

SUPSALV Celebrates 75 Years of Service to the Navy

Washington Navy Yard - 13 December 2016

December 13 2016 marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the office of the Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving (SUPSALV). Established just 6 days after the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor and with the United States at war, marine salvage quickly became a critical component of maintaining a naval force and effective maritime commerce. Commander William Sullivan was assigned as the first Supervisor of Salvage based on the experience he gained managing a Pacific coast salvage base in LaPlaya, CA before the war. Commander Sullivan reported to the Chief of the Bureau of Ships.

With ship salvage, harbor clearance and ship repair operations established in Pearl Harbor, Commander Sullivan turned his focus on establishing towing and salvage capability closer to home. Through a contract with Merritt-Chapman and Scott, of New York, the company's ships and specialized salvage equipment was made available to the Navy and SUPSALV created its headquarters at 17 Battery Place in New York Harbor. SUPSALV was responsible for offshore salvage operations along the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts, in the Caribbean, and off Panama and Alaska. Additionally, to rapidly respond to wartime casualties, a contract with Moran Towing allowed formation of the Navy Rescue Towing Service. The Supervisor of Salvage played a vital role in supporting the rescue of ships and cargo during the war allowing countless number of damaged ships to return to service contributing to the success of the Navy's war effort. A part of the Naval Sea Systems Command, SUPSALV currently operates emergency ship salvage material bases around the world with a headquarters staff at the Washington Navy Yard and standing agreements with a cadre of marine salvage, diving and deep ocean operations support contractors ready to respond to Navy, DoD and National missions.

To mark the occasion, SUPSALV recently gathered many of its current and former employees and contractors together for the anniversary celebration. In attendance were 6 former and current Supervisors of Salvage and 2 former and current Deputy SUPSALVs. Pictured below are the aforementioned leadership along with their host, and long standing salvor/diver CDR Jim Bladh, USN (ret) (seated) prior to the ceremonial cake cutting.



The strong tradition of the Naval uniformed and civilian service, contractor partnership, technical expertise, and dedication to our country and the task before them has resulted in numerous high

visibility and challenging success stories. Under current and future leadership, the Office of the Director of Ocean Engineering, Supervisor of Salvage and Diving will continue to provide that high level of performance in support of the Navy and our country.