

TORPEDO ALLEY



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February 2013

United States Submarine Veterans - Charleston Base Newsletter

USSVI Creed

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



Base Meeting:

March 14 2013 Social hour 1800 General Meeting 1900

Location:

Fleet Reserve Association Branch 269
Low Country Home
99 Wisteria Rd
Goose Creek, South Carolina Phone 843-569-2962

Base Officers	Click to email	Phone Number
Commander	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Vice Commander	Jerry Stout	843-871-9533
Secretary	Rick Wise	843-875-5559
Treasurer	Terry Trump	843-873-9563

Appointed Officers	Click to email	Phone Number
Chief of the Boat	Rick Sparger	843-553-5594
Public Affairs	Ed Stank	843 863-8474
Veterans Affairs	Jim Morrison	843-832-9716
Chaplain	John Nichols	843-452-3189
Membership	Carl Chinn	843-875-3098
Holland Club	John Kratz	843-873-0238
Scholarship	Julian Villegas	843-871-6135
Newsletter	Steve Morawiec	843-410-0131
Storekeeper	Ken Hutchison	843-553-0935
Webmaster	John Nichols	843-452-3189
Historian	George Scharf	843 873-3318

Minutes of the January 2013 Meeting

The attendance for the January 2013 meeting was 93.

Opening Ceremonies: The Base Commander, Carl Chinn, called the meeting to order. A quorum was present and the meeting started at 1901. Carl introduced Rick Wise as the new Base Secretary, appointed and approved per the Charleston Base By-Laws.

Introductions: The following were new attendees to Charleston Base meetings: Greg Wood, CDR USN (Ret.), Qual Boat USS Finback SSN 670, James Echtele, MM1(SS) USN active duty, Qual Boat USS Tennessee SSBN 734, Robert Gay, MMCS(SS) USN (Ret.), Qual Boat USS Sea Cat SS 399, Glenn Fleming MMCM(SS) USN (Ret.), Qual Boat USS Skate SSN 578, Wesley S. Smith, CDR USN (Ret.), Qual Boat USS Rhode Island SSBN 740.

Secretary: Jerry Stout reported that since the last meeting was the Christmas Party there were no minutes to be approved.

Treasurer: Terry Trump gave a report for the month of December 2012.

Vice Commander: Jerry Stout reported the base would like to get a list together of members who are willing to provide transportation to members who require it for base functions. An e-mail will be sent out soliciting volunteers. The base would also like to generate a special skills list of members who can help other members when needed with items like plumbing and electrical problems.

Chaplain: Nick Nichols made the following report:

Jackie Kirk, Harry's wife, in Roper St Francis after having stomach surgery 9 Jan. Doing well.

Tommy Cox, member of USS Maine Base and singer/songwriter of submarine music in failing health. Email sent today had his address for cards.

Kathy Smith, PM's wife, in Roper downtown. Will have back surgery soon after falling. Good prognosis.

S1/C (SS) Bill Copeland departed on Eternal Patrol on January 3rd. His funeral was held in Greenwood SC this past Sunday.

Marty Sessler became seriously ill in early December. He spent a lot of time in the hospital but is now regaining his health.

Bill Jennings was taken to the ER on Christmas Day after falling and breaking two ribs.

Karen Kopczynski, Don's wife, was in the hospital just before Christmas with pneumonia and flu. She is doing well now.

Beverly Euper, Phil's wife, passed away on 17 December 2012.

Jeannie Nuzum passed away on 13 December 2012. She was the wife of CB shipmate Don Nuzum who departed on EP in 2009.

Larry Cox had surgery on his leg mid-December.

Marvin Miller had 4x bypass surgery in mid-December. Doing well and here tonight.

Fred Woodley is at home with a very bad eye infection.

Fred Woodley's brother-in-law passed away in mid-December.

TMC(SS) David Bonow departed on Eternal Patrol on 29 November 2012. His funeral service was 6 December 2012.

Clyde Peters is still in Mt. Pleasant Manor Nursing Home, 921 Bowman Rd, Rm 323.

As reported by John Kratz, Dave Rein has lung cancer and has just completed his 2nd round of chemo at Roper St Francis.

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.

Webmaster: Nick Nichols reported that the following are available on the website:

DOCUMENTS: Page 2 and important instructions for your family.

If we don't have your picture on the website please get it taken at a meeting or if you have one at home send it to the webmaster at webmaster@ussvicb.org.

Public Affairs: Ed Stank had no report.

Membership: Carl Chinn reported that three members who were delinquent on base dues paid tonight but 27 former members were dropped from the sailing list. A request was made that members try to recruit submariners they know who are not members.

Newsletter: Steve Morawiec reported that the December electronic version has been sent out. The newsletter is accepting advertising to help pay for the postage. The Family Services Center at MenRiv is printing the newsletters for no cost.

The Oyster Roast is scheduled for 2 March at the Cooper River Partners Picnic Facility. A request was made for volunteers to help.

Storekeeper: Ken Hutchison reported that Ann Semler would like to sell Gary's motorcycle, a Harley Davidson 883 with less than 10,000 miles to a SubVet for \$3500. Ken also emphasized how much visits by SubVets meant to Clyde Peters.

Kaps For Kids: Mike Knaub had no report.

Fleet Reserve: The branch meeting will be held on Thursday, January 17 at 1900. There will be a Taste of the Fleet event on Sunday, January 20 and a Disco Night on Saturday, January 26 at 2000.

Holland Club: John Kratz reported he has 16 names to be inducted into the Holland Club this year. They are Richard Alfano, Ed Bowles, Walt Deal, Frank Evans, Gerry Farr, Al Katen, Tom Lehmann, Joe Lunn, Roy Massey, Fred McRae, Steve Nelms, Ed Simokat, Gerald Starr, Ralph Wieland, Stan Yoakum, and Lee Young. If you know of anyone who should be on the list but is not please contact John Kratz at johnk2561@bellsouth.net .

SUBVETS of WWII: Ed Stank reported that although the national organization had closed the Swamp Fox Chapter will continue to meet at 1130 at Ryan's in Summerville on the third Thursday of each even month. Charleston Base Members are welcome as Associate Members. Come on out!

Scholarship: Julian Villegas reported that the forms and information for this year's scholarship should be on the website soon.

Little David Project: Rick Wise gave a brief history of the Little David Project and stated this year's upkeep working party should be around the end of March.

Nuclear Historian: No Report.

District Commander: No Report.

Public Events Coordinator: Marty Sessler thanked everyone for the calls, cards and prayers during his recent illness. He also thanked everyone who participated in the parades last year. He reported that the H. L. Hunley Memorial Service will be held on Sunday, February 17 at the Sunrise Presbyterian Church, 3222 Middle Street, Sullivan's Island, SC. If you would like to participate please contact Marty at specialevents@ussvicb.org . There will be reserved seating for SubVets that only want to attend.

He also reported that the Savannah, GA St. Patrick's Day Parade will be held on Saturday, March 16 this year. If you plan on riding the float you should get your reservation soon.

Chief of the Boat: Rick Sparger said well done for all who helped with the Christmas Party. The base is restarting a checkout log for members to check out base equipment for whatever they need it. Contact the COB to checkout equipment. He also urged members to help and attend the Oyster Roast on March 9.

Base Commander: Carl Chinn reminded the base that this is the election for Base Commander and Base Treasurer. John Lookabill has volunteered to manage the election. John said he will take nominations for the posts up until the May meeting when the election will be held. He will announce the nominees at each meeting. John will take nominations in any form. Election will be by secret ballot.

Old Business: None

New Business: An announcement was made that the Submarine Birthday Ball will be held at the Charleston Marriot on Friday, April 12. Tickets will be free for WWII SubVets and a reduced price for Charleston Base members (probably \$20). Tickets will be on sale at the February meeting. Casual dress with your SubVets vest. Open bar. More info at charlestonsubball.org

Following a recommendation from the Charleston Base Executive Board a motion was received from the floor that the Building Fund be dissolved and the money placed in the General Fund. The motion was seconded and by a show of hands the motion passed.

Good of the Order: Rusty Pickett reported that nothing has been heard from the Patriot's Point Board about the Submarine Cold War Memorial. There has been a favorable ruling by the Attorney General so maybe the board has dropped the idea of moving the memorial. Rusty will keep the base informed.

Tom Lufkin reported that there was a problem with the Clamagore Fund and that PayPal donations cannot be made because the Clamagore Veterans group cannot find the paperwork to show that they are a non-profit organization, Money donated so far has not been lost.

The USS Von Steuben SSBN 632 All-Hands Reunion will be held at the Sheraton Hotel on Goer Drive in North Charleston on March 14 - 17. The website for the reunion is www.ssb632reunion.org Please let any Von Steuben sailors know about the reunion.

The Southeast Regional Convention will be held April 7 - 10 at the Sheraton Hotel on Goer Drive. The convention is not a Charleston Base sponsored activity. It is being put on by base member Thom Beach.

The USS Henry L. Stimson SSBN 655 Reunion will be held in Mobile, AL the first week in October.

The USS Nathan Hale SSBN 623 Reunion will be held in Branson, MO on September 19 - 22, 2013. For more information and registration visit www.ussnathanhalereunion2013.com

Two door prizes (\$50 gift Certificates to Miz Scarlet's Table in Moncks Corner) were left over from the Christmas Party. Numbers were drawn and two corresponding names on the sign-in sheet won. The winners were Don Londergan and Greg Wood.

Depth Charge: The depth charge winner was Pat Toelle.

Meeting Adjourned: The Base Commander adjourned the meeting at 2005.

February Submarines Lost

USS Shark	SS 174	February 11, 1942
USS Amberjack	SS 219	February 16, 1943
USS Grayback	SS 208	February 26, 1944
USS Trout	SS 202	February 28, 1944
USS Barbel	SS 316	February 4, 1945
H.L. Hunley		February 17, 1864

February Birthdays

Barwick	Burke	Cox	Curry
Cyrek	Everett	Gilmer	Grassman
Hamilton	Hayden	Hix	Jennings
Koebel	Koehler	Lunn	Massey
Neff	Rash	Rogers	Rook
Stout	Van		
	Swearingen		

Submarine News

Rose Parade



Electrician's Mate 1st Class (SS) Phillip Alampi, who is assigned to the Los Angeles class attack submarine USS Pasadena (SSN 752), sits in front of the City of South Pasadena's themed float, Sail the Sea of Knowledge, with his wife, Veera. Alampi, Pasadena's Sailor of the Year, and his wife, rode in the City of South Pasadena's float during the 124th Rose Parade, Jan. 1. The Alampis were invited by the Pasadena Foundation to take part in the Rose Bowl Kick-off Luncheon, participate in the Rose Parade and meet with various Pasadena Foundation civic leaders during their namesake visit to Pasadena, Dec. 29 - Jan. 1.

Women in Navy submerge for 1st time

Women in the military are definitely making strides under water. CNN's Pentagon correspondent Chris Lawrence talks to an officer who's on track to become the Navy's first female submarine commander.

Transcript: Women in the military are definitely making strides under water. CNN's Pentagon correspondent Chris Lawrence talks to an officer who's on track to become the Navy's first female submarine commander.

Chris Lawrence, CNN Correspondent: It's a new frontier for female Sailors. Submerged for months, no sun, no space, no sleep. Lieutenant Junior Grade Marquette Leveque is one of the first women to qualify for submarine duty. Is it everything you expected?

Navy Lt. Junior Grade Marquette Leveque: I got a lot less sleep than I imagined I would.

Lawrence: We met Leveque a few years ago when she went by her maiden name, Reed. She was a cadet at the Naval Academy when the Pentagon opened sub duty to women.

Leveque: At the time I was flying. I was a pilot, selected to be a pilot after graduation.

Lawrence: Leveque decided her future was under the water, not soaring above it, and she wasn't afraid of breaking a barrier.

Leveque: I see it being just like our male counterparts. And I think that we'll be accepted the same way.

Lawrence: We reminded her of what she said then and read some of the reaction from fellow and former Sailors. "Way to go, ladies. Welcome to the pride of the fleet. And wear those gold dolphins proudly."

But also "this is about giving feminists what they want. Glad I got my dolphins pinned on before the Navy went P.C." And "keep the eye candy upwardly mobile."

Leveque: There's always going to be an aversion to change, and so the best way to deal with that is just go and do my job like any other officer would.

Lawrence: Male and female officers do not sleep in the same state room, but that's about it. I mean, I can't imagine there's very much room for separating men and women.

Leveque: Honestly, I didn't even notice it.

Lawrence: Since all officers share one bathroom, they use a sign to warn each other.

Leveque: We just have a sign that we flip back and forth for either "occupied by male" or "occupied by female."

Lawrence: This month, Leveque earned her dolphin. A gold chest device that means she's mastered operations.

Lawrence: It took a year of nuclear training, three more months at submarine officer school. And then her first sea tour.

Leveque: It's a huge honor to finally really feel like I'm a part of the submarine community.

Lawrence: In fact, Leveque is one of only three women to qualify as unrestricted line officers. That's big because it means down the road she would be eligible to one day assume command of a nuclear-powered sub. And it's pretty clear that, whenever a war is waged under water, women are going to be a part of that fight.

See the full video [here](#)

Higher Skills For New Navy

A good long time ago, the future governor of Mississippi and civilian head of the U.S. Navy, Ray Mabus, started his career in public service in the Navy, on the USS Little Rock. The cruiser was a fighting ship, with a complement of 1,000 Sailors. And Mabus recalled that experience recently in talking about education in the South. The Navy secretary noted that the dramatic change in technology has made the Navy's newest combat vessel, the littoral combat ship, into a weapons platform that can strike vastly farther than the guns of the USS Little Rock of four decades ago. The LCS carries a crew of 40. And, Mabus said in an essay for the Southern Growth Policies Board, "every job onboard the LCS requires technological savvy."

"Sailors and Marines fix and operate the world's most-complicated and best anti-air and anti-missile systems, hang ordnance on planes heading out for combat missions, or operate the nuclear power plant on a submarine, as well as hundreds of other missions," Mabus noted. "These tasks do not just take intelligence, although that is crucial; they take the critical thinking that only a great education provides."

For Mabus, as for uniformed leaders of the national services, the problems of recruiting young people with the educational capacity — not just bravery, or a wish for adventure — become multiplied by the complexity of today's weapon systems.

Three serious problems prevent a young would-be Sailor from serving: the lack of a high school diploma, an excess of body weight because of the South's epidemic of obesity and criminal records that the services now cannot overlook as they might have in years past.

The educational component, the civilian teacher in the classroom, is thus critical to the armed services' future capacity, Mabus wrote. His essay was to reflect on the issues raised by the Southern Growth board and its experts over the last 40 years, and 25 years after a groundbreaking report on the future of the Southern states.

In many ways, those years have seen significant progress in the South. Yet as Mabus noted in his comments, the nation is now lagging behind.

"Twenty-five years ago, the United States led the world in high school and college graduation rates. While there have been positive reports recently about increased graduation rates and a decrease in Southern states in so-called 'dropout factories' where graduation rates are below 60 percent, worldwide the nation is 20th in high school graduation rates, and 16th in college graduation rates," Mabus noted. "More than 30 percent of Americans do not graduate from high school on time."

In colleges, many students doing advanced work in science and technology, math and engineering — the so-called STEM disciplines — are from abroad. "More and more of those (STEM) students are from places like India and China, and they will take home that great education to help fuel their economies and develop their military capability, not ours," Mabus said.

That costs money, as Mabus well knows, having had to balance budgets in Mississippi: "Federal and state governments must invest in education, and those investments must be protected, evaluated, and sustained, even when budgets are tight," he said. Perhaps Mabus is right that the public understands the value of making sustained investments in education, but his generation of leaders — included such governors as Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Buddy Roemer of Louisiana, Bill Clinton of Arkansas — who were able to make successful pitches for increasing public spending on education.

Is that will still there, in an age in which the ascendant Republican Party puts tax cuts and private provision of education at the forefront? Mabus said that failure to invest is not an option. "Whatever hard choices have to be made, whatever priorities have to be set, we simply have to give every child the ability to compete," he said. The national-security implications of today's education crisis should be part of the debate over whether we can afford to put more public money into education. We agree with Mabus: "Our nation's security depends not just on how strong we are, but on how smart we are."

Scottish lives considered cheap by UK defence bosses - THE MOD has deemed the UK's nuclear deterrent too dangerous to be housed in England, but says an accident in Scotland would result in acceptable collateral damage.

TRIDENT nuclear bombs are too risky to be based in the south of England, but it's fine for Scotland, according to the UK government. The Ministry of Defence says that the nuclear submarines currently housed on the Clyde could not be moved to the Devonport base in Plymouth because an accident there would endanger too many lives.

Responding to a Freedom of Information request from the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the MoD said: "Neither the Devonport naval base nor the dockyard safety case permit the berthing of an armed submarine." At least 11,000 Plymouth citizens could be killed in a worst-accident scenario envisaged by the MoD, and that is deemed an unacceptable risk.

Why then does the MoD insist it's fine to keep these killers anchored just 40 miles from Scotland's biggest city and centre of population? Put starkly, Scots lives are worth less. Back in 2000 the MoD envisaged a hypothetical accident involving Trident in Faslane. It concluded "societal contamination" resulting from such a disaster was OK.

No wonder CND have thrown their weight behind an independent Scotland. It's the only way to get rid of these obscene weapons, whether we live in Devon or Dumbarton. Don't let Tories play The Last Post for Royal Mail LAST year, a poll found that two in every three of us would back an independent Scotland if it made us personally £500 better off.

Scotland has 8.4 per cent of the population and pays 9.6 per cent of UK tax. Last year, that created a surplus of £2.7billion for Scotland, which works out at £500 each, according to figures backed by the Office of National Statistics.

We've been in the black for three of the past six years while the rest of the UK has limped along in the red. So our prospects are bright. Naturally, this terrifies the London government and David Cameron has ordered his top civil servants to make the propaganda case against the people of Scotland controlling their own affairs. Last week, they fired their first offensive. Danny Alexander, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, admitted Scots would each have got £500 in 2010-11. But he tried to undermine it by averaging Scotland's financial position over the past 12 years. Using that calculation, Danny says we will each be £1 a year worse off with independence.

Is this really the best the Treasury big guns can do? A worst case scenario where you lose just £1, IN A WHOLE YEAR? But most of the time you are a lot better off? I can live with that. Especially since these figures relate to Scotland's financial position now, with all our economic decisions made in England.

We can certainly improve on Lib Dem Alexander and his chums. Their austerity programme is causing more debt as tax revenue falls.

Now even enemies of independence admit it won't harm Scots finances. When people in Scotland make decisions – instead of the Tories in London – things can only get better.

US special forces to trial prototype dry submersibles

US submarine builder General Dynamics Electric Boat has been selected by the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to lead the design and build of a prototype 'dry' submersible for evaluation by the naval special forces community.

The USD44.3 million contract award is intended to provide USSOCOM with one of two User Operational Evaluation System (UOES) craft to support its Dry Combat Submersible Technology Development (DCS TD) programme; Submergence Group had previously been brought under contract in June 2012 for the build of another UOES craft design.

General Dynamics Electric Boat was, alongside Lockheed Martin, Oceaneering International, and L-3 Communications, awarded one of four Dry Combat Submersible-Light (DCS-L) Phase I contracts in April 2012. These initial contracts, concluding in July 2012, funded preliminary concept design activities for a 'dry' swimmer delivery craft.

While details of the DCS-L Broad Agency Announcement have remained restricted, USSOCOM has previously released some outline details of its broad DCS-L requirement. This calls for a free swimming vehicle capable of delivering a sustained top speed of at least 5 kt, a maximum operating depth of at least 200 ft, provision for two pilots, and a minimum four SEALs/objective eight SEALs.

U.S. Navy Looks To Future-Proof Ballistic Subs

The key to making the next generation of ballistic missile submarines survivable and even more valuable in future decades will be to design the vessels with enough flexibility for later technological improvements, says Rear Adm. Barry Bruner, director of submarine warfare. Bruner likens the effort to the commercial industry for everyday transportation.

"Here's an example," Bruner told Aviation Week in a recent interview. "Twenty-five years from now cars will be fundamentally different than they are today. Instead of getting in your car, turning the key and backing up and driving down the road with a bazillion other cars, you'll probably talk to it and say, 'Take me to work.' The car's computer will talk to some big network and the controls will be taken over by a network and the car will be timed with all of the other cars and you'll just sit there and it will take you to where you are going.

"The cars we design today, I'm willing to bet, they're already thinking about that and they're already designing the computer systems in the car so that you can't go out in the freeway so that if there's a law tomorrow, it can be back-fitted into a car," he says. "That's very simplistic, but it's the kind of thing we're talking about [in the submarine community]. It's very complex. We would like to even be able to design a submarine with enough buoyancy so you can put on some stuff and still have a sub that can do its missions."

Of particular interest, he says, would be additional equipment to make the vessel more survivable — one of the key requirements and selling points for ballistic submarines as one of the legs of the nation's nuclear triad. "You may want the capability in the future to carry some new defensive capability, whether it's a weapon or 'sub-masker,' that you don't have today," he says.

In that way, he says, the Navy can plan for greater future threats to its ballistic submarine force. "You want to make sure you have the capability to employ whatever that may be in the future. So you design in that kind of capability. You have an ocean interface, so you can launch it from a sub — whether it's a weapon that can go out and attack or something that can mask you and protect you."

But, he cautions, the Navy must also keep costs down for the next-generation fleet. "You continually go back and reassess," he says. But, he adds, "We're very careful not to let the cost-driving be so zealous that we end up with a platform that cannot do its mission. We are working hard to balance current capability, science and technology projects, and control cost."

As long as the Navy can keep a lid on costs as it develops its future fleet, defense analysts say, there is no reason to doubt the nation will develop and buy the replacement boomers to continue the same mission they perform now.

"As far as we can see, it will operate very similarly to how it operates now," Bruner says. "The basic ballistic submarine gets under way and then it disappears. It's not always 5 knots to nowhere, but no one knows where it is, not even our own government. That's a big piece of its survivability. It's a phenomenal capability."

USS Maine (SSBN 741) Returns to Bangor



Cmdr. Rich Massie, gold crew commanding officer of the ballistic-missile submarine USS Maine (SSBN 741) supervises the boat's return to Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor following a strategic deterrent patrol. Maine was recently named as a 2012 Battle "E" recipient by Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Attack sub collides with ship in Persian Gulf

An attack submarine collided with a small, civilian vessel in the Persian Gulf on Thursday, damaging one of the sub's periscopes but not harming anyone on either vessel, 5th Fleet said Thursday. The attack sub Jacksonville was at periscope depth at 5 a.m. when it collided with the unidentified vessel.

"Damage appears to be limited to one of Jacksonville's two periscopes," 5th Fleet said in a statement Thursday. "The reactor remains in a safe condition, there was no damage to the propulsion plant systems and there is no concern regarding watertight integrity." The periscope appears to be "slightly bent" according to initial reports, said 5th Fleet spokeswoman Lt. Marissa Myatt, who said the sub was keeping the damaged periscope raised.

"It's not going down the full capacity that they'd like it to, so they don't want to take any measures to degrade it any more," Myatt explained. The other vessel continued on its course and speed, officials said. A subsequent P-3 Orion search didn't locate any vessels in distress and Myatt said 5th Fleet had not been contacted by the vessel, which appears to be a small fishing vessel from reports.

Jacksonville is transiting the Persian Gulf and will head back into port to get the damages assessed, Myatt said. It is the sixth Navy vessel to sustain a collision at sea since May. 5th Fleet said the incident is under investigation. Investigators are attempting to identify the other vessel using the ship tracking system AIS. Jacksonville left its home port of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Nov. 5 for a six-month deployment. For more than half of the crew, this would be their first cruise, the commanding officer said at the time.

"They are anxious to go out there and do what submarines do at the pointy end of the spear," Cmdr. Nate Sukols said in a Nov. 6 Navy news release.

Finland formally recognizes military grave of Russian submarine wreck

Russia expressed its gratitude to Helsinki for recognizing the site of a Soviet submarine that went down in Finnish waters in 1940. "We are grateful to our partners for their favorable decision on an issue that is significant for Russia," the Foreign Ministry's information and press department said in a statement. "Respect for the memory of the deceased sailors is very important for their family and friends, and for all citizens of Russia."

Finnish officials notified Russia that the list of Russian (Soviet) military graves now includes the site of the Soviet Baltic Fleet submarine C-2. The submarine, presumably destroyed by a mine off the Aland Archipelago in the territorial waters of Finland, perished together with its crew on January 3, 1940. Swedish and Finnish divers discovered the wreckage of the submarine in June 2009.

"Immediately following the discovery, the Russian Federation requested that Finland recognize the site of the wreckage of the Soviet submarine as a military grave," the ministry said. Munitions were found aboard the submarine and were destroyed by the Finnish Defense Forces.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia has had several diplomatic disputes with several neighboring countries regarding the treatment of memorials where Soviet soldiers lost their lives.

In April 2007, officials from the Estonian capital of Tallinn made the decision to move a Soviet-era memorial, known as the Bronze Soldier, together with the remains of several Soviet soldiers who died liberating Tallinn from fascist forces during World War II, to a graveyard outside of the city.

The decision sparked two days of mass riots, which led to the death of a young man of Russian ethnicity. The Estonian embassy in Moscow was also the site of large protests.

Submarine shooting: coroner calls on Navy to introduce breath-testing

The public brouhaha between the prime minister and his predecessor deepened Sunday, with Ehud Olmert. A coroner has said he would recommend random breath-testing for Navy personnel following the shooting dead of an officer by a drunk submariner on a nuclear-powered submarine.

Southampton coroner Keith Wiseman said at the end of the inquest into the death of Lieutenant Commander Ian Molyneux that he would write to the Royal Navy about 18 areas it should look at.

The officer was shot dead by Able Seaman Ryan Donovan, who was at least three times the drink-drive limit while on guard duty on HMS Astute in April 2011. The hearing has previously heard that Donovan had drunk 20 pints of cider and lager, cocktails and vodkas in the 48 hours before he was put on duty armed the SA80 rifle.

Police investigating the murder were so concerned about binge drinking by the crew while ashore that the senior officer wrote to his chief constable to highlight the issue and it was passed to military authorities.

The navy has since tightened its rules on alcohol consumption before duty. At the time sailors were allowed 10 units in the previous 24 hours with no alcohol in the 10 hours before duty, which has now been changed to five units. Wiseman said it would never be known why the attack took place.

He said it was "a miracle" no one else had died during the gun rampage during a civic visit by Southampton's mayor and schoolchildren, who had just left when Donovan started firing. Donovan fired seven rounds in 13 seconds in the control room area of the sub.

The coroner said he would incorporate recommendations from Molyneux's widow, Gillian, which included random breath-testing of crew; breathalysing all those going on armed sentry duty; a look at alcohol allowances while on board; work to tackle the culture of binge drinking in the navy and the issuing of handheld breath-testing devices to all personnel.

Recording a narrative verdict, Wiseman said the officer was unlawfully killed and he will now write to the navy citing the issues under what is called a Rule 43 letter. "Random testing has some value. Anyone being drunk, or anywhere near drunk, on duty has, in my view, got to stop.

"It is an unfair responsibility to be given to someone carrying out little more than a spot check. In my view the routine use of the appropriate machinery to at least establish the absence of alcohol in the system is necessary as I'm not convinced that the concept of heavy drinking on leave periods is likely to alter very much.

"On an intense personal note this criminal action has left one family bereaved in the most appalling circumstances." Donovan, 23, was jailed for a minimum of 25 years after pleading guilty at Winchester crown court to the murder of Molyneux.

The navigator yeoman also pleaded guilty to attempting to murder Lieutenant Commander Christopher Hodge, 45, who was shot in the stomach. The court heard that his real targets, whom he also admitted to attempting to murder, were Petty Officer Christopher Brown, 36, and Chief Petty Officer David McCoy, 37.

On the day of the killing, Donovan said he was going to kill someone but the person who heard it thought he was joking. Donovan was facing disciplinary procedures for disobeying orders and a transfer for an operational tour on RFA Cardigan Bay was cancelled.

He was issued the SA80 weapon by Brown before the shooting, but the petty officer said he was unaware that Donovan was under the influence of alcohol at the time. Toxicology tests showed that Donovan would have had an alcohol/blood level of 139mg per 100ml, the two-week inquest heard.

Molyneux, 36, died from a single gunshot wound to his head, fired from 5cm away. The Home Office pathologist Dr Basil Purdue said the position in which the officer was found, lying face down on the floor, was consistent with him rushing forward to tackle the gunman.

Molyneux received a posthumous George Medal for his actions. The Royal Navy has undertaken what the coroner said were thorough inquiries into the incident that has also implemented new alcohol consumption guidelines and is looking at tackling the culture of binge drinking while ashore.

U.S. Navy developing unmanned submarines for anti-sub warfare

As the U.S. transitions to littoral warfare in key parts the world, including the Western Pacific, Persian Gulf, Straits of Hormuz and the Caribbean, the threats posed by small, quiet, diesel-electric enemy submarines is growing.

To deal with this, the Pentagon has developed a program to assemble an unmanned anti-submarine hunter force for the U.S. Navy. Several U.S. defense contractors are working with the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to develop prototypes for the unmanned subs.

DARPA awarded Science Application International Corp. a \$58 million contract in August 2012 to develop a prototype Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail Unmanned Vehicle by 2015.

Message in a bottle follows captain

CAPE TOWN-When one thinks of a word to describe the captain of a submarine warship, "romantic" is probably not one that springs to mind. But Commodore Darren White of the SA Navy is the first to admit he is a romantic. Two years ago, somewhere in the mid Atlantic, he wrote a message, put it in a bottle and threw it overboard, letting his imagination take him to all sorts of exotic places regarding where the bottle could eventually end up.

Never in his wildest dreams, he says, did he imagine the bottle would follow his submarine home, taking two years and at least 1 600 nautical miles to do so. Not quite home, as the submarine SAS Charlotte Maxeke is berthed in the naval dockyard in Simon's Town, but almost there.

The bottle ended up about 20 nautical miles away across False Bay, on the shores of Pringle Bay.

"It's quite extraordinary. I'm still trying to get my head around it," White said on Tuesday. The bottle's trans-Atlantic voyage began on November 27, 2010, when White tossed it into the sea at 40° south and 8° west.

The submarine and other SA Navy warships had been doing exercises with South American navies and were on their way home. Argentina was the host country. "Argentina is known for its wine and beef, and we made sure we tasted a lot of it. I kept a wine bottle from a function we had while alongside in Argentina. I typed out the message, put a picture of the crew with it and put it in a plastic sleeve in the bottle. Everyone had a good chuckle at me when I threw it overboard."

Fast forward to last Saturday, when Heinz Modricky of Somerset West was walking with his son from Pringle Bay towards Cape Hangklip. There was the usual amount of flotsam and jetsam on the shoreline, but then Modricky noticed the wine bottle with a cork in it and something inside.

"I said to my son: 'Hey look there's a message in the bottle'. I took photographs and then took it out. At first I was a bit disappointed because I thought it was just from Simon's Town, but then I read where it had been dropped off, in the middle of the Atlantic, and I was amazed. It took two years and two months to get here," Modricky said.

The typed message said: "Hello to whoever finds this. I have never done this before so am not sure of the result. Hopefully this bottle remains intact and travels several thousand miles to distant shores. My name is Darren White. I am the captain of the South African Submarine "SAS CHARLOTTE MAXEKE". We are in transit back to South Africa from exercises in Argentina and Uruguay. This bottle was ditched in position 40'00'S 008'55.7W."

White had put an e-mail address, but the blue ink had faded away. Modricky decided to put a post on the 4x4 forum website: "I do not have a contact for Darren. I'm sure he would like his bottle back! Anyone with contacts in the navy?" Someone saw it, contacted the navy and by Saturday evening Modricky had White's cellphone number.

"I'm in my 50s and I have never found a message in a bottle in my life, but when I was in East London in the 60s, I also threw bottles with messages into the sea. I think everyone has a romantic notion about doing that," Modricky said.

White is chuffed that Modricky has agreed to return the bottle. He has photographs the crew took of him throwing the bottle overboard and Modricky's photographs of the bottle. He plans to put these in the submarine's linebook, which records the life and times of the vessel. "Anything could have happened to that bottle. It could have sunk, or been smashed. But it came all this way back. If I stand here at work, I can look across the bay to the spot where it washed up."

Futuristic Robot Ship Tracks Enemy Submarines

A U.S. robot ship resembling a Star Wars spacecraft skimming the waves could hunt for enemy submarines within a few years. The unarmed robot ship, called Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail Unmanned Vessel (ACTUV), aims to track submarines using laser detectors, radar and sonar.

Such steady sea surveillance could protect the U.S. Navy's prize aircraft carriers and other large warships against underwater threats — one of many ways robots can watch the backs of humans on future battlefields.

ACTUV's design has a "trimaran" shape with gull-like "wings" touching the water on either side of the ship's main body, so that it could appear to almost fly over the ocean surface at high speeds. A video released in December 2012 envisions how the robot ship could handle its future tracking missions.

A human pilot could operate the ship remotely until it gets out of harbor, but ACTUV's own robotic brains would take over from there as it patrolled and tracked down submarines.

Sea deployments would ideally last from 60 to 90 days without any humans or maintenance. ACTUV could supposedly survive rough wind and waves approaching near-gale conditions of 32 to 38 mph.

The U.S. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) awarded \$58 million to the Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) in August 2012 — funding intended for building and testing the ACTUV robot ship. DARPA wants the robot ship to begin sea trials by mid-2015.

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Carnegie Mellon University both have a hand in helping create the robot's software brains. SAIC has also enlisted the help of Oregon Iron Works and Christensen Shipyards to work on ship design, construction and propulsion.

Such a robotic submarine hunter would represent one of many tireless robots working for the U.S. Navy in the near future. The Navy previously experimented with ways to launch drones from its own submarines and test-fired missiles from robot boats.

U.S. Navy warships are also poised to deploy swarms of drone helicopters and warplanes from their decks. The Navy has tried out drone helicopters such as the MQ-8 Fire Scout during operations targeting smugglers and pirates from the air. More recently, the X-47 robot warplane the size of a fighter jet underwent its first sea trials aboard a U.S. aircraft carrier in late 2012.

Defense experts have even envisioned the Navy deploying a huge submarine to act as an underwater mother ship for swarms of swimming or flying robots. That scenario came up during war games held by the U.S. Department of Defense's NeXTech workshop series in August 2012.

Secret Nuclear Redesign Will Keep U.S. Subs Running Silently for 50 Years

The U.S. Navy is betting the future of its submarine force on a secret and revolutionary nuclear drive system that aspires to be more efficient and quieter than anything under the water today. The heart of the planned ballistic missile Ohio Replacement (OR) program will be built around a drive that will not need to be refueled for the 50-year life of the boats and cuts out potentially noisy direct mechanical connection to the drive train. In other words, the Navy's next-gen subs could be almost silent, and keep running for a half-century straight.

The Navy's ballistic missile fleet, or boomers, rely on stealth to hide from rival boats, ships and sub-hunting aircraft. The quieter the boat, the harder it is to find. (And these boats are big: the current Ohio boomer is more than a football field and half long displacing 19,000 tons.)

Now the Navy is developing an innovation that attempts to give OR boomers the quietest nuclear engine yet by "going to [an] electric drive," Sean Stackley, the Navy's chief weapons buyer, said in a January interview with the U.S. Naval Institute.

Current boomers have a direct mechanical connection to the props that drive the boat. Steam turbines driven by the nuclear power plant go through a series of mechanical gears that translate the high torque power from the nuclear plant into lower torque energy needed to propel the ship. All of those mechanical connections can generate noise, the bane of the submariner.

Moving forward, the Navy wants to use the power from the reactor to create an elaborate electrical grid inside of the submarine. The reactor power would feed the grid and in turn the electric motors that would drive the boats. Eliminating the mechanical connection would mean less noise under water. The set up would also free up power previously devoted to driving the ship. Currently anywhere from 75 to 80 percent of the power from a nuclear submarine is devoted to driving the ship through the water. Extra power could be routed to other systems like sonars and potentially unmanned underwater vehicles.

This will be the second try for the Navy to use electric drive subs. The service experimented with the technology in the 1960s and 1970s but found the boats equipped with the drives to be underpowered and maintenance heavy.

Unlike other programs, the Navy hasn't gone out of its way to tout the electric drive technology it plans to use for the OR boomers. A 2010 Analysis of Alternatives for the OR program, then known as the SSBN(X), was closely held by the service. Gene Taylor, the chairman of the Seapower subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee at the time, demanded publicly that Congress get a chance to evaluate the proposal. He lost his 2010 election and the Navy kept specifics mostly quiet.

Among the details they have discussed, in addition to the electric drive, is the development of a new nuclear power plant for the OR boats. "There is investment in the front end in the reactor plant to arrive at a core that will last the life of the boat," Stackley said.

Now, the Navy's nuclear fleet requires a mid-life refueling and overhaul that can keep a ship or submarine out of commission for almost three years with a cost in the billions. "By eliminating that midlife refueling, you effectively get greater operational availability out of the boat," Stackley said.

The standard ratio for ballistic missile submarines on patrol to subs in port is about four to one. Currently the navy fields 14 Ohio-class boomers packing 24 Trident II D5 intercontinental ballistic missiles. (The first four Ohios were converted to carry missiles with conventional warheads). "There are still going to be midlife upgrades but the refueling portion is effectively eliminated which allows us to reduce from today's 14 Ohios to reduce down to 12 Ohio Replacements," Stackley said.

The original Ohio-class builder General Dynamics Electric Boat hasn't built a boomer in more than 20 years and the durability of the drive and the boats to last until 2080 is a tall order. Added to the pressure is a Pentagon imposed cost cap that reduce the cost of the boat from about \$7 to 8 billion down to \$4.9 billion. But the Navy will have little margin for error if they want to keep the price tag that low.

The Navy has already delayed work two years as part of its 2013 budget. Currently the first OR boat is scheduled to begin construction in 2021 for a decade-long construction and development process. The super-silent boat is scheduled to make its first patrol in 2031. After that, you may never hear from it again.

Next generation US submarines will refuel once every 50 years and have quieter electric drive

The heart of the planned ballistic missile Ohio Replacement (OR) program will be built around a drive that will not need to be refueled for the 50-year life of the boats and cuts out potentially noisy direct mechanical connection to the drive train. In other words, the Navy's next-gen subs could be almost silent, and keep running for a half-century straight. The Navy is developing an innovation that attempts to give OR boomers the quietest nuclear engine yet by going to an electric drive.

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Don't Scrap America's Ballistic Missile Submarines

Last week, Bryan McGrath of Information Dissemination made a surprising argument about the U.S. Navy's boomer flotilla. McGrath argued that rather than spend a tremendous amount of money replacing the force (which will reach obsolescence by 2040), the U.S. should seek alternative deterrent options.

This argument comes at an interesting time for world Ballistic Missile Submarines (SSBN) fleets. In the United Kingdom, the battle over the Trident replacement has been fully joined, with many in Labour suggesting that expensive new boomers are a waste of money. At the same time, other SSBN operators have decided to modernize their fleets. The Russians continue to push forward with the Borei-class submarines, while the PLAN has now built up to five of the Type 094 class boomer. India's first SSBN, INS Arihant, will likely enter service in the first half of 2013. Only France, with submarines roughly a decade newer than the UK, is not currently pursuing a substantial revision of its SSBN force.

McGrath's case rests on five points. First, boomers take up a disproportionate share of the shipbuilding budget for the utility they provide. Second, in the modern nuclear environment "survivability" means considerably less than it did in the Cold War. Third, eliminating the boomers might open the door to more effective conventional strike options, including Prompt Global Strike. Fourth, it allows the Navy to concentrate on warfighting and forward presence, rather than strategic deterrence. Finally, if the global political environment changes, we can always build new boomers.

As much as I would like to agree with McGrath's argument, I'm not convinced. I do think that Trident replacement is a waste of resources for the United Kingdom, but then the UK does not play the same kind of global role as the United States. While concerns about boomers crowding out other platforms should be taken seriously, other parts of the triad suffer from similar problems. The U.S. ballistic missile force is aging, although some studies suggest that the basic architecture could remain in place as late as 2075. The bomber force has also grown old, even as the Air Force has increasingly diverted bombers to non-nuclear tasks.

Any option, thus, involves unpleasant decisions. Maintaining all three legs of the triad probably won't be possible. Because long range bombers inherently have dual conventional and nuclear purpose, the United States cannot eliminate the bomber leg in any traditional sense, although it can reduce numbers and certain metrics of readiness. Thus, the choice comes down to the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force and the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force. My own view is that the United States can accept a lower threshold for at sea nuclear deterrence, but this leg should still retain a rump deterrence capability. Survivability concerns may not be what they were, but they are still relevant, and SSBNs have both survivability and flexibility advantages over ICBMs. It isn't accidental that China, India, and Russia are all choosing to develop or upgrade their SSBN capabilities at the same time. Concerns about shipbuilding costs should be remedied by resource transfers between services; if the Air Force no longer operates an ICBM force, then funding can (at least theoretically) shift towards the Navy.

Replacement of the Ohio boats will still be expensive, but circumstances may allow life extension beyond current expectations. The long term answer may not be an entirely new SSBN design, but rather a modified Virginia class boat

that could carry ballistic missiles. The Navy has argued that this design would become more expensive than an Ohio replacement, but issues of number and vulnerability may prove more manageable if the option is no boomers at all. No other state in the world can match such a capability, and yet the U.S. presumably feels deterred from launching pre-emptive nuclear attacks on China or Russia. A reduced SSBN force is still the best option for providing a foundational level of nuclear security.

Russia Plans to Sell Multipurpose Submarines Abroad

Rosoboronexport is in continued talks with Italy on the supply of S1000 submarines. However, these boats will not see action in either the Russian or the Italian Navy. Instead, they will be sold exclusively to third-party countries.

Experts at the Rubin Central Design Bureau for Marine Engineering and Italy's Fincantieri completed the conceptual design of the S1000 a few years ago. The submarine was always intended for third-party countries. The Italian shipbuilding company presented a mockup in 2008, at the 21st International Naval Defense and Maritime Exhibition and at the Conference Euronaval 2008.

According to Fincantieri Commercial Director Enrico Bonnetti, "the submarine's architecture has been determined, equipment has been positioned, and an integrated combat system has been designed." The S1000 is 56-meters long, with an outside hard-hull diameter of 5.5 meters (18 feet), a submerged displacement of around 1100 tons, a maximum depth of more than 250 meters (820 feet), and a top underwater speed of more than 14 knots. The submarine can carry a crew of 16, plus six special operations troops.

The propulsion system includes two diesel generators, a battery, an electric motor and an AIP system with an electrochemical generator. Both Russian- and Italian-made equipment will be installed in equal amounts.

The S1000 non-nuclear submarine is designed for anti-submarine warfare, reconnaissance missions, special operations support and transporting underwater subversive troops. The submarine can perform these tasks both in shallow coastal waters and in deep-sea conditions. Secondary objectives include anti-ship warfare, mining and naval aircraft support.

The Soviet Union — and later Russia — have traditionally sold non-nuclear, diesel-electric submarines abroad. "Our key product in this global market segment is the Project 636 submarine, which is the current bestseller. But we are also promoting the new Amur-1500 submarine," said Rosoboronexport head Anatoly Isaykin.

"This is not a replacement for Project 636; it is an entirely new submarine that we will be promoting in parallel with Project 636. The Amur-1500 will also be in demand from international buyers, as it will be offered in different versions — including a version with an air-independent propulsion system that is becoming increasingly popular in the naval market," Isaykin said.

He added that sales of naval hardware through Rosoboronexport amounted to 20 percent of total military exports last year and were slightly higher than in 2011. The Russian navy will soon receive Project 636 submarines, as well. A keel-laying ceremony for a large diesel-electric Project 636.3 submarine named Stary Oskol was held at the end of last summer, at the Admiralty Shipyard. These submarines are now being built for the Russian navy, after being exported for 20 years.

This submarine is expected to get a version of the new Kalibr missile system (exported as the Club-S) with a range of 1,500 kilometers (932 miles). There is one hitch though: to use this missile complex, a new combat command and control system is needed; its flaws have become one of the reasons behind the delays in building and deploying the Lada-class submarines for Russia's navy.

Project 636 submarines are armed with six torpedo launchers located in the bow; six torpedoes sit in shafts that are automatically reloaded after each launch. The torpedoes can be replaced with 24 mines, two in each launcher. Two torpedo launchers have been designed to fire high-precision, remotely controlled torpedoes. All launchers and their service systems can fire from both periscope and tactical operating depths. The launchers can be reloaded within 15 seconds.

According to expert assessments, the submarine is low noise and "sees" better underwater than the most widespread American-made, Los Angeles-class submarines.

Women to Serve on Virginia-class Subs, Navy Announces

When Adm. Jonathan W. Greenert, the chief of naval operations, visited Groton last summer, he said the Navy's plans to continue bringing women aboard submarines were going very well so far and "now we're ready to move to the Virginia class."

"I have complete confidence that the Navy will make this work and it will make for a stronger force," U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, said Thursday. "It's clear that women strengthen the military with their patriotism, their intelligence and their physical capabilities."

Panetta's decision to eliminate the 1994 rule that bans women from serving in combat means that many other military jobs are now open to women. He said the goal is "to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender."

Women make up 15 percent, or about 202,000, of the U.S. military's force of 1.4 million active personnel. In the past decade, more than 280,000 women have deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Women who serve in the Connecticut National Guard will be able to one day join the state's infantry battalion, the 1st Battalion, 102nd Infantry Regiment in New Haven. "The contributions of female members of the armed forces are well-known and documented," said Maj. Gen. Thaddeus J. Martin, commander of the Connecticut National Guard. "We have every confidence in their ability to perform assigned duties and responsibilities, whether in combat units and roles or in garrison support activities."

Connecticut Guard units are categorized as either combat, combat support or combat service support. The 102nd Infantry is the only unit considered combat, said Col. John Whitford, spokesman for the Connecticut National Guard.

Whitford said he was waiting for more details from the defense department on when the make-up of the battalion could change. The Pentagon is planning a phased-in approach that will take three years to fully implement. The unit of 600 men deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 and is not scheduled for another deployment, Whitford said.

Mabus: First Women Selected for Attack Subs

Mabus' announcement comes the same day that the Pentagon said it planned to lift its policy excluding women from combat positions, a historic shift that potentially opens as many as 34,000 Navy jobs currently closed. These include billets in the riverine forces and Marine Corps units.

Mabus has overseen the integration of women into the sub force and made broadening their opportunities a centerpiece of his tenure. "The Navy has a long history of inclusion and integration and I am proud we have achieved another important milestone," Mabus said.

The statement makes no mention of whether the Navy SEALs will open to women. But many of the Navy's closed billets stem from berthing issues, not the combat exclusion rule, such as frigates and coastal patrol craft.

Sub Commander Relieved of Duty

The commanding officer of the USS Pasadena was relieved of duty Friday. Cmdr. Luis Molina, the commanding officer of the Pasadena (SSN 752), was relieved by Rear Adm. Richard Breckenridge, the commander of Submarine Group Two. The submarine was based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, but is assigned to the submarine group in Groton while it is at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard for maintenance.

The Pasadena has been in Kittery, Maine, since September 2011. Breckenridge said he was not confident in Molina's ability to effectively lead the Pasadena through its maintenance overhaul. Molina has been reassigned to administrative duties at the naval shipyard. Cmdr. Mark E. Cooper has taken over as the submarine's commanding officer.

India Nearing Operational Status for Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile

India's Defence and Research Development Organisation recently staged a successful test of the K-15 submarine launched ballistic missile, revealing that the missile was approaching operational status, according to the Hindu newspaper.

Officials say one more test is needed before the weapon enters service with the newly-built nuclear-powered submarine INS Arihant, which is currently undergoing acceptance trials. The K-15 missile, occasionally referred to as

the Sagarika (Sanskrit for 'Oceanic'), has a range of about 700km, and makes India just the fifth country in the world to develop an underwater launched missile, according to the newspaper.

USS Alexandria Arrives in Souda Bay, Greece



The attack submarine USS Alexandria arrives in Souda Bay, Greece, Jan. 23, 2013. The Alexandria is on a scheduled deployment supporting maritime security operations and theater security cooperation efforts in the U.S. 6th Fleet area of responsibility.

India Successfully Tests Indigenous Sub-Launched Missile

Following a successful test-firing Jan. 27, Indian Defence Ministry officials say the Sagarika, a homemade submarine-launched ballistic missile, is ready for induction. A Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) scientist said that in its first stage, the missile, named K-15, reached an altitude of seven kilometers, and then the second stage lifted it to 20 kilometers, where it cruised at a constant speed of seven times the speed of sound. The missile has a range of 700 kilometers.

The scientist claimed that the K-15 is ready for induction, adding that the user trials will begin within a month. Sources in DRDO said the K-15 project is being developed with the help of Israeli scientists but no details are known.

The 6.5-meter-long K-15 weighs about 7 tons, uses solid propellant and employs a strap-on navigational system augmented by Global Positioning System equipment. It is accurate to a circular error of probability of 25 meters.

When the K-15 is inducted, India will join a select club of countries, which includes Russia, the United States, France, China and the United Kingdom, with submarine-launch capabilities. The K-15 missile will be integrated with the homemade nuclear Arihant submarine, which is currently on sea trials.

Bangladesh announces plans to acquire submarines

Bangladesh is in negotiations to buy submarines from China, a military official told reporters in Dhaka on 24 January. The official was speaking after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said the country would establish a submarine force to boost its presence in the Bay of Bengal.

"We have made a decision to add submarines with base facilities to Bangladesh's navy very soon to make it a deterrent force," Hasina said in the southern city of Khulna at the commissioning of BNS Padma: a 50.4 m patrol craft that is the largest naval vessel to be built in the country. "We will build a modern three-dimensional navy for future generations that will be capable of facing any challenge."

Hasina's announcement follows a 14 March 2012 ruling by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea on the maritime boundary between Bangladesh and Myanmar, which said the border should be based on an equidistant line drawn from base points on the low water lines of the coasts of both countries. The ruling provided "clarity to prospective investors and clarifies Bangladesh's territorial waters, allowing certification of block boundaries", IHS Energy analyst Tom Grieder said at the time.

H.L. Hunley May Have Been Closer to Ship Before Explosion

Scientists say the submarine that was the first in history to sink an enemy warship was much closer than thought to a Union ship it sank in 1864. Scientists announced Monday that 135 pounds of gunpowder was attached to a pole, or spar, at the front of the Confederate submarine H.L. Hunley.

It has been long thought the Hunley attached a torpedo to the bottom of the blockade ship Housatonic and then backed off. But new evidence indicates the Hunley was only about 20 feet away, meaning the concussion from the explosion could have knocked out the crew.

The Housatonic sank, while the Hunley, built in Mobile, Ala., never returned with its eight-man crew. The sub was found off South Carolina in 1995 and raised five years later.

USS California Completes PSA

Virginia-class attack submarine USS California (SSN 781) made her way up the Thames River Jan. 29 and arrived at Naval Submarine Base New London following her 11-month Post Shake Down Availability at General Dynamics Electric Boat.

A post-shakedown availability comprised of various maintenance, repairs, alterations and testing following her commissioning Oct. 29, 2011, at Naval Station Norfolk.

The recently-completed PSA provides California with the most modern combat system of any previous Virginia-class submarines.

"With California's Post Shake Down Availability behind us, the crew is looking forward to returning to sea," said Cmdr. Dana Nelson, commanding officer, USS California, who after nearly three years in command will be relieved by Cmdr. Shawn Huey during a time-honored change of command ceremony scheduled for Feb 1. Huey will serve as California's second commanding officer.



SUBVETS NEWS & VIEWS

Charleston Subvets To Hold Base Commander and Treasurer Elections in May

Charleston Subvets will hold elections this May for Base Commander and Treasurer. Nominations are being sought by John Lookabill, who has volunteered to manage the election. Send your nominations to johnd2501@aol.com or call them in to 843 870-2238.

Navy & Veteran News and Other Gouge

Defense Cuts Delayed, Doc Fix Extended, NDAA Signed into Law

In the last action of the 112th Congress, the House and Senate approved legislation that delays the automatic budget cuts (sequestration) for two months per the 2011 Budget Control Act. The cuts were slated to take effect on January 1, 2013, and would include significant reductions in Defense spending. The legislation also delays a 27-percent cut in Medicare/TRICARE reimbursements for physicians (the so-called "doc fix") for one year, increases FICA (Social Security) payroll tax, raises income tax rates for those at higher earning levels, and extends unemployment benefits.

President Obama signed the bill into law, forestalling the government funding "crisis" until late February or early March when sequestration is now scheduled to be implemented. In addition, the Continuing Resolution (CR) that extends funding for current government operations expires and the nation's debt ceiling will need to be increased.

In related news, the President also signed the FY 2013 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA - H. R. 4310).

Veterans Burials, Clark AFB Cemetery and Burn Pit Legislation

The House and Senate recently approved the "Dignified Burial and Veterans' Benefits Improvement Act" (S. 3202) that authorizes the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to furnish a casket or urn for a deceased veteran when VA is unable to identify the veteran's next-of-kin and determines that sufficient resources are not otherwise available to provide for proper burial in a national cemetery. Sponsored by former Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Chairwoman Senator Patty Murray (Wash.), the legislation addresses concerns that existing law does not authorize the VA purchase caskets or urns for vets without next of kin.

Last year Chairwoman Murray and SVAC Ranking Member Richard Burr (N.C.) joined Senators Bill Nelson (Fla.) and Marco Rubio (Fla.) in introducing this legislation after it was discovered that a veteran with no known next-of-kin was buried in a cardboard container at a VA National Cemetery in Florida.

The bill is expected to be signed into law by the President and includes provisions from the FRA-supported "Remembering America's Forgotten Veterans Cemetery Act" (S. 2320) sponsored by Senator Kelly Ayotte (N.H.) that would authorize the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) to operate and maintain the Clark Air Force Base Veterans Cemetery in the Philippines.

The legislation would also establish a registry for those veterans exposed to open burn pits while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and commissions an independent scientific report on the health effects of such exposures. Additionally, the bill will expand access to VA services by furnishing veterans with transportation to and from VA facilities and provide transition assistance (TAP) to eligible veterans and their spouses outside of military installations.

President Nominates Former Senator Hagel as SecDef

President Obama nominated former U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel (Nebr.) to replace Leon Panetta as the next Secretary of Defense. If confirmed by the Senate, Hagel will be the first former enlisted service member and Vietnam veteran to serve as Secretary of Defense.

Hagel quit college in 1967 and enlisted in the Army, volunteering to serve in Vietnam. When he returned, he resumed his studies and graduated from the University of Nebraska and was later appointed as Deputy Secretary at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but resigned after only one year. He started a small business (Vanguard Cellular Systems) that became the second largest independent cell phone company in the nation. Hagel was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1996 and retired in 2008 after serving two terms. During his tenure in the Senate, he and Senator Frank Lautenberg (N.J.) co-sponsored the "Military Health Care Protection Act" (S. 604) in 2007 that sought to limit annual TRICARE fee increases to the amount of the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Although the measure did not pass, similar legislation was eventually enacted in 2011.

Retirees Must Report Marriages to DFAS

Retirees who marry or re-marry must notify the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to properly establish Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage within one year of the marriage. Getting a military ID card and entering the new spouse in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) does not update pay records at DFAS or trigger SBP coverage.

Retirees who originally elected SBP coverage for a previous spouse must send DFAS a copy of the marriage certificate together with a completed DD Form 2656-6 (SBP Election/Change) that is available online at:

<http://www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/infomgt/forms/eforms/dd2656-6.pdf>

Retirees marrying for the first time may elect SBP coverage for their spouse with the same form, which must be received by DFAS within one year of the marriage. (A retiree who married during retirement and declined SBP spouse coverage, can not later enroll the spouse in the plan unless during a congressionally-approved open-enrollment period. Enrollments during open season normally result in penalties and extra charges for the retiree.) The above-mentioned form can also be obtained from DFAS by calling 1-800-321-1080.

Completed documents should be sent to:
DFAS
US Military Retirement Pay
P.O. Box 7130
London, KY 40742-7130

On The Web

Some Websites and Blogs of Interest to USSVICB Members

[Sub Lounge](#) [Submarine Force US Pacific Fleet](#) [Submarine History](#) [pigboats.com](#)

[Submarine Forces Year 2012 In Review](#) (video) [The Demise Of Jack Tar](#) (email your favorite links to [steve](#))

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