



BLOW NEGATIVE

VETERANS FREE PRESS

December 2025

The Official Newsletter of
South Lake Florida
Chartered chapter
of USSVI

2025 Social Event
December 18, Ruby Tuesday
1800hrs.

United States Submarine Veterans

SOUTH LAKE FLORIDA CHAPTER, CLERMONT

The "M" Class¹

The *Mackerel*-class submarines were a pair of experimental prototype submarines built just prior to World War II and launched in 1940 and 1941. The two submarines were similar in size and capability to the S-class submarines built at the end of World War I, and had been ordered to test the feasibility of using mass production techniques to build small submarines. Until at least 1940 it was thought that mass production of fleet submarines would be impractical, and in any case small submarines could provide area defense for submarine bases. Once it became apparent that there would be sufficient production of the more capable *Gato*-class submarines, interest in the design waned and no additional small submarines were ordered. Submarine production standardized during the war on the *Gato* class and its successors, the *Balao* and *Tench*-class submarines. In some references, the *Mackerels* are called the "M class".



USS Mackerel (SS-204)

Design

The *Mackerels* stemmed from

design studies ordered by the Navy's General Board beginning in 1936, when Admiral Thomas C. Hart joined the Board and spearheaded the small submarine effort. At the time it was felt that mass production of large fleet submarines would be impractical. It was also felt necessary to replace the aging S, R, and O-class submarines, to provide area defense for submarine bases and operate in restricted waters. For the *Mackerels*, two somewhat different designs were produced by the Electric Boat Company and Portsmouth Navy Yard. As prototypes, *Mackerel* and *Marlin I* were near-sisters rather than

sisters. References agree that *Mackerel* used a direct drive propulsion arrangement, but differ as to whether *Marlin I* had direct drive or diesel-electric drive. Both had engine designs not used in other US Navy submarines; *Mackerel* an in-house Electric Boat design, *Marlin I* an ALCO locomotive design. By late 1941 it became apparent that fleet submarines could be mass-produced, and interest in small submarines began to wane. Interest in them was revived with the examination of the German *U-570*, a Type VII U-boat captured by the British and loaned to the US. Also, Admiral Hart returned to the General Board in late 1942, following a courageous part in the ultimately futile defense of the Philippines and Indonesia in 1941-42. He pointed out that no other navy had abandoned small submarines. However, Admiral Frederick J. Horne, Vice Chief of Naval Operations, felt that small submarines should only be built if there was no interference with fleet submarine production. With all submarine yards capable of building fleet submarines, there was no easy way to avoid impacting their production, so the small submarine was abandoned as a concept.



General Characteristics

Service: 1939-1945

One each: Electric Boat & Portsmouth NY.

Speed: 15-16 knots surface; 11 knots submerged

Complement: 4 officers; 34 enlisted

Armament: 6 X 21 inch torpedo tubes; 12 torpedoes; 1 3-inch deck gun

Service

Both submarines spent their entire careers operating from Submarine Base New London, Connecticut and Portsmouth Navy Yard in training and research roles, contributing to the development of both submarine and antisubmarine warfare in World War II. On 12 April 1942 *Mackerel* was attacked by a German U-boat while transiting to Norfolk, Virginia, but the torpedoes missed and *Mackerel's* counter-attack

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mackerel-class_submarine

was unsuccessful. *Marlin I* appeared as the fictional *Corsair* in the 1943 movie *Crash Dive*, filmed at Submarine Base New London. After the war, both boats were decommissioned in November 1945 and scrapped in 1946-47.

USSVI 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 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.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, USSVI shall provide a way for all submariners to gather for their mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be strengthened by 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 the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today."

Chapter Officers

Commander: Carlos Martinez
 Vice-Commander: Fred Walter
 Secretary: Tim Blevins
 Treasurer: Sam Goodwin
 Storekeeper: Bill Bish

Foundation Officers

President: Sam Goodwin
 Secretary: Bill Bish
 Treasurer: Paul Enrandez
 E-VP: Tim Blevins



Sea Cadets

On Sunday, 7 December, immediate past Commander Ed Lashbrook and Secretary Tim Blevins attended the monthly Clermont Sea Cadet Battalion meeting at the Clermont Police Department, second floor training room. In attendance were about 20 Sea Cadets and three of their leaders. We presented two YouTube video files (thank you Bobby Mock) one of which was a torn of the USS Indian, Additionally, included in the files, were views of Submarine Base New London, a cutaway of the Turtle submarine, and other submarine support facilities. The presentation was well received, and we fielded a few questions regarding submarine life.

Chapter Dues

Please pay your annual chapter dues (\$25.00) to Sam Goodwin, If you are paying for USSVI dues on an annual basis, you will want to contact USSVI to new (<http://www.ussubvets.org>).





Don't miss movement: 15 January 2026, next membership meeting. Minneola Town Hall, 1800hrs.

South Lake Florida SubVet Newsletter

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² <http://www.southlakesubvets.org>

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