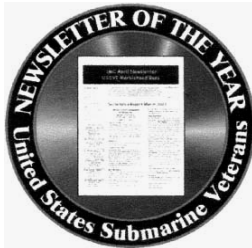


American Submariners Inc.
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404



The Silent Sentinel MARCH 2013



Our Creed and Purpose

To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of their duties while serving their country. That their dedication, deeds, and supreme sacrifice be a constant source of motivation toward greater accomplishments. Pledge loyalty and patriotism to the United States of America and its Constitution.

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be Strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

Submarine Movie: Phantom

It is not the policy of the *Silent Sentinel* or of USSVI to take a position concerning films. Since I [Mike H] have not seen the film, I cannot give my *personal* take on it. Nonetheless, others in our submarine community have seen it. The following are the personal opinions of two of our members.

Captain Charles R. MacVean, US Navy (Retired)--former skipper of USS Seawolf, SSN575, and plank owner (with Ken Sewell, the film's author) of USS Parche--writes:

Phantom is one of the most realistic post-WWII submarine movies that has ever been made. It is also the first Hollywood movie shot almost entirely inside an actual, Soviet cold-war submarine, docked at the Maritime Museum of San Diego. In particular, the film truly captures the unique camaraderie and courage any submarine crew experiences, whether American or Soviet.

Sharkey Chartier, former EM2(SS), 1959-1965, comments:

I did some research and have confirmed that the movie is loosely based upon the 2005 book, *Red Star Rogue*, by Kenneth Sewell. It discusses the story of one of the six Soviet Golf Class boats (only six were ever built). Also, this is *supposedly* the boat that that the CIA tried to lift from 20,000 feet off the ocean floor with the Glomar Explorer. My recommendation is to read the book, see the movie, and if possible, visit the Maritime Museum of San Diego. There, the B39, a Foxtrot Class boat is on display (another Foxtrot is on display adjacent to the Queen Mary in Long Beach). The B39 was used to film the movie; and we submariners who volunteer at the Maritime Museum been giving tours aboard the Foxtrot for many years.

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The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from \$3700 to about \$1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

A subscription to the Silent Sentinel newsletter will be available to surviving family members via internet email, at no charge, upon notification of the Membership Chairman. If a printed hard-copy is preferred, via US Post Office delivery, an annual donation of \$5.00 will be requested to cover costs.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

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TELEPHONE: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

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*DUE TO LOGISTICS CONSTRAINTS, ALL INPUTS FOR THE SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND NO LATER THAN **ONE WEEK** AFTER THE MONTHLY MEETING. IF I DO NOT RECEIVE IT BY THIS TIME, THE ITEM WILL NOT GET IN. NO EXCEPTIONS! MIKE*

March Meeting

Our monthly meeting is held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next meeting will be on 12 March, 2013. The post is located one-half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The E-Board meets one hour earlier at 6 p.m.

*Check us out on the World Wide Web
www.ussvisandiego.org*

BINNACLE LIST

Al Strunk

Submarine Losses in February

Originally Compiled by C J Glassford



SHARK # 2 . (SS 174) - 58 Men on Board
Sunk, on 11 Feb 1942, by Japanese Destroyer, in Makkasar Strait, 120 Miles East of Mendoa, in the Celebes Sea : "ALL HANDS LOST"

AMBERJACK (SS 219) - 74 Men on Board
Probably Sunk, on 14 Feb 1943, by Combined Efforts of a Japanese Seaplane, Torpedo Boat, and Submarine Chaser, off Cape St. George, New Britain: "ALL HANDS LOST"

GRAYBACK (SS 208) - 80 Men on Board
Probably Succumbed, on 27 Feb 1944, to Damage Inflicted, by LandBased Japanese Naval Aircraft suffered the day before in the East ChinaSea: "ALL HANDS LOST"

TROUT (SS 202) - 81 Men on Board
Most likely Sunk, on 29 Feb 1944, by Japanese Destroyer, in the Philippine Sea Area, Off Formosa: "ALL HANDS LOST"

BARBELL (SS316) - 81 Men on Board
Sunk, on 4 Feb 1945, by Japanese Naval Aircraft, In the South China Sea, Palawan Passage: "ALL HANDS LOST"

POMODON (SS486) - Duty Section on Board
 Battery Explosion and Fire, on 21 Feb 1955, from Hydrogen
 Buildup during recharging of Battery Cells, at San Francisco
 Naval Shipyard: "5 MEN LOST"



Minutes for Submarine Veterans San Diego, 12 Feb 2013.

1900 – Meeting of the Submarine Veterans Inc., San Diego Base was called to order by Base Commander, Bob Bissonnette.

Conducted Opening Exercises:

Reading of Our Creed:

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by David Ball:

Chaplin Lead in Prayer:

Conducted Tolling of the Boats for February:

Observed a moment of Silent Prayer:

Junior vice Commander recognized past E-Board members, Past Officers and guest present.

Secretary posted the sailing list – 32 members aboard.

Treasurer's report: Treasurer presented, his report it will be posted online but at this time we have \$1600.00 on hand.

Call for Committee Reports:

Chaplain Binnacle List: Jack Lester, Al Strunk, Tom Cox: Chaplin announced 6 members who are now on Eternal Patrol. If you would like more information please see the Chaplain after the meeting.

Parade Committee: Jack Kane:

Saturday April 27th: The Linda Vista Parade

We will have more information later.

Membership Committee: We have 291 members on the roll. We are seeing a reduction of membership so National is pushing for recruiting old members and looking for new members.

Scholarship Committee: You have one month to submit new applications for the Scholarship fund. We encourage you to submit an application. You can also access applications on the National webpage and our local website. Cutoff date is 15 April 2013.

Storekeeper: We have some items here and patches can be ordered. Let me know if you would like to order anything special.

Breakfast Committee: Next Sub vet breakfast will be 30 June 2013, at 0800 to 1200.

Float Committee: Dave K gave update report on construction of the new float. Progress is good and body has been build with Styrofoam we are looking to fiberglass the body. We do need to buy a lift to allow the boat to be moved up while on the trailer. This will provide seating on the side and allow the boat to be seen. Dave called for additional volunteers to help finish the project. You can contact him via email. We should also think about a name and number for the boat. We can use an existing boat number or just make one up and name it what every we want, more information on name and number later.

1925 – Base Commander called for a Break....

1945 – Base Commander called meeting to order.

Unfinished Business

Voting on the Budget: The treasurer presented to the membership the approved budget for the coming year. The floor was opened for discussion and then a motion was made to accept the budget. Members voted and ayes passed the motion. End of Year report was also submitted to the National Association which was do 31 March 2013.

Old Timers Luncheon: Friday, March 22nd at the HARBOR INN, Naval Base Point Loma. \$20.00 per person will be collected at the door. Tolling of the Boats Ceremony at 10:30, No-host Social at 11:15, Lunch served at 12:00. We encourage as many as able to attend the luncheon. It shows our support to the Old Timers Luncheon. For those who do not have a base sticker, Bob will find out what the procedure is to get you on base.

113th Submarine Birthday Ball, Hilton San Diego Bay Front, Saturday, March 23, 2013. Social hours begin at 4:00 pm. \$65.00 per person. For additional information contact HMCS(SS) Shane Walter (619) 553 7758

Old Business

Joel Eikam has sent a letter stating the base can store the finished float in his garage and have free use of his trailer to use for the float. Base Cmdr. proposed a motion to accept his proposal to use his garage and trailer. Floor opened for discussion, and votes taken and ayes approved.

New Business

USSVI Western District will be meeting in Laughlin, Nevada, April 7, 2013. Hotel accommodations are \$32.00, Dinner \$20.00. If you are interested in attended let me (BC) know and I can get you more information.

USS SCORPION (SSN589) Alumni Association sent a flyer requesting participation in 99 for 99 program (one dollar for each crewmember lost). This fund raiser is to help defray to cost of the 45th Anniversary Memorial Service in Norfolk this May. The fund raiser has been approved by USSVI. A motion was made to contribute \$99.00 to the Association to help in their fund raiser. Members discussed and motion was passed.

Good of the Order

Doug Smay has been in charge of the Submarine memorials at Liberty Station but has become too ill to continue. Presently he places an American Flag on each boat the month they were lost and places flags on all memorials on holidays. It was suggested that our base assume responsibility for this project. If this is possible we will need volunteers and schedules to do the work. More information will follow.

2020 – Meeting adjourned.

Sailing List for 12 Feb 2013

JIM BILKA	NIHIL D SMITH	ROCKY ROCKERS
BILL EARL	PAUL HITCHCOCK	JACK FERGUSON
JACK LESTER	JACK KANE	PAUL SCHULTZ
BOB COATES	M. BURCIAGA	JACK ADDINGTON
CHARLIE MARIN	D. MORTENSEN	SERGIO FROST
PHILLIP RICHESON	BUD ROLLISON	DAVID BALL
MIKE COSGROVE	JOEL EIKAM	LARRY DORE
RAY FERBRACHE	PHILL RICHESON	DAVID KAUPPINEA
STEVE LAMPRIDES	BUD ROLLISON	
BOB BISSONNETTE	BOB FARRELL	
MIKE HYMAN	GINO RILLAMAS	
DON MATHIOWETZ	RICHARD A. SMITH	

Our condolences to WW-II Submarine Veteran, Sidney Dorfman, on the loss of his wife, Lita. Sidney and Lita were married over sixty-six (66) years. May the Lord give Sidney and the rest of the Dorfman family the peace that surpasses all understanding along with the ability to endure!

Breakfast With Che

Personal Opinion and Commentary

by Michael Hyman

With thanks to Howard Mumford Jones

Sunday, the line at McDonald's was long. The street folks were rejoicing that the night had been shortened by one hour; and lines usually two or three persons deep were now six or seven. Standing ahead of me was a young homeless fellow wearing a khaki colored army fatigue jacket. And on it was a large sewn image of Che Guevara. As a rule, I try to live by the Yiddish proverb, *Az a kluger redt tsu a nar, redder tsvai naronim* 'When a wise man speaks with a fool, two fools are having a conversation'. So I did not say a word to him. Keeping my mouth shut was

admittedly hard but at the time I believed it the smart thing to do. I regretted my decision all day. In some cases, the smart thing is often not the best thing.

It's early Monday morning and I'm back at McDonald's, and to my surprise, so is the little drummer boy. "Today," I tell myself, "I'm really going to confront this guy."

Figuring that if it was good enough for Mush Morton, it's good enough for me, I fire a fish right down this guy's bow: "Excuse me. How come you're walking around with the image of a mass murderer on the back of your jacket?"

Beforehand, I had gone through a variety of possible responses that might come up (including a punch in the nose) but the one which he gave, depth charged any illusions that I had.

"Actually," he said, "I got it at *Good Will* and was afraid that I would ruin it if I ripped the image off—it's a nice, warm jacket . . . and since I'm on the street all night. . . ."

And so went the Battle of Midway Drive.

What is it about Guevara—and his kind—that I hate enough in order to risk getting clobbered? The answer can fill volumes but let's just look at one aspect of it. The error of the leaders of the French Revolution was their attempt to immediately reshape society according to an abstract intellectual formula. Napoleon, in a moment of genius, defined them with the term "ideologues." Men such as these have been with us since the beginning of time. Over the last 100 years or so, the primary exponents have been within Marxist and Fascist circles. Both worldviews still remain with us. And both aspire to wrench society into a preconceived pattern by means of force. Modern day Caesarism, whether it be North Korea, Communist China, Nicaragua, Cuba, Venezuela, the Islamic states, or any others, exist mainly by force of arms. The same can be said concerning all of them—specifically, when force is called in to implement an abstract idea, the idea disappears and rather than an era of culture society is left with an era of barbarism. The glorification of war which is now part of the creed of many rogue states (including non Islamic ones like North Korea) is in actuality an expression of the ideas of Mohammed: Slay the non believer with the edge of the sword wherever he may be. And with the ferocity which ideologues attack the inheritance of Western Civilization, one sees that the most formidable enemy of barbarism is culture!

The rich traditional heritage of classical thought is a heritage of reason. The attempts of those here and abroad who wish to break with tradition is at bottom a glorification of irrationality. When millions of human beings are indoctrinated with the fanatic belief that their highest duty to the state is to surrender any notion of rational choice, we turn back the clock by thousands of years. The only effective check upon the assumption that nations can profitably be remade by emotion and violence is the appeal to history.

The deepest practical reason why democracy must cling to the Western tradition is that only through it can democracy exist. By examining history, the arts, and philosophy, we instill the best wherever we can. On the other hand, if we, too, wish to be subject to the next ideological wind that blows, then let us by all means abandon the study of history, of art, of philosophy, of literature, and give ourselves completely to the study of the contemporary. But if the tragic lesson of the Twentieth-Century strengthens our determination to cling to the inheritance of civilization (as we rationally understand this term), then let us remember that the historical point of view is the only lasting check upon the ideological dogma directed toward violent shifts in society.

This is, admittedly, not a very thrilling program. It is impossible to shout into a public address system the words: “Be Sane;” it is also impossible to march in uniformed parades at football halftime shows in order to promote mass campaigns in favor of common sense. Moreover, it is equally impossible to even imagine popular leaders swaying the multitudes by an appeal to culture. Nevertheless, only in the widest possible spread of the implications of history—and of the knowledge of the significance of our cultural inheritance—and only in the patient and intelligent teaching and study of our Western tradition can we look for an effective check upon fanaticism, irrationality, violence, and despair.

Current News

**“Plataginet, I will; and like thee, Nero,
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn” (*Henry VI*, Shakespeare)**

Shipyard Furloughs Would Hurt Workers, Impact Subs Fosters.com, Mar. 9

The Navy’s plan to issue its largest-ever shipbuilding contract, a \$27 billion, five-year deal to buy nine Virginia-class submarines, now has a viable way forward via legislation the House adopted this week approving a new multiyear deal — and a downpayment on a 10th boat.

The fiscal year 2013 defense appropriations bill passed by the House this week would add \$778 million in advanced procurement funding for a second attack submarine in FY-14 and grant the Navy permission to sign a multiyear procurement contract for a fourth Virginia-class block buy. The Senate could take up the bill as soon as next week.

The Virginia-class submarine program is a 30-boat acquisition effort projected to cost \$93 billion, making it the Pentagon’s second-largest procurement project. The Navy in FY-13 is buying the last two submarines of a third Virginia-class block buy — a total of eight boats — that began in FY-09. During that block buy, the Navy and its suppliers realized sufficient cost-reduction measures to accomplish a long-sought goal: procuring two attack submarines per year.

Yet, anticipating particularly difficult budget pressures in FY-14, the Navy last year cut a second Virginia-class from its FY-14 plan. The service instead decided to slip the planned purchase from FY-14 to FY-18. Shipbuilders said that move would crimp production and hurt supplier efficiency, adding as much as \$600 million in costs and result in as many as 1,300 lost jobs.

The new defense bill, included in an FY-13 omnibus-spending package, reflects an agreement reached by House and Senate defense appropriations subcommittee members. Both subcommittees chided the Navy last year for dropping the second boat and reinstated funding for it in their marks of the defense-spending bill.

Until the proposed FY-13 defense appropriations legislation was unveiled on March 4 by the House Appropriations Committee — and approved by the House two days later — the near-term acquisition plans for the Virginia-class were uncertain.

While the FY-13 Defense Authorization Act, signed by the president in early January, granted the Navy authorization to enter into a Virginia-class multiyear contract, the Navy still needed approval in a corresponding appropriations bill.

The continuing resolution that has funded the government since October, which is set to expire on March 27, prohibits the start of new multiyear procurement contracts. Until this week, many Defense Department officials were bracing for a possible yearlong extension of the continuing resolution.

“In the event of a continuing resolution (CR), the CR would need to contain language providing authority to award a MYP contract,” Brie Lang, a spokeswoman for Naval Sea Systems Command, told *InsideDefense.com* last month.

In late February, the White House Office of Management and Budget sent lawmakers a package of proposed anomalies to consider in a continuing resolution. The package included a request to proceed with multiyear procurement contracts for the DDG-51 destroyer and the V-22 and CH-47 aircraft programs — but not the Virginia-class submarine.

That omission appeared to leave the Virginia-class program out in the cold for the balance of FY-13, congressional officials said at the time. “Technically it is an FY-14 issue, so I think the omission is a matter of the Navy and OMB prioritizing the list,” said one congressional source.

Last March, the Navy asked Congress to grant the service the authority to enter into a follow-on multiyear procurement contract for the Virginia-class program in FY-13 for boats the government would purchase between FY-14 and FY-18. “Due to the complexity of shipbuilding contracts, much of the proposal development, as well as the negotiations between the DON and the shipbuilders, will take place in FY-13,” the Navy said in its request. Armed with this approval, the Navy said it “would be in a stronger negotiating position . . . to achieve maximum savings.”

Despite not having the desired seal of approval for the Block IV Virginia-class acquisition enshrined in law, the Navy says it has not suffered any loss of leverage at the negotiating table with its two submarine builders — General Dynamics and Huntington Ingalls.

In making the case last year for multiyear procurement authority for the submarine program, the Navy argued that a new five-year deal for nine boats would deliver savings of as much as \$4.5 billion, or 14 percent, compared to buying the same quantities using year-to-year contracts.

The Navy “still believes this savings is achievable,” Lang said. “The Navy is on schedule to award the contract in early FY-14, assuming the DOD appropriations act is signed granting MYP [multiyear procurement] authority.”

The Navy estimates that the nine-boat contract will cost \$26.6 billion, or nearly \$3 billion per boat, over five years. The deal could also accommodate a 10th boat, according to Lang, if one is funded in the president’s FY-14 budget request.

“The Virginia Class Block IV contract is anticipated to be the largest ship construction contract in NAVSEA history,” Lang said, referring to Naval Sea Systems Command.

Conant: President and Congress Undermining Military
Savannahnow.com, Mar. 10
By Ed Conant

Sequestration is the law of the land. It happened despite protestations from both right and left that it was a stupid and harmful way to cut spending.

It is a manifestation of our broken political process, and it happened because Congress and the White House are not doing their jobs.

The public has watched the stalemate in Washington in disgust; most agree that sequestration is no way to run a country. But frustrated by politicians who won't reduce the deficit, many people are accepting bad spending cuts as preferable to no spending cuts.

But most people are unaware that sequestration is only the most recent of several blows to our military in the last two years. Cutting fat is one thing, but cutting military muscle is another.

In January 2011, the Secretary of Defense made the decision to reduce the size of the Army by 27,000 soldiers and the Marine Corps by 20,000 Marines. These cuts do not take effect until 2014 and 2015, so the military will be absorbing this troop loss at the same time they are dealing with financial cuts discussed below.

Wars are expensive. The government properly funds war expenditures from a separate account. As the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down, these contingency funds will disappear, a necessary but painful process. However, it is difficult to completely separate peacetime and wartime costs, and the contingency funds have invariably helped military funding in general. Elimination of war contingency funding is appropriate, but nevertheless creates financial difficulties for the military

A major blow to military funding was dealt by the Budget Control Act, the result of the 2011 debt ceiling negotiations. These negotiations cut a trillion dollars from discretionary spending over a decade, nearly \$500 billion of which came from the military. The military is still addressing this huge financial loss, with most of the cuts still ahead.

The next funding trauma comes from the failure of Congress to approve the 2013 budget. Instead, Congress has pegged funding at 2012 levels through a device known as a continuing resolution. This creates circumstances where the military cannot move funds between accounts without congressional approval, so the money from a program the military decides to eliminate in 2013 cannot be used to fund a new program.

The final challenge thrown at the military is the sequester, which requires another \$500 billion cut in this decade. Because the military must make so many cuts so quickly, and with little latitude on where to make cuts, training and readiness will be decimated.

Those who support sequestration emphasize that the amount being cut is only 2.4 percent of the federal budget. That is only part of the story. So much of the budget has been protected from cuts that the military must absorb a cut of about 9 percent. And they must do it in six months!

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Ray Odierno articulated the impact on his branch. In the next six months, the sequester cuts \$12 billion, and the continuing resolution deprives the Army of \$6 billion more. As a result, 251,000 Army civilians will be furloughed, 80 percent of stateside soldiers will stop training and 500 to 750 helicopter pilots won't be trained. The loss of these trained pilots will be felt for years, because the training pipeline cannot expand enough to replace them later.

The Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps will suffer similar degradations in readiness.

A post-war drawdown is necessary, but is always traumatic for the military. Thousands of good people are forced out of the service, bases must be closed and new weapons systems cut back or eliminated.

But the irresponsible cuts from sequestration and the continuing resolution that the Congress and the president have imposed on the military amount to piling on. They will make an always difficult transition far more perilous and will degrade national security to an extent yet unknown.

The debilitating effect is not instantaneous. There will be a slow deterioration of our military's readiness, modernization, force levels and morale. America will be less prepared the next time there is a threat to our security. And just as it will be a slow deterioration, it will be a slow recovery when we finally recognize we have cut our military too much, too fast and too thoughtlessly.

In Washington nothing is ever over, and in the case of sequestration that is a good thing. Congress and the White House can accomplish several things in the coming weeks to mitigate the worst impacts of sequestration, while preserving needed deficit reduction.

Job one is for Congress and the White House to provide flexibility to federal departments and agencies on how to make the cuts. Instead of the meat cleaver approach directed by the sequester and the continuing resolution, modify the law to allow agency heads to make smarter spending cuts. Provide them a dollar value of cuts by year. Then let Congress approve what they propose. The next change is for Congress to go back to work and find entitlement cuts and revenue increases to reduce the total amount of the cuts to the military. Then they need to change the timing of the cuts to recognize 2013 cuts are the most damaging.

The reason the president and the Congress cannot agree is because they won't compromise on revenue and entitlements. Each knows both need to be done, but they would rather engage in a childish mano-a-mano struggle where compromise is feared and the country's security is less important than their own political power. We would be far better served if our politicians had the courage of the military they are undermining.

The post-war drawdown of the military is necessary. But America has a sad history of imagining that we are no longer threatened, cutting too deep and finding itself with a diminished and weakened military. Let's learn from history so we are not doomed to repeat it.

MilitarySub thriller filmed at Maritime Museum Utsandiego.com, Mar. 8

When U.S. Navy submarines glide past Point Loma and head to sea, what they do in the dark depths is mostly a mystery. Certainly it involves keeping an eye on other navies. Some U.S. submarines carry a portion of the American nuclear arsenal in their tubes.

During the Cold War, the Pacific was full of Soviet submarines doing the same job for the other side.

This dangerous world of submarine cat-and-mouse comes to the big screen again in "Phantom," a new Hollywood action movie with a major San Diego connection.

About 80 percent of the movie was shot aboard the former Soviet B-39 submarine owned by the Maritime Museum of San Diego. The 1974 Foxtrot-class submarine has been moored in the bay along Harbor Drive since 2004.

Meanwhile, just across the water is Point Loma Naval Base, the heartbeat of U.S. submarines on the West Coast during the Cold War.

San Diego subs and their crews stalked Soviet subs like the Foxtrot from the 1970s through the 1990s. .

"Phantom," a thriller starring Ed Harris and David Duovny, depicts that world from the Soviet point of view.

Filmmakers say it is probably the first submarine movie shot on an actual sub. They used a compact digital camera weighing about 4 lbs, which allowed them to film in the tight corners of a real-life submarine. Some members of the movie crew reportedly fought claustrophobia during the three-week shoot.

“Phantom” was inspired by actual events. In March 1968, the Soviet diesel-electric submarine known as K-129 sank in deep water off the Hawaiian Islands.

Her country’s navy never found the wreck. The United States reportedly launched a secret salvage mission, the results of which are still murky.

Author Kenneth Sewell, a former U.S. Navy submariner, argues in his 2006 book “Red Star Rogue” that K-129 was poised to launch a nuclear ballistic missile attack on the United States when something went awry and the detonation sunk the boat.

The movie “Phantom” is loosely based on that outline. Filmmakers thought the San Diego B-39 submarine was similar enough to the K-129 to fill in for Hollywood’s purposes. Both were diesel-electric powered and carried nukes, though the sunken sub had extra tubes for intercontinental ballistic missiles and the B-39 only held nuclear torpedoes.

How did a Soviet submarine end up in the heart of its former enemy?

The Maritime Museum was the largest investor in a group that bought and moved the B-39 from the Seattle area, where it landed after a Canadian consortium purchased the decommissioned boat from the Russians in 1995.

Now, the B-39 and its more high-tech American counterpart, the former U.S. Navy submarine Dolphin, draw about a third of the museum’s visitors.

“There aren’t that many examples of Russian Soviet-era submarines around to look at,” Ashley said, adding that the comparison provided by the submarines is pretty stark.

“You get a whole picture of the Cold War and how it looked on each side simply by going on those two ships.”

Israel Feared Soviets Sunk Sub in 1968, Papers Reveal **TimesofIsrael, Mar. 10**

Israeli officials, frantic and befuddled by the sudden loss of a recently purchased submarine in 1968, feared the boat had been sunk by Soviet forces patrolling the Mediterranean, papers released on Sunday’s 45th anniversary of the disaster show.

The Dakar submarine was lost on January 25, 1968, and all 69 crew members aboard were killed. The remains of the sub were only found in 1999 in the deeps between the islands of Crete and Cyprus.

Sixteen documents cleared for publication last week by the state archives document the confusion in the minutes and days after the sub was lost, as officials attempted to grapple with the tragedy while carrying out search and rescue missions. The papers do not shed further light on the exact cause of the loss of the Dakar, which remains undetermined.

The papers include the minutes of a January 27, 1968, Cabinet meeting in which then-Navy head Shlomo Harel told the government that it was unlikely Egypt had sunk the ship, even though it had sent its last transmission from a position north of Alexandria. However, he said, he wasn’t sure why else it could have disappeared.

“There is the possibility that the sub was downed, without prior intent, by the Soviets,” he told the gathered ministers. “It’s possible they thought the sub was going to attack them, but this is just surmise.”

He added that he did not think it was likely the hands on board would be found alive.

A paper prepared by Harel weeks later listed three possible reasons for the disaster: technical or human error, an action by the Soviets, or a crash between the sub and another vessel in the water.

The papers also reveal that Israel turned to Turkey for permission to search along its southern coast, but was refused by Ankara, which said it would carry out the search itself.

Still, then-defense minister Moshe Dayan said the search was done on an “unprecedented, international scale.”

The international search mission was called off of January 30, but Israeli forces continued searching for four more days, only admitting the loss of the sub officially on February 4.

In the papers, Dayan explains to then-prime minister Levi Eshkol why he refused a request from the families of the crew to push off the death declaration and continue searching.

“I told the families that we can’t accept their request to push off the declaration,” he said. “This is not something at the discretion of the families representatives.”

The submarine was bought from the British and was to be sailed from Portsmouth via Gibraltar to Haifa for a welcoming ceremony on January 29. The submarine went underwater at the Strait of Gibraltar on January 15 and sent its last signal a minute after midnight on January 25.

In the 1990s, an Egyptian military official claimed he had been part of a team that sank the sub with depth charges.

No British Submarines to Patrol Falkland Islands

Express.co.uk, Mar. 10

The Navy is finding it “increasingly difficult” to deploy a nuclear hunter-killer submarine to patrol British waters around the Falkland Islands.

Senior sources made the warning last night, three weeks after the Sunday Express reported exclusively that the forced return of HMS Tireless means that just one of Britain’s five Trafalgar-class submarines is fully operational and even that is about to undergo a brief period of maintenance after duties in the Middle East.

Submarines proved their effectiveness in the Falklands War when HMS Conqueror sank the General Belgrano. However, the Conqueror was decommissioned in 1990 and the hunter-killer fleet is “now well beyond its sell-by date”.

Last night Admiral Sandy Woodward, who led the Task Force to recapture the islands in 1982, called the situation “very worrying”. He said: “I have always argued that we need to have a submarine on permanent deployment in the South Atlantic but this was reduced to occasional deployment. Now we seem not able to do that, either.”

Hunter-killer submarines are needed to carry out vital duties, including protecting Britain’s Trident missile-carrying Vanguard submarines which patrol the North Atlantic.

However, HMS Torbay is undergoing maintenance, HMS Trenchant will need servicing after its deployment in the Middle East, HMS Talent is awaiting decommissioning and HMS Triumph, which should have been decommissioned last year, is being used for training.

HMS Astute, the first of our new £1.2billion Astute class submarines, is still not fully operational.

Tireless, dubbed HMS Tired, was forced to return to base last month due to a coolant leak in its nuclear reactor. Sources suggest it could be out of action for 10 months.

Last night naval sources suggested the likelihood of an Argentine seaborne invasion was “almost non-existent”. However, submarines have long been regarded as the “secret weapon of ultimate deterrence” against Argentine aggression.

Details of their deployment are never made public but last year Navy sources let it be known when HMS Talent was sent to the islands to put a lid on any threat of Argentine aggression during the 30th anniversary of the conflict.

The Navy aims to send a hunter-killer nuclear submarine to South Atlantic waters at least twice in 12 months.

Last night former First Sea Lord Admiral Lord West said Britain is “now paying the price” for the 10-year delay in ordering the Astute-class replacements.

“Even when they come on line fully, we will not have the eight submarines which, I believe, is the minimum number we should have in our locker to undertake the tasks required.”

Last night a Ministry of Defence spokesman said there were contingency plans to increase the military footprint in the South Atlantic if required but there was no suggestion of any need to do this at present.

Suspicious Buoy Drop Highlights Asian Submarine Tensions

Nbr.co.nz, Mar. 9

Chinese People’s Liberation Army–Navy (PLA-N) ships earlier this week dropped a number of mysterious buoys around a group of islands in the East China Sea, and although Beijing says they are to monitor ocean conditions, suspicions abound.

The islands are the disputed string called Senkaku by Japan and Diaoyu by China and have for many years been the centre of an increasingly nationalistic tussle between the two powers.

Multiple military planes and ships belligerently traverse the area, inflaming tensions, but submarines have mainly been overlooked.

The buoys may really be for a scientific experiment, as Chinese foreign ministry officials claim, but it is more likely they are part of an expanding system of submarine detectors or sonobuoys China is using to monitor Japanese submarines.

Some were dropped just 300m from Japanese-controlled waters.

While surface tension and conflicts are featured in the news media, beneath the waves submarines are almost forgotten.

Submarines more active

Submarine detection is difficult in the noisy and shallow waters typical of the South China Sea and the East China Sea. Acoustic energy from passive and active sonar technology is more likely to reflect off the seabed than in deeper waters, such as in the Philippine Sea.

Both countries have a number of different classes of submarines but the Chinese diesel-electric vessels are noisier than Japan’s more advanced similarly powered craft.

But the PLA-N’s newest Jin-class nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) are a mighty addition to Chinese undersea capabilities. While only two are assumed to be operational, and China is struggling with nuclear power at sea, they add serious firepower to its fleet.

And they may soon be equipped with JL-2 nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles, which, according to initial estimates, can reach the United States, meaning America’s nuclear deterrence strategy would be undermined.

A submarine’s stealth makes it ideally suited for operating in restricted or sensitive waters, making them ideal for the tense waters around the Senkaku/ Diaoyu islands.

The reason for such tension becomes very clear on a map. Geographically, they occupy an extremely strategic position for both Japan and China.

They are a gateway for China into the greater Western Pacific. Controlling them would effectively allow the PLA-N to break out of the claustrophobic South China Sea, a result they desperately desire.

Likewise, keeping them in Tokyo’s hands would help Japan pen China into their territorial waters and put a temporary lid on Beijing’s expansionist dreams.

Beijing’s strategy

China's development of a world-class submarine fleet is in its infancy, but even now Beijing can quietly project power a significant distance from its shores.

This is why the outcome of the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands dispute is so important for both nations. Controlling them would give Chinese submarines unfettered access to the Western Pacific and increase Beijing's strategic options in the Eastern Pacific.

It would also open up the rest of the Pacific for exploration by its submarines, possibly sailing with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles.

Only the US and Russia possess similar capabilities. Adding a third nation to the list will radically alter the strategic nuclear leverage America has enjoyed in the Pacific since the end of the Cold War.

Ultimately, Tokyo will not end its submarine patrols around the disputed islands, despite the Chinese sonobuoy drop. Submarines are an integral part of the monitoring of major sea routes to Japan.

With heightened military movements in the region the chance of an accident increases. And with so much firepower in close proximity should the US become involved – along with widespread and popular nationalism in both Japan and China – the need to tread carefully to avoid escalating hostilities is paramount.

As North Korea Blusters, South Flirts With Talk Of Nuclear Arms New York Times, Mar. 13

SEOUL, South Korea — As their country prospered, South Koreans have largely shrugged off the constant threat of a North Korean attack. But breakthroughs in the North's missile and nuclear programs and fiery threats of war have heightened fears in the South that even small miscalculations by the new and untested leaders of each country could have disastrous consequences.

Now this new sense of vulnerability is causing some influential South Koreans to break a decades-old taboo by openly calling for the South to develop its own nuclear arsenal, a move that would raise the stakes in what is already one of the world's most militarized regions.

While few here think this will happen anytime soon, two recent opinion polls show that two-thirds of South Koreans support the idea posed by a small but growing number of politicians and columnists — a reflection, analysts say, of hardening attitudes since North Korea's Feb. 12 underground nuclear test, its third since 2006.

“The third nuclear test was for South Korea what the Cuban missile crisis was for the U.S.,” said Han Yong-sup, a professor of security policy at the Korea National Defense University in Seoul. “It has made the North Korean threat seem very close and very real.”

In recent weeks, the North has approached a crucial threshold with its weapons programs, with the successful launching of a long-range rocket, followed by the test detonation of a nuclear device that could be small enough to fit on top of a rocket. Those advances were followed by a barrage of apocalyptic threats to rain “pre-emptive nuclear strikes” and “final destruction” on Seoul, the South's neon-drenched capital. The intensification of North Korea's typically bellicose language shocked many South Koreans, who had thought the main target of the North's nuclear program was the United States.

Adding to South Koreans' worries, the North and its nuclear arsenal are in the hands of a young new leader, Kim Jong-un, whose brinkmanship appears to be an effort to ensure the support of his nation's powerful military.

The South also has a new president, Park Geun-hye, the daughter of a military strongman who stood firm against North Korea, who herself also faces pressure to stand fast against the North. Just two weeks after her inauguration, Ms. Park faces a crisis as the North makes vague threats interpreted by many South Koreans as the precursor to some sort of limited, conventional military provocation. Ms. Park has promised to retaliate if her nation is attacked,

aware of the public anger directed at her predecessor, Lee Myung-bak, when he showed restraint after the North shelled a South Korean island in 2010, killing four people.

That kind of limited skirmish is more likely than a nuclear attack, but such an episode could quickly inflame tensions and escalate out of control. Over the years, North Korea has sent armed spies across the border, dug invasion tunnels under it and infiltrated South Korean waters with submarines.

But beyond the immediate fear of a military provocation, analysts say deeper anxieties are also at work in the South. One of the biggest is the creeping resurgence of old fears about the reliability of this nation's longtime protector, the United States. Experts say the talk of South Korea's acquiring nuclear weapons is an oblique way to voice the concerns of a small but growing number of South Koreans that the United States, either because of budget cuts or a lack of will, may one day no longer act as the South's ultimate insurance policy.

"The Americans don't feel the North Korean nuclear weapons as a direct threat," said Chung Mong-joon, a son of the founder of the Hyundai industrial group and the former leader of the governing party, who has been the leading proponent of South Korea's development of a nuclear weapons program. "At a time of crisis, we are not 100 percent sure whether the Americans will cover us with its nuclear umbrella."

The United States, which still has 28,500 troops based in South Korea, has sought to assure its ally that it remains committed to the region as part of the Obama administration's strategic "pivot" to Asia. But analysts say the fact that senior leaders like Mr. Chung and a handful of influential newspaper columnists now call for the need for "nuclear deterrence," or at least hint at it, reflects widespread frustrations over the inability of the United States and other nations to end North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Until recently the idea was too radical for most mainstream leaders and opinion makers, including both deeply pro-American conservatives and nationalistic yet antinuclear liberals.

Advocacy for a nuclear-armed South Korea has been virtually taboo since the early 1970s, when the country's military dictator, Park Chung-hee, made a serious bid to develop a nuclear weapon, fearing that the United States might pull out of Asia after its defeat in Vietnam. After catching wind of the program, Washington forced Mr. Park, the new president's father, to stop, persuading him instead to rely on the United States, an agreement that has held ever since.

Mr. Chung and others say that if the United States does not allow South Korea to develop its own nuclear arms, it should at least restore the nuclear balance on the Korean Peninsula by reintroducing American atomic weapons, which were removed from bases in the South in 1991 in a post-cold-war effort to reduce tensions.

Many in the South are now convinced that the North may never give up its nuclear weapons. The South's new level of anxiety is also apparent in the widespread speculation here about when and where the North might carry out another, non-nuclear military provocation.

North Korea has stoked those fears by saying that on Monday it will drop out of the 60-year-old armistice that ended the Korean War, in a show of anger at new United Nations sanctions for its nuclear test. North Korea has threatened to terminate the armistice in the past, but the greater worry now is that it might take actions to contravene it. There have been cryptic warnings in North Korea's state-run news media of coming "counteractions," which have led South Korean officials to warn of an episode like the bombardment of Yeonpyeong Island in 2010.

On Friday, North Korea's state-run television showed Mr. Kim addressing the same artillery units that hit Yeonpyeong. On the same day, South Korean television stations showed President Park with heavily decorated generals, and later descending into the bunker at the Blue House, South Korea's version of the White House, to confer with her national security advisers.

The opposition parties had blocked the confirmation of her cabinet, raising concerns about her ability to respond to a crisis, but she reached a deal allowing her to fill crucial posts on Monday. Even many on the left said that the country would quickly pull together if shots were fired.

"The third test was a wake-up call for the left, too," said Lee Kang-yun, a television commentator.

On the streets of Seoul, it has remained business as usual with no signs of panic, a testimony to the resilience, or perhaps resignation, of a people who have grown used to the North's threats.

Chung Eun-jin, a 26-year-old English teacher interviewed in the trendy Gangnam district, said she was not overly concerned because the North had threatened the South so often before. But Kwon Gi-yoon, 38, an engineer, said that since the North's third test, he believed that South Korea should develop its own nuclear weapons.

Opinions like Mr. Kwon's appear to be spreading. Two opinion polls conducted after the third test, one by Gallup Korea and the other by the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, found that 64 to 66.5 percent of the respondents supported the idea that South Korea should develop its own nuclear weapons, similar to polls after the Yeonpyeong attack in 2010.

"Having a nuclear North Korea is like facing a person holding a gun with just your bare hands," said Mr. Kwon, the engineer. South Koreans should have "our own nuclear capabilities, in case the U.S. pulls out like it did in Vietnam."

Monitor Sailors' Remains Arrive For Burial

Washington Post, March 8

The wind rustled the red, white and blue flags on the two caskets. It blew the pantlegs of the waiting ceremonial guard, and it lifted the jumper flaps on the sailors' uniforms.

It might have seemed familiar to the two shipmates whose bones were borne from the hold of an aircraft Thursday, a century and a half after they perished in a storm off the North Carolina coast.

But the two men, who died aboard the USS Monitor in 1862, were safe from the winds now, and back in the white-gloved hands of fellow sailors who were readying them for their burial Friday at Arlington National Cemetery.

The two sets of remains, which were found when the famous Monitor's 150-ton turret was raised from the bottom of the ocean in 2002, arrived at 11:30 a.m. at Dulles International Airport.

They were flown through Atlanta on a Delta Airlines commercial flight from a military identification laboratory in Hawaii. There they had been studied for the past 10 years and their identities sought, in vain.

As the plane landed, passengers could be seen taking snapshots from the windows, and the plane's pilot, Capt. Steve Manley, came down from the cockpit, stood at attention and saluted near the nose of his jet.

Manley had told the passengers about the remains, explained the history of the Monitor and asked that people stay in their seats until the caskets were unloaded.

As the gusts came, and quiet commands were issued, the caskets were then carried by a Navy Ceremonial Guard to two gray hearses, which took them to an Arlington funeral home to await burial Friday.

One of the most renowned vessels in history, the Monitor is famous for engaging in the first battle between ironclad warships, on March 9, 1862. Its opponent was the formidable Confederate ship CSS Virginia, formerly the USS Merrimack.

The battle in Hampton Roads was a draw, but many people thought the Monitor had saved the Union from the Confederate behemoth.

The Monitor and its crew became national heroes. The ship was swarmed with visitors who begged for autographs. One woman, given a tour, kissed the guns. An emotional President Abraham Lincoln went aboard and reviewed the assembled crew, hat in hand.

But 10 months later as the Monitor was being towed off the coast of North Carolina, it got caught in a fierce storm, capsized and sank. It went undiscovered until a scientific team located the wreck in 1974.

Most of the Monitor's crew escaped the sinking, but 16 men died, including the two who were trapped in the turret.

The names of all 16 are known, but experts could not determine which of them were the ones who were recovered.

One was a younger man, about 21, whose skull showed he had suffered a broken nose and whose feet were clad in a pair of beat-up, mismatched shoes.

The other man was older, about 35, and his bones showed that he might have had a limp from a previous injury. He also had a groove in his left front teeth, probably from clenching a pipe, and he wore a gold ring with a crude swirling pattern on a right-hand finger.

The arrival at Dulles was emotional for some of those who had been working on the Monitor project for years.

"I was thinking of the irony that these men who fought to preserve the Union flew over a United States last night that they couldn't even have comprehended in 1862," said David W. Alberg, superintendent of NOAA's Monitor National Marine Sanctuary, who was aboard the plane.

"It's reassuring that everything that they fought for was not in vain, that the nation not only survived but has thrived," he said.

The funeral Friday is open to the public. After a service at the adjacent Fort Myer chapel, the men are to be buried at 4:30 p.m. in the cemetery's Section 46.

Assistant Secretary of the Navy Juan M. Garcia, who was on hand to meet the plane, said: "It's delivering on a commitment we make to every one of our sailors . . . you will to the maximum extent possible, you will be brought home . . . even if it takes a century and a half."

USS Monitor And USS Minnesota: Connecting The Past With The Present

NAVY LIVE BLOG, March 7

Master Chief Electronics Technician (SS) Randy Reid

PCU Minnesota Chief of the Boat

I am the chief of the boat for the soon-to-be newest Virginia-class submarine in the U.S. Navy, the future USS Minnesota (SSN 783). We are the third ship to bear the name "Minnesota" and we are proud to represent our namesake state. I'm writing this blog because a few of my fellow Sailors, including my commanding officer, Cmdr. John Fancher, and myself are getting the opportunity of a lifetime. We are going to attend and witness the interment of the USS Monitor Sailors into Arlington National Cemetery on March 8, 2013.

Upon hearing of the interment ceremony of the USS Monitor Sailors, I immediately sought the guidance of Cmdr. Fancher and Lt. Cmdr. John Witte, PCU Minnesota's executive officer. "What if we could get some of our Sailors to attend the interment," I asked. The three of us quickly discussed the significant history shared by the Monitor and Minnesota and thought that it would be an honor to attend the ceremony. It would also be a great experience for our Sailors. So, with the help of Commander, Submarine Forces Atlantic and Commander, Submarine Group Two, who both supported the idea and wanted to make this happen, we set out to make this a reality for the members of my crew, realizing the profound link between the two ships.

As a Chief in the Navy, (I) constantly strive to teach our Sailors about heritage and history and the importance of both in our modern Navy. So I couldn't pass up this opportunity to engage my junior shipmates and tell them about the proud legacy of USS Minnesota and her connection with USS Monitor.

Pre-Commissioning Unit (PCU) Minnesota is currently under construction in Newport News, Va., in the area commonly referred to as "Hampton Roads." Our submarine is located in the same area where our predecessor fought

in the American Civil War. The first USS Minnesota was a wooden steam frigate in the U.S. Navy, launched in 1855 and commissioned eighteen months later. The ship served in East Asia for two years before being decommissioned.

She was re-commissioned at the outbreak of the American Civil War and returned to service as the flagship of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. During the first day of the Battle of Hampton Roads on March 8, 1862, Minnesota ended up running aground during battle, badly damaging her and inflicting many casualties. On the second day of the battle, USS Monitor engaged CSS Virginia, which was maneuvering to destroy Minnesota, allowing tugs to free Minnesota on the morning of March 10, 1862.

Minnesota was repaired and returned to duty, and three years later, she participated in the Second Battle of Fort Fisher. Minnesota served until 1898, when she was stricken, beached and burnt to recover her metal fittings and to clear her name for a newly-ordered battleship, USS Minnesota (BB 22), which is known for being a part of “The Great White Fleet.”

So, now that I have given you the history lesson of how Minnesota and Monitor are historically linked, I want to move onto the heritage part. I never thought I would be happy to attend a ceremony such as the one we are going to on Friday, March 8. But, to have my crew, from seaman to commanding officer, attend this ceremony and witness this piece of history is amazing!

We are extremely busy right now while our boat is under construction and could have easily kept our nose to the grind stone, but it's things like this that require us to stop and take the time for something so important. Military burials are a part of our heritage and forever will be. These men could have possibly been onboard the Monitor while she was defending the first Minnesota during the Civil War, allowing her crew to return home to their families and allowing the ship to continue service in the Navy.

These two men lost their lives at sea doing their jobs of fighting the ship, and now, 151 years later, these Sailors are getting laid to rest with honors in the hallowed grounds of Arlington National Cemetery. For protecting our fellow Sailors of the first USS Minnesota, I felt it was our duty to attend the interment ceremony for these two Sailors. While these Sailors are not technically our family members, anyone whose profession- past or present- is being a Sailor or protecting our great nation, is as close as a family.

U.S. Missile Shield Defends Against Ballistic Threats

FOX NEWS, March 7

A missile flies toward U.S. air space in the dark of night. The threat is detected from outer space, and a missile soars in response out of the Pacific Ocean – and within minutes the threat is vaporized.

This is no movie: It's just an ordinary day for the U.S. Navy, which is actively testing the might of a system designed to keep the homeland safe.

Using space-based satellite sensors orbiting the Earth, the Navy's Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMD) recently achieved its first live-fire medium-range ballistic missile intercept.

Aegis-equipped ships can simultaneously attack targets on land, ships and submarines, all while automatically unleashing defenses against enemy aircraft and missiles threatening the fleet, forces or homeland. And the system will remain robust despite budget cuts from sequestration: On Tuesday, March 5, Lockheed Martin was awarded a five-year, \$100.7 million contract to maintain and upgrade the Aegis combat system.

Testing

In the wee hours of Valentine's Day at 4:10 a.m. ET, the Pacific Missile Range Facility in Hawaii launched a medium range ballistic missile that headed northwest over the Pacific Ocean – the 30th test of the system since 2002.

Up in outer space, the Space Tracking and Surveillance System detected and tracked the “threat.” It sent the data back down to Earth to the USS Lake Erie out at sea.

The ship processed the threat data and launched a Raytheon-made SM-3 Block IA missile, a defensive weapon that can destroy short- to intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

In mere minutes the target was vaporized, one missile striking another like a bullet hitting a second bullet in flight. The impact is like a 10-ton truck traveling at 600 mph colliding with a wall, Raytheon says.

Ballistic Missile Threat

Over the past five years, more than 1,200 ballistic missiles have been added to the world’s arsenal, according to the Missile Defense Agency. The total outside the United States, NATO, Russia and China has now risen over 5,900 missiles.

The MDA estimates that hundreds of missiles and launchers are within range of deployed U.S. forces right now.

Advanced ballistic missile technology is now far more widely available to countries hostile to the U.S., and the threat of hostile non-state groups is growing.

Iran’s short and medium range missile stockpile has grown, for example. In August 2012, Iran revealed a new upgraded short-range ballistic missile called Fateh-110 or Conqueror.

In 2009, the Revolutionary Guards tested the Shahab-3 and Sajjil rockets, believed to have ranges of approximately 1,240 miles, meaning they could strike targets in Israel and U.S. bases in the Gulf.

North Korea’s Taepodong-1 could reach Japan and South Korea – as well as U.S. bases, like Okinawa in the region. The Taepodong-2 has a 25 percent greater range, and if eventually successful could reach the U.S. homeland. Its first launch in 2006 appeared to be a failure and its second appearance in 2009 fared no better.

But a leaked 2011 U.N. report seemed to suggest Iran and North Korea were swapping notes on ballistic missile development.

U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense System

American missile defense technology is designed to meet ballistic missile threats at all ranges from short to long, thanks to a “layered defense.”

The BMD system has three main components: detection, interception, and a communications and battle management network.

For target detection and tracking, there are networked sensors and ground- and sea-based radars in addition to the space-based sensors.

Ground- or sea-based interceptors launch missiles to destroy the target.

The third piece, the network, provides commanders with links between the sensors and the interceptor missiles.

Space-based detection and tracking is particularly important because it allows a larger area to be defended. It also enables threats to be intercepted at a longer range than if only ground-based detection systems were used.

Almost one year ago in April 2011, the first successful use of the space-based sensors was demonstrated.

Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense

Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense is the sea-based component of BMD.

To defend the homeland, Aegis ships patrol, detect and track ballistic missiles. The ships provide data to other Navy BMD ships and ground-based Midcourse Defense interceptors like Fort Greely in Alaska and Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

As of November 2012, there were 26 Aegis BMD combatants, comprising cruisers and destroyers, assigned to both the Pacific and Atlantic Fleet.

The MDA and the Navy are working together to increase the number of Aegis ships.

Japan, South Korea in North's range

Reuters, March 8

North Korea has plenty of military firepower even if its threat this week of a pre-emptive nuclear strike on the United States is a hollow one, with South Korea most at risk from the isolated regime's artillery and rockets.

Japan, separated by less than 1,000 km of water and a frequent target of North Korea's ire, is also in easy range of Pyongyang's short- and mid-range missiles.

In pure numbers, North Korea's military looks formidable, much larger than the more affluent South in both personnel and equipment.

The North's 1.2 million soldiers face off against 640,000 South Korean troops who are backed up by 26,000 US personnel stationed in the country.

However, Pyongyang's capabilities are not what the figures would suggest. Impoverished North Korea has all but abandoned running a conventional military that can engage in sustained battle because of scarce resources and has instead focused on nuclear weapons and ballistic missile technology, experts said.

"A conventional military is very costly, and overwhelmingly so for North Korea. It quickly becomes a money fight and North Korea cannot win that," said Shin In-kyun, head of the Korea Defence Network, an alliance of defence experts based in Seoul.

Nevertheless, a defence policy statement from South Korea in December noted that North Korea's frontline artillery pieces could launch a "sudden and massive" barrage on the capital Seoul, a mere 50 km from the Demilitarised Zone border that separates the two Koreas.

North Korea has around 12,000 artillery guns, many arrayed near the border. It also has an arsenal of intermediate range missiles in operational deployment, some of which can travel more than 3000 km. That puts South Korea and Japan in range as well as the US territory of Guam.

"They have the capability to strike anywhere in the South and Japan," said Shin.

North Korea has also shown it has submarine capabilities.

In 2010, a North Korean submarine was widely believed to have sunk a South Korean naval vessel, killing 46 sailors. Pyongyang has denied it was behind the attack.

In the same year, North Korea shelled a South Korean island in a disputed area, killing civilians.

One military expert said the North might be careful before launching another blatant attack, given Seoul has vowed to respond vigorously next time.

MAXIMUM CONFUSION

"The greatest realistic threat from North Korea is a type of attack that will create maximum confusion in the South but one that will be confusing as to who instigated it so that it will not invite immediate retaliation on Pyongyang," said Song Young-keun, a retired Army general who was once head of the intelligence arm of the South's military, the Defense Security Command.

Ad Feedback Cyber warfare or a possible attack on the intricate communication and utility networks in the South could have just as much impact as any outright military action, Song said.

Outside its artillery and missiles, North Korea struggles to match the South.

Many of the soldiers that make North Korea the world's most heavily militarised state are poorly trained or even properly fed and are deployed in hard labour or farming to supplement the meagre resources of their units.

The North's air force has more than 820 fighter jets, according to South Korea's Defence Ministry, but it does not have enough fuel to fly sorties or conduct needed drills to maintain combat effectiveness. South Korea has 460 jets.

North Korea has 4200 tanks, according to South Korea, although Seoul's 2400 are more modern and better maintained.

The question of North Korea's atomic capability was thrust to the headlines when Pyongyang on Thursday threatened the United States with a nuclear strike.

That came in the wake of accusations from Pyongyang that Washington was using military drills in South Korea as a launch pad for a nuclear war.

Experts say North Korea is years away from being able to hit continental America with a nuclear weapon despite a decades-long push toward an atomic capability.

The core of the North's unconventional military focus is a stockpile of fissile material that could be enough for six to eight nuclear weapons, and up to 5000 tonnes of biological and chemical weapons that can wipe out a mid-size industrial city.

North Korea claims to have developed a miniaturised nuclear weapon while the launch of a long-range rocket in December that for the first time put an object into orbit indicated progress in its attempt to build an intercontinental nuclear missile.

"But for a weapons system to be viable, it has to be in production and deployed. I don't think we can say that about the Unha-3," Shin said, referring to the rocket launched on December 12.

Song said the general consensus was the North had yet to shrink a nuclear warhead to put on an intercontinental ballistic missile and more crucially there had been no tests to prove it has mastered the re-entry technology needed to bring a payload back into the atmosphere.

"It's hogwash, blackmail," Song said of Thursday's threat against the United States.

China Navy Seeks to "Wear Out" Japanese Ships in Disputed Waters

Reuters, March 6

HONG KONG -China's naval and paramilitary ships are churning up the ocean around islands it disputes with Tokyo in what experts say is a strategy to overwhelm the numerically inferior Japanese forces that must sail out to detect and track the flotillas.

A daily stream of bulletins announce ship deployments into the East China Sea, naval combat exercises, the launch of new warships and commentaries calling for resolute defense of Chinese territory.

"The operational goal in the East China Sea is to wear out the Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force and the Japan Coast Guard," said James Holmes, a maritime strategy expert at the Newport, Rhode Island U.S. Naval War College.

It wasn't until China became embroiled in the high stakes territorial dispute with Japan late last year that its secretive military opened up.

Now, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) is routinely telegraphing its moves around the disputed islands, known as Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese.

News of these missions also has domestic propaganda value for Beijing because it demonstrates the ruling Communist Party has the power and determination to defend what it insists has always been Chinese territory, political analysts said.

However, experts warn that the danger of these constant deployments from both sides into the contested area increases the danger of an accident or miscalculation that could lead to conflict.

In the most threatening incident so far, Tokyo last month said the fire control, or targeting, radar of Chinese warships near the islands "locked on" to a Japanese helicopter and destroyer in two separate incidents in late January.

Beijing denies this but U.S. military officers have backed up Japan's account.

"We are in extremely dangerous territory here," said Ross Babbage, a military analyst in Canberra and a former senior Australian defense official.

“We could have had Japan and China in a serious war.”

Some foreign and Japanese security experts say Japan’s powerful navy and coast guard still holds the upper hand in the disputed waters but that this could change if Beijing intensifies its patrols.

“I believe China for the time being focuses resources on the South China Sea, which is a higher priority for them now,” said Yoshihiko Yamada, a maritime policy expert and professor at Tokai University.

“But, if they shift more resources to the East China Sea, the coast guard alone would not be able to handle the situation.”

There were signs that tension remained high last week when Tokyo protested that China had deployed a series of buoys around the islands to collect intelligence about Japanese operations.

China’s Foreign Ministry said the buoys were in Chinese waters and positioned to collect weather information.

Beijing’s paramilitary agencies have been equally forthright since the standoff began with a stream of news and footage of their deployments.

Ships from these agencies including customs, maritime surveillance and fisheries are in the frontline of Beijing’s campaign to assert sovereignty over the disputed islands, which are believed to be rich in oil and gas.

A Chinese fisheries surveillance vessel entered Japan’s territorial waters near the islands for the second day running on February 24 in what was the 31st similar incursion since September, the Japanese coast guard said last week.

News bulletins in China are saturated with coverage of Chinese paramilitary ships jostling for position with their Japanese counterparts around the rocky islands.

Pressure on Japan Coast Guard

There is evidence Japan’s coast guard is feeling the pressure.

It plans to form a new, 600-member unit equipped with 12 patrol ships that will be deployed exclusively on missions around the disputed islands.

And, it is boosting its budget to buy ships and aircraft by 23 percent to 32.5 billion yen (\$348.15 million) for the year starting in April.

The coast guard also plans to add 119 personnel in the year starting next month. That would be the biggest staff increase in 32 years.

As tension mounted around the islands ahead of his return to office as prime minister of Japan in December, Shinzo Abe proposed converting retired navy vessels into coast guard patrol ships.

Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera said on Tuesday that his ministry and the coast guard were discussing the idea.

Beijing has so far held its navy back from waters immediately surrounding the disputed territory but its warships are almost constantly patrolling nearby seas and other waterways around the Japanese archipelago, according to the PLA announcements.

In late January, the PLA said a naval fleet would conduct a naval exercise in the Western Pacific after “sailing through islands” off the Chinese coast, a clear reference to the Japanese archipelago. The navy had conducted seven similar exercises last year, it said.

In a series of subsequent bulletins, the PLA said three of its most modern warships, the missile destroyer Qingdao and the missile frigates Yantai and Yancheng would make up the fleet which would conduct training in the Yellow Sea and the East China Sea in an 18-day deployment.

The U.S. navy has also monitored the sharply increased tempo of Chinese naval and paramilitary operations near Japan.

In an unusually blunt public assessment, a senior American naval intelligence officer, Captain James Fanell, told a seminar in San Diego on January 31 that the PLA navy had last year sent seven surface action groups into the Philippines Sea south of Japan.

It had also deployed the biggest number of submarines in its history into this area, he said.

It was unclear if Fanell was referring to the same seven deployments the PLA disclosed last month.

“Make no mistake, the PLA navy is focused on war at sea and about sinking an opposing fleet,” Fanell said.

And, the U.S. officer said, China’s maritime surveillance agency, a civil proxy for the PLA, had become “a full-time maritime sovereignty harassment organization” with the goal of enforcing territorial claims.

The frequency of deployments appears set to continue with the PLA announcing on February 27 it would conduct 40 military exercises this year with an increased emphasis on “core security-related interests.”

Senior Chinese officials have strongly implied that Japan’s claim over the islands is an attack on one of China’s core interests, an important distinction to Beijing in defining its non-negotiable national priorities.

In a speech to the politburo in late January, Chinese party leader Xi Jinping referred to the pain of “wartime atrocities,” an apparent reference to Japan’s bloody invasion and occupation of China last century, according to a report of his remarks carried by the official Xinhua news agency.

“We will stick to the road of peaceful development but will never give up our legitimate rights and will never sacrifice our national core interests,” he was reported to have said.

And, Beijing continues to boost its military firepower. Chinese shipyards last week delivered a new, stealth frigate to the navy, the official PLA Daily newspaper reported.

The radar evading type-056 frigate would be introduced in big numbers as the first step in a systematic upgrade of navy hardware, the paper said.

But Japan Says It Won’t Buckle

Despite the intense military and diplomatic pressure, the Japanese government shows no sign of wilting.

“We simply cannot tolerate any challenge now and in the future,” Prime Minister Abe said recently in Washington.

“No nation should make any miscalculation or underestimate the firmness of our resolve.”

Still, military analysts said Japanese forces must continue to match China’s patrols and exercises.

In a paper prepared for an Australian military think tank last year, an influential Japanese military strategist, retired Vice Admiral Yoji Koda, said Chinese naval forces sailing around the Japanese islands “will surely meet intensive surveillance and continuous tracking” from Japanese forces and its U.S. allies.

Some military analysts suggest Beijing’s continuous deployments around the Diaoyu/Senkaku islands are also part of a wider policy of enhancing its claims over a number of disputed territories in the East China Sea and South China Sea.

“If Beijing starts policing territory it claims as its own, and if rival claimants can’t push back effectively, it will start looking like the rightful sovereign over that territory,” said Holmes.

However, Holmes added that Japan poses a much stiffer challenge for Beijing than smaller nations like the Philippines which also has overlapping territorial claims with China.

While smaller in raw numbers than the PLA navy, the highly trained Japanese navy is generally regarded as the most powerful in Asia with state-of-the-art ships, submarines and aircraft. And, it has a security alliance with the United States that obliges Washington to intervene if Japan is attacked.

Other military experts suggest Beijing has decided to intensify its operations against Japan, a nation whose wartime aggression is remembered across Asia, because confrontations with smaller neighbors in recent years had led to a region-wide diplomatic backlash.

“The Senkaku/Diaoyu hoopla of late is triggered by China’s desire to extricate itself from total regional isolation caused by China’s expansive territorial claims against virtually all of its maritime neighbors,” said Yu Maochun, an expert on the PLA at the Annapolis, Maryland United States Naval Academy. (\$1 = 93.3500 Japanese yen)

Russia, Vietnam Agree on Submarine Fleet Deal

rt.com, March 6

Vietnam will get its own submarine fleet as soon as this year, said Russia's defense minister while on a visit to Hanoi.

"This year a new page will be opened in the history of the Vietnamese Navy – it will get a fleet of submarines," Sergey Shoigu told reporters following the meeting with the Vietnamese Defense Minister Phung Quang Thanh.

The Russian minister said that they reached an agreement on synchronization in preparing both the submarines and their crews, and also decided that Russian military schools would train more Vietnamese specialists in the nearest future.

In earlier comments Shoigu called the cooperation with Vietnam one of the priorities of Russia's foreign policy and promised that Moscow would renew active military cooperation with Hanoi.

In particular, the two sides discussed the possibility for Russian specialists to use the naval base and the military airport in Cam Ranh. All talks were held in secrecy, but Shoigu's visit to Vietnam started from a trip to Cam Ranh, which was once used by Soviet and then by the Russian Navy, but was abandoned in 2002 due to lack of funds.

Russian experts are divided on the possibility and necessity of putting Russian military bases in Vietnam. Colonel-General Leonid Ivashov, former head of the foreign cooperation department of the Russian Defense Ministry, told the *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* daily that such a step is simply necessary as it would seriously strengthen Russia's positions in the South East Asia.

At the same time, the Interfax news agency quoted an unnamed source in the Russian Navy HQ as saying that the return of the Cam Ranh base is not necessary and the issue is not even on the agenda.

News of Russia's future role in the beefing up of the Vietnamese navy comes on the background of the major international row over the South China Sea and its major oil and gas deposits. In the latest developments, Vietnam has commenced exploratory drilling on the sea shelf, but China replied with a note demanding it to stop. Soon after that China declared that the oil under the South China Sea was its national asset. Other neighboring countries, such as the Philippines and Malaysia also voiced claims to the resource-rich region.

Brushes Dust off 25-year Old Sub

Barentsobserver.com, Mar. 5

"Karp" will be one of the oldest nuclear powered submarines in service with the Northern fleet when she sails towards the Barents Sea in 2016. Originally commissioned in 1987, the submarine was only in service for ten years before being laid-up in 1997. "Karp" was recently moved from her laid-up location in Severodvinsk to the Zvezdochka yard where upgrades will start, reports a naval blog site.

Upgrade work will take three years and includes the reactor, electronics and weapons, reports *Izvestia*.

The hull of the submarine is made in titanium, said to be the main reason why the submarine now will be upgraded and put into service again instead of being scrapped. Titanium is very expensive; therefore it is cheaper to repair such submarines than to build new ones. Titanium resists deep-water pressure better than steel-hulls and do not attract magnetic mines.

A total of six Sierra-class submarines were built in the 80ies. Two of them are still in active duty, the "Nizhny Novgorod" and "Kostroma" both based in Vidyaevo on Russia's Kola Peninsula. Two of the laid-up ones will be re-commissioned.

A senior official in the navy's head command says to Izvestia that the decision to re-commission the Sierra-class submarines was taken in January. "It was not a spontaneous decision, we carefully considered and concluded that repair of the vessels were more cost-effective than scrapping them."

The other Sierra-class submarine still in operation, the "Kostroma" is next in line for upgrade. Zvezdocka officials says "Kostroma" will be repaired after the "Karp" is ready, while the navy blog site says it is possible that this repair and upgrade will take place at Zvezdockha's branch-yard Nerpa northwest of Murmansk.

"Kostroma" made headlines in 1992 when she collided with the American nuclear powered submarine "Baton Rouge" just outside the entrance to the Kola bay.

Repairs of the hulls will not be difficult, Zvezdockha argues, because unlike steel titanium does not corrode.

Effort Afoot in House to Preserve Carrier, Submarine Spending **Dailypress.com, Mar. 6**

Top House Republicans are pushing legislation that spares Newport News Shipbuilding from potentially costly delays to several high-dollar aircraft carrier projects even while maintaining deep cuts to other federal spending programs.

The federal government is funded through March 27, and at funding levels frozen below what Pentagon planners had been expecting. As a result, the midlife refueling and complex overhaul of the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, scheduled to be towed into Newport News on Valentine's Day was postponed.

Navy planners also canceled 11 surface ship maintenance projects that are considered crucial to several smaller shipyards in Norfolk and their suppliers. And projects to overhaul the USS Theodore Roosevelt and build the carrier John F. Kennedy, could also be delayed..

The new House legislation, sponsored by Appropriations Committee chair Rep. Hal Rogers, R-Kentucky, includes \$1.6 billion for carrier overhaul programs for 2013. That amount – as well as an allotment for advanced purchases related to the overhaul program – is in line with what the Navy asked for in the White House's budget request for fiscal year 2013.

Democrats in the House have voiced their opposition to the Republican plan, which they say slashes programs serving the country's most vulnerable citizens, but it remains unclear how Senate Democrats will approach the legislation, which may be voted on Thursday the House.

Mike Petters, CEO and president of shipyard parent Huntington Ingalls Industries, was asked about the House bill at an industry conference event for investors, and was cautiously optimistic about some sort of a resolution to the budget squabbles of the past month.

And, according to an event transcript on the website Seeking Alpha, he stressed that the Navy in its communications with Congress has "highlighted the importance" over the past six weeks of key shipyard carrier programs – the Lincoln and Roosevelt overhauls; the Kennedy construction and the defueling of the Enterprise.

"You could see some kind of normal course of business start to break out here," he said.

In addition to protecting carrier programs, the House bill includes spending levels in line with a Navy budget request for construction of Virginia-class submarines, which are built collaboratively by the shipyard, and Groton, Conn.,-based General Dynamics Electric Boat.

On Saturday night, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said across-the-board cuts, known as sequestration, mean the Navy is re-negotiating a contract for advance materials purchases for a yet-to-be-named Virginia-class submarine that will be delivered by Electric Boat.

Lt. Courtney Hillson, a Navy spokeswoman, said the various contractors involved in the advanced procurement for the submarine may have to make do with an amount below the \$386 million that's described in the original contract and a contract modification signed in December.

She said about \$26 million, or 6.7 percent of the total contract value, has not been "obligated" by the Navy.

According to a description on a Department of Defense website, a substantial amount of the work under the contract was scheduled to be performed in Coatesville, Pa. – where ArcelorMittal owns a steel mill that supplies a number of shipbuilders – and Sunnyvale, Calif., home of Northrop Grumman Marine Systems.

Robert Hamilton, a spokesman for Electric Boat the prime contractor, said Tuesday the sequestration-inspired revisiting of the sub contract is out of the ordinary.

"We're living in unusual times," Hamilton said. "It's reflection of the times and the Navy doing what it needs to do. It's not a performance issue."

"These are the times of ultimate uncertainty," he added.

Remembering the Thresher

Newburyportnews.com, Feb. 27

When her keel was laid at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on May 28, 1958, the USS Thresher was set to be the world's most advanced attack sub, nuclear-powered and able to dive deeper, cruise faster and run quieter than any before her.

But by 9:13 a.m. on Wednesday, April 10, 1963, the Thresher and all 129 men aboard her were dead, their remains eventually found scattered across the bottom of the ocean, 8,400 feet below the surface, about 220 miles east of Boston.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Thresher disaster, and local members of the U.S. Submarine Veterans will honor the sailors who died aboard the ship — including two Newburyporters and a Salisbury Beach resident.

The ceremony will be held April 10 at 9 a.m. at a memorial marker in Salisbury Beach Center that honors the memory of Robert Steinel, a Salisbury Navy man.

"We're planning just a quiet, reserved ceremony to memorialize the people who lost their lives on the Thresher," U.S. Submarine Veterans Marblehead base commander Tom Shannon told Salisbury selectmen this week. "It should take about half an hour. We'll read the names of all who were lost, and there'll be the tolling of bells."

With Shannon at the selectmen's meeting were other local submarine veterans, Peter Koester of Rowley and Arthur Ober of Salisbury. They're all proud of their service on these Navy ships built for stealth, and they know the debt they owe to the men who lost their lives on the Thresher.

The loss of the Thresher was a landmark event in American Naval history. The nation was stunned in the hours that followed the Navy's first announcement that it had lost contact with its wunder-boat during sea trials. With a seafaring history and the home of two Naval hubs, New England had many sons on the Thresher. In Newburyport and Salisbury, families with men on aboard prayed that the ship, whose motto was "silent strength," had gone quiet only because of communications problems.

Then came Thursday, April 11, when Chief of Naval Operation Admiral George W. Anderson announced "with deep regret" that boat and all aboard — 16 officers, 96 enlisted men and 21 civilians — had indeed been lost.

The USS Skylark had accompanied Thresher on sea trials, hearing her last words at 9:13 a.m. on that fateful Wednesday relaying a message that she was experiencing "minor difficulties." But quickly following came a series of unintelligible verbal fragments. By 9:18 a.m., Skylark's sonar picked up the sounds of the ship breaking apart.

The Thresher's last understandable report came as she began a maximum test dive. The depth to which the sub had planned to descend was classified, Anderson said, but then he explained to a horrified nation that the chance of finding any survivors was gone.

"If this submarine sank in the water of that depth in which she was operating," Anderson said, "I would say that there would be absolutely no possibility that (those aboard) would still be alive."

On board were Steinel of Salisbury Beach, Robert E. Charron and Donald Day, both of Newburyport, and Fred Abrams, of Kittery, Maine, whose sister lived in Salisbury at the time.

According to The Daily News on April 11, 1963, Steinel, of Railroad Avenue, was a veteran sailor with 16 years of service to his country, with a wife and three little children. Charron, of Federal Street, was a husband and father of five, a civilian electronics technician at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard on board just for the sea trials. Day listed an address on Inn Street, and Abrams was also a civilian from the shipyard.

Over the decades that followed, family members and the region would never forget those who lost their lives on the Thresher, holding yearly memorials, particularly in Portsmouth and Arlington National Cemetery.

The Navy's extensive investigation into the Thresher disaster indicated a leak in an engine room seawater system as the most probable cause of the tragedy, as well as other probable causes discovered by the Navy's research and that of a Congressional inquiry. After locating the Thresher's imploded remains on the sea floor, a Court of Inquiry found she most likely sank due to a piping failure that led to a loss of power that prevented the ship from blowing its ballast tanks fast enough to avoid sinking.

Following the discoveries, the Navy undertook a massive effort, known as "Subsafe," to correct design and construction problems in its existing and future nuclear subs that it believed led to the Thresher tragedy. Since the implementation of Subsafe, the Navy and nation has endured no further losses like those of the Thresher.

Laid down in May 1958 and launched July 9, 1960, at 3,700 tons, the Thresher was 279 feet long, 32 feet wide and had a draft of 26 feet, receiving her Naval commission as a cutting-edge naval vessel in August 1961. In the midst of the Cold War, carrying the label of "submarine killer," Thresher was the first of her kind, the nuclear-powered marvel of her day.

Breaking the Barrier: The Story of the Navy's first African American Submarine Commanding Officer *Navy.mil, Feb. 25*

The Navy submarine community has an adage that says, "The number of surfaces must equal the number of dives." When submerged hundreds of feet beneath the sea, submarine Sailors have to put their differences, and sometimes even their rank, aside to ensure when they go under they can come back up – otherwise, everybody has a very bad day. The dynamic on a submarine is unique, but during a time when racial tensions were boiling over in America, adding a black officer to a submarine crew could have made things even more complicated. Somehow, Pete Tzomes made it work to his advantage, and that of the Navy's.

In May 1983, close to 30 years after Rosa Parks was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus for a white man, Tzomes made his own splash in the history books, a sign of the changing times. On a spring day in Norfolk, Va., he would report for duty aboard USS Houston (SSN 713) as the first black commanding officer of a nuclear-powered submarine, a stark contrast to the life he envisioned for himself as a young man. "There were three things I was thinking about doing when I grew up: a professional baseball player, a garbage man or a pimp," laments Tzomes. "I had no role models. The reason that I thought about those is because I just thought that's how I can make money."

Born in 1944 in Williamsport, Penn., Tzomes is the older of two children born to James and Charlotte Tzomes. His mother instilled in him the value of hard work and discipline at an early age. In those days racism was not as overt in

the North as the South. However, it was commonplace to hear the “N-word” thrown around. There was still a very distinct racist undertone. In fact, there was a street in Williamsport referred to as “N——r Hollow.”

Even the neighborhood children provided a constant reminder that things were different for blacks. “Kids that were 10 or 11 years old would call my father by his first name, and that just used to bother me. And back in those days, that came with the turf. That was part of the way of keeping you in your place.”

Regardless of his surroundings, his parents taught him to deal with racism and not to be sidetracked by it. “They taught me to live with it, not react, not get violent, because there would be better things to come especially after I grew up, just deal with it.”

When Tzomes was in junior high school, he had an awakening of sorts about the direction he wanted to take his life. Midshipmen on a recruiting visit to his junior high school showed Tzomes and his classmates a Navy video called “Ring of Valor.”

“It got my attention, and I started thinking that maybe I want to go to the Naval Academy.”

But, in those days, blacks were viewed as inferior and not suitable to serve in prestigious positions. Tzomes learned this firsthand when he expressed interest to his school guidance counselor.

“I’ll never forget those words. He says, ‘Pete, why don’t you concentrate on something reasonable? Negroes can’t go to the Naval Academy.’”

Tzomes fired back at his counselor, “It didn’t say that in the movie!”

The resistance didn’t deter him. Instead, it lit a fire in Tzomes to make it into the academy.

To enter the Naval Academy, applicants had to receive a legislative appointment. The congressman in Tzomes’ district gave a competitive exam to those seeking his appointment. His senior year of high school, Tzomes took the test but wasn’t selected. Instead, he was an alternate. So Tzomes enrolled in Oneonta State University in upstate New York. However, he took the appointment test a second time, still only receiving an alternate spot, but because he had good grades he was selected to attend the Naval Academy as a qualified alternate.

In 1963, 250,000 people joined Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. for the civil rights march on Washington, D.C. That same year, in the face of Governor George Wallace physically blocking their way, Vivian Malone and James Hood stood their ground and were allowed to register for classes at the University of Alabama. Riots broke out in Birmingham, Ala. after four young black girls attending Sunday school were killed when a bomb exploded at the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. Meanwhile, in Annapolis, Md., Pete Tzomes arrived at the U.S. Naval Academy campus.

“There were two [blacks] in my class and we still talk about that. You know, where were we when all this was happening? We were sheltered at the Naval Academy.” Sheltered, but only to a degree. Although Tzomes was not subjected to the threat of lynching, vicious police dogs, or the unforgiving blow from a water hose, there were still those who brought their prejudiced views to Annapolis.

“At the Naval Academy in those days we had racial issues. Administratively, all of the rules were going to be right for blacks, but the way you got treated by upperclassmen and your classmates, that’s different. I got called “n——r” a few times while I was there. There were always the few who were like that. They didn’t hide their feelings about you or about your race.

“When Dr. King got shot, there was some sort of news release, and we all heard about Dr. King getting shot. And one of my classmates who rowed crew at the academy . . . very muscular, in very good shape, over six-foot tall, came up to me and says to me, ‘Tomzy, what are your people going to do now your big leader’s dead?’ Just like that.

“And I told him, ‘I know you’re bigger than I am, but I’ll tell you, I’ll get one last kick in your crotch area and you’ll never forget it. Get away from me!’ And he did. But [he was] only one person. There were about 20 of us in our class, and he was the only person like that. That’s typical of my experiences back in those days.”

Tzomes would have to deal with prejudice and discrimination several more times throughout his time at the Naval Academy, but he overcame those challenges. The only thing worse than dealing with discrimination was when he found out he would not be able to become a pilot in the Marine Corps.

“I wanted to be a Marine pilot. And I went to take my flight physical my senior year; and, they said I was too short to fly. I was completely demoralized because that’s all I wanted to do. But good grades open up all possibilities. I was on the equivalent of the dean’s list at the Naval Academy, so I applied for the nuclear power program. I was the second black accepted into the nuclear-power program, and the first on submarines. It was prestigious.”

Tzomes entered the submarine field, and after 12 months of nuclear-power training and six months of submarine training, he reported to the “blue crew” of the ballistic missile submarine USS Will Rogers (SSBN 659) in February 1969.

“When I got my commission in the 60s, it was not uncommon, especially in major ports like San Diego [and] Norfolk, white Sailors refused to salute black officers. Some would tell you, ‘I ain’t gonna take no orders from no n—r officer.’ I used to tell folks, ‘Don’t look at me. Look at what’s on my collar.’”

“On my first submarine there were two blacks, a first class steward and a first class torpedoman. They looked at me with pride. You could see it in the way that they interacted with me. They were proud that there was a black officer that they can call ‘sir.’”

Tzomes persevered through his career over the next 14 years. He was assigned to the pre-commissioning unit of the fast attack submarine USS Pintado (SSN 672). In December 1970, he served in division officer billets until completing his engineering officer qualification. In April 1973, Tzomes was assigned as engineering officer aboard USS Drum (SSN 672), where he served until August 1976. From September 1976 until September 1979, he was assigned to the nuclear propulsion examining board on the staff of then-Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. In November 1979, he reported as executive officer aboard USS Cavalla (SSN 684), where he served for almost three years.

“Once I got through my first couple of submarines, it was like, ‘You know this isn’t that bad.’ I liked what submarines did, especially when I started on fast attack, and I liked what they did on what we called ‘spec ops’ during the Cold War. That was exciting. I said, ‘I want to command one of these.’ If I was going to command one of these, I was going to be the first [African American] and I knew that.”

While on his executive officer tour, Tzomes screened for a command position, with the knowledge that if he had a successful executive officer tour, he would attend commanding officer nuclear training and, ultimately, command his own submarine.

“The racial thing had nothing to do with motivating me except for the fact that I knew that if I got the command that I would be the first. But it wasn’t, ‘I want to be the first black commanding officer.’ I want to be a commanding officer. This stuff is fun. I want to be in charge. This is what I want to do, just coincidentally I’m black.”

In 1983, Tzomes took over as commanding officer of USS Houston in Norfolk and six months later, the submarine switched homeports to San Diego, where Tzomes received a hero’s welcome.

“I’ll never forget, it was 9 or 10 o’clock at night. I was just beaming. There were several folks from the black community in San Diego that made it a point. They were on the waterfront to greet me. It’s kind of hard to describe. That just made me feel special.”

By the 80s, the racial paradigm in American had shifted, and the experience Tzomes had was completely different.

“When I was in command, nobody’s going to say, ‘I ain’t taking no orders from no n—r officer,’” said Tzomes. “Those days were gone. I did have some issues with a couple of chief petty officers that didn’t like having a black

commanding officer, but most of it was subtle. The playing field was more leveled... more opportunities for anybody to do almost anything they wanted to do.”

“They did, in *Ebony* [magazine], a feature story on me when I was in command. The crew was very proud of that. They were very proud of their commanding officer. Once you earn the trust of all your shipmates, then all the other issues go away.”

“I came back to the Naval Academy, and they had invited him to come speak. He talked to the midshipmen and afterwards, he stood around so folks could come talk to him. I walked up to him and introduced myself and started this conversation about [how] life is tough for me, and before I got more than a sentence or two into it, he gave that look like, ‘You have no idea what it’s really like!’” Grooms recalled. “And I remember the look, and it was the look of an older brother that wants you to do well. In his special way he said, ‘You better toughen up and get going!’ And I really think that’s part of the reason I was able to achieve the things I have, because I had someone like that who cared enough to not sugarcoat what I needed to be doing. I think the world of him. He inspired me in a big way.”

Grooms and Tzomes along with Rear Adm. Tony Watson, Capt. Will Bundy, Vice Adm. Mel Williams, Capt. Joe Peterson, Adm. Cecil Haney are now fondly referred to as the Navy’s “Centennial Seven,” the first seven African American submarine commanders.

“So as we were approaching the hundredth anniversary of the submarine force, there were seven African American officers who were commanding officers of submarines,” Grooms said. “And so we had this relationship with the Black Engineer of the Year Awards, and we would gather there every year. It kind of dawned on the group collectively, although I’m happy to give Admiral Mel Williams most of the credit, it dawned on us that there’s this special thing. It’s 100 years, and there are seven of us and ‘Centennial Seven’ resonates.”

From there, the Centennial Seven were born, and they have been committed to paying it forward ever since.

“We try to gather with aspiring submariners, the young junior officers working their way up, just to give them some insight,” said Grooms. “I think what happens lots of times with the young folks is that they go into something where there is only one or two of them and they sort of think that, ‘I’m on my own and I’m the only person that’s ever experienced this.’ And just like my experience with Captain Tzomes, who had seen a whole lot more of the challenges than I, you really do want the chance to talk candidly.”

Grooms is now paving the way for more black submarine officers the same way Tzomes did years ago.

“When I see an African American officer, I beam with pride because I know what they’ve gone through to get trained and be where they are. As I count the number of young African Americans, there are still not enough. And it’s been a few years since we had another reach command - it’s been too many years. And so I do try to put my arm around their shoulders and help them if there is anything that I can continue to do to interact with the young guys and encourage them,” said Grooms.

And while there is still room for growth, for African Americans to achieve more in the Navy, Tzomes said it is important to realize how far things have come.

“We’re past the term where we need to be talking about ‘first’ and all these exceptions,” said Tzomes. “That’s terrific.”

Navy Seeking To Withhold Some Funding For Future SSN Mike McCarthy *DefenseDaily.com, Mar. 4*

The Navy says it is moving to renegotiate a contract for long-lead materials for a Virginia-class submarine planned for fiscal 2014 to cope with automatic budget cuts that took effect on Friday.

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus said the decision to renegotiate contract modifications was an immediate response to the automatic budget cuts known as sequestration, and that other steps will have to be taken across the Navy to deal with the impact of sequestration and the possibility of a continuing resolution (CR) to govern spending for the rest of the fiscal year.

President Barack Obama signed the sequestration order required under the Budget Control Act of 2011 late Friday after the White House and congressional Democrats and Republicans failed to reach a budget agreement.

“Because no budget deal had been reached, the Budget Control Act required setting in motion the automatic, government-wide cuts known as sequestration,” Mabus said in a memo issued over the weekend.

“Given that reality and the association impact of budget uncertainty imposed by an indefinite continuing resolution, the Department of the Navy intends to commence some reductions immediately.”

The Navy allotted \$874 million in fiscal 2013 for long lead items for the 19th Virginia-class (SSN-774) attack submarine. Of that, more than

90 percent, or \$849 million, has been obligated, a spokeswoman said.

The Navy is looking to “de-obligate” the remaining amount under Mabus’ instructions.

General Dynamics [GD] Electric Boat and Huntington Ingalls Industries [HII] are the makers of the Virginia-class subs.

Long-lead materials are generally items that take lengthy amounts of time to produce and can include the nuclear power plant.

Mabus said the Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) program, built by Austal USA, will be affected under his order.

Russia, Vietnam discuss submarine, arms purchase *Europeonline-magazine.eu, Mar. 5*

Hanoi (dpa) - Vietnam and Russia discussed expanding weapons sales including submarines during a visit to Hanoi Tuesday by Defence Minister General Sergei Shoigu.

“The submarine force of Vietnam will come into being through the common efforts of the two sides” this year, Shoigu said, calling it “a new chapter in historical development of the Vietnamese navy.”

Russia is scheduled to deliver in August the first of six diesel submarines Vietnam agreed to buy for 2.1 billion dollars in 2009, and the rest by 2016.

Vietnam, one of Russia’s top arms buyers, was discussing the purchase of spare parts to maintain Soviet-era weapons, new weapons and ships, as well as the submarines.

“Vietnam will continue to sign contracts to buy weapons and military equipments from Russia,” Vietnamese Defence Minister Phung Quang Thanh said.

“We also discussed training new crew groups and the building of new military ships,” Shoigu said.

On Monday, Shoigu visited Cam Ranh naval base at a deepwater port 300 kilometres north of Ho Chi Minh City. The port was used as a US military base during the war and later as a maintenance centre for Russian warships.

The two sides also discussed Russia's upgrading of naval facilities at the bay. Thanh said Vietnam would not allow a foreign military base to be set up there.

Vietnam, with more than 3,000 kilometres of coastline, does not have a functioning submarine force. According to military analyst website globalsecurity.org, it bought two Yugo-class midget submarines from North Korea in 1997, but their operational status was uncertain. dpa ptb msb cds Author: Pham Bac and Marianne Brown

Market for conventional subs to grow

UPI.com, March 4

LONDON, March 4 (UPI) — LONDON, March 4 (UPI) — The world market for conventional diesel-electric submarines is predicted to grow at a compounded rate of 1.8 percent until 2022.

British market research and analysis company Frost and Sullivan said especially in demand will be submarines with air-independent propulsion systems.

“The naval operations environment has changed significantly; operations at sea have moved from the ‘blue water’ open ocean to the ‘brown water’ shallow coastal environment,” said Frost and Sullivan Aerospace, Defense and Security Industry Analyst Dominik Kimla. “The importance of smaller and quieter conventional submarines, rather than larger, nuclear-powered (ones), has increased significantly.”

The Asia-Pacific region and Europe appear to be the prime growth areas for conventional submarines, the company said. The Asia-Pacific market for conventional submarines is predicted to grow 2.1 percent and account for 47.2 percent of the global demand.

Europe, which holds a 22.4 percent market share for the vessels and that is expected to grow at a compound rate of 1.5 percent. Germany, Italy, Turkey and Spain have “prominent” conventional submarine projects. “Navies are increasingly looking at modern SSK (conventional submarines) due to its multi-role capacities and semi-strategic potential,” Kimla said. “Consequently, modern conventional submarines present significant market opportunities for the submarine sector to sell new boats as well as to retrofit standard SSK with AIP plug in section.”

Brazil To Induct Nuclear-Powered Submarine In 2023

Defenseworld.net, March 4

Brazil is all set to get its very own nuclear-powered submarine, according to President Dilma Rousseff.

Rousseff, on Friday, inaugurated a naval shipyard in Rio de Janeiro state where the country's first nuclear-powered sub is set to be built in partnership with France.

“We can say that with these installations we are entering the select club of countries with nuclear submarines: The United States, Russia, France, Britain and China,” said Rousseff.

Under the \$3.95 billion deal, France will supply Brazil, which already has the uranium enrichment technology required for producing nuclear fuel, with four conventional submarines and help develop the non-nuclear components.

According to the defense ministry, the first of the four conventional Scorpene-class subs will be delivered to the Brazilian Navy in 2017, while the nuclear-powered vessel will be commissioned in 2023.

“This alliance (with France) must be carefully watched by all those who are taking part because our mission is to ensure that this technology is transferred to us in line with the contract,” Rousseff said.

The 75-meter-long (246-foot) Scorpene is a diesel-electric attack submarine built by France's DCNS naval defense firm for a variety of missions, including anti-submarine warfare, special operations and intelligence collection.

Submarine Sent to World's Deepest Sea Vents

The New Zealand Herald, Feb. 28

Researchers steering a remote-controlled submarine around the world's deepest known hydrothermal vents have collected numerous samples from sunless depths of the Caribbean Sea where blazing hot, mineral-rich fluid gushes from volcanic chimneys that look like gnarled tree stumps.

Jon Copley, chief scientist for the expedition of Britain's National Oceanography Center, said Wednesday he believes that laboratory analysis in the coming months will reveal some new life forms that have evolved in the pitch-black vent areas of the Cayman Trough, more than five kilometres below the sea's surface between the Cayman Islands and Jamaica.

"From body form alone, I am confident that we have found several new species on this expedition: probably a new species of sea anemone, a few species of bristle worms, and some small crustaceans," Copley said in an email from the RRS James Cook research ship.

The researchers discovered the deepest known hydrothermal vent field and new organisms in the Caribbean trench nearly three years ago.

At a depth of 4,960 metres, the Beebe Vent Field spews out inky, copper-enriched fluids from hot regions below the sea floor into the frigid depths of the sea.

The undersea vents are among the hottest found anywhere on the planet. The highest sustained temperature that researchers measured was just over 400 Celsius, said Copley, a marine biologist who works at Britain's University of Southampton.

Besides discovering new life, scientists say the study of the vents could yield a variety of new insights into the geological processes that form and drive them, the physics of so-called "supercritical fluids" - liquids so hot they act like gasses - and the chemical makeup of the ocean's depths.

Copley said studies of the marine life found in the area should also tell scientists more about how animals disperse and evolve in the dark ocean depths, which cover most of our planet.

Another scientist aboard the ship, Andrew David Thaler, a post-doctoral researcher at the Duke University marine laboratory in Beaufort, North Carolina, said there were abundant populations of some species around the vents, particularly an eyeless shrimp dubbed *Rimicaris hybisae* that was discovered by the research team in 2010.

"They're so thick that you often can't even see the rock beneath because they're buried in blankets of shrimp," Thaler said in an email from the James Cook.

Such large amounts of anemones were found at the Beebe site that Thayer said they "look almost like meadows."

Among other things, researchers recorded images of a slender mineral chimney almost 10 metres tall. At another site, a mound of minerals formed by the superheated fluid rushing from the vents rises some 30-metres from the seafloor. They saw brilliant oranges and red colors on the seabed from the bounty of iron, and also blues and greens from copper.

The ultra-hot fluid shooting from the vents into the icy cold of the deep ocean creates a smoke-like effect and leaves behind pinnacle-shaped structures of metal ore. The pressure - 500 times stronger than the earth's atmosphere - keeps the water from boiling.

At the base of this ecosystem are chemical-eating bacteria that draw on the hydrogen sulphide and methane erupting from the vents to make food.

Unlike other living things, the organisms that inhabit the dark vent areas do not depend on photosynthesis, the process by which plants convert sunlight into energy. Instead, chemosynthetic bacteria is the base of the food chain.

To see what scavengers might show up, a big slab of pork was dropped into depths some distance away from the vents. Cusk eels about 1.5 metres long and scavenging crustaceans called amphipods made short work of the meat offering, according to the expedition scientists.

“The fact that it has been so quickly eaten means that, despite being very nutrient-limited, the deep sea can still support animals capable of exploiting the random occurrence of large carcasses sinking to the sea floor,” Thayer said.

Chinese Navy Receives First “Stealthy” Corvette *Ottawacitizen.com, Feb. 27*

The People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) took delivery of its first Jiangdao-class corvette during a ceremony in Shanghai on Tuesday, according to Channel News Asia. The 95 metre-long, Type 056 vessel, which has a displacement of 1,300 tons and can reach speeds of up to 28 knots, is reportedly equipped with YJ-83 sea-skimming anti-ship cruise missiles, a FL-3000N short range missile system, and will be used for anti-submarine warfare operations and escort missions. It’s sleek design has been described as stealthy.

The Navy is Sick of the One-Person Subs it Uses for Deep-Sea Diving *Wired.com, Feb. 26*

Moving around underwater in a diving suit is a lot less fun than it sounds. To survive at the deepest depths, divers need enormous, cumbersome, pressure-resistant suits that limit their mobility. But the Navy is sick of trading survivability for flexibility, no matter how far into the briny deep its divers wade.

In the Navy’s most recent round of technology solicitations to small businesses, the seafaring service is looking for someone to develop a lightweight atmospheric diving suit that weighs under 400 pounds and can withstand pressure at 1,000 feet below sea level. If the weight requirement still sounds pretty heavy, consider that the current generation of deep-sea suits can weigh *thousands* of pounds, limiting what divers can do in them.

According to the solicitation, the new diving suit is for “expeditionary diving and salvage forces” (.pdf) and retrieving “high value material” in “austere environments.” Unlike the bulky suits divers currently wear — really more like one-person submarines — these might be light enough so divers can propel themselves with their own feet. (Current models use thrusters, not divers’ legs.) Still, a wetsuit this ain’t: It’s still a self-contained pressure suit.

It’s also extremely dangerous to dive below a few hundred feet without one of these single-serving subs. Below 500 feet, a neurological disorder called high-pressure nervous syndrome can kick in, which can lead to drowsiness and tremors. Breathing nitrogen and oxygen at depths below 300 feet can also cause blackouts and even death. Saturation diving, which relies on gradually acclimating to underwater pressure over time, isn’t perfect either. Surfacing too quickly can result in the bends, a form of decompression sickness caused by nitrogen bubbles expanding and becoming stuck in vital organs.

To prevent death from happening at these extreme depths, bulky atmospheric suits maintain a steady internal pressure of one standard atmosphere, or one atm — the same as the mean pressure at sea level. That also means deep-sea divers don’t have to depressurize when surfacing. But the Navy notes: “This size and cumbersome configuration severely constrains its use.”

Some experimental suits have some of the functionality the Navy wants. Canadian firm Nuytco Research recently developed an atmospheric diving suit called the Exosuit ADS, which can descend to 1,000 feet — its crush depth is double that — and weighs between 500 to 600 pounds, just over the Navy's requirement. Divers can wear flipper boots in addition to the suit's thrusters. And the Nuytco model uses a foam coating of teeny, tiny microbubbles to keep divers' limbs buoyant. The suit also has artificial hands controlled by handles contained inside.

Nor is the Navy the only part of the military giving divers a boost. The Pentagon's blue-sky research agency Darpa wants to develop a sensor system that can detect signs of decompression sickness in divers, and adjust for it by squirting small amounts of nitric oxide into divers' lungs when there's danger. But those divers won't be operating at extreme depths. For that, you'll still need a clunky suit — though a lighter one. With flipper boots.

NATO to test anti-submarine warfare underwater and surface vehicles

Defense Systems, Feb. 25

The NATO Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE) will test a wave-powered unmanned surface vehicle known as the Wave Gilder at its upcoming Proud Manta '13 exercise, which serves as a way to test new anti-submarine warfare (ASW) technologies, the organization said.

The large-scale exercise, which will be held from February 23 to March 6 off the coast of Sicily, is an opportunity for CMRE to test cutting-edge ASW systems in a realistic scenario and see how new technology advances can be applied to NATO missions in the future.

During the event, CMRE scientists plan to test new autonomous underwater vehicles (AUVs), autonomous surface vehicles (ASVs) and associated software designed to detect and track submarines in the marine environment.

Proud Manta '13 will include experimentation with an autonomous ASW barrier designed to protect a shoreline asset using AUVs and ASVs as in POMA '12.

CMRE will conduct the Multistatic ASW Experimentation which will use collaborative AUVs and ASVs, and a tactical planning and exercise reconstruction using CMRE's Multistatic Tactical Planning Aid tool.

POMA 13 CMRE experiments are conducted from and supported by the 93-metre NATO Research Vessel Alliance, the only ship jointly owned by all NATO nations.

Search Begins for Famous World War II Submarine

TIME World, Feb. 22

One of the most celebrated submarines of World War II could soon be located 70 years after she was scuttled to avoid falling into enemy hands.

On Aug. 14, 1943, the H.M.S. Saracen was deliberately sunk by her crew near the town of Bastia, on the northern coast of the French island of Corsica, after being damaged in a clash with Italian warships. She has lain undisturbed at the bottom of the Mediterranean ever since, but now a new operation to find her wreck is under way.

The André Malraux, a state-of-the-art, \$13 million research vessel, departed from the French port of Marseille on Monday and is now combing the ocean floor in search of the lost British sub. France's underwater archaeological unit (DRASSM) is using side-scan sonar to locate the remains and will then deploy a robotic camera to examine her down in the depths.

“A copy of the resulting pictures and film will be sent to the Royal Navy Submarine Museum in Gosport for their archives,” Terry Hodgkinson, a British author who has written extensively about the ill-fated vessel, told the U.K. Telegraph. “Some will also be sent to the family members of HMS Saracen’s crew.”

(MORE: End of the Road for Burma Spitfire Hunt?)

The 217-foot Saracen was one of the most successful Allied submarines marauding the seas of Europe. She torpedoed the Italian submarine Granito, the auxiliary submarine chaser Maria Angelette, the Vichy French tugs Provincale II and Marseillaise V, the Italian merchant ships Tagliamento and Tripoli and the German merchant vessel Tell, according to official records.

But on Aug. 13, 1943, she was mortally wounded by depth charges launched from the Italian corvettes Minerva and Euterpe; her superstitious captain, Lieut. Michael Lumby, insisted on waiting for a day to pass in order to avoid scuttling the ship on the unlucky Friday the 13th.

Two of the Saracen’s 48 crewmembers died while attempting to flee the wreckage, meaning that her wreck is classed as an official war grave. Should the DRASSM find the submarine as expected, a bronze badge will be placed on top that bears the inscription: ‘In memory of H.M.S. Saracen and her Crew who played a vital role in the Liberation of Corsica. Sank 14th August 1943.’

(MORE: World War II Crimes: The Legal Afterlife of John Demjanjuk)

One sailor who managed to escape with his life was William T. H. Morris, who was captured and eventually moved to the infamous prisoner of war camp at Marlag und Milag Nord in Germany. Morris was incredibly proud to serve on the Saracen and kept a fascinating logbook. One of his poems, called Here’s to Us, includes the lines: “Here’s to the gallant submariners;(The boys with their torpedoes, by gad;(Those cool, imperturbable, calm, indisputable;(Nervy, inquisitive lads!”

Back From the Dead *Strategy Page, Feb. 22*

A year after cancelling its Lada class diesel-electric submarines Russia has revived the project as part of a joint development effort with an Italian firm (Fincantieri). This effort will build the S-1000 submarine as well as revive other export versions of Lada. These were called the Amur class and the S-1000 began as the Amur 950. This was what the export version of the Lada was to be called, but working with an Italian shipbuilder the Amur 950 has been transformed into the cheaper (less than \$200 million each) S-1000 class submarine. While Fincantieri has never built subs (just destroyers, aircraft carriers and patrol craft), it is one of the largest ship builders in Europe and has access to much Western military technology. The S-1000 will have a crew of only 16. Top submerged speed is 26 kilometers an hour. There are six torpedo tubes and an AIP (air independent propulsion) system to extend underwater endurance to 15 days or more. Instead of eight torpedo reloads, the S-1000 can carry a dozen commandoes.

Lada was developed in the 1990s as the successor to the Kilo class but it was determined that there was not enough difference between the Lada and the improved Kilos being built. So Lada/Amur was canceled last year. One Lada was built and another is partially completed and will probably be finished as the under construction (and may be completed). The Russians are hoping that the S-1000 will spark interest in the various Amur designs. The largest of these is the Amur 1650, which is basically the Lada with some top-secret Russian equipment deleted.

The Ladas have six 533mm torpedo tubes, with 18 torpedoes and/or missiles carried. The Lada has a surface displacement of 1,750 tons, are 71 meters (220 feet) long and carry a crew of 38. Each crewmember has their own cabin (very small for the junior crew, but still, a big morale boost). When submerged the submarine can cruise at a top speed of about 39 kilometers an hour (half that on the surface) and can dive to about 250 meters (800 feet). The Lada can stay at sea for as long as 50 days and can travel as much as 10,000 kilometers using its diesel engine (underwater,

via the snorkel). Submerged, using battery power alone, the Lada can travel about 450 kilometers. There is also an electronic periscope (which goes to the surface via a cable) that includes a night vision capability and a laser range finder. The Lada was designed to accept an AIP (air independent propulsion) system. Russia was long a pioneer in AIP design but in the last decade Western European nations have taken the lead. Russia expects to have its own AIP in production within three years.

Construction on the first Lada began in 1997, but money shortages delayed work for years. The first Lada boat was finally completed in 2005. A less complex version, called the Amur, was offered for export. There were no takers.

The Ladas are designed to be fast attack and scouting boats. They are intended for anti-surface and anti-submarine operations as well as naval reconnaissance. These boats are said to be eight times quieter than the Kilos. This was accomplished by using anechoic (sound absorbing) tile coatings on the exterior and a very quiet (skewed) propeller. All interior machinery was designed with silence in mind. The sensors include active and passive sonars, including towed passive sonar. Russian submarine designers apparently believe they can install most of these quieting features into improved Kilos, along with many other Lada features.

Two years ago Russia began construction of its second "Improved Kilo" submarine. These are mostly for the export market, although the Russian Navy is buying a few more of this improved model as well. The Kilos weigh 2,300 tons (surface displacement), have six torpedo tubes, and a crew of 57. They are quiet and can travel about 700 kilometers under water at a quiet speed of about five kilometers an hour. Kilos carry 18 torpedoes or SS-N-27 anti-ship missiles (with a range of 300 kilometers and launched underwater from the torpedo tubes). The combination of quietness and cruise missiles makes the Kilo very dangerous to American carriers. But for the Russians their Kilos are mostly for home defense. Nuclear subs are used for the long distance work.

The Kilo class boats entered service in the early 1980s. Russia only bought 24 of them but exported over 30. It was considered a successful design, especially with export customers. But just before the Cold War ended in 1991, the Soviet Navy began work on the Lada. This project was stalled during most of the 1990s by a lack of money but was revived in the last decade.

Russia has 17 Kilos in service (and six in reserve) and six Improved Kilos on order. More than that is on order from foreign customers.

Sub Firings At 4 For 2013

Navy Times, Feb. 25

Less than two months into the new year, the submarine fleet suffered its third and fourth firings of 2013 when the commanding officer and executive officer of attack submarine Jacksonville were relieved of command Feb. 10.

The firings stem from the sub's Jan. 10 collision with a civilian vessel in the Persian Gulf, said Lt. Cmdr. Lara Bollinger, a public affairs officer for Submarine Group 7.

Cmdr. Nathan Sukols, the CO, and Lt. Cmdr. Lauren Allen, the XO, were fired following an admiral's mast Feb. 10 in Manama, Bahrain, where the Jacksonville was in port as of Feb. 14.

The collision damaged one of the sub's two periscopes. Repairs, which cost \$2.7 million, were completed Feb. 1. The cause of the collision is still under investigation.

Both Sukols and Allen received nonjudicial punishment and were reassigned to administrative duties at Commander Submarine Force, Pacific Fleet, at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. Both men declined an interview with Navy Times through SUBPAC public affairs. Rear Adm. Phillip Sawyer, commander of Submarine Group 7, also reviewed the actions of other crew members aboard the Jacksonville and "held accountable those

whose actions did not meet the high standards we expect,” Bollinger said. She declined to disclose how many sailors or officers were punished, as well as other details like ranks, positions and the nature of the punishments.

The first sub firing of the year also followed a collision.

Cmdr. Thomas Winter, CO of the attack submarine Montpelier, was relieved Jan. 4. His sub collided with the cruiser San Jacinto in October. The collision was caused by human error, poor teamwork by the Montpelier watch team and the commanding officer’s failure to follow procedures for submarines operating at periscope depth, a Navy statement said.

The second relief of the year came Jan. 25 when Cmdr. Luis Molina, CO of the attack sub Pasadena, was relieved during the sub’s overhaul in Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Maine. Navy officials have declined to discuss the circumstances relating to his release, but said leaders lost confidence in Molina’s ability to lead Pasadena through the overhaul.

The high rate of sub reliefs so far this year does not represent any systemic issue with the sub force, said Cmdr. Monica Rousselow, a public affairs officer for Submarine Force Atlantic.

“There are 72 submarines, with a total of 90 submarine crews in the Navy, and the overwhelming majority of commanding officers are doing outstanding work, leading their crews on challenging missions around the world every day,” she said in a statement. “Those removed from leadership positions prematurely constitute a very small percentage.” Adm. Bill Gortney, head of Fleet Forces Command, told Navy Times earlier this month that investigations are key when it comes to mishaps.

“None of ’em are because it’s an act of God,” he said. “It’s a series of events that is personnel-related or materiel-related, whether it’s decision-making, supervisory or any of these reasons. We want to determine the root cause.”

This is for anyone that may be interested in watching a live Internet feed of the 50th Thresher Memorial Service on Saturday 6 April 2013 at 1300.

Silent Strength - Pride Runs Deep

PLEASE make sure you share this information with anyone you know who cannot attend.

Videographers from U.S. Navy Chief of Information (CHINFO) with support from the US Department of Defense, Defense Media Activity (DMA) will film the auditorium portion of the service live and stream it over the Defense Video & Information Distribution System website: <http://www.dvidshub.net/>.

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