



# USSVI Thresher Base News



November 2010

## September 2010 Minutes

The September meeting of Thresher Base was held at Newick's Restaurant in Dover, NH on Saturday, September 18. The meeting was called to order followed by a silent prayer and pledge of allegiance. The Tolling of the Bells was conducted for those boats lost in September and October. A silent prayer was said for those on eternal patrol.

A sound off of those present was conducted - There were 14 members and 4 spouses. Secretary's Report - Minutes from the July 2010 meeting were read and approved.

Treasurer's Report -

\$3490.19 opening balance

\$3480.80 current balance

\$3456.10 Memorial Service balance

A motion was made to make a \$25 donation to Groton Base's Thanksgiving meal which serves 800 people. The motion was approved.

Thresher Memorial Service -

- Kevin Galeaz has received feedback from family members regarding the service date. They wish to hold it on April 9.
- The website has brought contact from a new family.
- The Submarine Birthday ball has been an issue in the past, but they will move around our service date.
- Dennis O'Keeffe told the group that the town of Kittery is considering closing Traipp Academy and tuitioning students to Eliot. This is still up for a vote and would not take effect for a number of years.

Old Business - none

•Peter Joy attended the dedication at

the Southern Maine Veterans' Cemetery, Springvale, ME on August 24.

•Sub Sailor of the Year, Groton Base - The base has received thank you notes from all 3 of the sailors. They were very appreciative.

•The base received a letter and \$50 donation from Jack Hunter for the Thresher Memorial Service. The donation was made in honor of Irv Searl.

•Peter Joy made a suggestion to ask Vice Admiral Emery to speak at the Thresher Memorial Service.

New Business -

•USSVI Convention - Larry Oiler attended his first convention and he plans on attending next year. Gordon Wentzell also attended. Larry estimated that there were about 900 people.

The facilities were good, the Ohio River cruise was great, but the banquet was not great. Mike Bircumshaw was elected National Commander.

Holland Club bylaws were changed at the convention - you still need to be qualified for 50 years, but now you do not need to be a USSVI member for 5 consecutive years. The other change is that automatic life membership is no longer offered. Due to these changes, there are 4 more base members that qualify for the Holland Club.

Bill Niland, Dan Nicholson, Ian Johnson and Mike Remington will be honored at the November meeting at Flag Hill Winery. The next convention will be in Springfield, MO in 2011, Norfolk, VA in 2012, Minnesota in 2013 and starting in 2014 conventions will be held every 2 years. The median age of members is 66 years old.

•Wright Pat Air Force Museum, Dayton, Ohio. While at the convention, Larry was able to go to the museum

which is quite impressive - 3 double hangers. He said that 3 hours was not enough time. There is a guided tour that takes you through the on base hanger that houses 4 Airforce Ones: Kennedy, Roosevelt (2), Truman.

• Peter Joy brought up for discussion obtaining a non-descript memorial for all submarine veterans for the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery. He has been in touch with Tom Conlon at national. Before making any further contacts, a sponsor is needed to collect and maintain the funds until all money is raised. Looking to see if Thresher Base in coordination with Maine Base would set up a monument committee. Bill Tebo has experience with obtaining quotes and they vary widely from \$7000 to \$100,000. Bill Livendale

*continued on page 2*

## Upcoming Events

November 20 - 1200 - Meeting/Luncheon at Flaghill Winery, Lee, NH. Reservations are required for lunch.

January 15 - 1200 - Meeting/Luncheon at Newick's, Dover, NH



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contributed the specifics about how the Vermont cemetery memorials needed to look. Discussion on how money has been raised for past WWII monuments. Peter was considering placing ads in various magazines and asking for donations of any amount. Larry Oiler brings up that the 50th Thresher Memorial Service is in 2013 and that should be the focus of base fundraising. Peter is willing to get more information for the November meeting. Gary says that if he wants to get more information then go ahead, but indicated a concern with the idea that Maine Base be responsible for a Thresher Base idea and that the focus

of the base needs to be on the 50th Memorial Service.

- Kevin Galeaz received a request from Flag Hill Winery to move the meeting time to 11:00 to accommodate a wedding. The group agreed to move the meeting time. (After the meeting, Kevin was notified that the wedding was moved to another weekend so the start time will not be changing.)
- Gary received a call from a gentleman looking to find anyone who might have known his father, George Alfred Vartek, USS Billfish.
- Gary has received information about a Thresher model created by shipmod-

el builder Henry Weiss that is being sold. This is museum quality piece and Gary has the details about the sale.

- Jack McNally has been ill and is very interested in hearing from people. Contact Kevin Galeaz if you need Jack's phone number.
- Base elections were held and the results were:
  - Commander - Tom Young
  - Sr. Vice - Kevin Galeaz
  - Jr. Vice - Dennis O'Keeffe
  - Treasurer - Dennis O'Keeffe
  - Secretary - Kevin Galeaz
  - Chaplin - Peter Joy
- The meeting was adjourned.

<b><i>Boats Lost in September and October</i></b>
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USS S-5 (SS-110) - Lost on Sept. 1, 1920 when a practice dive went wrong and she sank bow-first, with her stern showing above the water. In a dramatic adventure, her exhausted crew was rescued during the next few days.

USS Grayling (SS-209) - Lost on Sept 9, 1943 with the loss of 76 men near the Tablas Strait.

USS S-51 (SS-162) - Lost on Sept 25, 1925 with the loss of 32 men when it was sunk after collision with SS City of Rome off Block Island.

USS Cisco (SS-290) - Lost on Sept 28, 1943 on her first war patrol with the loss of 76 men in the Sulu Sea west of Mindinao.

USS Seawolf (SS-197) - Lost on Oct 3, 1944 with the loss of 102 officers and men when she was sunk just north of Moritai by USS Rowell, a Destroyer Escort (DE). In this tragic error, Rowell mistook Seawolf for a Japanese submarine that had just sunk another Destroyer.

USS S-44 (SS-155) - Lost on Oct 7, 1943 with the loss of 56 men when it was sunk off Paramushiru, Kuriles. Two men were taken prisoner and survived the war.

USS Wahoo (SS-238) - Lost on Oct 11, 1943 with the loss of 79 men near La Perouse Strait. She was lost to depth charges dropped by a Japanese patrol aircraft.

USS Dorado (SS-248) - Lost on Oct 12, 1943 with the loss of 78 when she was sunk in the western Atlantic near Cuba. She may have been sunk by a U.S. patrol plane that received faulty instructions regarding bombing restriction areas or a German U-boat that was in the vicinity.

USS Escolar (SS-294) - Lost on Oct 17, 1944 with the loss of 82 men. She was on her 1st war patrol and was most likely lost to a mine somewhere in the Yellow Sea.

USS Shark II (SS-314) - Lost on Oct 24, 1944 with the loss of 90 when she was sunk near Hainan. Shark was sunk by escorts after attacking and sinking a lone freighter. Compounding the tragedy, it turned out that the freighter had 1800 U.S. POW's on board.

USS Darter (SS-227) - Lost on Oct 24, 1944 when she became grounded on Bombay Shoal off Palawan and was then destroyed to prevent her falling into enemy hands intact. The entire crew was rescued by USS Dace.

USS Tang (SS-306) - Lost on Oct 25, 1944 with the loss of 80 men in the Formosa Strait. Tang was on her 5th war patrol. During a daring night surface attack, Tang was lost to a circular run by one of her own torpedoes. Nine of the crew were taken prisoner, All survived the war.

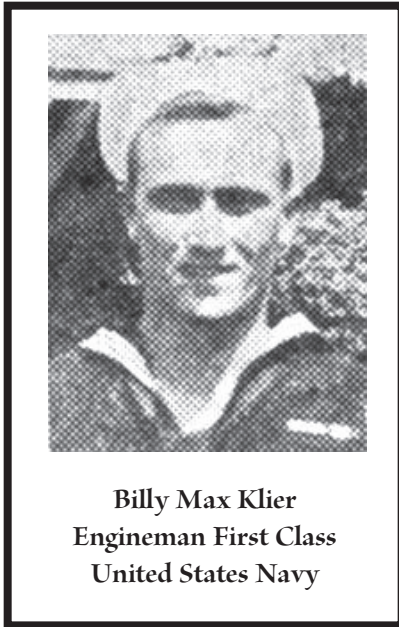
USS O-5 (SS-66) - Lost on Oct 29, 1923 with the loss of 3 men when rammed and sunk by SS Ababgarez off the Panama Canal.



## To Perpetuate the Memory



Billy Max Klier was born on January 26, 1935, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Klier of Elkhart, Kans. In January 1943, the family moved to Roslyn, where Billy attended local schools and was a member of the Roslyn Royal Neighbors club. He was enrolled in Cle Elum High School for his freshman year; but when his father became seriously ill, the family returned to Elkhart, in late 1949. Billy was graduated from Elkhart



High School and worked in the oil fields of Elkhart for several years prior to enlisting in the Navy.

Billy entered the naval service on September 30, 1954, from Kansas City, Mo., and received his basic training at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill.

Volunteering for submarine duty, he was accepted and enrolled as a student in the Submarine School at the U.S. Naval Subma-

rine Base, New London, Conn. Upon completing the course of instruction on

March 4, 1955, he was assigned to the submarine U.S.S. Tunny (SS 282), in which he became qualified as a submariner and was awarded the silver dolphins on September 19, 1955.

He also served in the U.S.S. Sea Devil (SS 400), and was selected for advance training in nuclear power. Successfully completing the course of instruction at the submarine base, Billy was assigned to the fleet ballistic-missile submarine U.S.S. Abraham Lincoln (SSBN 602), and in November 1962, he was reassigned to the U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593).

Billy is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mary C. Klier, and a son, Billy Charles of Niantic, Conn. He also leaves his widowed mother, Mrs. Sadie Klier of Santa Ana, Calif., and a sister, Marjorie of Denver, Colo.

George John Kiesecker was born on October 30, 1924, and spent his early boyhood in Brooklyn, N.Y. Prior to entering the naval service in November 1942, he attended Queens Vocational High School where he was a member of the football team. George was an avid reader, an excellent dancer, played piano and organ, and had won several medals for his swimming feats.

On November 13, 1942, George entered the Navy and received his recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill. He volunteered for submarine duty and served in the submarine U.S.S. Sea Dragon (SS 194), in which he became qualified as a submariner on December 30, 1944. While serving in the Sea Dragon during World War II in the Pacific area, George earned his submarine combat insignia for participating in various war patrols; Asiatic-Pacific Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, American Defense Service Medal, Philippine

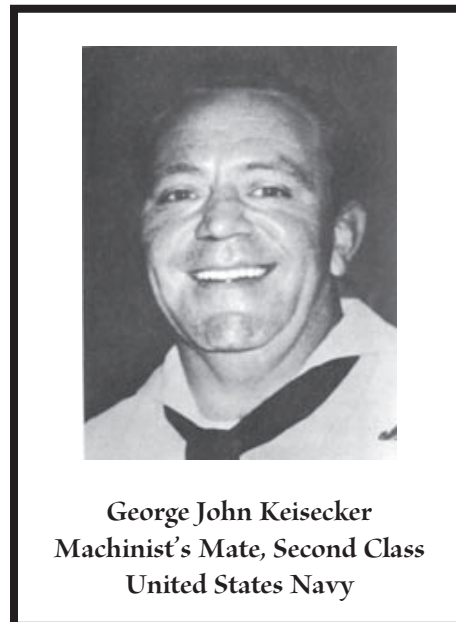
Liberation Medal, and the National Defense Service Medal. He was also awarded the Navy's Good Conduct Medal.

After World War II, George returned to civilian life for several years, but re-enlisted in the Navy on December 10, 1947. He again volunteered for submarine duty and served in the U.S.S. Salmon (SS 573) and the U.S.S. Diodon (SS 349), prior to being selected for advance training in nuclear power. George attended the nuclear power training units at both the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, New London,

and at Windsor Locks, Conn. Upon successfully completing the course of instruction he was assigned to his first nuclear powered submarine, U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593), where he served as a nuclear reactor operator.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Lily Kiesecker of Los Angeles, Calif.; his mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Kiesecker of Brooklyn, N.Y.; a brother, Donald of Long Island,

N.Y.; sister, Mrs. Carolyn Rodano of Brooklyn, N.Y.; and a daughter, Mrs. James Keele of Torrance, Calif.



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

*Next Thresher Base Meeting*  
*Saturday, November 20 @ 1200*  
*Flag Hill Winery • Route 155 • Lee, NH*



### 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](http://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 [thresherbase@comcast.net](mailto:thresherbase@comcast.net).

### USSVI *Conventions*

**2011**  
**Springfield, MO**

**2012**  
**Norfolk, VA**