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The Silent Sentinel

July 2011



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.

A HAPPY 4TH OF
JULY
TO ONE
AND ALL

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

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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.

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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*

July Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next meeting will be on 12 July, 2011. 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
None Reported

Submarine Losses in June

Submitted by C J Glassford



- O – 9 (SS 70) - 33 Men on Board :
 Foundered, on 20 Jun 1942, During Deep Submergence Tests, off the Coast of New London, Connecticut :
 “ ALL HANDS LOST “
- S -27 (SS 132) - 50 Men on Board :
 Grounded on Shoals off Amchitka Island, on 19 Jun 1942, Crew Abandoned Ship, Swam to the Island, and were Rescued by PBY’s
 from Dutch Harbor, Six Days Later :
 “ NO LOSS OF LIFE “
- R – 12 (SS 89) - 48 Men on Board :
 Foundered, on 12 Jun 1943, After Battery Flooded, while off Key West Florida : “ALL HANDS LOST “
- HERRING (SS 233) - 84 Men on Board:
 Sunk, on 1 Jun 1944, by Japanese Army Shore Battery. Off Matsuwa Island, in the Kuriles :

“ ALL HANDS LOST “

S – 28 (SS 133) - 50 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 4 Jun 1944, During ASW Exercises Off the Hawaiian Islands : “ ALL HANDS LOST “

GOLET (SS 361) - 82 Men on Board:

Probably Sunk, on 14 June 1944, by Japanese Guard Boat, Auxiliary Submarine Chaser, and Naval Aircraft Attack, Off Northern Honshu, Japan : “ ALL HANDS LOST “

BONEFISH (SS 223) - 85 Men on Board :

Sunk, on 18 Jun 1945, by Combined Efforts of Destroyer Escort, and 4 Coastal Defense Vessels, off the Southern Coast of Honshu, Japan : “ ALL HANDS LOST “

SARGO (SSN 583) - 95 Men on Board :

Oxygen Feeder Line Fire and Explosion, on 14 Jun 1960, in After Torpedo Room, Blaze Extinguished by Submerging at Pier in Pearl Harbor, with Compartment Sealed, and After Torpedo Room Hatch Open :

“ 1 MAN LOST “



NEWS-01: 2011-2 American Submariner mailing
Submitted by: T. Michael Bircumshaw on 6/27/2011

Shipmates,

The 2011-2 edition of the American Submariner magazine is at the Mailers and is expected to be in the USPS NLT Wednesday with 14,800, including yours, on the way.

The 2011-3 edition will be on time and in your hands prior to the 2011 convention in Springfield.

With more than 400 Shipmates and guests already registered at the primary hotel, University Plaza, now is the time to make sure you have your hotel reservation taken care of.

If you have not already done so, get signed up for the events, tours, banquets, and special lunches, so that you don't miss anything.

There is lots to do in Springfield and I look forward to seeing you there.

Best,
Michael

Come Join Us at the Annual Joint SUBVETS Picnic



**Come one,
come all and
have a day of
fun in the Sun!!**

**Lots of food,
games, boat
tours, and door
prizes for all!**

Picnic location is at Smugglers Cove on

Sub Base on 17 July 2011.

Starts at 0900 until 1600.

Tours at 0930 & 1330. Contact Bob

Bissonnette to get on the list. 619-251-7095





Public Affairs Office
Submarine Squadron Eleven
140 Sylvester Road
San Diego, CA 92106-5200
619-553-2005

We look forward to hosting your group onboard a Submarine Squadron Eleven submarine at Naval Base Point Loma. The following is important and useful information for your upcoming tour -

1) CITIZENSHIP REQUIREMENTS

All attendees must be U.S. citizens. A list of names is required no later than 10 days prior to scheduled tour.

2) TOUR SUBJECT TO CANCELLATION

Due to sudden operational requirements and/or maintenance issues, all tours are subject to cancellation on short notice. The public affairs office will notify you of schedule changes right away. Please ensure we have your cell phone number and any other number where we can quickly reach you. We appreciate your understanding should a schedule change or cancellation occur.

3) CLOTHING

Wear comfortable clothes and avoid white or light colors. Our submarines are extremely clean, but it is still possible to brush up against dirt or grease as you tour the ship. Dress slacks and casual shirts are appropriate. Suits, skirts, and high heels are not recommended. Loose fitting clothing can be dangerous and should not be worn. Sturdy, comfortable flat shoes with non-skid soles are recommended. You may want to bring a light jacket or windbreaker.

5) CAMERAS – You may bring a camera if you desire to document your tour aboard the submarine; however, please no photography of Naval Base Point Loma. Please wait to take photos until you're on the submarine. Please understand that there are areas of the sub which photography is restricted - you're tour guide will let you know when and where you can and cannot take pictures.

6) GENERAL SAFETY

Do not operate equipment or switches, position any valves, or enter any posted areas without prior approval from the ship's force. Be aware of where you place your hands. Never grasp things such as cables or wires. All who tour a submarine must be in good health. If you have health problems or issues, please coordinate with the person responsible for arranging the event. Once on board, the opportunities to provide you medical support will be limited. Please be aware that the ladders on the submarine are vertical and there will be walking and climbing involved in the tour. If you are claustrophobic or have other physical ailments, it may be better to forego your tour.

7) SECURITY

Most features of a submarine are of a classified nature. The radio room, the sonar spaces and the propulsion plant spaces are security areas that will not be granted access. Information concerning speed, depth, weapons, fire control, and reactor plant equipment and operations is classified. In the event that one of your questions is not answered, please do not be offended.

8) EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In the unlikely event that an emergency situation arises, alarms will sound and the word will be passed. You are requested to stand fast and remain clear of all passageways and operating areas. Do not obstruct ladders, hatches, or watertight doors. Allow ship's personnel to perform required action without interference. The member of the ship's company in charge at the scene will explain the situation as soon as he is able.

Should you have any problems on the day of the tour (you're running late, escorts have not arrived at the scheduled time, etc.) please call Harbor Operations (619-553-8666) at anytime. The watch stander can contact me, your escort, or the submarine for you. You may also call me on my cell phone at 619-778-7258.

Thank you and enjoy your tour!

Very respectfully,

MC2 Shannon Warner
Tour Coordinator
Assistant Public Affairs Officer
Submarine Squadron ELEVEN

Directions to Naval Base Point Loma...

... from Los Angeles:

1. Merge onto US-101
 2. Merge onto I-5 S via the exit on the LEFT toward SANTA ANA –113.3 miles
 3. Merge onto CA-209 S via EXIT 20 toward ROSECRANS ST- 3.5 miles
- Stay STRAIGHT to go onto ROSECRANS ST-2.2 miles
4. Make a left at Strothe Rd (SPAWAR Parking lot) I will meet you in the Parking lot.

... from San Diego International Airport (Lindberg Field):

- 1: Start out going Northwest on TERMINAL 1 towards AIRPORT EXIT. 0.2 miles
- 2: Turn SLIGHT RIGHT onto TERMINAL 2. 0.1 miles
- 3: Stay straight to go onto TERMINAL 2. 0.3 miles
- 4: Stay straight to go onto AIRPORT EXIT. 0.1 miles
- 5: Turn RIGHT onto N HARBOR DR. 1.4 miles
- 6: Turn LEFT onto ROSECRANS ST/CA-209. 0.4 miles
- 7: Stay straight to go onto ROSECRANS ST. 1.1 miles
8. Make a left at Strothe Rd (SPAWAR Parking lot) I will meet you in the Parking lot.

TOTAL ESTIMATED TIME: 11 minutes TOTAL DISTANCE: 3.5 miles

... from Highway 8:

1. Take Highway 8 west.
2. I-8 W becomes SUNSET CLIFFS BLVD.
3. Turn SLIGHT LEFT onto NIMITZ BLVD.
4. Exit Rosecrans. Turn RIGHT onto ROSECRANS ST/CA-209. Continue to follow ROSECRANS
5. Make a left at Strothe Rd (SPAWAR Parking lot) I will meet you in the Parking lot.

LA MESA FLAG DAY PARADE PHOTOS





MEMORIAL DAY AT SUBBASE SAN DIEGO







HOLLAND CLUB INDUCTEES: Thomas Polen Joseph Dubois Ed Farley Ralph Benke Manny Burciaga Harvey Highty

Blue Water Dreams

Why China wants an aircraft carrier.

By James Holmes, *Foreign Policy*, June 27, 2011

On a visit to Washington this month, Chinese Gen. Chen Bingde, chief of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) General Staff, confirmed what Asahi Shimbun and the Financial Times reported last December: China, he said, has officially committed itself to deploying aircraft-carrier task forces, a program that has evidently been under way since 2009. A Soviet flattop called Varyag, refitted and reportedly rechristened Shi Lang, may take to China's "near seas" for sea trials sometime around July 1. Whenever it takes place, the maiden cruise of the Varyag will mark a milestone in China's return to great power.

Any number of excellent technical studies of Beijing's carrier plans have appeared in recent years, and much ink has been spilled debating the ship's design characteristics: flight-deck configurations, launch and recovery systems, and propulsion plants. But to my mind, the best guide for figuring out what it all means in terms of China's naval strategy isn't the latest edition of Jane's Fighting Ships, but rather the two-plus-millennia-old History of the Peloponnesian War. In his chronicle of the protracted war between Athens and Sparta in the fifth century B.C., the Greek general and historian Thucydides proclaims that "three of the strongest motives" animating states' actions are "fear, honor, and interest." Peoples must arm lest they fall victim to the "law that the weaker should be subject to the stronger." China's aircraft-carrier ambitions can be seen in similar terms.

During his tenure as chairman of the early People's Republic, Mao Zedong took little interest in the sea, focusing instead on land defense. Even after the Great Helmsman's demise, Chinese leaders like Deng Xiaoping contented themselves with free-riding on U.S. maritime supremacy, reasoning that finite resources were better spent on economic

development than on putting steel in the water. But with development came increasing reliance on the sea for imports of fuel and raw materials, not to mention exports of finished goods. Shipping lanes now figure prominently in China's foreign-policy calculus. Chinese statesmen accordingly fret that the United States will hold China's economic interests hostage during a crisis or war in the Taiwan Strait or elsewhere in maritime Asia, mounting a "distant blockade" to interdict the crucial sea routes on which Chinese commerce overwhelmingly depends.

Fear that the U.S. Navy will cut China's economic lifelines from afar beckons China's strategic gaze irresistibly seaward. An editorial in the official People's Daily last December captured China's broader geopolitical anxieties. The United States, the editors write, is intent on preserving "its hegemony across the world," including on the high seas in Asia. Focused on latter-day containment, Washington has stayed outside the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea. Why? Because, the editors write, it "considers exclusive economic zones to be international waters, which, by its hegemonic logic, should be included in the U.S. sphere of influence." In voicing their own fears, Chinese pundits — not unreasonably — impute fear to the United States. "Any fast-developing country," concludes the Daily, will be "instinctively seen" as a challenge to U.S. primacy. Such countries must construct strong military and naval forces, equipping themselves to resist a domineering America.

Such a bleak analysis would be instantly familiar to Thucydides, who found the "real cause" of the Peloponnesian War in the "growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta." Fear made great-power war "inevitable." From Beijing's standpoint, assenting to permanent U.S. maritime supremacy would amount to knuckling under to Thucydides's law condemning the weak to remain subservient to the strong. Dread of what U.S. leaders might do with overwhelming sea power helps account for China's quest for a great navy.

But why aircraft carriers specifically? Beijing is already fielding an impressive cruise-missile navy specifically designed to deny U.S. naval forces access to Asian seas and skies during a Taiwan confrontation or some other upheaval. Cruise missiles, augmented by submarines, ballistic missiles, and land-based tactical aircraft, would be far more lethal against the U.S. Navy than any carrier fleet Beijing will put to sea anytime soon. Writing in *International Security*, Boston College professor Robert Ross ascribes China's carrier-centric naval buildup to "naval nationalism." In this view, high-end warships represent tokens of great power that Beijing simply must have to fulfill its destiny as a seafaring state. Such talismans fire popular enthusiasm for nautical endeavors, and for the state that undertakes them.

History is not unimportant here. China still nurses memories of its long "century of humiliation" at the hands of seaborne conquerors like imperial Britain, France, Germany, and Japan. Starting with the First Opium War (1839-1842), imperial powers defeated the ruling Qing dynasty again and again, compelling Qing emperors to accept "unequal treaties" along with such indignities as foreign gunboats patrolling Chinese rivers. Such memories are a lot for Asia's historical central power to stomach. Furthermore, Chinese observers have looked around the U.N. Security Council and noticed that all five permanent members except China deploy aircraft carriers. Closer to home, the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force operates light carriers known euphemistically as "helicopter destroyers"; South Korea has a similar vessel. Even Thailand has a flattop. The upshot is that a carrier will certify China's arrival as a sea power.

But there's more to China's navy than nationalism — and there's more to the Chinese aircraft-carrier program than salvaging China's good name or keeping up with the Joneses. Beijing can use carrier task forces to uphold real, tangible interests. Most obviously, a PLA Navy carrier group could exit from the China seas through the Ryukyus, to Taiwan's north, or the Luzon Strait, to the island's south, during times of strife. By threatening the east coast of Taiwan, carrier groups would further complicate a tactical picture for the island's defenders that already verges on hopeless. The PLA already holds a commanding margin of superiority, so carrier operations would not decide a cross-strait war. But compelling the Taiwan Navy and Air Force to look eastward — as well as westward and skyward — would further disorient them, letting the PLA set the terms of engagement. PLA forces could thus prevail before the U.S. military could intervene, and Beijing would fulfill its dream of national unification with minimal disturbance to the regional order.

There's also the South China Sea, which has dominated headlines of late. Some Chinese-claimed islets in the Spratlys and Paracels are too small to fortify; carrier groups would provide a forward, mobile airfield from which to defend the islands, the adjacent waters, and the rich natural resources thought to lie in the seabed beneath. And as Beijing turns its gaze further southwest, carriers could anchor a PLA Navy presence in South Asia, should Chinese leaders opt to create a standing Indian Ocean squadron. Flattops could perform many functions, just as these multimission platforms have spearheaded U.S. naval operations since World War II.

Nor must Chinese carriers match their U.S. Navy counterparts on a ship-for-ship basis to achieve Beijing's goals. As noted before, the PLA Navy surface fleet benefits from dense land-based fire support. For instance, the PLA Second Artillery Corps, or missile force, is reportedly fielding the world's first anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM), a truck-launched weapon capable of striking ships under way hundreds of miles from Asian shores. There is no known defense against it. If the missile lives up to its hype — and if Beijing acquires sufficient numbers of rounds — U.S. Pacific Fleet commanders will

be increasingly reluctant to venture westward of Guam. And if they do accept the losses inflicted by ASBM strikes, U.S. mariners will encounter land-based combat aircraft, quiet diesel submarines, and stealthy high-speed catamarans toting long-range anti-ship cruise missiles. Just reaching the combat theater could come at a steep cost.

If indeed the PLA converts the Western Pacific into a no-go zone for the U.S. Navy, it can uphold China's Thucydidean interests without ever risking a battle with its major antagonist. Land-based defenses may grant PLA naval commanders time to train pilots. It's a steep learning curve: In 1954 alone — fully eight years after a jet fighter first landed aboard the carrier USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, and despite having developed sound concepts for flying jet aircraft from carrier decks — the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps lost 776 aircraft and 535 airmen. China is by no means exempt from such hazards. Shore defenses also give China's navy a respite to work the engineering kinks out of the flattops themselves and to experiment with fleet tactics. Carriers steam in company with an entourage of escorts and logistics ships. It takes time to sort through various formations, defensive screens, underway replenishment techniques, and the like. Shore fire support affords the PLA leisure to devise its own approach to carrier operations, and it spares China the need for a costly, uncertain naval arms race with the United States. Why waste scarce resources?

By no means is combat readiness the sole motive propelling China's carrier ambitions. Carriers can prosecute numerous noncombat missions. After the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, for instance, Chinese pundits took note of how U.S. Navy vessels transiting the afflicted region rushed to the scene to render assistance. Hard power, in other words, enabled the soft kind, and Beijing felt sidelined. To remedy such shortcomings, it has built vessels like hospital ships and amphibious transports suitable for responding to natural and humanitarian disasters. Big-deck carriers would make a worthy addition to China's emerging disaster-relief repertoire.

And even these non-Thucydidean errands of mercy add luster to China's maritime reputation, bolstering the legitimacy of its naval enterprise and thus indirectly advancing its national interests. Great powers do well by doing good. Comforting the afflicted is not only worthwhile in its own right but helps the benefactor establish a track record for using its martial prowess wisely and humanely. Such a power eases suspicions of its intentions by furnishing international public goods that benefit not only China but its Asian neighbors. Beijing knows that to truly be a great sea power, you have to look — and act — the part. A former U.S. Navy surface warfare officer, James Holmes is associate professor of strategy at the Naval War College.

Old Tech Isn't The Answer

By W. J. Holland, Defense News, June 26, 2011

The June 13 commentary by Gary Schmitt and Richard Cleary, "U.S. Navy Needs Diesel Submarines," contains a number of factual mistakes and, in the view of naval strategists, several errors of judgment.

The first and most significant error is to consider the ship to be powered by diesel engines. In an operational situation, these submarines rely on a battery with all the difficulties and concerns attendant to that type of power source. As anyone who has had an important phone conversation end in midstream because a cell phone battery ran out of power can attest, battery capacity is a major concern when operating equipment powered by such a source.

Submarines operating on a battery at low speeds are quiet but cannot avoid the eventual need to charge the battery. Air independent propulsion does not provide propulsion - these devices support the housekeeping. If the submarine needs to go somewhere other than where it is, the battery or the engine must be used. Proceeding at any appreciable sustained speed must be done on the snorkel (by the engines), or if the battery is used, it must be followed by a charging evolution, again using the engines.

When the engines are running, the battery-powered submarine sensors become limited and its stealth is compromised.

Schmitt and Cleary err when they suggest that the difference in size makes the smaller battery-powered submarine more maneuverable in narrow and shallow waters than a submarine that is nuclear powered. This judgment reflects their failure to understand the physics involved. The size of the submarine is of less importance than the forces exerted by the control surfaces that in turn are related to speed through the water.

All submarines operate around a keel depth of 50 to 65 feet, depending upon sea state and periscope/mast extension. In shallow waters, e.g. 100 feet, the 12-foot difference in draft between a battery powered boat (Kilo = 20 feet) and a big nuclear-powered attack boat (Virginia = 32 feet) adds little to the challenge of maintaining ordered keel depth.

Having power to give the rudder and the planes the lift needed is the real key to operating in shallow waters, not the physical size of the boat. In this situation, the superior power of the nuclear submarine enables the ship to be much more maneuverable. The superiority in handling and sea-keeping of nuclear-powered versus battery-driven submarines will be attested to by anyone who ever has served as the diving officer of both.

Being able to hide on the ocean floor is an idea that tries to turn a defect, short endurance, into an advantage. A sub "hides" when submerged but, when bottomed, becomes blind and mostly deaf.

Whenever detection is suspected, the appropriate tactic for the submarine is to clear the datum, meaning to leave the area in which the sub was detected, as expeditiously as possible. For a nuclear-powered submarine, this is a matter of minutes, for a battery-powered submarine, hours.

Bottoming provides anti-submarine warfare (ASW) forces a stationary target - solving a hard part of their problem. Bottoming is a last and desperate resort to be adapted only when the battery capacity is no longer sufficient to provide propulsion power.

Schmitt and Cleary's inference that battery-powered submarines are in some way "better platforms for many of the tasks the Navy faces today" simply flies in the face of all evidence from the real world.

In their list of missions, "close-in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance, special operations and blockade and mining," there is nothing a battery powered submarine can do which cannot be done as well or better than by a nuclear-powered submarine. Their prediction of future exploitation of unmanned underwater vehicles will require stowage space and power sources on the parent submarines, power that is plentiful in nuclear plants but precious in diesel-electric ones.

If the United States needs more submarines to provide practice for ASW training, buying new battery boats doesn't make sense when there already exists a plethora of operational submarines, our own and from friendly nations.

Hampered by short legs and low speeds of advance, today's conventionally powered submarines' effectiveness and utility are limited to narrow seas or coastal waters. These attributes hamstringing their utility for the United States where the deployment horizon is far beyond the Gulf of Mexico.

Their small size limits their weapon capacity and thus their potential for strategic employment. Their small crews, standing port and starboard watches plus regular "General Quarters/All hands to action stations" for weeks, become as limiting on these small submarines' endurance as their fuel supply or battery capacity.

The crews of modern submarines are expensive assets. Not employing this valuable asset with the best tools possible runs counter to every principle in good industrial and technological practice.

Investing in old technology occasionally may have merit when funds are plentiful, but when investment capital is at a premium, as it is now, that capital ought to be invested in technologies and equipment that promise rewards over the next 50 years, not questionable returns over the next five. Suggestions to buy battery-powered boats belong with suggestions to try airships - interesting, perhaps, but their day is done.

W.J. Holland, a retired U.S. submarine officer and occasional consultant. He is former director of strategic and theater nuclear warfare on the staff of the chief of naval operations.

Famed Submersible Alvin Gets \$40 Million Upgrade

By Max Eddy, Geeko System, June 25, 2011

DSV Alvin is the vehicle that first explored the Titanic, brought back footage from hydrothermal vents, and investigated the BP oil spill, but the workhorse of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution has lagged behind technological breakthroughs. But now, the plucky submarine is finally getting the upgrade it deserves.

Currently, the sub can only dive 2.8 miles which leaves 40% of the ocean floor beyond its reach. Furthermore, its titanium-sphere cabin is notoriously uncomfortable, especially for researchers that can spend hours on end onboard. But after \$40 million facelift, all that will change. The maximum depth will be extended to four miles, granting access to 98% of the ocean floor, thanks to improved buoyancy foam. New lithium-ion batteries will make that increased depth even worthwhile, providing 12 hours of operations on a single charge. Inside the sub, folding chairs, additional viewports, and an 18% increase in space will make the cabin a little more habitable.

Though it certainly isn't luxury accommodations, it does ensure that this 46-year old little sub will continue making scientific discoveries for years to come.

U.S. Navy Eyes Submarine-UUV Mix

By Michael Fabey, Aviation Week, June 17, 2011

Unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs) represent some of the best operational investment opportunities for the U.S. Navy, and the service could use UUVs to offset submarine fleet reductions, says Adm. Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations.

"If we make the right decision on UUVs, we could perhaps absorb a smaller sub force structure," Roughead said June 16 during an event sponsored by the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

UUVs would be cheaper to acquire and maintain than nuclear-powered submarines, which are among the most expensive vessels in the Navy fleet. UUVs would be ideal, he says, for "dull and dangerous" missions, remaining in one place with sensors saving and transmitting data. These have been the types of missions done by the Navy's attack submarines.

Roughead framed his comments around a discussion about the pending clash in the 2020s between Navy shipbuilding plans and available funding. “We’re going to have the aging out of ships built in the 1980s,” Roughead notes.

At the same time, though, the Navy is going to have to embark on a program to replace its SSBN ballistic missile submarine force — a program that’s been estimated at \$40 billion for procurement, with life cycle costs of more than twice that.

The Navy also has started to ramp up its purchases of Virginia-class attack submarines, and analysts have questioned how the service can afford both attack and missile subs in the coming years.

While trying to reconcile those needs and costs, Roughead says, the Navy also will have to do midlife overhauls on some Nimitz-class carriers while decommissioning others. Further, the service also is in the midst of starting its new carrier class, led by the CVN-78 Ford.

The Navy, Roughead says, is going to have to prioritize. “In the next year or two, we’re going to have to dig in and decide,” he says.

The service could find some of its answers with UUVs, which are the one area “where we stand to have the greatest operational breakthroughs,” he says.

Roughead says he’s more than just interested in UUVs. “I’m obsessed,” he says. The critical UUV attributes that the Navy needs to develop are sufficient procurement numbers, shipboard safety, endurance and power. UUVs have a “huge potential” to be “netted together” and sent into an area of interest, he says.

The service had hoped to leverage commercial UUV efforts — such as programs developed by oil companies — and tweak them for Navy use, but that equipment has failed to meet military requirements.

Iran Sends Submarine To Red Sea

The Journal of Turkish Weekly, June 15, 2011

Several Iranian submarines were sent to the Red Sea to gather information and identify warships, the Fars news agency reported with reference to a competent source.

Submarines accompanied by several surface ships were sent to the Gulf of Aden, from where they reached the Red Sea.

Last month, the Iranian Navy ships carried out a patrolling mission in the Gulf of Aden.

In February, two Iranian Navy ships, Khark and Alvand, passed through the Suez Canal, a strategic international shipping route in Egypt, for the first time since the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, and reached the Mediterranean Sea.

The appearance of Iranian ships in the Mediterranean has caused concern in Israel.

The ships have to sail to Syria, with which Israel is formally at war. Israeli Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman named this military campaign as a “provocation, which demonstrates that self-confidence and boldness of Iranians are growing day by day.”

Sea Change: Mixed Bunks On Subs

By Dan Oakes, The Sydney Morning Herald, June 16, 2011

MALE and female junior sailors will bunk together on the navy’s Collins class submarines for the first time.

While officers and non-commissioned officers have slept in mixed messes for some time, junior sailors have been strictly segregated until now.

The announcement comes a week after the Herald revealed that female soldiers will be eligible to serve on the front lines within 18 months

“The Australian government believes it is important that the nation’s defence forces be representative of the community it serves and it’s committed to ensuring that female military personnel have opportunities for career progression and development,” the Defence Personnel Minister, Warren Snowdon, said last night.

The main reason behind the change is the difficulty in assigning sailors. Although women have served on the six Collins class boats since 1998, there cannot be fewer than six female sailors on board because they sleep in messes with six bunks, and all messes need to be full. There are 560 submariners, of whom 44 are female.

However, in a letter to submariners and their families, the commander of the Royal Australian Navy’s submarine fleet, Captain Brett Sampson, also cited “cultural” reasons for the move.

The navy has been under fierce scrutiny on gender equality since an inquiry found a “tribal” group of senior sailors on HMAS Success engaged in predatory sexual and drunken misconduct in 2009.

“It is anticipated that junior sailors will embrace integration with the same mature and professional attitude as the senior sailors and officers have already done - new messing arrangements are intended to be in effect as of the 15th of July, 2011,” Captain Sampson said.

Even under the new rules, there will not be lone female sailors on the vessel, and no female junior sailors will be posted to submarines where there are no female officers or senior sailors.