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SUBMARINERS' ADVOCACY GROUP RELEASES GROUNDBREAKING REPORT EXPOSING HIDDEN TOXIC EXPOSURE CRISIS IN THE U.S. NAVY'S SILENT SERVICE

ST. MARYS, GEORGIA – November 8, 2025 – The Submariners' Advocacy Group (SAG) today released a landmark report, *The Unseen Burden: Toxic Exposures and Health Impacts on U.S. Navy Submariners*, uncovering a long-overlooked public health crisis among veterans of the U.S. Navy's Submarine Force.

The report presents compelling evidence that generations of Submariners have been subjected to chronic, round-the-clock exposure to a complex mix of chemical, gaseous, and radiological contaminants within the sealed atmosphere of U.S. Navy submarines. These unstudied exposures are now linked to a wide spectrum of debilitating illnesses – including rare cancers, blood disorders, cardiovascular disease, and chronic respiratory conditions.

“For decades, our Submariners were told their environment was safe,” said Stanley J. Martinez, Chairman and CEO of SAG. “In reality, they were breathing a low-oxygen atmosphere tainted by toxins like monoethanolamine and benzene. These Sailors carried out missions vital to national security – yet the government has placed an **impossible burden of proof** on them as they fight for care. The time for silence is over; the time for action is now.”

The *Unseen Burden* report identifies systemic failures in both science and policy: a lack of federal research into the synergistic effects of multiple contaminants, reliance on outdated industrial exposure standards, and an absence of data reflecting the 24/7 exposure realities of submarine service.

As a result, Submariners face **disproportionate denial rates** under the PACT Act – the very legislation meant to ensure care for toxic-exposed veterans – because submarine service is not explicitly recognized as a presumptive exposure category.

To address what it calls a “moral and public health failure,” SAG is urging immediate action by Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to:

1. **Expand PACT Act Eligibility** – Amend the Act to explicitly include all Submariners who served from 1947 to the present as a presumptive exposure group.
2. **Commission Comprehensive Scientific Studies** – Launch independent, peer-reviewed studies to fully characterize submarine atmospheres and assess the cumulative, synergistic health impacts of continuous exposure.

3. **Reform VA Claims Processing** – Overhaul the VA claims process and update Veteran Service Representative (VSR) training to reflect submarine-specific toxic exposure realities.

“The suffering of these Sailors represents the unseen cost of national defense,” Martinez added. “It’s time for our nation to confront the truth, acknowledge the science, and deliver the care and justice these veterans have earned.”

The *Unseen Burden* report stands as an urgent call to action – a demand for transparency, scientific accountability, and policy reform to honor those who served in silence beneath the waves.

About the Submariners’ Advocacy Group (SAG)

The Submariners’ Advocacy Group is a non-profit organization representing U.S. Navy Submarine Force veterans. SAG serves as the unified voice for those affected by toxic exposures, advocating for legislative recognition, scientific research, and equitable access to healthcare and benefits for Submariners and their families.

For more information or to access *The Unseen Burden* report, visit www.subadvocates.org.

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