

American Submariners Inc.
Silent Sentinel
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

Non-Profit Org.
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The Silent Sentinel

AUGUST 2008



Our Creed

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 towards greater accomplishment and patriotism to the United States of America



M. Hyman 2008

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

Base Commander

Bob Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen Street
Spring Valley, CA 91977
(H) 619-644-8993
(CELL) 619-251-7095

Membership -- Change of Address

Ron Gorence
2563 Roseview Place
San Diego, CA 92105
Home--(619) 264-6995. Cell: (619) 264-3327
mgorence@yahoo.com

Senior Vice Commander

Bill Earl
2251 Vancouver Ave
San Diego, CA 92104-5350
619-2804053
dinkysan@yahoo.com

Newsletter Editor

Mike HYMAN
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunessofwar.com

Junior Vice Commander

Jim Bilka
310 E. Bradley Ave., Apt 42
El Cajon, CA
92021-8929
619-277-5758
sashanman@yahoo.com

Base Storekeeper

Mike Hyman
3639 Midway Drive, B-320
San Diego, CA 92110-5254
Voice/Fax/Message: (619) 223-9344
stamps@fortunessofwar.com

Secretary

Manny Burciaga
8406 Alado Place
El Cajon, CA 92021-2003
619-921-5877
MannyBurciaga@pointloma.edu

Chief of the Boat/Chaplain

CJ Glassford
4905 Coconino Way
San Diego, CA 92117-2619
858-483-7355
"Cjtmatl@san.rr.com

Treasurer

David Ball
3804 Wildwood Road
San Diego, CA 92107-3750
619-225-0304
davidball@cox.net



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: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

Robert Bissonnette
1525 Walbollen St.
Spring Valley, CA 91977-3748

USSVI Base Commander
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

Do not Miss Movement!

All submittals for the next Silent Sentinel must be received by the date indicated on page four. Entries received after the due date will be printed in the following month's issue, space permitting. Acceptable format for text files are TXT and DOC (not DOC1). Questions? Call me at 619-980-0846.

SEE OR CALL MIKE HYMAN, 619-980-0846, FOR ALL YOUR SUBMARINE STORES NEEDS. ASK ABOUT THE SPECIAL OF THE MONTH. SHIPPING IS AVAILABLE FOR "ANY" SIZE ORDER. *Mike*

ALL INPUTS FOR THE AUGUST 2008 SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND BY THE 19TH OF AUGUST! IT HAS TO BE RECEIVED BY ME BY THIS DATE. I CANNOT ACCEPT SUBMITTALS FOR THE AUGUST ISSUE ANY LATER, SO GET THEM IN EARLY. MIKE

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

AUGUST Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next one is on August 12th. The post is located one half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting starts promptly at 1900. The "E" Board meets one hour earlier (at 1800).

HAVE FUN AND HELP SUBVETS SAN DIEGO AT THE SAME TIME!

HELP COLLATE THE SILENT SENTINEL IN ORDER TO KEEP COSTS DOWN.

THE AUGUST 2008 EDITION *SILENT SENTINEL* COLLATE PARTY WILL BE HELD ON August 30th , 0900, AT THE TWAIN AVENUE VFW.

BINNACLE LIST

Mike Hyman (Crohn's Disease)

C J Glassford (had pacemaker put in and recuperating at home)

Larry Freske

Al Strunk (now recuperating at home and doing much better)

Submitted by Mike Hyman



“ SUBMARINE LOSSES “

“ JULY “

S – 28 (SS 133) - 50 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 4 July 1944, During ASW Exercises Off the Hawaiian Islands
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

ROBALO (SS 273) - 74 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 26 July 1944, by a Mine, Off Western Palawan, Philippines
Islands
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

G – 2 (SS 27) -
Sank at Moorings, on 30 July 1919, Off New London, Connecticut
“ 3 MEN LOST “

GRUNION (SS 216) - 70 Men on Board
Sunk, on 13 July 1942, by Gunfire from Torpedoed Japanese Transport
“Kashima Maru”, Ten Miles North of Segula, near Kiska Island, Aleutians
“ ALL HANDS LOST “

Submitted by CJ Glassford



Submitted by C J Glassford

Commanders Corner

August 08

Hello everyone!! First of all I want to Thank everyone who helped out at the last breakfast. We had a big showing there and Thanks for all the helpers. It was a good turn out for the Julian 4TH of July Parade. The temperature reading in my truck read 106 degrees and lots of water was past around. And the American Legion put on another Great feast after the parade.

I would to Thank everyone who came out to the picnic at Subase and those who lent a hand. Looks like we had about 70 to 80 people come out and enjoy a day out. I think we would have had more show up if Mother Nature was a little more friendly. I think everyone had a good time and I know we all had lots to eat!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Coming up next month is the Presentation of the Scholarship Awards at the next meeting. At the end of the month we have another breakfast. I should be done working on the USS George Washington CVN 73 and will be leading the way of the helpers. If you want a Great Breakfast, bring the family out and enjoy the company at breakfast.

Hope you all got online or mailed in your votes for National Officers and a few changes to the National By-Laws and Constitution. If you're having problems with your online access, please give Ron Gorence a call or email him.

Just a reminder to all... SEPTEMBER is a dark month [which means no meeting in September *Mike*] due to the National Convention. Hope to see you there. I'm looking forward to the Convention.

As always, I hope we thinks about and prayer for our shipmates and their families to keep in good health and for their safety all the time.

Checking Account Balance @ 5/01/2008 **\$ 2,243.34**

INCOME for MAY 2008

Booster Club 165.00
40/30/30 46.00

Subtotal 211.00

Membership 220.00

Scholarship Income from 40/30/30 45.00
Other Scholarship Income 35.00

Scholarship Income for May 80.00

Total Income for May (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 511.00**

EXPENSES for MAY 2008

Paper for Silent Sentinel - 20 reams 178.65
Membership
Printer Monthly Maintenance - Mar & Apr 0.00

Total Expenses for May (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 178.65**

Checking Account Balance @ 05/30/2008 **\$ 2,575.69**

ASSETS

Base Checking (5/30/08) \$ 2,575.69
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Checking 147.00
Base Savings (5/30/08) 9,318.36
Convention Account (5/30/08) 4,622.74

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 16,516.79**

NOTES to REPORT

Sale of Opportunity Tickets for Convention 770.00

Checking Account Balance @ 5/30/2008 **\$ 2,575.69**

INCOME for JUNE 2008

Booster Club	15.00
Silent Sentinel Donation	5.00
40/30/30	47.00
Subtotal	67.00
Membership	80.00
Scholarship Income from 40/30/30	47.00
Other Scholarship Income	600.00
Scholarship Income for June	647.00

Total Income for June (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 794.00**

EXPENSES for JUNE 2008

Silent Sentinel Postage (Apr-May-Jun)	140.72
Membership	95.00
Printer Monthly Maintenance - May	51.55

Total Expenses for June (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 287.27**

Checking Account Balance @ 06/27/2008 **\$ 3,082.42**

ASSETS

Base Checking (6/27/08)	\$ 3,082.42
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Checking	794.00
Base Savings (6/30/08)	9,323.36
Convention Account (6/30/08)	3,965.56

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 16,371.34**

NOTES to REPORT

Sale of Opportunity Tickets for Convention	0.00
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Don't tell anybody, but...

I'd still do this job if they cut my pay in half, never mind nit-picking the math (50% of \$0 is still...): I cannot figure out a good way to pass on all the short notes I receive with dues-payments, but instead of feeling guilty, I am in awe. Many notes just thank us [for doing our job] or just ask me to say Hi to Charlie (CJ, Bob, the E-Board, etc.)—but others leave me speechless (almost).

Buzz Lee [Qual: Nautilus (SS168), 1939] was “stunned by...two beautifully written and inscribed...’ certificates we sent him while arranging approval of his Holland Club induction. **Ed Block** [Qual: S34 (SS134), 1943] managed to increase my reverence for those who wear the war patrol pin: he wrote that he got his first one (of 4) on this third patrol aboard SS139, which stunned me into realizing just how many times these guys were held down and depth-charged on *unsuccessful* patrols—maybe 2-3 times for each award. Wow! **Jack Semmelrath** [Qual: Tambor (SS198}, 1942] wanted us to know just how “Honored he was” to receive *his* Holland Club Certificate from *us*—a perfect definition (excuse the French) of bass-ackwards, in my opinion. And when **Phil Loria** [Qual: Sea Leopard (SS483, 1956] let us know that his a son (Army NG) is home from Iraq, I was vicariously filled with a father's patriotic pride. Politically correct or not, I know one thing: **We are among Men!**

Volunteer, guys! The pay stinks, but the compensation is incalculable.

Fraternally,
RonG, Membership

Membership

New Members: Welcome Aboard: Newest members Rick Bittner, awarded his dolphins aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln-39 years ago, and Robert Chapman, who qualified on USS Scamp in 1971. Bob is now Base Life Member # 293.

Status: 328 members

News: Temple Allen, Daniel Thompson, Jim Webb, Carter (Doc) Blythe (our shipmate suffering with terminal cancer in Anaheim) and Thomas Branyan, all did, quietly and without fanfare, include donations to our Base along with their payment of dues. Thank you shipmates. Florence Richards, widow of shipmate Dick Richards, paid for extended regular mail receipt of the Silent Sentinel. God Bless submarine wives.

Database Errors: Huh? Over 34 members don't have good phone numbers in our database; amazingly, a dozen of them are among the 78 computer-literate members receiving the Sentinel by email. Come on guys, look at ussvi.org and see what's wrong. [First(initial only no space)Lastname & zip = password & ID]. See mine below.

Be safe,

Rgorence 92105

San Diego Base Submarine Veterans meeting for July 8, 2008

1900 The meeting called to order by Base Commander, Bob Bissonnette.
Conducted opening exercises. Reading of the Creed – Pledge of Allegiance –
Opening Prayer.

Tolling of the Boats

USS S-28 (SS-133)

USS ROBALO (SS-273)

USS GRUNION (SS-216)

Base Commander introduced a new member, Rick Bittner.

Secretary report: we have 26 members one guest.

Treasures' report: this month we showing gain of 1683.00 in treasury.

Meeting in sentinel states wrong date, sorry for mix up, if no questions correction will be in the Sentinel.

Binnacle list:

CJ is still recuperating

Richard Fullen is recouping in Santee.

Mike Hyman, is recouping.

The Julian parade, 15 people attended and we had good time with flag bears walking in the parade but a good time was had by everyone. The parade only had about 40 groups participating. The small town of Julian really appreciated our attendance. We did receive a plaque for best motorized entry of parade.

Membership:

Ron Gorence reported on our membership. We are looking for a couple of members. At present we have member 337 total on the roles.

Base Commander announces two members who qualified before WWII and four Holland club members are present. We have special gift for you. Thanks for your service.

Scholarship program: Charlie Marin - The Scholarship Committee elected to award all three applicants funds this year.

Convention Committee: Mike Hacking, The American Legend hall in Escondido will conduct the last meeting before the convention. We must have everything in place by the time Ft Worth convention starts. We have different levels to donate funds, from Admiral at 25,000, down to seaman at 25 dollars. Due to the cost of gas, etc. The Fort Worth convention is taking hits on registration; We have info on the website. We need to turn in ticket sales by this month. There is another fund raising idea is called Challenge coins. They are only 5 dollars apiece and we can sell them for 10 each. If you have a small company or would like to sponsor we definitely could use their help.

Breakfast comm.- Fred gave the amounts we made on the breakfast, thanks to Bill, Don Jan and all the volunteers who helped. It was a good breakfast, we have increased the price of the breakfast, but it still was a good deal. The next breakfast will be on Aug 31, we could use more help. We could use a couple more guys to help us out.

1920 Break for 50/50

1930 Meeting called to order, new member draw ticket for drawing.
Unfinished business - The next parade will be in November, however we have no info yet.

Selling tickets, we get half of all ticket sales as a fund raiser, this is easy fund raiser.

July 19 picnic on sub base, we are working on a tour of a boat. We will have food and game, we do not know if Scamp base is attending, (from floor) Scamp Base has announce and are pushing members to attend. They may give money for picnic fund.

No New business:

Good of the order: JJ Lynch. Member of Seapoacher Base and their association address the group. We had meeting and decided to donate battle flag of the Seapoacher to the Bowfin museum in Hawaii. The Bowfin base came out and supported this donation the ceremonial event. There are pictures on the table to look at.

Bob Chapman from Scamp Base, introduced himself.

Fred announce donation of a large set wooden dolphins are for sale.
JJ proposed that we take the dolphins to the picnic and auction them at the picnic. All hands agreed.

Ed Farley took photos of Julian parade and the McGrievy memorial event.

A member stood and suggested any one who could attend U505 museum in Chicago. It is a great display and very informative. The Wisconsin submarine maritime museum is also high recommended.

September is convention month will be a dark month. (No meeting)
Commander discussed the voting for national officers, it was suggested that you do it on line. There are two for National Commander, and two for Junior vice Commander. You can also vote using the next American Submariner; if you vote on line do not use the mail in ballot.

All breakfast workers must now attend a food handler's class. A class will be given on July 26 starting at 0900 and going to 1030. This certificate is good for three years; if you want to help you must take this class.

The Scamp Base has offered to sell their submarine float. I think this would be a great thing for our base, but the disadvantage is storage, and costing about 100 dollars a month for storage, 50 dollars for registration, and about 50 dollars a year for fixing up.

From the floor, we should try the sub base storage area. They have new base commander and we may need to address the new command for special permission. The Float is approximately 20 feet long with trailer. All bases in district six can use the Seafox float.

We can put sound system and lights and we could use it four times a year for parades.

We will put it out in the sentinel and the members can let us know how they feel. We can take a vote on the float next meeting.

Everett, asked about status of memorial at NTC Liberty Station. No info at this time.

1959 Meeting adjourned by the Base Commander.

Sailing list:

FRED FOMBY	A. POBLETE	BILL EARL
JIM BILKA	PHILL RICHESON	CHARLIE MARIN
EVERETT MAUGER	DAVID BALL	RON GORENCE
MANNY BURCIAGA	BOB BISSONNETTE	BOB FARRELL
RAY FERBRACHE	JJ LYNCH	MIKE HACKING
JOHN CAMERON	LIN SCHIMA	JOE ACAY
RICK BITTNER	MERT WELTZIEN	ED FARLEY
BOB MEDINA	JIM MALDON	DENNIS MORTENSEN
JACK KANE	BOB OBERTING	BOB CHAPMAN

USSVI CONVENTION SPONSOR INFORMATION



2009 United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. National Convention



Contact:

Mike Hacking

2009 USSVI Convention
P.O. Box 420159
San Diego, CA 92142-0159

(858) 495-0562

mrhacking@san.rr.com

September 8 – 12, 2009

**Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, CA**

The 2009 convention in San Diego is being hosted by the San Diego Base and the USS Scamp Base of the United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI). USSVI is a fraternal veteran's association whose creed is:

"To perpetuate the memory of our shipmates who gave their lives in the pursuit of 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 Government."



Joining USSVI in San Diego will be members of the International Submariners Association (who will be holding their 46th International Congress), U.S. World War II Submarine Veterans, and veterans from the Canadian Submariners Association. With the participation of the local military community this convention will be one of the largest gatherings of submariners in history!

We are seeking your support to make this a truly historic occasion. Your donation to the 2009 USSVI Convention will benefit all Submarine Veterans and their families who will be attending this gathering of Submarine Veterans from around the world.



Website: www.ussvisandiego.org/Convention2009/index.htm

The United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. (USSVI - our national organization), the San Diego Base and the USS Scamp Base (hosts of the convention) are 501(c)19 veteran organizations, as designated by the Internal Revenue Service.

LEVELS OF SPONSOR PARTICIPATION



**2009 United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.
National Convention**

**September 8 – 12, 2009
Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, CA**

<u>Levels</u>	<u>Contribution Level</u>
<p>Admiral Full-page ad in the Convention Program* Full-page ad in each of the quarterly publications of the American Submariner leading up to the Convention (\$6,000 value)* Recognition in the Convention Program as Admiral level sponsor Seating for 16 (2 Reserved Tables for 8 each) at the Annual Awards Banquet Banner advertising in conventions halls and / convention lobby</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 25,000</p>
<p>Captain Half-page ad in the Convention Program* Half-page ad in each of the quarterly publications of the American Submariner leading up to the Convention (\$4,000 value)* Recognition in the Convention Program as Captain level sponsor Seating for 8 at the Annual Awards Banquet Banner advertising in conventions halls and / convention lobby</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 15,000</p>
<p>Commander Quarter-page ad in the Convention Program* Quarter-page ad in each of the quarterly publications of the American Submariner leading up to the Convention (\$2,800 value)* Recognition in the Convention Program as Commander level sponsor Seating for 4 at the Annual Awards Banquet Banner advertising in conventions halls and / convention lobby</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 10,000</p>
<p>Lieutenant Quarter-page ad in the Convention Program* One-Sixth-page ad in each of the quarterly publications of the American Submariner leading up to the Convention (\$1,600 value)* Recognition in the Convention Program as Lieutenant level sponsor Seating for 2 at the Annual Awards Banquet</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 5,000</p>
<p>Ensign Quarter-page ad in the Convention Program* Recognition in the Convention Program as Ensign level sponsor</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 1,000</p>
<p>Warrant Recognition in the Convention Program as Warrant level sponsor</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 500</p>
<p>Chief Petty Officer Recognition in the Convention Program as Chief Petty Officer level sponsor</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 250</p>
<p>Petty Officer Recognition in the Convention Program as Petty Officer level sponsor</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 100</p>
<p>Seaman Recognition in the Convention Program as Seaman level sponsor</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">\$ 25</p>

Note: To support preparation of Convention Program and recognition items the deadline for all donations is May 1, 2009. American Submariner publication deadlines are: Oct 1, 2008; Dec 15, 2008; Apr 1, 2009; and Jun 15, 2009.

* Sponsor responsible for providing camera-ready artwork for Convention Program and / or American Submariner Magazine.

Website: www.ussvisandiego.org/Convention2009/index.htm

SPONSOR REGISTRATION



2009 United States Submarine Veterans, Inc. National Convention

September 8 – 12, 2009
Town & Country Resort and Convention Center
San Diego, CA

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- | | | | |
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Make checks payable to: "2009 USSVI Convention"

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Subscribe to the E-mail edition of the Silent Sentinel. More than twice the size of the printed version and always an interesting read.

Nautilus Shines During North Pole Anniversary

Submariners celebrate 50 years under the ice

The Dolphin, August 7, 2008

GROTON, Conn. - On August 3, the Historic Ship Nautilus and Submarine Force Library and Museum hosted a special ceremony honoring the 50th anniversary of the submarine's world-shattering achievement: the first crossing of the North Pole by a ship, August 3, 1958; and, veteran crew members of USS Nautilus (SSN 571) once again enjoyed a day in the sun.

"The sun always shines on Nautilus," was a phrase coined by retired Navy Vice Adm. Kenneth Carr when, as a young Lt. assigned to Nautilus, he witnessed the cloudy skies part before the submarine's christening and launching in 1954.

As sunlight gleamed off of Nautilus' glossy black sail Sunday, Carr, who served on the submarine until 1960, joined eight shipmates of that epic Arctic journey for an afternoon of celebrations few could have imagined 50 years earlier.

Then, submarine and crew had been fully focused on the seriousness of the dangers facing them.

Prior to Nautilus, much of the Arctic Ocean was unexplored. But in these uncharted waters, the United States with Nautilus, the world's first nuclear powered ship, might have an advantage over the then Soviet Union. The Arctic could be a counterpoint to the Soviets who were leading the space race and would launch the first artificial satellite, Sputnik, into orbit in October 1957.

In carrying out Operation Sunshine, Nautilus made two attempts at crossing the pole before success.

Gyro compass failure forced submarine and crew to turn back from an August 1957 attempt that brought Nautilus to within 180 miles of the pole, and during a second attempt the next year, extremely deep, underwater ice ridges almost trapped the ship.

Finally, ice conditions proved favorable for a late July 1958 attempt; and 4 days and 1,830 miles after submerging under the ice in the Chukchi Sea, Nautilus surfaced off the coast of Greenland and sent the momentous and succinct message: "Nautilus 90 North."

Submarine and crew had conquered the Arctic, transiting from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean and "piercing" the North Pole at 11:15 p.m. on August 3.

Those on board nicknamed themselves PANOPOs, an acronym from the phrase from the Pacific to the Atlantic via the North Pole, and the crew of 116 men received the Presidential Unit Citation, the first ever issued in peacetime.

"In the backdrop of the Cold War and the Soviet's success in space with Sputnik, Nautilus and her intrepid crew reaffirmed our Nation and our Navy's honor, courage, and commitment," said Lcdr. Greg Caskey, the officer in charge of Nautilus and the museum, during Sunday's ceremony at the historic ship. "In doing so, they gave our country the strategic advantage of an entire ocean at the very top of the world, and opened a new frontier for our Submarine Force. Today, following in Nautilus' pioneering wake, U.S. Navy Submarines continue to operate and exercise in the Arctic."

Today's submariners owe a great deal to the heritage of Nautilus' crew, asserted Rear Adm. Bruce E. Grooms, Commander, Submarine Group 2. "We celebrate the men from the original North pole crew of Nautilus and all of the remaining Nautilus sailors who carried on her legacy of greatness."

Acknowledging Carr and his North Pole crew mates in attendance: Al Charette, Richard Williamson, Joseph Degnan, Boyd Cohenour, Arthur Callahan, David "Huey" Long, Jack Kurrus and Stonewall Hilton, Grooms captivated ceremony attendees with examples of these veterans' boldness and courage.

As a sonar supervisor, Charette's skill and professionalism had been critical during that first 1958 polar transit attempt in which Nautilus was almost trapped by extremely deep, underwater ice ridges. It was a harrowing situation, with dangerously minimal clearance, as the more than 300 feet long submarine had just 20 feet of water beneath its keel and less than 8 feet of clearance above its sail.

As an innovative engineman, Kurrus was instrumental in assessing and conducting underway repairs to a vital periscope that Nautilus had damaged under the ice. Carrying-out the work in tight quarters was difficult enough, but Kurrus completed the task on the surface of the Arctic Ocean, facing tremendous challenges from the elements despite a novel shelter shipmates had constructed.

While the humble Kurrus would declare "We never had a bad day on Nautilus," after the ceremony, during the event, Connecticut Governor M. Jodi Rell made Sunday Kurrus', and all the PANOPOs', day.

In an official statement read and unveiled at the celebration, Rell proclaimed the day: USS Nautilus North Pole Crossing Day in the state of Connecticut.

Similarly, ceremony guest speaker, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, Connecticut 2nd District, presented Caskey and the museum a framed copy of House Resolution 1067, for which Courtney served as lead sponsor. Through the resolution, the House of Representatives commended Nautilus officers and crew on the 50th anniversary of their magnificent achievement.

These crewmembers “are truly the pioneers on whom today’s nuclear submarine force was built,” said Courtney. “When the sub surfaced in the Atlantic and radioed success, America had a new set of heroes that ranked with the Lewis and Clark expedition and Charles Lindbergh’s crossing of the Atlantic.”

As others followed in the paths of those trail blazers of yore, early last month, Groton based USS Providence (SSN 719) transited, surfaced, and flew a special replica flag at the North Pole.

In fitting tribute to conclude the Sunday’s ceremony, the museum played a celebrated audio clip and hoisted that special flag above the historic ship, to fly there through the end of the year - it’s a replica of the flag that Nautilus crew fashioned and flew after their historic transit.

The audio clip to which attendees were treated: the voice of Nautilus Commanding Officer, Cmdr. William Anderson, addressing the crew via ship’s intercom as the submarine passed through the pole fifty years earlier. His memorable and celebrated words: “For the U.S.A. and the U.S. Navy, the North Pole.

BREAKING NEWS: U.S. Navy Says USS Houston Radioactive Leak Lasted 366 Days On Guam

By Phillip Leon Guerrero, Pacific Daily News, August 7, 2008

Guam - Even though the Navy says an analysis of the water and sediment in Apra harbor showed no “measurable” effects from a leak of radioactive water from the nuclear submarine the USS Houston, a report released today says a shut valve in the sub was steadily leaking since June 2006.

Acting Governor Mike Cruz says Adelup is concerned about the new information, and is therefore calling for an independent, locally driven, analysis of Apra Harbor. A news release says both the Guam Environmental Protection Agency and the National Guard have already begun talks with their federal counterparts who worked on the Navy’s findings.

Government of Guam agencies have been directed to “identify resources to begin independent testing of the waters in and around” the leak. In addition to the directive, Cruz is starting to form an interagency plan to monitor the environmental impacts that may be caused by the coming increase in military activity.

Senator B.J. Cruz introduced legislation earlier this week that appropriates money for an independent water study. He tells the Pacific News Center the newest report is precisely why he wrote a bill. Cruz is now looking into bringing the measure onto the session floor, via an emergency declaration.

US Says Submarine Leaked Radiation In 3 Japan Ports

Reuters, August 7, 2008

TOKYO, Aug 7 - A U.S. nuclear-powered submarine which has steadily been leaking a small amount of radiation for over two years stopped at three Japanese ports, as well as Guam and Pearl Harbor, the United States and Japan said on Thursday.

Japan was notified by the United States last week that the nuclear-powered USS Houston had been leaking water containing a small amount of radiation, but was told at the time that it was unclear when the leak had started.

A statement from the U.S. government on Thursday said the Houston had been leaking radiation from June 2006 to July 2008.

During that time, the Houston docked at the Japanese ports of Yokosuka, 45 km (30 miles) southwest of Tokyo and in the southern island of Okinawa, as well as at Sasebo, 980 km (610 miles) southwest of Tokyo, the U.S. statement said.

Both the U.S. and Japanese governments said the radiation leak was too small to cause harm.

“We do not think that the amount of leakage would have any impact on humans or the environment,” a Japanese foreign ministry official said.

The Houston may have also released a small amount of radioactivity into Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and Guam, the U.S. statement said.

The radiation leak is a fresh blow for Tokyo and Washington, which has been planning to station a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier in Japan, the only nation in the world to have suffered nuclear attacks.

Local residents and civic groups expressed concern over the deployment of the USS George Washington after a fire on the nuclear-powered warship in May. They called for more information about that fire.

Japan said the Houston’s radiation leak would not have any impact on the plan to deploy the George Washington at Yokosuka.

“The United States assures strict procedures and prevention systems for nuclear-powered warships coming into port, and Japan is also checking the radiation levels 24 hours a day,” the foreign ministry official said.

The Houston radiation leak caused a big media stir in Japan last week, with the foreign ministry criticised for failing to disclose the leak promptly to the government and the public. (Reporting by Yoko Kubota; Editing by Paul Tait).

WINTER: World’s Economy Depends Upon A Strong Navy

By Donald S. Winter, Washington Times, August 7, 2008

America is a nation at war, and our Navy and Marine Corps are focused on achieving victory in Iraq, Afghanistan and wherever terrorist enemies may be found. Given this focus, we must examine the full range of implications of today’s war.

Our nation’s maritime strategy reaffirms the use of seapower to influence actions and activities at sea and ashore, and adds to the core applications of naval warfare. Where tensions are high or where there is a need to demonstrate a commitment to security, we will aggregate forces to limit conflict or deter major war.

Our maritime forces will also be positioned and tailored to support humanitarian operations, counterpiracy efforts, and the training of partner nations. These new core capabilities move us to adopt persistent global presence as a key tenet of our strategy. The increasing desire for presence is one of the driving factors in decisions on fleet size and fleet composition.

I remain concerned that the value of presence is underappreciated. The world is a far more connected and interdependent globe today than it was in years past. Nations have moved away from the idea that they must have economic self-sufficiency and have largely recognized the value of trade.

Goods are globally sourced, and nations are dependent on suppliers for the necessities of life from every continent: energy resources from Africa and South America as well as from the Middle East; raw materials from South America, Africa and Australia; finished products from China, and food stuffs from North America. Of this world trade, fully 90 percent of it is transported by sea.

We can no longer afford to focus our attention on only a few specific areas or choke points. For much of the 20th century, the United States and Great Britain — as the preeminent seapowers of the day — maintained freedom of the seas by focusing on three major chokepoints — Suez, Panama and Gibraltar.

Those days are gone.

With today’s global economy, maritime security has a major claim on our attention. Minor shocks and interruptions to the flow of trade at sea can have dramatic, instantaneous effects that reverberate worldwide. Safeguarding this source of food, energy and goods is critical to the world’s economy. Global conditions and trends have driven us to put a higher premium on maritime security around the globe and the need to increase our worldwide presence. We cannot maintain global maritime security by ourselves. We will need to form maritime partnerships.

We are advocating more cooperation among nations that share a common stake in international commerce, safety, security and freedom of the seas. Maritime partnerships and cooperation will promote global maritime security. However, even if we achieve great success in establishing partnerships, we will need to increase presence to develop and maintain those partnerships.

We are tasked with executing many missions, and each mission has an impact on our future fleet.

We must prevail in the Global War on Terror.

We must deter and dissuade threats from potential peer competitors.

We must be capable of winning the high-end wars that we hope never to have to fight.

Certainly, these are priorities about which there is very little disagreement. The hard part is calculating the risks associated with each, and deciding what levels of risk are acceptable. Whether looking at the strategic or operational environment, the Department of the Navy must balance risk daily. While we must plan for high-end contingencies, we must carry out today's operations on the low end, in support of the war on terrorism, and for enhanced maritime cooperation.

These multiple requirements compel us to develop a portfolio of combatant ships. We need aircraft carriers, amphibious ships, submarines and other large combatants - but we also need smaller, less expensive warships. Not every crisis requires an aircraft carrier's supremacy. A range of ship types allows us to better match ship capabilities and size to missions. Smaller ships are more appropriate to some missions, while also being better suited for engagement with the navies of our maritime partners. Moreover, the inclusion of these smaller, less expensive ships in our portfolio allows us to increase our fleet size within our budget. Our 30-year shipbuilding plan provides for a range of high-end- to lower-end-capability ships, and will give us the number of ships we need to support global presence.

Given the long lead times necessary in shipbuilding, the American people must support shipbuilding in peacetime, years before threats come fully into view.

That means that we must invest now in the Fleet.

Peace has never been the natural state of mankind - it must be defended and preserved. Let us go forward and work to defend peace through a strong Navy and Marine Corps.

Donald S. Winter is secretary of the Navy. This essay is adapted from a speech delivered at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I. on June 17, 2008.

Solving The Navy's Energy Crisis

By Mike Burlison, Opinion-Editorials.com, August 6, 2008

An article in the Virginia-Pilot (Navy wonders, just how do you trim a \$3.8 billion fuel bill?), details how the military suffers along with the rest of us with high gas prices. Their's might be the most tragic story considering, as the report details, that vital training exercises are often canceled and ships frequently forced to shut down their engines in order to conserve fuel. Both are dangerous practices when the fleet is under threat from terrorists and stealthy submarines from rogue states.

Since the US Navy's first atomic powered warships went to sea in the 1950s, a desired goal has been for an all-nuclear fleet. Obviously because of cost such a lofty objective has been beyond the finances allocated to the service. Now with government as well as the public straining with high fuel prices, Congress is once again calling on the Fleet to build such vessels, unmatched as they are for fuel-efficiency. There is some controversy in this decision because of the extra expense it adds to the building of modern surface combatants, with some estimates reaching as high as \$800 million more per ship. No power on earth can afford continuing to build multi-billion dollar warships exclusively.

There is an alternative however to costly nuclear task forces. During the First Gulf war, with the carrier battle groups tied down supporting the liberation of Kuwait, the USN turned to its superb fleet of nuclear attack submarines to continue holding the line against the bankrupt though still dangerous Soviet Fleet. Thanks to the power of modern weapons, such as smarter versions of the famed Tomahawk cruise missiles, the submarine could expand this role today to reduce our dependence on these budget draining carriers, their equally pricey escort cruisers and destroyers, as well as the extended and vulnerable logistics chain needed to support them.

The advantages of a submarine over an aircraft carrier strategy are astoundingly clear:

1. Though a nuclear carrier doesn't require frequent refuelings, its gas-guzzling aircraft and escorts do.
2. The submarine is a stealth warship, the carrier far from it. The flattop's vast size stands out like a sour thumb while the noisy Aegis radar of its escorts can be picked up by enemy warships and aircraft hundreds of miles away.
3. The carrier, as we mentioned, requires expensive escorts to protect it, as well as costly naval aircraft for defense. The submarine relies on its own invisibility under the sea.

4. The sub is completely invulnerable to the modern cruise missile, the carrier not so much.

5. Submarines are run by a hundred or so crewman, while the carrier requires many thousands.

Those who argue the necessity of carrier groups might site the need for "presence", meaning the sending of a supercarrier into the vicinity of a potential hotspot would often be enough to avert conflict. To this I would contend that

ordering a missile-firing submarine off an enemy shore, along with a discrete posting in the Press, would accomplish the same function without putting at risk the tens of thousands of sailors or the enormous expense of such an undertaking, or the subsequent escalation of tensions that occurs every time the highly visible battle group makes a move. The beauty of this strategy is that the attack sub need not even be in the vicinity for this to work! How would an adversary know the difference from the near invisible undersea boats?!

Others might also insist that no submarine can perform the varied functions of the multi-purpose flattops. The big ships can perform round the clock bombing against an adversary as well as patrol great distances due to the reach of her aircraft. This argument seems to relate back to the days of when the battleships were the Navy's frontline defenders. It was even said that if the mighty battlewagons with their fearsome guns were obsolete, then all surface warships were in danger of extinction. Yet, the carriers rule today so far, and we have gotten along fine without the expensive and vulnerable dreadnoughts. It all comes down to which warship is most capable of surviving the new warfare at sea, and considering the power of precision bombs and missiles, we believe this to be the submarine.

We conclude that 1 or 2 nuclear attack subs with long range cruise missiles could replace an entire aircraft carrier strike group, her expensive escorts, as well as the extended and vulnerable logistical chain. Likewise a squadron of such vessels, 6-10 nuke boats including 1 or 2 SSGNs (converted Trident subs carrying over 150 missiles) could conduct a sustained campaign on the order of a Desert Storm, in place of 3-4 carriers and 50 or so supporting ships. Combining this with the already awesome airpower deployed by the USAF, Marines, and Army, you would have many survivable platforms doing the mission of the handful of expensive flattops whose great cost alone is dragging total fleet numbers down, and adding further to the world-wide Energy Crisis.

Mike Burleson is a regular columnist with Sea Classics magazine and an advocate of Military Reform. He resides in historic Charleston, SC.

Special Beer Being Crafted To Mark The Occasion

By Charles McMahon, Fosters Daily Democrat, August 6, 2008

PORTSMOUTH — With all of the exciting things happening prior to the upcoming commissioning of the USS New Hampshire in October, event officials have plans on tap to create a commemorative beer with the help of the Portsmouth Brewery.

The unofficial name of the beer will most likely be "Grey Ghost Ale," according to Stephanie Seacord, information director for the USS New Hampshire Community Commissioning Committee.

The creation of the 22-ounce brew was offered by local business owner Peter Egelston, owner of both Smuttynose and The Portsmouth Brewery.

The crew of the submarine is responsible for naming the ale, which will be the official beer of the weekend-long commissioning ceremony.

"Peter (Egelston) very generously offered to create the special beer and do a special label with the submarine logo," said Seacord.

Unfortunately, the process of getting a logo approved for a bottle of beer takes longer than it actually takes to make the beer, she added.

If all goes as planned the beer will be available for everyone to enjoy come October, said Seacord.

DSU Showcases Submarine Capabilities

By Mass Comm. Spc. 3rd Class (SW) Porter Anderson, Navy News, August 6, 2008

SAN DIEGO - Deep Submergence Unit (DSU) hosted the second annual Submarine Rescue Day at their command on Naval Air Station North Island.

DSU, the Navy's only worldwide deployable submarine rescue-capable command, showcased personnel, capabilities and equipment.

“It’s gratifying to give all these people that ‘wow’ feeling in seeing all that we here at DSU offer to the fleet and around the world,” said Machinist’s Mate 1st Class (SS/DSW) Patrick Melendez, co-pilot of Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) Mystic.

The event provided information about how the Navy responds to crises around the globe. DSU is capable of responding to a crisis within 72 hours of the call.

“We train constantly to keep our performance levels high,” said Lt. Scott Sharrow, training and planning operations officer. “It normally takes 12 to 15 months to fully qualify our enlisted members and even longer for the Reserve unit we have.”

Some equipment DSU’s Sailors must qualify to use was showcased at the event including the Atmospheric Diving System, which has a maximum depth of 2,000 feet and DSRV Mystic, which has served DSU for more than 30 years.

Submarine Rescue Day was open to contractors, friends, family members or anyone interested in DSU’s operations and equipment.

“It’s good to see what the Navy has to offer, such as all the systems and capabilities for all situations and events that could be thrown at them by world events,” said visitor Tim Hunt.

“This year’s Submarine Rescue Day is already bigger than last year’s,” said Navy Diver 1st Class (DSW/SW) Kiwini Turner. “With some hope, it will be even bigger next year, and I look forward to it.”

Navy Tries To Ease Worry Over Sub Nuke Leak

Navy Times, August 5, 2008

The Navy continued trying to tamp down worry across the Pacific Ocean on Tuesday by telling people there was no risk from the radiation leaked for months by a nuclear-powered attack submarine.

The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine Houston, commissioned in 1982, began discharging small amounts of radioactive water around five months ago, according to reports, prompting worries about the boat’s port calls in Guam, Japan and its return to port in Pearl Harbor, where the leak was discovered in late July.

A preliminary environmental survey found no elevated radiation levels in the waters off Guam attributable to a visit in May and June from the Houston, according to a letter from the Navy to Guam Gov. Felix Camacho.

Likewise, commanders in Japan were trying to calm public worries over the port visit of another nuclear-powered Los Angeles-class attack sub, the La Jolla, just a few days after Japanese authorities revealed the Navy had alerted them about the Houston’s leak.

According to local news reports, government officials in Japan were upset that they learned about the radiation worries from a report on CNN, rather than having been told by the U.S. Navy or the Japanese foreign ministry.

The La Jolla’s visit to Naval Base Sasebo had already been scheduled as part of its Western Pacific deployment.

Anti-military activists on Guam demonstrated outside the naval station and a local legislator introduced a bill that would require continuous radioactive monitoring in the island’s port.

In Japan, anti-nuclear activists — already upset that the nuclear-powered carrier George Washington is arriving this fall as the new forward-deployed 7th Fleet carrier — cited the case of the Houston as another reason to worry about the presence of nuclear-powered ships.

Northrop Grumman, Navy Working Out Best Path Forward Following Report On Sub Welds

By Geoff Fein, Defense Daily, August 6, 2008

NEWPORT NEWS, Va.—The Navy and Northrop Grumman [NOC] Newport News (NGNN) are still working out how the service and the company will proceed forward following a report on interior welding issues first discovered last year on the USS New Hampshire (SSN-778), a company official said.

NGNN sent the first of its three-volume report to the Navy on April 21, Charles Southall, director advanced submarine programs and author of the report, told Defense Daily.

“The company has been working hand-in-hand with the Navy, assisting them, digesting the report, understanding what the recommendations were, and making sure that the Navy is informed as they make their response,” he said.

NGNN has yet to receive the Navy’s response, Southall added.

Following the discovery of weld failures on New Hampshire during routine testing at General Dynamics [GD] Electric Boat in August and again in October 2007, the Navy and the two shipbuilders began inspecting welds on all Virginia-class submarines in early December (Defense Daily, Dec. 7).

One of the things the Navy initially found out in its investigation was that copper contamination causes cracking and weakens the weld. The Navy began to question the shipbuilder about how copper got into the welds (Defense Daily, Dec. 11).

The root cause was that NGNN welders were allowed to carry two types of weld wire on them. One made from corrosion resistant steel and the other from nickel copper, which would have copper in it (Defense Daily, Feb. 1).

Between 2000 and December 2007, the Navy discovered 15 instances in which there had been some contamination of one type or another in a weld where copper weakened a weld. The Navy knew about those issues and the welds were fixed.

Out of that subset of valves, inspectors found just a few with contamination: one on the Virginia and one on the USS Texas (SSN-775).

None were found on the USS Hawaii (SSN-776) or the USS North Carolina (SSN-777) (Defense Daily, Dec. 11).

By January 2008, the investigation expanded to include Los Angeles-class (SSN-688) submarines and aircraft carriers built and serviced at Newport News (Defense Daily, Feb. 1).

“The only recommendations we made in those reports were to do some limited inspections on ships and we’ve not begun that process,” Southall said last week. “[We are] working with the Navy to make sure they are comfortable with those recommendations before going forward.

“We haven’t had any finding where we recommend the Navy go back and cut joints,” Southall noted.

NGNN implemented changes immediately, he added.

“We implemented a wide array of process changes to bolster the procedures we had in place. That has been done,” Southall said. “We continue on further improvements, as you do as a learning organization no matter what, but the immediate corrective actions have all been taken and our processes are much stronger as a result.”

The most notable change is making sure all of NGNN’s welders are educated on the cause and effect of improper metal finding its way into a joint, he added.

“Although we have put into place a few physical procedure changes, the lion’s share of our work has been education for our welder workforce, making sure we focus on the leadership aspect of this because at the end of the day that’s where it all really comes down to,” Southall said.

Southall noted he has seen a lot better communication back and forth between program officials and the deck plate in terms of technical involvement at the deck plate level and support for the welding trades.

“I think that’s probably the biggest improvement I have seen since we began this process a few months ago,” he said. “I am confident now we don’t have [any] problems that the technical community doesn’t know about and are not immediately involved in. The frequency of those issues has gone down. Overall, we have seen marked improvement in the process.”

NGNN has evaluated all of its product lines at this point. The company sent the report on the Virginia-class boats to the Navy in April, followed a month after that with a similar report on aircraft carriers. In June, NGNN submitted its third volume of the report, focusing on all the company’s fleet support work, to the Navy, Southall said. “We have taken a look at every one of our product lines and made...recommendations to the Navy for all of those product lines.”

A Virginia-class submarine, nominally, has 100,000 structural welds and about 30,000 piping welds and socket welds per ship, Southall explained.

“Looking at the defects that we have uncovered, we are talking about [one and two]...single digit. So if you go back to what you have seen from [Vice] Adm. [Paul] Sullivan (commander, Naval Sea Systems Command), for instance, it is literally [ones and twos]. But we still, at the core process, take that extremely seriously. Those [ones and twos] are too much for us,” Southall said.

Taiwan Arms Freeze

By James A. Lyons Jr., Adm., Ret., *Washington Times*, August 6, 2008

When President Bush came to power in 2001, his administration had an announced policy to improve the defensive posture of Taiwan. However, recent statements from the administration have made it clear that the president has suspended or is “freezing” arms sales to Taiwan for an undetermined period. While administration officials deny such a “freeze” exists, other reports have suggested the freeze may become permanent.

Such a policy choice would be a tragedy not just for the people of Taiwan, but for our U.S. military forces who may have to defend Taiwan from a Communist China that shows no inclination to consider a future for Taiwan other than from its own dictat. In view of the rapidly expanding Chinese military modernization program, the current freeze makes no sense.

Taiwan, along with our friends and allies, could not be faulted for viewing the freeze as a first step in abandoning democracy for Taiwan and adding a significant degree of uncertainty to our Asian security policy. This is not a legacy President Bush should want to leave for his successor.

As Adm. Timothy Keating, current USCINCPAC (United States Pacific Command) commander, recently pointed out in an address at the Heritage Foundation, Taiwan’s military equipment is getting older, leading to an expanding imbalance as the People’s Republic of China (PRC) accelerates the modernization of its military forces, which include a force projection capability. There are reports that China is planning to construct an amphibious force consisting of 6 new Type O81 helicopter assault ships and 3 Type O71 landing dock assault ships. These forces are clearly not for defensive purposes.

Since his election in March, President Ma Ying-jeou and the new Kuomintang (KMT) government have moved quickly to reduce tension with mainland China. The Bush administration has worked hard to show its preference for many of the moves the KMT government is now trying to do. However, for the people of Taiwan and for the United States, the preservation of democracy on Taiwan remains paramount.

Chinese military writings over the last decade have made it patently clear that Taiwan’s value to China is as a new military base. They look at Taiwan as an unsinkable aircraft carrier; controlling Taiwan will allow Chinese military forces to break out of what has been called the “First Island Chain” and to then dominate East Asia. Even with President Ma’s conciliatory moves to reduce tension with mainland China, there has been no reciprocity by the PRC. Since the Taiwan election in March, China has shown no inclination to reduce its order of battle facing Taiwan, or even to slow the rate of growth in these forces. The Chinese air force flies up to five sorties a day up to the “midline” of the Taiwan Strait, creating a strain on Taiwan’s air defense posture, made more burdensome by the increasing number of nearly-impossible-to-evade, long-range Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles.

Since 2001, the number of Chinese ballistic missiles aimed at Taiwan has increased from about 400 to over 1,250, and include 250 new land attack cruise missiles. The number of modern, fourth-generation fighters facing Taiwan has grown from about 150 to about 500. The number of modern submarines has grown from about eight to about 30. This does not include the new underground submarine pens on Hainan Island, which provide a base to interdict the critical sea lines of communication coming from the Straits of Malacca to Taiwan and our allies Japan and South Korea.

Had the Bush administration’s original 2001 arms sales package to Taiwan of new destroyers, new Patriot anti-ballistic missile interceptors, P-3 anti-submarine aircraft and eight new, conventional submarines been transferred immediately, Taiwan might have been able to sustain a margin of technical superiority and deterrent capability. Further, as many as 66 new F-16 fighters that Taiwan has requested in the last two years would also have to be added to the equation.

There can be no errors in preserving the military balance in the Taiwan Strait. We either have a sincere interest in Taiwan’s ability to defend itself, as stated in the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act, or we do not. I suggest that America continues to have vital interest in sustaining Taiwan’s survival as a democracy, plus a vested interest in helping the Taiwanese to defend themselves. Failing in our responsibility to provide the necessary defensive arms to Taiwan could force Taiwan to renew a latent nuclear weapons program to maintain some semblance of deterrence in the Straits.

Until mainland China changes its totalitarian regime and can accept Taiwan on its own terms, the creditability of American leadership demands that we do what's necessary to defend freedom on Taiwan. This should be the legacy that the Bush administration leaves for its successor.

James A. Lyons Jr., a retired U.S. Navy admiral, was commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, senior U.S. military representative to the United Nations, and deputy chief of naval operations, where he was principal adviser on all Joint Chiefs of Staff matters.

Protests As US Nuclear Submarine Arrives In Japan

AFP, August 4, 2008

TOKYO - A US nuclear-powered submarine arrived on Monday at a port in southern Japan amid protests over a radioactive leak by another vessel earlier this year.

Dozens of atomic bomb survivors and peace activists gathered in Nagasaki, one of two Japanese cities devastated by atomic bombs in World War II, bearing banners reading: "Nuclear vessels are not welcome in Nagasaki prefecture."

They urged the local authorities to end visits by nuclear-powered submarines until safety can be assured, said Hiroshi Sakamoto, a local peace activist.

The Pentagon said Friday that a small radioactive leak may have come from the nuclear-powered USS Houston during a cruise that included stops in Japan and Guam. The submarine docked in Sasebo City in Nagasaki prefecture in March.

A US Navy investigation determined the amount of radioactivity that seeped from a valve was less than half a microcurie, or less than what would be found in a 50-pound (22.6 kilogram) bag of lawn fertiliser.

Another US nuclear-powered submarine, the USS La Jolla, called Monday at the same port in Sasebo City, where it was met by a protest by about 50 peace campaigners and local residents, activists said.

"We will continue the sit-in protest until the nuclear-powered ship leaves Sasebo port," said Sakamoto. It was unclear how long the submarine would stay.

The port call came just days ahead of the 63rd anniversary of the US atomic bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, 1945.

House Panel Weighs Fallback Plan For Authorization Bill

By Megan Scully, National Journal, August 4, 2008

With the fate of the FY09 defense authorization bill uncertain in the Senate, members of the House Armed Services Committee huddled shortly before the August recess to discuss strategies for getting at least a bare-bones Pentagon policy measure to President Bush's desk this year. The bipartisan meeting was called by House Armed Services Chairman Ike Skelton Wednesday to discuss options in the event the Senate does not take up the authorization measure before Congress adjourns for the year or does not approve the measure in time for formal conference negotiations on the bill. Among the fallback strategies discussed was pairing down the bill to include only the most important provisions or attaching some version of the bill to the anticipated continuing resolution, aides and lawmakers said. Skelton would not discuss the details of the meeting, other than to say, "Stay tuned." He added, "We're doing our best."

Senate Armed Services Chairman Carl Levin and Sen. John Warner, R-Va., a former chairman of the panel, had been working before the recess to gain approval for a unanimous consent agreement that would limit debate on the bill to germane amendments. But Republicans objected to the UC when Senate Majority Leader Reid offered it on the floor July 26. Five days later, Republicans defeated a cloture resolution on the measure. "It happens to be the politics of the Senate that's the problem," said House Armed Services Air and Land Subcommittee Chairman Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii. The House passed its version of the defense authorization measure in May. The Senate Armed Services Committee approved its version April 30.

There were no decisions reached during the closed-door strategy session, said House Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee ranking member John McHugh, R-N.Y. Members discussed the "lay of the land" and what could be done to shepherd some of the most important provisions through Congress in the event the bill remains tied up in the Senate. Committee members also did not draw up a list of must-pass provisions, McHugh said. "There is no rule book that says the

following are must-dos,” he added. But one must-pass provision could be the authorization of a troop pay raise, often considered one of the most important pieces of the massive authorization measure. Both the House-passed version and the Senate Armed Services Committee’s bill include a 3.9 percent pay raise — a half a point higher than President Bush requested. A week before the recess, Levin said he that he believes approving a paired-down measure would set a “terrible precedent” for handling the bill, which Congress has approved every year since at least 1961.

Fastest Boat In the World Goes To The Breakers

Strategypage.com, August 5, 2008

August 5, 2008: Russia is decommissioning and scraping its fastest submarine. The only ship of its class, the K-222 entered service in 1970, and was referred to by NATO as the Papa Class. This 5,200 nuclear boat had a record breaking top speed of 82 kilometers an hour. But it was very noisy at this speed, and uncomfortable for the crew as well, so not very useful as a combat boat. The K-222 did, however, serve as a test bed for two other classes of subs; the smaller (2,300 ton) Alfa class SSNs (attack boats), and the larger missile carrying boats. Because of their high cost (they had the same titanium hull as the K-222), only seven Alfa’s were built in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The K-222 also carried ten anti-ship missiles, and this feature taught the Russians that silence, more than speed, was needed for these weapons to work in combat. The 4,3000 ton Charlie class appeared a few years before the K-222, but these only had a top speed of closer to 45 kilometers an hour.

The K-222 has been laid up for twenty years, after problems with its reactor proved too expensive to repair. Actually, the K-222 cost about twice what a Charlie class boat cost to operate, and was less effective as a “carrier killer” (a sub equipped with anti-ship missiles.) Thus there was no incentive to get the K-222 back into service. Thus, age finally caught up with the K-222, and it will be cut up for scrap.

Navy Veteran Remembers USS Nautilus’ Secret Mission

By Joe Vanhoose, The Herald Tribune, August 3, 2008

OCALA – Frank Holland is reporting back to his vessel today after a 47-year leave. Most of his crew is gone now, excused from the muster list with little black dots next to their name.

“They’ve gone on to their final assignment,” Holland said. “They’re on eternal patrol.”

The 87-year-old Ocala native knows it will not be long until all of the crew that sailed on the Nautilus, the first nuclear-powered submarine that became the first ship to cross the North Pole in 1958, have passed on to stiller waters. The feats they accomplished, however, will live on.

“They called us the impenetrable crew,” Holland said recently before he left for the Nautilus Museum in New London, Conn. “I think we’re a very special group.”

The crew of 126 was the first to cross the North Pole, 50 years ago this Sunday, by cruising 700 feet below the polar icecap. What came to fruition in 1958 started out as a top secret training exercise in 1953. Holland, who was soon picked to be the sub’s engineering technician, was right in the middle of it.

“I was going to school at the University of Florida and went into the Navy instead of getting drafted,” Holland said. “I had high scores on the Navy entrance exam, and I was told I could either go to Annapolis or do this.”

He soon learned that “this” was the challenge of sailing the first nuclear-powered submarine, a challenge Holland was eager to take on. The class of 35 trained in Pittsburgh under the veil of being scientists.

“The Navy didn’t even keep information or papers on us,” Holland remembered. “I was told that everything was top secret and that I had to sign up for two extra years.”

Holland said the Nautilus introduced a new kind of warfare. The sub could stay submerged as long as the crew could take it, Holland said, which was about three months at a time.

“Once we got into deep water, we’d submerge and wouldn’t surface until we got to where we were going,” he said. “I spent about 12 years of my life underwater in those things.”

“We had to do something to overcome the Russians and Sputnik,” Holland said. “We had crossed the Panama Canal and made some excursions under some ice in the Atlantic Ocean, but that was almost disastrous.”

As they entered the ice caps of northern water, the crew soon realized they were lost.

“We couldn’t figure out where we were with all the ice on top of us,” Holland said. “The Navy sent a ship to throw grenades so we could follow the sounds to find our way out.”

The Nautilus backed out of its first North Pole mission in June 1958 and retreated to Hawaii, but Holland knew the sub would soon make another attempt.

In Hawaii, Holland and fellow crew member John Krawczyk made a rubber stamp out of the Nautilus symbol and of the polar icecap. They left enough room to add a time and day later.

Later that summer, the Nautilus returned to the north Pacific and started its slow climb to underneath the top of the world.

“The space was getting tighter and the ice and the base was closing in,” Holland said. “But the scientists had a machine on board that made these small circles. When the circles started going the other way, we knew we had crossed.”

They crossed at 11:15 p.m. on Aug. 3, 1958. Holland and Krawczyk stamped 1,528 letters on board saying so.

The Nautilus went on to England, where Holland said he was greeted by thousands of onlookers. They then sailed to New York City, where they were thrown a ticker tape parade, made guests of honor at the Waldorf Astoria and given a key to the city.

Holland would sail on the Nautilus until 1961. He stayed in the Navy on submarines before retiring in 1975, coming back to Ocala to teach at Central Florida Community College. The Nautilus was decommissioned in 1980.

The Nautilus sits in pristine condition at the New London museum. But something that looks awfully similar sits on a trailer in Holland’s backyard.

Holland and a handful of other veterans built an 1,800-pound, 28-foot replica submarine out of an airplane gas tank and a lot of fiberglass. From the bow planes to the torpedo tubes to the aluminum sail with “571” painted on the sides, it is as if the Nautilus was just shrunk to a 13th of its size and taken out of the water.

“This is the way it looked 50 years ago,” Holland said. “Heck, it’s the way it looks now.”

Holland has also preserved all his press clippings, letters, pictures and maps from the sub, treasures he will share this month in the Marion County Public Library in Ocala.

“I want to preserve the history the artifacts, the newsprint at the library,” Holland said. “It’s a very important, celebrated part of our naval history.”

Adm. Ralph Metcalf, WWII Commander, Dies At 95

By David R. Baker, The San Francisco Chronicle, August 3, 2008

Retired Rear Adm. Ralph Marion Metcalf, a decorated World War II submarine commander who later pursued careers in aerospace and personal finance, died July 18 of pneumonia at a Los Gatos hospital. The Saratoga resident was 95.

Although Adm. Metcalf spent two-thirds of his long working life in the private sector, friends and colleagues remember him as a man molded by the Navy. He brought an officer’s drive and directness to his work at Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. and investment company Paine Webber.

“He was a perfectionist,” said his daughter, Marshall Metcalf Seymour, of Arlington, Va. “He sought integrity, honor and loyalty in others, and that’s what he believed in.”

Adm. Metcalf was born on June 22, 1913, in Greenfield, Ill., a small farming town near St. Louis. While still in school, he met the woman he would later marry, Helen Achenbach, who lived in the nearby town of Rockbridge.

The schools in Greenfield and Rockbridge competed with each other in essay contests, and the future couple often squared off.

“One year, my mother would win, and the other, my father would win,” Seymour said. “They went back and forth.”

After one competition, the two students were walking along a railroad track, and Adm. Metcalf offered Achenbach a peppermint candy. The gesture won her over, said son-in-law Jack Seymour Jr. They married in 1939 and stayed together for the rest of his life.

He joined the U.S. Naval Academy in 1931, graduated in 1935 and served, at first, on surface ships. But he soon became interested in submarines and completed training for them in 1939. He patrolled the Aleutian Islands early in World War II aboard the S-23, then was assigned to the Pogy as the submarine’s executive officer.

After briefly working on the refits of other submarines, he returned to the Pogy as its captain in November 1942. The submarine sank 10 ships during three war patrols in the Pacific, earning Adm. Metcalf two Navy Crosses, a Silver Star and a Bronze Star.

He retired from the Navy in 1957, moved to Saratoga and took a job with Lockheed Missiles and Space Co., near Moffett Field. Adm. Metcalf worked on the company's Polaris missile program, serving as a liaison to the British military. His stint at Lockheed lasted 21 years, almost as long as his naval career.

While working at Lockheed, however, Adm. Metcalf had grown interested in personal finance. He helped found an investment club called the Piggy Bank. Then in 1978, he turned his interest into his third career, taking a job at Paine Webber in San Jose.

"I think he took to this like he did to the water," said Paine Webber colleague James Mann. Adm. Metcalf, he said, brought military exactitude to the job.

"It wasn't that he was an admiral in the office, but he had a very straightforward way of doing business," Mann said.

He retired from Paine Webber in 1996, at age 82, and handed off most of his clients to Mann. But he still came in on Mondays to talk with Mann about clients' accounts. He only stopped doing so after turning 93, Mann said.

In addition to his daughter and son-in-law, Adm. Metcalf is survived by his wife, Helen, of Saratoga, nephew Peter Hurd and his wife Diane Tsukamoto of San Jose, grandsons Peter DuBois Seymour of Los Angeles and Randle Bingham Seymour of Houston, and three great-grandsons.

A funeral service took place July 23 at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Saratoga.

China's Bond-Style Nuclear Sub Base

In A Move That Projects Its Naval Power Across The Pacific, China Has Secretly Built A Huge Underground Nuclear Submarine Base Near Sanya On Hainan Island Off Its Southern Coast.

By Peter Sharp, SkyNews.com, August 3, 2008

The construction of the naval base threatens China's Asian neighbours and for the first time challenges America's power in the Pacific.

Since the Second World War, the region has been a vital part of Washington's security umbrella.

The immense man-made harbour is big enough to house a fleet of aircraft carriers.

And in the rocky promontories - in what could be a set from a Bond film - 60ft high caverns have been built that could shelter a score of nuclear submarines from spy satellites.

Analysts from Jane's Intelligence Review suggest that the base could be used for "expeditionary as well as defensive operations" and would allow the submarines "to break out to launch locations closer to the US".

The location of the base off Hainan gives the submarines access to very deep water within just a few miles making them even harder to detect.

The Sanya base is close to the strategically important oil shipping lanes from the Middle East.

For that reason, China's neighbours in the region are viewing the establishment of the base with alarm.

Intelligence expert James Kyngge told Sky News: "One of the greatest questions is how able China will be to secure its supply routes of oil, natural resources, the energy, the metals without bumping up against this regions biggest military power America.

USS Helena Resurfaces in San Diego

By Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class (SW/AW) Brian Gaines, Fleet Public Affairs Center, Pacific, July 31, 2008

SAN DIEGO (NNS) – Los Angeles-class attack submarine USS Helena (SSN 725) returned to Naval Base Point Loma July 30 after performing independent operations during a scheduled Western Pacific deployment.

The crew conducted various missions during their six-month underway period and received numerous accolades from their commanding officer, Cmdr. Daniel Brunk.

"The crew did an absolutely wonderful job," said Brunk. "We kept a steady 83 percent operational tempo, worked hard and kept things running smoothly. I can't say enough about the crew and their achievements."

Approximately 250 friends and family members turned out to greet the returning Sailors.



“Words cannot express the excitement I feel today,” said Kerri Davis, wife of Machinist’s Mate 2nd Class (SS) Jimmy Davis. “

I look forward to spending time with him and for him to get to know his son.”

Davis’ son was born just prior to Helena’s deployment.

Electronics Technician 2nd Class (SS) Carl Haines said the return to friends and family makes the challenges of being a submariner worthwhile.

“Today is one of the greatest feelings I have ever had in the Navy,” Haines said. “I can’t wait to spend time with my family and friends during the standdown.”

Helena is the fourth Navy ship to be named after Helena, Mont. She was commissioned in 1987 and has a crew of 12 officers and 98 crew members.

Navy: No Evidence Stranding Due To Sonar

By Chris Amos, Navy Times, 31 July 2008

Navy officials say there is no evidence that the stranding of one of a rare species of whales on a Hawaiian beach Monday morning was caused by sonar activity from a large naval exercise in nearby waters.

“At this time there is no evidence that any naval activities contributed to the stranding. Marine mammal strandings are a regular occurrence in the Hawaiian Islands,” Navy spokesman Lt. Sean Robertson said, adding that 22 strandings were recorded in 2006 and that most were caused by illness or disease.

Bystanders pushed the 2,000-pound Cuvier’s beaked whale back into the ocean once after finding it on a mudflat 100 yards offshore.

“It was pointing into shore, struggling somewhat, trying to get ashore,” kayaker Drew Murphy told a Honolulu television station.

“Myself and some other local fellows tried to see if we could turn the animal so it could swim out off the beach instead of onto the beach. As the tide rose, the animal did free himself and we blockaded it to prevent it from coming toward the beach which worked partially.”

The whale swam back out to sea but beached itself again about a mile away, Murphy said.

Murphy said he then called the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Marine Mammal Response Team to the beach. The team euthanized the whale. The Coast Guard flew its carcass to Oahu, where a necropsy will be performed by the NOAA.

The Rim of the Pacific exercise involved 35 ships, six submarines, and 150 aircraft from 10 nations. Navy officials said the ships would use mid-frequency active sonar during the final stage of the exercise, the tactical portion of which wrapped up Monday.

Scientists have said beaked whales are particularly susceptible to that type of sonar but have been unable to explain why.

Zak Smith, a lawyer for the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental group which has sued the Navy claiming that its sonar use during violates federal laws, said the group would reserve judgment until the NOAA report was finished.

“Until scientists have completed their investigation on the animal, we would not have a comment,” he said.

India to acquire underwater land attack missiles

The Economic Times (India), 31 July 2008

NEW DELHI: India is on the verge of acquiring a strategic capability to strike land targets thousands of miles from its shores by inducting the Russian underwater launched Club-S subsonic cruise missiles.

The missiles will come armed in early August on Indian Navy’s new series of upgraded Kilo-class submarine INS Sindhuvijay, according to Naval sources here.

Sindhuvijay will be the first of Kilo-class submarines to be fitted with these land attack versions of the new breaking technology Club-S cruise missiles, which have a flight range of 275 nautical miles.

“The high-precision missile can be launched from standard torpedo tubes from a depth of 35 to 40 meters,” Naval sources said.

Sindhuvijay is the fourth Indian Navy’s Kilo-class submarine that has been overhauled at Zvezdochka shipyard in northern Russia. Besides the land attack version, the subs are also coming armed with 3M-54EI anti-ship cruise missiles.

Labelled by NATO as one of the quietest submarines in the world, the upgraded Kilo-class subs have undergone extensive changes in the hull as well as getting improved control systems, sonars, new electronic warfare systems and an integrated weapon control system.

First Nuclear Sub Patrol Left From Base Set Up At Height Of Cold War

By William Tinning, The Herald, July 30, 2008

It was established four decades ago at the height of the Cold War when relations between the West and the former Soviet Union were on a knife-edge.

The Royal Navy took over a remote 1000-acre site on the shores of Loch Long in Argyll, amid some of Scotland’s most beautiful countryside, for use as a base where Britain’s nuclear submarines would be armed.

The Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Coulport, on the Rosneath peninsula, opened in 1966. Two years later Britain's first Polaris nuclear submarine patrol left from the base sparking a surge of protests that continue today.

RNAD Coulport is lesser known than its sister base HM Naval Base Clyde at Faslane, a short drive past the resort of Helensburgh, where Britain's most important submarine base has been located since the early 1950s.

The comparisons in terms of the numbers employed at each base contrast starkly.

Some 6500 military and civilian staff work at Faslane for the Royal Navy and defence company Babcock Naval Services making it the biggest single site employer in Scotland.

Only 540 military and civilian staff are employed at Coulport.

The most up-to-date independent review by Scottish Enterprise, which covered the financial year of 2001-2002, showed that 3000 people were indirectly employed because of the bases at Faslane and Coulport.

At the time the review said that the bases were spending £267m in Scotland in salaries and contracts and one in four people living in West Dunbartonshire was directly employed at the bases.

The explosives handling jetty at Coulport, where the Trident warheads are loaded and unloaded from the current class of Vanguard submarines, is described as the most dangerous job in the nuclear industry. It is the only facility in Britain used for this purpose.

While a lot of the protests over the years have been concentrated at Faslane many have also focused on Coulport where nuclear warheads are transported by road several times a year from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston, near Reading, an hour's train ride west of London in rural Berkshire.

Moving the 540 jobs at Coulport from Ministry of Defence control would effectively bring the whole of the Trident servicing programme into the private sector. Babcock Marine already run the Faslane facility and Lockheed Martin effectively run the Aldermaston facility.

Moving the work at Coulport into the private sector will increase the pressure on the MoD to open up its Scottish sites to licensing and inspection by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII).

Until now the MoD has maintained that Rosyth, Faslane and the Vulcan naval test reactor at Dounreay in Caithness are military facilities which are beyond the authority of the NII or liable to inspection by the Health and Safety Executive.

Submarines are serviced, maintained and repaired at Faslane and are stocked up before deployment.

The base is also used for training and accommodation for crews.

A £150m development is currently under way at the base to build Scotland's "biggest hotel" with almost 2000 en-suite cabins.

The MoD's intention, within the next 15 years, is that Faslane will be the only base in the UK from where submarines operate.

The Trident weapons system is expected to be in use until the mid-part of this century. However, the submarines that carry them will not last that long and will have to be replaced from about 2020-2025.

A plan to replace Trident over the next 20 years was agreed by former prime minister Tony Blair, and backed by MPs at Westminster last year, despite a major Labour revolt. The plan has been pursued by Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Last month about 500 demonstrators formed a 2000-metre long human chain alongside the fence of the Faslane base.

The event was timed to mark the 40th anniversary of the first Polaris nuclear submarine patrol from Faslane and the 26th birthday of the Faslane peace camp.

It marked one year since a vote in the Scottish Parliament against the replacement of Trident.

Last September new figures showed the cost of policing a year-long anti-nuclear protest was £5m.

Hunt for the Grunion

WWII sub may be found, but closure is hazy idea for Richmond-area woman

By Bill Lohmann, Times-Dispatch (Richmond, Va.), July 27, 2008

The sea swallowed up Bobbi Heims' father before she was even born.

Heims' father, Ryder Mathison, was among a crew of 70 lost when the USS Grunion, a World War II submarine, vanished in the Pacific on July 30, 1942, on its first war patrol. Heims was born three months later.

A lost submarine was not uncommon during World War II, when 52 subs met that fate. What's unusual is when one of them is found – as the Grunion apparently was in August 2007. An expedition financed by the sons of the submarine's

commander located what is believed to be the wreckage in the Bering Sea, more than 3,000 feet below the surface, near the Aleutian Islands.

The discovery left Heims not knowing how she should feel, approaching the 66th anniversary on Wednesday of the vessel's disappearance.

"It's really kind of hard because I never really knew my father," said Heims of Chesterfield County, who was born in California, grew up in Hawaii and has lived in the Richmond area since the 1970s. Her father, an electrician's mate first class, was a native of Iowa.

"No one ever really talked about what happened," said Heims, who until her mother died five years ago never had any of her mementos of her father, such as photographs and an American flag presented to the family after her father's presumed death. "I never knew anything about it. It was never part of my life."

However, she finds comfort in finally knowing what became of the submarine and its men.

"Now we can place a memorial for these men," she said, "and others can know they did exist and did fight for their country and died doing it."

...

Heims will be among more than 100 relatives of the Grunion crew who will gather for a memorial weekend in October in Cleveland. The occasion will include a service as well as a tour of the USS Cod, a World War II submarine docked in Cleveland as a National Historic Landmark. The Cod is similar in design to the Grunion.

"I think it will be quite something," Bruce Abele said of the gathering of families, who have come to know one another through phone calls and e-mails during the search for the Grunion.

Abele is the oldest son of the submarine's captain, Mannert L. Abele. He was 12 when his father's sub was reported lost. Years later, he and his two younger brothers, Brad and John, spearheaded the search that led to the discovery of the Grunion after a series of events that Bruce Abele called "a string of improbables."

One was stumbling across an Internet posting by a Japanese man who, 60 years after the disappearance, had come across a letter written by the commander of a Japanese cargo ship who provided details – and a location – of an encounter with the Grunion. Previously, the Navy had never known where the Grunion went down.

Bruce Abele said the evidence is "really overwhelming" that the wreckage found near the Aleutians is the Grunion. What's less clear is why it sank. It could have been enemy fire. Abele said it's possible the submarine was struck by one of its own faulty torpedoes. He and his family have no further plans to explore the wreckage.

Abele recalls his mother, dealing with her own grief and with no help from the Navy, tracking down addresses for next of kin of each crew member and writing them condolence letters. It's the memory of their mother, who persevered to raise three sons, and of their father, as well as the entire crew, that has driven the Abele brothers to honor the long-forgotten Grunion.

"We have an opportunity not to forget, and that's what we're doing," Abele said in a phone interview from his home in Newton, Mass.

...

The other part of the story is the search for family members of the crew. That work fell largely to the so-called "sub ladies" – three women whose uncles were aboard the Grunion. They have worked like detectives, using the Internet, phone directories and public records to track down the far-flung families.

Three Virginians were among the 70-member crew:

Carson Raymond Martin, Bedford, chief motor machinist's mate.

Meryl Martin Kretschmann was only 6 when her father was lost. When the Grunion was found, she said, "the tears flowed."

"Somehow he has been with me in spirit, and I knew I must never forget him as he never forgot me," said Kretschmann, who lives in Delaware. "My dad was a true hero just as the rest of the 69 men."

Something else went down with the Grunion: a purse Martin had bought – and told his wife about in a letter – for his daughter's 6th birthday.

Samuel Lunsford Jr., Dorchester, electrician's mate second class.

The youngest of six boys, Lunsford grew up in a family of miners in the coal fields of Southwest Virginia. Three of the boys served in World War II. All are gone now.

Ted Lunsford, a nephew, called the discovery of the Grunion a relief.

“It’s just sad that his brothers and his mom and dad never knew,” said Ted Lunsford, who lives in Coeburn, just down the road from Dorchester.

Although he grew up hearing that Sam had been a good high school football player, Ted Lunsford knew little else about his uncle because he was so young. The day the Grunion vanished – July 30, 1942 – was the day Ted celebrated his first birthday.

Frank Thomas Nave, Arlington, motor machinist’s mate second class.

Nave’s Purple Heart, awarded posthumously, was lost during a family move. Whoever found it tracked down a niece of Nave’s, who passed it along to her son, Frank Thomas Dooley, who lives near Roanoke and was named for his great-uncle.

Mary Bentz, one of the tireless “sub ladies,” said she often thinks back to the conversations of her late father and his siblings talking about their baby brother, Carmen Parziale, who was lost on the Grunion.

“People say to me, ‘Why are you doing all of this work?’” Bentz, who lives in Bethesda, Md., said in a phone interview. “I’m doing it because my dad would be so happy to know that I was helping other people have closure.”

For Bobbi Heims, closure is a hazy concept because she never knew her father, but she does know this: She never goes anywhere without him.

Bobbi, she said, is a nickname she has answered to since she was a kid. But the name her late mother gave her at birth was Pearl Ryder – Pearl for Pearl Harbor, where the Grunion sailed from a month before it was lost, and Ryder, her father’s name.

Russia Plans New Carriers, Subs To Boost Navy

By Dmitry Solovyov, Reuters, July 27, 2008

Russia announced plans on Sunday to revive its once-mighty navy by building several aircraft carriers and upgrading its fleet of nuclear submarines in the coming years.

Russia’s power at sea is a shadow of the formidable Soviet navy which challenged U.S. military dominance in the Cold War. But, with a strong economy now from booming oil exports, it is seeking to raise its profile on the world stage by modernizing the armed forces.

Russia will build five or six aircraft carrier battle groups in the near future, RIA news agency quoted Navy Commander Vladimir Vysotsky as telling Navy Day festivities in St Petersburg, the second city.

“We call this a sea-borne aircraft carrier system which will be based on the Northern and Pacific fleets,” Vysotsky said. “The creation of such systems will begin after 2012.”

He said such carrier groups would operate in close contact with Russia’s military satellites, air forces and air defenses.

Russia now has only one aircraft carrier, the Soviet-built Nikolai Kuznetsov, which was launched in 1985 but did not become fully operational for 10 years due to the turmoil following the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991.

In fact, it is not even a fully-fledged aircraft-carrier, being officially called an air-capable cruiser. It carries fewer aircraft than U.S. carriers and features a steam-turbine power-plant with turbo-generators and diesel generators, while all modern carriers are nuclear-powered.

NEW SUBS AND MISSILES

Vysotsky said that along with designing new aircraft carriers Russia would also modernize its new-generation nuclear submarines of the Borei class (Arctic Wind).

The first Borei submarine of the so-called “Project 955,” the Yuri Dolgoruky, was launched in February and is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2008. Two other submarines of this class are now being built.

“Starting with the fourth submarine, we will begin modernizing this class,” Vysotsky said. “The modernized Borei submarines will be the core of Russian naval nuclear forces until 2040.”

“We are aspiring not only to introduce new technologies, not only to compete with the West, but to take completely new steps which would allow us to look at submarine technologies of the middle of the 21st century,” he said.

The prestige of Russia's navy was badly dented in August 2000 when the Kursk nuclear submarine, one of its newest, sank in the Barents Sea, with the loss of all the 118 sailors on board.

Tests of a new nuclear intercontinental ballistic missile Bulava-M, designed to be mounted on Borei-class submarines, have been a mixture of failure and success. The Kremlin has touted Bulava as a unique weapon able to pierce any air defense.

Vysotsky said Bulava would come into service this year.

"Despite the fact that there are still some glitches, the missile will all the same learn how to fly," he said. "Not just to fly, but also to use all the potential invested in it."

Sunken German U-Boats Mapped Off North Carolina Coast

Shipwrecks Located In The Graveyard Of The Atlantic

ENC Today, July 26, 2008

Epic maritime battles between Nazi Germany and Allied forces during World War II seldom ended without bloodshed.

German U-boats often patrolled off the U.S. Atlantic coastline hoping to send a vessel to its early demise with one torpedo strike. Several U-boats, including the U-85, U-352 and U-701, lurked ominously offshore North Carolina's shore, which would eventually become their final resting place.

German U-boats had different levels of success sinking merchant and military vessels as they traveled in the cool Atlantic waters. By July 1942, allied forces had sunk U-85, U-352 and U-701, ending their brief but deadly campaigns.

Each U-boat's wreckage site is located less than 40 miles from Cape Hatteras, Morehead City and Oregon Inlet. For the past two weeks, a six-man dive team from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has conducted a research expedition off the state's coast to inspect the U-85, U-352 and U-701 wreckage.

"This expedition is the first part of a larger multi-year project to research and document a number of historically significant shipwrecks tragically lost during WWII, including U.S. and British naval vessels and merchant marine vessels," expedition leader David Alberg said in a press release. "The information collected during this expedition will be crucial to efforts to preserve these historic sites."

Friday marked the expedition's last day. Tropical Storm Cristobal briefly delayed the expedition last week.

"We have had a lot of good dive time," Monitor National Marine Sanctuary education and outreach coordinator Shannon Ricles said. "Divers surveyed both the U-85 and U-701 today (Friday)."

Ricles said the U-85 wreckage site is located beneath the ocean's surface about 16 miles from Oregon Inlet. The U-701 is located about 30 miles off the coast of Oregon Inlet. U-352's wreckage is located about 25 miles in waters off Morehead City.

The sunken German U-boats are located in an area known as the "Graveyard of the Atlantic," which includes shipwrecks from both sides of the Battle of the Atlantic.

NOAA's July expedition at the U-boat wreckage sites marks archeologists' first formal attempt to survey the scene.

"Divers have taken photos and videos of the wrecks," Ricles said. "Archeologists will examine how much deterioration exists."

Of the three wreckage sites, U-701 is the most intact. The wreckage site was first discovered in 1989 by Uwe Lovas. During WWII, U-701 was Germany's most successful U-boat to operate off North Carolina's coast.

It first launched on April 16, 1941 and later patrolled near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay where it laid several mines for Allied vessels, sinking two ships and severely damaging three others. U-701 fired its arsenal at the SS William Rockefeller sinking one of the era's largest tankers. A U.S. Navy yard patrol craft was sunk on June 19, 1942 by one of U-701's deck guns.

The U-701's reign of terror ended on July 7, 1942, after it was sunk by an U.S. Army Air Corp Hudson Bomber. Thirty-six German crew members survived the vessel's initial sinking but only seven lived to be rescued.

Ricles said U-352's wreckage is in better shape than U-85's wreckage. Both sites have seen their share of relic hunters searching for rare souvenirs. Both U-boats were sunk in 1942.

The U-85 was the first enemy submarine kill in U.S. waters with most of its crew killed by depth charges after they abandoned the vessel. The wreckage site was discovered in the 1960s.

U-352 was sunk by the U.S. Coast Guard Icarus on May 9, 1942. Thirty-three German crewmen aboard the submarine were captured, which marked the first German submarine prisoners of war captured in WWII. Recreational divers discovered the U-352 wreckage site in 1975.

The three U-boats were part of Adolf Hitler's overall plan to disrupt commercial shipping lanes off the American coast. The Nazi plan was named Operation Paukenschlag. During the first six months of 1942, Hitler's U-boat fleet sank 397 merchant ships off the American coast, according to ncbeaches.com.

Waters off Cape Hatteras offered U-boats many easy targets because the site was a central route for merchant ships to travel. The area was named Torpedo Junction.

During NOAA's expedition, University of North Carolina Coastal Studies Institute Director John McCord chronicled the divers' journey to the U-boat wreckage sites on his blog.

On July 8, the first day of the expedition, he blogged, "Today was our first day diving on the U-352. For our orientation dive on the German submarine, we were greeted by 60-foot visibility and warm water temps. On these first few dives, we focused on camera work, taking video and photo mosaics to be used later in mapping the wreck. The sub is like a fish magnet, drawing in baitfish and larger predators such as amberjacks and great barracuda."

On July 15 McCord's blog said, "We moved up the Oregon Inlet July 13 and made a single dive on the U-85 July 14. Poor visibility of less than 5 feet limited us to a single dive that day but things improved today. The visibility seems to be getting better with 10 to 12 feet on the sub this morning. This wreck is a little shallower than the U-352, our maximum depth on the two dives today was right at 100 feet."

McCord chronicled the impact Tropical Storm Cristobal had on the divers' efforts. He blogged on July 19 that "with Tropical Storm Cristobal heading towards the Outer Banks, we headed out early and made the 40-mile run from Oregon Inlet to the U-701. There was a very strong current on the site today, making working and even staying on the site very difficult."

The first leg of NOAA's expedition was based in Beaufort from July 6 through July 12. Divers later worked at a Nags Head headquarters site from July 13 to July 26.

NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries collaborated with East Carolina University, the National Park Service, Minerals Management Service, UNC's Coastal Studies Institute, NOAA's National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, and the State of North Carolina to implement the U-boat expedition efforts.

Next summer, NOAA will conduct the expedition's second phase, investigating the state's coastal waters for Allied wrecks in the Graveyard of the Atlantic.

Martha L. Grenfell

VIRGINIA BEACH - Martha Fronk Lindsey Grenfell, after 92 years of wonderful memories, passed peacefully into her Lord's welcoming arms Saturday, the 26th of July. At her side were her loving daughters, Mary Colby of Portsmouth, Jane Duffey of Norfolk and Elizabeth Grenfell of Alexandria, Va. She will be dearly missed by all her family and friends.

Martha was born at Fort Sill, Okla., in 1915, when the state was so new to the Union that her birth certificate still read "Territory of Oklahoma." Her father was an Army surgeon at the time. In 1920, she went with her family to live in Honolulu in the Territory of Hawaii. Her father, Dr. Clarence Fronk, became a respected surgeon, big game hunter and horse trainer. Her mother, Laura Mulhall, was the daughter of U.S. Army captain and Mrs. Stephen John Mulhall, whom Dr. Fronk had first met in the Philippines.

After a round-the-world cruise in 1934, Martha had planned to go to college, but she had met and fell in love with a dashing young Naval aviator, lieutenant (jg) Eugene E. Lindsey, who was stationed at nearby Pearl Harbor. After tours at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., and then Long Beach, Calif., where Gene Jr. and Mary were respectively born, the family returned to Pearl Harbor once more...just in time for the Japanese attack Dec. 7, 1941.

The war years found Gene Lindsey commanding Torpedo Squadron 6 on the USS Enterprise. On June 4, 1942, although wounded, he led the squadron of torpedo bombers against the Japanese Fleet at Midway and was lost at sea. In 1944, Martha was to christen a new Navy destroyer, DD 771, the USS E.E. Lindsey.

Martha returned to Hawaii and Poki Street which by then had become a stopover for old friends like John Ford, the movie director and an actor named John Wayne as well as Naval officers like Cmdr. Elton W. "Joe" Grenfell. Joe, was the

commander of the USS Gudgeon, the submarine that was the first to leave on a combat patrol after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

After a short romance, Joe and Martha were married in March of 1944. Their family soon expanded with the birth of Elizabeth "Bit", Stephen and Jane. They were now "The Seven Grens" as Joe was apt to boast.

Martha helped develop the Dolphin Scholarship program for children of submariners who died in defense of their country, while Joe, then a vice admiral, was ComSubLant in Norfolk and she continued monitoring the program until her death. Following Joe's death, Martha lived on in their home in Alexandria, Va., for another two decades. When Gene Jr. died, she decided to move to Virginia Beach to be close to her daughter Jane and her husband Tom Duffey. They were joined by her daughter, Mary when she and her husband Ted Colby moved to Portsmouth in 2004.

Martha was known to her family, which consisted of 25 great-grandchildren, as their "Great-Grand-Mom" and the matriarch who greatly loved each and every one of them as she loved her Lord. She will be greatly missed by us all.

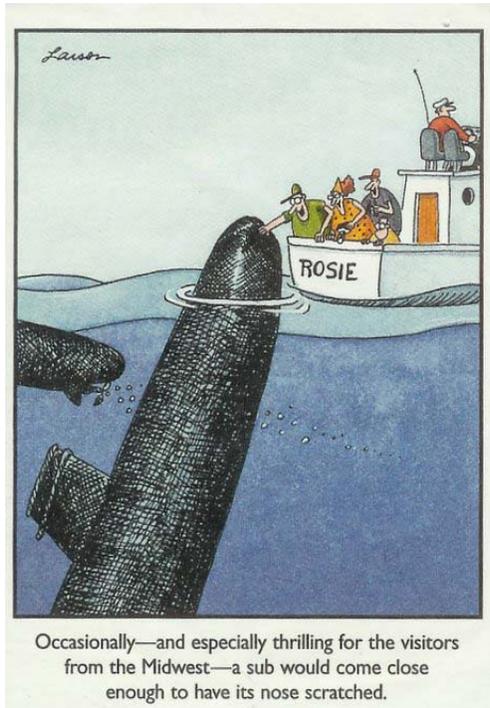
The funeral will be private. Burial will be in Arlington National Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, it is requested that donations be made to the Dolphin Scholarship Fund, DolphinScholarship.org

Online condolences may be sent to the family at hdoliver.com. *Submitted by Ed Farley*



The Ex-Trout arrived at Esco (Brownsville, TX) 10:30 am Monday 30 June 2008. Ship moored along the bank with gangway in place. The USN's last real smoke boat (Not counting the AGSS-555) reaches the scrap yard. End of an era... *Thanks, Mert*



Submitted by *Fred Fomby*



The U.S. Navy research submarine NR-1 is guided to her berth at the U.S. Navy Submarine Base in Groton, Conn., Wednesday, July 23, 2008 as she arrived home at the end of her last scheduled deployment. The NR-1 is to be retired after 40 years of service in the fall. (AP Photo/Bob Child) *Submitted by Jay Crumbie*



Subvets Picnic Subbase Pt. Loma (Mike Bircumshaw, ?, and Charlie Marin)



Subvets Picnic Subbase Pt. Loma (George Baco, WWII vet/heilo pilot with Dennis Mortenson and Ed Farley)



From the USS Tang - Submitted by Ray



From the USS Tang - Submitted by Ray