



USSVI Thresher Base News



June 2008

Michael C. Geletka on Eternal Patrol



Michael C. Geletka, 87, of Sanford Road Wells, died Saturday, May 10 at Gosnell Memorial Hospice House in Scarborough following a long battle with cancer.

Michael was born Jan. 8, 1921 in Cleveland, Ohio a son of John and Mary (Matis) Geletka. He joined the United States Navy in 1937 serving on submarines during WW II and the remainder of his 21 years in the Navy. On July 20, 1940 he married his sweetheart, Phyllis Montgomery. After retiring from the Navy in 1957,

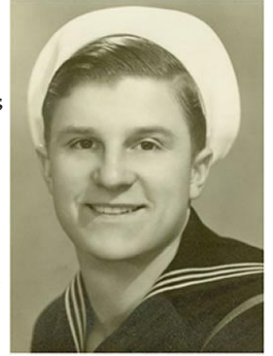
he earned his degree at Boston University. He became a Snap-On Tool Dealer for 20 years before retiring for the second time.

Michael was a member and busy with the Ocean Lodge of Masons, Scottish Rites, and Kora Shrine. He was the Memorabilia Director for the US Submarine Veterans, WW II and attended the International Submarine Association Conventions. He also enjoyed hunting and cutting and stacking firewood.

Michael was predeceased by his brother and two sisters. He is survived by his loving wife of nearly 68 years, Phyllis; son, Richard C. Geletka and his wife Gayle of Wells, his daughter, Charlotte Lee Brown and her husband Michael of Norcross, Ga; four grandchildren, R. Kurtiss, Kara Lee, Timo-

thy, and Abbey; two great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews.

Visitation was held on Tuesday, May 13 from 6-8 p.m. at Bibber Memorial Chapel, 111 Chapel Road, Wells. A Masonic Service was held at 7:30 p.m. in Michael's honor. Arrangements were in care of Bibber Memorial Chapel. www.bibberfuneral.com



In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Ocean Lodge #142, P.O. Box 142, Wells, ME 04090-0142

45th USS Thresher Memorial Service

The 45th anniversary memorial service of the loss of the USS Thresher was held on April 12, 2008. This year's service was held in Kittery at the R.W. Traip Academy. To mark this 45th anniversary, a number of new aspects were added along with the inclusion of family members and former crew in the ceremony.

The welcoming address was given by Captain Robert Mazzone, Commander, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. His welcoming statement was followed by three guest speakers. The first speaker was William Olsen, former crew member, who shared his thoughts on how the tragedy impacted him. He


was followed by Rear Admiral Kevin M. McCoy, Chief Engineer, Naval Systems Engineering Directorate, Naval Sea Systems Command.

The final speaker was Lori Arsenault, daughter of ENCA(SS) Tilmon Arsenault, who spoke about the importance

of family. Following her speech, Lori performed the Navy Hymn.

This set the stage for the somber Tolling of the Bells for the 129 men who lost their lives on April 9, 1963. While Kevin Galeaz, USSVI Thresher Base and John Cook, former crew



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45th USS Thresher Memorial Service *(continued from page 1)*

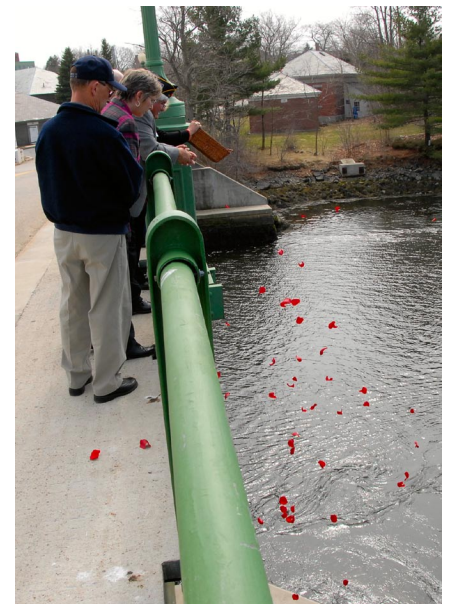
member, read the names and David Harvey, former crew member, tolled the bell, the melodic sounds of a

bagpipe, played by Patrick Boyle, could be heard in the distance. After Chaplain Lt Robert D. Johnson's Benediction, the service continued down at the waterfront. As those in attendance made their way to the waterfront, long-

stemmed red roses were passed out to all female family and wives. Each person was asked to place a single rose petal in a basket, so they could be released into the water with the wreath.

At the water's edge, Lt. Johnson led us in a prayer which was followed by a gun salute from the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Rifle Team. While the wreath was being prepared, Mr. Jay Daly played taps. Mr. Mark Gauthier, nephew

of EM2(SS) Richard William Jones had the opportunity to release the wreath off the shipyard bridge while his wife released the rose petals collected from the female family members. The rose petals added a dramatic effect as they floated down the river with the wreath. Piper Boyle concluded the ceremony with the Navy Hymn.



The most recent graduating class from Sub School, Groton, Ct was named after the Thresher and they travelled to Kittery, Me to attend the service.

Billy Gagner, a 6th grader at Nobel VI, Berwick, ME, seen here with his father Russell Gagner, won a state-wide award for his Maine History Project on the USS Thresher. He contacted Thresher Base and asked if he could set up his display at the 45th Memorial Service. His display was well received by all who attended. Billy will be attending the National History Day Competition at the University of Maryland from June 15 to 19.



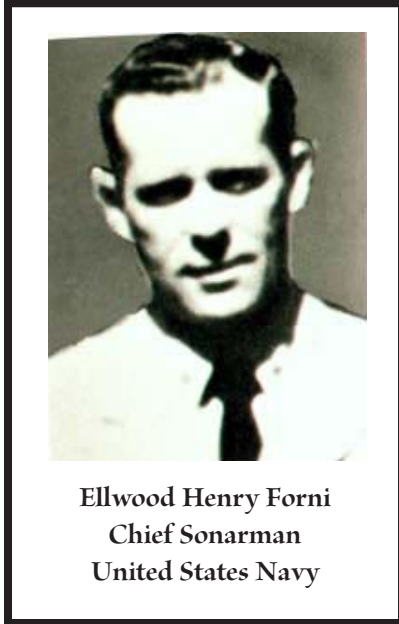


To Perpetuate the Memory



Ellwood Henry Forni was born on October 28, 1928, in Baltimore, Md. He attended local public schools there, and enlisted in the Navy on May 21, 1948. During his recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill., he volunteered for submarine duty and reported to the Submarine School at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, New London, Conn., in August, 1948.

Successfully completing the course of instruction, he was assigned to his first Submarine, the U.S.S. Sennett (SS 408). It was while



Ellwood Henry Forni
Chief Sonarman
United States Navy

...serving in Sennett that Ellwood became qualified as a submariner and received his silver dolphins. He then attended the Navy's Fleet Sonar School at Key West, Fla., and after graduation, he was assigned to the U.S.S. Sea Cat (SS 399).

Service in the submarines U.S.S. Quillback (SS 424), U.S.S. Guavina (SS 362) and U.S.S. Sea Poacher (SS 406), followed until October, 1959. He was then selected for training at the Guided Missile School, Dan Neck, Va.

After this training, Ellwood was assigned to the nuclear-powered submarine

U.S.S. Tullibee (SSN 597), where he received a letter of commendation from the commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, for his outstanding assistance and performance of duty during the "inservice trials" of the U.S.S. Tullibee.

He had also earned the Navy's Good Conduct Medal with four stars; National Defense Service Medal, a letter of commendation from the commanding officer of the U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593) and a letter of commendation from the commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet.

On August 4, 1961, Ellwood was assigned to the U.S.S. Thresher.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Mildred M. Forni of Mystic, Connecticut; his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edmund F. Forni, Sr., and a brother, Edmund, Jr., all of Pikesville, Maryland.

Raymond Peter Foti was born on May 6, 1939, in Rochester, N.Y., the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Foti. The family moved to Webster, N.Y., where Raymond attended and was graduated from Holy Trinity Parochial School. He attended St. Thomas Aquinas High School in Rochester, for 2 years, standing first, scholastically, in a class of 400. As an honor student he was a member of the St. Thomas Aquinas Honor Club. Raymond returned to Webster High School from which he was graduated.

After high school he attended the University of Rochester for a short time, and was employed by the Eastman Kodak Co., prior to enlisting in the Navy on August 26, 1958.

Raymond completed his basic training, and attended the Navy's Electronics Technician School at the U.S. Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, Ill. He volunteered for submarine duty and upon being accepted he was enrolled

...in the Submarine School at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, New London, Conn. He successfully completed the course of instruction and was assigned to his first submarine, the U.S.S. Medregal (SS 480). It was while serving in the Medregal that Raymond became qualified as a submariner and was awarded his silver dolphins.

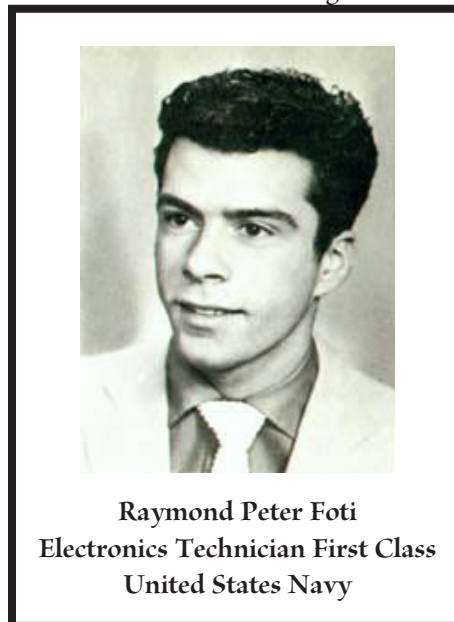
He was selected for advance training in nuclear power, and attended the school at the Nuclear Power Training Unit at Windsor Locks, and at the submarine base, New London, Conn.

On November 29, 1961, Raymond

...was assigned to the nuclear-powered submarine U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593), as a member of her crew. During his naval service, Raymond had earned the Navy's Good Conduct Medal.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Frances Dora Foti; a son, Anthony; and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Foti of Webster, N.Y. He also leaves three

brothers, Frederick, William and Robert Foti also of Webster.



Raymond Peter Foti
Electronics Technician First Class
United States Navy



May Meeting Minutes

The May 2008 meeting was held at the VFW on Saturday, May 17, 2008. It was called to order followed by a prayer and pledge of allegiance. The Tolling of the Bell was conducted for boats lost in May and June followed by a sound off of all present. The meeting went well, although attendance was few. The Thresher Service was discussed and some lessons learned. It was decided to approve Kevin Galeaz's recommendation to continue the Thresher Memorial Service each year until the 50th. We

will then revisit the five-year interval between services after the 50th.

We approved \$200.00 for Traip Academy Seniors and \$100.00 for the student with the Thresher Display. Gary Hildreth will deliver both checks on behalf of Thresher base.

Since our only way to raise money is from membership dues and the few donations that come in, it was decided to have a "fish bowl" at the 46th - 49th Memorial service soliciting any donations for the 50th.

As a reminder, Mrs. Mary Lee Coe Fowler, daughter of LCDR James "Red" Coe, Commanding Officer USS CISCO (lost in WW II) will attend our July meeting as our guest speaker. She will speak on her book "Full Fathom Five: A Daughter's Search."

As a fund raiser Larry Oiler donated a wooden model of a Virginia Class submarine to be raffled off at the July meeting. The cost of the tickets are: \$2.00 each, 3 for \$5.00, or 7 for \$10.00 .

Memorial Day Ceremony at Albacore Park



Combined WWII SubVets & Thresher Base Meeting & Lobster Fest

Saturday, July 19, 2008 @ 1200

American Legion Post #70

Raymond D. Walton Road

Seabrook, NH

Menu Options & Cost

Single lobster, steamed clams, chowder & corn on the cob for \$20 p/p.

- or -

Double lobsters, steamed clams, chowder & corn on the cob for \$25 p/p.

- or -

Steak with baked potato for \$20 p/p.

Invitation List

U.S. SUBVETS WWII, Associates, Wives and Guests.

USSVI SUBVETS, Wives and Guests.

Reservations

Reservations are required by July 12.

Mail check (USSVI Thresher Base) with menu selection to:

Kevin Galeaz

1465 Hooksett Road #239 • Hooksett, NH 03106

603.268.0420 • webmaster@thresherbase.org

Directions

Take Rt. 95 to NH Exit 1, Rt. 107 East. Proceed to Rt. 1, and turn right heading South. Continue to Traffic Circle completing 3/4 of the circle. Turn right onto Walton Rd. and proceed for ~ 1/2 mile. The Raymond D. Walton American Legion Post #70 is located on the left. If you need more directions call the American Legion at 603.474.8387

THRESHER Base
United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.
c/o Kevin Galeaz
1465 Hooksett Road #239
Hooksett, NH 03106

**Next Thresher Base Meeting
Saturday, July 19, 2008 @ 1200
American Legion Post #70 • Seabrook, NH**



USSVI Thresher Base

USSVI Thresher Base was chartered on 15 November 1989 in the memory of those 129 gallant men who at 9:17 AM on 10 April 1963 lost their lives in the performance of their duties aboard USS THRESHER (SSN 593).

Our mission 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 Government."

The base newsletter, *Thresher Base News*, and base website, www.thresherbase.org, are used to inform the membership and community about meeting happenings and upcoming events. Any member who has information to share with the membership is encouraged to submit articles to the editor for publishing. Send submissions to Kevin Galeaz, Editor, 1465 Hooksett Road #239, Hooksett, NH 03106 or webmaster@thresherbase.org.

USSVI Conventions

**2008
Fort Worth, TX**

**2009
San Diego, CA**

**2010
Cincinnati, OH-
Covington, KY**