



Media Contact:  
Becky Peterson  
770-367-0321  
[peterson.becky.j@gmail.com](mailto:peterson.becky.j@gmail.com)

## **MIDDLE SCHOOL CADETS FROM SARASOTA MILITARY ACADEMY PREP TO PARTICIPATE IN “ON ETERNAL PATROL MEMORIAL REEF” CEREMONY HONORING 65 LOST U.S. SUBMARINES**

*First undersea memorial to lost submarines to be dedicated in Sarasota 27 MAY 2018*

*SARASOTA, Fla. (May 1, 2018)* – This Memorial Day weekend, 72 sixth and seventh grade cadets (students) from the Sarasota Military Academy Prep School (SMA) will be docents and assist with the dedication ceremony of the [On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef](#), the first ever undersea memorial to honor all 65 U.S. manned submarines and more than 4,000 lives aboard that have been lost since 1900 and remain On Eternal Patrol. One additional reef ball representing the crews and boats lost in non-sinking accidents will be included in the memorial for a total of 66 Eternal Reefs.

A reef ball is a designed artificial reef, specifically engineered to mimic Mother Nature; when deployed to the ocean floor, the reef ball quickly assimilates into the ocean environment and new marine growth begins in as little as three months.

All 66 Eternal Reefs will be deployed off the Sarasota coast after the land-based ceremony on 27 May 2018 to form the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef, significantly replenishing the ocean’s reef systems and enhancing the marine habitat in which these heroes served.

The SMA middle school cadets are currently studying the 65 submarines to prepare to be resident experts at the event. They will share details such as the military record, battle experience, history and stories about the officers and crew that served aboard each sub. Each “cadet expert” will field questions and foster discussion from their positions beside their assigned submarine’s Eternal Reef ball, a substantial structure standing 3-feet tall and weighing about 1,300 pounds. The 72 sixth and seventh graders include ranks from Cadet Private, Cadet Corporal, Cadet Sergeant, Cadet Captain and Cadet Major and are supervised by Major Alex Vanston, USMC (Ret) and Captain Terri Davis, both military studies instructors at SMA Prep.

“When Eternal Reefs approached us to participate in the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef, we were delighted to add the youthful resources and brain power from SMA Prep to this impactful project,” said Christina Bowman, Executive Director of Schools for both the high school and middle school campuses of Sarasota Military Academy. “I can’t wait to see the cadets and veterans interact. I’m sure the day will be filled with moving and patriotic moments.”

The public is invited to the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef dedication from 10 a.m. to 12 noon on 27 May 2018 at Ken Thompson Park in Sarasota. Full military honors will be presented, including rifle salutes, buglers playing taps and an honor guard bestowing flags the SMA cadets have carefully folded and will give to representatives for each lost submarine. For many, this will be the first time they've been recognized collectively for their contribution and sacrifice.

A Sarasota-based 501c3 memorial organization, [Eternal Reefs, Inc.](#), has planned the ambitious project, in partnership with Reef Innovations and The Reef Ball Foundation. The On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef has already garnered recognition from more than 25 state governors (and counting) via proclamations, certificates and letters of recognition. Additionally, submarine enthusiasts, veterans and other military representatives from across the nation plan to attend.

Brian Lawrence, from Missouri, is coming to the Sarasota event with his wife and dog. A Navy veteran himself, he's attending 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.

“Stories like Brian’s are starting to stream in and it’s incredibly satisfying to know that the On Eternal Patrol Memorial Reef will bring some closure to families and friends of our nation’s fallen submarine heroes,” said George Frankel, Eternal Reefs CEO. “Making history come alive adds deep meaning to what we do each and every day at Eternal Reefs and we’re thrilled cadets from SMA Prep will help us bestow the honors.”

Making the timing of the dedication even more significant, it falls almost 50 years to the day after the U.S. nuclear submarine USS Scorpion was lost on 22 May 1968 with all hands, 99 officers and crew.

View a 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 [www.OnEternalPatrol.com](http://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](mailto:info@EternalReefs.com).

### ***About Sarasota Military Academy (SMA)***

Combining extraordinary academics with the highest military principles of camaraderie, focus, leadership, integrity, compassion, poise, honor and respect, Sarasota Military Academy’s mission is to graduate young men and women who will confidently define their personal and unique goals for success in a multi-cultural and globalized world. SMA cadets embrace the challenge of bringing honor to themselves, their families, their communities and the United States of America. We share a fundamental belief that doing the right thing is always the right choice. To SMA cadets, accountability for behavior and decision-making is an expectation that is embraced. Our cadet culture instills personal, social and patriotic respect, demonstrated with confidence through courtesy, politeness, kindness, and consideration for others. Learn more at [www.SarasotaMilitaryAcademy.org](http://www.SarasotaMilitaryAcademy.org).

### **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 cremated remains 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](http://www.EternalReefs.com) or on the company's [Facebook page](#).

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