



# HAMPTON ROADS BASE

## ≈ CURRENTS ≈



Website Address: <https://www.HRB-USSVI.org>

Facebook Address: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/USSVIHRB/groups/USSVIHRB/>

01 July 2023

Issue No: 2023-07

***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 about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today."***

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### From the Base Commander

Congratulations to all the graduates this summer and I wish you success in your next endeavor. A big "Thank You" to the SUBVET's of Hampton Roads on the successful induction of the USS ATLANTA (SSN 712) into the Submarine Hall of Fame. She joins the company of many others as an historical Submarine in the halls at the Submarine Learning Facility here in Norfolk. While at the induction ceremony we were treated by SYSCO with a great picnic lunch of barbeque, hamburgers, and hotdogs. Some of us even got to pilot a Virginia Class Dive Trainer using only joy sticks. The only thing I recognized were the Chicken Switches. We are looking forward to the July picnic and seeing more of our members. Keep in mind that the National Convention is in



Tucson this year and they have plenty of rooms left. Keep a Green Board!

V/r

YNCM(SS/SW/AW) Ted Vorce,  
USN,RET

[BaseCommander.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:BaseCommander.HRB@gmail.com)  
or [TVorce@Verizon.net](mailto:TVorce@Verizon.net)

#### Hampton Roads Base Newsletter "Currents"

Published monthly and distributed on or about the 10th of the month. All submissions for publication should be sent to the editor, Tony Ficca, by email: [Newsletter.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Newsletter.HRB@gmail.com) NLT the 1<sup>st</sup> weekend of the month.

Hampton Roads Base meetings are held at 11:15 hours, on the third Saturday of every month (except March) at FRA #60 located at 9601 1<sup>st</sup> View Street, Ocean View, Norfolk, VA



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**From the Base Senior Vice  
 Commander**

MMCS(SS/DV) Gary Galles, U.S.N.  
 (Ret.)



[Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com) or  
[GaryGalles@HotMail.com](mailto:GaryGalles@HotMail.com)

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**From the Base Junior Vice  
 Commander**

ETC(SS) Adam Kingsley, U.S.N. (Ret.)



[Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com)  
 or [tk593@AOL.com](mailto:tk593@AOL.com)

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**From the Base Secretary**

Here we are celebrating America , The Fourth of July and the beautiful Red White and blue colors and an eagle to protect them. I hope everyone has fun on the fourth and hopefully it'Ns not too hot. Enjoy the summer and please stay safe!!!!



Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

Lynn Merryman

[Secretary.HRBase@gmail.com](mailto:Secretary.HRBase@gmail.com)

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**From the Base Treasurer**

As has been previously report National raised the USSVI dues effective 4/1/2023. HRB dues are always 1/2 of National. The following is the updated dues table for your reference:



If you would like to make any payments (Donations, Base Sponsorships, Dues, etc.) to the base dues by Credit Card, please just send me an email to [treasurer.ussvi.hrb@gmail.com](mailto:treasurer.ussvi.hrb@gmail.com) and I can send you an invoice our Clover credit card pay app or just see me at the next Base Meeting. Also you can mail checks to: USSVI - Hampton Roads Base, C/O The UPS

HRB Currents, July 2023



Annual & Multi-Year Dues Table		
Effective 01-APR-2023		
USSVI National Dues	1 Year	\$ 30.00
	3 Years	\$ 85.00
	5 Years	\$ 140.00
Hampton Roads Base Dues (1/2 of National)	1 Year	\$ 15.00
	3 Years	\$ 42.50
	5 Years	\$ 70.00
National & HRB Dues	1 Year	\$ 45.00
	3 Years	\$ 127.50
	5 Years	\$ 210.00

Lifetime Dues Table		
Effective 01-APR-2023		
Based on your age at time Lifetime dues are paid (2-3 month grace period)		
USSVI National Dues	76+ Years	\$ 120.00
	66 -75 Years	\$ 240.00
	56 - 65 Years	\$ 360.00
	46 - 55 Years	\$ 500.00
	Up to 45 Years	\$ 600.00
Hampton Roads Base Dues (1/2 of National)	76+ Years	\$ 60.00
	66 -75 Years	\$ 120.00
	56 - 65 Years	\$ 180.00
	46 - 55 Years	\$ 250.00
	Up to 45 Years	\$ 300.00
National & HRB Dues	76+ Years	\$ 180.00
	66 -75 Years	\$ 360.00
	56 - 65 Years	\$ 540.00
	46 - 55 Years	\$ 750.00
	Up to 45 Years	\$ 900.00

Store, 1215 N. Military Hwy., Box #813, Norfolk, VA 23502

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

ET1(SS) John (Sid) Sidlovsky

[Treasurer.USSVI.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Treasurer.USSVI.HRB@gmail.com)  
 or [SidofVA@gmail.com](mailto:SidofVA@gmail.com)

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**From the Base Chaplain**

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).



IC1(SS) Art Nelson

[Chaplain.HRBase@gmail.com](mailto:Chaplain.HRBase@gmail.com)  
 or [ArtWorkWood@Yahoo.com](mailto:ArtWorkWood@Yahoo.com)

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**From the Base Storekeeper**

Hello from your Store Keeper,



Hope this finds everyone enjoying some nicer weather. I have some short sleeve shirts for sale and various submarine memorabilia at the monthly meetings. You can also look through the Store Keeper catalog and order various items of interest.

Remember to bring in your Submarine items that you no longer want to look at or dust and we can put those on the donation table. Looking forward to the picnic in July and I hope you are enjoying your family and friends.

Blessings,

YNCS(SW/AW) Fran Vorce, USN, Ret.

[USSVI.HRB.Storekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:USSVI.HRB.Storekeeper@gmail.com)  
or [francesvorce@gmail.com](mailto:francesvorce@gmail.com).

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**The CoB's Corner**

looking for Volunteers to work Pier arrival Burger Burns. Hope to have a schedule soon.



Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

MM1(SS) Gary Merryman U.S.N. (Ret.)  
[Gary2361@Yahoo.com](mailto:Gary2361@Yahoo.com)

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**From the Editor**

Hope everyone had a fabulous 4<sup>th</sup> of July this year. Looking forward our base picnic next month.



MS2(SS) Tony Ficca U.S.N.

Any questions or contribution to the newsletter should be sent to the following email address

[Newsletter.hrb@gmail.com](mailto:Newsletter.hrb@gmail.com)

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**Membership**

Membership drive is a 365-day job. Membership renewals should be done before the end of the year. It makes Sid and Lynn's job easier. Please renew your dues now and consider life membership, then you never have to worry about it again. Thank you.

- # Members: 279
- # with E-mail: 261
- # Owe National Dues: 58
- # Owe Base Dues: 72



- # Regular Annual: 74
- # USSVI Life Members: 183
- # Base Life Members: 172
- # Holland Club: 129
- # Reg Associate: 10
- # Life Associate: 2
- # Charter Members: 0
- # Senior Members: 0
- # War Veterans: 249

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

MMCS(SS/DV) Gary Galles, U.S.N. (Ret.)  
[Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com) or  
[GaryGalles@HotMail.com](mailto:GaryGalles@HotMail.com)

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**Ways & Means**

As always, we're on the lookout for ideas for Base fundraising opportunities. You can present them to the Base leadership or contact me directly at any time.

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

ETC(SS) Adam Kingsley, U.S.N. (Ret.)  
[Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com)  
or [tk593@AOL.com](mailto:tk593@AOL.com)

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**Upcoming Picnic information**

The August meeting will be our picnic. Tickets will be on sale starting at this month's meeting. We will need to give the caterer a head count at the end of our July meeting. The cost of tickets is \$5 each.

We will be having pulled pork, pulled chicken, hamburgers and hot dogs. The fixings will be provided.

If you have any questions please contact Beverly Galles at 252-562-3534 or [bgalles9@yahoo.com](mailto:bgalles9@yahoo.com)





**Hampton Roads Base**  
**United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.**  
*"To Perpetuate the Memory of our Shipmates, who gave their lives  
in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country."*

We are a fraternal organization of Submarine Veterans.  
We are open to and welcome any and all who have qualified to wear dolphins.  
Contact us by email at [USSVI.HRB.Secretary@gmail.com](mailto:USSVI.HRB.Secretary@gmail.com) with any questions  
and come visit our website at <https://www.hrb-ussvi.org>

Join us for our monthly meeting at 11:15 hours, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of every month  
(except March). We meet at FRA #50 in Ocean View, 9601 1<sup>st</sup> View Street,  
Norfolk, VA 23503-1603 (the corner of 1<sup>st</sup> View St. & Balview Ave. and across  
'A' View Ave. from the Post Office).  
**We look forward to meeting you at a meeting.**

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**[Submarine Memorial and Hall of Fame](#)**

Congratulations to our winner of HOF Boat

USS ATLANTA (SSN 712), in commissioned service from 1982 to 1999, and was nominated by Bill Heron.

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**[About The Base Website and Social Media](#)**

The web address for the Base website is:

<https://www.hrb-ussvi.org/>.

Note that the ‘members only’ area is currently being revised for new content. New Base members (or previous Base members who now wish to gain access to the ‘members only’ area) should take the following steps for access:”

1. Click on “Login” at the top right of the website pages.
2. Once selected look for blue lettering and
3. Select Sign up to create your account.

**Note:**

When entering your email address during account creation, please enter the same email address you used when joining the Hampton Roads Base. (If your email address has changed, please contact the Base Secretary, Lynn Merryman, to update your email in the Base roster BEFORE applying for or creating your account.)

Also of Note: The USSVI National website, while still under construction in some areas, is now open.



You should have received a member-specific email recently detailing how to gain and maintain access to the site. Check your email for this important information from USSVI National.

The Website may be found at:

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

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

STS1(SS) Sam Stevens, U.S.N. (Ret.)

[HRB.USSVI@gmail.com](mailto:HRB.USSVI@gmail.com)

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**[Holland Club News](#)**

EMCM(SS) William (Bill) Heron, U.S.N. (Ret.)

[Bill.Heron1@Verizon.net](mailto:Bill.Heron1@Verizon.net)

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**[Emergency Relief Fund](#)**

Submarine Brothers, Submarine Sisters, and other associated members of Submarine Veterans Hampton Roads Base, the Base Emergency Relief Fund was created to help base members in need without having to wait for the next base meeting. This will also, allow the member in need to discreetly reach out to one of the following members: Craig Dudley on my Cell (757-618-5624), EM2(SS) Paul Schmidt (Cell: 757-481-1297), or HMCS(SS) Jack Ritz (Cell: 757-647-4669), or contact our Base Secretary, Lynn Merryman (Cell: 757-354-7259). Then the members can talk about the issue privately and vote to approve or reject and once approved reach out to the Base Treasurer to get the funds released.

There is a designated ERF donation container at each of our meetings. All funds donated are kept separate from other Base Funds.

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).

MM1(SS) Craig S. Dudley

[ERF.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:ERF.HRB@gmail.com) or  
[CraigD.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:CraigD.HRB@gmail.com)

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*The USS SCORPION Memorial*



BE IT RESOLVED THAT A COMMITTEE WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO CONDUCT AN ANNUAL MEMORIAL TO COMMEMORATE THE LOSS OF USS SCORPION (SSN 589)

I proposed this resolution in preparation for the 50th USS SCORPION Memorial to establish the USS Scorpion Memorial Committee and volunteered for the past 11 years as the chairman, but I now find that I am unable to continue as the Chairman.

We had excellent support for the 50th Scorpion Memorial in 2018 and recently at the 55th Memorial. Due to age and distance, the majority of the surviving families have decided that they would like to have Memorials on the five-year anniversary years.

The Base involvement is primarily as a coordinator in communicating between the families, the Submarine Force and the Knights of Columbus and there has been no cost to the base.

I am soliciting the membership for a relief and will share all the information I have collected with them.

Any questions should be sent to me by email (below).CWO4 John Donaldson, U.S.N. (Ret.)

[John.Donaldson@Earthlink.net](mailto:John.Donaldson@Earthlink.net)

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**We remember....**



*Boats Lost in July*

**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 of the Aleutian Island of Kiska.

**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 was last known to be. The exact cause of her loss remains a mystery. The remains of S-28 were located off the coast of Hawaii in December of 2017.

**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 RUNNER (SS-275)

Lost between June 26 and July 4, 1943, with the loss of 78 men. Runner was on her third war patrol and probably was lost due to a mine. Prior to her loss, she reported sinking a freighter and a passenger-cargoman off the Kuriles. This boat's last known ship sinking happened on June 26th, so she probably hit that mine on or after that date but before July 4th, when she was scheduled back at Midway.

*They shall not grow old as we who are left behind  
grow old.*

*Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn  
them.*

*From the rising of the sun in the morning, until  
it's rising again the following morning,*

***WE WILL REMEMBER THEM,***

***FOREVER.***

### *Note of Thanks from our Shipmate*



Thank you to all the members of the Base for their support and good wishes for my speedy recovery.

A special thank you for the Get Well Cards and to all who signed them, I appreciate them and think they are great.

Naomi and I both are thankful for the support.

*~ Stay Safe & Stay Well ~*

EMCS(SS) Craig S. Werner, U.S.N. (Ret.)

[GrumpyOldSquid@gmail.com](mailto:GrumpyOldSquid@gmail.com)

### *HRB Members with July Birthdays*

(If I've gotten your birthday wrong, or missed it, please let me know.)

- 03: Bradley Matters
- 04: Gregg Weber
- 05: David Duffié
- 08: David Carney
- 09: John Sidlovsky
- 11: Larry Ward
- 12: Nate Mewhinney
- 14: Rick Perez
- 15: George Vest
- 16: Craig Faubion
- 17: Mark Waddell
- 20: Eric Kellgren
- 22: Doug Roberts
- 23: Jason Melton
- 24: Chris Fairbanks
- 25: Gary Stephenson
- 26: Andrew Smith
- 27: Brian Daugherty
- 27: James Mattox
- 29: Lynn Merryman
- 30: Paul Rice



## **Base Officers & Key Personnel**

(Remember: you must dial all 10 digits when contacting by phone)

### **Base Commander:**

Ted Vorce  
757-376-2458

[BaseCommander.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:BaseCommander.HRB@gmail.com)  
or [TVorce@Verizon.net](mailto:TVorce@Verizon.net)

### **Base Senior Vice Commander & Membership Committee Chair & Scholarship Committee Chair:**

Gary Galles  
757-714-2733

[Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Senior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com) or  
[GaryGalles@HotMail.com](mailto:GaryGalles@HotMail.com)

### **Base Junior Vice Commander & Ways and Means Committee Chair & Events Committee Chair:**

Adam Kingsley  
757-535-4179

[Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Junior.Vice.HRB@gmail.com)  
or [tk593@AOL.com](mailto:tk593@AOL.com)

### **Base Secretary &**

### **Public Relations and Publicity Committee Chair:**

Lynn Merryman  
757-354-7259

[Secretary.HRBase@gmail.com](mailto:Secretary.HRBase@gmail.com)

### **Base Treasurer:**

John (Sid) Sidlovsky  
757-328-9796

[Treasurer.USSVI.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:Treasurer.USSVI.HRB@gmail.com)  
or [SidofVA@gmail.com](mailto:SidofVA@gmail.com)

### **Base CoB:**

Gary Merryman U.S.N. (Ret.)  
757-968-6708

[Gary2361@Yahoo.com](mailto:Gary2361@Yahoo.com)

### **Base Chaplain:**

Art Nelson  
804-920-6820

[Chaplain.HRBase@gmail.com](mailto:Chaplain.HRBase@gmail.com)  
or [ArtWorkWood@Yahoo.com](mailto:ArtWorkWood@Yahoo.com)

### **Base Storekeeper:**

Fran Vorce  
757-376-2459

[USSVI.HRB.Storekeeper@gmail.com](mailto:USSVI.HRB.Storekeeper@gmail.com)

### **Social Media Coordinator & Webmaster:**

Sam Stevens  
757-814-7976

[SStvns7@gmail.com](mailto:SStvns7@gmail.com) or  
[HRB.USSVI@gmail.com](mailto:HRB.USSVI@gmail.com)

### **Holland Club Chairman:**

William (Bill) Heron  
757-886-0913

[Bill.Heron1@Verizon.net](mailto:Bill.Heron1@Verizon.net)

### **Base Historian:**

Paul R. Schmidt  
757-572-2711

[TheBakerPaul@gmail.com](mailto:TheBakerPaul@gmail.com)

### **Newsletter Editor**

Tony Ficca  
757-646-1152

[Newsletter.hrb@gmail.com](mailto:Newsletter.hrb@gmail.com)

### **Submarine Memorial &**

### **Hall of Fame Committee Chair**

Ken Swan  
413-923-4030

[Kenneth.A.Swan@gmail.com](mailto:Kenneth.A.Swan@gmail.com)

### **Kap(SS)4Kid(SS) Coordinator:**

John (Sid) Sidlovsky  
757-328-9796

[SidofVA@gmail.com](mailto:SidofVA@gmail.com)

### **Base Emergency Relief Chair:**

Craig Dudley  
757- 618-5624

[ERF.HRB@gmail.com](mailto:ERF.HRB@gmail.com) or  
[CraigD.HRBase@gmail.com](mailto:CraigD.HRBase@gmail.com)

### **SCORPION Memorial Committee Chair**

John Donaldson  
757-270-0205

[John.Donaldson@Earthlink.net](mailto:John.Donaldson@Earthlink.net)

### **NORFOLK Sail Committee Chair**

Gary Merryman U.S.N. (Ret.)  
757-274-9322

[Gary2361@Yahoo.com](mailto:Gary2361@Yahoo.com)

### **Nominating Committee Chair:**

Brian Daugherty (Immediate Past Base Commander)  
757-409-8560

[BDaugherty7@Verizon.net](mailto:BDaugherty7@Verizon.net)

### **Hampton Roads Base Snail Mail Address:**

US Submarine Veterans, Inc.  
Hampton Roads Base  
1215 N Military Hwy, Box 813  
Norfolk, VA 23502-2228



*Some pictures from the HOF Induction of the USS Atlanta SSN 712*







## 4 generations in the U.S. Navy: This Hampton family has seen 100 years of submarine history



Kendall Warner/The Virginian-Pilot/TNS

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### Caitlyn Burchett, The Virginian-Pilot

Sat, July 8, 2023 at 12:12 PM EDT · 6 min read

The grooves of the Will family’s gold-plated dolphins have tarnished. But the submarine warfare insignia, having been pinned to the chests of four generations, shines nonetheless.

The dolphins have been handed down from Will to Will for 100 years, bearing witness to major conflicts and events — World War II, the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Iraq War — and the U.S. Navy’s shift from diesel ships to nuclear powered warfighters. That century of Naval submarine history is mapped out on walls of the family’s Buckroe home in Hampton.

“This is submarine history, but it is our history too,” said Alex Will, a retired captain and third-generation submariner.



Alex was pinned with the dolphins in 1988 when he was 26. The insignia, which is given to qualified submariners, belonged to his father and his father's father.

More than three decades later, those same dolphins belong to his son. Adam Will, 27, was pinned in May 2021 while assigned to the [Norfolk-based USS Washington](#), a Virginia-class fast attack submarine. Although the Navy can't confirm it, Adam may be the only fourth-generation submariner.

"It is a very special feeling," Adam said. "When I look at the photos at home, and see what my great-grandfather, my grandfather and my dad have done, it is admirable. But I don't think of it as continuing a legacy — I am just doing my job."

Engraved on the back of the dolphins is the name of the first Will to join the silent service. John Will Sr. was one of the Navy's first submarine officers in the years before World War II, with his commissioning dating to 1923. He commanded three diesel S-class submarines and the fleet submarine Porpoise before World War II.

"Four generations, in any profession is noteworthy, particularly when that service is so important to our nation's defense," Alex said. "In my grandfather's day — World War II — submarines were critical to the outcome of that war, they were vital to winning the Cold War, and are arguably the most essential weapon system in these times of strategic competition."

John Mylin Will Sr. also commanded submarine divisions in the Pacific and Military Sealift Command, achieving the rank of vice admiral. Upon his retirement in 1959, he received a "tombstone promotion," and retired as a 4-star admiral. He died in 1981.

The second Will was the late Capt. John Will Jr., Adam's grandfather. John Will Jr. began his Naval career in 1953 as the Navy was on the cusp of introducing nuclear-powered propulsion.

"My dad wanted to go to the Naval Academy. As a kid, he moved around with his mom and dad so much that he went to 28 schools growing up. He wrote an essay about wanting to be a midshipman in the U.S. Naval Academy and he turned it in every time he changed schools," Alex said with a laugh.

John Will Jr. first worked on two destroyers and later entered the nuclear training program to transfer to submarines.

In 1989, John Will Jr. told *The Beacon*: "I know I'm prejudiced, but I feel the nuclear submarine fleet is the current backbone of the Navy ... Not to take anything away from carriers or battle groups, but I think subs are slowly growing in prominence."

John Will Jr. went on to be the first commanding officer of the USS Puffer (SSN 652), putting it in commission in 1968. He then served the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as head of submarine research and development and returned to the Pentagon as a military advisor to the Department of Defense's Office of Naval Warfare.

"We are all submariners but it is an interesting distinction because my great-grandfather was a diesel boat guy, but in the '50s my grandfather shifted and spent his entire career as a nuclear officer." Adam said. "And then my dad and I followed that directional shift and became nuclear officers."

In 1985, Alex Will was commissioned as an officer and assigned to fast attack submarine USS *Silversides*, continuing what was affectionately dubbed "a family tradition." Alex served aboard the Norfolk-based submarine for three years before completing two years of shore duty and transitioning to the Navy Reserve. He retired as a captain in 2016 after a 30-year career.



While Alex left the active duty force, he still worked closely with submarines. He spent many years in the SSGN Program Office, overseeing the conversion of the capabilities of four Ohio-Class guided-missile submarines from launching nuclear missiles to launching guided missiles.

The Wills, Alex said, have always been drawn to subsurface warfare.

“It seems our family has always been connected to the submarine force in some way, shape or form,” Alex said. “Even my oldest brother, he is an engineer, he works on acoustic programs. That is very important to the submarine force because our eyes and ears down there are the acoustics. There are no windows. Listening is all you’ve got.”

Even so, it came as a surprise to him when his son asked about pursuing a Navy Reserve Officers Training Corps scholarship before heading to the University of Virginia in 2014. The program offers college tuition to qualifying students who sign on to be commissioned as a Navy officer upon graduation.

“We have never pushed the military to our boys,” Alex said. “It was my thing, and it was my dad’s thing. But we never said, ‘Hey, why don’t you go into the military?’”

“So when Adam was applying to colleges and writing essays, he said he might go for an ROTC scholarship, and we were like, ‘Where did that come from?’ Joining the military had not been uttered by him up until that point.”

Adam graduated from UVA in 2018 and went through two years of intensive nuclear training before he was commissioned in 2020. He was pinned with his dolphins in 2021.

“The Washington has a colloquial name — the Blackfish — and when we get pinned underway, we get pinned with black fish (dolphins), instead of silver or gold,” Adam said. “But because I was pinned with my great-grandfather’s dolphins, I was the only one with gold dolphins.”

Adam was attached to the Washington for three years, and estimates he spent more than half of that time submerged.

“But the camaraderie you gain down there is ...” Adam began. “It’s like 140 guys cooped up. Everyone comes from different backgrounds — not one person looks like the other. So, being able to understand where people come from, what their strengths are, what their weaknesses are, and be able to build a cohesive team, it’s a pretty incredible thing.”

Adam concluded his first sea tour aboard the Washington in March, and is now assigned to U.S. Submarine Forces Atlantic.

As for whether or not the Will family legacy will continue for a fifth generation, Adam said virtually the same thing his father told The Beacon in 1989.

“I am single so I have not really thought about it. But if my future son or daughter wants to be a submariner, they will have my full support.”

Caitlyn Burchett, [caitlyn.burchett@virginiamedia.com](mailto:caitlyn.burchett@virginiamedia.com)

