

The Naval Submarine League
Is pleased to present the
DISTINGUISHED SUBMARINER AWARD

For
**Outstanding and Continued Support of the
Submarine Service**

For the year 2012

To
**Vice Admiral Patrick J. Hannifin
United States Navy (Retired)**

For Service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For outstanding and continuing meritorious service in support of the submarine force. Vice Admiral Hannifin has a distinguished career which included service in three World War II war patrols. He commanded USS Diodon (SS 349) and was the first Executive Officer of the first Polaris submarine, USS George Washington (SSBN 598). He commissioned USS Lafayette (SSBN 616) as commanding officer and later served as Commander Submarine Squadron 15 in Guam where he was responsible for the administration, training, logistic support, and material readiness of all Polaris submarines in the Pacific Fleet. As a flag officer, he commanded Submarine Flotilla Eight and was Commander of all NATO submarines in the Mediterranean. He has held assignments as deputy director Submarine Warfare, OPNAV, Commandant of the Thirteenth Naval District and duty on the Joint Chiefs of Staff as Chief, Strategic Plans and Policy Division. In retirement, Vice Admiral Hannifin has been a much sought after resource of information for ongoing submarine matters. He was the principal consultant in the filming of the movie U-571. In this role, he helped train the actors and provided coaching to insure realism and authenticity. Vice Admiral Hannifin has appeared on numerous news and television programs and has provided insight and analysis of submarine related events. Significant among these was a 2000 session on Larry King Live concerning the Kursk tragedy. It is most appropriate that his dedicated service is recognized by the Naval Submarine League as the Distinguished Submariner for 2012.

Vice Admiral Patrick J Hannifin, USN (Ret) Comments
Naval Submarine League Distinguished Submariner – 2012
Falls Church, Virginia October 18, 2012

Thank you for the kind words, although I am reminded of an old journalist's remarks: "If you live long enough, first, you get accused of things you never did, and later, credited for virtues you never had."

Admirals, fellow submariners and distinguished guests, it is a sincere privilege to be here with you this evening.

My thanks to the naval submarine league for this distinct honor, quite a trip for a New Mexico kid (and former Horse Calvary Cadet) who had never even seen much water until showing up on the banks of the Severn in the summer of 1941. I am privileged to be considered with your previous selectees.

As one of the oldest in the room tonight, I'm already up past my bedtime – so I'll keep my remarks short...

I've now been "us navy (retired)" for about as long as I was on active duty and, while my retired life has been fulfilling

- Working with the Department of Energy;
- Running a capital campaign for my Episcopal Church in Del Mar;
- Rubbing shoulders for a few years with a surprisingly enjoyable & down-to-earth group of Hollywood personalities while working on the movie U-571 (thanks to my classmate George Ellis);
- Running a family-owned oil & gas business;

And for the past 12 years traveling the world with this beautiful lady, (point to Phyllis) Phyllis whittle.

But, since 1944, my passion has been the US Navy Submarine Service. While working for "the kindly old gentleman" ADM Rickover in 1957, I was selected for the nuclear power program. That singular event pretty much defined my navy career for the next 20 plus years.

Tonight, though I'd like to reflect on my earliest years as a naval officer (at least as I recall them some 60 to 70 years later). It was those WW-II years that were the crucible in which the solid foundation of today's submarine force was forged.

Does it really seem like it was a little over 70 years ago that a bunch of young men, many only teenagers took some old s-boats and a few newer fleet boats out to the pacific and defeated the Japanese empire?

Of course, we didn't do it "all by ourselves", we had some help from the marines, the army and the rest of the navy. But we did one hell of a job!

We sank well over half of their merchant fleet and almost a third of their navy. About 16,000 of us (less than 2% of the pacific fleet navy) accomplished that feat, making war patrols in about 260 boats.

And, we did a lot of things other than sinking ships, some of our boats performed special missions; delivering and evacuating personnel and delivering over 1300 tons of supplies.

Our boats on lifeguard duty rescued more than 500 airmen, including a future President of the United States George H W Bush.

All of these accomplishments came at an extraordinarily high cost, from the loss of Sealion at Cavite in the first few days the war, to the loss of Bullhead in the Java Sea in august of 1945.

Our submarine force experienced the highest per capita losses of any branch of our armed services.

Before Pearl Harbor, some of us were already in the navy, but most of us were not.

We answered the call from the big cities, from the small towns, from farms and ranches, from high schools and colleges. We were sons and brothers and husbands from families all across America. It was a very different America then; our purpose was crystal clear and the entire country was galvanized:

We had to defeat an enemy that threatened our world. We volunteered for submarines for many reasons, but mainly because it sounded exciting, and it seemed like a place where a young sailor or young officer would get a lot of experience and responsibility in a hurry, that it was! Some of us had never even seen salt water until the Navy showed it to us. And we sure didn't know what life in a submarine in wartime was really like. But we learned and we learned quickly!

We learned that our lives and the lives of our shipmates and survival of our boat depended on each of us knowing our job.

We learned confidence in ourselves and in our ability to do it right. We learned that we could depend on our shipmates and, more importantly, that they could depend on us.

We learned that, in time of emergency, our lives and the life of our submarine could be in the hands of a well-qualified shipmate in the right place, at the right time, taking the right action!

So we busted our butts to qualify as submariners and to earn those silver and gold dolphins. Sometimes it was by our own energy and drive and sometimes it was because some chief or more senior officer booted us in that butt, (for our own good, of course!)

Most of us were lucky, we had some good Skippers and some great Skippers and we had some Skippers who were both good and lucky! As Junior Officers, we worked for (or had friends who did) the Fluckeys, the Dealeys, the O'kanes, the Grenfells, the Stimsons, and the Ramages. All superb naval officers & extraordinary leaders!

They took us to war and with them, we fought and defeated the enemy and they brought most of us back home. After the war, they mentored and guided us as we emerged from the post WW-II drawdown into the Cold War and the Nuclear Age.

Today, almost 70 years later, some still refer to WW-II submarine veterans as heroes. But we were just the lucky ones. We left over 3,500 men and officers in 52 boats out there. Those 3,500 accounted for about 16% of submarine force's officer corps and 13% of our enlisted strength. They are the real heroes of the WW-II submarine force.

If you could ask them today, if they considered themselves heroes, they'd probably say: "Hell No! I was just doing my job. I was a submarine sailor, and damn proud of it!"

But we know differently, it was those sailors who did not come back, who are still on patrol, who were and will always be, the real heroes of the submarine force. We honor and remember them; we are justly proud of them. Most of the surviving WW-II submarine veterans are gone now; but they and their shipmates on eternal patrol forged a legacy of courage and of professionalism that has been carried forward by you younger submariners.

You who lead today's submarine force can trace your heredity directly to our WW-II submarine sailors. All of you were tutored and trained by these WW-II heroes and their immediate protégés. May their tradition of courage and honor always be hallmarks of our submarine force.

May god continue to bless them, our Submarine Service, and the United States of America!

Thank you.