



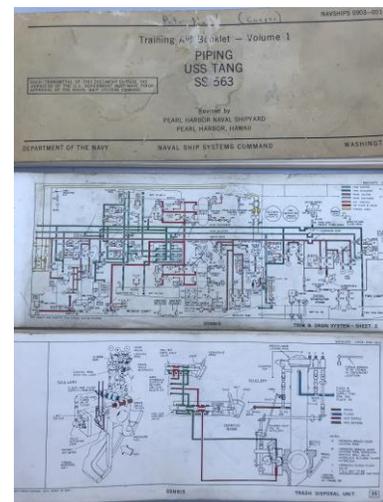
Submarine Dolphins

“Qualified Submarine Sailor”

“SS”

What Wikipedia does not tell you is the HELL one goes through the first year riding a “boat” [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine\\_Warfare\\_insignia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine_Warfare_insignia). Any “sailor” reporting on board a submarine if it is his first submarine MUST QUALIFY in submarines. That sailor has one year to complete the qualification process, and if he is NOT qualified at the end of the year (365 days to the minute), he is immediately transferred off of submarines and there is no going back. The “year” as I stated is a full year and that is broken down by the day; 24 hours per day with 4 hours of sleep authorized per day. The remaining 20 hours is spent learning every system on the submarine, up close and personal. You are tested daily, weekly, monthly and quarterly; by ever increasing numbers and ranks of fellow crewmen who ARE qualified and primarily assigned to each respective system.

Shown here is my “Piping Tab” cover, and two sample sheets from other “tabs” I have to this day, as a constant reminder of the HELL that is being a “Dedicated Delinquent Non-Qual.” You live with these tabs day in and day out, one at a time as they are issued to you. They are sized @ 4.5 inches by 12 inches and will fit in your uniform pants pockets. When you find the time to sleep, you sleep with the tablet under your pillow so that it is not removed from your custody. When you are finished with one “tab” you lock it in your locker and keep it there – it is more valuable than anything else you own. When you finally complete your qualification process, you turn in all of your tablets, and they must all be accounted for – or pay the consequences, which is treason. Because you, as a Dedicated Delinquent Non-Qual; you must have sold the tab to the enemy. And having been charged with treason, you are no longer able to be qualified in Submarines.



IT'S A BIG DEAL!!

So, I am not going to cover any more of what could go wrong, let's say that you did finish the process successfully. At that point there is a formal ceremony where you are awarded your Dolphins by the CO of the submarine. Following that, is the informal ceremony given to you by your shipmates at a local “watering hole”. For me it was a bar in Olongapo City, outside the Subic Bay Naval Base in the Philippines. And no I don't remember the name or exactly where it was located.

The informal ceremony was known as “drinking your dolphins”. There were different variations, but mine was a pitcher of drinks. Yes drinks. I had to purchase the pitcher and bring it to the bar. Then my “Diesel Boat Forever” (DBF) pins were dropped into the pitcher, and then everyone poured their drink into the pitcher. OK Side-bar:

DBF pins were a derivative of Dolphins. Because I was a “rider” I never fully qualified in Submarines. I was never on one boat long enough to complete the process. But on my third and final Diesel boat, the crew felt I was qualified enough. Having just spent 3 weeks on the boat, they had witnessed my activities and knowledge of “their boat” and felt I needed to show that I was a member of their group. So my “informal ceremony” was going to use the DBF pins instead of “real” dolphins; and then following the initiation the submarine community would be made aware of my accomplishment – unofficially. This paid off huge dividends on the future 7 Nuc boats I rode = “they” knew me.



So now my DBF pins were at the bottom of the pitcher, the actual pitcher is shown here with a pack of cigarettes to show the scale. Then it was filled with every drink that was being drunk at the time by everyone in the bar. Perhaps 50 to 60 different drinks, including mixed drinks, straights, and of course San Miguel Beer. It didn't matter if the pitcher was full, all the drinks had to be poured into the pitcher and any spillage was mopped up by me with the clothes that I was wearing. The whole process took about a half hour, with frequent pauses for me to prove that my underwear (briefs) had soaked up as much as they could hold. So yes moments of complete nudity did take place.



THEN, the common across all “informal” ceremonies was to drink the contents of the pitcher, coming up with the “Dolphins” (in my case the DBF pins) in your teeth. Spillage (again cleaned up by the honoree's clothes) was allowed. The key was having the pins in your teeth at the end.

Following that the pins were “pinned” on your shirt, above the heart. This was done by placing the pins in place on the shirt and then punching them through by everyone in attendance. In my case I knew this was coming and I had a shirt that included sufficient padding to accommodate the pins and therefore I escaped without any skin punctures of any significance.

Then not a part of the ceremony and more because I had received DBF pins and not true Dolphins the “guys” gave me the monkey pod replica of the Dolphins (shown in my FB post). My actual DBF pins like the drink are long gone. But my monkey pod Dolphin plaque – jogs my mind every time I see it.

PS The next page shows you a couple of pages of a Piping tab from a Nuc Boat. The first is that of the trim and drain system, the second is that of the Trash Disposal Unit. You will note the slash marks and “X's” across different valves/ connections and pipes. As you learned the system and you knew where they were on the boat, and knew their function, you crossed them off. Once that particular system was fully covered, you went to find a senior sailor in charge of that system and he would question you about the system. This was called a “walk through”. When you had demonstrated that you really DID know the system you would move on. Note that I had stopped part way through the trim and drain system. I stopped because I left that boat, and on to the next one. Only being on board any one boat for 3 to 4 months had its sacrifices – I never qualified in Submarines.

