



the NEW
STIMSON
DRAFT



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY
TO OUR
SUBMARINE FORCE**



VOL. 2023 #4

APRIL 2023

USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER

Association Officers & Board of Directors 2021 - 2023

PRESIDENT Tom [Marie] Krauser	VICE PRESIDENT Jerry [CJ] Blevins	SECRETARY Nick [Linda] Nichols	TREASURER Ken [Diane] Meigs
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Other Positions 2021 - 2023

HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN Larry [Linda] Knutson	WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER Nick [Linda] Nichols	CHAPLAIN Bruce [Vicki] Stefanik
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REUNION CONTROL CENTER

2023 Stimson Reunion

October 11-15, 2023

Charleston SC

Hilton Garden Inn (Summerville SC)

[information and directions to the hotel venue are on the [Reunion #12 Webpage](#)]

50 registrations have been received as of 25 March 2023. Check here to see who has signed up to attend:

Registered Attendees Sailing List

STATES W/REGISTERD ATTENDEES & # ATTENDING				
SC - 6	NY - 2	FL - 6	KY - 4	NC - 8
CT - 2	OK - 2	GA - 2	TN - 1	CA - 1
VA - 2	OH - 4	AL - 2	AZ - 2	CO - 2
MA - 1	PA - 3			

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From the Association Reunion 2023 Reunion Chairman, [Harry Nettles](#), QMCS(SS) G COB 91-92, [QMCM Ret.], USSVI Charleston Base, Holland Club:

Good day Stimson Shipmates!

The countdown to the reunion is well underway and we, here in Charleston, are so looking forward to seeing you all. The venue we have booked is gorgeous and southern hospitality is rampant. For those of you who have not been here in a while may not even recognize the ole girl. So, if you haven't made those plans and reservations, get them done soon. We are really looking forward to this reunion and you don't want to miss it.

Harry Nettles - The Last Gold Crew COB



From the Association President - Tom Krauser, MM1(SS) B 72-74, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI Albany-Saratoga Base, Holland Club

Welcome to Spring!!!

Going to Virginia Beach at end of March to visit our granddaughter, Caitlin. Will spend a couple of days on the beach hopefully enjoying some sun. Maybe we will get some site seeing done also. We plan to tour the Westover Plantation near Williamsburg which has connections to both my father's and mother's ancestors in the 1700's.

Will probably drive by the Newport News Shipyard where I reported aboard the Stimson in 1972 and the apartment complex where we lived while there.

Marie and I are looking forward to the next reunion in Charleston THIS October. Look for details about the reunion progress in the newsletter.

The Stimson Board had a ZOOM meeting in March. Topics included the status of the Reunion Plans and some suggested changes to the bylaws for approval at the next reunion.

If you have any questions or concerns for the board, please feel free to contact us so we can address them.



From the Association Vice President - Jerry Blevins, LT(SS) B 76-79, USSVI USS Groton Base, 655 Assoc Life Member:

Just wishing all my shipmates a wonderful spring. March has been hectic for us. Three days without power – At least it resulted in a thorough cleaning of our

refrigerator and freezer. As soon as power was restored, I had my rescheduled cataract surgery on my first eye followed a week later on the second. All is well and world is suddenly much brighter!!

Looking forward to seeing many of you at the Reunion in October!



Ship's Historian - Larry Knutson, MMCS(SS) B 79-81 USSVI Charleston Base, Holland Club:

As most of you are well aware of, back in November 2020 someone broke into the storage unit housing our Stimson Association Ship's History Archives. If you would like to be reminded exactly what happened please read the January 2021 newsletter to be brought up to date. We still have not recovered any of the items that were taken.

At each reunion the Association attempts to put out all of the items in our Archives for you to look at. If you are attending the reunion and have something of interest from the boat please bring it with you to display with what we have left. You can then take it home with you when the reunion is over.

We still have the box of Gold Crew check-in cards that were from the time of Bob Weeks CO tour. This last couple of months has seen an increase in the number of our shipmates asking for a copy of the check-in card. If you were on the Gold Crew during any time when Bob Weeks was the CO you completed a check-in card for him.

The box of cards is now held by our base secretary. If you would like a copy of your card sent to you please contact our Secretary at 655webmaster@ssbn655.org.

Submarines Lost During the Month of April

USS PICKEREL (SS-177)	April 3, 1943 – 7th war patrol	Lost with all hands – 74 souls
USS SNOOK (SS-279)	April 8, 1945 – 9th war patrol	Lost with all hands – 84 souls
USS THRESHER (SSN-593)	April 10, 1963 – sea trials	Lost with all hands – 129 souls
USS GUDGEON (SS-211)	April 18, 1944 – 12th war patrol	Lost with all hands – 79 souls
USS GRENADIER (SS-210)	April 22, 1943 – 6th war patrol	76 POWs; 72 survived the war

Five Boats and 370 Men Lost

[reported by Mike Casella, SN(SS) B 69-71,
Assoc. Life Member, USSVI Groton Base]

MM1(SS) Robert B. Peterson B 70-72

Eternal Patrol March 19, 2023

MMCS(SS) Retired

[reported by his sister, Jeanne]

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The direct link to the Association Eternal Patrol
page is: [http://ssbn655.org/eternal-patrol/
eternal-patrol.html](http://ssbn655.org/eternal-patrol/eternal-patrol.html)



**WELCOME ABOARD: Found & Updated
Shipmates**

(Shipmate has contacted us to be added or have
info updated on our Sailing List. Please check the
online Sailing List for shipmates contact info.)

**NOTE: DON ORT, MM1(SS) G/OVHL1/G 69-74,
CONTINUES TO LOCATE OUR STIMSON
SHIPMATES WHO ARE ON OUR SAILING LIST
BUT WITH NO EMAIL ADDRESS.**

STS1(SS) Jeff Morse B 86-91

[updated by member due to moving]

BINNACLE LIST UPDATES: If you know of a
shipmate who should be on the binnacle list
please let me know. I will contact the shipmate for
permission to add them to this list. I only add
those who have given permission. **Also only the
latest update will be shown. To see past
updates and info check the previous
newsletters**

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**Sandy Hastie, CAPT B 80 (Oct-Dec) CO-1
patrol**

Cards to: 75 Lambeth Dr., Asheville NC 28803-
3425

3.28.23: Email from Sandy & Donna:

Dear Friends,

Donna saw her spine surgeon's PA on Friday,
March 24. She still has severe pain in her right leg

and back, despite pain medications. The PA said
we needed to wait the full four months after
surgery to assess the pain and what further action
is needed. In the meanwhile, he recommended
we obtain a local pain specialist to help resolve
the current pain issues. Hopefully, the pain
specialist will be able to provide both short and
long-term pain relief methods.

I had a PET/CT scan on March 12. I then saw
my local oncologist and had my Keytruda infusion
on March 15. In conjunction with my local
oncologist, we decided to follow up with my Duke
oncologist for his recommendations as the PET/
CT scan showed increased cancer activity. This
may be due to the Keytruda reaching the end
of its effectiveness. The plan is to continue
Keytruda for a series of four infusions as usual,
then repeat the PET/CT scan. At that time, it will
be determined if a different treatment is needed.
Keytruda has been my friend for five years and
has set records on how long Keytruda has worked
to control this type of cancer. I would hate to lose
this friend because the next option,
chemotherapy, has an average record of
controlling this cancer for 6 to 12 months only.

Donna and I will continue to fight on both fronts
and keep you informed.

God can continue to do wonderful
things. Please pray Keytruda will get back on
track and hold the cancer at bay. Your prayers
would be greatly appreciated!

We are grateful we have a God who listens to
and acts on prayers!

Blessings and Love, Donna and Sandy

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Lloyd Hyatt, MT2(SS) B 73-76

Cards to: 134 Coral Way, Jacksonville Beach FL
32250

1.26.23: Email from Lloyd: A quick update on my
AML cancer. I was going to Moffitt Cancer Center
in Tampa on 1/24 to start the process for my bone
marrow transplant on 1/31. However, the
transplant has been postponed. The Doctor said
that the donor cells had deteriorated to the point
that they can't be used. They are finding a new
donor, new timeline for transplant 4-6 weeks.

Thank you for the support and prayers. Lloyd

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John Cole, LT [CDR Ret] B AWEPS 78-80 [E1-E9 & O1E-CDR Ret.]

Cards to: 5914 Ruby Dr., Pearland TX 77581-8926

1.26.23: Email from John: Sadly... The family's Princess Southeast Caribbean Cruise over Christmas did not turn out to be all that we planned it to be. All started well with 13 of us sailing on Saturday December 17, 2022.

All went well to start but each stop I going ashore less and having more breathing problems.

Our last planned stop was to be Curacao. Susan went on a bus tour while I stayed in our room knocked out until she returned about 1:00pm. The ship was scheduled to depart about 4:30pm for the final two days at sea.

About 4:15pm I started having crushing pain in my left chest area that was going down my left arm. A crew member who saw what was happening called the ship's doctor. After some tests and him telling Susan and Brian that "If I did not get off the ship and into the hospital I would die!", I was taken off the ship. Susan was left to get our stuff off the ship and somehow to get to the hospital as best as she could. The ship departed leaving Susan and I behind on Curacao.

At the hospital they very quickly determined it was not a heart problem but a breathing problem associated with the Parkinson's as well as COPD. It was now Christmas Eve and a two-day holiday so I would not get to see a doctor until Tuesday morning, Dec. 27, 2022.

I was released from the hospital on Wednesday afternoon but only to go to the hotel with Susan promising to return on Friday, Dec. 30 at 1:00pm for a doctor appointment that resulted in me be released to fly on Sunday Jan. 1st, 2023.

Once released the real problem raised its head in how might find seats on one of the two flights off the island with only two flights on Jan. 1st. Also was getting home to Pearland. We ended up taking the long way home via Miami FL, then Charlotte NC and final to Houston TX on Tuesday Jan. 2nd.

Bye For Now, Very Respectfully, John F. Cole,
CDR U. S. Navy Retired 100% Disabled

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Ron 'RG' Hyson, STS1(SS) B 70-75, Assoc. Life Member, USSVI Hampton Roads Base, Holland Club, STSCM(SS) Retired

Cards to: 3425 MacDonald Rd., Virginia Beach VA 23464

1.29.23: Email from Ron 'RG': After my diagnoses of Alzheimer's, February 2022, I had to have my Aortic Heart Valve replaced in April followed by Cardio Rehab from June to August of 2022. I entered a CBD Oil Study from July to October through EVMS, Eastern Virginia Medical School, to help with my anxiety and agitation. It seemed to help a lot. January 2023, I was reevaluated for my Alzheimer's and I am now in the moderate stage. I was prescribed new medication to help with my memory and anxiety. It seems to be working very well. Thank you for all your prayers, RG and Jean

GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH

655 Association Website

www.ssb655.org

Submitted by George Stevens, MT2(SS) G 68-71
Everything We Know About The Future SSN-AUKUS Submarine's Configuration

SSN-AUKUS will be a 'frankensubmarine' based on the UK's next attack submarine but with combat systems and other components from the U.S.

By Howard Altman, Published Mar 15, 2023

We are learning more about the ambitious effort to build a new line of nuclear-powered, conventionally armed submarines for the U.K. and Australia that is a key part of the three-phased plan officially unveiled yesterday in San Diego.

READ MORE

Submitted by George Stevens, MT2(SS) G 68-71
Columbia-Class Submarine: The Largest Submarine Built By The U.S. Navy Is A Big Secret

By Kris Osborn

Columbia-Class Submarine: What Do We Know? Lurking secretly in dark waters around the world and holding potential adversaries at risk of nuclear destruction from unknown locations, US Navy's nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines offer the backbone of U.S. strategic deterrence.

[READ MORE](#)

SEA STORIES, COMMENTS and JUST GOOD THINGS From Our Shipmates

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Submitted by Mike Casella, SN(SS) B 69-71, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI Groton Base, Holland Club

It was October 1969, I just graduated from Sub School with orders to report to The Henry L Stimson - Blue Crew, stationed in Groton. I was born and raised in Kittery Maine, 20years old, and in general feeling pretty uneasy/uncertain about things. I do not specifically remember when we met but Steve Henry from Comack LI came into my submarine life. We immediately hit it off. My earliest memory was - in the barracks, before my first patrol. Henry asked me to join him and 2 other shipmates who were going to Providence and get tattoos. I remember saying 'no thanks', he called me a sissy and then proceeded to 'give me the business'. They all went and got their tattoo's.

To this day I regret not going.

We were complete opposites, however that invitation started our friendship that lasted until he passed away December 29, 2011. On patrol, we stood watches on the planes, mess cooked together, slept across from each other in the lower-level racks, and our friendship continued on. I was discharged from active duty in April 1971, Henry had one more patrol but we stayed in touch.

After his discharge in 1973, he went home to Comack, then headed west to find a job in Las Vegas. We continued to speak on a regular basis. In 1990 after having hounded me so much, he convinced me to visit him. He ran a bar off the Strip and worked mid-nights. Casino workers flocked there after their afternoon shifts ended.

So, for the next 21 years, I visited sometimes 2or3 times a year, seeing Las Vegas from his or their point of view. It was an eye opener.

At one of our last visits, he said to me - *'Casella I am going to die soon, I am going to write on this cocktail napkin - I'd like you to spread my ashes in the Piscataqua River along The Portsmouth Navy Yard, my sisters will send you my ashes'*. (He loved that my father/both grandfathers/friends' fathers all worked on the Navy Yard)

I said 'of course Henry, I'd be honored'. After he passed and forgetting we agreed to this, one night I got a call from his sister who said - *'Is this the Mike who served with our brother Stevie Henry on a submarine? Did you really agree to spread Stevie's ashes in the Piscataqua River along The Portsmouth Navy Yard? We have a cocktail napkin that says you will. Will you still do this?*

Yes, I am. Yes, I did and Yes, I'd love to', I said.

They sent me his ashes via US Mail. The morning of April 15, 2012, Henry and I went to 7:30 mass at St. Mary of Annunciation, Melrose, MA. I had already rented a barge in Kittery; later that morning, Denise, a longtime pal, and I spread his ashes as we floated in The Piscataqua, along the Navy Yard. Denise took a video and we sent it to his sisters.

Barbara, Anita, and I to this day, still communicate. We have met them twice while visiting in Las Vegas. Henry was the brother I never had.

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Submitted by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G/SY1/G 69-74, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI Carolina Piedmont Base, Holland Club

SON TRAINS DOLPHINS

An elderly man rear-ends a guy driving an expensive sports car.

Enraged, the guy hops out of his car and confronts the old man. *"Look what you did to my car!"* he yells.

"You're gonna give me \$10,000 right now or I'm gonna beat you to a bloody pulp!"

“Oh my,” says the old man, “I don’t have that kind of money. Let me call my son, he trains dolphins and he’ll know what to do.”

“Dolphins!” the other driver huffs while rolling his eyes. The old man pulls out his phone, dials his son, and just as the son answers, the irate man snatches the phone away from the old man.

“So, you’re a dolphin trainer, huh? Well, your old man here just rear-ended my car and I need ten grand right now or I’m gonna beat you and your old man both to a bloody pulp.”

“I’ll be there in 10 minutes,” says the calm voice on the other end.

Exactly ten minutes later, a jeep pulls up and the son hops out and proceeds to pulverize the bully, leaving him in a bloody heap on the side of the road.

When he’s finished, he walks over to his father and says, *“For the last time, dad.... I train SEALS.... Navy SEALS.... not dolphins!*



The Computer Corner
By: Tom Krauser, MM1(SS) B 72-74, 655 Assoc Life Member, USSVI Albany-Saratoga Base, Holland Club

Enhance Your Digital Security

Thanks to George Birmingham for this month's topic suggestion.

In order to keep ourselves protected from hackers and viruses and other malware, we need to keep our digital devices and browsers updated as the manufacturers fix their products to prevent these attacks.

George suggested the following link to help inform you of things that need to be done to update your different devices.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/digital-security-updates-list/>

We will summarize some of the suggestions here. Read the above article for more details.

Whenever your installed programs suggest you install updates, you should apply those updates as soon as possible, since the updates may also

fixing discovered security threats. You should also make frequent backups of your data in the event recovery is necessary.

When your smartphone suggests that it needs to update its operating system, you should probably let it install the updates. Many people tend to ignore updates on their phones. This usually involves restarting the phone for the updates to install. People with iPhones sometimes feel that Apple protects them from viruses, but they are as prone to attack as other vendors.

To check your cellphone for updates you usually go to Settings and, depending on the vendor, you should be able to find where updates are. If it suggests updating you should do so.

For computers, the updates are usually under “Settings” for Windows devices. You should see an option for Security and Updates. Under the Update option you should see “required updates” and “suggested or optional updates”. I generally install all updates. Windows will often offer a “roll-up” update where many smaller updates have been combined into a single update. These may be required or optional. You need to check your updates frequently to ensure that optional updates get installed. Many of these updates require you to restart your computer after updating to replace files being used by the operating system. For Windows computers, you will notice that the computer usually “Reboots” at 30%. The reason for this is that “operating system file changes” are installed first, then the computer restarts to use these new files before it continues the installation using these new files.

I recommend that updates be set for “Automatic” to ensure your computer is kept up to date.

Besides updating your computer, your “browsers” (Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Opera, etc.) need to be updated to fix known problems. Many times you may get a warning when the browser starts that updates are available and asks if you want them installed. In general, to check for updates, you can click on the “Settings”, which, on most browsers, are 3 “dots” or “bars” on the upper right side of the browser window. Depending on

the browser, you can usually find the update status under "Help" and/or "About x" where "x" is the browser name. If it tells you that the browser is out of date, you should select to update it.

The article contains other types of devices that also need to be updated and steps to update them.

Submitted by George Birmingham, ET1(SS) G/SY1/G 69-74, Assoc. Life Member, USSVI Carolina Piedmont Base , Holland Club

Computer Corner Part II

No, There Isn't a ChatGPT Windows Client— It's Malware

BYGAVIN PHILLIPS

Don't trust everything you read about ChatGPT.

OpenAI's ChatGPT generative AI is being used for all manner of enterprising activities. But as with anything that rapidly gains popularity, it doesn't take long before criminals try and use it to their advantage.

Enter the ChatGPT Windows desktop client, a supposed full desktop client for ChatGPT that runs on Windows 10 and Windows 11.

However, as good as a desktop ChatGPT client sound, you shouldn't trust any download links or adverts for such a tool because it doesn't currently exist.

ChatGPT Desktop Client Is Actually Trojan Malware

In February 2023, cybersecurity firm Kaspersky reported that it had uncovered a malware campaign using ChatGPT as its lure, promising victims a free ChatGPT account with a \$50 balance (to spend on the premium version of ChatGPT) and the use of a new ChatGPT desktop client.

Unfortunately, it's all a falsehood. The campaign uses fake accounts mimicking OpenAI or ChatGPT spread across several different social networks, including Twitter and Telegram, advertising access to a new ChatGPT trial.

Once the user clicks the link, it transports them to a page that looks exactly like the official

ChatGPT site, albeit with the addition of a **Download For Windows** button. As you can probably guess, when you click the download button, you don't receive a new trial version of a ChatGPT desktop client. Below you can see the real site, followed by the fake ChatGPT site.

Instead, you receive the Fobo Trojan, designed to steal user credentials for Facebook, Twitter, and other accounts, along with Google cookies and accounts, and "in particular, business accounts." *If this archive is unpacked and the executable file run, then, depending on the version of Windows, the user sees either a message saying installation failed for some reason, or no message at all — at which point the process seems to end.* But the lack of a message or the Windows warning that your installation failed is just indicating that the ChatGPT malware was successfully installed.

According to Kaspersky's research, the ChatGPT desktop client malware has been spotted across Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. PSA: There Is No ChatGPT Desktop Client

Although the temptation of a new ChatGPT desktop client trial is alluring, no such product exists at the current time, nor has OpenAI given any signal that a full desktop client for ChatGPT is in the works.

For now, the only way to access ChatGPT is through your browser, be that on your computer or your smartphone.

3 Ways to Avoid ChatGPT Scams

First up, make sure you're using the official ChatGPT website, and double-check the actual URL before signing up, adding your credentials, and so on: <https://chat.openai.com/> or <https://openai.com/blog/chatgpt>.

Double-check any social media accounts against OpenAI's official accounts. For example, on Twitter, **OpenAI** is the only account you should trust for official ChatGPT product releases and launches.

Make sure your antivirus software is up to date, and consider installing an additional **security tool like Malwarebytes Premium** to mop up any other nasties.

New Guaranteed Life Insurance for Veterans

Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (**VALife**) is VA's newest whole life insurance program. It offers guaranteed whole life coverage to Veterans age 80 and under with a service-connected disability, and there is no time limit to apply. Learn more about the program and find answers to some common questions.

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Access New Toxic Exposure Health Care and Benefits

The PACT Act expanded benefits for millions of Veterans. Download the Accessing Toxic Exposure Benefits guide and learn more about what you're eligible for.

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What Your Heart Rate Says About Your Health

Learn about your resting heart rate and what too fast and too slow can mean

By Hallie Levine, AARP February 02, 2023

You probably already know several key numbers about your health: your weight, your blood pressure, your cholesterol and blood glucose levels, and possibly even your waist circumstance. But there's another one that you should add to your list: your heart rate.

"If it's too low, or too high, it can indicate heart problems," says Michael LaMonte, research professor of epidemiology and environmental health at the University of Buffalo School of Public Health and Health Professions and spokesperson for the American Heart Association. "But it can also be tricky, since your heart rate can be impacted by a lot of different things, including environmental conditions such as heat, humidity or cold." Here's a look at what an ideal heart rate is, and what a rate too high or too low may mean for you.

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What Your Blood Type Says About Your Health

Knowing your type could give clues to your risk of stroke and heart attack.

By Hallie Levine, AARP February 21, 2023

Do you know your blood type? There's a good chance that you don't. More Americans know their horoscope sign (66 percent) than their blood type (51 percent), according to a survey published this year by medical laboratory company Quest Diagnostics.

There are compelling health reasons why you should know, especially when it comes to your heart. Research suggests that people with certain blood types — namely A and B — are at higher risk to develop blood clots and to have heart attacks and strokes.

Blood Type and Your Health

Blood types are determined by the presence or absence of certain substances, called antigens, that can trigger an immune response if they are foreign to the body.

There are four main blood types: A, B, O and AB, according to the American Red Cross. In addition to these antigens, there's a protein called the Rh factor, which can either be present (+) or absent (-). That means there are eight blood subtypes: A+, A-, B+, B-, O+, O-, AB+, AB-.

What the research shows:

Types A and B - Higher risk of blood clots, heart attacks and strokes.

Type AB - Higher risk of stroke and inflammation. Those with AB+ blood can accept blood from all donors and are called universal recipients.

Type O - Slightly lower risk of thrombosis, blood clots, heart attacks and strokes. People with type O- blood are universal donors and can donate to anyone.

Note that a healthy lifestyle likely trumps blood type in terms of increasing or decreasing risks.

READ MORE

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6 Body Parts You Shouldn't Ignore After 50

Pay special attention to these susceptible areas as you age

By Beth Howard, AARP February 28, 2023

If you want to keep your body strong and healthy in the second half of life, you might need some new routines. Here's what you're up against

and why you should treat your most vulnerable body parts with TLC.

1. Your eyes

Even if you have perfect vision, an eye exam every one to three years should be part of your routine starting at age 55.

2. Your teeth and gums

These days, thanks to widespread water fluoridation and basic oral hygiene, “people expect to keep all or at least most of their teeth for a lifetime — into their 80s and 90s. But to get that kind of mileage out of them, you may need to do more than you’re used to.

3. Your feet

You probably don’t think much about your feet until they hurt — and pain is a strong likelihood.

4. Your pelvic floor

You might think of the pelvic floor — the muscles that stretch from the pubic bone back to the tailbone at the bottom of the pelvis — as a female concern. But it’s just as important to men.

5. Your hips and knees

These familiar joints are among your body’s most vulnerable. Unfortunately hip and knee pain are common after 50 and often lead to surgery.

6. Your ears

Just 2 percent of Americans ages 45 to 54 have serious hearing loss. But that changes over time, rising to half of people 75 and older. Hearing changes may be imperceptible year to year, and it takes the average person seven years to seek help, according to the Hearing Loss Association of America. But addressing hearing loss early on may lead to less precipitous declines and lower risks for depression and dementia, both of which can be linked to *poor hearing*.

READ MORE

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Enroll in the New VALife Program Now

VA’s newest life insurance program, **Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife)**, increases access to life insurance for more service-connected Veterans than ever before. Enrollment for VALife opened on Jan. 1, 2023, for Veterans age 80 or under with any level of service-connected disability (0-100%). Veterans age 81 or

over may also qualify if they meet certain conditions.

In most cases, **VALife premium rates** are competitive with, or better than, similar private sector guaranteed acceptance programs. VALife rates will not increase for the life of the policy and are not based on medical conditions. Instead, rates are based on a Veteran’s age upon enrollment and the coverage amount selected. Learn more about VALife coverage and how to apply today!

LEARN MORE

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Surprising Foods That Can Spike Your Blood Sugar

It’s not just cookies, sodas and other sweet treats in the dessert aisle

By Kimberly Goad, AARP March 09, 2023

Sugar is sneaky. Just when you think you’ve got its whereabouts figured out, you begin taking a closer look at nutrition labels, only to discover the sweet stuff is hiding out in any number of foods and beverages not on the cookie, candy and soda aisles.

The unsavory truth: Sugar is used by all kinds of food manufacturers to enhance flavor and texture.

Keep reading to learn more about the surprising foods that can spike your blood sugar.

1. Refined grains
2. Plant-based milks
3. Sugar-free snacks
4. Dried fruit

READ MORE

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Why You Should Never Charge Your Phone in Rental Cars

Madeline Wahl Updated: Aug. 22, 2022

Protect yourself—and your information. Think twice about plugging your phone into a rental car.

Whether you booked a rental car for your vacation or are hailing a Lyft home after a night out with friends, it’s tempting to plug your dying phone into your rideshare or rental car’s USB port to charge. However, charging your smartphone in a car that isn’t your own could be

disastrous. Rental cars, like airports and train stations, are some of the places you should never charge your phone.

First of all, you should never plug your phone into a public USB port, and that includes rental cars and essentially any cars that you don't own. "The USB cable and outlet are designed not only to charge the connected device, but they are also designed for two-way data transfer," John Burkhauser, an auto repair specialist and director of educational programs at Bolt On Technology, tells *Reader's Digest*. "When the phone is plugged into the active outlet, usually located at the front of the vehicle, both the phone and the vehicle systems will talk to each other." Translation? Using that USB port can transfer information from your phone to the car, and the car can store private information from your phone. Here are 13 ways hackers get you when you travel.

"Most everything you do with the phone and the vehicle systems will be stored in the vehicle's memory," says Burkhauser. "Your music list, text numbers, the addresses you looked for using GPS, and more. When you disconnect, you leave all this information behind. This can be accessed by anyone who uses the vehicle after you." That's why a portable charger might be the best charging option any time you're on the go.

Thomas Piippo, mechanical division director for the Automotive Service Association and owner of Tri-County Motors in Rudyard, Michigan, agrees. "Often (almost always) the USB port is connected to the car's infotainment system and it may download your personal information into the car's system," says Piippo.

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Get Appointment Reminders to Your Phone

Easily confirm or cancel. It can be hard to keep track of medical appointments. That's why VA has text message appointment reminders. Start or stop reminders at any time.

LEARN MORE

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Tips to Sleep Better

Did you know that lack of sleep can increase

your risk of high blood pressure and other health problems? Your habits before bed can help or hurt your quality of sleep.

Learn more.

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Diabetes and Your Blood Pressure

If you have diabetes, you're at greater risk of heart disease and stroke. Managing your blood pressure is an important way to protect your heart.

Learn more

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Act Fast: Stroke Response

If you have a stroke, time is crucial. Know the signs so you can call 911 right away. The earlier you get treatment, the more likely you will recover.

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The Lean Submariner

Here's the latest posts on the blog. Still going strong. The link to his blog is

<https://theleansubmariner.com/>

A Real Deep Sea Sailorman – Harley Cope Mister Mac Mar 25

Personal Note: I'm still reeling from a few personal losses recently. Writing is a form of

therapy to try and take my mind off of those events that are taking their toll on me mentally and spiritually. For those who have been regular readers for a long time, I sincerely apologize.

Writing as therapy The [...]

[Read more of this post](#)

Pentagon Tells Service Members To Stop Displaying Giant U.S. Flags At Major Events (STARS AND STRIPES 27 FEB 23) ... Alexander Riedel

The Defense Department has a message for the service members being cheered on as they unfurl giant American flags horizontally at the Super Bowl and other major events: You're not following the rules.

In a Feb. 10 memo to its public affairs offices, the department said that having service members carry the U.S. flag horizontally or land it on the ground after a parachute jump is no longer acceptable.

The department's leaders have expressed concern over proper flag protocol and alignment with Title 4, United States Code, more commonly known as the U.S. Flag Code.

The code, which is referenced in DOD regulations, provides guidance on how to properly display the American flag, including rules about its size, placement and handling. It states that the flag should be treated with dignity and respect.

"In recent years, some sporting events have asked military members to hold large, horizontal flags during events, and some military units have carried them in parades," Cmdr. Nicole Schwegman, a Defense Department spokeswoman, told Stars and Stripes in a statement Monday. "While many, including service members, find these events moving and patriotic, according to the code, the flag should never touch the ground or be carried flat or horizontally."

The memo also generally bans the flying of flags by military parachutists, because the Flag Code states that "the flag should never touch anything beneath it, such as the ground, the floor, water or merchandise."

The exception is when the U.S. flag is used to

cover a casket during funeral honors, so long as it isn't lowered into the grave or allowed to touch the ground.

While some may see the policy as limiting their ability to show patriotism, the department's leaders say the restriction is necessary.

It prohibits uniformed service members from participating directly in the "unfurling, holding, and/or carrying of giant horizontal U.S. flags" and bars DOD jump teams from incorporating the U.S. flag in their demonstrations if it "cannot be caught reliably and handled respectfully by ground personnel."

"I encourage public affairs officers to work with sponsors of community events to develop other ways to showcase the patriotism and capabilities of our military that comply with DoD policy," Chris Meagher, assistant to the secretary of defense for public affairs, wrote in the letter.

The memo drew criticism from some commenters on the popular Amn/NCO/SNCO Facebook page, where it was posted Thursday.

"If we're following flag code for the reasoning for this stupidity, the objects used for these events aren't technically flags, they're banners," one commenter wrote Friday.

The Pentagon's leaders have been concerned with flag protocol in recent years, addressing troops on the issue in previous memos.

In 2020, DOD issued a new policy that banned the display of unauthorized flags on military installations, buildings and vehicles. The policy was seen as effectively banning Confederate flags and other controversial banners without spelling out which flags were undesirable.

<https://www.stripes.com/theaters/us/2023-02-27/giant-flag-code-memo-9241902.html>

Navy Carriers, Submarines Cleared To Use 3D Printed Parts

(VIRGINIAN-PILOT 08 MAR 23) ... Caitlyn Burchett

The Navy's nuclear-powered warships will be increasingly made of 3D-printed parts, which are cutting costs and reducing production time on billion-dollar ships that are years in the making.

Huntington Ingalls Industries announced Tuesday that its Newport News Shipbuilding division has been cleared to use printed pipe fittings or other potential components in the construction of aircraft carriers, submarines and other Naval Sea Systems platforms.

“This will continue to propel our progress in efficiency, safety and affordability as we remain steadfast in our mission to deliver the critical ships our Navy needs to protect peace around the world,” said Dave Bolcar, vice president of engineering and design for Newport News Shipbuilding.

Three Gerald R. Ford-class aircraft carriers and the Columbia- and Virginia-class submarines are being built at Newport News Shipbuilding. Delivery dates are scattered across the next decade.

The USS George Washington (CVN-73) and USS John C. Stennis (CVN-74) are undergoing mid-life refueling and overhauls. The Washington began its refueling and complex overhaul at Newport News Shipbuilding in August 2017, and the Stennis arrived in May 2021.

According to Huntington Ingalls spokesperson Todd Corillo, it is uncertain exactly how much time and money could be shaved off construction and overhauls thanks to the 3D printed stainless steel parts. But in general, Corillo said, the option to use 3D parts “can offer enhanced schedule production benefits in a cost-effective manner.”

Recently, the Navy approved 3D printing of specific door hinges to be used on the new Ford-class carrier Enterprise (CNV 80).

“Newport News Shipbuilding, working with our partners, produced the parts in less than eight weeks. It would typically take five to six months using traditional casting methods,” Corillo said.

Newport News Shipbuilding has worked for more than 15 years to bring 3D printing, also known as additive technology, to the shipyard.

The technology was first approved in October 2018, when Naval Sea Systems Command announced a prototype 3Dprinted metal drain strainer would be installed on the Newport News-built USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75). Ultimately,

a 3D-printed piping assembly was the first to be installed on the carrier in 2019.

The Newport News shipyard is pursuing additional 3D fabrication approvals for broader use and implementation of printed parts. As more printed warship parts are approved, Corillo said, printed parts will likely be made in-house when possible.

<https://www.pilotonline.com/military/vp-nw-military-hii-3d-20230308-hhugfygocfdipjalfm6nhhymey-story.html>

The Most Successful Submarine Commander Ever Was Captured By The Japanese

(WE ARE THE MIGHTY 09 MAR 23)

When Rear Adm. Richard O’Kane retired from the Navy in 1957, he was (and still is) the most successful American submarine commander, ever. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, he spent his entire wartime career sinking enemy ships. By the end of the war, he would receive three Navy Crosses, three Silver Stars and the Medal of Honor. The only thing that could stop him was his own faulty torpedo.

O’Kane started his career on surface ships, but qualified for submarine duty in 1938, and it’s a good thing, too. His skill in the “silent service” would help the United States win the war in the Pacific Theater. After the U.S. entered World War II, he joined the crew of the USS Wahoo, a legendary submarine in its own right. There, he learned everything he needed to know about captaining a sub from an equal submariner legend, Lt. Cmdr. Dudley Morton.

On his five patrols with the Wahoo, the boat wreaked havoc on Japanese shipping and naval movements. In July 1943, O’Kane was promoted and given command of the USS Tang, the sub that would propel him into U.S. Navy legend. In command of his own crew, he drilled them relentlessly in acquiring the range of targets swiftly and accurately. It would come in handy in combat.

In Tang’s five patrols, O’Kane and crew would sink 33 ships for more than 118 tons of shipping, making it the most successful submarine of the

war. The first patrol sank three freighters in a daring nighttime surface attack, evaded the enemy and then followed the remaining ships until morning, when it hit them again from below the surface. In evading after the second strike, Tang had to dive below its maximum depth. Its second patrol saw the rescue of 22 downed airmen, earning the boat a Presidential Unit Citation.

Its third patrol sank more enemy ships than any other single patrol of the war, beating the previous record, which happened to belong to the USS Wahoo, where O'Kane was the Executive Officer. Its fourth patrol took the Tang to the Japanese home waters, where in little more than a month, it expended all its torpedoes sinking freighters, tankers, and patrol boats before returning to Pearl Harbor.

USS Tang's fifth and last patrol sent it to the Formosa Strait, near modern-day Taiwan. After its departure, however, no one heard from Tang again. The only reason we know what happened to it came from the very few survivors. In October 1944, Tang attacked a large convoy of Japanese freighters, transports, and escort ships. Expending nearly all its torpedoes, it sank two large freighters in the convoy.

As it fired its final Mark-18 torpedo from its aft tubes, the shot curved as the submarine fishtailed to avoid the torpedo's return. The move failed and Tang was hit in its aft torpedo room by its own shot. The explosion racked the boat, and the sub began to sink. The bridge crew escaped by swimming to the surface, others used the forward escape trunk. Seventy-eight crew members were killed.

O'Kane and eight others escaped only to be "rescued" by a Japanese frigate, one of the ships the crew had been targeting the night before. The Japanese sailors beat the Americans mercilessly before sending them all, including O'Kane, to a prisoner of war camp near Yokohama. He would spend the remainder of the war imprisoned there.

The Tang was lost, but its commander would survive the war and continue his Navy service until 1957. He died in 1994, but to honor his memory, the oldest fast attack submarine in the

U.S. Navy carries his personal cribbage board. It's currently aboard the Los Angeles-class submarine USS Chicago.

<https://www.wearethemighty.com/mighty-history/submarine-commander-captured-by-the-japanese/>

AUKUS Plan: Aussie Sailors To Serve On American Subs, RAN To Buy U.S. Virginia Attack Boats

(USNI NEWS 13 MAR 23) ... Gidget Fuentes

SAN DIEGO – The leaders of Australia and the United Kingdom joined President Joe Biden at the Navy's submarine base in San Diego, Calif., Monday to mark a historic trilateral agreement aimed at bolstering security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

During the ceremony, Biden was joined by Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and U.K. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak at Naval Base Point Loma to outline the basics of the technology Australia-United Kingdom-United States pact forged a year and a half ago.

AUKUS will eventually lead to Australia building and maintaining its own fleet of nuclear-powered attack boats.

The phased approach will start with training Royal Australian Navy sailors in the U.S., expanding port visits by U.S. and U.K. submarines to Australia as well as training the Australian industrial base to build and maintain the nuclear submarines.

"Nuclear propulsion is a highly complicated technology. It requires years of training to master," Biden said.

The first group of Australian submariners already started training in the United States, and later this year, more Australian personnel will begin to "embed with U.S. and U.K. crews on boats and at bases and in schools and our shipyards."

The increase in port visits by U.S. and U.K. subs to Australia and a rotational deployment of subs later this decade will "help develop the workforce Australia is going to need to build and maintain its fleet," he said.

“The United States is prepared to sell Australia up to five nuclear-powered submarines, and our plan for doing so is up to three submarines at this time,” an administration official told USNI News.

Those high-tech subs “feature cutting-edge propulsion technology and provide unmatched stealth and maneuverability,” he said. If Congress approves the sale of the Virginia-class boats to Australia, it would jump-start “their undersea capability a decade earlier than many predicted.”

Although Australia would remain a non-nuclear weapons state, a nuclear-powered submarine would increase the country’s capabilities, including the longer operation range nuclear-fueled submarines have over their conventionally powered cousins.

“We think we’ve come up with an approach that will deliver capability to Australia quicker than everyone expected, shares some of our most sophisticated technology – almost without precedent – and is constructed it in a way that really lifts both the undersea capabilities and the industrial capacity of all three nations,” one administration official told USNI.

Australia is expecting to build shipyard facilities to produce submarines in the western part of the island nation, Albanese said in an interview during a weekend visit to India.

“This is about jobs, including jobs in manufacturing, and Adelaide, in particular, will be a big beneficiary of this announcement, as will Western Australia,” the prime minister said, according to a Reuters report.

The United Kingdom has been undergoing a broad review of its defense and security forces, in part due to Russia’s war with Ukraine and China’s growing aggressive stance across the globe.

“In turbulent times, the U.K.’s global alliances are our greatest source of strength and security,” Sunak said in a statement, Bloomberg reported Sunday. “I am traveling to the United States today to launch the next stage of the AUKUS nuclear submarine program, a project which is binding ties to 8 our closest allies and delivering security, new technology and economic advantage at home.”

AUKUS “will make a positive contribution to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by enhancing deterrence,” U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and his Australian and U.K. defense counterparts said in a statement after a December 2022 meeting at the Pentagon.

The trilateral pact has prompted sharp complaints from China. Last week, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told reporters in Beijing that the three countries should “do more things that are conducive to regional peace and stability,” Bloomberg reported.

Multi-phase plan

The first phase of AUKUS is already underway, officials said. The first groups of Australian officers have joined their U.S. Navy counterparts at Nuclear Power School in South Carolina, an administration official told USNI News.

“We will increase port visits over the coming years, from both U.S. and U.K. submarines” to Perth, the official said. “We also will be embedding Australian sailors in our submarine forces and in our nuclear power schools. The first cohorts have already arrived at Nuclear Power School.”

Australians are fully committed to training their people appropriately “and take the time to do this right,” he added.

The agreement also calls for “bringing hundreds of Australian workers into the U.S. to the shipyards,” the official said. That will parallel efforts by Australia “to build up its own infrastructure” that will enable it to house and support its own submarines, as well as visiting U.S. submarines.

“Once we feel that Australia is ready to do that – and we think it could be as early as 2027 – we’ll establish a rotational force of U.S. and U.K. submarines in Australia, the construct we’re calling Submarine Rotational Forces West,” or SURF-West, the official said.

The goal of the rotational force of U.S., U.K. and Australian submarines is to put sailors “shoulder to shoulder” to help build Australia’s capacity.

Then Australia will transition to its future

submarine, “a state-of-the-art platform that uses the best technologies from all three nations, a submarine we’re calling SSN AUKUS” and that’s based on a U.K. design known as SSNR, the official said. “It’ll incorporate critical and cutting-edge Virginia-class technologies from the United States. It’ll be the future submarine for both Australia and the United Kingdom,” which in turn will shore up critical supply chains and strengthen partnerships and interoperability among the countries.

The U.K. expects to deliver the SSN AUKUS “in the late 2030s,” the official said, and Australia will have its first one built in Australia for the Royal Australian Navy “in the 2040s.” That timeline will ensure there’s no capability gap as Australia retires its older submarines, he said. Those Collins-class submarines are planned to undergo service life extensions that would continue them in service until they are replaced by the new submarine.

Albanese hailed the plans to work closely with the U.S. and with the U.K. to build the new submarine for Australia’s defense forces. “This will be an Australian-sovereign capability, built by Australians, commanded by the Royal Australian Navy, and sustained by Australian workers in Australian shipyards,” he said, “with construction to begin this decade.”

The “whole-of-nation” effort behind AUKUS will provide “transformative opportunities for jobs and skills and research and innovation,” he said, noting work planned for shipyards in Adelaide and in Western Australia. Those opportunities “will shape and strengthen and grow Australia’s economy for decades and create around 20,000 direct jobs for Australians from many trade and specializations.” He added that it will also grow and support the necessary supply chains across all three countries.

“This is a genuine trilateral undertaking,” Albanese said.

In its support of AUKUS, the United Kingdom will invest more in its defense budget. Sunak announced a bump from the existing 2 percent of gross domestic product to 2.25 percent, or 5

billion pounds of additional spending over the next two years.

“This will allow us to replenish the war stock and modernize our nuclear enterprise, delivering AUKUS and strengthening our deterrence,” he said. And it’s the first step for a defense spending level at “a new ambition of 2.5 percent” that he said would allow the U.K. to remain “one of the world’s leading defense powers.”

The first of the new AUKUS subs will be built in the U.K. – at naval shipyards at Barrow and Derby – with the plan to share the process with Australia, “so they can build their own fleet,” he said.

The AUKUS subs “will also be truly interoperable,” as both U.K. Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy will operate the same boats, he said. “And we will both share components and parts with the U.S. Navy. Our submarine crews will train together, patrol together and maintain their boats. They will communicate using the same terminology and the same equipment, and through AUKUS, we will raise our standards of nuclear nonproliferation.”

“This is a power partnership,” said Sunak. “It will mean three fleets of submarines working together across both the Atlantic and the Pacific, keeping our oceans free, open and prosperous for decades to come.”

The U.S. Navy, meanwhile, plans to wind down its purchases of Virginia-class boats in the mid-2030s as it develops the next-generation submarine, SSN(X).

No nuclear weapons

The sale of nuclear-powered submarines and sharing of sensitive and super-secret nuclear propulsion technology is as historic as it is rare. The United States “has not shared nuclear-propulsion technology to any country, except for the U.K.,” since 1958, the official said. “So this is a major shift.”

Australian officials have said they want the capabilities of nuclear-powered submarines and are not seeking nuclear weapons or nuclear weapon-capable submarines.

Administration officials said Biden insisted on adherence to standards under the non-

proliferation treaty as important as U.S. officials worked closely with both Australia and the United Kingdom to develop the detailed AUKUS framework.

“This is extraordinarily important to the president,” one official said, and “we worked very closely with the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) and others to make sure that is the case.”

“Australia’s commitment to making it clear that it is seeking to develop nuclear propulsion but not nuclear weapons has been indicated at every stage of the process,” the official added.

<https://news.usni.org/2023/03/13/embargoed-until-4-aucus-leaders-agree-on-path-to-nuke-subs-for-australia-shipyard-support-to-u-s-navy>

NORTHCOM: Russia Close to Persistent Nuclear Cruise Missile Attack Sub Presence off U.S. Coasts

(USNI NEWS 23 MAR 23) ... Sam LaGrone

Russia could have its most powerful and quiet nuclear attack submarines on persistent patrols off either U.S. Coast in the next two years, the head of U.S. Northern Command told the Senate Armed Services Committee on Thursday.

In response to questions from Sen. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) on the threat of Chinese and Russian cruise missile submarines operating close to the U.S., NORTHCOM commander Gen. Glen VanHerck said that the deployments of the Russian Yasen-class nuclear cruise missile attack boats have been deploying more frequently.

“[The risk is] absolutely increasing. Within the last year, Russia has also placed their [Yasens] in the Pacific,” he said.

“Now not only the Atlantic, but we also have them in the Pacific and it’s just a matter of time – probably a year or two – before that’s a persistent threat, 24 hours a day. ... That impact has reduced decision space for a national senior leader in a time of crisis.”

Also known by their NATO reporting name Severodvinsk class, the 13,800-ton Yasen-class attack boats are among the most capable

submarines in the world. In particular, the three current boats in the class are capable of a special quiet operations mode that make them difficult to detect in the open ocean. In 2018, the lead boat in the class, Severodvinsk, evaded U.S. efforts to find it for weeks, according to press reports.

Navy officials have told USNI News that the service has become increasingly concerned with the efficacy of the Russian submarine force. The growing ability of Russian submarines to operate undetected in the Atlantic pushed the Navy to reactivate U.S. 2nd Fleet and create a command for anti-submarine warfare across the Atlantic in 2018.

The Russian Navy has planned to build ten Yasen-class attack boats, with the fourth to commission later this year, according to Russian press reports.

The Russians have also recently delivered two new strategic nuclear submarines.

In January, the Russian Navy commissioned the 24,000-ton Borey-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine Generalissimus Suvorov. In July, the Russian Navy delivered Belgorod – a strategic weapons platform fitted with school bus sized nuclear torpedoes that can be fitted with a 100-megaton nuclear warhead.

VanHerck also emphasized the need for the U.S. to expand its operations in the Arctic, as Russia has modernized its assets in the region and China continues to push farther north.

“Russia has modernized their fleet of icebreakers. They’ve modernized their strategic defense along with their submarine forces. China is sailing into the Arctic under the guise of research [missions] and we know they’re doing military operations, surveying the seabed.”

VanHerck said the U.S. is short of assets in the Arctic as Russia and China continue to expand operations.

“We’re not organized, trained and equipped to operate and respond in the Arctic. Infrastructure is a big concern for me, whether that be runway links, whether that be buildings, whether that be weapons storage, whether that be fuel storage,” he said.

“We need persistence that requires icebreakers. We as a nation are in bad shape regarding icebreakers, and I fully support the Coast Guard’s plan. We need to go faster.”

<https://news.usni.org/2023/03/23/northcom-russia-close-to-persistent-nuclear-cruise-missile-attack-sub-presence-off-u-s-coasts>

Norway Watches Warily As Russian Subs And Aircraft Step Up Arctic Patrols

The NATO ally has released videos exclusively to NBC News illustrating what it sees as a growing Russian threat near a maze of undersea pipelines.

(NBC NEWS 23 MAR 23) ... Tom Costello, Dan De Luce and Joel Seidman

ABOARD THE KV SORTLAND — NATO ally Norway has announced that it is boosting the number of naval patrols near vital undersea gas pipelines off its coast, and released a trove of videos exclusively to NBC News illustrating what it sees as a growing Russian threat in the Arctic.

The videos provided by the Royal Norwegian Air Force capture the high-stakes cat-and-mouse game between the two militaries, with Russian attack submarines patrolling near a maze of undersea pipelines carrying vast amounts of natural gas to Europe and telecommunication cables linking Europe and America.

According to the head of the Royal Norwegian Navy, the videos indicate that Russian attack submarines and planes have expanded their presence in the High North, operating near Norway’s natural gas pipelines that represent a vital energy lifeline for Europe.

“We’ve seen increased military activity around Norway in the High North, in the North Atlantic. We have seen Russian submarines operating differently than they did 10 years ago,” Rear Adm. Rune Andersen said last week from the bridge of the Norwegian refueling ship Maud at the Haakonsværn Naval Base in the city of Bergen.

He did not quantify by how much Russian activity had increased in the past year.

Not only have there been more Russian patrols, their behavior has also changed, with

them “operating more unpredictably” and some of their maneuvers appearing “more aggressive,” Andersen added.

A NBC News team accompanied a Norwegian Coast Guard ship, the KV Sortland, on patrol for three days last week in the North Sea, as the 25-member crew kept a close eye on gas installations while contending with heavy winds, frigid temperatures and rough seas.

The uptick in military activity came as tensions between NATO and Russia soared following the invasion of Ukraine. After a drastic drop in the flow of Russian natural gas to Europe, Norway replaced Russia as the top supplier to the continent. And since an unexplained attack last year on the Nord Stream gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany, Norway — backed by its NATO allies -- stepped up security for the vast network of pipelines and communication cables off its coast.

“After the explosions, we have actually increased our presence over these installations,” Norwegian Foreign Minister Anniken Huitfeldt said in an interview in Oslo. “Now we really need to protect the whole infrastructure system and also the installations at sea.”

“We are prepared for everything,” she added.

Norway, with more than 5,000 miles of pipelines, is now supplying 30 to 40% of Europe’s natural gas needs, up from about 20% before the Ukraine invasion. The undersea cables in the North Sea are part of a crucial global communications network that keeps data moving around the planet.

In Ukraine, Russia’s military has suffered serious setbacks and Western officials say it remains plagued by logistical and morale problems. But, Andersen said, Russia’s nuclear-powered submarine fleet, much of it based at its Murmansk military base near Norway, remains a formidable threat.

“The submarines and the maritime and air capabilities of the (Russian) northern fleet... they’re largely unaffected by the war in Ukraine. It’s still intact,” he added.

The videos released to NBC News show one

submarine's periscope peeking out of the water, and include footage of the latest Yasen-class attack submarines and a Borei-class submarine designed to carry 16 nuclear-armed ballistic missiles. The imagery also depicts Tupolev TU-142 and Ilyushin Il-38 surveillance planes designed to track submarines.

Russia has invested heavily in its submarine fleet, making its boats quieter and more lethal, analysts say. The new Belgorod submarine is designed to carry massive 80-foot-long nuclear torpedoes, as well as smaller mini-submarines capable of carrying out rescues or research, but military experts say the smaller submersibles also could be used to cut cables or pipelines along the ocean floor.

'Suspicious activity'

Russian submarines, ships and aircraft in the area appear to be conducting surveillance of the gas pipelines, Norwegian officers said.

"They're around this area. More than once, they're going back and forth. They're following the pipeline," said Comdr. Tirrell Herland, a Norwegian naval spokesperson, calling it "suspicious activity."

The Sortland's acting captain, Helen Dahl, said Russian fishing trawlers often go dark by turning off their navigational transmitters, and are equipped with an unusual number of antenna — raising suspicions.

Meanwhile, unexplained sightings and events are also raising suspicions of Russian surveillance and activities.

In recent months, drones have been spotted flying over Norwegian gas facilities, airports and other infrastructure. In October, Norwegian police investigated reports of a drone flying over the Karsto gas plant in southwest Norway. The 10 Norwegian government has not said who it thinks may have been behind the drone flights.

In 2021, undersea sensors that help Norway monitor submarines were knocked out and last year, a fiber optic cable between mainland Norway and the Svalbard archipelago in the Arctic was incapacitated in another unexplained incident.

The Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C.,

did not respond to a request for comment.

Andersen, the naval chief, said his forces work with private pipeline companies to closely monitor and protect the undersea network of pipelines and cables.

"We have a relatively strong network of sensors. We have activity out there, on the surface, below the surface and in the air, enabling us to have a pretty good picture on what's moving around in the North Atlantic," he said.

The undersea infrastructure is a "potential vulnerability in times of conflict," Andersen said. "And we need to make sure that we are able to monitor, survey and protect it."

Norway and its NATO allies need to be vigilant given Russia's track record of carrying out alleged sabotage and retribution outside its borders, including cyber attacks and more lethal operations, according to Ian Brzezinski of the Atlantic Council think tank.

"The list of what the Russians have done in the realm of subterfuge, subversion and assassination is long," he said. "So, attacking subsurface infrastructure has got to be on their list of options."

Czech authorities in 2021 accused the Russian military intelligence of setting off massive explosives at its ammunition depots in 2014, and British police in 2018 alleged that Russia used a nerve agent to poison former Russian intelligence officer Sergei Skripal and Yulia, his daughter. Russia has denied that it was behind the explosions at the Czech ammunition warehouses or the poisoning of Skripal in the United Kingdom.

Last week, the Sortland was pulled from its patrol duties to help provide security for a joint press conference by the leaders of NATO, the European Union and Norway who flew to the giant Troll platform in the country's largest gas field. Three other warships — from Germany, the Netherlands and Spain also stood watch — part of an enhanced NATO presence now in the North Sea.

"Since these installations are so vital, they are also so vulnerable," NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said as the Sortland and the other ships moved nearby.

Stoltenberg, joined by Norwegian Prime

Minister Jonas Gahr Støre and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, said that the E.U. and NATO are forming a new task force to guard vital infrastructure and that the alliance had deployed more ships to the area since the September sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline.

The attack on the Nord Stream pipeline, which damaged three of its four pipelines 260 feet under the ocean, remains an unresolved case. An investigation by the German, Swedish and Danish governments is underway, and no findings have been issued.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/norway-russian-submarines-planes-military-ukraine-arctic-rcna76368>



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USS THRESHER (SSN-593) MEMORIAL SERVICE



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Please join us for the monthly membership meeting immediately following the ceremony. Both events will be broadcast via Zoom

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Respectfully,
Steve Ricard
USSVI, Groton Base Commander
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Number who will be attending this event in your group: _____

Patrols on STIMSON: Total # Patrols on all boats:

Dates Onboard	Rate	Crew	Dates Onboard	Rate	Crew
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Special Needs: _____

Reunions Attended:	1999 ND	2001 CT	2003 WA	2005 MO	2007 CT	2009 GA
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X beside each one	2011 SC	2013 AL	2016 SC	2018 OK	2021 KY
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Event attendance will be through advance payment only.)

I am registering for the following per person (Association Member and all guests):

Registration Fee: (required for all) \$150.00 ea Number: _____ = _____

(This fee includes registration, Saturday banquet, Thursday Welcome Aboard gathering, all hospitality room food & beverages, etc.)

Friday – HL Hunley Tour \$30.00 ea Number: _____ = _____

The Hunley has changed significantly since the 2016 Reunion. Check their website

[THE FRIENDS OF THE HUNLEY](#). Bus transport may be provided for an extra fee.

Please indicate (circle) if you will take the bus if provided: YES NO

Please indicate (circle) if you will provide your own transportation: YES NO

The 2023 Reunion will be a different format. We are allowing those who attend plenty of unscheduled time. Charleston and the Tri-County area offers a host of places to see and things to do so we are going to give you time to enjoy and have fun either as individuals, couples or small groups. On the next page I have listed several places and things to do to make your time here enjoyable. The Eternal Patrol service will be Saturday morning and the Business Meeting will be Saturday afternoon followed by our Banquet. All will be conducted at the hotel.

The Association has established a refund policy for reunion registrations and it is located within our Bylaws in Article V.g. You can view this policy at: <http://ssbn655.org/association/bylaws/1610%20655BylawRev.pdf>

g. Cancellation of reunion registration and the refund of monies paid will be based on the timing of the cancellation. Registration cancelled prior to the reunion registration cutoff date will result in refund of monies paid minus the registration/office fee. For cancellation after the registration cutoff date, there will be no refund of monies paid.

REUNION USE ONLY

Check # _____

Date Rcvd _____

Registration # _____

Hotel Resv: _____

Our 2023 Reunion Venue is located in Summerville SC in a newly built area named Nexton. It is a mixed-use community which includes a combination of dining and shopping, single family homes and apartments/condos. You can check this area out [HERE](#). From fast-food to fine dining, you will be able to find many places to eat...and you can get to them all with either a quick drive or a nice leisurely walk to build up the appetite. Check them out [HERE](#).

Many of you lived in the Summerville area while stationed in Charleston. If you haven't been back in a while, you will have a hard time believing all of the changes to this quaint little town. But the one thing that hasn't changed here is that it still has a quaint feel to it when you are in the downtown area. The website www.visitsummerville.com is loaded with a wealth of information on our little (???) town and what's available. Even being here for a few years (49 to be exact) there are things listed on the site that we haven't taken advantage of yet. Brochures about Summerville are also available at the hotel.

Of course, the Charleston area in general has a plethora (like that word?) of things you can do. Here is a small list with links:

Plantations & Gardens:

- [Magnolia Plantation and Gardens](#)
- [Boone Hall Plantation](#)
- [Middleton Place](#)
- [Drayton Hall](#)
- [Charleston Tea Plantation](#)
- [McLeod Plantation](#)
- [Hampton Plantation](#)
- [Charles Pinckney National Historic Site](#)

[North Charleston Fire Museum](#) & [Tangier Outlet](#):

[Beidler Forest](#)

[Bee City](#)

[Old Navy Base Memorial](#) & [Old Navy Base Riverfront Park](#)

[Cold War Memorial](#) / Stimson Bench

[Patriot's Point/Yorktown](#)

[Fort Sumter & Fort Moultrie](#)

[The Battery & White Point Gardens](#)

[The Charleston Market](#)

Carriage Rides

- [Old South](#)
- [Palmetto](#)