks, then, are an inspiration rather than a deterrent.

The challenge of masculinity is another factor which attracts men to serve on submarines. It certainly is a test of a man's prowess and power to know he can qualify for this highly selective service.

However, it should be emphasized that this desire to prove masculinity is not pathological, as it might be in certain dare-devil pursuits, such as driving a motorcycle through a flaming hoop.

There is nothing dare-devilish about motivations of the man who decides to dedicate his life to the submarine service.

He does, indeed, take pride in demonstrating that he is quite a man, but he does not do so to practice a form of foolhardy brinkmanship, to see how close he can get to failure and still snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.

On the contrary, the aim in the submarine service is to battle danger, to minimize the risk, to take every measure to make certain that safety, rather than danger, is maintained at all times.

Are the men in the submarine service braver than those in other pursuits where the possibility of a sudden tragedy is constant? The glib answer would be to say they are. It is more accurate, from a psychological point of view, to say they are not necessarily braver, but that they are men who have a little more insight into themselves and their capabilities.

They know themselves a little better than the next man. This has to be so with men who have a healthy reason to volunteer for a risk.

They are generally a cut healthier emotionally than others of the similar age and background because of their willingness to push themselves a little bit farther and not settle for an easier kind of existence. We all have tremendous

capabilities but are rarely straining at the upper level of what we can do...these men are.

This country can be proud and grateful that so many of its sound, young, eager men care enough about their own stature in life and the welfare of their country to pool their skills and match them collectively against the power of the sea.”

A very fitting summary, indeed, of the Sailors who take our Nation’s submarines into a harsh sea and who I, and many of you, have been blessed to have served with.

We’ve come a long way since Dr. Brother’s 1963 assessment...but in that time these characteristics have remained the same for the men and now WOMEN in our submarine force. Yes, our Nation has finally recognized the value that women bring to submarining.

In 2010, I was fortunate to have been on the team that brought the 1st 21 females into the submarine force. And every year since

then our Navy has increased the number of females serving as submarine Officers and Enlisted Sailors.

It was an incredibly rewarding part of my life. And I'm proud that our team's actions paved the way for two of our daughters, who are both MIDN anxiously awaiting information on their submarine training this summer.

What an amazing journey for our Nation's submariners. It's hard not to beam with pride, not just as a Sailor...but as an American...when I consider the adversity that these men and women overcame and the resulting success.

I hope all our future submariners will appreciate the history they are becoming a part of.

I'm confident the next generation of submariners will continue this proud legacy.

And I am sure that one day they will be blessed with the opportunity that you've provided me here to honor those who came before them.

Let me close by thanking Marcus and Chris for their tenacious efforts to bring this incredibly important memorial to Phoenix.

And thank you Wayne, and our United States Submarine Veterans...for your support and action through the years in continuing to raise public awareness of the role that our submariners have played in our Nation's security.

Ladies and gentlemen - today, we celebrate our Nation's submariners, both past and present.

And we celebrate those who gave their lives in service to their nation while serving onboard these awesome ships of war.

They did NOT believe it to be an inconsequential act. On the contrary, each of these heroes knew full well the significance of their service, the consequences of their actions, and the possibility of the ultimate sacrifice.

As we walk away from here and return to our life routines, I call on each of us to carry the message this memorial stands for...and to communicate that message to our friends and family at every opportunity.

Each of our submarine veterans owns this calling...

I believe it will be a large part of our submarine force's success in the NEXT 121 years.

God bless you all and God bless our United States of America.

Thank you