



VOL. 2023 #6



JUNE 2023

**USS HENRY L. STIMSON ASSOCIATION SSBN655 NEWSLETTER**

**Association Officers & Board of Directors 2021 - 2023**

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

<b>HISTORIAN / CUSTODIAN</b> Larry [Linda] Knutson	<b>WEBMASTER / NEWSLETTER</b> Nick [Linda] Nichols	<b>CHAPLAIN</b> 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](#)]**

**72 registrations** have been received as of 30 May 2023. There are another 8 that have reserved hotel rooms but not registered yet.

Check here to see who has signed up to attend:

**[Registered Attendees Sailing List](#)**

STATES W/REGISTERED ATTENDEES & # ATTENDING				
SC - 15	NY - 4	FL - 8	KY - 4	NC - 13
CT - 2	OK - 2	GA - 2	TN - 1	CA - 1
VA - 2	OH - 4	AL - 2	AZ - 2	CO - 2
MA - 1	PA - 3	NM - 2	TX - 2	

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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:**

Stimson Shipmates, we are just 133 days before our 2023 Reunion. It will be a great time for all. The hotel we have chosen is working hard to make this, their first, to be a spectacular event. I, and all of our Charleston shipmates are looking forward to seeing you all. So, if you have not registered, please do so soon and if you have, thank you. It will be a fun time. See you in October.



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

Marie and I are going on a cruise with our daughter Amy on Memorial







get through it. He has done many miracles in the past 1 1/2 years and is ever faithful.

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

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

**NO NEW UPDATE**

**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

**5.24.23: Email from Lloyd:** I did have my bone marrow transplant on April 10. I just met with my doctor after my 30 day bone marrow biopsy and so far everything is going well. I did have some graft verses host disease but things have settled down. My cancer is in remission, no cancer detected in my bone marrow and my donors DNA has been detected in the bone marrow. I want to thank everyone for the prayers. I'll give you a new update after the next biopsy in 60 days. Lloyd Hyatt MT2(SS) Blue Crew

*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

**5.24.23:** Physical Therapy 3 Times A Week Is Helping Immensely! Susan And I Will See You In Summerville.

*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. 1<sup>st</sup>, 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. 1<sup>st</sup>. 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. 2<sup>nd</sup>.*

*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

**5.24.23: Email from Jean:** I really don't have any updates, just taking it one day at a time. We have started attending some social events at our local VFW and Ron enjoys the camaraderie of his VFW buddies, this certainly raises his spirits. Please keep checking in. Your thoughts and prayers are greatly appreciated.

*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*

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## GREAT LINKS TO SPEND TIME WITH

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**655 Association Website**

**[www.ssb655.org](http://www.ssb655.org)**

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**A YouTube walkthrough** of the Forward compartments of the USS Indiana and really pretty cool. Sadly, there are No nuclear or machinery spaces available.

**<https://youtu.be/0StWrXoN8nl>**



### **The Computer Corner**

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

### **Different Types of Computer Viruses**

We are all bombarded everyday with junk mail that may contain malicious links or software or visit sites that look legitimate but may contain a virus or give us pop-up messages saying we are infected and to "immediately call Tech Support". In general, NEVER CALL any number that pops up on your computer screen.

If you do get one of these pop-up messages, the safest thing to is DO NOT click on anything on that browser screen, not even the "X" to close the browser. You can try to close the browser by "right clicking" on that browser on the TASK BAR on the BOTTOM of your screen and select "Close Window". If you have the Task Manager available you can close the browser by using the Task Manager.

If neither of these methods close the browser, then hold the computer Power button down until the computer turns OFF (usually about 10



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**Veteran Service Officer Update April 2023**  
**From the Desk of USSVI National Veteran**  
**Service Officer John Dudas**  
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**Free Lifetime National Parks Passes Are Here**  
**for Veterans and Gold Star Families**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/11/09/free-lifetime-national-parks-passes-are-coming-veterans-and-gold-star-families.html?ESRC=navy\\_230404.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/11/09/free-lifetime-national-parks-passes-are-coming-veterans-and-gold-star-families.html?ESRC=navy_230404.nl)

**Veterans, Gold Star Families get free lifetime**  
**pass to national parks, wildlife refuges, other**  
**public lands**

[https://news.va.gov/110751/free-lifetime-pass-to-national-parks/?utm\\_source=middle&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=VetResources&utm\\_id=19APR2023](https://news.va.gov/110751/free-lifetime-pass-to-national-parks/?utm_source=middle&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=19APR2023)

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**The Cost of Going Cashless at U.S. National**  
**Parks As Many Switch to Plastic-Only**  
<https://www.frommers.com/trip-ideas/national-park/the-cost-of-going-cashless-at-us-national-parks>

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**Amid Record TSA Pre-Check Enrollment,**  
**Here's How to Get Through Airport Security**  
**Faster**

<https://www.frommers.com/tips/airfare/with-new-record-in-tsa-precheck-members-heres-how-to-get-through-airport-security-faster>

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**Passport Wait Times Go Up Again: Here's**  
**Where They Stand Now**

[https://www.frommers.com/blogs/passportable/blog\\_posts/passport-wait-times-go-up-again-here-s-where-they-stand-now](https://www.frommers.com/blogs/passportable/blog_posts/passport-wait-times-go-up-again-here-s-where-they-stand-now)

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**DD214: What You Need to Know / How to Get**  
**Yours**

[https://www.military.com/benefits/records-and-forms/dd214.html?ESRC=eb\\_230330.nl](https://www.military.com/benefits/records-and-forms/dd214.html?ESRC=eb_230330.nl)

The FASTEST way is to go online and request them: <https://vetrecs.archives.gov/>

[VeteranRequest/home.html](#)

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**New Panama Canal Zone Agent Orange**  
**Exposure Bill introduced in Congress**

<https://app.box.com/s/7nfw57wm94o6dvxt4x6oq27xy933y6or>

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**Defense Finance and Accounting Service**  
**March 2023 Retiree Newsletter (multiple issues**  
**of interest)**

<https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/newsevents/newsletter/>

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**VA announces survivors of veterans may be**  
**eligible for benefits under PACT Act**

<https://www.legion.org/veteransbenefits/258449/va-announces-survivors-veterans-may-be-eligible-benefits-under-pact-act>

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**New Shift Colors are available**

[https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Media-Center/Publications/Shift-Colors/?utm\\_campaign=Shift+Colors+Spring+2023&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=dfas](https://www.mynavyhr.navy.mil/Media-Center/Publications/Shift-Colors/?utm_campaign=Shift+Colors+Spring+2023&utm_medium=email&utm_source=dfas)

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**US Deploys Guided-Missile Submarine Amid**  
**Tensions with Iran**

<https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/08/us-deploys-guided-missile-submarine-amid-tensions-iran.html>

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**VA Delays Rollout of Troubled Electronic**  
**Medical Records System to More Hospitals**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/06/va-delays-rollout-of-troubled-electronic-medical-records-system-more-hospitals.html?ESRC=navy\\_230411.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/06/va-delays-rollout-of-troubled-electronic-medical-records-system-more-hospitals.html?ESRC=navy_230411.nl)

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**VA Halts Future Launches of Its Oracle Cerner**  
**Health Record System**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/21/troubled-v-a-medical-records-system-wont-be-added-new-hospitals-anytime-soon-v-a-halts-rollout.html?ESRC=eb\\_230424.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/21/troubled-v-a-medical-records-system-wont-be-added-new-hospitals-anytime-soon-v-a-halts-rollout.html?ESRC=eb_230424.nl)



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**You Now Need a Credit Card in Most Cases to Get Access to DoD, VA Benefits Websites**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/13/you-now-need-credit-card-most-cases-get-access-dod-va-benefits-websites.html?ESRC=eb\\_230414.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/13/you-now-need-credit-card-most-cases-get-access-dod-va-benefits-websites.html?ESRC=eb_230414.nl)

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**Wreckage of Submarine Found by Divers in Long Island Sound**

[https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/19/wreckage-of-submarine-found-divers-long-island-sound.html?ESRC=eb\\_230420.nl](https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/04/19/wreckage-of-submarine-found-divers-long-island-sound.html?ESRC=eb_230420.nl)

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**Your Free VA ID Card is the proof you need for discounts**

[https://news.va.gov/117828/va-id-card-proof-discounts/?utm\\_source=feature&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=VetResources&utm\\_id=19APR2023](https://news.va.gov/117828/va-id-card-proof-discounts/?utm_source=feature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=19APR2023)

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**Postage Stamps Are About to Go Up in Price—Here’s How to Save Up to 14%**

*Van Van Cleave* Updated: Apr. 24, 2023

There are few surprises as delightful as receiving a card in the mail. While we certainly have myriad digital communication options, there’s something so charming and thoughtful about old-fashioned snail mail.

But unfortunately, like most goods and services right now, the price of sending a letter or card is going up, thanks to a federally approved increase in the price of postage stamps. Here’s what you need to know about the price hike, as well as some tips to score discounts on postage stamps.

**When will the postage stamp price increase happen?**

While the postage stamp price increase has not officially been approved by the Postal Regulatory Commission, it is very likely that the United States Postal Service (USPS) will implement the price hike on July 9, 2023.

**How much will the price of postage stamps increase?**

The price of postage stamps will increase by 3 cents. Currently, postage stamps cost \$0.63, but they will likely cost \$0.66 this summer—a 5.4% increase.

**How can I save money on postage stamps?**

The good news is that there are still numerous ways to save money on postage stamps, especially if you act now before they are implemented. Here are a few penny-pinching tips.

**Buy in bulk now**

If you post a lot of letters, try to buy stamps in bulk before the price hike. You can buy stamps in bulk directly from USPS’s Postal Store, as well as on Amazon or Tanga.

**Shop for stamp sales at big box retailers**

Did you know that you could buy stamps at Walmart?

**Subscribe to Stamps.com for small businesses**

If you run your own small business and need a truly vast quantity of stamps, Stamps.com is for you! With a monthly subscription for \$19.99, Stamps.com can help you track shipments and print packaging labels, as well as offer postage stamps at a significant discount.

**Try out e-cards and electronic payments**

Though it isn’t the same as holding an adorable slip of handwritten paper, digital cards and electronic payments do have their benefits.

**READ MORE HERE**

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**Manage Your VA Appointments**

**Online scheduling is easy**

Did you know you can schedule VA health care appointments online? You can also view details about upcoming appointments and organize your health calendar with VA appointment tools.

**Learn more.**

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**Appointments: Ask These Questions**

It’s easy to forget important questions during appointments with your doctor. Get the most out of your visit with these helpful tips.

**Learn more.**

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**Take Care of Your Brain**

Brain health is key to physical and mental health. We have healthy habits that can keep your brain strong.

[Learn more.](#)

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### **Mobile Options for Check-ins**

These check-in options can save you time.

[Learn more.](#)

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### **Strengthening Your Core**

Strong core muscles make moving easier. See a VA exercise physiologist do a seated core strengthening routine.

[Watch now.](#)

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### **Fall-proof Your Home**

Falls are a leading cause of injury among older adults. We have helpful steps to make your home safe and lower your risk of falling.

[Learn more.](#)

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### **Americans Hit With More Than 50.3 Billion Robocalls in 2022**

**By Christina lanzito and John Waggoner, AARP**

The federal government is targeting services that allow illegal calls to reach U.S. consumers from overseas

Scammers and others blanket Americans with billions of illegal robocalls annually — more than 50.3 billion last year, according to the call-protection app YouMail — many of which originate overseas. To fight this scourge, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) is accelerating its efforts to block these calls through its Project Point of No Entry, which targets the “point of entry” providers that field illegal calls from outside the U.S.

Regulators describe these gateway providers as “on-ramps for international call traffic.” Overseas robocallers send a call to a gateway provider, which in turn hands the call off to a U.S. network carrier.

The FTC says it’s identifying the gateway providers that have been transmitting robocalls, demanding that they stop, and pursuing legal action if they don’t. So far, according to the agency, officials have identified 24 providers

transmitting illegal calls — including those from government and business impostors, COVID-19 relief payment scams, and student loan debt relief and forgiveness schemes.

Of the 24 providers targeted by the FTC, 22 have “significantly curbed or altogether stopped the flow of illegal robocalls entering the country over their networks,” the agency reports.

### **Deceptive tactics**

Robocallers use a variety of deceptive techniques to get you to answer, including spoofing, which tricks caller ID into displaying fake phone numbers. Sometimes those numbers are designed to use your three-digit area code, making the call look like it’s coming from a neighbor — not another country.

If you answer, the robotic voice on the other end might claim to represent a utility, a name-brand company (Amazon is a common one), or a government agency like the Social Security Administration or the Internal Revenue Service. Another extremely pervasive robocall involves a pitch for an extended warranty on your car. The goal: to get you to give up personal information or cash.

### **Whack-a-mole**

At the direction of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), most large telecommunication companies use a technical protocol called STIR/SHAKEN to verify that calls originate from the number that shows up on your phone. (FCC rules compel gateway providers to comply with the same caller ID authentication protocols.)

- **Don’t answer calls from unknown numbers.** If you answer such a call, hang up immediately.
- **Do not respond to any questions,** especially those that can be answered with “Yes.”
- **Never give out personal information,** such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother’s maiden names, passwords or other identifying information in response to unexpected calls or if you are at all suspicious.
- **Talk to your phone company about call-blocking tools** they may have, and check into

apps you can download to your mobile device to block unwanted calls.

To block telemarketing calls, register your number on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) National Do Not Call Registry at [donotcall.gov](https://www.donotcall.gov). Legitimate telemarketers consult the registry to avoid calling both landline and wireless phone numbers on the opt-out list.

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### **The U.S. Navy Is Putting Its Submarines On Rare Public Display In A Message To Russia's Growing Undersea Force**

(BUSINESS INSIDER 01 MAY 23) ... Christopher Woody

The US Navy rarely reveals where its submarines are, but it is making those subs more visible in the North Atlantic, demonstrating their presence as US officials warn that Russian submarines are more active and carrying new weapons closer to US shores.

Since late 2020, the Navy has announced multiple visits by its submarines to Tromsø in northern Norway, the Danish-controlled Faroe Islands, and Iceland — locations that reduce the time those subs have to spend away from their operating areas, according to Vice Adm. William Houston, the commander of US submarine forces.

"We have increased activity in the Atlantic. We keep a very close eye on that, and our NATO partners and allies are absolutely critical to that," Houston said at the Sea Air Space Symposium outside of Washington DC on April 3.

For subs in the North Atlantic, access to those ports means "we can exchange people off those submarines in hours when typically it would take us days to pull into Faslane," Houston added, referring to a base in Scotland. "So it gives us an incredible opportunity and an incredible strategic position to do that."

The US Navy focused less on submarine activity in the high north after the Cold War, but its attention has increased over the past decade, as shown in its sub operations and its anti-submarine-warfare exercises.

"There was a time when we sort of backed off on that because the Russian threat" was

diminished and there were higher priorities elsewhere, but the Navy "has been increasing the number of deployments they've been doing with submarines up to the high north," Bryan Clark, a former US Navy submarine officer, told Insider.

A Norwegian navy officer said in January 2018 that allied submarines were entering Norwegian waters or ports for supplies or personnel exchanges three to four times a month. Since 2020, when Norway allowed NATO subs to use a port near Tromsø, announcements of such visits appear to have increased.

In August 2020, the Navy said USS Seawolf, a West Coast-based attack sub, made "a brief stop for personnel in the vicinity of Tromso." That was followed by visits by USS New Mexico in May 2021 and USS Washington, USS Albany, USS South Dakota, HMS Ambush, and USS Newport News — all attack subs — in 2022.

The visits reflect increasing defense cooperation between Norway and its NATO allies. "Tromsø gives us a place where we can pull in submarines, fix material things, do personnel exchanges," Houston said at the April 3 event.

"Denmark just opened up Faroe Islands for our ability to conduct brief stops for personnel, which is absolutely a key position for us," Houston added. (In August 2022, the US Navy published a graphic indicating that USS Georgia, a cruise-missile sub, was in or near the Faroe Islands.)

Houston said at the event that the Navy was "working very closely" with Iceland on permission for "brief stops" there, and on April 18, Iceland's minister for foreign affairs said US subs not carrying nuclear weapons would be allowed to make "brief" stops in Iceland for supplies and crew exchanges, calling the decision part of Iceland's "policy to 15 support increased monitoring and response capacity of Allied countries in the North Atlantic."

On April 26, the Navy said attack sub USS San Juan had made "a brief stop" for supplies and personnel off Iceland's west coast, the first such visit by a US submarine.

### **'We're in your backyard'**

Reducing travel time has a significant impact

on what subs can do at sea.

Returning to Faslane for spare parts or to disembark a crew member "could be a week-long endeavor depending on how far out you are, and we routinely miss mission time and even have to cancel missions because of stuff like that," said Clark, now a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute think-tank.

"This way, you can get that guy off the boat right away or you can get those parts right away and be right back out there in a day, so it's a huge difference."

Some missions, like mapping parts of the Arctic, can be paused without much issue, but others are more time-sensitive. "If you're trying to keep track of what a Russian undersea operation is doing or some kind of Russian exercise, missing a week means you're probably going to miss the whole thing," Clark said.

Monitoring Russian submarines has become a more urgent task for NATO, and the waters between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans are vital to that mission. To reach the Atlantic, subs from Russia's powerful Northern Fleet have to leave their bases on the Barents Sea and sail between northern Norway and the Svalbard archipelago to reach the Norwegian Sea and then through what's known as the Greenland-Iceland-UK Gap.

Those chokepoints at either end of the Norwegian Sea allow NATO forces to more easily monitor Russian submarine movements.

Russia's undersea fleet is smaller than its Soviet predecessor, but US officials and experts say it now has submarines with more advanced sensors and weapons, including land-attack cruise missiles. Of particular concern are Russia's Severodvinsk-class subs, three of which have entered service since 2013.

With a level of quietness comparable to Western attack subs and the ability to strike important infrastructure, like sea ports, from longer ranges, Severodvinsk-class subs have worried NATO officials. Russia plans to build at least nine of them, and US officials are already warning about their presence near the US.

Gen. Glen VanHerck, who is responsible for operations around North America as head of US

Northern Command, told lawmakers in March that Russian submarine activity off US coasts "is absolutely increasing."

"Within the last year, Russia has also placed their Severodvinsk-class submarines in the Pacific, so now not only [in] the Atlantic," VanHerck added. "It is just a matter of probably a year or two before that is a persistent threat — 24 hours a day potentially."

Gen. Christopher Cavoli, the head of US European Command, told lawmakers this month that Russia's undersea force has "not been affected negatively" by the war in Ukraine.

"The Russians are more active than we've seen them in years, and their patrols into the Atlantic and throughout the Atlantic are at a high level most of the time, at a higher level than we've seen in years," Cavoli added.

The increasing activity and sophistication of Russia's submarines is a driving factor behind the increase in US submarine operations — and the more frequent announcements about them — in the high north. "Part of this is to make sure the Russians understand that we're doing that," Clark said.

During the Cold War, US attack subs operated in the high north to get the Soviets to keep their attack subs close by to protect their ballistic-missile subs. The goal now, Clark said, may be to show Russia "that we're in your backyard with our attack submarine so you feel like you have to keep more of your best boats at home to protect" those missile subs.

"The US Navy has obviously increased the visibility of its submarine deployments, both in the high north and in the Western Pacific, to try to affect the decision-making of potential adversaries," Clark added, "because otherwise you're not getting nearly as much benefit from the deployment."

<https://www.businessinsider.com/us-navy-submarines-more-visible-message-to-russian-sub-fleet-2023-5>

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**Dry Dock 4 Welcomes USS Pennsylvania After Seismic Upgrades At Puget Sound Naval**

## Shipyards

(KITSAP SUN 12 MAY 23) ... Peiyu Lin BREMERTON — Updated. Tested. Re-certified. After being suspended from docking submarines for over three months, Dry Dock 4 at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard has returned to service and welcomed USS Pennsylvania (SSBN 735) to the facility, the shipyard announced on Friday.

A picture of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine entering the dry dock on May 11 marked the completion of the seismic mitigation upgrades for Dry Dock 4. The sub entered the dry dock to begin its Extended Refit Period, said the shipyard. USS Pennsylvania sailed from Bangor to Bremerton on March 1 for planned maintenance, said Submarine Group 9 spokesperson Lt. Corey T. Jones in March.



USS Pennsylvania (SSBN 735) enters Dry Dock 4 at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard & Intermediate Maintenance Facility May 11 to begin its Extended Refit Period. *Jeb Fack, Puget Sound Naval Shipyard*

The mitigation construction at Dry Dock 4, which began on Feb. 15, included drilling holes to install anchors inside the dry dock walls to enhance structural integrity. The Navy also updated its emergency response plans to better address the chance of a catastrophic earthquake and improved early-warning employee notification systems in the dry docks, according to a statement released by PSNS.

The Navy suspended submarine docking in Dry Dock 4, 5 and 6 at PSNS and a dry dock at the Delta Pier at Trident Refit Facility in Bangor in late January due to a seismic assessment that raised concerns. The mitigation works at two of the four dry docks started in mid-February.

As of Friday, the construction continued at Dry

Dock 5 in the shipyard and the Delta Pier in Bangor, but such mitigation work was not required for Dry Dock 6 at PSNS, according to the statement.

"Based on future planned improvements to Dry Dock 6 and differences in ship design and the size of aircraft carriers, it was determined immediate seismic mitigations are not required," the shipyard said in the statement.

It is unclear what changes the Navy's decision from suspending Dry Dock 6 to not requiring the seismic work. Dry Dock 6 sits next to Mooring A, one of the Navy's two proposed locations to build a multi-mission dry dock at PSNS that will be able to serve the nation's current and future classes of submarines and aircraft carriers. The other option is to build the new dock at Dry Dock 3.

"The need for mitigations in the remaining docks will be determined once current efforts are complete and may include stability enhancements for submarine availabilities," according to the statement.

The work to upgrade the three dry docks at Naval Base Kitsap costs over \$76 million, according to the Department of Defense's contract.

Shipyards Commander Capt. Jip Mosman appreciated those contributed to the seismic mitigation project, he said in the statement.

"The Navy is working as quickly and safely as possible to return our dry docks to full functionality, and I extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has been involved thus far," Mosman said.

The mitigation actions at the dry docks didn't affect the country's strategic deterrent capability or the submarine's overall mission, the shipyard said.

Established in 1891 as a Naval Station and re-designated as Navy Yard Puget Sound in 1901, PSNS is the primary provider for the maintenance, repair, modernization, inactivation and disposal of ships, submarines, and aircraft carriers in the Pacific Fleet.

<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/news/local/navy/2023/05/12/puget-sound-naval-shipyards->

## How One Black Bear Almost Set Off World War III During the Cold War

Military.com | By Blake Stilwell



“To err is human, to forgive is not”

Strategic Air Command policy. (U.S. Air Force)

For as destructive as the world’s combined nuclear arsenals could be, it sure seems like both the United States and Soviet Union were pretty cavalier about using them. The U.S. alone had 32 different nuclear weapons incidents, which includes straight-up losing six of them, none of which was ever found.

The Soviets, of course, had a far-from-perfect nuclear record. The USSR may have lost upward of a hundred weapons. It also would have launched a nuclear attack against the U.S. if it weren’t for one officer who recognized a malfunction in the early warning system.

As highly as we like to think of our military leadership, the launch code for World War III was “00000000” for 15 years. We shouldn’t be surprised that a bear was nearly able to start that war by itself.

On Oct. 25, 1962, America was in the middle of the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviets had begun to construct nuclear launch sites on the island of Cuba, allowing the USSR to target areas deep inside the American mainland. It also sparked alarm that a Soviet attack was soon to follow.

The U.S. government was livid, and for 13 days, it demanded the removal of the missiles. This response seems strange in retrospect, because the United States had been using the

same tactic against the Soviets using missiles based in Turkey since 1961. The Navy was blockading Cuba, and Soviet ships were headed straight for the blockade. Things were pretty tense.

With all this going on, much of the U.S. military was at DEFCON 3, which meant the Air Force had to be ready to mobilize within 15 minutes. Strategic Air Command, the bulk of the U.S. nuclear arsenal, was at DEFCON 2, one step below a nuclear war.

At midnight on Oct. 25, a portly saboteur set off the intruder alarms at Duluth Sector Direction Center in Minnesota. A sentry fired shots at the intruder and raised alarms all over the area, believing the Soviets were making a move against the Air Force assets. In a frenzy, Volk Field Air National Guard Base in Wisconsin sounded the wrong alarm. Pilots were scrambling to get to their aircraft and to take nuclear weapons to World War III.

But almost as fast as the alarm was sounded, cooler heads prevailed as the presumed saboteur walked off into the woods on four legs. The guard realized that his perpetrator was likely a black bear, a creature native to the area. Most of the bases stood down their alert. The only base that didn’t was Volk Field.



Pictured: Sabotage. (Greg Hume)

It turns out the alarm at Volk Field was a lot more serious than just warning of intruders. The airplanes that were about to head off into the night were armed and ready. The alarm that sounded would be rung only if the United States was going to war with Soviet Union.

To stop the pilots from potentially nuking the USSR, the base commander had to get one of his officers to drive a truck onto the flight line, right in the takeoff path of the jets. He was able to make it to them and abort the mission as they started their engines.

The black bear that almost ended civilization wasn't the only close call of the Cold War. It wasn't even the only time nuclear war almost started during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Despite all evidence to the contrary, it seems humanity doesn't want to commit nuclear suicide after all.

## NAVAL HISTORY:

### Why The First Nuclear Sub Had To Stop For Auto Parts Before A Secret Mission

(MILITARY.COM 18 MAY 23) ... Blake Stilwell

In January 1954, the United States Navy launched a game-changing new weapon for the arsenal of democracy, the first operational nuclear-powered submarine, USS Nautilus. It was the fourth vessel to bear the name of the fictional submarine from Jules Verne's 19th-century science fiction classic "Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Seas," but it was the first to live up to Verne's vision.

Since the operational abilities of Nautilus far outpaced those of diesel-electric submarines of the time, the Navy did something equally incredible with it. This new sub sailed underneath the Arctic Ocean's ice, across the North Pole, entirely underwater. Called Operation Sunshine, the mission was nearly over before it began.

Luckily for the Navy, the skipper and the crew of the Nautilus, Seattle had some auto parts stores open.

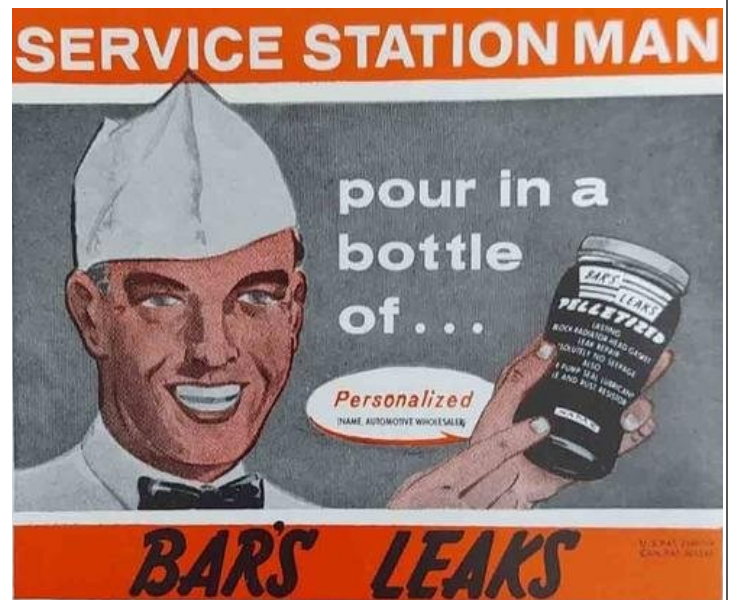
Submarines built before Nautilus ran on diesel fuel and electric batteries, which meant they not only needed to refuel, but they had to come to the surface regularly to recharge their batteries. With its nuclear-powered propulsion system, SSN-571 had to do neither of those things, meaning it could stay submerged the entire time it crossed the Arctic Ocean.

Normally, crossing an ocean wouldn't be a problem for any ship or submarine, but the Arctic

Ocean (at least, at the time) was covered in vast, dense sea ice. Before climate change, the submarines of the time could neither punch through the thick ice or traverse it (punching through sea ice is still a difficult undertaking).

In the wake of the Soviet Union's Sputnik launch, President Dwight D. Eisenhower wanted to reassure the military (and potentially the American public) that a submarine-based missile deterrent would maintain the nuclear balance of power. Operation Sunshine was supposed to be a display of advanced American technology. The range of Nautilus changed the Cold War game under the Arctic Ocean, but someone had to make the first trip.

When the submarine arrived in Everett, Washington, on June 2, 1958, it was scheduled to stay the night, then head for Seattle for another night before departing on its secret mission. It arrived in Everett to a lot of fanfare from civilians and journalists, but the vessel had a problem: A condenser unit was leaking and threatened the entire mission.



You can't just send a bunch of sailors out to any old auto parts store to get materials to repair your new, game-changing nuclear submarine. Cmdr. William Anderson, Nautilus' captain, also couldn't call attention to the issue through the usual channels due to security concerns. Somewhere along the way, however, someone aboard the sub figured out they could just use Bar's Leaks, a popular automotive product for

leaking radiators, on the condenser unit.

To keep anyone outside the boat from getting wise to the problem, Cmdr. Anderson had his crew dress in civilian clothes and pile into taxi cabs in Seattle. They went off to auto parts stores and service stations to buy as much of Bar's Leaks as they could find. The crew returned with 140 liters of the stuff. It worked: 70 liters of Bar's Leaks fixed the condenser, and they had the other half to use later, if needed.

On June 9, 1958, Nautilus set sail, painted over its identifying numbers and headed for the Arctic Ocean. This initial mission had to be scrapped because the ocean's floor had yet to be mapped and the vessel ran into heavy ice. It successfully made the voyage later, departing from Pearl Harbor on July 23 and crossing the pole on Aug. 3, 1958.

<https://www.military.com/history/why-first-nuclear-sub-had-stop-auto-parts-secret-mission.html>

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### **Submarine Hunt Incident A Peak Into Cat-And-Mouse Games In South China Sea**

A stretch of the northern South China Sea is increasingly of great strategic interest, especially when it comes to submarine activity.

(THE DRIVE 19 MAY 23) ... Joseph Trevithick

A shadowy cat-and-mouse game between Chinese submariners and U.S. military forces tasked with tracking them is, by all accounts, increasing in scope and frequency in the Pacific. One stark example of this was recently highlighted by a Chinese newspaper's report about a previously undisclosed incident in a highly strategic coordinator in the South China Sea that occurred on January 5, 2021, some details of which the U.S. military's top command in the Pacific has disputed.

The South China Morning Post, or SCMP, which has its main offices in Hong Kong, published its initial story on the incident on May 15. The newspaper said the episode, details of which had emerged in a Chinese-language research paper written by a team that included members of the People's Liberation Army (PLA),

had involved three unspecified U.S. "spy planes" engaged in a "hunt for Chinese submarines." The researchers reportedly said that one of those aircraft had come within 150 kilometers (around 93 miles) of Hong Kong, prompting a significant PLA reaction.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) confirmed to The War Zone that Chinese forces intercepted a U.S. Navy P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol plane twice in the northern end of the South China Sea on January 5, 2021. However, the command denied that this aircraft flew unusually close to Hong Kong.

After SCMP published its piece, The War Zone had reached out to INDOPACOM and the U.S. Navy's 7th Fleet for more information. INDOPACOM is the U.S. military's main command overseeing operations across the Indo-Pacific region. The 7th Fleet, with its headquarters in Japan, oversees Navy operations in the Western Pacific, including in the South China Sea.

"The U.S. P-8A that flew on 5 Jan 2021 was intercepted twice in international airspace between Woody Island and Hainan Island roughly 500km [just over 310 miles] from Hong Kong," a spokesperson for INDOPACOM told The War Zone in a statement. "U.S. and allied aircraft routinely fly in international airspace to maintain situational awareness and reinforce international norms."

Hainan Island is home to a sprawling People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) base that includes large underground caves that submarines can sail in and out of, as well as a host of other Chinese military facilities. Woody Island is one of a number of island outposts in the South China Sea that the PLA has dramatically expanded in the past decade or so. That network of outposts features significant anti-aircraft and anti-ship defenses. This is part of a larger anti-access/area denial umbrella the PLA has established that extends from mainland China and covers this entire area. This would swing into action to prevent foreign military forces from moving freely in the region in a crisis scenario.

The area in between Hainan and Woody Island



is also a key route for Chinese submarines moving in and out of the region. This includes the PLAN's Type 094 ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs), all of which are based in Hainan. The U.S. military has previously assessed that the PLAN's could operate those boats from the safety of "bastions" closer to the mainland, but recent analysis points to an increasing number of longer-range deployments. This creates new challenges for the already complex task of trying to keep tabs on where those and other Chinese submarines are at any time, which is critical information, especially when it comes to China's SSBNs.

Most importantly, this geographical area culminating at the Luzon Strait, between Taiwan and the Philippines, is the primary corridor through which Chinese submarines based at Hainan Island, and especially the SSBNs, reach the greater Pacific beyond the first island chain. As such, it is a critical anti-submarine and undersea surveillance choke point and China is very well aware of this as is the U.S. and its allies.

Back on January 5, 2021, what appeared to be two separate U.S. Navy P-8As were spotted using online flight tracking data in parts of the northern end of the South China Sea on or about January 5, 2021, based on online flight tracking data. Depending on one's location, the Tweet immediately below may say it was posted on January 4, 2021. However, the time stamp shows that it was published on what was the following day in the region, which is to the west of the International Date Line.

Online flight tracking data at the time also indicated that a U.S. Navy MQ-4C Triton drone was operating in the area, and appeared to have flown closer to Hong Kong. "Although there was an MQ-4 aloft on 5 Jan 21, our records show it did not come within 150 km of Hong Kong," the spokesperson for INDOPACOM also told The War Zone.

The Chinese research paper "said the PLA, which was conducting a naval exercise in the area, responded swiftly by sending out a counter force, the size and nature of which remains classified," SCMP reported. "The two forces were

so close that the U.S. military 'self-destroyed' its floating sonars to prevent the sensitive devices from falling into China's hands."

"The [research] team... said the US activities were a severe challenge to China's national security," SCMP's story added. "According to the report, U.S. spy planes deployed sensors in waters near the Dongsha islands – also known as the Pratas islands – a group of atolls and reefs under Taiwanese control."

The War Zone has so far been unable to independently locate a copy of this research paper, which was reportedly included in a recent issue of the Chinese-language publication Shipboard Electronic Countermeasures. A 2007 report to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission says that Shipboard Electronic Countermeasures is "a bimonthly periodical sponsored by China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC), 723rd Research Institute in Yangzhou, Jiangsu" which features "academic studies and technical reports on electronic warfare, radar, signal processing, and related technologies."

SCMP also reported that the paper's lead researcher was Liu Dongqing, a member of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) Unit 95510. Readily available details about Unit 95510 are limited, but other members of the unit have published research related to electronic warfare work in the past.

The War Zone has also not been able to independently verify any of the other reported details about the January 5, 2021 incident. The claim that "the U.S. military 'self-destroyed' its floating sonars" in response to the appearance of Chinese forces seems questionable given that this is very likely to be a reference to sonobuoys. Modern sonobuoy designs, including the ones in use by the U.S. Navy, typically only work for a matter of hours and have deliberate design features to help them sink automatically afterward by default.

The research paper also said more generally that "the U.S. spy planes 'typically fly at an altitude of 60 metres [sic] (196 feet)', noting this is a lower

cruising altitude than most aircraft and can pose safety risks because it is relatively close to ground level," according to SCMP. "The scientists said the low altitude is a deliberate tactic used by anti-submarine patrol aircraft, such as the US Navy's P-8A, to improve the ability to detect and track submarines."

Low-level tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by anti-submarine warfare aircraft, including the P-8A, are well-documented, as you can read more about in this past War Zone feature. Flying very close to the water allows for more precise sonobuoy emplacement and can help get certain sensors closer to targets of interest. Some sensors, sonobuoys, and anti-submarine weapons simply need to be employed or released closer to the water to function properly.

Flying at lower altitudes does present challenges and increased the vulnerability of anti-submarine warfare aircraft to certain threats. Of course, flying higher exposes them to other risks, including detection and targeting by longer-range radars and surface-to-air missile systems. The U.S. Navy has been pursuing efforts to help expand certain higher-altitude anti-submarine warfare capabilities on the Poseidon specifically.

SCMP's initial story framed the incident within the context of a particularly low point in U.S.-China relations compounded by a moment of major domestic political upheaval in the United States. The day after the incident in the South China Sea, a fatal riot over the results of the 2020 presidential election rocked the U.S. Capitol Building. Two days later, in the aftermath of that chaos, U.S. Army Gen. Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, made two unusual calls to his Chinese counterpart. Milley has publicly confirmed those calls and has said he did so after U.S. intelligence showed Chinese officials feared that a conflict was imminent.

U.S.-Chinese relations have remained cool, especially following another surge in tensions last year around a visit by Nancy Pelosi, then a Democratic Party Representative from California and Speaker of House, to Taiwan. The U.S.

military has been open about its fears that a conflict with China over Taiwan could emerge before the end of this decade.

However, other portions of the research paper that SCMP highlighted suggest the PLA may view the January 5, 2021 incident, and others like it, as significant outside of any specific temporal context. It also points to broader anti-submarine warfare concerns the PLA has, especially in this highly strategic zone.

"In a time of war, this could pose a detrimental threat to our submarines carrying out critical missions," Liu Dongqing and his team wrote about the U.S. military capabilities on display during the incident two years ago, according to SCMP. "The purpose is to monitor, block, and contain us."

The Chinese government has long been sensitive to U.S. military activities in the South China Sea, especially around Hainan and its man-made bases. The U.S. government routinely challenges China's expansive and largely unrecognized claims that the bulk of the region is its sovereign territory.

Well before January 5, 2021, this had sometimes taken the form of outright harassment of American military aircraft and warships. The most infamous example of this was an incident on April 1, 2001, in which U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) aircraft collided with a PLA J-8 fighter jet, resulting in severe damage to both planes. The J-8 crashed and the pilot was killed in the incident, while the crew of the EP-3E were forced to land on Hainan. The EP-3E's crew were ultimately repatriated to the United States, but not before they were interrogated and their plane stuffed with extremely sensitive equipment and materials was torn-down and thoroughly examined.

That being said, in recent years, there has been a noticeable uptick in incidents involving U.S. Navy aircraft and ships that would seem to reflect the more general PLA concerns voiced in the recent research paper about American anti-submarine warfare capabilities. Chinese intercepts of Navy P-8As, as well as Poseidons belonging to the Royal Australian Air Force, in the

South China Sea in particular, are routine, but there are clear indications that they are getting more assertive and at times even aggressive.

Production crews from CNN and NBC both got something of a direct taste of this during flights aboard Navy P-8As on missions over the South China Sea earlier this year.

Last year, the Australian Department of Defense said that a RAAF P-8As had been damaged after a PLA J-16 Flanker fighter jet released unspecified countermeasures – likely decoy flares – in front of it during an altercation in international airspace over the South China Sea. That followed another incident earlier in 2022 involving a RAAF Poseidon and PLA warships closer to Australia. Interestingly, Chinese authorities claimed that the P-8A dropped sonobuoys around their naval task force during that latter incident.

The PLA's harassment of other U.S. military assets engaged in the monitoring of Chinese submarine activity, or that at least could have been, extends beyond aircraft, too. In 2009, U.S. officials accused ships from a number of Chinese civil agencies, as well as commercial Chinese fishing boats, of conducting dangerous maneuvers around the ocean surveillance ship USNS Impeccable as it sailed in international waters near Hainan. That ship, as well as the four Victorious class vessels, are the only ones the U.S. Navy currently has that are capable of using the powerful Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System (SURTASS), which is designed to provide "long range detection [of submarines] and cueing for tactical weapons platforms or other vessels of interest."

The PLA's brief seizure of a U.S. Navy glider-type uncrewed underwater vehicle (UUV) in 2016 may also have been tied to concerns that the undersea drone was being used to snoop on Chinese submarines.

Chinese aircraft and warships have of course harassed other military assets belonging to the U.S. armed forces and those of other countries in the South China Sea and elsewhere in the Pacific that have nothing to do with anti-submarine

warfare. At the same time, the comments in the recent research paper, together with these past incidents, point to the PLA having particularly pronounced fears about the ability of its submarines to operate freely.

The PLAN has worked very hard in the past few decades to significantly expand not only the size of its submarine fleets, but also acquire more advanced types. In parallel, the PLAN has been pushing to conduct submarine operations further and further from the mainland, including with the longer-range deployments of its growing number of Type 094 ballistic missile submarines. This is all in line with broader Chinese efforts to become more of a global military power.

There is similar evidence that the PLA is worried about its own abilities to track and otherwise monitor U.S. and other foreign submarine activity in the Pacific, in general, and that it has been taking steps to expand the scale and scope of its capabilities in this regard.

All of this is also coming amid an increasing willingness on the part of the U.S. Navy to talk about its submarine operations, especially in the Pacific with an eye toward deterring China.

"I would no longer characterize ourselves as a silent service," Navy Rear Adm. Jeffrey Jablon, the commander of Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet (SUBPAC), notably told author and defense expert Robbin Laird earlier this year for a piece Breaking Defense recently published. "Deterrence is a major mission for the submarine force. You can't have a credible deterrent without communicating your capabilities; if the adversary doesn't know anything about that specific deterrent, it's not a deterrent."

Altogether, no matter what exactly transpired in the northern portion of the South China Sea on January 5, 2021, the PLA-linked research paper, at least reported by SCMP, makes clear that Chinese authorities took notice. That now-disclosed incident speaks to broader Chinese concerns about American anti-submarine warfare capabilities in the region and increasing undersea competition between the two countries. And yet it is just one small snapshot of a much wider

picture, one in which similar incidents likely happen with increasing regularity without ever being reported.

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/submarine-hunt-incident-a-peak-into-cat-and-mouse-games-in-south-china-sea>

### **The U.S. Navy Has Its Eyes On A New Submarine Base That Will Help It Keep Track Of China's Growing Undersea Fleet**

(BUSINESS INSIDER 19 MAY 23) ... Christopher Woody

US and British submarines will soon be operating out of Australia, giving the allies greater reach and presence in the Indian and Pacific oceans, where undersea activity by friends and foes alike has been intensifying.

In March, President Joe Biden and his British and Australian counterparts announced a timeline for Australia to acquire new nuclear-powered submarines, first buying US-built subs in the early 2030s and then receiving the first Australian-built boats by the early 2040s.

In the years ahead, US and British subs will visit Australia more frequently, and as soon as 2027, those navies will begin basing attack submarines — one British and as many as four from the US — at HMAS Stirling, an Australian navy base near the city of Perth on the Indian Ocean coast.

Designated Submarine Rotational Forces-West, the subs will rotate through HMAS Stirling rather than being permanently assigned, and officials say their presence will help develop Australia's capacity and capability to operate its own nuclear-powered subs.

"This rotational force will help build Australia's stewardship," a senior Biden administration official said ahead of the March 13 announcement. "It will also bolster deterrence with more US and UK submarines forward in the Indo-Pacific."

The AUKUS deal comes as each country's main rivals — China and Russia — expand their submarine fleets and operations in the Pacific.

Russia continues to deliver new submarines to its Pacific Fleet, including two in one day in

October. One of those was the latest of the Yasen-class guided-missile subs, which worry US commanders because their ability to operate more quietly than other Russian subs could challenge the US Navy's ability to track them.

Yasen-class subs operating in the Atlantic and the Pacific present "a dual-flank challenge" for the US, the admiral in charge of the Office of Naval Intelligence said earlier this year. The head of US Northern Command, which is responsible for North America, said this spring it was "just a matter of probably a year or two" until Yasen-class subs were "a persistent threat" to the US mainland.

China's submarines are generally not as advanced as Russia's, but its navy has put "a high priority" on modernizing them, the US Defense Department said in its most recent report on the Chinese military, though that fleet will "grow modestly" as China focuses on improving the force, adding new technologies, and expanding its shipyards.

Nonetheless, China's undersea force has made notable developments. Its newest Yuan-class diesel-electric subs are quiet and have more advanced sonars and "might be actually pretty good at anti-submarine warfare," said Bryan Clark, a senior fellow and director of the Center for Defense Concepts and Technology at the Hudson Institute.

The Defense Department report also says China's six operational Jin-class nuclear-powered ballistic-missile subs are likely already conducting "near-continuous at-sea deterrence patrols," a sign that China's submarine force continues to improve its operational capabilities.

The head of US Strategic Command, which oversees US nuclear forces, told lawmakers this spring that those Jin-class subs are being armed with new third-generation JL-3 ballistic missiles that can reach the US from the South China Sea, a first for Chinese subs.

For the US Navy, those developments make the ability to base subs closer to the Western Pacific a greater priority.

Twenty-five of the US Navy's 49 attack

submarines are based in the Pacific, according to Rear Adm. Jeffrey Jablon, commander of the US Pacific Fleet submarine force, and the Navy has moved some of them farther west. In November 2021, Jablon announced that the number of subs based in Guam would increase from two to five; the fifth arrived in March 2022.

Jablon also announced in November 2022 that the Navy would increase investment in its submarine support facilities in Guam in order to expand its operational capability there.

Like Guam, operating from Australia would put more subs closer to the Western Pacific and allow those subs to spend more time at sea. Subs based at Perth could do longer-term deployments, operating in the region for up to a year "as opposed to a normal deployment, which is six months where you spend a month transiting either way from the US West Coast and you basically get four months on station," Clark, a former US Navy submarine officer, told Insider.

Travel time from the West or East Coast "is obviated if you're staging from" Perth, Harry Harris Jr. a retired US admiral and former commander of US Pacific Command, said in response to a question from Insider at a think-tank event on March 30.

Harris Jr. called SRF-West "a positive" and said "it certainly increases our day-to-day presence and numbers in the Indian Ocean [and] certainly in the Western Pacific."

Forward-deployed subs also usually have a higher operational tempo, and with roughly a half-dozen subs in Guam and three to four in Perth, Clark said, "you're going to have on any given day easily a half-dozen to eight submarines underway, driving around, which is more than we have today."

"The end result could be almost doubling the US submarine presence in the Western Pacific," Clark added.

Chinese submarines now appear to operate mostly in the "near seas" off of the Chinese coast, especially its missile subs in the "bastion" of the South China Sea, where China's naval and air forces offer additional protection.

The development of more advanced subs, particularly nuclear-powered subs capable of staying at sea for longer, may allow the Chinese navy to send more subs into more distant waters for longer periods, including into the Indian Ocean, where China's military is likely to "significantly increase" its presence in the coming years as part of a strategy that calls for "an ability to project power and fight in distant seas," according to the Office of Naval Intelligence.

Chinese subs heading to the Indian Ocean are likely to use straits in the Indonesian archipelago that are closer to Australia, which are deeper and allow those subs to remain submerged, according to Collin Koh, a research fellow focused on naval affairs at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

"Having UK and US subs based in Perth can provide a vantage point to range operations into those areas," Koh said.

AUKUS' ambitions for increasing the number of submarines in the Indian and Pacific oceans still face hurdles. Australia will have to develop the institutional knowledge and facilities to maintain nuclear-powered subs, which it has never done before, and its future sub orders may further tax US shipyards, which are straining to deliver subs ordered by the US Navy. Delays on sub repairs are also challenging the US Navy's ability to keep subs in the water.

But additional British and eventually Australian submarines in the region will ease the burden of tracking China's increasingly active sub fleet, a task that now falls largely on US submarines. "This may compel Beijing to seek to minimize the risks of detectability and trackability of its submarines," Koh told Insider.

Until the Chinese military improves its ability "to project and sustain a wider array of military capabilities" to help keep those allied subs at bay, its subs may continue to focus on operations within range of friendly naval and land-based forces, Koh said. "This means the AUKUS program may complicate Beijing's efforts to range submarine operations out into the far-seas."

<https://www.businessinsider.com/aukus-plans>

## -for-new-submarine-base-amid-increased-undersea-competition-2023-5

### **The Man Who Kept the Secrets**

**Eighty years ago, a U.S. Navy captain chose to go down with the ship.**

By James Freeman

May 26, 2023 at 4:00 pm ET

The son of a Medal of Honor recipient always suspected that something was wrong with the official story about his father's service in World War II. And the son was right to be suspicious. His father's sacrifice 80 years ago was even more significant than initially reported.

The Medal of Honor that U.S. Navy Capt. John Cromwell posthumously received in the 1940s carried a citation that certainly described remarkable courage and dedication:



U.S. aircraft return from a bombing run on the airfield at Param Island, Truk Atoll during World War

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as commander of a submarine coordinated attack group with flag in the U.S.S. Sculpin, during the 9th war patrol of that vessel in enemy-controlled waters off Truk Island, 19 November 1943. Undertaking this patrol prior to the launching of our first large-scale offensive in the Pacific, Capt. Cromwell, alone of the entire Task Group, possessed secret intelligence information of our submarine strategy and tactics, scheduled Fleet movements, and specific attack plans. Constantly vigilant and precise in carrying out his secret orders, he moved his undersea flotilla inexorably forward despite savage opposition and

established a line of submarines to southeastward of the main Japanese stronghold at Truk. Cool and undaunted as the submarine, rocked and battered by Japanese depth charges, sustained terrific battle damage and sank to an excessive depth, he authorized the Sculpin to surface and engage the enemy in a gunfight, thereby providing an opportunity for the crew to abandon ship. Determined to sacrifice himself rather than risk capture and subsequent danger of revealing plans under Japanese torture or use of drugs, he stoically remained aboard the mortally wounded vessel as she plunged to her death.”

Cromwell allowed his crew to escape and then accepted a death sentence—and surely it was no pleasant death—rather than risk the chance that he might surrender useful intelligence to the enemy.

Anyone who has raised children may get a chuckle at the idea that even such a reported parental example was somehow found wanting by Cromwell's offspring. But the son wasn't being disrespectful—his own distinguished service in the Navy informed his skepticism.

And the kid was on to something, even if it took much of his life to learn the truth. In 2011 the Navy named the new headquarters of its Submarine Learning Center in Groton, Conn., after Cromwell. Noting the event, McClatchy's Jennifer McDermott reported on his son:

Growing up, John P. Cromwell Jr. knew his father was considered a hero in the submarine service for sacrificing his own life to avoid being captured during World War II...

The family was told that Cromwell knew details of the impending operation in the Gilbert Islands, the son said, and he didn't want to reveal anything if the Japanese tortured him.

“I never could buy that original story,” he said. “Once I got on active duty, and I saw how things went, it didn't seem like that was that big of a deal that he would have had to give up his life for it.”

The younger Cromwell would also go on to serve as a captain during his own 30-year career in the Navy. But it would be decades before he learned the rest of the story of his father's

sacrifice. Ms. McDermott added:

The son would later learn that by late 1941 Navy cryptologists had deciphered the Japanese naval code, and senior officers were reading decrypted enemy messages.

As a division commander, Cromwell was privy to this highly classified intelligence, code-named ULTRA, his son said. He also happened to be close friends with one of the people who helped crack the code. If the Japanese knew the code was compromised, they would have changed it and made it more difficult for the U.S. Navy to track their vessels.

When information about ULTRA eventually came to light, the son said that it “all came together.” It was this secret that his father died to protect. “It was probably the biggest secret of the war,” he said. “And even when the citation was written up, it was still top secret. So, in his citation, they waffled and didn’t give the true facts or the reason he went down. He knew the code was broken.”

On this Memorial Day weekend, it’s essentially impossible to adequately honor the sacrifices of those like Captain John Cromwell who have given their lives for our freedom. But let’s try.

As for the kid in this story, Capt. John P. Cromwell Jr. passed away five years after that McClatchy report at the ripe old age of 88. He was survived by his wife of 63 years as well as numerous children and grandchildren. A death notice in the Capital Gazette recounted:

He is remembered by his family and friends for being a true gentleman, having a warm smile and a quick wit. He was always glad to see old friends, drink martinis, and watch Navy football, win or lose. As a father and grandfather, he provided guidance and wisdom on countless occasions, and he will be genuinely missed by all who knew him.

Reading this passage, even those of us who never knew him are missing him.

Rest in peace, Captains Cromwell.

*Submitted by George Stevens, MT2(SS) G 68-71*

## **The U.S. Navy Has A Secret Submarine That No One Knows What It Does**

By Peter Suci



An artist's concept of the nuclear-powered submarine SEAWOLF (SSN-21).

### **USS Jimmy Carter, A History –**

There are currently nine aircraft carriers named for former presidents of the United States, while a tenth is now under construction. However, President Jimmy Carter isn’t included in the list of former commanders-in-chief to be so honored – rather Carter has the distinction of being recognized for his service as a United States Navy submariner with a Seawolf-class nuclear-powered, fast attack submarine (SSN) named for him. Carter was the only submarine-qualified sailor to go on to become the nation’s chief executive. He was the nuclear engineer officer on the Pre-Commissioning Unit Seawolf (SSN 575) in the 1950s.

### **Enter The New Seawolf-class: USS Jimmy Carter**

The new Seawolf-class of the late 1980s vintage was something quite amazing. SSN-23 is the third and final boat of the class – and due to extensive modifications from the original design is even described as a subclass. The boat is the only submarine to be named for a living former president. Laid down in 1998, launched in 2004, and commissioned in 2005, USS Jimmy Carter is one of the most sophisticated attack submarines ever built. Larger and more advanced than her sister boats, SSN-23 has also reportedly been tasked with taking on a number of secretive missions for the U.S. Navy.

## **Meet the Seawolf**

Designed to address the threat of Soviet ballistic missile submarines, and to replace the aging Los Angeles-class of attack submarines, the Seawolf-class of nuclear-powered fast attack submarines (SSN) has been described as the best of the best.

A total of 29 boats were to be constructed over a 10-year period – a number that was then reduced to 12 – but only three were launched. Cost was an issue. The boats also became less necessary with the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. It meant they were designed for a foe that no longer existed.

At approximately \$3 – \$3.5 billion per vessel, the boats were simply too expensive, especially in the wake of changing global geopolitics. Instead, the United States Navy opted for the smaller and more cost-effective Virginia-class submarine program. That could turn out to be a huge mistake as the United States is now facing a Cold War 2.0 against near-peer adversaries including Russia and China, which have each engaged in new submarine programs.

### **The Seawolf Has Claws**

The fast attack subs were equipped with an advanced suite of electronics, including a 24-foot diameter spherical sonar array mounted in the bow, a wide-aperture flank array sonar mounted on the sides, and the recently added ability to carry a towed-array sonar. Each of the three SSNs of the Seawolf-class further features a modular design that has allowed for later upgrades including weapons development and better sonar systems, and even today, these remain somewhat “future proof.”

The boats lack external weapons, but each was designed with eight torpedo tubes – twice as many as the Los Angeles-class, along with a double-deck torpedo room to allow for simultaneous engagement of multiple threats. It also had a 30 percent increase in weapons magazine providing storage for a combination of up to 50 Mark 47 heavyweight torpedoes, Sub-Harpoon anti-ship missiles, and Tomahawk missiles.

## **Here's Why The M1 Abrams Is Feared By So Many - 40 Reasons**

The Seawolf-class is equipped with a strengthened sail that permits operations under the polar ice cap, and the highest speed of any U.S. submarine. As importantly, the design efforts focused on noise reduction – it was up to 70 times quieter than the initial generation of Los Angeles-class boats and 10 times quieter than the Improved Los Angeles submarines.

The boats were also designed to be true hunters, and could easily seek out the best the Soviet Navy had to offer, including its Akula-class. The Seawolf sonar suite includes a BQQ 5D with bow-mounted active/passive arrays and wide aperture passive flank arrays, along with TB-16 surveillance TB-29 tactical towed arrays – each of the latter able to be upgraded to more advanced hardware. The boats have been refitted with a Lockheed Martin AN/BQQ-10(V4) sonar processing system under the acoustic-rapid commercial-off-the-shelf insertion (A-RCI) program.

### **“Always The Best”**

Though few – apart from Sean Penn, perhaps – would ever suggest that Jimmy Carter was the “best” president, the motto of the boat to bear his name is actually “Semper Optima” (Latin for “Always the Best”). It is meant to honor his Naval passion.

The USS Jimmy Carter was launched on May 13, 2004, and commissioned for service the following February 19th with a crew of 15 officers and 129 enlisted. Power is supplied from a single S6W series reactor, which provides an unlimited ocean-going range, while she has an underwater speed in excess of 25 knots.

The boat, which is larger than her sister attack submarines, displaces 12,140 tons under full load and is 453 feet in length with a beam that measures 40 feet. The larger size is due to a modification that included adding special thrusters fore and aft that allow the sub to remain stationary underwater, as well as a 100-foot hull extension known as the Multi-Mission Platform (MMP). It allows SSN-23 to carry remotely operated



vehicles, cable spools, special-operations craft, and other advanced technologies needed to carry out classified operations and “enhanced warfighting capabilities.” The MMP can be used to deploy Navy SEALs or other special operations forces.

The exact types of missions USS Jimmy Carter has conducted in the past 18 years remain classified.

Still, it has been seen returning to port flying the “skull and crossbones,” a tradition among submarine crews that its mission was conducted successfully. The boat has Battle Efficiency awards and a Presidential Unit Citation, suggesting it has conducted some important – and likely even dangerous – missions. This may have included tapping undersea fiber-optic communications and conducting intelligence-gathering missions.

Whatever missions SSN-23 has taken part in; it is like the boat and her crew proved they were always the best.

### **What an Expert Told 19FortyFive**

“The Seawolf-class was a quantum leap over the older Los Angeles-class boats for sure, integrating new technology that was not on any U.S. Navy attack submarines before,” explained a retired Electric Boat engineer who worked on the Seawolf-class submarine program as they were being designed and built. He spoke to 19FortyFive on background.

“The Navy came to us with a set of very hard-to-match metrics for the sub to hit in terms of stealth, speed, and armaments. We told them that some of the tech to fulfill those needs did not exist yet. They gave us the budget to do just that. And the USS Jimmy Carter was very much in line with that vision.”



Image: U.S. Navy.



BREMERTON, Wash. (Dec. 15, 2016) – The Seawolf-class fast-attack submarine USS Connecticut (SSN 22) departs Puget Sound Naval Shipyard for sea trials following a maintenance availability. (U.S. Navy photo by Thiep Van Nguyen II/released)



Seawolf-class Submarine.



Image: Creative Commons.

Submitted by Chuck Hladik, TM2(SS) G 67-70, Assoc. Life Member, USSVI USS Oklahoma Base Commander, Holland Club



The Los Angeles Class Attack submarine USS Key West at periscope depth.

Photo credit: Photographer's Mate 1st Class Kevin H. Tierney / U.S. Navy

## **Nuclear Submarine Officer recalls when his submarine had to do an emergency deep dive after the periscope came up inside a cardboard box while the boat was coming to periscope depth**

By **Dario Leone** May 12 2023

*'Apparently, the scope came up inside the box. Not so much a needle in a haystack, more like threading a needle in a haystack,' John Hartzog, former US Navy Nuclear Submarine Officer.*

The periscope is the eye of the submarine. It was invented and developed solely for the purpose of providing a means to view the surface without fear of detection by surface craft.

Have submarines coming to periscope depth ever hit something?

John Hartzog, former US Navy Nuclear Submarine Officer, recalls on Quora;

'While on patrol in the central Mediterranean on a fast attack one day in the early 90s, we were coming to periscope depth to get a satellite fix, get our radio traffic, etc. It was one of those rare days, when the water is flat as a pond, and no one else was within 20 miles. Sunny, gorgeous summer day. We made routine preparations for coming to, including clearing baffles. Once we start driving the ship up, the periscope is raised, and the Officer of the Deck [OOD] trains the scope upward, and starts scanning the underside of the surface, looking for "shapes and shadows", while continually announcing, "no shapes or shadows."

'Just as we approached the depth where the scope is breaking the surface, he yells, "emergency deep" ... this gets everyone's pucker factor up quickly, as it implies, we were about to co-occupy a volume with something else, i.e, hit it. Now, sonar had not heard anything, but passive sonar has its limitations. A sail boat on sail without an engine or generator running is pretty much impossible to hear, for instance. Emergency deep results in the control room crew immediately and automatically bringing the sub to a safe-from-being-hit depth... rapidly.'

Hartzog concludes;

'So, we get to our safe depth (simply deep enough to pass under the deepest draft ship in existence, with some margin). The OOD explains that the scope went black dark just as it broke the surface. We again clear baffles. Nothing heard. So, we circle around where we previously attempted to come to up, and finally try again. When we get there, a cardboard box is floating upside down. Apparently, the scope came up inside the box. Not so much a needle in a haystack, more like threading a needle in a haystack.'

**[READ HERE](#)**

*This is a very long article. I've printed several paragraphs so that if you are interested you can click on the link at the end.*

**No More Silent Service As Marine CH-53s Resupply Ballistic Submarine In Pacific**

The at-sea resupply of the USS Maine highlights

new concepts of operations and a broader openness about Navy submarine activities.

(THE DRIVE 17 MAY 23) ... Joseph Trevithick

The U.S. Navy's top submarine officer in the Pacific has said that his forces are no longer just "a silent service" in a recent interview with Breaking Defense. This reflects an increasing willingness by the Navy to discuss the activities of its Ohio class missile submarines and other types to help deter potential adversaries, particularly China. An announcement today from the U.S. Marine Corps about resupplying an Ohio class ballistic missile submarine, or SSBN, in the Philippine Sea using CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters reflects this policy shift and highlights new concepts of operations.

The U.S. Marine Corps' III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF), headquartered on the Japanese island of Okinawa, issued a press release about the recent vertical replenishment of the Ohio class SSBN USS Maine in the Philippine Sea earlier today. Two CH-53Es from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 462 (HMH-462), part of III MEF's 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (1st MAW), carried out the recent replenishment mission. Cargo was lowered down to the submarine via hoists on the helicopters.

The Navy currently has 14 Ohio SSBNs in service, which form the sea-based leg of America's nuclear deterrence triad. The service has four other Ohios converted into conventionally-armed guided missile submarines. Those boats are capable of carrying up to 154 Tomahawk cruise missiles, as well as serving as motherships for special operations forces and uncrewed platforms, underwater command and intelligence fusion centers, and more, as detailed in this past War Zone feature.

"The U.S. Navy's ballistic missile submarine force has demonstrated yet again that we have the proven capability to work seamlessly alongside III Marine Expeditionary Force to execute our mission, allowing us to remain on station," Navy Cmdr. Travis L. Wood, the USS Maine's commanding officer, said in a statement about the recent vertical replenishment of his boat

in the Philippine Sea. "Rotary-wing vertical replenishment such as this allow us to quickly resupply so that we can constantly maintain pressure against any adversary who would wish to do harm to the homeland."

The Navy's interest in this kind of resupply capability for its forward-deployed submarines has been apparent for some time now. The service has demonstrated the potential to use various aircraft, including Air Force C-17A Globemaster III cargo planes, Marine MV-22 tilt-rotors, and Navy MH-60 Sea Hawk helicopters and drones, for these kinds of missions in recent years. Even platforms with limited capacity could still be used to deliver vital spare parts, medical supplies, or other cargo to submarines, as well as other ships, at sea.

All told, the recent use of Marine CH-53Es to resupply the USS Maine in the Philippine Sea is a demonstration of what could be a very useful capability in various scenarios in the future. At the same time, the public disclosure of the at-sea replenishment mission, and of Maine's presence in the region at all, reflects a larger change in the Navy's willingness to talk openly about its submarine activities to help deter opponents in the Pacific and beyond.

<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/no-more-silent-service-as-marine-ch-53s-resupply-ballistic-submarine-in-pacific>

## An A-ganger's Lament



**LAW OF MECHANICAL REPAIR**

After your hands become coated with grease  
your nose will begin to itch,  
and you'll have to pee

**PICTURES PROVIDED BY  
DAVID WEEKS, CAPT RET.**

In the recent passing of mom (wife of Gold Crew Commissioning CO Bob Weeks) I've found some photos that may be of interest to your website. I've attached a few and will undoubtedly uncover many more.

Warm regards, Dave Weeks,  
CAPT USN (Ret)



**Forward to the WWII Story  
By Karen Huckeba**

I was given the letter in February of 2021. I had planned to send it out that Memorial Day but it got too busy with life and reunions. I put it up then Covid hit and I forgot about it. I found it again this April when I did some deep cleaning - the first since before I got Covid. I felt that God knew this letter would make more of an impact with the Ukraine war going on, plus our country seems to be in a mess and God knew this letter would speak to a lot of people. Especially for service members-it's a unique look from a survivor's heart at the thankfulness of being rescued by our forces. Someone said people seem to forget what Memorial Day means and look at it more as the start of summer vacation.

This letter really makes you think. I love the way she ended it. I sent it out to lots of people, hopefully they will share it with their kids and others. Mark said Sue sent it to lots of people-that's how we got one. Madeleine has passed now but her letter will live on. Feel free to send it to whoever else you want to. Hopefully, it will make people stop and think what direction our country is headed in.

# A True World War II Story

①

I have been ask to talk to you about my life during the german occupation of France. It is hard for anyone to understand what it is like to loose your freedom to an invading army until you yourself have experienced it. When the germans marched into France my father thought it would be better for us to go to free France. France was divided into 2 parts, the demarkation line runed right thru the middle of France. Paris, my home, was occupied later by the germans. My father took a truck & trailer, like the semi we see here, cut a few holes on the side for ventilation and put a few belongings of 3 families and about 15 people of our family & friends. His friend then drove us to the Central part of France, the free France, we never reached it.

After we left Paris, we made good time for a short time, then we meet with the largest exodus of people I have ever seen. They came by cars, bicycle, carts, on foot, taking with them the only thing they could carry, trying to flee the germans. We then started going at a snail's pace, a few blocks a day under constant air attacks. When we could not go any further an elderly couple took us in, and gave us much needed food & shelter. I was the oldest one in my family, having 3 sisters and a baby brother. During this time, we were under constant air attacks. This came from the Italians. Theye planes would come out of nowhere and machine gun us trying to kill as many of us as they could. We had taken the mattress out of the trailer to air them out, and laid them on top

NOTE II YOU KNOW SORT A

(2)

of the hedge rows along the road. They became our shelters, we could hide underneath them in the day time as soon as we could hear the planes, trying to escape of the bullets of the machine guns.

My father stayed in Paris to work hoping to join us later, But, when the german came they took from his company a truck & trailer and made my father drive for them. For 4 months we did not know if he was dead or alive or where he might be -

From his friend he found out liberace were - He had to abandon his truck and cross at site a very large treacherous river - Believe me it was a great relief to us to see him alive & well. My father decided to return us to Paris, we could not live indefinitely in a troulu or with these dear people.

We were also very lucky the germans never found out that a member of our family was Jewish, My uncle My aunt & him left France for Tunisia as soon as France fell. If the germans had discovered this relationships, my entire family would have been sent to a concentration camp, ~~and probably would not be here today~~ - The germans wanted to destroy the Jewish race & any one associated with them.

For a Moment, just picture yourself a 12 year old girl, your country has just been invaded by the germans. As you come to school today, your teacher tells you no more French history would be taught, but that german history - Hitler's doctrines hold to take its place. You are not asked

you are told to do it. This happened to me. I was going to a Catholique school at the time, and was taught by nuns. Our teacher entered the room, told us the news. I was starting to learn English & Typing at the time. Our typewriter and french history books were confiscated and replaced with german ~~ones~~ <sup>books</sup>. This dear nun looked at us with such a determined look in her eyes and said - "Navi, Nevi, Never". After this the school was closed. I then entered public school and going only now then - not on a daily basis. The reason, we were often under air attacks & bombed.

Our parents and many other parents, felt it would be unsafe to send us, in fear of having an attack and afraid either us or our parents would be killed or separated. School during the occupation was very much at a stand still. The germans had occupied most of the school buildings & colleges. Life at this time of my life was unreal, uneasy, unsafe, very scary and very much unwelcome. My young life and my teenage years were filled with fear of losing a parent, a friend or both.

I remember going to bed at night for many years with my clothes on and a little bag by the side of my bed, with my name, my parents name & address & a few clothes in it. We were prepared to move quickly, as soon as the air raid siren would sound, we were up and running for the ~~air~~ shelter my father had built for us in the repair shop of the bank.

(4)

During one of these raids, our neighborhood was bombed. For 30 minutes time approximately 3000 people lost their lives. Entire families were killed, several city blocks near and around my home were destroyed. Many were left homeless and orphans. Many of my school friends were among the dead. It was a very hard task for me to help identify the victims, one that has remained in my mind to this day.

I will never forget the mass funeral held a few days later, the whole neighborhood of thousands of people attended, the funeral was held on a large square outside the Cathedral. Many caskets held the remains of those unable to be identified. It was a sobering experience, I fully realized the meaning of war that day.

I remember doing my home work with gloves on my hands, by the light warmth of a fire made with newspapers or anything we could find to burn which was very little.

We would go at night on the railroad track close to our home to steal some coke, which is a type of coal use to burn in the locomotives. My mother was terrified we would be caught, which we almost did twice, but nevertheless, we returned time after time anyway, then one day the Germans came in the streets and told the people a train had arrived with food, to come & get some. It was very tempting believe me for we were so hungry, but my mother forbade it and made sure we



(5)

did not go. She knew this was a trick. The Germans were very good at that. As soon as the people entered the cars, the car doors were shut, you could hear the people shouting or screaming, then the train pulled away taking them to a concentration camp. We never heard or knew of their fate after that.

We lived in fear of the German soldiers. Their propaganda was always how good they were to us. This was the lie we heard & read about every day. We knew better, our empty stomachs & cold bodies told us otherwise. No food, no heat, no clothes, no freedom.

My family was however luckier than others. We could raise a few Rabbits & a small garden, we did not have to go through the garbage cans as others did. No clothes, not for years, we had ration tickets for food & clothes. To get the small amount of food the ration allowed us, we spend many long hours in line, ~~at~~<sup>and</sup> being told when your turn came that no more food was available. As I was the oldest this was my responsibility.

I remember buying wooden soles for shoes. Cutting strips of old worn sheets, making straps of them. Nailing these straps to the soles. These were my shoes for summer & winter. My feet were so sore from frostbites I could hardly walk, we did not have any socks to wear. When we had old knitted garments, we would unravel the yarn and knit another one. We had no soap to wash with, the one we had felt so smell like home made and no hot water. We tried to keep ourselves as clean as best we could with what we had, we got lice in our hair.

(6)

We had, like most children, had to have our hair cut short using alcohol - save to kill the lice

I remember my father building a frame over a picture and behind it build a short wave radio antenna so we could hear from our radio, the B.B.C from London

This was the only way we had for 4 years to know what was happening outside France - If the Germans would have found out we would have been shot on the spot.

This was our hope, to know that the allied forces were on their way. We were always hungry & cold, we could go nowhere or do anything, the Germans were every where like lice. We were afraid to speak with our friends, neighbors or even members of our family, in fear that, in return for food, they would turn us in to the Gestapo, which was the German police. This happened quite often.

We were an isolated people. We did not know who to trust so we trusted no one. My father would caution us often. Remember, the wall have ears. We eventually came to hate the Germans - A feeling I am afraid is still within me. We would do anything to do the opposite of what they wanted, this was very dangerous yet we did it.

I was working in a grocery store, the lady who own it had such hate for the Germans that everytime they would come to get the wine, she had emptied the bottle half way - refilled them with water - She was caught twice nevertheless she continued until the war ended.

This took courage.

A ~~young~~ <sup>older</sup> friend of mine was taking to Dachau a concentration camp. No reason was given for his arrest, when he returned we could not believe what had become of him. He never recovered. He was lucky he even came back.

Then the day we had hoped a pray for so long had arrived. It was very hard for us to believe it, for we feared we were doomed ~~for life~~ ~~under~~ to live under the Germans for ever. The allies had landed June 6, 1944 - D day. I will never forget that, we were overwhelmed, we wanted to go out & shout for joy, but we had to keep quiet a little longer. This reminds me of a mother putting her hand on her child's mouth to stop him from screaming, yet a little noise escape until it cannot be contain any longer.

Then came the liberation of my city, Paris, no words have ever been writing yet, or ever will to describe, the joy, the ecstasy we felt. Tears, shouts, prayers, happiness all combined. When the allies entered Paris, the streets were empty, but not for long, a mass of people surrounded them, expressing the best they could their gratitude & thankfulness for getting rid of the boogie. A name we gave the Germans, not a very nice one at that.

Some of us French girls expressed ourselves a little stronger than others, for we fell in love with some of these young soldiers, and eventually married them, but when you feel so happy to be free you sometime go a little overboard. Anyway I am glad I was one of them.

I hope none of you will ever have to suffer an occupation - cannot start to tell you the horrors of war, you cannot comprehend the madness of it, unless you yourselves experience it. How can I describe to you the whistling of a bomb near you, the shaking of the earth as it hit its target, the horrible noise it makes as it exploded and the heat that burned my hands as I picked up the pieces of shrapnel from that bomb. This I did.

As I am now a citizen of this great country, where peace rules, where freedom of speech, freedom of choice, freedom to worship ~~is~~, I feel very privileged to have had the chance to share part of my life with you. It is a country of the people, by the people, and for the people.

You are the future of America. Do not shirk your responsibilities, when you see the flag of your country do not burn it, remember what it stands for, respect it but most of all defend it with all your might, mind, & strength. Yes even with your life if necessary. I wish you could visit a Veteran hospital or a Cemetery in France where thousands ~~and~~ <sup>upon</sup> thousands of brave soldiers are buried. They have given the supreme sacrifice, they have given their lives. No one wants to send a loved one to war, but the price of freedom is very high.

I hope & pray none of you will have to

Remember also that those who so gallantly gave their lives for freedom, never enjoyed the reward of their sacrifice, you do, we all do. Take care of that reward, respect those who gave it to you and most of all do all you can to Keep America Free

9

When I return to my homeland, my heart beats a little faster as the plane lands, these are my people, my family, this is the land of my birth. It feels wonderful, yet after a few days something happens - I feel restless, uneasy, fear comes over me once again but as soon as I get back on American soil, believe me I feel relieved.

Remember America is the greatest country in the world. In the year 1831 Alet de Tocqueville, famous french historian made this statement.

America is great because she is good. and if America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great.

It is our responsibility to keep America good so she can continue to be great.

Thank you God bless you

MADELEINE ORSI JOHNSON

Madeline is the mother of a very dear friend of Mark's. She shared this letter with us. Very enlightening!

Print a copy, complete and mail with your check to the address below:



## Event Registration 655 Reunion #12

11-15 October 2023

Hilton Garden Inn Summerville  
406 Sigma Drive, Summerville SC 29486  
843.832.1304



To Reserve Rooms: call the number above or link to

<https://group.hiltongardeninn.com/y4h1lh>

Reserve Group Rates by referencing either: USS Henry Stimson Reunion OR code UHS

Hotel Reservation Deadline Monday SEPT 11, 2023

*Hotel Reservation is the responsibility of the individual.*

Reunion Registration Deadline Monday SEPT 11, 2023

[Reunion Web Page](#)

**The hotel does not provide a shuttle from the airport. Rental cars, LYFT or Uber are available for you.**

Complete (print legibly), print the form and mail along with a check or money order payable to: **Henry L. Stimson Reunion** to: 655 Reunion Secretary, 102 Greenhurst Ave., Summerville SC 29485 [655webmaster@ssbn655.org](mailto:655webmaster@ssbn655.org)

Shipmate Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship (place X beside correct one):      Spouse      Significant Other      Family      Friend

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_

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](http://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](#)