



41st Memorial Service Combined with Barracks Dedication a Success

The 41st anniversary memorial service of the loss of the USS Thresher was held on April 17, 2004. This year had an extra special meaning with the dedication of the new base residence hall in the name of USS Thresher COB Robert Johnson. The service, attended by more than 200 visitors, started with the pledge of allegiance followed by a marvelous rendition of the National Anthem by Portsmouth High School student Kate Robertson.



Tolling of the Bells

The welcoming address was given by Captain Kevin McCoy, Commander, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. The assembled guests were treated to a Keynote Address by Rear Admiral William Timme, Commander, Naval Undersea Warfare Center and Deputy

Commander for Undersea Warfare, NAVSEA. Following the keynote address, Lori Arsenault, daughter of ENCA(SS) Tilmon J. Arsenault, performed a moving rendition of the Navy Hymn. This beautiful version of the Navy Hymn set the stage for the somber Tolling of the Bells for the 129 gallant men who lost their lives on April 9, 1963. While Kevin Galeaz and Bill Tebo read the names and Carl

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Lori Arsenault performs Navy Hymn

USSVI Voting Enters a New Era

A new era has started for USSVI as it initiates on-line voting. All members with e-mail have the option of voting on-line rather than by paper ballot. Kevin Galeaz put together a list of valid e-mail addresses of current base members and has sent it to National at their request.

The ability of vote on-line will save the organization thousands of dollars in postage and printing costs. A lot of effort has been put into this process. If you do not have e-mail, the traditional paper ballot will be mailed to you. Regardless of the method you use, make sure you take the opportunity to vote and support the organization. Look for your ballot or reminder e-mail in July.

Joint WWII and USSVI July Meeting

Our WWII brothers have invited us to attend their annual Lobsterbake in Seabrook on July 24.



Reservations are necessary so contact Carl Weber at (603)888-2675 or cw320@worldnet.att.net by Monday, 19 July, 2004 if you wish to attend.

Mail payment to Carl Weber, 15 March St., Nashua, NH 03060-5353

On the Menu - Double lobsters, steamed clams, chowder & corn on the cob (\$20 per person) or Steak with baked potato (\$15 per person)

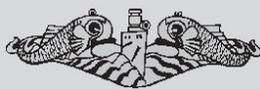


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Commander's Message

Greetings,

The 41st

Thresher Memorial Service was an honor for those that paid the



ultimate sacrifice that April morning in 1963. I couldn't be happier with all the support and the way the ceremony was conducted. Having the newly erected Johnson Hall building dedication in concert with the Memorial service added a nice touch to this year's event. Johnson Hall will be a daily reminder to today's submariners about the dangers associated with our business and a lasting legacy to Thresher and her crew. I attended, along with Larry Oiler and Bob Bellisle, the District One USSVI Meeting at Maine Base in Augusta, Maine along with the Maine Base's monthly meeting. The District One Commander Change of Office took place as Green Mountain Base, shipmate Gilbert "Gil" Hanley, relieved Paul Orstead as District One Commander. Paul did a great job while in office and Thresher Base wishes him and his family the best in future endeavors. Additionally, Maine Base did a fine job hosting the event. CDR Kan, skipper from USS Providence (SSN 719), was the keynote speaker and I think everyone appreciated the time he took to meet with us.

A topic of discussion that was near and dear to everyone was the price increase in dues and Life Membership. Life Membership is going to increase at the end of the year by nearly 100%. So, if you've been on the fence about becoming a Life Member, much like myself, you might want to consider making the move this year.

May 2004 Meeting Minutes

- The meeting was called order followed by a blessing and the Pledge of Allegiance. The Tolling of the Bell was conducted for all ships lost during May and June. Followed by a sound off of those present.
- The March Secretary's Report for Thresher Base USSVI was read by Kevin Galeaz, secretary.
- There was no Treasurer's Report because, Roy Pierce, Thresher Base Treasurer was not at the meeting.

Old Business

- Mike Geletka passed around a copy of the WWII Convention booklet featuring an add from Thresher Base. He was able to get the booklet printed for \$.68 a piece.

New Business

- Kevin Galeaz introduced new member Tom Faunce who is transferring from Marblehead. He mentioned that another transfer was expected soon.
- Larry Oiler spoke is helping Tom Young update the database. He made a request for everyone to check their USSVI join date to update the database. He is planning on bringing a laptop to the next meeting to allow members to check the database for accuracy. Kevin added that National is allowing members to access their

information on-line.

- Memorial Service and Barracks – service was flawless and sailors will be moving in the week of May 24. The Montpelier is arriving in the next week. A brief discussion was had about the barracks being Coed.
- The committee was congratulated on a good job with this year's service. The service cost \$740 of the approved \$1000 - \$260 has been returned. Future services will probably not be as elaborate or expensive. The singer, Katie Robertson, Portsmouth High School, was hand delivered a letter from Captain McCoy. Kevin officially recognized Gary for the work on the Thresher Memorial Service. Kevin recommended writing a thank you letter to the shipyard. He is willing to write the letter.
- D1 meeting was attended by Bob Bellisle, Gary Hildreth and Larry Oiler. Gil Handley, Green Mt. Base Vermont was elected new D1 Commander. It was discussed that dues will be going up January 2005 from \$10 to \$20. Life membership is also doubling so there is an incentive to look into paying life membership now and paying in installments. This deci-

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USSVI 20 Year Award

At the start of 2004, USSVI created a new certificate to recognize members who have been a part of the organization for 20 years or more. After an extensive search of the base database, Thresher Base is proud to announce that one member has been found who meets the criteria. Mike Geletka has been a member since 1978 and he received his award at the May 2004 meeting. Congratulations Mike!

Check Your Database Listing

As an off shot of the most recent database searches, Larry Oiler and Tom Young have determined a need to check all entries for accuracy. Larry has offered to bring his laptop to the next few meetings to allow the membership to check the base records. So please check in with Larry and help



the base with this endeavor. Your help is greatly appreciated and will make the base a stronger entity.

May 2004 Meeting Minutes (continued from page 2)

sion was made at the Reno Convention Executive Board. Dick Godbout voiced concern that the organization will price itself out of business. MAL search was also discussed – how much effort should be spent looking for these members who join USSVI, but do not join the local base. Not a big issue for us, but it is for other bases. Upcoming voting will not be done electronically due to trying to figure out process and everyone will receive a paper ballot. The banquet held that evening had the Captain of the USS Providence as the guest speaker. He spoke well talking to submariners about current submariners. It was also discussed how the Maine Base runs its Holland Club presentations. They go to the Speaker of the House of Maine and get proclamations for each individual that are personally delivered by a representative of the state.

- Gary thanked Denis O'Keefe who gave his set of dolphins to a sailor at the Submarine Ball. The sailors greatly appreciate it and if you have an extra set that you wish to donate please let Gary know.
- Bill Tebo personally presented Armand Minitelli with his Holland Club certificate.
- Bill Tebo already has WWII 2005

Calendars for \$5 each.

- WWII Convention was very successful. Bill Tebo thanked Gary for the base tour arrangements. The shipyard commander made sure that he came out and greeted each group for veterans.
- Discussion then took place about the Portsmouth Peace Treaty 100 year anniversary will take place Summer 2005. The USS Sirago will also be having its reunion in Portsmouth around the same time.
- Bob Bellisle let everyone know about the 50th anniversary of the Submarine Association of Canada taking place in Halifax August 19-22, 2005. They would love to have US submariners attend.
- The letter and plaque for the Bergeron's are in Gary's possession. He will keep them until next year. Bob suggested bringing them to the Memorial Day service because they generally attend.
- Memorial Day Service is on Monday, May 31. Captain McCoy will speak. This will be his last appearance prior to going to NAVSEA in DC.
- Storekeeper duties have been relinquished by Kevin and all materials are being stored at the shipyard and will remain there until someone takes over

the position.

- Discussion took place about fundraising options and membership growth. Will require volunteers to take on these jobs and it is hard to find volunteers to fulfill the current positions in the organization. Creating a feedback form for the membership to find ways to improve the base.
- The membership was invited to have a joint meeting with the WWII members at their annual lobsterbake on July 24 in Seabrook.
- Fred Petrowski is looking for a ride to the Convention in Saratoga.
- Mike Geletka was awarded his USSVI 20+ year award.
- The meeting was concluded with a prayer by the base chaplain.

Base Storekeeper Sought

A volunteer is being sought to take over the base store. This position requires someone who is willing to sell goods at base meetings, be the point of contact with the USSVI storekeeper and place special orders for the members. This position will remain open and the base store will remain closed until someone comes forward to take over. If you are interested in giving your time, please contact Gary Hildreth, base commander.



USSVI Thresher Base

USSVI Thresher Base was chartered on 15 November 1989 in the memory of those 129 gallant men who at 9:17 AM on 10 April 1963 lost their lives in the performance of their duties aboard USS THRESHER (SSN 593).

Our mission is "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 Government."

The base newsletter, *Thresher Base News*, and base website, www.thresherbase.org, are used to inform the membership and community about meeting happenings and upcoming events. Any member who has information to share with the membership is encouraged to submit articles to the editor for publishing. Send submissions to Kevin Galeaz, Editor, 1465 Hooksett Road #239, Hooksett, NH 03106 or webmaster@thresherbase.org.

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BAE SYSTEMS



To Perpetuate the Memory



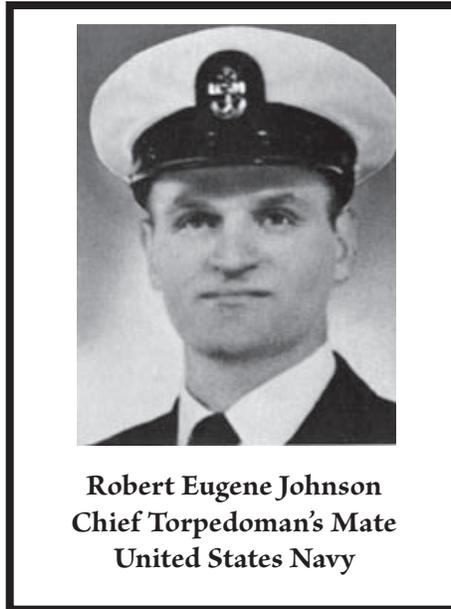
Robert Eugene Johnson was born on June 20, 1925, in Junction City, Ohio.

At the age of four, his family moved to Wyandotte, Mich., where he attended Roosevelt High School before enlisting into the naval service in 1942.

He received his recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill., and was graduated in late 1942, from the Class "A" Torpedoman's Mate School at Newport, R.I.

His first sea duty was in the stores ship U.S.S. Denebola (AF 56), until early 1944, when he volunteered for submarine duty. He successfully completed Submarine School at New London, Conn., and his first submarine duty was in the U.S.S. Torsk (SS 423), in which he made two successful war patrols. While serving in Torsk he was designated qualified in submarines.

Following World War II, Robert served on the staff of commander, Submarine Squadron 4, and in



Robert Eugene Johnson
Chief Torpedoman's Mate
United States Navy

numerous submarines including the Grenadier (SS 525), Paddle (SS 263), Gar (SS 206), and Trout (SS 566).

Robert reported to the U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593) on February 27, 1961, and was the first man to qualify in this new class of ship. He was selected as the first "Chief of the Boat," and in this capacity served as execu-

tive petty officer in all matters affecting enlisted personnel.

This position of authority and responsibility was filled by Robert in a most exemplary manner, and his performance of these difficult and demanding duties earned him the respect of the officers and men of the Thresher.

During his more than 20 years of active duty, Robert was awarded the Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Campaign Medal, Navy Occupation Medal with Asia Clasp, European African and Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, and several letters of commendation. While serving in the submarine Torsk, he earned the Submarine Combat Pin.

Robert is survived by his wife, Rizalina, now residing in Oakland, Calif. He also leaves his mother, Mrs. Marie N. Johnson of Wyandotte, Mich.; and a sister, Mrs. Betty Harmon of Southgate, Mich.

Website Generates New Family Contact

A family vacation request has turned into a new family contact. Sandy LaBier, the niece of Engineman Richard Brann, sent an e-mail to webmaster@thresherbase.org looking for information about any public memorials dedicated to the USS Thresher. Her family is planning a trip to Hampton and wanted to pay their respect to their lost Uncle. Kevin Galeaz was pleased to respond to the request. The LaBier's have not attended any memorial services and were very honored to be asked and added to our mailing list.

USSVI Dues Increase January 1, 2005

Due to increasing costs, USSVI has announced that effective January 1, the annual membership will increase to \$20.00. Two savings options are being offered - 36 month membership \$55.00 (\$ 5.00 saving) and 60 month membership \$90.00 (\$ 10.00 saving)

Your membership runs from January 1 to December 31 with dues payable on or before Dec 31. Members who have not renewed as of Jan 1 are moved from member in good standing status (M.I.G.S.) to member not in good standing (Delinquent) status. Payment received by April 1 restores the member to M.I.G.S. status. Members will be dropped from the organization rolls if not paid by April 1.

USSVI is also increasing the Life Member dues but the current Life Member dues structure will remain in place through Dec 31, 2004 so that current members may take advantage of the old rates up until then.

Age Range	New Rate	Old Rate
Up to 45	\$500.00	\$250.00
46 to 55	\$400.00	\$200.00
56 to 65	\$300.00	\$100.00
66 to 75	\$200.00	\$50.00
Age 76 +	\$100.00	\$50.00

The members may purchase National Life membership on a \$25.00/mo installment plan until paid in full. Contact the National Office for details. (360) 337-2978

Memorial Service *(continued from page 1)*

Weber and Mike Geletka tolled the bell, the melodic sounds of a bagpipe, played by Patrick Boyle, could be heard in the distance.

At this point the service turned its focus to the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Johnson Hall. We were honored with the presence of COB Johnson's niece, Bonnie Carroll and her son, who flew from Kentucky to attend the service. It was a particularly moving ceremony when Ms. Carroll was asked to cut the ribbon in front of Johnson Hall.

Following the Ribbon Cutting ceremony the service continued with the wreath laying ceremony at the water's edge. Trolley's were available for any guest who wanted to attend this part of the service. Once the guests reassembled at the

water's edge, Chaplain Chapman led us in a prayer which was followed by a 15 gun salute. While the wreath was being prepared, George Stevens, US Submarine Veteran, played a stirring version of taps. This set the stage for Jill Arsenault Robinson, widow of ENCA(SS) Tilmon J. Arsenault and Bonnie Carroll to carry the



Jill Arsenault Robinson and Bonnie Carroll prepare to release wreath



15 Gun Salute

wreath to the railing of the bridge and release it into the outgoing tide. Piper Boyle concluded the ceremony with the Navy Hymn.

Everyone was then invited for a time of fellowship and tours of Johnson Hall.

March 2004 Meeting Minutes

- The meeting was called order followed by a blessing and the Pledge of Allegiance. The Tolling of the Bell was conducted for all ships lost during February and March. Visiting D1 Commander, Paul Orsted was welcomed followed by all members soundoff. A special welcome was extended to new member Bill Allen.
- The Secretary's Report was read by Kevin Galeaz. A correction was requested in regards to the CEO in St. Louis who is a private collector not a dealer.
- Roy Pierce, Thresher Base Treasurer provided a list of expenditures since the last meeting and reported a balance of \$4669.46. Roy reported that Stan Thurston made a generous \$190 donation to the base.
- Paul Orsted, D1 Commander, gave a report to the membership
 1. He is retiring in May 2004 after 8 years as commander - a former national commander will take over if no one runs.

2. He reported there is a perception that Groton Base has too much power and a redistricting is being considered.
3. There are a number of USSVI awards available that recognize individuals as well as newsletters.
4. A new certificate/pin has been created to recognize those members who have been USSVI members for 20 years. A list from the base secretary needs to be sent to national. Individuals will be acknowledged at the convention in Saratoga and will receive their certificate/pin in person.
5. D1 meeting will be held in Augusta, Maine on May 15. Gary has information for those interested.
6. Elections - All efforts are being made to have web based voting for upcoming elections. All members as of April 1 are eligible to vote. It currently costs \$10000 to mail ballots to the 115 bases and having web based voting will be a significant cost saving measure.

- Submarine Ball
The ball will be held at the Sheraton on April 16 and tickets are \$42 each. The theme this year is "Bring Them Home." Admiral Timme will be the guest speaker at both the Memorial Service and the Ball. See Gary if you are interested in attending the ball. Any family member who wishes to attend is welcome.
- Memorial Service - April 17, 2004 at 1300
 1. The Memorial Service is being tied in with the dedication of Johnson Hall, the new enlisted barracks. The shipyard will be picking up the cost of invitations, programs, tent, sound system and trolley for this year's service. A search is on for a band or other musical suggestions.
 2. Herm will handle the wreath arrangements.
 3. Gary asked for \$1000 for food/drink and the motion was carried. It was thought that 200-300 people

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March 2004 Meeting Minutes (continued from page 5)

would attend this year.

4. The Navy is commissioning a painting of COB Johnson to be hung in the barracks. It has been difficult finding photos of Chief Johnson. Discussion took place of where to locate photos. There is apparently a library in Baltimore, MD named after Johnson and maybe they have more information on Chief Johnson.

5. Chief Johnson's niece and her son will be attending the service. They are arriving from Kentucky and have never flown.

6. There will be a trophy case in the front lobby dedicated to Chief Johnson and the Thresher, along with a marble memorial outside the building.

7. Bill Tebo asked if the Museum show be open. Gary says yes the museum should be open after the service.

8. A discussion then started about writing a letter to the couple who has brought the USS Thresher painting to the service every year. Mike Geletka talked about giving them a plaque. Larry Oiler agreed to write the letter with input from Gabby.

9. Kevin Galeaz asked about the bagpipe arrangements and was told that this was all set.

10. Kevin then said he was making arrangements for George Stevens to play the trumpet again this year.

11. If you are planning on attending

please RSVP to Gary. A list of all base members will be given to the guards at the gate.

12. The USS Providence will be in shipyard and will be helping with the Memorial Service.

13. A specific area for family will be reserved so that there is not a repeat of last year's seating issues.

Old Business

- Mike Geletka repeated a request of the base to place an ad in the WWII Convention booklet. He discussed the 3 sizes available and it was decided that the base would take out a full page ad for \$100. Robin Galeaz will create the ad.

- Bill Tebo thanked Kevin Galeaz for creating the WWII base webpage.

New Business

- Pictures of the joint meeting in January were available. Let Kevin know if you want copies.

- Holland Club – Help is needed to locate new inductees who did not attend the celebration: Leo Cloutier, Armand Minutelli, Thomas Delozier, Edward O'Neill, and Robert Anderson. Bill Tebo offered to deliver Armand Minutelli's certificate and it was learned that Thomas Delozier had passed away.

- Webmaster's report was given by

Kevin Galeaz. The inaugural "Perpetuate the Memory" series was dedicated to Tilmon Arsenault. A bio for Admiral Timme was added to the website. A repeated request was made for photos from the 40th and member bios.

- Memorial planned for the Nautilus at 50 on April 13 in Washington DC at the Navy Memorial.

- Thresher book was donated to the base by the son of a former neighbor of a crew member.

- USS Thresher hats – Family and crew have expressed interest. Will look into this, but will not be available upcoming Memorial Service.

- 40th Anniversary Groton Base – April 29 to May 1. Gary has more information

- Holland Club is looking for a representative to work on fund raisers.

- Lighthouse at Avery Point in Groton, CT Brick fund-raising program - \$50 per brick.

- Special Visit to SubSchool – Discussion was held about possibility to attend graduation and use/see trainer.
- Virginia Class/Seawolf Class discussion was held.

- Captain McCoy has been named Rear Admiral. He is the first named from the Portsmouth Shipyard.

Change of command is expected in October/November

- Final Patrol Certificate has not been issued for Oscar Schmidt, Ralph Sanderson or Stu MacGregor. Information has been submitted to National Chaplain. Paul Orsted tells Kevin to contact National higher ups if the Chaplain does come through with the certificates.

Base Contacts

Gary Hildreth, base commander
(207) 438-4100

HildrethGR@mail.ports.navy.mil

Larry Oiler, sr. vice commander
(207) 676-5864

loiler@maine.rr.com

Donald Simpson, jr. vice commander
(603) 942-5962

irexdon@msn.com

Kevin Galeaz, secretary, webmaster, newsletter editor

(603) 268-0420

webmaster@thresherbase.org

Roy Pierce, treasurer

(603) 745-8077

dn6@adelphia.net

Armand Legare, holland club

(603) 778-4939

AFFL@prodigy.net

2004 USSVI Candidates

George Boyle

Life Member #0434
Drum Base

I am seeking your help and support for the position of Eastern Regional Director of which, I wish to aspire too. I feel I have a lot to bring to the position and I have the commitment and the time to perform the duties of the position.

I am member of USSVI and have been Life member for the past 11 years. My Primary Base is the Drum Base in Pensacola, Florida, as a member for the past 7 years. As a member of Drum Base I have served as Base Commander for 2 years and partici-

pated on numerous committee's. I am also a Life member of New Jersey South Base and a member of the Redfish Base in Louisiana. I am presently the USSVI Base Development Chairman and I am on the Long Range Planning Committee. I am an Associate member of Sub Vets WWII.

I started the National Storekeeper position from scratch turning over to my successor over \$30,000 in inventory, several thousand dollars in a bank account, and several thousand dollars has gone to the National Office. I have worked closely with the present Central Regional Director and the present President of Subvettes, in

establishing the Ladies Auxiliary of USSVI.

I have attended all National Conventions and Board of Directors meetings since (1994) at the Portsmouth, New Hampshire Convention.

Presently, I am spending countless hours scanning boat reunion lists for Non-USSVI members and informing those of our organization and requesting them to join.

As your Eastern Regional Director I will continue to represent the Base's of the Eastern Region and work with the National Board of Directors to make USSVI grow.

Dick Kanning

Life Member # L4233
Tarheel Base

- Enlisted 13 July 1961
- Boot Camp, 'A' School and Sub School
- Qualified in Angler SS-240 12/62, during Med Cruise
- NucPwr Sch Bainbridge and SIC Windsor graduate 4/64
- Qualified in Halibut SSGN 587 3/65. (John Peters was Engineer)
- PreCom, shakedown and transit on Ben Franklin SSBN-640(G)
- Qualified in SSBN 640 8/66
- NPTU @S5G prototype instructor 5/67 to 10/70
- PreComUnit Guitarro SSN-665 11/70 -7/71
- Appointed Warrant 7/71
- USS Proteus AS-19, Repair Dep't til 11/74
- Mare Island NSY Ship' Sup't for Halibut, Seawolf and Parche 11/74- 11/78
- USS Canopus AS-34 Repair Dep't 1/79-10/81
- Retired CWO4 10/81

A varied and challenging career, from port and starboard in a 'Jimmy' 248 engine room to Nuc operator and

missile fuel team on the only SSGN at that time.

First deep dive and Sub safe boat post Thresher loss, Polaris Missile Shot observed from Gemini-6 in space, Panama Canal transit, navy test and acceptance of natural circulation reactor; restoration work on Guitarro after sinking, repair work on Many boats with past shipmates while in Guam, especially the unscheduled SSN's for emergent repairs.

Ship Sup't for the three SubDevGru1 "Project Boats" and their numerous dockings, winding up to close down Rota as a SSBN site and relocation to Charleston SC

I worked numerous Commercial Nuclear Plants throughout the free world, and finished up at the Harris Plant in NC as Project Supervisor for the steam generator replacements.

I joined the Tarheel base (NC) USSVI in 9/99 and have represented our base at the 2000 2002 and 2003 National Conventions. I presently serve as base Vice Cdr, and am the coordinator for the upcoming joint USSVI District 3/Southeast Region

SVWWII meeting this May. I also developed the rules and Code of Conduct for our base and the NC Chapter SVWWII to function as a unified body I am the point of contact (Sponsor) for the NC DMV Submarine Specialty license plate, and serve on the Halibut SSGN/SSN 587 Association Board.

I believe that an elected individual needs to carry out three vital tenets:

- Responsibility, Respect and Recognition. We need to be responsible to our WWII heroes and assist them in their basic functions and endeavors. Were it not for them we modern day folks would have much less camaraderie and esprit de corps. Responsibility must be assumed, it will not survive if directed.

- Respect for our leaders and each other. A disregard for ones ideas and ideals serves but to disrupt.
- Recognition is a stalwart for success. To be recognized is better than any egoism and serves as a catalyst for Responsibility.

It is my goal to practice these principles for the benefit of our organization.

THRESHER Base
United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.
c/o Kevin Galeaz
1465 Hooksett Road #239
Hooksett, NH 03106



**Johnson Hall Dedication
April 17, 2004**
