

# THE DEEP DIVE NEWS

Nov/Dec 2023



## Our USSVI Creed

*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 of America and its Constitution.*

*In addition, to perpetuate the memory of our shipmates, we shall provide a way for all submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as submariners shall be strengthened by camaraderie.*

## USSVI Minneapolis Board Member Contact List

<b>NAME</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>email</b>	<b>Phone</b>
Tom Williams III	Central Regional Director	<a href="mailto:texsubvet@yahoo.com">texsubvet@yahoo.com</a>	(512) 632-9439
David Farran	CR-D3 Commander	<a href="mailto:dfarran@gmail.com">dfarran@gmail.com</a>	(319) 269-7389
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USSVI Base	Base Email List	<a href="mailto:MSPUSSVI@gmail.com">MSPUSSVI@gmail.com</a>	

\* NOTE, from David Farran:

Any base member can contact me with requests or questions about USSVI at any time.  
I am your link to the USSVI National Board of Directors.

# *Happy Birthday, Members!!*

## November

Robert T Rueckert 9<sup>th</sup>  
Jack Deschene 16<sup>th</sup>  
Dale Clark 18<sup>th</sup>  
Darold C Anderson 24<sup>th</sup>  
John P Amtower 24<sup>th</sup>  
Steven A Galewski 25<sup>th</sup>  
John D McVay 29<sup>th</sup>

## December

Gerold T Davey 4<sup>th</sup>  
Richard C Holtz 5<sup>th</sup>  
Ernie Kertzscher 14<sup>th</sup>  
John Hlavac 31<sup>st</sup>

*Happy Birthday Guys and Gals!!!!*

# Commander's Corner

I have been writing this column for 4 years now and I never know what to say before I start. This time it's different because I know what I need to say but don't know how. We need your help more than ever to keep the Base open. We learned after the last elections that Jack Fay will not return as Treasurer next year and David Harms won't be coming back as well. This past summer and fall I've come to that decision as well. Because Ken Tupper only took the Vice Commander's job to support me he has informed me that he will be stepping down. Joel Bergstrom has been waiting for someone to fill his shoes as Chaplain and Librarian for a few years.

Age, health issues, and life changes come to all of us over time. So it is time for YOU to step up and lead this Base forward. The members stepping down and all the past officers will be here to help with the transition to the job that you choose to take on. We all want the Base to succeed and we will help you. If you are new to the Base this is a great way to meet members and learn about the USSVI. Don't wait until the April Annual Election Meeting to think about it, contact me TODAY. Come to the December Christmas Meeting/Party and let us know that you are willing to help.

I want to thank all of the Board members and those who helped with the float events and setting up the meeting events over my term as Commander for bringing the Base from a low of 82 members to 111 that we have today.

## Duties of the Officers

Section 1: The duties of Base Commander shall include, but is not limited to, presiding over all meetings of the Organization, serving on the Executive Board, providing a meeting place for all meetings. Be ex-officio of all committees and appoint committees not provided for.

Section 2: The duties of Vice Commander shall include, but limited to, assisting the Commander in the performance of his duties, preside at the meetings in the absence of the Commander. Serve as the membership chairperson of the organization and shall serve on the Executive Board. The Vice Commander shall automatically assume the duties of the Commander should that office become vacant for any reason.

Section 3: The duties of the Secretary shall include, but not limited to, the taking and keeping of the minutes of all base meetings. Answer and keep a record of all base correspondence and shall serve on the Executive Board.

Section 4: The duties of the Treasurer shall include, but not limited to, accepting and keeping a record of all monies collected and received. Disburse such monies as necessary under the direction of the membership and shall serve on the Executive Board.

## Early Bird Drawing

It's time to send in your Annual Base and National dues. We are going back to doing the Early Bird Drawing. If you have your dues in by the end of the December meeting you will be eligible for

the Early Bird Drawing. The winner gets their meal money back. Base dues are still \$15 and National is \$30. If you want to pay more than one year at a time or life membership National has discounts at [ussvi.org](http://ussvi.org).

John Barnes  
Base Commander  
612-251-2260  
jbbblastit@gmail

## **USSVI MSP Treasurers Report 11/\_\_/2023**

### **Base VENMO account for Dues @USSVIMSP**

For those unfamiliar or not interested in Venmo, cash and check also work just as well.

Please leave a note on what the deposit is intended for. (Example: 1 year Base Dues \$15)

### **Note that National Dues have changed effective April 1 2023:**

National 5 year term: \$140.00  
National 3 year term: \$85.00  
National 1 year term: \$30.00 (Jan-Sept)  
National 1 year term: \$35.00 (Oct-Dec)  
National Life (Ages 76+) \$120.00  
National Life (Ages 66-75) \$240.00  
National Life (Ages 56-65) \$360.00  
National Life (Ages 46-55) \$500.00  
National Life (Ages 45 and under) \$600.00  
Associate Member

**MSP Base Dues remain at \$15.00 per year**

## **Annual Holiday Base Meeting**

### **Meal Selections and instructions for 2 December, 2023 USSVI MSP Base Meeting**

Meeting Starts at 11:00am, Lunch at 1:00pm

The December meeting will be held on Saturday, December 2, 2023 at the Fred Babcock VFW Post 5555, 6715 Lake Shore Dr S, Richfield, MN, Phone: (612) 869-5555.

Meal selections for this meeting will be a choice of eight entrees, Liver & Onions, Walleye, Chicken Stir Fry, Vegetable Stir Fry, ½ Baked Chicken, 8Oz Prime Rib, 8 Pc Shrimp or, 8 Oz Top Sirloin. The prices are shown on the Reservation form below. Soft Drinks, Water, Tea and Coffee will be provided. Meal Selections may be phoned in, texted or e-mailed to the Base Master at Arms, Tim Martinson.

Payment will be taken at the meeting. Place your order information to the base Master at Arms no later than Wednesday November, 29<sup>th</sup> before the meeting.

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**Meal Order Selections:**

The listed prices include all costs: Food, taxes, service charges, and gratuity

**Note:** When placing your meal order please:

- Provide the number of each selection
- Call Tim Martinson with your questions
- **All** Dinners include: Dinner Salad, Baked Potato, Vegetable, Rolls & Butter
- 

1. Liver and Onions .....	\$15.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
2. 8 oz. Top Sirloin .....	\$20.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
3. Broiled Walleye .....	\$20.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
4. 1/2 Baked Chicken .....	\$15.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
5. 8 oz. Prime Rib .....	\$25.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
6. Shrimp Dinner (6pc) .....	\$20.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
7. Chicken Stir Fry .....	\$15.00, # _____	Total \$ _____
8. Vegetable Stir Fry .....	\$15.00, # _____	Total \$ _____

• Grand Total..... Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Attendee's Names: \_\_\_\_\_

Respond to: Tim Martinson, MSP Base Master at Arms

Phone or text: 860-734-6957, e-mail: martinsonsti@gmail.com

***Deb wants to remind everyone to bring cookies/treats for the Annual Holiday Dinner and nice items for the raffle, like we did at the Annual Base Meeting in addition to the 50/50, that seems to go over very well.***

## **Armed Forces Service Center**

The Armed Forces Service Center has 53 years of service to traveling military at the MSP airport. We are similar to a USO with the same mission: however, we are an independent organization started by a mom who lost her son in Vietnam.

We are always looking for volunteers to work a 4-hour shift of their choice at least once a month.

The board has approved a donation of \$500. Members are still encouraged to volunteer at the center. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, go to our website, and complete the volunteer sign-up at the website; navigate the menu selection to 'volunteer'.

<https://www.mnafsc.org/>

# K4K KAP(SS) 4 KID(SS)

<https://www.ussvcf.org/kapss-4-kidss-fund.html>

## The US Submarine Veterans' Charitable Foundation Scholarship Fund

<https://www.ussvcf.org/kapss-4-kidss-fund.html>

**A hearty welcome aboard to our newest members.**

Forrest Wilkenson, David Lovold, Sean Mullan, Geoff Campbell.

### USSVI Msp/Stp Base E-board Meeting Minutes

11.11.23 – Meeting called to order at 10:17

Attendees:

John Barnes

Ken Tupper

Jack Fay

Tim Martinson

Marcus Benjamin

Jack Fay presented printed Treasurers Report.

Ken Tupper asked about new members. Not much info was given, but our Base membership is at 111 paid, active members.

Jack entered info from John Barnes.

Creating a roster is an issue. Jack will work with Marcus Benjamin on that.

Joh Barnes asked when the DDN will go out. At the time of the meeting Marcus has received zero artifacts for publication.

The WWII Fleet Submarine is stored in Ken Tibesars pole barn.

Estimated cost of Gato repair is \$2800 minus the sail repair.

John Barnes noted he will be stepping down from the Base Commander position the first Saturday in April, 2024.

Sidebar discussion on the Bob & Tom Show. Laughs.

Motion to have the Base pay 100% of the Gato repair was brought to motion by Marcus Benjamin.

Ken Tupper seconded the motion and motion passed with unanimous yay votes.

Jack Fay will issue a check to pay for the Gato repairs when the bill is finalized by the supplier, MNFX.com

New meeting places were discussed.

Ken Tupper is actively looking, and noted three main points to keep in mind.

- 1) Room (capacity)
- 2) Storage for Base assets
- 3) Food

It was suggested to put in an article in the DDN asking for membership help to find a new Base Home and any confirmed offers.

It was mentioned that the board was never sworn to an oath.

There was a discussion on making Cami an honorary base member, and Jack Fay made a motion to prove Kami as an honorary member, it was mentioned, this will be voted upon in April, and to put in a blurb in the DDN.

Tim Martinson brought up a question, "What do we have to entice new membership?", the issue was discussed, we should invite new people to attend the base meeting to have fun with the rest of the group and find out if they like it. Need new young members.

Early Bird Special was discussed for Base dues.

DDN Treasurers Report was discussed.

We need to check on the status of the Duluth USSVI Group.

11:11AM was noted by Marcus Benjamin, Ken Tupper explained the Armistice Day origins.

Web Site issues were discussed.

The national convention in Arizona was mentioned, did the MSP USSVI setup a table there? Answer, no.

Ken Tupper made a motion to return to in person voting, nobody actually seconded that motion and the e-board meeting concluded abruptly at 12:17.

*Check out our website at: [WWW.MSPUSSVI.COM](http://WWW.MSPUSSVI.COM)*

## **After Action Report**

**EMPTY**



## Binnacle List

**Andy Anderson**  
**David E. Anderson**  
**David Harms**  
**Jeff Lundgren**

Past Commander Lundgren is Home now. He will be receptive to contact by Phone 763-300-9961, or a visit at his Condo at 11635 Theatre Dr W Unit #447 Champlain, MN . Please Call before visiting.

**Phylliss Thomton**

Phylliss Thomton is Home from the Hospital and TCU and doing well under the command of EN (SS) Brent.

**Kevin Rosing-Clapp**

## Chaplains Corner

Greetings Shipmates

While looking at my notes from my last years' article, if you can remember, we had a bunch of snow on the ground.

Though the weather may not look like the holidays are coming, they will be here soon. As the season approaches, it is time to give thanks to be able to worship the way we choose and to respect others for their choices. I believe our Constitution makes it clear on this subject. It's also time to give thanks for all that we have and to give thanks for all those who have served and are still serving on United States Submarines. May all of your days and especially the holidays be joyful. Forgive others who have wronged you and do good whenever you can.

I hope to see everyone at the December meeting/Christmas party. Remember to bring a treat to share and an item for the 50/50 drawing.

For those who will not be at the December meeting, I'm enclosing the opening prayer and the Lost Boat list for Dec/Nov for you to read.

Good and gracious God, please bless all of our Submariners and their families throughout the world. Please make this a joyous time of the year for everyone. This joyous time of the year is celebrated by the Jewish Faith with their Holy Days of Observance. It is the time of year we remember that a child is born, called Jesus of Nazareth. His teachings here on earth created Christianity, a religion embraced by many. It is also time of giving from the heart, especially to our veterans less fortunate than ourselves. Let the holiday season bring happiness and good will to all, now and for the years to come. This we ask of you.

Amen

**December Meeting Boats lost in November and December**

	Ship's Name	Date Lost	Crew Lost	
1	USS F-1 Carp (SS-20)	12/17/17	19	Lost with nineteen Men on 17 December 1917 when it was sunk after collision with the USS F-3 (SS-22) off San Clemente, California
2	USS S-4 Snapper (SS-109)	12/17/27	40	Lost with forty men on 17 December 1927 when it was sunk after being rammed by USCGC Paulding off Provincetown, Massachusetts.
3	USS Sealion (SS-195)	12/10/41	4	Lost with four men on 10 December, 1941 by aerial bombs during a Japanese air attack at Cavite Navy Yard, Republic of Philippines
4	USS Corvina (SS-228)	11/16/43	82	Lost with all hands (eighty two men) on 16 November 1943 during a Japanese submarine attack off Truk.
5	USS Sculpin (SS-191)	11/19/43	40	Lost with forty on 19 November 1943 when it was sunk by a Japanese surface craft north of Groluk Island near Truk. The remainder of the crew, another forty men, were taken prisoner but only twenty one survived the war
6	USS Capelin (SS-286)	12/01/43	78	Lost with all hands (seventy eight men) on 2 December 1943 by an unconfirmed Japanese Surface attack in the Celebes Sea.
7	USS Albacore (SS-218)	11/07/44	86	Lost with all hands (eighty six men) by possible Japanese Mine on 7 November 1944 between Honahu and Hokkaido, Japan
8	USS Growler (SS-215)	07/08/44	85	Lost with all hands (eighty five men) on 8 November 1944 by a possible Japanese Surface attack in the South China Sea.
9	USS Scamp (SS-277)	11/16/44	83	Lost with all hands (eighty three men) on 11 November 1944 when she was sunk during a Japanese surface attack in the Tokyo Bay area.
A total of 517 men lost on 9 boats			Finally, and in addition to these, we remember all the brave men who died in the course of their duties aboard submarines where the submarine itself was not lost.	

Argentine submarine ARA San Juan, 44 crew Lost, 11/15/2017. Lost with all hands off the coast of Argentina on a training mission.

**Closing Prayer**

God be in our head, and in our understanding  
 God be in our eyes, and in our looking  
 God be in our mouth, and in our speaking  
 God be in our hearts, and in our thinking  
 God be at our end, and at our departing  
 Amen

## SSN 708 Restoration Project – Camp Ripley

**SSN708 Fun Facts**

**Ordered**                31 October 1973  
**Laid down**            20 January 1981  
**Launched**            19 March 1983  
**Commissioned**      10 March 1984  
**Decommissioned**    28 August 2008  
**Out of service**      22 June 2007  
**Stricken**                28 August 2008  
**Homeport**            Pearl Harbor, HI

**Status** Stricken, to be disposed of by submarine recycling

### General characteristics

**Class and type** Los Angeles-class submarine

**Displacement**

- 5,695 tons light
- 6,068 tons full
- 373 tons dead

**Length** 110.3 m (361 ft 11 in)

**Beam** 10.0 m (32 ft 10 in)

**Draft** 9.7 m (31 ft 10 in)

**Propulsion** 1 × S6G reactor

**Range** Unlimited distance; 20–25 years

**Complement** 12 officers, 98 enlisted

## Regional Scuttlebutt

We would like to have a Base Member host a Regional Scuttlebutt in January or March 2024. Maybe in the New Prague, Willmar, Red Wing, Stillwater, or Faribault Area(s). Our last St Cloud Gathering was a tremendous success and resulted in securing several New Base Member's. These are usually held at a Veterans Organization (VFW / American Legion) and result in fantastic Camaraderie. Please let the Base Commander know if you are willing to help put this together in your area.

## Skippy the Yeoman

Just thinking: Sad I know.

The DDN is being prepared: Members / Board Member are encouraged to submit articles/submission's.

Some (Most) Board Members actually have a Report to share. This would be a great addition if we could solicit them.

We also have a Facebook page MSPUSSVI @ Facebook. Many people connected. But NOT Enough. The people connected do not contribute! There is only one main contributor, Any one on the site can Post/Contribute/Respond. This is a Fantastic platform for communication and contribution / Camaraderie.

I was also thinking as I read the Draft of the DDN; Why is it that we as a base never ever call our members? Especially on their Birthday? I think this would be a perfect way of creating Camaraderie.

We have been trying to create this Camaraderie with the 708 float events: Funerals/ Parade's/ Air shows/ County Fairs/State Fair/ Special Events/ Memorial Day/ July 4th/ Military events/ Camp Ripley/ ETC. Since 2015. Marginally successful.

When John became Commander, Steve, John and Tup met and created a Call list where the Commander called every member of the base. This was received very well. The PLANdemic was created, and all of the communication stopped. INCLUDING Collecting Base Dues. This was HORRID (Thank You JOE). Folks - The Base has not recovered from that time.

We need to put on our creative thinking caps and figure out the method(s) to revitalize this organization.

My First Suggestion is for us ( All of us) to call other members, especially Birthday Boys, and have a nice chat. Who is with me in this?? But Why Not the rest of the Group?? Tell me why not.

Sadly, we do not have an accurate Roster. Never really ever had since Bob Ehr.

I completely understand that some of you are not enamored with my personality, however, I hope you understand that I have the best interests of the Minneapolis St Paul Base of the USSVI in the foremost and front of my daily life. This may be hard for some to understand. Think about the work I have done for the past 9 years in the promotion of the Organization. Support and Storage of the 708 (8) Support and storage of Gato (2). Base Vice Commander (2022-2023: 2015-2016) I had the Privilege of being on the Board with Bob Ehr, Steve Marquis, and Dal Holmberg. I also had the distinct opportunity of knowing Rolly Conklin and Stan Kowalski, along with too many others to name. I have been fortunate enough to be able to view the olden DDN Video's. created by the original members during the 1909s.

Our Base has been around since 1993. We are honored to have One (1) Charter Member still with us. Does anyone know who the member is? My Point is that we do not understand our member group. Our events and Meetings (Regional Scuttlebutts) are INTENDED to grasp and incorporate the Bubblehead Camaraderie to those that understand and those that need to understand. S At our last RB in St Cloud (3/4/23) we garnered nearly 35 folks (3 NEW Members). THIS IS How we can grow. There are many databases of prospective members. WE DO NOT Afford ourselves to searching these! We do a horrible job. IF we happen to be wearing a Boat Hat in a K-Mart, we may get a Hollar. Then we typically shy away

Some 8 members and a few nonmembers have been the primary supporters of the group for those past few years. How long can that last?

THAT IS the Question I want Each of you to postulate and comprehend.

Thank you for indulging me.

**Shipmates**

# Float and Static Display Opportunities

Float Events - ALL Information is listed under "EVENTS" on the Base Website (MSPUSSVI.com)

## Expanding Brotherhood

We need to ask ourselves What can I do to ensure the success of our Base. As our membership ages, the long-term viability of the organization fades. Just last year we had several members depart on Eternal Patrol".

Each of our members are "**Qualified in Submarines**". A designation that required Hard Work and most likely more than the minimum time. Hopefully each of you are Proud of that accomplishment. Membership does not require much. Just \$15 per year. The base is required to hold 6 meetings. (Every 58 days). What are you doing to support the group during these off" days? In your travels, have you met a Qualified Submariner who is not part of our group? Did you try to offer information about our group and possibly recruit him? Have you chosen to support the base at events that are planned for the membership? Have you shown the camaraderie that you enjoyed on the boats? Can you? Would you offer your time to do the simple things that keep our base alive by becoming involved? There are a few things that we do not do because of our lack of member involvement. Promoting our Base and Floats in the American Submariner magazine. Setting up regional scuttlebutt get-togethers in "off" months. Reaching out to the community to promulgate the organization. Minnesota has an inordinate number of former Bubbleheads that we need to connect with.

## Member Submissions

### Submariner's Prayer

Eternal God, whose creative hand turned primeval seas into oceans wide, and whose omnipresent love can be as keenly felt beneath as above their undulating surface; descend with us now into the silent depths as our unfailing guide.

We men of the silent service are grateful to be among the few ever to thrill with the excitement of a dive, and sheer ecstasy of each surfacing. May we never look upon these maneuvers as mere routine, for each is an experience fresh with challenge and no little danger. May we be ever alert to our individual duties realizing that so much depends on our doing our duty without error.

May we remember the new member of our crew who is to make his first descent and breathe a prayer that he shall be a good submariner. May we, who know what it is to follow a course, also know Him, who said "I am the way." May we, who gulp in hastily the first breaths of fresh air as it rushes down the hatchway following every dive, know also thy refreshing spirit.

May we who know the necessity for companionship feel our partnership with thee when the hatches are dogged and when we are rigged for dive. When all else of the surface world has been closed out, may we feel thee in every compartment, as near to us as throbbing engines, pinging sonar, and the hissing of compressed air. And when, as aging submariners our souls have descended into the depths of eternity, may the final call to us be "Surface, surface, surface," in the name of Him who rides as the unseen crewman on every ship at sea. Amen.

## Submariners on the Internet

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-15959067>

### *Submarine escape: A WWII survival tale from Kefalonia*



*HMS Perseus was launched in May 1929*

**By Tim Clayton**

Military historian

**Seventy years ago, off the Greek island of Kefalonia, the British submarine HMS Perseus hit an Italian mine, sparking one of the greatest and most controversial survival stories of World War II.**

The clear waters of the Mediterranean were a death trap for British submarines in World War II. Some were bombed from the air, others hunted with sonar and depth charges, and many, perhaps most, collided with mines.

Two fifths of the subs that ventured into the Mediterranean were sunk and when a submarine sank it became a communal coffin - everyone on board died. That was the rule.

In fact, during the whole of the war there were only four escapes from stricken British submarines. And the most remarkable of these took place on 6 December 1941, when HMS Perseus plummeted to the seabed.

## Enigma

When she left the British submarine base at Malta at the end of November 1941, HMS Perseus had on board her 59 crew and two passengers, one of whom was John Capes, a 31-year-old Navy stoker en route to Alexandria.



*John Capes: Stoker on the Perseus*

Tall, dark, handsome and a bit of an enigma, Capes had been educated at Dulwich College, and as the son of a diplomat he would naturally have been officer class rather than one of the lowliest of the mechanics who looked after the engines.

On the rough winter night of 6 December, Perseus was on the surface of the sea 3km (two miles) off the coast of Kefalonia, recharging her batteries under cover of darkness in preparation for another day underwater.

According to newspaper articles Capes later wrote or contributed to, he was relaxing in a makeshift bunk converted from a spare torpedo tube when, with no warning, there was a devastating explosion. The boat twisted, plunged, and hit the bottom with what Capes described as a "nerve-shattering jolt". His bunk reared up and threw him across the compartment. The lights went out.

Capes guessed they had hit a mine. Finding that he could stand, he groped for a torch. In the increasingly foul air and rising water of the engine room he found "the mangled bodies of a dozen dead".

But that was as far as he could get. The engine room door was forced shut by the pressure of water on the other side. "It was creaking under the great pressure. Jets and trickles from the rubber joint were seeping through," said Capes.

He dragged any stokers who showed signs of life towards the escape hatch and fitted them and himself with Davis Submarine Escape Apparatus, a rubber lung with an oxygen bottle, mouthpiece and goggles.

This equipment had only been tested to a depth of 100ft (30m). The depth gauge showed just over 270ft, and as far as Capes knew, no-one had ever made an escape from such a depth.

In fact, the gauge was broken, over-estimating the depth by 100ft, but time was running out. It was difficult to breathe now.

He flooded the compartment, lowered the canvas trunk beneath the escape hatch and with great difficulty released the damaged bolts on the hatch.

He pushed his injured companions into the trunk, up through the hatch and away into the cold sea above. Then he took a last swig of rum from his blitz bottle, ducked under and passed through the hatch himself.

"I let go, and the buoyant oxygen lifted me quickly upward. Suddenly I was alone in the middle of the great ocean.

"The pain became frantic, my lungs and whole body as fit to burst apart. Agony made me dizzy. How long can I last?

"Then, with the suddenness of certainty, I burst to the surface and wallowed in a slight swell with whitecaps here and there."

But having made the deepest escape yet recorded, his ordeal was not over.

His fellow injured stokers had not made it to the surface with him so he found himself alone in the middle of a cold December sea.

In the darkness he spotted a band of white cliffs and realised he had no choice but to strike out for those.

Story doubted

The next morning, Capes was found unconscious by two fishermen on the shore of Kefalonia.

For the following 18 months he was passed from house to house, to evade the Italian occupiers. He lost 70lb (32kg) in weight and dyed his hair black in an effort to blend in.

He recalled later: "Always, at the moment of despair, some utterly poor but friendly and patriotic islander would risk the lives of all his family for my sake.



*Kostas Thoctarides and his dive team found the wreck of HMS Perseus in 1997*

"They even gave me one of their prize possessions, a donkey called Mareeka. There was one condition attached to her - I had to take a solemn vow not to eat her."

He was finally taken off the island on a fishing boat in May 1943, in a clandestine operation organised by the Royal Navy.

A dangerous, roundabout journey of 640km took him to Turkey and from there back to the submarine service in Alexandria.

Despite being awarded a medal for his escape, Capes's story was so extraordinary that many people, both within and outside the Navy, doubted it.

Was he really on the boat at all? After all, he was not on the crew list. And submarine commanders had been ordered to bolt escape hatches shut from the outside to prevent them lifting during depth charge attacks.

There were no witnesses, he had a reputation as a great storyteller, and his own written accounts after the war varied in their details.

And the depth gauge reading 270ft made his story all the harder to believe.



John Capes died in 1985 but it was not until 1997 that his story was finally verified. In a series of dives to the wreck of Perseus, Kostas Thoctarides discovered Capes's empty torpedo tube bunk, the hatch and compartment exactly as he had described it, and finally, his blitz bottle from which he had taken that last fortifying swig of rum.

*Tim Clayton is the author of [Sea Wolves: The Extraordinary Story of Britain's WW2 Submarines](#).*

BBC Radio 4's [Escape from the Deep](#) is broadcast on Friday 2 December 2011 at 1100 GMT. Or listen again on BBC [iPlayer](#).

## **Photo of the Day**

### **USS Minnesota SSN783**



**Photo, Jan 8, 2014**

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## ***United States Submarine Veterans*** ***Minneapolis/St Paul Base***



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