



Newsletter of the South Lake Subvets
blevinst@gmail.com



BLOW NEGATIVE

VETERANS FREE PRESS

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VOTE

NOVEMBER 5th^s



Navy Launches First Gender-Integrated Submarine

The Navy finally launched its first fully gender-integrated submarine on Saturday, some 14 years after female sailors were allowed to serve on the vessels.

The USS New Jersey sub is a Virginia-class boat, the newest class type. This means the vessel is designed for various naval engagements, including anti-submarine warfare and intelligence gathering. The commissioning ceremony occurred in the state it was named for, with an event held over the weekend in Middletown, New Jersey.

The ban on women staffing submarines was lifted in 2010 by then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates (who served under the Democratic President), and



the first female officers joined the submarine force the following year.

Since then, the *Navy Times* has noted that several trailblazers have risen to positions of prominence, such as Lt. Cmdr. Amber Cowan, who became the first woman to serve as the executive officer of a submarine aboard the ballistic missile submarine Kentucky in 2022, and Master Chief Information Systems Technician (Submarine) Angela Koogler became the first woman to serve as a 'chief of the boat' aboard the nuclear ballistic missile submarine Louisiana that same year.

But despite such achievements, the Navy's subs had all been designed for a male-only crew, with female sailors forced to make do with the existing facilities and living arrangements on board.

The USS New Jersey has been built for a fully gender-integrated crew. According to military news outlet Stars and Stripes, the washrooms and sleeping dorms have been designed with more doors to increase sailors' privacy in those areas.

While access to other areas of the sub has also been improved to make the practicalities of life on board easier for both genders, there are now steps to allow submariners to reach the top bunks or stacked washing machines. At the same time, some overhead valves have been positioned lower and made a little easier to turn.

All U.S. submarines will be designed for a fully integrated crew going forward.

The New Jersey's commanding officer, Cmdr. Steve Halle described the commissioning as "a truly historic moment." He added: "Our superior professionalism is enhanced by our crew integration and our diversity. We have exceeded expectations at every turn and overcome every obstacle set before us."

Susan DiMarco, the wife of former Secretary of Homeland Security Jeh Johnson, was the ship's sponsor, a female civilian who launched the boat to bestow good luck. At the ceremony, she gave the traditional order to the submariners: "Man our ship and bring her to life!" The sailors responded, "Aye aye, ma'am," before ceremonially running aboard the sub.

The media was invited on board to view the boat during

the launch celebrations, with reports describing how the interior was decorated with Jersey-themed items in honor of the sub's name. Walls featured posters from Rutgers University, New Jersey Devils memorabilia, and even a guitar donated by rock singer Jon Bon Jovi

The Navy revealed that the state-of-the-art submarine was designed to perform in anti-submarine warfare, anti-ship warfare, strike warfare, special operations, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, irregular warfare, and mine warfare. It is 377 feet long and can dive to depths greater than 800 feet and reach speeds of 25 knots. Almost 135 Navy personnel will serve as its crew.



In October 2023, Lieutenant Commanders Andrea Howard and Emma McCarthy wrote an article for the U.S. Naval Institute about their experiences serving as female submariners. The authors described their first postings: "Despite resumes and training that mirrored our [male] peers, the crew was keenly aware of the 'Sex: F' in our personnel records." They described how they occasionally needed to be creative when "adjusting to periscopes and equipment designed for the average-height American men (although being short on a submarine is typically beneficial)."

Describing what improvements could be made in the future, the pair said treating women with kid gloves on board "results in unacceptably 'othering' the female members of the crew and perpetuating stereotypes." However, they added that women crew members are "different, but equal," arguing that some adaptations would have to be made. For example, the boat's medics "must understand and provide resources to support women's health, including access to medication and hygienic disposal of feminine products."

The authors added: "The dilemma in integrating women on board submarines is when to address the reality of their differences and when not to. The ultimate goal is acknowledging and leveraging the team's diversity while upholding the traditional ethos and pride in wearing submarine dolphins."

Today, more than 700 women are assigned to submarines. In 2023, the Navy had 69 subs and announced plans to increase the number of submarines with coed crews from 30 to 40.

Get Gussied Up

Mission BBQ will offer veterans a free barbecue to show appreciation for veterans from all services. The restaurant is next to Portillos’s and near the Ford dealership on SR50. If you own a subvet vest, wear it to the restaurant.

Our Purpose/Creed

The purpose/creed of USSVI is to perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country so that their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice may be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments and to pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

camaraderie. The USSVI supports a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, USSVI provides a way for all submariners to gather for their mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our shared heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by

KEEN VISION
Whether you need daily eyeglasses to keep your world in focus or need some magnification for reading, it is not uncommon for older Americans to experience some need for visual aids.

All VA Health Care program veterans are eligible for eyecare (no-cost glasses and vision exams). Additionally, when using your computer, you can increase the size of fonts and the magnification of the screen or even allow your computer to read aloud what is displayed on the screen.

There are other resources found on the internet, and one I recently discovered is Double Tap. Here, you will find suggestions for keeping and improving your vision. www.Doubletaponair.com

Keep looking for ways to enjoy the gift of vision.

SOUTH LAKE FLORIDA OFFICERS		SLF Paul Curtis Scholarship Foundation	
Base Commander:	Carlos Martinez	Foundation President	Sam Goodwin
Vice-Commander:	Fred Walter	Foundation Secretary	Bill Bish
COB:	Randy Huckabee	Foundation Treasurer	Walter “Bob” Stout
Storekeeper:	Bill Bish	Administrator	Timothy Blevins
Chaplin:	Paul Hornberger		

FREE Dental Care (non-VA)

Everyone for Veterans is a nonprofit that connects eligible military veterans and their spouses to dentists in their communities for free oral care. To for care, a veteran must have served for at least two years, be honorably discharged, show proof of financial hardship, and be less than 100% service-connected disabled. Along with filling out the application form, a veteran also must submit their DD214 paperwork, a VA disability award letter from this year (even if they are rated at 0%), and, if a veteran's spouse is applying, a marriage certificate. The organization's data shows that 654 dentists nationwide have volunteered with E4V.

EVENTS

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT

Waterfront Park - Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 5PM - 8PM

The Clermont Police Department joins other law-enforcement agencies throughout the nation in this annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safe places to be.

Volunteers needed – Wednesdays, 0900, at TNC. Call Scott (352)429-1200, x103

SCAREMONT - HALLOWEEN ON THE TRAIL

Waterfront Park - Tuesday, October 29, 2024 - 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM

Get ready for a “scary” good time at Scaremont – Halloween on the Trail! The Clermont Police Department and the City of Clermont invite you to join them at Waterfront Park from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM for a night of fun. Enjoy trick or treat stations provided by participating organizations in a safe and festive environment. The night will also feature family-friendly activities, including the Creepy Clermont Costume Contest and a special showing of the beloved movie Halloweentown starting at 7 PM. Don't miss out on this fantastic evening of Halloween delights!

October 31 – Minneola Halloween, 315 E. Madison.

<https://www.minneola.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif4716/f/uploads>

November 11 – Veterans Day, 330 3rd Street, Clermont

LIGHT UP CLERMONT

The holiday season is always full of enchantment and fun here in Clermont! There are so many fun activities to take part in. Light Up Clermont always has something for all ages to enjoy at the events.

November 18 to December 18 – Letters to Santa Victory Pointe

November – nominations for Commander and Secretary

Elections will take place at the November member meeting.

THE ENCHANTED TREE FOREST

Victory Pointe - Nov. 23, 2024 - Jan. 3, 2025

The Enchanting tree forest is open on Nov. 23 and runs through Jan. 3 for viewing. There are 50 trees decorated by local organizations and businesses setup to view at Victory Pointe. you can walk on the trail to view, or park at the Clermont Boat House and walk over to Victory Pointe. check out the trees in the day and nighttime to get the full effect!

LETTERS TO SANTA.

Victory Pointe - Nov. 23, 2024, to Dec. 16, 2024

Stop by Santa's mailbox at the Enchanted Tree Forest! Mail off your letter to Santa and Santa will write you back. Make sure you include your return mailing address. No stamps necessary - The North Pole doesn't require stamps. Don't worry if you didn't bring a letter in advance there is stationary available next to the mailbox you are welcome to write a letter onsite to send!

DECEMBER 4 – MINNEOLA'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARADE; 1800;

[https://www.minneola.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif4716/f/uploads/christmas_parade.](https://www.minneola.us/sites/g/files/vyhlif4716/f/uploads/christmas_parade)

ANNUAL TREE LIGHTING.

Downtown Clermont - Dec. 6, 2024

Join us downtown for our annual tree lighting at City Hall Park and Downtown Clermont! There will be live music, food trucks, DJ, music, carolers, photo opportunity with Santa and Mrs. Claus (provided by Kiwanis Club of South Lake) and more! This is one of Clermont's most popular traditions! We can't wait to see everyone again to watch Downtown Clermont to be lit up by countdown!

CLERMONT CHRISTMAS PARADE

Downtown Clermont - Dec. 7, 2024

Just as the title describes, the Clermont Christmas Parade is a parade that will go through Downtown Clermont! It starts at 10 a.m. from Waterfront Park and winds it way through downtown Clermont making a loop. There will be floats, bands, and many local groups attending the Hometown Parade.

COOKIES AND COCOA

Downtown Clermont - Dec. 13, 2024

USSVI 2024 Convention Annual Business Meeting

The NSVC reports that the USSVI has 1 million dollars in assets. The Charitable Foundation has 1 million dollars in assets. And all of the local bases combined have 1 million dollars in assets. We are in good shape and the only veteran's organization that is debt free.

INCREASE IN DUES. On January 1, 2025, there will be an increase in dues for National dues to \$40 per year. A 3 year dues payment will \$113.00; a 5 year dues payment will be \$185.00. For Life Membership: 76+ \$150; 66-75 \$300; 56-65 \$450; 46-55 \$625; up to 45 \$750. A new member joining in the last quarter of this year will pay \$47 and be covered until the end of 2025. **The South Lake Florida annual dues are now \$25.00; please make payment to Ken Brown.**

Many members are of the opinion that Life Members are not contributing to the health of the organization. That is not so as the Life Membership dues are invested and those monies help fund the organization.

Following the convention in 2023, our membership was 11,888. As of August 2024, our membership is 11,828 or a loss of 60 members.

In February 2024, the National Office dropped 622 members for non-payment of dues.

We are losing one member per day to Eternal Patrol (400 total in 2023)

70% of our members are Life Members.

Recruiting and Retention are the main goals. Please download the manual on the website and use it. Statistics show that 20-30% of base members attend base meetings.

The National Treasurer reports that premiums for our liability insurance policy doubled when the office moved from Silverdale Washington to Groton Connecticut. The budget of \$337,000 was approved.

New Business:

The new 2025 USSVI National Officers were installed:

- National Commander – Jon Jacques
- National Senior Vice Commander – Tim Carlisle
- National Junior Vice Commander – Tom Williams
- National Secretary – David Farrugia
- National Treasurer – John “Sid” Sidlowski
- Northeast Regional Director Jeff Walsh
- Southeast Regional Director Ken Nichols
- Central Regional Director Rick Mitchell
- Western Regional Director Pete Juhos
- Election Master – Mike Bost

District Commander of the Year is Fred Marazita

Overall in the USSVI 15.3% of members voted in the election.

They are moving the National Library from a barge in Arkansas to the Maritime Museum in Punta Gorda, FL

2025 Convention in Orlando at Rosen Shingle Creek, 8/31-9/6, \$120 per night + tax

2026 Convention in Corpus Christi, TX at the Omni, 9/6-9/11, \$142 per night + tax

2027 Convention in Reno, NV at the Grand Sierra Resort, 8/22-8/27, \$129 per night +tax

The convention website brought in over \$100,000 in on-line payments

They are working the Base Activity Report into a Google form so it can be done on-line.

Blackbaud contract ends in April. New contractor hire in progress.

25 hours per month to maintain the “old/new website”.

It won't last forever.

Questions about the new website – ussviwebsitequestions@gmail.com

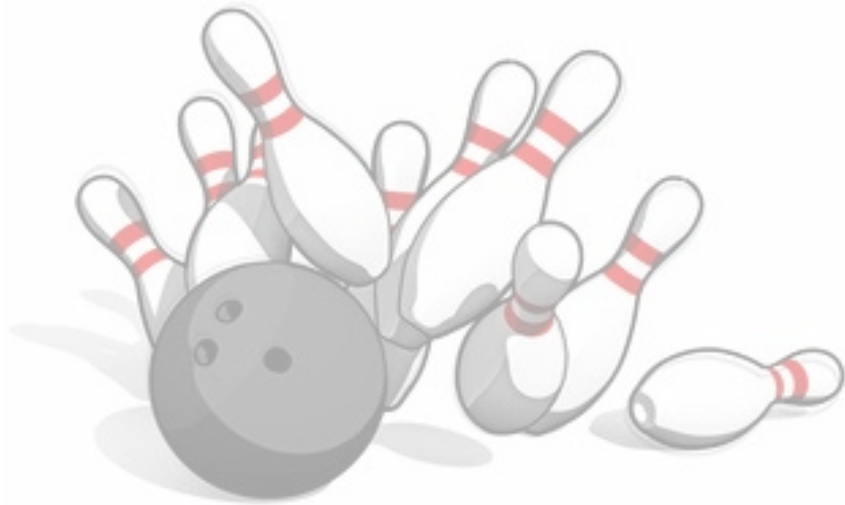
**South Lake Florida chapter dues can be paid to Ken Brown.
Annual dues beginning in 2025 are \$25.00**

**October Chapter Meeting
15 October 2024
1800 hrs.
VALOR LAKES
12629 S Hwy 27, Clermont,**

THANK YOU!

The success of the Scholarship Foundation's Bowling Tournament was due to the participation of these local businesses. Our membership is encouraged to patronize these companies. Please mention your membership.

Amore Italian Restaurant
Bath & Body Works
Bob Evans
Buffalo Wild Wings
Carrabba's Italian Restaurant
Clermont Bowling Center
Clermont National Country Club
Clermont Oyster Bar
Clermont VFW Poat 5277
Culver's
Family Jewelry & Pawn
Gator's Dockside
Island H₂O Water Park
King's Ridge Country Club
Lakeridge Winery and Vineyards
Legends Golf Club
Miller's Ale House
Olive Garden
Piesano's Stone-Fired Pizza
Suncreek Brewery
Texas Roadhouse
Yellowstone Landscape



Bill Bish and Cdr. Martinez hosted the event at the Clermont Bowlin Center. Please join the Foundation Committee in thanking Bill for his dedication to making this event the success it was. The Foundation raised \$980.00 from donations and registration fees. Every registered bowler received some award for their participation.