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Hundreds Gather to Pay Memorial Day Tribute to the 65 Lost American Boats and 4,000+ Submariners “On Eternal Patrol”

Dedication ceremony for first and only memorial to lost subs and crews not dampened by subtropical storm Alberto Sunday morning in Sarasota

SARASOTA, Fla. (May 27, 2018) – Despite subtropical storm Alberto bearing down on the Florida gulf coast, hundreds gathered this morning in Sarasota for the dedication of the first ever undersea memorial to the 65 American submarines lost since 1900, along with 4,000+ officers and crew.

The [On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef](#) is a collection of 65 Eternal Reef balls – each 1,300 pounds and three feet tall -- with plaques identifying each of the submarines still On Eternal Patrol and one additional Eternal Reef ball representing those crews and boats lost in non-sinking incidents. The 66 Eternal Reefs will be deployed to the ocean floor off the Sarasota coast over the coming weeks to significantly boost the marine environment in which these submariners served and made the ultimate sacrifice. (A single Eternal Reef was scheduled to be deployed to the reef site about nine miles off the Sarasota coast tomorrow, on Memorial Day, but high seas from Alberto postponed this plan.)

A reef ball is a designed artificial reef, specifically engineered to mimic Mother Nature, which quickly assimilates into the ocean with significant new marine growth within 90 days.

"The strategic value of the Navy's submarine force in World War II and since cannot be overestimated. It is fitting that the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef honors the brave submariners who gave their lives in service to our nation," said Rear Admiral Donald P. Harvey, USN (Ret), who, at age 94, is Sarasota's oldest living naval serviceman and highest ranking retired naval officer.

Full military honors were bestowed this morning for each of the 65 lost boats including rifle salutes, buglers playing taps and an honor guard presenting folded flags to representatives for each lost submarine. For many, this was the first time they received military honors. View the full dedication service on the Eternal Reefs [Facebook page](#).

A host of veterans accepted the flags, including Brian Lawrence, RMCS(SS), USN (Ret), from Missouri, who attended in honor of RM2 Kenneth Eugene Nearman, who was aboard the USS TROUT (SS-202) when it went down on 27 February 1944 with all hands, 81 officers and crew.

Lawrence shared that his late mother dated Nearman while in and after high school in Missoula, Montana and often spoke of him, and cried, well into her 90s.

Mark Martin, QMCS(SS)DV, USN (Ret) accepted the flag for, among others, the USS Skate (SS-23 F-4) lost 25 March 1915 with 21 officers and crew.

Lawrence and Martin were shipmates aboard the USS Dolphin in the late 1980s and were unexpectedly reunited this morning with the tearful and firm embrace of long lost brothers at the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef dedication. The last time they saw each other was 30 years ago.

A cadre of others accepted flags on behalf of family, friends, and fellow submariners, including Michael Burasco, from Ocala, Fla., to honor his brother, Nugent Anthony Burasco, one of 79 men lost on the USS Tullibee (SS-284) when she went down on 26 March 1944. James Jordan, from Lakeland, Fla. served aboard the USS Parche (SSN-683), the USS Daniel Webster (SSBN-626), and the USS Sam Rayburn (SSBN-635) and accepted several flags, including for the USS Corvina (SS-226) lost on 16 November 1943 with all hands, 82 officers and crew, the USS Dorado (SS-248) lost on 12 October 1943 with 77 officers and crew, and the USS Grayback (SS-208) lost on 27 February 1944 with all hands, 80 officers and crew.

Accepting the flag for the 66th and final reef, representing all submariners lost in non-sinking incidents, was William (Bill) Andrea, National Junior Vice Commander for the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI). The USSVI was an integral part of planning the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef.

Dave Taylor, Past Commander Disabled American Veterans Chapter 97, was master of ceremonies; Colonel Charles Caudill, U.S. Air Force (Ret), was officiating chaplain; and students from Port Charlotte High School Naval Junior ROTC Unit presented the colors under the supervision of Cadet LCDR John Flaws. Middle school cadets from the [Sarasota Military Academy Prep School](#) (SMA) were “cadet experts,” providing guests background on each of the lost 65 subs and presenting the folded flags to the veterans. The 72 sixth and seventh graders are supervised by Major Alex Vanston, USMC (Ret) and Captain Terri Davis, both military studies instructors at SMA Prep. Christina Bowman is SMA’s executive director of schools.

Taylor and Vanston presented 50-year Vietnam commemorative pins to approximately 35 Vietnam veterans in attendance.

Rear Admiral Thomas Logan Malone, Ed.D, U.S. Navy (Ret) was the scheduled guest speaker, but was unable to attend due to the weather.

Admiral Harvey’s comments continued, read by Eternal Reefs CEO George Frankel at the event: "It was as Director of Naval Intelligence, some 40 years ago, that I testified before Congress several times in support of U.S. submarine operations. So, it is appropriate to again recognize this remarkable service." Rear Admiral Harvey retired in 1978.

A Sarasota-based 501c3 memorial organization, [Eternal Reefs, Inc.](#), planned the ambitious project, in partnership with Reef Innovations and The Reef Ball Foundation. The project garnered gubernatorial recognition from 25 states including Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

View the full dedication service on Eternal Reefs [Facebook page](#) and see video of the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef project, including a full listing of all submarines with their date of loss, on [YouTube](#). Find a complete list of the 65 boats On Eternal Patrol and the boats lost in non-sinking events at the USSVI site: www.OnEternalPatrol.com. Eternal Reefs is accepting outside funding to support the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef. Interested parties should call 888-423-7333 or email info@EternalReefs.com.

About Eternal Reefs

The Genesis Reef Project dba Eternal Reefs, Inc. is a Sarasota-based non-profit organization that provides a creative, environmentally-enhancing way to memorialize the cremated remains of a loved one. Eternal Reefs incorporates cremains into a proprietary concrete mixture used to cast artificial reef formations which are then dedicated as permanent memorials which bolster natural coastal reef formations. Eternal Reefs pioneered the concept of reef memorialization and, since 1998, the organization has placed nearly 2,000 Memorial Reefs in 25 locations off the coasts of Florida (North Atlantic, South Atlantic, Gulf Coast and Panhandle), Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia, substantially increasing the ocean's diminishing reef systems. Memorial reefs can only go in properly permitted locations by the U.S. Government. Eternal Reefs has strategic partnerships with the Reef Ball Foundation and Reef Innovations. The company secured 501c3 status in January 2017. Learn more at www.EternalReefs.com or on the company's [Facebook page](#).

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