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The official newsletter of the Wolverine Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.

Volume 2026, No. 3

WOLVERINE BASE PARTICIPATES IN TWO MAJOR PARADES

Wolverine Base members proudly marched in the 73rd St Clair Shores Memorial Day Parade on May 24. That was followed by an appearance in the Wyandotte Independence Day Parade on July 4.

In St. Clair Shores, the 2 mile parade route ran north on Harper Avenue through the business district, with parade-goers lining both sides of the road for the entire route. Wolverine Base member (and former Escolar Base Commander) Lynn Watson was our Grand Marshall. A new addition to our group this year was Senior Vice Commander Pat Kelley on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.



As in past years, Base members proceeded to the Cpl. Walter F. Bruce VFW Post 1146 following the parade to conduct the Tolling of the Boats ceremony. The ceremony was observed by many folks attending the other festivities being held at the VFW Post. A trumpeter from the Great Lakes Drum and Bugle Corps played *Taps*.



The Wolverine Base parade unit included a float carrying a model of USS Scorpion (SSN-589), the last United States submarine lost at sea. Frank Woechan towed the float with his truck, outfitted with a submarine diving alarm. A new addition to the parade group this year was Senior Vice Commander Pat Kelley on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle. If you look closely, you can see the dolphins of the side of the gas tank!



Two of our “downriver” members, Jan McKim and Ozzie Osentoski were the Grand Marshalls for the Wyandotte Parade.

Following the parade, the Tolling of the Boats ceremony was graciously hosted by VFW Post 1136



JIM GURNEY RECOGNIZED AS VETERAN OF THE MONTH

Wolverine Base member James Gurney was recently recognized as the March Veteran of the Month by the Livingston County Veterans Council for his “lifelong dedication to service and community”.

A 50-year American Legion member and Senior Vice Commander for AMVETS Post 1775 and VFW Post 4357, Gurney remains deeply active in veteran and community service. He serves on the Brighton Memorial Committee, co-captains the VFW Honor Guard, supports the American Spirit Center, manages the annual Lenten fish fry, founded the Community Service Awards program, and led a major Post Canteen renovation, securing a \$5,400 grant and completing extensive hands-on work.

CONGRATULATIONS Jim!

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MEMORIAL BENCHES HONOR JOHN BOND

By Hannah Ball

Published on May 10, 2026 [*Tri-County Times*]

Linden — A group of veterans from the Linden Price Crane Robinsons VFW Post 4642 honored a fallen comrade by installing two memorial benches.

John Thomas Bond Jr., former Linden VFW commander, was killed as a result of the active shooter incident and fire at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc Township on Sept. 28, 2025.

The veterans who installed the benches consisted of the following VFW Post 4642 members: Greg Durkac, VFW post quartermaster and Army veteran; Dan Sly, VFW post 3 year trustee and Air Force veteran; Pat Munch, VFW post adjutant and Army veteran; Jim Morey, VFW post 1 year trustee and Army veteran; Mike Jacques, VFW chaplain and Marine veteran; Frank Allen, VFW senior vice commander and Navy veteran [ed., and Wolverine Base member]; and Craig Newberry, VFW junior vice commander and Marine veteran.



They installed one bench in front of the Linden Community Center, formerly the Linden VFW Hall, and one bench in front of the Linden Multi-Purpose Building along the non-motorized pathway. Each bench has a plaque with information about Bond and his service. John was a U.S. Navy veteran who served during the Vietnam war. He served on the Submarine Base at Pearl Harbor from 1968-1971, the USS Dixon from 1971-1972 and the USS Scamp from 1972-1975.

Durkac said the Linden VFW collected donations from VFW posts, auxiliaries and people all over the country to make this project possible. Polly Products donated one of the benches and Great Lakes Concrete constructed the concrete bases.

“We contacted Polly Products to purchase the benches and specialized plaques showing John’s service as a Navy Submariner. After discussion with Polly Products about what we were doing, they graciously donated one of the benches. We are very grateful to Mr. Andrew Jackson Gardner, marketing director, and Adam Harris, project coordinator, from Polly Products for their gift to John and his family,” according to the press release.

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Frank Allen, senior vice commander of the Linden VFW and Navy veteran, said he and Bond were the only two submariners at the Linden VFW. He said Bond worked in the fire control system and Allen worked in sonar.

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Editor’s Note:

Wolverine Base member John Bond tragically lost his life on Sunday 28 September, one of four victims of the tragic attack in Grand Blanc when an armed man drove his pickup truck into the Grand Blanc Township Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and started shooting. John Qualified in Submarines in 1972 aboard USS Scamp (SSN-588). He left the Navy in 1975 as an FTG1(SS). He joined Wolverine Base in 2023, and was a proud member of the Holland Club.

EAGLE SCOUT HONORED



On 12 April, Wolverine Base members honored Boy Scout James Woltmann of Troop 1489 in St. Clair Shores for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. Among several Base members attending, Jr. Vice Commander Frank Woechan and Jim Gurney, both Eagle Scouts themselves, participated in the Court of Honor. Troop 1489 is sponsored by the Cpl. Walter F. Bruce VFW Post 1146, where we conduct our “Tolling of the Boats” after each Memorial Day Parade.

GURNEYS HOST JUNE WOLVERINE BASE MEETING

Jim and Kathleen Gurney graciously opened their spacious home in Howell, MI to host our June meeting. A great pot-luck meal and submarine camaraderie, along with cooperative weather made for a great afternoon.

THANKS JIM & KATHLEEN!



THE FIVE MOST DANGEROUS THINGS YOU WILL HEAR IN THE NAVY

1. A Seaman saying: “I learned this in boot camp ...”
 2. A Petty Officer saying: “Trust me ...”
 3. An Ensign saying: “Based on my experience ...”
 4. A Lieutenant saying: “I was just thinking ...”
 5. A Chief saying: “Hold my beer and watch this ...”
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WASHTENAW VETFEST COMING AUGUST 1

ANN ARBOR, MI — Washtenaw Community College will host its fifth annual Vet Fest Saturday, Aug. 1, offering military veterans, active-duty personnel and their families a free day of activities, resources and community connections, according to a June 23 press release.

The event runs from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. near the Ann Arbor college’s main entrance at 4800 E. Huron River Drive. Pre-registration is required through the event registration page <https://washtenaw.cc/vetfest26>

The Wadhams Veterans Center at WCC is organizing the event with multiple veterans organizations throughout Washtenaw County.

“The WCC Wadhams Veterans Center and several county resource providers have created an annual event for our military affiliated families to enjoy a day dedicated to serving them and providing support they may not know about or have access to,” Carol Osborne, WCC’s manager of military and veteran services, said in the press release.

“We hope that our Washtenaw County Veterans community will join us and leave with new information and a new friend.”

The festival aims to connect service members with community resource providers and each other. This year’s event will feature a new gaming tent where attendees can play video or tabletop games.

Activities include live music, free food, cold treats, hourly raffles and carnival games. Children can enjoy balloon art, face painting and temporary tattoos. Military vehicles and aircraft will be on display, and K-9 demonstrations are scheduled.

Resource provider exhibits and veteran-owned businesses will be featured. A blood drive and a fully operational Secretary of State office will be on site.

Attendees who wear something representing their branch of service can earn extra raffle tickets.

WCC serves approximately 500 veteran students and families through the Wadhams Veterans Center, located in the Student Center on campus. The Michigan Veterans’ Affairs Agency recognizes the college as a gold-level veteran-friendly school, the highest honor awarded, according to the press release.

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Vet Fest flyer_May 7 2026_Veterans Center.indd 1

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USSVI CONVENTION 2026

USSVI 2026 NATIONAL CONVENTION

CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS
OMNI HOTEL
SEPTEMBER 6-11, 2026

COME JOIN YOUR SHIPMATES
FROM AROUND THE WORLD
AT THIS ANNUAL EVENT!

For additional information, visit the website at [USSVI National Convention 2026](https://ussvi.org/convention-2026)

COMING EVENTS

12 July	1500	Base picnic –Bay Court Park [6970 Andersonville Rd, Clarkston, MI]
9 Aug	1400	10 th Annual Bubblehead BBQ [Ozzie’s house - 3701 Brookshire St., Trenton, MI 48183]
6 – 11 Sep		USSVI Convention, Omni Hotel, Corpus Christi, TX
13 Sep	1500	Monthly base meeting, location TBD



LOST BOATS [July – September]

USS S-28 (SS-133)

Lost on July 4, 1944 with the loss of 49 crew members. She was conducting training exercises off Hawaii with the US Coast Guard Cutter Reliance. After S-28 dove for a practice torpedo approach, Reliance lost contact. No distress signal or explosion was heard. Two days later, an oil slick was found near where S-28 had been. The exact cause of her loss remains a mystery.

USS Robalo (SS-273)

Lost on July 26, 1944 with the loss of 81 crew members while on her 3rd war patrol. She struck a mine about 2 miles off the coast of Palawan. Four men survived and swam ashore, then were imprisoned by the Japanese. Unfortunately, they were

put on a Japanese destroyer and lost when that destroyer was sunk.

USS Grunion (SS-216)

Lost on July 30, 1942 with the loss of 70 crew members while on her first war patrol near Kiska Harbor. She radioed that she sank two sub-chasers and damaged a third, but was never heard from again. Grunion’s mangled remains were found in the Bering Sea in 2006 off the Aleutian Island of Kiska.

USS Bullhead (SS-332)

Lost on August 6, 1945 with the loss of 84 crew members in the Lombok Strait while on her 3rd war patrol when sunk by a depth charge dropped by a Japanese Army plane. Bullhead was the last submarine lost during WWII.

USS Flier (SS-250)

Lost on August 13, 1944, with the loss of 78 crew members while on her 2nd war patrol. Flier was transiting on the surface when she was rocked by a massive explosion (probably a mine) and sank within less than a minute. 13 survivors, some injured, made it into the water and swam to shore. 8 survived and 6 days later friendly natives guided them to a Coast Watcher and they were evacuated by the USS Redfin (SS-272).

USS S-39 (SS-144)

Lost on August 13, 1942 after grounding on a reef south of Rossel Island while on her 3rd war patrol. The entire crew was able to get off and rescued by the HMAS Katoomba.

USS Harder (SS-257)

Lost on August 24, 1944 with the loss of 79 crew members from a depth charge attack by a minesweeper near Bataan while on her 6th war patrol. Harder had won a Presidential Unit Citation for her first 5 war patrols and CDR Dealey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. Harder is tied for 9th in the number of enemy ships sunk.

USS Cochino (SS-345)

Lost on August 26, 1949 after being jolted by a violent polar gale off Norway caused an electrical fire and battery explosion that generated hydrogen and chlorine gasses. In extremely bad weather, men of Cochino and Tusk (SS-426) fought to save the submarine for 14 hours. After a 2nd battery explosion, Abandon Ship was ordered and Cochino sank. Tusk's crew rescued all of Cochino's men except for one civilian engineer. Six sailors from Tusk were lost during the rescue.

USS S-5 (SS-110)

Lost on September 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. Salvage attempts were unsuccessful, S-5 settled to the bottom and was abandoned.

USS Grayling (SS-209)

Lost on Sept 9, 1943 with the loss of 76 men near the Tablas Strait. Grayling was on her 8th war patrol and sank two ships before being lost.

USS Pompano (SS-181)

Pompano was sunk (between Sept 17 and Oct 5) with the loss of 77 men while on her 7th war patrol. Possibly lost on Sept 17, 1943. Japanese records show that a submarine was sunk in her patrol area on 17 September by air & depth charge attack off the Aomori Prefecture near Shiriya Zaki. Before being lost, she sank two enemy cargo ships. The exact cause of her loss remains unknown, but she probably was sunk by the air/sea attack above or fell victim to a mine on or after 9/25/1943. This boat's last recorded ship (Taiko Maru) sunk happened on Sept 25th, so she probably hit a mine on or after that date but before Oct 5th, when she was scheduled back at Midway.

USS S-51 (SS-162)

Lost on Sept 25, 1925 with the loss of 33 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 Mindanao.

Eileen Mahoney's poem "In Waters Deep" sums up the loss of sailors at sea. It uses (intentionally) the same meter as "In Flanders Fields" by John McCrae

IN WATERS DEEP

In ocean wastes no poppies blow,
 No crosses stand in ordered row,
 There young hearts sleep... beneath the wave...
 The spirited, the good, the brave,
 But stars a constant vigil keep,
 For them who lie beneath the deep.

'Tis true you cannot kneel in prayer
 On certain spot and think. "He's there."
 But you can to the ocean go...
 See whitecaps marching row on row;
 Know one for him will always ride...
 In and out... with every tide.

And when your span of life is passed,
 He'll meet you at the "Captain's Mast."
 And they who mourn on distant shore
 For sailors who'll come home no more,
 Can dry their tears and pray for these
 Who rest beneath the heaving seas...

For stars that shine and winds that blow
 And whitecaps marching row on row.
 And they can never lonely be
 For when they lived... they chose the sea.

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Our purpose 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 of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed 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. We support 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.



Wolverine Base
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<https://www.ussvimich.org/>

Base Commander: Steve Ritter
Sr. Vice Commander: Patrick Kelley
Jr. Vice Commander: Frank Woechan
Secretary: Brian Ball

Treasurer: Sam Ritchie
Chaplain: Robert Dickinson
Storekeeper: Frank Woechan
Chief of the Boat: Jeremy Hale