

TORPEDO ALLEY



Vol. 11, No.5

May 2015

Newsletter of Charleston Base, United States Submarine Veterans, Inc.

Base Meeting:

BOD: 7 May, 1800

Membership: 14 May, 1900

Location:

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 26

Low Country Home

99 Wisteria Rd.



Base Commander	<u>Ed Stank</u>	843-568-2148
Vice Commander	<u>Don Mook</u>	843.499.5727
Secretary	<u>Mike Ciesielko</u>	843-324-0011
Treasurer	<u>Steven Morawiec</u>	360.473.8883

Chief of the Boat	<u>Rick Sparger</u>	843.553.5594
Veterans Affairs	<u>Ken Curtis</u>	843.797.1268
Membership	<u>Don Mook</u>	843.499.5727
Scholarship	<u>Julian Villegas</u>	843.871.6135
Storekeeper	<u>Ken Hutchison</u>	843.553.0935
Historian	<u>George Scharfe</u>	843.873.3318
Public Affairs	Tom Clark	843.871.8923
Chaplain	<u>Nick Nichols</u>	843.452.3189
Holland Club	<u>Bill Freligh</u>	843.553.1115
Newsletter	<u>George Fuchs</u>	941.580.2333
Webmaster	<u>Nick Nichols</u>	843.452.3189
Kaps for Kids	<u>Walt Deal</u>	843.871.4143



Submarines Lost During the Month of May

USS LAGARTO (SS-371)	May 3, 1945 – 2nd War patrol	Lost with All Hands – 86 Souls
USS SCORPION (SSN-589)	May 22, 1968 – returning from deployment	Lost with All Hands – 99 Souls
USS SQUALUS (SS-192)	May 23, 1939 – during test dive	33 survivors – 26 Souls Lost
USS STICKLEBACK (SS-415)	May 30, 1958 – under tow	NO LOSS OF LIFE

FOUR Boats and 211 Men Lost

Chaplain's Corner—God's Guidance and your Path

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding; think about Him in all your ways, and He will guide you on the right paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

Proverbs 3:5-6 makes this promise: if you acknowledge God's sovereignty over every aspect of your life, He will guide your path. And, as you prayerfully consider the path that God intends for you to take, here are things you should do: You should study His Word and be ever-watchful for His signs. You should associate with fellow believers who will encourage your spiritual growth. You should listen carefully to that inner voice that speaks to you in the quiet moments of your daily devotionals. And you should be patient. Your Heavenly Father may not always reveal Himself as quickly as you would like, but rest assured that God intends to use you in wonderful, unexpected ways. Your challenge is to watch, to listen, to learn . . . and to follow.

--A Prayer for Today--

Dear Lord, let my plans and hopes be pleasing to you. Let me live according to Your commandments. Direct my path far from the temptations and distractions of this world. And let me discover Your will and follow it, Father, this day and always. Amen

USSVI Charleston Base Meeting Minutes

The attendance for the April 2015 meeting was 111.

Opening Ceremonies: The meeting was called to order by Base Commander Ed Stank. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1901. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Invocation and Tolling of the Boats lost in April was given by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols. The USSVI Creed was read by Base Vice-Commander Rick Sparger. Ed welcomed the members and guests to the meeting.

Changing of the Guard: Base Commander Ed Stank announced that due to health reasons Don Mook has stepped down as Vice Commander. Rick Sparger was appointed as new vice commander. This left the Chief of the Boat position open that was filled by our ships storekeeper Ken Hutchison. Ken's Storekeeper position was filled by A.J. Tassarotti.

Holland Club Induction: Ed Stank introduced Holland Club Chairman Bill Freligh. Bill explained the meaning of

the Holland Club and read the certificates that would be presented to each of the inductees. With the aid of Ed Stank and base member Charlie Hudson, Bill presented the certificates to Hugh Andrews, David H. Clark, Dennis W. Fuqua, Charles E. Gravley, William E Hall, Edgel C. Hash, Robert Ingebretson, Larry M. Knutson, John P. Meyenburg, Cecil F. Rash, Roy Robertson, Ralph Rohrssen, Lawrence Rosselot, William A. Roup, George Scharf, John Sealander, Richard K. Sparger, Leroy Werley, and David Wood.

Following the presentations photographs were taken to be posted on the base website www.ussvicb.org. The guests were thanked for attending and the asked to leave so that a short business meeting could be held.

After the guest left the meeting continued.

Base Commander: Ed Stank Introduced Paul Viering to present the Distinguished Submariner Award for Charleston Base to our Chief of the Boat turned Vice Commander TMC/SS Rick Sparger

Introductions: The following men introduced themselves at the meeting: TMC(SS) Mickey Davidson, Qual Boat USS Tusk SS 426. Mickey is a Holland Club member from the Groton base. MMCM(SS) Robert Williams, Qual Boat USS Threadfin SS 410. CPO FC Terry Chatham HMCS Ojibwa S72. Seth Goodwin (Paul Viering's Nephew) who has volunteered to go in the US Navy and will be in Great Lakes for "A" school then off to Groton for Sub School. His rate will be ET. ETC(SS) John Meyenberg, Qual Boat USS Darter SS 576. FT1(SS) Dennis Dowling, Qual Boat USS Parche SSN 683. STS1(SS) Bill Ramey, Qual Boat USS Parche SSN 683. EN2(SS) Ray Williams, Qual Boat USS Bagara SS 331. TCM(SS) Lucky Logan USS Pollack SSN 603.

Secretary: Base Secretary Mike Ciesielko reported that the corrected March meeting minutes had been published in the newsletter and on the base website. Ronnie Kerstetter made a motion to approve the corrected March meeting minutes as published. The motion was seconded and carried on a voice vote.

Treasurer/Newsletter: Base Treasurer Steve Morawiec gave a report on the Charleston Base finances.

Chaplain and Webmaster: Base Chaplain and Webmaster Nick Nichols gave the following report:

Chaplain's April Report:

Highlighted boat of the month:

70 years ago yesterday, April 8, 1945, 84 officers and men lost their lives when **USS SNOOK (SS-279)** was lost near Hainan Island, possibly sunk by a Japanese submarine. Snook ranks 10th in total Japanese tonnage sunk and is tied for 9th in the number of ships sunk.

- **MSCM(SS) Dutch Wieland departed on Eternal Patrol March 23rd**. His memorial service was held on March 28th with several of our base members attending.
- **MMCM(SS) Glenn Fleming departed on Eternal Patrol March 30th**. His funeral service was held on April 4th with several of our base members attending.
- **ICCS(SS) Mike Mulkey departed on Eternal Patrol March 25th**. He was not a member of Charleston Base. His memorial service was held on March 30th.
- **SKCM(SS) Dom Bellon departed on Eternal Patrol March 31st**. He was not a member of Charleston Base. His funeral mass was held on April 7th.
- **Lynn Cousino, Mike's wife**, has been diagnosed with liver cancer and has been undergoing chemo since last September. She has hit a plateau so her treatments have to change to something more aggressive. She is keeping a very positive attitude through everything that is happening.
- **David Sarri** was in MUSC last month with pneumonia. He is home and doing much better.
- **Bob Turner** had rotator cuff surgery but I have not heard how he is doing.
- **Mike Knaub's** ankle is not doing well. He had to go to the ER with a blood sugar level of 500.
- **David Knaub, Mike's son**, is back in the hospital. If you remember he had a double-lung transplant.
- **Richard Cox** who was at the March meeting had knee surgery on Tuesday and is having a rough time with rehab.
- **Abe Jenkins** would like to see some visitors. Mike Emerson, Theron Irving and Roger Gibson visited him 2 days in a row...first visit he was good but the second day was not so good.

Benjamin Neufeld was born on April 2nd. He was 7 lbs, 9 oz. Parents are Wayne & Erica Neufeld.

I have not heard much from anyone about the SCP but want you to know that we still need to be checking on our shipmates. As a refresher the SCP (Shipmate Contact Program) is a program to make contacts with our base members each month. I'm asking you to:

- Take a look at the Sailing List and contact at least 4

shipmates during this coming month (1 per week).

- Contact can be by email but phone is preferred
- Contact someone outside your table of friends; someone you don't see at the meeting.

Make no reports unless you feel there's something I need to know about.

Several follow-ups were made on those who've had surgery or illnesses in the last couple of months along with the base sending additional cards.

If you know of shipmates or spouses from other bases who are having a difficult time, had surgery, etc. and would like for USSVI Charleston Base to send them a card please send their name and address to the Chaplain via email or phone call.

Storekeeper/Election Coordinator: Base Storekeeper Ken Hutchison reported as Election Coordinator he reported he has two nominations for Base Commander and Treasurer. Both are running unopposed. Rick Wise has been nominated as Base Commander and Mike Welch for Base Treasurer. Ken pointed out that A.J. Tassarotti is replacing Ken as the Ships Storekeeper.

FRA: The Red Ticket Drawing was won by George Scharf. Two Steak Dinners.

CRAMA: Director of Restoration and Maintenance Butch Bryar announced that a meeting took place today 9 April with SC State Representative Joe Daning concerning the preservation of the Clamagore. The three points discussed were Mr. Daning finding land for the Clamagore; second a meeting with Mr Daning and Mayor Keith Sumney talking about a guaranteed spot for it; and third Joe Daning talking to the finance director of the state to allocate a million dollars to aid in this whole process. Butch stated that the boat is not going anywhere! He will keep us informed.

Nuclear Historian: Rick Carlson made the following report:

Have you heard about the new Homeless Shelter here in Charleston?

It's called "ONE EIGHTY PLACE". It's a pretty tricky name for Homeless Veterans. To make the Vets feel at home, the place is just like we started our military careers.....It is a large "Open Bay Barracks", only they don't have any lockers. After thinking about who could have designed this place..... I finally figured it out..... CIVIL ENGINEERS!

One of our Nuclear trained members had a desire to go cross country on a train. He purchased his ticket for a sleeper room. This turned into a memorable vacation and a short but beautiful love story.....

A man and woman who had never met before, but who were both married to other people, found themselves assigned to the same sleeping room on a Transcontinental Train.

Though initially embarrassed and uneasy over sharing a room,

they were both very tired and fell asleep quickly, He in the upper berth and she in the lower.

At 0100, the man leaned down and gently woke the woman saying, Ma'am, I'm sorry to bother you, but would you be willing to reach into the closet to get me a second blanket? I'm awfully cold.

"I have a better idea", she replied. Just for tonight, let's pretend that we're married. "Wow that's a great idea!" he exclaimed. "Good," she replied. "Get your own blanket". After a moment he farted.

Little David: Base Member Rick Wise, reported that a working party of six members will be needed on the 17th and 18th of April or the 24th and 25th. There are boards that need to be replaced and painted.

Chief of the Boat: Rick Sparger stated that the small podium is missing.

He wanted to let everyone know that from now on we need at least 3 people to fold flags at the funeral ceremonies. If you would like to be a Flag Folder at funerals see Mike Emerson after the meeting.

The WWII Meeting on the 16th of April is at 1400.

Terry Chatham from the Canadian Submarine Veterans got up to thank us for all our Hospitality.

Base Commander: Reported that the Hog roast is Saturday 11 April 1400. A good time will be had by all.

Friday is the Submarine Birthday Ball at the Charleston Marriot we still have two tickets.

The Amberjack memorial ceremony is Saturday April 11 at 1000

Old Business: We are returning to participating in parades using the old float trailer. After we replace one tire the float will be towed in local parades with speed limits on towing to and from events.

New Business: None.

Good of the Order: The Base Commander of the Kings Bay Chapter Sean Ferrell announced that there will be a WWII tolling of the Bell ceremony the first Friday of November. They pay all expenses with exception of lodging and transportation. Details to follow.

Depth Charge: The depth charge was won by Bob Langley who contributed \$100.00 to the Scholarship Fund.

Meeting Adjourned: Following the benediction by Base Chaplain Nick Nichols, the Base Vice-Commander adjourned the meeting at 2017.

The following was received from our COB, Rick Sparger. It was received by the COB from Jimmy Kimbrell. NORFOLK, Va (NNS) --

The submarine force was born April 11, 1900 when the U.S. Navy bought the submersible Holland VI from John Holland.

Since that historic day, undersea war fighters and submarines have used fortitude and creativity to sustain their superiority beneath the sea and develop the force into the indispensable asset that patrols world-wide today.

As submariners celebrate their birthday around the world this month, they will honor the heroes on eternal patrol and those who have served past and present.

Rear Adm. Frank Caldwell, commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet, understands the value of submariners. "For 112 years, the broad military advantages created by undersea concealment have resulted in a wide range of undersea platforms and missions that have enhanced our national security," said Rear Adm. Caldwell. "Throughout history, what has remained constant is the bold character of submariners."

Throughout the last 11 decades, submariners have advanced through four generations. The first generation produced fleet boats with the speed, endurance, weapons and payload that would make the submarine a war fighting platform. The second generation, defined by World War II heroes, made a decisive difference in the war and dominated the seas which set high standards of performance. The third generation of undersea warfare during the Cold War was defined by the advent of nuclear power - in weapons and propulsion. This advanced technology prevented a nuclear world war and secured the nation's interests.

The current generation of submariners, Generation IV, is being defined by the increase of long-range precision sensors and weapons. Today's submariners stay ahead of these threats and work hard to preserve their superiority in the undersea environment with the help of the "Design for Undersea Warfare" a guiding document which articulates how undersea warfighters provide "Ready Forces, Effective Employment, and Future Forces."

Vice Adm. John M. Richardson, commander, Submarine Forces, recognizes the hard, outstanding work of submariners and their families.

"I am incredibly proud of each and every member of the undersea warfare team, including our families who sacrifice along with us," said Vice Adm. Richardson. "Just as earlier generations did before us, we fourth generation undersea warriors will be ready to surge to any crisis - first to arrive and last to leave. Let it always be a comforting reassurance to our friends and the worst nightmare for our enemies to know that the U.S. Submarine Force is on the job."

Today's submarine force consists of 53 attack, 14 ballistic-missile and four guided-missile submarines that enable the

Navy and the nation to win wars, deter wars, defeat terrorists, and ease disasters.

Happy birthday U.S. Submarine Force and congratulations on 112 years of rich success running silent through history and running deep into the future.

Rick

Upcoming Events for May 2015

Friday, May 1st, Little David Working Party, 0900, to replace boards and pressure wash.

Saturday, May 2nd, Little David Working party, 1000, to paint Little David.

Thursday, May 14th, Charleston Base monthly meeting, with **BASE ELECTIONS**, at the FRA, 99 Wisteria Road, Goose Creek. Kitchen opens at 1700. Social hour starts at 1800. Meeting starts at 1900.

Saturday, May 16th, First annual SubVets/ FRA picnic to be held at Cooper River Partners picnic grounds. Lots to eat and drink. Picnic flyer with all details forthcoming.

Tuesday, May 19th, Victory House Veterans Home visit. Meet at VFW on Bellwright Road at 1000. Will return about 1300.

Monday, May 25th, Memorial Day celebration. We will be announcing a Memorial Day program and event in Summer-ville when more details are available.

VA Surviving Spouse Website

This is something that might be of interest. All of our shipmates should know about this IN ADVANCE of needing it. I know it isn't something that most like to talk/ think about, but, we all will go there. Ken

The following was received from our VA Officer Ken Curtis; good planning points to consider

The Department of Veteran Affairs has created a new Internet website for surviving spouses and dependents of military personnel who died on active duty and for survivors and dependents of veterans who died after leaving the service. The site is organized into two broad categories-death in service and death after service. It provides visitors with information and about a wide range of benefits for surviving spouse, dependent children, and dependent parents of diseased veterans and active duty personnel. The site also has information from, and links to, other federal agencies and organizations that offer benefits and services to survivors and dependents.

Several options also apply to surviving retirees participating in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP), where the spouse is lost through death, divorce or annulment, and the retiree later remarries. Unless the former spouse coverage elected as part of the divorce, retirees who remarry have two choices. They

can: Resume the prior level of coverage; Elect not to resume spouse SBP coverage, (this election is irrevocable), this election will not affect child coverage; or if the original election was for reduced coverage, the retiree may request the base amount be increased. There is also a link to frequently asked questions, and answer most questions. For more specific questions the site tells how to contact the VA directly.

The new website can be found at <http://www.vba.va.gov/survivors>.

Some of the topics found on this page include:

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

Survivors Pension

Home Loans

Dependents' Educational Assistance Program

Educational and Vocational Counseling

Beneficiary Financial Counseling

Civil Service Preference

Commissary and Exchange Privileges

Children of Vietnam Veterans with Certain Birth Defects

Fiduciary Services

FRA Discusses Retirement Commission's Final Report with Rep. Jones (N.C.)

FRA DLP John Davis was a guest on cable TV talk show "Washington Watch." The show is hosted by Rep. Walter Jones, who invited Davis to discuss the final recommendations of the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization (MCRMC). Davis expressed disappointment that none of the MCRMC commissioners were senior enlisted personnel. Davis thanked the commission staff for numerous meetings with FRA staff to allow FRA to provide input as the commission made its decisions regarding changes to pay and benefits. The commission recently released its final report, which includes 15 recommendations. The primary focus of discussion on the show were recommendations that substantially reduce benefits for future 20-year career retirees in order to help pay for benefits for those who serve less than 20 years, and recommendations to abolish TRICARE for current and future retirees under age 65, replacing it with a program provided by commercial insurers that would shift a substantial part of the cost to retirees.

Rep. Walter Jones (N.C.) is an honorary FRA member and 2003 Pinnacle Award (FRA's award for legislator of the year) winner. Washington Watch airs on a dozen local North Carolina cable TV stations and can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oqMb1-2H7Y&feature=youtube>.

and on behalf of each Korean War veteran. Identifying those veterans who wish to receive the Peace Medal is therefore the first step.

This is precisely where the Museum needs your help. Please contact Korean War veterans in your Post and inquire whether they have received the Peace Medal and, if not, whether they wish to receive said Medal. Then forward us their names and contact numbers, **no later than 1 June 2015**, so my staff can begin putting together application packets.

If you have any questions, please contact me at your earliest convenience. Also note the Museum will support any Korean War veteran wishing to receive the Peace Medal, regardless of interest level in holding a ceremony thereto. Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,



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Columbia, SC 29201
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Embassy of the Republic of South Korea

If you served, you may be eligible for the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal. The medal is an expression of appreciation from the South Korean government to US service men and women who served in the Korean conflict.

To be eligible, the veterans must have served in country during the Korean War from June 25, 1950 to July 27, 1953. It is also available for the veterans who have participated in UN peacekeeping operations until the end of 1955.

If a veteran was a Navy service member and had served aboard a naval vessel, then he or she is eligible if the naval vessel was assigned into Korean waters during the 1950 to 1953 time frame. You can find this information in the Veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, DD 214.

Please note that both men and women are eligible for this medal. The military had support positions such as nurses, clerical and administrative, and other positions that were predominantly held by women service members.

Criteria:

1. The Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal may be awarded posthumously. The next of kin, such as the spouse or descendants, may receive the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal on behalf of a deceased Veteran. However, please understand that the highest priority for presenting the medal is given to veterans who are currently surviv-

ing. The next of kin, such as the spouse or descendants may apply for the medal on behalf of a deceased veteran

2. To establish eligibility, you need a copy of the Veteran's Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, DD 214. The DD 214 need not be certified or notarized, but it should be legible.

3. Lastly, there are no costs or fees to the family or to the veteran. There are no legal agreements that need to be met, nor any documents to be signed. This is an appreciation in the form of the Korean Ambassador for Peace Medal from the Republic of South Korea for the sacrifices, service and friendship of our American service men and women who served in the Korean War.

USWN Briefs of Interest

The Navy Is Designing A Drone That Flies And Swims Carl Engelking, Discover, Apr 2

The United States Navy is incredibly interested in developing undersea robots and flying robots. So why not find a drone that can do both?

That's exactly what the Naval Research Laboratory's Flimmer Program aims to do. Early prototypes of the Flimmer — a portmanteau of "flying swimmer" — have successfully been launched from a plane at 1,000 feet, splashed down on the water's surface, then dove underwater reaching speeds of 11 miles per hour. Though the drone's design still needs a lot of tweaking, it could someday be used to hunt enemy submarines from the air and sea.

The biggest hurdle for Flimmer's designers is that water is roughly 1,000 times denser than air. Weight is the enemy of a flying drone, as heavier aircraft require more lift to stay airborne. Underwater craft, on the other hand, are built to be thick and heavy to protect electrical components from crushing under pressure. The Flimmer needs to be light enough to fly, yet strong enough to handle the impact of a splashdown and water pressure.

The latest version of the Flimmer is called the Flying WANDA, for "Wrasse-inspired Agile Near-shore Deformable-fin Automaton." It has fins tucked away at the end of its wings that fold upward to stabilize the craft in the air, while a rear propeller provides the thrust. In the water, the rear fins, and a pair of fins near the front of the body, are used to steer.

In the air, WANDA can reach speeds up to 57 miles per hour, and clock 11 miles per hour underwater.

The Navy envisions using their duck-like drone to provide quick reconnaissance by flying to a location, landing in the water and following an enemy submarine. Engineers will continue to alter the Flimmer's design to improve its air-to-sea abilities. However, there's no timeline for when the Flimmer will be deployed in enemy waters.

Nuclear Submarines: America's New Aircraft Carriers? Dave Majumdar, The National Interest, Apr 7

DHA Wants Beneficiaries to Protect their Privacy

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) wants to remind beneficiaries that it will never call them and ask for personal information, and that if a beneficiary receives this type of call, it is fraud. Beneficiaries should remain vigilant in protecting their personal information from people looking to use it for fraudulent reasons. Beneficiaries should never give out personal information, such as their social security number, to anyone over the phone.

In more sophisticated telephone scams, the caller may have specific information that makes the call seem official. This information may include the beneficiary's address, phone number or doctor's name. The caller is hoping this will convince the beneficiary he or she is calling from a legitimate vendor and that the beneficiary will divulge his or her social security number and additional personal information.

If you receive a call like this, DO NOT reveal any personally identifiable information, such as birth date, social security number or banking information. TRICARE never asks beneficiaries for this information when calling for any reason, including an official Department of Defense survey.

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) Program Integrity Office always closely monitors possible fraud against beneficiaries. If you receive a call of this nature, please do not provide your information, and contact the DHA Program Integrity Office immediately. For more information, go to: www.tricare.mil/ContactUs/ReportFraudAbuse.aspx.

TRICARE Revises Compound Drug Coverage

As first reported in the July 12, 2013 issue of NewsBytes, TRICARE announced that compound prescriptions including ingredients that are not FDA-approved would no longer be covered. However, starting May 1, 2015, Express Scripts Inc. (ESI), the TRICARE pharmacy contractor, will screen all ingredients in compound drug claims to ensure that they are safe and effective, and covered by TRICARE. This screening process is similar to the one TRICARE already uses for other prescription drugs, but it will now apply to the ingredients in compound drugs.

Compound drugs are a combination of drug ingredients prepared by a pharmacist for a patient's individual needs. TRICARE beneficiaries taking a compound drug likely to be impacted by the change will soon receive a letter explaining the new process for screening compound drugs, and what steps they should follow.

Use of compound drugs has increased greatly in recent years. However, there is limited or no evidence that some compound

drug ingredients are safe and effective. If a compound does not pass an initial screen, the pharmacist can replace a non-approved ingredient with an approved one, or request the doctor write a new prescription. If this is not possible, the doctor may ask ESI to consider other evidence by requesting prior authorization.

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) claims that its highest priority is to provide beneficiaries safe and effective care while being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars. Many compound drugs will still be covered because they include ingredients proven to be safe, and most beneficiaries will experience no delay in getting their prescriptions. For more information about TRICARE coverage of compound drugs, visit the TRICARE Compound Drugs page at www.tricare.mil/CompoundDrugs.

Happy Birthday, Navy CPO!

This week marks the 122nd birthday of the Navy's Chief Petty Officer rank. On April 1, 1893, the Navy promoted the first sailors to Chief Petty Officer (CPO). The position has evolved into the backbone of the fleet, responsible for keeping the Navy operating. Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Mike Stevens released a birthday message thanking the chiefs for their service and their leadership in an ever-changing role in the Navy.

FRA Storms Capitol Hill

Members of FRA's National Board of Directors (NBOD), many Regional Vice Presidents, and other Association leaders brought the enlisted perspective to Capitol Hill this week as they visited their respective elected officials in Washington, D.C. These shipmates shared the Association's position on priority legislative issues with their senators and representatives, asking them to oppose the administration's call for drastically higher TRICARE Prime fees and co-pays and new enrollment fees for TRICARE Standard and new TRICARE-for-Life (TFL) beneficiaries. They urged Congress not to cut funding for military stateside commissaries and to exclude Defense from mandatory sequestration budget cuts. Additionally, FRA leaders asked lawmakers to take action to reduce the disability claims backlog at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and to extend disability benefits to "Blue Water" Vietnam veterans exposed to the Agent Orange herbicide while serving off the coast of Vietnam. These Shipmates also asked legislators to oppose the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recommendations to drastically shift TRICARE health care costs to current retirees under age 65 and to cut retirement benefits for those future service members that serve 20 or more years. FRA wants to thank the Shipmates that sent nearly 2,500 advocacy messages to Capitol Hill in conjunction

with our NBOD storming the Hill.

FRA Honors New Hampshire Senator Kelly Ayotte

FRA presented its prestigious annual Pinnacle Award to New Hampshire Senator Kelly Ayotte to honor her outstanding leadership in preserving and enhancing the quality of life for military personnel, retirees, veterans and their families. Ayotte, New Hampshire's junior senator, was selected to receive the association's highest honor for her stand against the reduction in cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) of retired pay for military retirees under the age of 62 and for her opposition to TRICARE fee increases. She also strongly supports legislation to exclude the Department of Defense (DoD) budget from sequestration cuts. FRA additionally recognized Ayotte for her advocacy on behalf of all military veterans, including sponsorship of bills such as the Veterans Health Equity Act and the Remembering America's Forgotten Veterans Cemetery Act. The award was presented in a Capitol Hill ceremony hosted by FRA.

Permanent "Doc Fix" Approved

The Senate approved legislation (HR 2) that will make the so-called "Doc Fix" permanent and sent it to the president to be signed into law. The House had already overwhelmingly approved the bipartisan bill (HR 2) that replaces the current Sustainable Growth Rate (SGR) pricing methodology, which would have mandated a 22 percent cut to reimbursements to doctors who see Medicare/TRICARE patients. These reductions would have caused doctors to leave the Medicare and TRICARE programs and reduce TRICARE/Medicare beneficiaries' access to care. President Barack Obama has indicated he will sign the legislation into law. FRA wants to thank the Shipmates that generated nearly 10,000 (9,985) messages this year urging Congress to make the "doc fix" permanent

.Shipmates...at the meeting last Thursday I had the privilege of announcing an event that will not happen for most of us at our stage of life. While we may have grand, great grand, or great great grand children born into our family one of our members has had a son born into the family.

Congratulations to EMC (SS) Wayne & Erica Neufeld.

Benjamin Gerald Louis Neufeld

7lbs 9oz

April 2nd 2015



SubVets Wives

Third Wednesday 20 May. SubVets Wives'; Luncheon is at Logan's Road House in Summerville, Azalea Square

Shopping Center at 1130

Received from South Carolina Military Museum 21 April 2015

Dear Post Commander:

The South Carolina Military Museum is considering holding a ceremony in October of 2015 to present the South Korean "Ambassador for Peace Medal" to those Korean War veterans who have not yet received one. Although October is several months away, time is of the essence due to a lengthy application process.

In order to make this process as easy as possible, the Museum is trying to collect individual service records – and any other relevant data – so it may send the applications *en masse*

Nuclear Submarines: America's New Aircraft Carriers? Dave Majumdar, *The National Interest*, Apr 7

A new class of nuclear-powered guided missile submarines could be the key to maintaining America's future naval supremacy as new weapons increasingly challenge the dominance of the U.S. Navy's aircraft carriers.

In fact, some analysts have suggested that guided missile submarines should one day replace the aircraft carrier as the centerpiece of the Navy's warfighting capability.

With the proliferation of precision-guided weapons like anti-ship cruise missiles, anti-ship ballistic missiles and advanced air defense systems—particularly by China—the U.S. Navy's carriers and their embarked air wing are increasingly vulnerable to what the Pentagon calls the anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) challenge.

Instead of being able to push in close to shore during the initial stages of a major war, the Navy's multi-billion dollar floating airfields and their escorting warships might be forced to maintain station as far as a thousand nautical miles offshore to remain outside the range of enemy attack. Further compounding the problem is the fact that the current carrier air wing does not have the necessary reach or ability to penetrate into ever more capable enemy air defenses. Even the belated introduction of the Lockheed Martin F-35C Joint Strike Fighter around 2019 will not solve that problem.

While a new long-range stealthy unmanned strike aircraft could eventually give the carrier the long-range reach and hitting power it needs, there are those who argue that submarines are far more effective weapons against such high-end threats. Though potential enemies like China can challenge the United States in the air, sea, surface, on land and in space—American forces dominate the undersea realm with near impunity.

“Our submarine advantage gives us the ability to operate inside the A2/AD envelope,” said former Navy Captain Jerry Hendrix, a naval analyst at the Center for a New American Security. “They're a very potent weapon that can operate with impunity in an A2/AD environment.”

Hendrix argues that the vessels like the first four Ohio-class nuclear-powered submarines that were converted from carrying a payload of 24 Trident II D5 ballistic missiles to a conventional payload of 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles are some of the most potent weapons against an A2/AD threat. “Those submarines have been noticed by nations that would build A2/AD environments,” Hendrix said.

Hendrix makes the case that the vessel's performance during Operation Odyssey Dawn against the regime of now-deposed Libyan strongman Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 is an indication of just how potent such submarines can be. USS Florida (SSGN-728) almost single-handedly eliminated Libya's air defenses with a barrage of some 90 Tomahawk cruise missiles.

These SSGNs are so capable that Hendrix suggests that the Navy cease building the new Ford-class nuclear-

powered aircraft carriers after the two vessels currently under construction are completed. The Navy could buy numerous SSGNs for the price of a single new aircraft carrier—a new Ford-class carrier costs roughly nearly \$13 billion without factoring in the price of the air wing.

Unlike a carrier, an SSGN would be able to approach an enemy coast before disgorging its payload of missiles—striking deep inland with weapons that have a range of more than 1,200 nautical miles to hit targets that might include everything from air defenses, to command and control nodes, to enemy infrastructure. “The point there is that three SSGNs gives you a potential striking power of 462 Tomahawk missiles or Tomahawk follow-ons that would be even more advanced,” Hendrix said.

Hendrix said that there is an immediate opportunity to expand the SSGN fleet by converting the last two Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines into cruise missile carriers. Those two vessels are coming up on their mid-life refuelling and overhauls, which gives the Navy the perfect opportunity to convert those submarines to a conventional strike role.

U.S. And Vietnam Start Limited Naval Training On 20th Anniversary Of Establishing Diplomatic Relations Sam LaGrone, *U.S. Naval Institute News*, Apr 6

A U.S. guided missile destroyer and Littoral Combat Ship have arrived in Da Nang to conduct a series of low-level exercises with the Vietnamese People's Navy, the U.S. Navy said on Monday.

The five-day Naval Engagement Activity (NEA) comes as the U.S. and Vietnam mark 20 years of normalized diplomatic relations – which were established in January of 1995.

Sailors from USS Fitzgerald (DDG-62) and USS Fort Worth (LCS-3) will work with their counterparts in non-combatant events as part of the sixth iteration of the bi-lateral NEA.

“Subject-matter expert exchanges will focus on maritime domain awareness, shipboard damage control, submarine rescue, legal symposia, band concerts, community service events and team sports,” read a statement.

“A brief at-sea phase will allow ships from both navies to practice the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) and ship handling.”

CUES is a series of non-binding rules-of-the-road to prevent an escalation of tensions between different militaries at sea.

It was signed by several countries last year at the 14th Western Pacific Naval Symposium in Qingdao, China following a December 2013 incident in which a U.S. cruiser almost collided with a Chinese amphibious warship.

The U.S. began the planned NEAs in 2010 following annual port visits of U.S. ships to Da Nang starting in 2004 with a visit from destroyer USS Curtis Wilbur (DDG-54). Last

year USS John S. McCain (DDG-56) was the U.S. ship for the 2014 NEA.

“Each year, NEA becomes more complex, and last year marked the first time ships from both navies conducted exchanges at sea,” read the Navy statement.

Vietnam and the U.S. have cooperated more in the last several years against a backdrop of rising tensions in the South China Sea over mineral and natural resource claims between China and its regional neighbors.

Last May, Hanoi and Beijing were at loggerheads over a Chinese state owned oilrig in Vietnam’s exclusive economic zone (EEZ) which resulted in a several at sea incidents between ships of both countries.

U.S. officials are quick to point out they don’t take sides in disputes, but the U.S. began moves last year to slacken restrictions on arms sales related to maritime defense to Vietnam.

Tossing Lines: Hats Off To All Submariners **John Steward, New London Day, Apr 7**

Here in the Submarine Capitol of the World, submariners are who we are. Whether we build them, serve on them or just catch a glimpse of one now and then gliding on the Thames River, subs have always been a part of our lives.

Active and retired Navy personnel and the extended families of Electric Boat shipbuilders fill communities throughout Connecticut and Rhode Island. Newspapers cover submarines returning to the Sub Base in Groton after long deployments.

That is why, when I first laid eyes on an eerie x-ray of the confederate submarine H.L. Hunley on CNN.com, I felt a connection to those skeletons trapped inside because every submariner is one of our own.

The Hunley sank in 1864 after fatally torpedoing the USS Housatonic off the coast of South Carolina. The Hunley was recovered in 2000 and underwent archaeological processing in a lab.

Powered by hand, the heavy sub’s seven crank handle positions were painstakingly excavated from the sediment. One by one, each skeleton was exposed at his station. They had never moved.

Time and the ocean stole skin, muscle and tissue but left the skeletons remarkably preserved. Some still wore shoes.

Mainstream media avoided the crew’s remains but these men had names. The website for Friends of the Hunley (friendsofthehunley.org) tells their story.

Inside the sub, personal effects, small symbols of humanity, had settled in place as their owners slowly disintegrated – shoes, wood and brass buttons, a tin canteen, a wallet, a wooden pipe for smoking and bits of clothing.

In the front of the boat still on station beneath the

forward conning tower sat the skeleton of Lt. George E. Dixon, the Hunley’s commander. He fired the torpedo that sunk the Housatonic, introducing submarines to naval warfare.

Jewelry and an ornate gold watch mingled with his bones. A healed gunshot wound was found in Dixon’s left upper thigh. He had become legend for the \$20 gold good luck piece that once deflected the bullet, saving his leg. Dixon carried it that night.

At the first crank were the bones of 20-year old Arnold Becker. His teeth showed signs of childhood illness or occasional malnutrition. His skeleton still held signs of strain from turning the crank shaft.

Still manning the second crank were the remains of a man named Lumpkin, first name undetermined. In his early 40s, he showed past evidence of a broken nose, cheek and foot. He had notches in his teeth where he held his smoking pipe. His sewing kit and pocketknife lay with his bones.

Frank Collins was the tallest skeleton, collapsed at the third crank handle. Collins had “tailor notches” in his teeth from working with metal needles. He apprenticed in his grandfather’s cobbler shop.

The bones of J. F. Carlsen, in his early 20s, rested at the fourth crank handle. Carlsen had survived a mutiny, testifying in an 1861 treason trial in Charleston.

Details are sketchy about a man named Miller, manning the fifth position. He was one of the oldest, in his mid-40s. His skeleton spoke of a hard physical life, showing old fractures on his rib, leg and skull. He was a heavy smoker with a touch of arthritis.

At the sixth crank sat James A. Wicks, father of four girls. A heavy tobacco user with light brown hair and blue eyes, seven U.S. Navy buttons mingled with his bones.

Nestled at the seventh crank position was Joseph Ridgaway, just over 30. Scattered among his bones was a slouch hat and pencil. Mysteriously, around his neck hung the dog tag of Connecticut soldier Ezra Chamberlin, who died at the Battle of Morris Island where Ridgaway had also fought.

In 2004 the Hunley crew was buried amid great fanfare in Charleston, S.C., laid to rest as they had died – side by side.

Ted Dubay of East Lyme, submariner and author of “Three Knots to Nowhere” wrote: “All submarines operate on the edge of survivability.”

The courage it took to man the hand-cranked Hunley is no different than the courage it takes to man today’s sophisticated nuclear submarines. The deep, unforgiving sea hasn’t changed. Hats off to all submariners.

[U.K. Conservatives Pledge To Renew Nuclear Submarine Fleet If Re-elected](#) *William James, Reuters, Apr 9*

Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative Party on Thursday promised to renew the country's aging nuclear submarine fleet if it wins a May 7 national election, hoping the issue could prove an electoral problem for their main Labor rivals.

Replacing the vessels carrying the Trident missiles -- four Vanguard-class submarines -- is expected to cost 20 billion pounds (\$29.71 billion) with a final decision on the renewal due to be taken in 2016.

"The Conservative manifesto will guarantee that we will build a new fleet of four Successor ballistic missile submarines," Defense Secretary Michael Fallon wrote in the Times newspaper.

Under the current system Britain always has one nuclear submarine on patrol, making the country one of only two nuclear powers within the European Union, with the fleet based at the Faslane naval base near Glasgow, Scotland's biggest city.

Opponents argue replacing Trident could cost up to 100 billion pounds and Britain should consider cheaper alternatives.

The Conservatives have long supported renewing Trident, and since the 2010 election have resisted pressure from their junior coalition partners, the Liberal Democrats, to reduce the number of nuclear submarines.

The main opposition Labor Party reiterated on Thursday it would maintain a continuous-at-sea nuclear presence, although it has mooted the idea that three submarines could fulfill the same role.

With neither Labor nor the Conservatives forecast to win the election outright, Labor's most likely route to power is a deal with the Scottish National Party (SNP) who vocally oppose any renewal of the fleet.

SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon on Wednesday said her party would "never ever, ever" vote for a renewal of the Trident program, potentially complicating post-election government-forming negotiations.

"The main argument is very simple: nobody could have predicted four or five years ago what Russia is now doing in Eastern Europe or the rise of ISIL (Islamic State)," Fallon told BBC radio. "We can't be clear what the threats are that might emerge in the 2030s, the 2040s and the 2050s."

He said Labor could not be trusted to stick to its pledge in negotiations with the SNP, launching a personal attack on its leader Ed Miliband.

Fallon said Miliband's decision in 2010 to challenge his own brother for the Labor leadership showed if he was prepared to betray his sibling then he was "willing to stab the United Kingdom in the back to become prime minister."

Labor's foreign affairs spokesman Douglas Alexander

said the Conservatives were resorting to "politics of the gutter."

"This is not up for negotiation with the SNP or with any other party, I don't see how I can say it more plainly than that," he told BBC radio.

[52nd Anniversary Memorial Service Held For USS Thresher](#)

Suzanne Laurent, Seacoast Online, Apr 11

U.S. Navy Capt. (Ret.) Joseph Yurso said he still clearly remembers the day USS Thresher SSN 593 was lost at sea.

"I was a young naval shipyard watch officer," he told the families and friends of some of the 129 men who perished April 10, 1963.

"We collectively were not prepared to deal with losing a sub and the whole crew," Yurso said. "There was a chaotic unfolding of events and then the realization of it all was so difficult."

Because some men did not board the ship at the last minute, Yurso said it was a challenge to confirm who was on the submarine.

"Rarely a day goes by that April 10, 1963, leaves my mind," said the former commander of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

"All those men did not die in vain," he told the crowd of about 200 gathered for the 52nd anniversary memorial service for USS Thresher inside the auditorium of R.W. Traip Academy. "Immediately all submarines were restricted to one-half of their test depth and there was a Navy Court of Inquiry and a team of experienced submarine designers was used to reconfigure the Thresher."

From the tragic event, the Submarine Safety Program (SUBSAFE) was established to assure implementation of recommendations resulting from findings of the Thresher Court of Inquiry and Thresher Design Appraisal board.

"Today, we have the strongest and safest submarine force in history," Yurso said. "Arrogance, ignorance and complacency can be the fatal flaws in any system."

Yurso recognized the U.S. Submarine Veterans Thresher Base that has been holding the Thresher memorial service every year since 1989. He said a service was first held in 1963 at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. It was reinstated 19 years later and services were held in 1982, 1983 and 1984.

"Holding these services must continue forever," Yurso said.

Capt. William Green, commander of Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, gave opening remarks and said he is the first commander who was not born yet when the Thresher was lost.

"But the memory of the Thresher will not fade," he said. "And, our SUBSAFE program is a benchmark across the world. The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is a well-earned center

of excellence for submarine repair and maintenance.”

Greene said he has a photo of Thresher in his office and in the hallway of his home and it’s the last thing he sees when he leaves his home for the day.

Beverly Currier, daughter of Paul Chevalier Currier, a ship progressman machinist aboard Thresher, gave remarks with Paul Currier’s great-granddaughter Abigail by her side.

“My dad was born in 1922 and he and his wife Helen raised five children in Exeter,” Currier said.

She told how her father founded and coached the Tigers Little League team in Exeter.

“On the 50th anniversary of the Thresher, one of his players sent us a letter that talked about how my father made them all feel like all-stars,” she said. “It also talked about how he was like a second father to him and spoke of his quiet strength.”

Lori Arsenault and Debra Arsenault Henderson, daughters of ENCA (SS) Tilmon J. Arsenault, performed the national anthem and the Navy Hymn during the program.

After the ceremony, the crowd gathered at the pier behind the school where the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Rifle Team gave a gun salute and the family of Richard Jones, an electrician’s mate, 2nd class, aboard Thresher, cast a wreath into the Piscataqua River.

[Germany Approves Fifth Israeli Submarine Staff, CBN News, Apr 12](#)

Germany announced the delivery of the fifth of six submarines promised to Israel, the German daily Süddeutsche Zeitung reported over the weekend.

The submarines, which can be armed with nuclear weapons and used offensively, also bolster Israel’s defensive capabilities against missile attacks by Hezbollah, the Lebanese-based Iranian proxy.

Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah periodically threatens to target Israel’s major population centers with longer-range missiles, supplied by Iran and Syria. Israel’s offshore natural gas reserves, which recently became operational, also need protection. Germany’s Federal Security Council approved the delivery of the fifth Dolphin-class submarine, named the INS Rahav. Last September, the German company ThyssenKrupp delivered number four, the INS Tanin, and the sixth is slated for delivery in 2017.

Negotiations for the submarines have been taking place since 2005.

[Pentagon Seeks Sensors That Last For Years Patrick Tucker, Defense One, Apr 13](#)

Reducing battery drain by a factor of 1,000 will enable true “persistent surveillance.”

to collect data and information in places that it can’t put people. One method for doing that is cheap sensors that can be left on the battlefield for extended periods of time, long after soldiers have returned home. Case in point: the 1,500 unattended ground sensors that the Pentagon has requested for the hills and battlefields of Afghanistan.

Getting the most out of a network of sensors means extending battery life as long as possible. That, in turn, means redesigning the way sensors use power and also the way that they do the work that they do. Smarter sensors, ones that actually know what to pay attention to, as opposed to just sit and collect info, could allow for what the military calls “persistent surveillance” on an order of years.

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, or DARPA, today announced a program called Near Zero Power RF and Sensor Operations, or N-ZERO, which will build a network of sensors that can determine what to pay attention to and when. They will have an innate ability to detect specific frequency signatures “such as the presence of a particular vehicle type or radio communications protocol,” according to DARPA.

“Our goal is to use the right signal itself to wake up the sensor, which would improve sensors’ effectiveness and warfighters’ situational awareness by drastically reducing false alarms,” program manager Troy Olsson said in a press release. N-ZERO will build sensors that draw just 10 nanowatts of power during the device’s “asleep yet aware” phase, as much power as a typical watch battery in storage and about 1,000 times less power than is consumed by typical sensors.

It’s a technology that will play a role in some current and future DARPA programs, such as the Upward Falling Payload program, which seeks to put a network of pods on the ocean floor, sleeping quietly, until they sense a particular threat and release their pods.

Undersea pods that lie in wait and spring into action only when they detect, say, a submarine, would cut down on the need for other submarines to collect data on undersea threats. Land-based sensors that can detect military vehicles moving across a border in places like Iraq (or elsewhere) could be connected to armed drones that could also be stationed to lie-in-wait until they are needed, potentially cutting down on the need for drone orbits (patrols) or satellite surveillance.

Persistent ground sensing could radically reduce the costs of gathering intelligence. Sensors that last for years on end would enable far greater capability for the Internet of Things. It could also turn the entire world into a vast, surveillable frontier.

For decades, the military has been looking for ways

US Navy To Deploy Underwater Drones By The End Of 2015

The U.S. Navy will for the first time deploy Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs) from Virginia-class attack submarines by the end of this year reports military.com.

According to the U.S. Navy's director for undersea warfare, Rear Admiral Joseph Tofalo, the soon-to-be deployed underwater drones will be commercially available UUVs such as the REMUS 600 Autonomous Underwater Vehicle.

Designed through funding from the Office of Naval Research, the REMUS 600 is modeled after the REMUS 100 UUV, built by the Norwegian-based Kongsberg Maritime defense contractor, and can be deployed for a wide range of missions including mine counter measure, harbor security, and search and salvage operations.

The UUV is constructed by the Kongsberg U.S.-based subsidiary, Hydroid, and is similar to the Bluefin-21 UUV, which was used for the search of Malaysia Airlines Flight 370 in 2014, military.com notes. The U.S. Navy plans to expand its use of existing commercial off-the-shelf technology as Tofalo explains:

We're using commercial off-the-shelf technologies to do real world missions for the combatant commander. The oil and gas industry uses these things for all kinds of functions. The submarine force will be adapting this. The sensors are similar to the sensors that the oil and gas industry might use. They might be surveying where their oil pipes are, whereas we might want to be looking for a mine field.

The Remus 600 UUVs will be launched from a dry deck shelter – a removable module that can be attached to a submarine – which makes entering and exiting a sub easier when the boat is submerged.

Other UUVs could also soon be launched through the Virginia Payload Module tube, Tofalo notes:

For the large diameter UUV itself, what we want to have is an interface that allows it to come out of that Virginia Payload Module tube. To do that we need an arm that can extend itself with a little platform that can extend itself and go to the vertical.

The U.S. Navy is currently testing and developing a host of different underwater drones and has allocated a "significant" amount of money for the expansion of its UUV fleet in the Pentagon's 2016 budget request.

For example, the Naval Research Laboratory is testing a drone ("The Flimmer") that can operate both in the air and underwater and can attack enemy submarines. The Upward Falling Payload program run by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) and experimenting with launching aerial drones from ocean floors is another example.

The Office of Naval Research will also unveil a new autonomous UUV prototype called the Large Displacement Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (LDUUV) military.com reports.

A prototype is supposed to be ready by 2017. The article further notes that the U.S. Navy is also testing a small submarine-launched UAV called the Switchblade, capable of carrying up to three pounds of explosives. Additionally, Wired reported on a new underwater reconnaissance drone called the "Ghost Swimmer", which is designed to look and swims like a fish.

It is noteworthy, however, that UUV technology is not maturing as quickly as UAVs, first and foremost because it is a lot more difficult to communicate with UUVs than aerial drones – oceans are opaque to radio signals and acoustic signals travel a lot slower than radio waves. Consequently, UUVs have to be almost completely autonomous.

According to Frank Herr, head of the Office of Naval Research's ocean battlespace sensing department: "Underwater vehicles are much harder to do because of this inability for us to communicate robustly with the vehicles the way you can in the air. That means they are way behind in the development."

Nevertheless, UUVs will certainly be a game changer in the years to come as Tofalo notes:

Now you are talking about a submarine CO who can essentially be in two places at the same time – with a UUV out deployed which can do dull, dirty and dangerous type missions. This allows the submarine to be doing something else at the same time. UUVs can help us better meet our combatant command demand signal. Right now, we only meet about two-thirds of our combatant commanders demand signals and having unmanned systems is a huge force multiplier.

Indeed, a recent report by the influential Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) called for the development of a new family of (unmanned) undersea vehicles (see: "The End of The Submarine as We Know It?")

As I wrote before, the CSBA report emphasizes that we need to rethink some of the fundamental underpinnings of undersea warfare and, for example, comes to terms that "manned submarines will likely need to shift from being front-line tactical platforms like aircraft to being host and coordination platforms like aircraft carriers." This would be a big change from how large portions of the U.S. submarine fleet are used today.

The aircraft carrier comparison would also imply that future submarines would need to be bigger than today's Virginia-class submarines, in order to accommodate a host of new systems, as well as an array of unmanned vehicles and weapons.

U.S. Navy Band On Cultural Diplomacy

Kang Hyun-kyung, Korea Times, Apr 19

The audience at the Center One building lobby in Seoul on April 14 sang along with the songs performed by the U.S. Navy band, Seventh Fleet Orient Express.

They clapped as the seven-member band performed a variety of music from country to pop music.

When one of the band members announced they were going to perform the last song, a country music hit, some of the audience groaned because they realized that the fun and interactive concert was going to end shortly.

The U.S. Embassy in Seoul and the Korea Foundation organized the event on the occasion of the Seventh Fleet band's trip to Korea for several performances.

Before the concert at the Center One lobby, the U.S. Navy rock band performed at a royal palace in Seoul.

They also performed music at U.S. Ambassador Mark Lippert's residence in Seoul following the Center One building concert.

"I am kind of surprised that many people sang along and recognized the music," Bruce Fisher, the drummer of Seventh Fleet, told The Korea Times.

"It's a very pleasant surprise. We tried to arrange all of our sets to be enjoyable for everybody. So far, I think we have done a good job."

Founded in 1943, the U.S. Navy band has been involved in a lot of outreach activities.

"When we relocated to Japan our mission changed into doing a lot of community outreach and public awareness because we want to demonstrate the Navy is a partner interested in local communities as much as we are doing Navy-oriented activities," Fisher said.

The band travels around the Pacific Rim performing public outreach concerts teaching music classes at schools.

The band consists of 35 musicians. "Of the 35 people, the group is broken into several different ensembles including a jazz group, a concert band and New Orleans Style brass band," Fisher said.

"Orient Express is a popular music group and part of the larger group of the Seventh Fleet."

Seventh Fleet, which is based in Japan, has traveled to Korea for performances on a regular basis.

They returned to Japan on April 16 after wrapping up a six-day trip to Seoul.

[Congress Adds Cash To Special Account To Build New Nuclear Submarines](#)

[Kris Osborne, Military.com, Apr 20](#)

Congress plans to add money into a special fund established this year for the purpose of paying for the Navy's next-generation, nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines, the Ohio Replacement Program.

The 2015 National Defense Authorization Act established the National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund as an account created specifically to fund the program; however, it did not receive funding in the initial budget request.

Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Seapower and Projection Forces

subcommittee, told Military.com that his Congressional subcommittee will add money to the fund as part of its current mark-up of the 2016 defense bill.

"We're going to put some dollars in that this year. As you know we've wanted to get that fund established," Forbes said. "I think this year you will see us actually putting dollars in there and increasing the opportunity for the Department to put additional dollars in there down the road."

The exact amount of the mark-up has yet to be revealed. Congressional and Navy leaders wanted to create the fund to separate its spending line from the Navy's formal shipbuilding budget in order to avoid depleting needed shipbuilding accounts.

If the funding for the Ohio Replacement program would have come from the Navy's annual shipbuilding budget – it would have devastated the Navy's overall long-term plans for the fleet, officials have said.

Rear Adm. Joseph Tofalo, Director of Undersea Warfare, said there is historical precedent for the U.S. coming up with innovative funding strategies for undersea nuclear deterrence. He cited the original Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines first built in the 1980s and the first nuclear armed submarines first built in the early 1960s, called "41 for Freedom."

"The Navy is going to need top line relief in order to accomplish the ship building program. When '41 for freedom,' and then the Ohio-Class, were built, the Navy received about \$5 to \$7 billion per year in additional funding for ship building. When you compare those years to all other post-Korean war years, you see that top line relief is historically consistent with what has happened over time. The issue is the additional resources and that is the conversation that is going on," Tofalo said.

Slated to serve through 2085, the Ohio Replacement program, the nuclear submarine is scheduled to begin construction by 2021. Requirements work, technical specifications and early prototyping have already been underway at General Dynamics Electric Boat.

Designed to be 560-feet-long and house 16 Trident II D5 missiles fired from 44-foot-long missile tubes, Ohio Replacement submarines will be engineered as a stealthy, high-tech nuclear deterrent.

Production for the lead ship in a planned fleet of 12 Ohio Replacement submarines is expected to cost \$12.4 billion — \$4.8 billion in non-recurring engineering or development costs and \$7.6 billion in ship construction, the plan states.

The Navy hopes to build Ohio Replacement submarine numbers two through 12 for \$4.9 billion each.

Detailed design for the first Ohio Replacement Program is slated for 2017. The new submarines are being engineered to quietly patrol the undersea domain and function as a crucial strategic deterrent, assuring a second strike or retaliatory nuclear capability in the event of nuclear attack.

Citing the Ohio Replacement Program's electric drive

technology as a vital part of its ability to stay quieter and on patrol through the 2080s, Tofalo said discussions to fund the program were going well.

"When the new strategy comes into effect we are going to have 70-percent of our nation's account able nuclear warheads with the submarine force. This is a ship that is going to be on patrol through the 2080s – it is a tremendous return for the American taxpayer when you talk about preventing major power war," Tofalo added.

The Navy is building 12 Ohio Replacement submarines to replace 14 existing Ohio-class nuclear-armed boats because the new submarines are being built with an improved nuclear core reactor that will better sustain the submarines, officials have said.

As a result, the Ohio Replacement submarines will be able to serve a greater number of deployments than the ships they are replacing and not need a mid-life refueling in order to complete 42 years of service.

Electric Boat and the Navy are already progressing on early prototype work connecting missile tubes to portions of the hull, officials said. Called integrated tube and hull forging, the effort is designed to weld parts of the boat together and assess the ability to manufacture key parts of the submarine before final integration.

In 2012, General Dynamics Electric Boat was awarded a five-year research and development deal for the Ohio Replacement submarines with a value up to \$1.85 billion. The contract contains specific incentives for lowering cost and increasing manufacturing efficiency, Navy and Electric Boat officials said.

The successful creation of this fund could raise questions among Army and Air Force leaders seeking for ways to fund some of their top dollar, high-priority programs. For example, the Air Force might seek top line relief for its new bomber program and the Army might wish for funds to pay for its next-generation helicopter program – Future Vertical Lift.

Enlisted Women In Submarines Application Package Milestone Achieved

Rear Adm. Chas Richard, Navy Live Blog, Apr 20

As the commander for Enlisted Women in Submarines Task Force, I wanted to take the opportunity to thank the entire fleet for your dedication and support of the integration of enlisted women into the submarine service. We've reached a major milestone as the April 15 deadline just passed for the first round of submarine rating conversion applications.

The more than 100 applications received matched the strong support we received as we visited fleet concentration areas to share this opportunity with Sailors across the Navy. Now it is our turn to take the ball and run with it. The Task Force is excited to deep dive into the conversion packages, to review the records of these talented Sailors and to select the initial cohort of enlisted female Sailors to serve alongside the female officers already serving onboard submarines!

Once announced, the first group to be selected will need to complete their medical screening after which they will receive orders for their tailored training pipeline ultimately to report to USS Michigan. This is not the end of the story though. The Navy and the submarine force will continue this process and the next application window to integrate additional crews will be announced at the completion of this selection process. This is the first of many opportunities for enlisted women to become submariners.

The Navy, and especially the submarine community, is dedicated to providing all Sailors the opportunity to serve in the submarine force.

This is an important opportunity for individual Sailors, but also for the submarine force as a whole ... to find new talent ... to grow our skills ... to ensure we remain the premier fighting force for future generations.

Thank you to all those who applied and to the commands who supported their applications. I look forward to reporting out the names of the first enlisted female submariners in the coming weeks.

Submarine Group 7 Strengthens Ties With The Indonesian Submarine Force

MC2 Brian G. Reynolds, Commander, Submarine Group 7 Deputy Public Affairs Officer, Apr 20

FLEET ACTIVITIES YOKOSUKA, Japan (NNS) -- Rear Adm. William R. Merz, Commander, Submarine Group 7 (COMSUBGRU 7), met with representatives from the Indonesian submarine force in Surabaya, Indonesia, on April 14 in order to strengthen a dynamic working relationship between the two navies.

The primary focus of the staff talks was to establish routine periodic regional engagements and operations to integrate the Indonesian submarine force as a partner and ally in the Pacific.

The engagements will include training opportunities between the two navies that will focus on integrating U.S. and Indonesian submarine force capabilities.

The staff talks followed a table top Simulated Submarine Casualty Exercise (SMASHEX), where COMSUBGRU 7, U.S. Navy Submarine Rescue Command, and International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office worked with the Indonesian navy during a simulated submarine rescue training.

The Indonesian navy is the largest navy in Southeast Asia based on the number of active personnel and ships.

Navy Gave Local Sheriff's Spokesman His Start

John Andrew Prime, Shreveport Times, Apr 22

Most media in the Ark-La-Tex and quite a few everyday people know Bill Davis as a lieutenant with the Bossier Parish sheriff's office and its main spokesman.

But fewer people probably know that he served in the U.S. Navy just under 21 years and there learned and honed his

skills as a journalist. He's proud of the service whose uniform he once wore and will be visible at, and supporting every way he can, Navy Week activities when that event is held for the first time in Shreveport-Bossier City April 27-May 3.

"When I raised my hand to join the Navy soon after walking into the recruiting station on Old Minden Road in January 1987, I really didn't have a clue as to what was in store for me," said Davis, 51 and a native Shreveporter (Byrd Class of 1982). "I knew I wanted to be a broadcaster after imitating just about every DJ and news anchor in the Ark-La-Tex, and then reading every billboard as an announcement."

Joining was easy. His father had served in the U.S. Air Force, and his grandfather and two brothers had been, or were, in the Navy.

"First, boot camp, then journalism A-school, then my first broadcasting job" was the plan, he mused. "NOPE. I was sent to a Combat Camera unit in Virginia and traveled the world, deployed TAD (temporary assigned duty) to just about every type of ship."

As a combat photographer, he deployed around the world on 24 hours notice, living out of a duffel bag.

In the summer of 1989, on the guided-missile frigate FFG-59 USS Kauffman, he spent time on the Black Sea and visited the Crimea

"I was literally there the first time a U.S. vessel had been in that region since World War II," he said. "As we walked around, I learned about four phrases in Russian. One of them was 'where's the bathroom?' It was a good port visit. We were there for relaxation and meet and greet the locals. We were treated like rock stars. It was amazing."

Just a few months later, he had another treat. he got to meet the president, George H.W. Bush. Bush was to meet Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Malta. Davis, by then a lowly Journalist third class in Italy, was assigned temporarily to the guided missile cruiser USS Belknap, the flagship of the group taking Bush to the Dec. 2-3 meeting at which the leaders famously declared an end to the Cold War.

"The president was at a Sunday morning service on the ship," he recalled. There were very few media around, but Davis, as a sailor, had the run of the ship pretty much and was standing with his camera when the ranking admiral walked by, saw him and ordered him to follow to take photos of Bush during his final moments on the vessel.

"So soon I was in the commanding officer's stateroom, with the admiral and the executive officer with the president of the United States. That was pretty amazing."

Bush had his picture taken with the officers, but then "the next thing, the president looks at me, a lowly E-4, and says 'photographer, you're next.' So I gave my camera to a Secret Service man and thought 'I hope this guy can focus!'"

He could, and Davis has a photo that hangs on his wall to this day.

"It was pretty amazing, and neat to meet the commander in chief," he said.

And he spent a month on the USS Barnstable County, a tank landing ship, off the coast of Africa.

"We evacuated about 1,900 Liberians," he recalled. "They were having a civil war. That was an exciting time."

Finally he was sent to Sicily where he got his first broadcasting job and met and married Sheila Hauenstein, daughter of a veteran who returned to the region to be a preacher.

A few years later, he was one of two enlisted sailor journalists selected for Officer Candidate School to become a public affairs officer.

"OCS was the most intense, yet rewarding experience, having been trained by a Marine Corps drill instructor," he said.

But by then, age 33, he was one of the oldest students in the class, which involved physical training that left his body worn out.

"I hurt a knee running and had to go to medical for aid," he said. His wife was allowed to visit and he shared his doubts with her.

"I remember saying 'I can't do this, I'm going to quit,'" he recalled. "She looked at me and said 'Bill, you'll regret that the rest of your life.' Like any good wife, she said Don't Quit. To this day, I thank her. I stayed and graduated third in my class because I kept hearing those words, Don't Quit."

Davis then spent the next 11 years as a public affairs officer, earning the 1994 Thomas Jefferson Award as the Department of Defense Broadcaster of the Year.

"This is the highest award a (military) broadcaster can receive," he said. "They flew me to the Pentagon where I received my accolades from then-Defense spokesman Ken Bacon and a host of Pentagon brass. I was then able to speak to the group at the acclaimed Pentagon briefing room podium. That was pretty awesome."

But finally it was time to shift gears.

"One wife, four kids, multiple dogs and a couple of dumb cats later, it was time to retire in 2008," he said.

David moved back to Bossier Parish, built a house in south Bossier and was hired by the Bossier sheriff's office to replace Ed Baswell, who was retiring to devote himself full-time to a religious ministry.

"I remember watching Ed on TV back in the '80s and thinking I'd like to have his job one day, doing broadcasting," Davis said. "I had no idea I would actually replace him as the PIO here at the Bossier sheriff's office."

Navy Week

The Navy Week program began in 2005. Since then, 154 Navy Weeks have taken place in 62 U.S. cities. For more

information about 2015 Shreveport/Bossier City Navy Week, call Gary Ross at (901) 874-7069.

Take part:

Navy Week will be observed for the first time in Shreveport April 27-May 3. Public events include:

Navy Day at Bossier Parish Community College, 9:15 – 10:45 a.m. April 28. Rear Admiral (lower half) Keith Jones (not the Keith Jones in the profile feature), a native of Ferriday and an LSU graduate, will meet with local military veterans in the Chancellor's conference room. Event is open to all area military veterans – no formal invitation required. Jones, the veterans, and BPCC students will then watch the Navy Leapfrogs parachute team jump into the field in front of the college along East Texas Street at 10:15 am. Following the jump, students and veterans will have an opportunity to interact with the Leapfrogs, all of whom are Navy SEALs.

Navy Night at Airline High School, 7-9 p.m., April 28. Events include a jump by the U.S. Navy Leapfrogs; remarks by Shreveport Mayor Ollie Tyler, Bossier City Mayor Lorenz Walker, and Rear Admiral Keith Jones; presentation of a joint Navy Week proclamation, a new recruit swearing-in ceremony, and a performance by U.S. Navy Band Southwest.

U.S. Navy Lt. Cmdr. Maura Thompson, a 2004 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and currently supply officer aboard the submarine USS Louisiana, will speak to two groups as part of Navy Week. One will be April 30 at noon before the Bossier City Rotary Club at Boomtown Casino, 300 Riverside Drive, Bossier City, and May 1 at noon to The Optimist Club of Shreveport at East Ridge Country Club, 1000 Stewart Drive, Shreveport. Public events are Dutch-treat buffet.

Navy Band Southwest performances on May 1-3. The band or its sub-units will perform in Bossier City at the Louisiana Boardwalk May 1, in Shreveport May 2 and at Barksdale Air Force Base at the open house May 2-3. Concerts are free and open to the public.

Barksdale Air Force Base Defenders of Liberty Open House and Air Show, May 2-3. Headliner is the U.S. Navy Blue Angels flight demonstration team. For more information, visit its website at <http://www.barksdale.af.mil/library/airshow.asp>.

<http://www.shreveporttimes.com/story/news/local/2015/04/22/navy-gave-sheriff-media-rep-start/26171027/>

Raytheon Wins Navy Submarine Radio Contract

Michael Peck, C4ISR and Networks, Apr 27

Raytheon has been awarded an \$89 million Navy contract for submarine radio antennas.

Raytheon will provide 25 Submarine High Data Rate (SubHDR) antenna systems, which are "used to provide submarines with high capacity communications in the extremely high frequency and super high frequency bands and enables

reception of the global broadcast service," according to the Department of Defense contract announcement. The contract is a combined U.S-UK purchase, with 80 percent for the Americans and the remaining 20 percent for the British under the Foreign Military Sales program. The work, scheduled to be completed by June 2018, will be performed in Massachusetts, Florida, New Jersey, California, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Utah.

Trident Nuclear Submarines To Be Moved To Gibraltar Amid SNP Threat

Marco Giannangeli, Express, Apr 27

Ministry of Defence officials who assessed its suitability, estimate that relocation would cost Britain about £3billion and take up to 10 years to complete.

A senior academic said yesterday that the MoD was clearly "reading the writing on the wall" about the possibility of another Scottish referendum.

SNP deputy leader Stewart Hosie has threatened to hold Westminster to ransom over Trident if it gains enough seats after May to hold the balance of power.

A senior military source said yesterday: "A party was sent to Gibraltar in January to determine whether the option could work. One can only assume it's part of broader contingency planning."

Gibraltar has the capacity to accommodate submarines large enough for Trident.

The move would prove more politically palatable than other UK mainland options such as Falmouth.

Its deep Mediterranean waters would allow easy access, in contrast to Devonport, which has only a single deep water channel large enough which would be vulnerable to sabotage.

In addition, its 34 miles of excavated tunnels include enormous caverns that have been made blast proof against nuclear detonations and could be adapted to store nuclear warheads. Theodore Bromund, of the Washington DC-based Heritage Foundation think-tank said: "Gibraltar is already a first strike target, so moving Trident there would not increase concerns.

"There is no other available port in the UK. Gibraltar would require expansion rather than starting again."

University of York international security lecturer Dr Nick Ritchie, said: "If the MoD is exploring other options, it shows admirable planning and foresight. Choosing Gibraltar would avoid the nimbyism question. Any alternative site in England or Wales would carry political downsides. But Gibraltar has enough patriotism to overcome this.

"It would be interesting to see Spain's reaction, however, since it is a non-nuclear member of Nato."

Gibraltar's chief minister Fabian Picardo said:

Navy Week Feature: Lt. Commander Maura Thompson

Angela Thomas, 710 KEEL, Apr 27

What's it like being one of only a handful of women on a submarine? I had the opportunity to ask U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander Maura Thompson that question. She's a supply officer on the USS Louisiana.

"We're underwater three months at a time. We will have a few people come on and off, but for the most part, it's just 160 of us. We become very much like a family. We get very close and very weird," Lt. Comm. Thompson said. "It's very challenging at times. We are often tired, the mission always comes first. There's always something that breaks, something that goes wrong, and we always end up having to come together to overcome those things. So it's challenging, but fun at the same time."

LCDR Thompson told me while she was at the Naval Academy, she got the opportunity to take a 24-hour ride on a sub, the USS Ohio, and thought she'd never be on a submarine. That changed 10 years later when she was a lieutenant.

"A supply admiral actually called me and said, 'We're bringing women on submarines. Would you consider applying to be one of the first?' I had never even really considered it. My husband was on a submarine, I didn't know if it was the life for me."

She decided to apply and was accepted. A year later, she showed up to the USS Louisiana, and she said it's been fantastic. She said the person who's made the biggest impact on her in submarines is her chief, the sub's cook.

"When I first came onboard the submarine... I was the first woman to show up, and everyone was a little bit hesitant about offending me or telling me when I was doing something that was wrong. And there's a lot of cultural things that I didn't understand about being on a submarine. It was great to have a CSC who was not afraid to take me aside and say, 'Hey, Ma'am, we don't do that' or 'Maybe you should think about doing this,' and I appreciated so much having people who could be honest with me. And after a while, the crew warmed up to me and now, gender's just not a thing."

Thompson said her favorite part about being in the Navy is working with the finest sailors she's ever encountered.

"I always say, hey USS Louisiana, finest in the fleet. I don't know if it's true, I haven't been on every boat, but it feels like it to me. Sailors are fantastic. They're so young, I work with so many sailors that are teenagers or in their early 20's, and they constantly surprise me with how ingenious and smart they are," she said. "They overcome

sleep challenges and work challenges, and are able to accomplish enormous tasks together and help each other. They are constantly surprising me pleasantly."

Thompson will be all over the place during the week, and she's brought three USS Louisiana sailors with her to share their experiences. Navy Week runs from today through May 3.

Sub Force to Don FRV Coveralls for Boosted Protection Lance Bacon, Navy Times, Apr 28

Bubbleheads across the fleet will be issued flame resistant variant coveralls by year's end, and it will come at no cost to sailors.

All boats have been ordered to purchase four FRVs and one name tag per sailor before Sept. 30, said Capt. Jim Lowther, Submarine Force Atlantic's force supply officer. The sub force will fully transition to the FRV as the fleet uniform by year's end, replacing the poly-cotton utility coveralls that have been the standard for more than a decade. The sub force is the last major fleet community to transition to the flame-resistant coveralls, which were fast-tracked to the fleet after fire risks were discovered with the Navy working uniform and the utility coveralls in late 2012.

The FRV's wear life of 18 to 24 months will not change for service under the sea. As organizational clothing, sets of the FRVs will be issued out by the command, which can later be exchanged for damaged and unserviceable sets.

Velcro name tags will be worn above the left breast pocket. Each skipper will authorize either the embossed leather name tag worn on the V-neck sweater, or develop a name tag that includes an embroidered unit design. Names can also be stenciled inside the FRV.

The FRV coverall will be worn with a black cotton web belt for petty officers and below. Chief petty officers and officers will wear the khaki cotton web belt. Unit patches and the U.S. flag are not permitted, as they can potentially degrade fire retardant properties, according to a Navy release.

Some sailors in the surface and air communities had to wait to get the FRV when the new rules took effect in late 2013. It was a simple matter of supply and demand. But the demand boosted the supply, and that enabled the submarine community to make the swift transition. Approximately 472,000 FRVs have been delivered and another 4,600 are in transit to fleet sailors as part of sustainment efforts, said Lt. Cmdr. Cate Cook, Fleet Forces spokesperson.

"The only individuals who may not currently have FRVs are new check-ins and those people temporarily serving aboard a ship, not in a permanently assigned status," she

said. "With the exception of the submarine community ... the initial distribution to outfit all communities in the fleet with the FRV coverall is complete."

The change may be swift in its implementation, but has been in the works for a couple of years. The FRVs were first authorized for wear in the surface and air communities in late 2013. The submarine force wasn't sure how environmental systems would handle the new material, specifically ventilation systems. It conducted a wear test aboard the Los Angeles-class attack submarine *Montpelier*, which showed "very little impact" to the ventilation systems, Lowther said.

Officials at Naval Submarine Support Center, New London, in Groton, Conn., wasted no time. They put in orders for all of their boats and are already receiving the first batch, Lowther said.

'Irresponsible' Not to Renew Trident, Ex-Defence Chiefs Warn (UK) Staff, ITV News, Apr 29

It would be "irresponsible folly" for the next Government not to renew Trident, a group of former defence and security chiefs has warned.

Writing in *The Times* (£), the 20-strong group, including former GCHQ director Sir David Omand and former head of the Royal Navy Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, said that a decision against renewal would be "irrevocable".

"In an uncertain world where some powers are now displaying a worrying faith in nuclear weapons as an instrument of policy and influence, it would be irresponsible folly to abandon Britain's own independent deterrent."— Excerpt from the letter signed by leading former security chiefs:

Submarines would have to stop patrolling the seas straight away, as credibility in the system would be lost, the group added.

The cost of replacing Trident, a system of submarine-based nuclear missiles, based on four boats is estimated at between £17.5 billion and £23.4 billion.

The SNP, Greens and Plaid Cymru are in favour of scrapping Trident, in contrast to the Labour and Conservative position.

Vietnam Buys Submarine-Launched Land Attack Missiles To Deter China Greg Torode, Reuters, Apr 30

HONG KONG – Vietnam is arming its expanding submarine fleet with land attack missiles that could be capable of reaching Chinese coastal cities, a choice of weapon likely to be seen as provocative by China in the ongoing South China Sea dispute.

A little-noticed filing to the United Nations made by

Vietnam last year, and reviewed by Reuters, shows it has bought the Russian-made land attack variant of the Klub missile for its state-of-the-art Kilo attack submarines.

The filing came to light after the independent Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) recently updated data on its website to show Vietnam's acquisition.

Regional military attaches and analysts see the missiles as a further sign of Vietnam's determination to counter the rise of China's larger military and part of a broader trend of Asian countries re-arming amid rising territorial tensions.

The choice of weapon is a more assertive one than the anti-ship missiles Vietnam was expected to obtain.

While those would potentially target Chinese ships and submarines in the South China Sea, the land attack weapons are capable of precision strikes at a range of 300 kilometres, making China's coastal cities potential targets in any conflict.

Carl Thayer, an expert on Vietnam's military at the Australian Defence Force Academy, said the move was a "massive shift" beyond more routine anti-ship tactics.

"They've given themselves a much more powerful deterrent that complicates China's strategic calculations," he said, adding he was surprised by the move.

Vietnam is the first Southeast Asian nation to arm its submarine fleet with a land attack missile. The Vietnamese defence and foreign ministries have yet to respond to questions submitted by Reuters. Vietnamese military officials have previously described Vietnam's arms build-up, including the submarine purchases, as defensive.

Moscow-based Almaz-Antey, parent company of the missiles' manufacturer Novator, declined to comment on any weapon sales to Vietnam.

Likely Targets

Rather than risk an attack on cities such as Shanghai, it is more likely Vietnam would see closer ports and airfields, such as the naval base at Sanya on China's Hainan Island and facilities on land reclamations China is building in the South China Sea, as potential targets, Thayer said.

While communist parties rule both Vietnam and China, Hanoi has long been wary of China, especially over Beijing's claims to most of the potentially oil-rich South China Sea.

Beijing's placement of an oil rig in waters claimed by Vietnam last year sparked riots in Vietnam and infuriated Hanoi's leadership.

The two navies routinely eye each other over disputed holdings in the sea's Spratly islands, which straddle some of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Before obtaining the weapons, Hanoi's previous land attack capabilities were limited to a handful of ageing Scud

missiles and more limited weapons fired by Russian-built Su-30 aircraft.

Vietnam's navy has taken possession of three Russian-built Kilos and a fourth is in transit under a \$2.6 billion deal struck with Moscow in 2009, according to Vietnamese state press reports. A fifth is undergoing sea-trials off St Petersburg and a final sixth submarine is due for completion in 2016. SIPRI has logged the sale of 50 anti-ship and land attack Klubs to Vietnam as part of the deal, with 28 having been delivered already over the last two years. The precise number of land attack missiles it has bought is not publicly available.

Collin Koh of Singapore's S Rajaratnam School of International Studies said it was unclear whether Vietnam had the full electronic capabilities to deploy the missiles at peak effectiveness.

"But even with those caveats, this is still significant... the Vietnamese have realised that without the ability to launch a counterstrike, their deterrence would have been quite limited."

Moscow-based strategic analyst Vasily Kashin said the Kilos sold to Vietnam are more advanced than those used by China while Moscow has never sold the Klub land attack missile to Beijing, which has developed its own similar weapon, the YJ-18.

Zha Daojiong, an international relations professor at Beijing's Peking University, said the move was part of a "normal" regional rearmament trend and Hanoi would be aware of the costs of ever using them against China.

"It is a loaded pistol, but can (they) afford to fire it?," he said.

China's Defence Ministry spokesman Geng Yansheng, when asked about the missiles and whether Beijing had expressed concern about them to Hanoi, said the two country's militaries were always in close touch.

"We have confidence we can together properly maintain this relationship," Geng told a monthly news briefing on Thursday.

Trevor Hollingsbee, a former naval intelligence analyst with Britain's defence ministry, said Vietnam was creating China's biggest strategic headache in the South China Sea.

"All indications are that they are surmounting the submarine learning curve quite rapidly...this is a very real problem for China," he said.

And, Finally...LEMON SQUEEZER

At the bar in Washington D.C. The owner & bartender, was so sure that he was the strongest man around, that he offered a standing \$1000 bet.

The bartender would squeeze a lemon until all the juice ran into a glass, and then hand the lemon to the patron..

Anyone who could squeeze two more drops of juice out of it,

would win the money.

Many people had tried,.....over the years: weightlifters, long-shoremen, etc., but nobody had ever been able to do it.

One day, this scrawny little fellow came into the bar, wearing thick glasses and a polyester suit.

He sat down, ordered a glass of draft, & started looking around the bar.

After reading the sign on the wall about the lemon challenge, he said in a small voice:

"I was just reading your sign, and I'd like to try the bet."

After the laughter had died down, the bartender said:

"Ok, ..."

He grabbed a lemon and squeezed the heck out of it.....then he handed the wrinkled remains of the rind to the little fellow.

But the Crowd's laughter turned to total silence....as the man clenched his little fist around the lemon.... and six drops fell into the glass.

As the crowd cheered, the bartender paid the guy his \$1000, and then asked little man:

"Do you mind if I ask what do you do for a living? Are you a lumberjack, a weight-lifter, or what?"

The little fellow quietly replied:

"I work for the IRS."