



# USSVI Thresher Base News



May 2011

## Families and Friends Mark Anniversary of USS Thresher Sinking

By Jennifer Feal, Seacoastonline.com

KITTERY, Maine — For Lori Arsenault, who was just eight years old when her father, Tilmon Arsenault, died as the USS Thresher sank in 1963, there's a responsibility to keep the submarine's story alive and to honor the lives of her father and his 128 crew members.

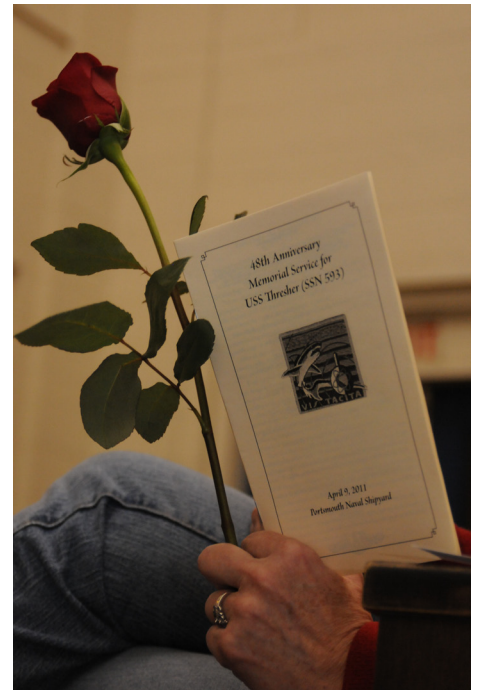
Forty-eight years ago today, April 10, Thresher, a nuclear-powered attack submarine built at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard and commissioned in 1961, was lost about 100 miles east of Cape Cod while conducting sea trials. On board were 16 officers, 96 enlisted men and 17 civilian technicians. The tragedy was remembered Saturday as family and friends of the crew, officers and others gathered at the shipyard, where bells were tolled for all 129 men and a wreath was laid at the water's edge.

"It's a responsibility for us, an obligation for us, to honor their memories because the lessons learned are being put to good use, but we risk forgetting why we're doing them and then they lose their meaning," said Arsenault, of Gorham, who performed the national anthem and Navy Hymn alongside her sister, Debra (Arsenault) Henderson, at the ceremony. "It's important that as long as I live I help them remember, help all of us remember."

Following Thresher's loss, a massive program was undertaken to correct design and construction problems on the Navy's existing nuclear submarines, those under construction and in planning. The Submarine Safety Program was established to assure implementation of technical and administrative requirements to assure seawater is kept out of the submarine and that the sub and crew can recover if there is a seawater casualty.

"There's not a day that passes that we don't work a little harder, just a little smarter, to ensure our work is of the highest quality to keep them safe," said Capt. L. Bryant Fuller, commander of the shipyard, of those who serve in

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## March 2011 Minutes

The May meeting of Thresher Base was held at Newick's Restaurant in Dover on March 19. The meeting was called to order followed by a silent prayer and pledge of allegiance. The Tolling of the Bells was conducted for those boats lost in March and April. A silent prayer was said for those on eternal patrol.

A sound off of those present was conducted - There were 18 veterans and 9 spouses.

**Secretary's Report** - The minutes from the January 2011 meeting were read and approved.

**Treasurer's Report** -  
balance on 1/15/11           \$3381.98  
deposits                       +\$2324.65  
payments                      -\$1492.74  
balance on 3/19/11         \$4213.89  
The USS Thresher Memorial Fund balance is \$3566.07. All dues were due

by the end of January.

The base has 106 members with approximately 85% having email.

### USS Thresher Memorial Service -

- Due to a conflict at Traip Academy the service will be held on the Shipyard.
- Everything is all set
- Vice Admiral Emery is the keynote speaker.
- Carol Norton, daughter of Fred Abrams will be the family speaker.
- Tolling of Bell Readers will be Kevin Galeaz and John Riemenschneider with Bob Flannery tolling the bell.
- Scott McCord, son of Donald McCord and his 2 children will throw the wreath.
- Cars will be available for older at-

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## Meeting Minutes *(continued from page 1)*

tendees to get to the waterfront.

- To make security easier, please give your name to Kevin Galeaz if you plan on attending.

### New Business -

- Kevin Galeaz is looking into setting up a Facebook page to seek out USS Thresher family members.
- Tom Young informed the membership that if you have 2 addresses in the National database, that you need to select 1 or put in specific months when to send mail to each address.
- Submarine Birthday Balls:
  - April 15 - NH
  - April 16 - Groton Base
- Sailor of Year - thank you notes. This receives national coverage. Approve to give \$50.
- Renewing Boat Sponsorship -USS Hampton.
- Maine Maritime Museum exhibit titled "Cold Waters, Cold War" will run from February to August 2011. Gary Hildreth has agreed to speak at

a special event in May. The shipyard museum has given many items.

- Return to Sub School, Groton, CT, will be held May 5-7.
- Jack McNally is in a rehabilitation facility, but hopes to be sent home in 4-5 days.
- Charlie Manes told the group about a concert tonight at 7 in Plaistow performed by the Navy band.
- Bill Seaward told the group that John Maier was hired as Albacore Park's new manager. He has previous non-profit experience from working at Strawberry Banke. Gary Hildreth will be meeting with him soon to discuss Memorial Day arrangements.
- Memorial Day Ceremony is at 10:00 at Albacore Park.

- Lori Arsenault will be speaking on April 8th at the Naval Sea System Command Thresher Services in Washington, D.C. She will be back in time for our service on April 9.
- Larry Oiler continues to offer driving assistance to base meetings to those members in the Rochester area who need transportation.
- Our new Chief of the Boat is Bob Flannery.
- The next meeting will be held at Flag Hill Winery at 11:00 due to a conflict with UNH Graduation luncheon.
- The meeting was adjourned to have lunch.

### Boats Lost in March and April

- USS Perch (SS-176)
- USS Grampus (SS-207)
- USS H-1 (SS-28)
- USS Triton (SS-201)
- USS Kete (SS-369)
- USS F-4 (SS-23)
- USS Tullibee (SS-284)
- USS Trigger (SS-237)
- USS Pickerel (SS-177)
- USS Snook (SS-279)
- USS Gudgeon (SS-211)
- USS Grenadier (SS-210)
- USS Thresher (SSN-593)





## 48th USS Thresher Memorial Service



### Families and Friends Mark Anniversary of USS Thresher Sinking (continued from page 1)

the submarine force. "It's a hallmark of excellence, an admiration of the fleet and a testament to those who gave their lives."

Carol Norton's father, Fred Philip Abrams, returned from 38 months of service in the U.S. Army to take a position at the shipyard, moving up the ranks to civilian inspector when he worked on Thresher. Norton, born and raised in Kittery, said her father went on many sea trials and always came home. But she remembers playing outside after school April 10, 1963, with her brother Jim as their mother walked toward them.

"The look on her face told the story. The words she spoke did not seem real, surely this was a dream and we would wake up soon," she said. "With every single day, hope for the 129 men on Thresher faded. We were alone and the most important person in our

lives was gone forever. The memories have sustained us."

While families of 26 Thresher crew members attended Saturday, The Thresher Base, U.S. Submarine Veterans, Inc., hopes to reach the families of all 129 crew members to attend the

50th anniversary memorial service in 2013. "There is no better way to perpetuate the memory of those lost than through family members," said Kevin Galeaz, Thresher Base senior vice commander.





# 48th USS Thresher Memorial Service





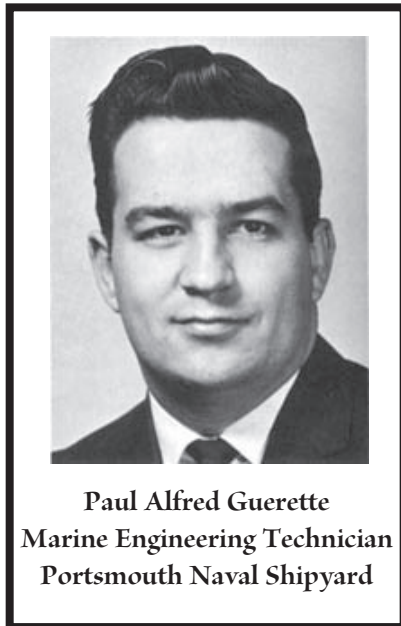
## To Perpetuate the Memory



Paul Alfred Guerette was born on February 27, 1939, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Guerette of Nashua, N.H. He attended local schools in Nashua, and was graduated from Nashua High School in 1957.

Inclined toward mathematics and talented as well in engineering subjects, Paul received early recognition in the form of an award from the Gilbert Co., for a model he built

from an erector set, at age 11 years.



**Paul Alfred Guerette**  
Marine Engineering Technician  
Portsmouth Naval Shipyard

Upon graduating from high school he won a scholarship from the General Electric Corp. plant in Somersworth, N.H. After a year at the University of New Hampshire, he joined the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in July 1958, as an apprentice marine machinist. His high examination marks resulted in his immediate transfer to the Design Division as a draftsman.

He participated in evening courses of

instruction by the University of New Hampshire in the study of calculus, statistics, dynamics, and thermodynamics.

Paul was a member of Saint Patrick's Parish in Nashua, and a member of the Holy Name Society. Active in sports, Paul was a better-than-average golfer, and member of the Twilight League at the Portsmouth Country Club. He was also one of eight students who participated in the shipyard's subprofessional engineering training program to graduate in February 1953.

Paul was married to the former Annette Beudet of Nashua, and was father of three sons; Michael, Mark, and Thomas, now living in Portsmouth. In addition to his parents, he is also survived by two brothers, Richard and Norman, and a younger sister, Sally.

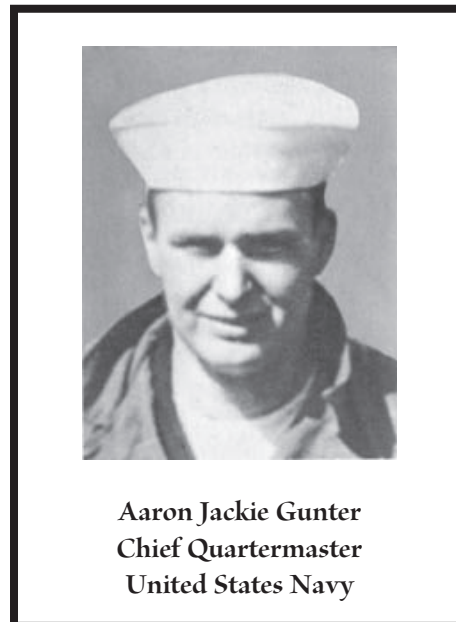
Aaron Jackie Gunter was born in Cross City, Fla., on August 27, 1933, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Aaron S. Gunter.

He entered the Navy on February 26, 1951, at Jacksonville, Fla., and underwent recruit training at the U.S. Naval Training Center, San Diego, Calif. After receiving his basic training he was assigned to the destroyer U.S.S. McGowan (DD 678), and later served in the destroyer U.S.S. C.K. Bronson (DD 668).

Aaron volunteered for submarine duty, and upon being accepted, he was enrolled in the Navy's Submarine School at the U.S. Naval Submarine Base, New London, Conn. His first duty in a submarine came shortly after successfully completing the course of instruction at the school. He was then assigned to the U.S.S. Sterlet (SS 392),

and while serving that command, he became qualified as a submariner and was awarded his silver dolphins. He had also earned the Navy's Good Conduct Medal (two awards); and a letter of commendation from the commanding officer of the U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593).

He had also attended the Loran School at Newport, R.I., and the submarine quartermaster school at New London, prior



**Aaron Jackie Gunter**  
Chief Quartermaster  
United States Navy

to being assigned as a member of the crew of the nuclear powered submarine U.S.S. Thresher (SSN 593), on February 27, 1961.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Doris M. Gunter, and two sons, David and Richard, who reside in Ashland, Mass. He also leaves his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Aaron S. Gunter;

a sister, Ruth, all of Jacksonville, Fla.; and another sister, Mrs. Joy Ann Corn, of Norfolk, Va.

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

**Next Thresher Base Meeting**  
**Saturday, May 21 @ 1100**  
**Flag Hill Winery • 297 North River Road, Lee, 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](http://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 [thresherbase@comcast.net](mailto:thresherbase@comcast.net).

### USSVI Conventions

**2011**  
**Springfield, MO**

**2012**  
**Norfolk, VA**