

American Submariners Inc.
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404

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Permit No. 445
Chula Vista, CA



The Silent Sentinel

January 2010



Our Creed

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

From Page 16

Once the fight was evident, would the Navy be able to track Iran's three Kilo-class and dozen domestically produced light subs and preposition U.S. attack submarines to take them out? How quickly could our destroyers reduce Iranian threats to the U.S. mine sweepers that would re-open sea lanes? Even a small disruption in the flow of oil supplies would shake global markets and quickly raise questions about U.S. capabilities to maintain global order. Naval warplanners would certainly want to get the new Littoral Combat Ship into the fight to buttress their arguments that that class of warship is perfectly suited for achieving sea control in such relatively shallow battlespaces. On the other hand, would the Navy feel confident that its carrier strike group screens would protect aircraft carriers in waters covered by mines, new torpedoes, and anti-ship missiles? U.S. Navy training, readiness, planning, and operational execution would be tested for all to see. Few can doubt that the U.S. would prevail, and probably quickly, in any naval clash with the Iranians. Nonetheless, it would be the first real maritime challenge to the U.S. Navy in a generation. It might also be a test of how well the military can adapt to new asymmetric tactics. Equally importantly, it would highlight how successfully the new joint Cooperative Strategy has positioned the Navy to respond to global threats in an increasingly unstable world.

Great Green Fleet

Inside The Ring

By Bill Gertz, *Washington Times*, Dec. 17, 2009

As world representatives debate climate change in Copenhagen and skeptics continue to level charges of scientific fraud on the subject, Navy Secretary Ray Mabus is taking the sea service green.

A report by Mr. Mabus' office states that in the 21st century, the Navy will deploy a "great green fleet" that will seek aggressively to reduce the use of fossil fuels and seek to secure energy supplies.

In an interview with Inside the Ring, Mr. Mabus disputed critics who might suggest environmentalism was more important than force readiness. "Our No. 1 concern in becoming energy-efficient and moving away from fossil fuel is to improve war-fighting," he said.

Also, Mr. Mabus said green technology is available, noting that an F-18 jet has been flown with biofuel instead of kerosene. "It worked fine," he said.

Mr. Mabus also said the Navy's first green ship is the amphibious assault carrier USS Makin Island, which is propelled with both gas turbines and electric motors.

In a preface to the report, Mr. Mabus stated that he is committed to "energy reform" and reduction in the use of fossil fuels.

"The underlying reasons for reform are clear," he said. "Our energy sources are not secure. We need to be more efficient in energy use, and we emit too much carbon. Overreliance on fossil fuels is bad strategy, bad business and bad for the planet."

He said the U.S. military uses 93 percent of all federally used energy supplies and is the largest single consumer of energy in the United States.

Instead of oil, Mr. Mabus wants Navy equipment to run on algae, grain, cellulose, seawater, waves, wind, solar and geothermal power in the future and to "dream of what today might seem unimaginable."

"Environmental stewardship is our responsibility," the report states. "We will reduce the environmental impacts of our energy use, lead in reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and promote sustainability."

It gives few details on how the Navy will make its ships, submarines, aircraft and ground vehicles environmentally friendly, but the report states that sailors will "consider carbon emissions in our daily operations and our procurements."

The Navy also will "replace energy from fossil fuels with energy from alternative and renewable sources," the report says.

The report says the green effort will be led by the Naval Energy Office, but it makes no mention of increasing the use of nuclear power, currently used to power all aircraft carriers and submarines.

On an unrelated subject, Mr. Mabus was asked to comment on the controversial case of four Navy SEALs currently courts-martial for purportedly punching an al Qaeda terrorist in Iraq. The terrorist was blamed for the deaths of four U.S. contractors and for misleading Navy investigators about the incident.

"It's with the convening authority, and I can't do it because of risk of command influence," Mr. Mabus said.

Asked if he was aware of widespread criticism that the case has prompted from pro-military advocates, Mr. Mabus said: "I read the paper."

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

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The Silent Sentinel via Email

To all of my Shipmates and families who currently receive our Great newsletter via the mail who would like it sent via email or continue to receive it via mail, please fill out the form and mail it to the base or myself. We are trying to cut the cost of the newsletter down from \$3700 to about \$1900 a year. By receiving the Silent Sentinel via email will cut down the printing and mailing cost. The other plus to receiving it via email is you can save it on your computer and not have the paper lying around the house.

A subscription to the Silent Sentinel newsletter will be available to surviving family members via internet email, at no charge, upon notification of the Membership Chairman. If a printed hard-copy is preferred, via US Post Office delivery, an annual donation of \$5.00 will be requested to cover costs.

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Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

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DUE TO LOGISTICS CONSTRAINTS, ALL INPUTS FOR THE SILENT SENTINEL MUST BE IN MY HAND NO LATER THAN *ONE WEEK* AFTER THE MONTHLY MEETING. IF I DO NOT RECEIVE IT BY THIS TIME, THE ITEM WILL NOT GET IN. NO EXCEPTIONS! MIKE

JANUARY Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our January meeting will be on 12 January, 2010. The post is located one-half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The meeting begins at 7 p.m. The E-Board meets one hour earlier at 6 p.m.

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

BINNACLE LIST

CJ Glassford
Charlie Marin
Mike Hyman
Chuck George

Submitted by Mike Hyman

Submarine Losses in December

Submitted by C J Glassford



GRAMPUS [Bell} (SS 4) - 16 Men on Board:
Main Engine Fuel Explosion, on 10 Dec 1910 :
“ 1 MAN LOST “

CARP (SS 20) - 19 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 16 Dec 1917, after Collision with USS F-3, (SS 22), off the Coast of San Diego, California :
“ALL HANDS LOST “

S-4 (SS 109) - 39 Men on Board:
Rammed and Sunk, on 17 Dec 1927, by Coast Guard Cutter Spaulding, Off Provincetown, Massachusetts, * Later Salvaged:
“ALL HANDS LOST “

SEALION (SS 195) - Duty Section on Board:

Severely Damaged, on 10 Dec 1941, by 2 Bombs, during Air Attacks at Cavite Navy Yard, in the Philippines. Later
 Scuttled on 25 Dec 1941: " 4 MEN LOST "

MINNEAPOLIS-SAINT PAUL [Bell] ((SSN708) – 110 Men on Board:
 Heavy Seas, on 29 Dec 2006, Washed 4 Crewmen Overboard in Plymouth, Sound England, while exiting
 Devonshire, England, on the Surface, After a Port of Call :
 " 2 MEN LOST " – " 2 MEN RESCUED "



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Base Officer Nominations

There is only one month left to nominate your future Base officers. Nominations will be closed at our February meeting. Elections will be held at our February meeting. Newly elected officers will be installed at our March meeting.

The candidates are:

Base Commander - Bob Bissonnette
 Base Vice Commander - Bill Earl
 Base Junior Vice Commander- Jim Bilka
 Base Secretary - Manny Burciaga
 Base Treasurer - David Ball

Charlie Marin - Nominations Chairman

Meeting of the Submarine Veterans, San Diego Base for November 10, 2009.

1900 – Meeting call to order by Base Commander Bob Bissonnette.

Conducted opening exercises:

Reading of the Creed:

Pledge of Allegiance:

Base Chaplin lead in opening Prayer and Tolling of the Boats for November.

USS ALBACORE(SS218) NOV 7, 1944

USS GROWLER(SS215) NOV 8, 1944

USS SCAMP(SS277) NOV 9, 1944

USS CORVINA(SS226) NOV 16, 1943

USS SCULPIN(SS191) NOV 19, 1943

Please observe a moment of Silent Prayer. AMEN.

Introduction of E-Board members present and VIP's and Guests:

One Guest present: Shipmate George Fishrock.

Secretary's report: Sailing list indicates 40 members and one guest.

Treasurer's report: Report has been submitted to the membership by mail.

Treasurer also reported that Convention information has not yet been posted because he has not received all the invoices resulting in some account not being balanced. Once all payments have been completed a report will be presented to

the membership.

Committee reports:

Parade Committee: Jack Kane provided information on Nov 11th Veterans Day parade in San Diego. Nine individual raised hands when asked who could attend. Jack discussed location and were to park, and he has parking and press passes if you need one. Any member who needs a ride let him know and a request was made to pick up CJ. We still need a parade coordinator, if you can volunteer please see me. The next parade will be in Riverside, which will be after the Coronado parade.

Membership Committee: 55 members past due on local and National dues. Dues must be sent in by the end of December.

Scholarship fund: Nothing has been received yet...Members are encouraged to consider all family members, see Paul for more information. Dead line date for scholarship applications is March.

Storekeeper: Mike Hyman- We have a buyer for Convention banner.

Breakfast: This months breakfast will be 800- 1200, 29th November.

1925: Break

1940: Meeting called to order by Base Commander:

Base Commander announced that the annual Christmas party to be held here at the VFW on Dec 19, 2009. He requested donations for additional door prizes.

It was also request a members bring a toy for donating to The Toys for Tots program.

The menu will be chicken or beef. Call me or email concerning amount of members and guest attending and choice of meal.

Nomination of Base officers: Election are for next year. You can nominate anyone you would like. Nominations are now open for Base commander. It was motioned that Bob Bissonnette continue for another term, he accepted and motion was closed by the members.

Senior vice Commander now is Bill Earl. It was motioned that Bill Earl continue as Vice Commander he accepted and nominations were closed.

Secretary and Treasure have both agreed to serve another term so nomination was closed.

It was pointed out by a member that even there are no nominations for these positions nominations will be open again for any new nominees. We can post new nominees at next months meeting.

Budget committee: Committee will met next month any one who would like to serve temporally on the committee please contact me.

Good of the order:

Scamp Base food fest was outstanding and we had a great time.

Veterans Day provides an opportunity to receive free stuff from local restaurants and other businesses. Check with local retailers for special deals given to Veterans.

Consider visiting a Veteran Hospital and help cheer up a veteran.

2010- Meeting adjured by base commander.

Sailing list

- | | | |
|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| PAUL HITCHCOCK | CHUCK GEORGE | BOB COATES |
| BOB FARRELL | BUD ROLLISON | TOM POLEN |
| ED WELCH | DONALD WALBAUM | RICK BITTNER |
| JACK KANE | PHIL RICHESON | BOB OBERTING |
| HARRY MCGILL | JACK ADDINGTON | BOB MEDINA |
| DENNIS MCCREIGHT | CHARLIE TATE | JOE ACAY |
| ED FARLEY | CHARLIE MARIN | JOEL EIRAM |
| DAVID KAUPPINER | GLENN GERBRAND | JIM MALDON |
| DAVID BALL | MANNY BURCIAGA | BILL EARL |
| EVERETT MAUGER | DON MATHIOWELZ | DICK WOLZ |
| DENNIS MORTENSEN | CHRIS STROWS | MICHAEL HYMAN |
| MATTHEW BAUMANN | RON GORENCE | ART DAVIS |
| JOHN GRIENEIVEROER | RAY FERBRACHE | ROY BANNACTT |
| ART DAVIS | CJ GLASFORD | JOE DUBOIS |
| BOB BISSONNETTE | | |

Checking Account Balance @10/30/2009 **\$ 4,078.02**

INCOME for NOVEMBER 2009

40/30/30 Base	48.00
Roncador Base Partial Refund	73.15
Ship's Store Sales	32.00
 Subtotal	 153.15

Membership

Scholarship from 40/30/30	48.00
Other Scholarship Income	

Scholarship Income for November 48.00

Total Income for November (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 201.15**

EXPENSES for NOVEMBER 2009

Imaging Technologies - Sil. Sen. Printing	72.67
Sentinel Postage (Sept & Oct)	106.29
Membership paid to USSVI	100.00
Website / Domain Renewal	117.35
 Subtotal	 396.31

Total Expenses for November (per Bank Stmt) **\$ 792.62**

Checking Account Balance @ 11/27/2009 **\$ 3,486.55**

ASSETS

Base Checking (11/27/09)		\$ 3,486.55
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Checking	2,657.00	
Base Savings (11/27/09)		9,328.83
Convention Account (11/30/09)		8,588.53

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 21,403.91**

RECONCILIATION DATA FOR SUBVETS 2009 CONVENTION

Date	Source	Total Deposits	Total Expense	San Diego	Scamp	Total
9/2/2004	Gene Hall - San Diego Base - Seed SD	500.00		500.00		500.00
8/14/06	San Diego Base - Seed SD	2,000.00		2,000.00		2,000.00
9/11/06	San Diego Base - Seed SD	3,000.00		3,000.00		3,000.00
11/16/06	Sale of Items @ 2006 Convention - Seed Joint	60.00		30.00	30.00	60.00
8/9/07	Ship's Store Sale - Convention Items - Seed SD	47.00		47.00		47.00
10/2/07	Ship's Store Sale - Convention Items - Seed SD	20.00		20.00		20.00
5/16/08	Opportunity Tickets - Seed SD - \$385	770.00		385.00		385.00
7/14/08	Opportunity Tickets - Seed SD - \$145	290.00		145.00		145.00
8/6/08	Opportunity Tickets - Seed SD	25.00		25.00		25.00
8/14/08	Picnic Raffle - Seed SD	180.00		180.00		180.00
9/10/08	Opportunity Tickets - Seed SD - \$25	50.00		25.00		25.00
9/18/08	Ft. Worth Convention Raffle - Seed Joint	484.00		242.00	242.00	484.00
9/18/08	Ft. Worth Shirt Sales - Seed Joint	138.00		69.00	69.00	138.00
9/18/08	Opportunity Tickets - Seed Joint	280.00		140.00	140.00	280.00
11/13/08	Scamp Base - Seed Scamp	1,000.00			1,000.00	1,000.00

11/13/08	Scamp Base - Seed Scamp from Oppor Drawing	1,325.00			1,325.00	1,325.00
11/24/08	Scamp Base - Seed Scamp	5.00			5.00	5.00
06/02/09	Silent Auction Entertainment - Seed SD		350.00	(350.00)		(350.00)
06/05/09	Silent Auction Tickets & Donations - Seed SD	175.00		175.00		175.00
06/11/09	Silent Auction Donation - Seed SD	50.00		50.00		50.00
06/15/09	Silent Auction Revenue - Seed SD	2,569.00		2,569.00		2,569.00
06/16/09	Holiday Inn - Silent Auction Banquet - Seed SD		924.88	(924.88)		(924.88)
06/25/09	Silent Auction Proceeds - Seed SD	239.00		239.00		239.00
07/08/09	Xfer to Gen Fund - Holiday Inn Depos. - Seed SD		1,000.00	(1,000.00)		(1,000.00)
07/15/09	Silent Auction Proceeds - Seed SD	20.00		20.00		20.00
07/15/09	Auction & Meeting Proceeds - Seed SD	49.00		49.00		49.00
07/17/09	B. Bissonnette - Polo Shirts - Seed SD		227.42	(227.42)		(227.42)
07/30/09	Razorback Ass'n - Share of Sales - Dolphins - Seed SD		35.00	(35.00)		(35.00)
07/30/09	Razorback Ass'n - Share of Sales - Dolphins - Seed SD		40.00	(40.00)		(40.00)
08/05/09	Embroidered Shirts for Convention - Seed SD		749.87	(749.87)		(749.87)
08/18/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint	100.00		50.00	50.00	100.00
08/24/09	Polo Shirt Sales - Seed SD	169.00		169.00		169.00
08/24/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint	20.00		10.00	10.00	20.00
09/04/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint		114.31	(57.16)	(57.15)	(114.31)
09/09/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint	20.00		10.00	10.00	20.00
09/09/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint		272.15	(136.07)	(136.08)	(272.15)
09/10/09	Plaque Sales - Silent Auction - Seed SD	100.00		100.00		100.00
09/12/09	Plaque Sales - Silent Auction - Seed SD	80.00		80.00		80.00
09/14/09	Calendar Sales - Seed SD	372.00		372.00		372.00
09/14/09	Silent Auction Sales - Seed SD	297.00		297.00		297.00
09/14/09	Polo Shirt Sales - Seed SD	70.00		70.00		70.00
09/14/09	Plaque Sales - Silent Auction - Seed SD	30.00		30.00		30.00
09/14/09	Dolphin Sales - Seed SD	30.00		30.00		30.00
09/14/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint	247.00		123.50	123.50	247.00
09/21/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint		331.00	(165.50)	(165.50)	(331.00)
10/15/09	Virtual Memory Pictures - Seed - Joint	280.06		140.03	140.03	280.06
10/15/09	T-Shirt Sales - Seed - Joint	15.00		7.50	7.50	15.00
10/15/09	Polo Shirt Sales - Seed SD	5.00		5.00		5.00
						0.00
	Totals	14,591.06		7,718.13	2,793.30	10,511.43
	Calculations					
	San Diego	\$ 7,718.13	\$ 10,511.43	73%		
	Scamp	\$ 2,793.30	\$ 10,511.43	27%		
	San Diego	\$ 8,588.53	73%	\$ 6,269.63		
	Scamp	\$ 8,588.53	27%	\$ 2,318.90		
	\$ 8,588.53					
	Calculations After Adjust of Checks Outstanding	\$ (915.00)				
	San Diego		\$ 7,673.53	73%	\$ 5,601.68	
	Scamp		\$ 7,673.53	27%	\$ 2,071.85	
					\$ 7,673.53	

2010 On The Horizon

From Pay To Uniforms To Quails: Here's What The Coming Year Has In Store
Navy Times, Jan. 4, 2010

1. PAY RAISES: For 11 straight years, service members have received a Jan. 1 increase in basic pay that is slightly larger than average private-sector raises. But that could end when Congress takes up the 2011 budget.

Bigger raises have been part of a congressional effort, largely opposed by the Pentagon, to close a perceived gap in pay that grew in the 1980s when military raises were capped. After the 3.4 percent Jan. 1, 2010, increase, the pay gap, which peaked at 13.5 percent in 1999, will be reduced to 2.4 percent. Whether there will be a 12th consecutive year of gap-reducing raises will depend on the state of the economy and whether election-year politics make lawmakers more interested in cutting federal spending than in continuing to close the pay gap.

Military advocates are urging Congress to keep chipping away at the pay gap by providing raises through 2013 that are half a percentage point greater than private-sector raises.

The Military Coalition, a group of more than 30 military-related organizations, does not want to leave military raises to the annual whims of Congress. It would like lawmakers to set into law a fixed formula for raises to be half a percentage point greater than the annual increase in the Employment Cost Index, a Labor Department measurement of private-sector wages.

Such a law was used in the early years of this decade, but Congress allowed it to lapse. If it were re-enacted, it would fence off military pay from any debate about cutting federal spending.

2. PAY & BONUS REVIEW

The review of all Navy officer and enlisted special pays and bonuses will continue into the coming year. In 2009, personnel officials reworked the selective reenlistment bonus program, which now offers money to significantly fewer sailors. Also reviewed was special duty assignment pay, which offers sailors extra cash to fill crucial billets. That special pay also saw significant reductions.

Officials are now reviewing the assignment incentive pay program and expect to announce those results early in the new year. The review of the remaining special and continuation pays will wrap up sometime in 2010.

3. NEW UNIFORMS

This coming year will see the final sets of blue camouflage Navy Working Uniforms and the black-and-khaki service uniforms rolled out to the different Navy regions.

Sailors E-6 and below must own the service uniform by July 31. Starting in August, the summer white and working blue uniforms will no longer be authorized.

As for the NWU, all sailors must own the uniform - which replaces wash khakis for chiefs and officers and utilities for sailors - by Dec. 31.

Other uniform highlights:

- New desert and woodland cammies. Details on testing and fielding of the Type 2 and 3 versions of the NWU are expected to come early in the year.

- Improved crackerjacks. The uniform board will receive results of wear tests for the new uniforms this coming year. A lighter-weight version of the dress blues is being tested, along with a version of the whites with side zippers, more pockets and a faux 13-button flap.

- Service dress khaki. Officials have wrapped up their wear tests of the throwback khakis for chiefs and officers. They tested both a traditional and a contemporary design. Expect an announcement on the way ahead in the early months of the year.

- New running suit. After ditching the first two warm-up suit designs in 2008, Navy uniform officials began wear-testing two new designs this fall in Norfolk, Va.; Great Lakes, Ill.; and Washington, D.C. About 100 sailors are wearing the two similar designs. Testing is expected to be completed in 2010, and officials could make a decision on fielding the suit by the end of the year.

4. MANDATORY WARFARE QUALS

Sailors E-1 through E-4 will soon be required to earn a warfare pin within 30 months of checking onboard their first sea-duty command, officials recently announced.

Sailors E-5 and above who are going to sea for the first time will still be required to complete their quals in 18 months or less.

Type commanders are expected to submit drafts of their instructions in January for review by the master chief petty officer of the Navy. Final approval is expected in the first few months of the year.

5. MORE HIGH-LEVEL FIRINGS

With 15 firings by Dec. 20, more commanding officers were relieved in 2009 than in any of the past five years. You may see that crackdown continue, as senior officials appear to be stepping up enforcement of the fraternization rules that bring down skippers more often than many other reasons. In addition, senior enlisted leaders will be getting more scrutiny by Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (SS/SW) Rick West, who said he wants to be briefed whenever a chief has a major disciplinary problem.

6. MORE CHIEFS GOING HOME

In September, a continuation board met to decide whether nearly 8,000 retirement-eligible chiefs and above should stay in the Navy. The board sent home 158, who must retire by the end of June.

Another board will be held in 2010, but senior enlisted leaders are leaning toward recommending that chiefs with 19 years in also go before the board, and that no one be exempt.

7. CARRIERS & STRIKE GROUPS

- The Dwight D. Eisenhower is scheduled to deploy in January.
 - The Harry S. Truman will follow a couple of months later, marking its second eight-month deployment in as many years.
 - Enterprise, late coming out of the yard, will be back in action to prepare for its final deployment next year.
 - Carl Vinson will move to San Diego in the early part of the year.
 - Nimitz is scheduled to return to San Diego in March after an eight-month deployment.
 - Abraham Lincoln is a likely candidate to replace Nimitz, but Navy officials will not comment on future deployments. While Lincoln and John C. Stennis are in Bremerton, Wash., for maintenance and workups, Stennis has been out twice since 2007, including a 2009 deployment. Lincoln hasn't gone since 2008. And don't add the Ronald Reagan into that equation - the carrier is at Naval Air Station North Island, Calif., for maintenance following four deployments in as many years.

- The George Washington is forward-deployed at Yokosuka, Japan.
 - The George H.W. Bush is beginning its operational life, and will spend the year completing quals and evals.
 - The Theodore Roosevelt entered the yard in mid-2009 for its major refueling and overhaul, which should take roughly three years. In addition, the decision as to which carrier will move to Mayport, Fla., is expected to be part of the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review.

8. QDR DECISIONS

For months, decision-makers in the Pentagon and Congress have put off answering questions on programs because of the Defense Department's Quadrennial Defense Review, the planning document that is supposed to set down DoD's latest strategic and budgetary priorities.

Beltway scuttlebutt has it that this year's report could deliver a body blow to the Navy, recommending that it strike one or even two aircraft carriers, cancel the Marine Corps' Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle, and delay fielding the F-35 Lightning II. Or not. Whatever its findings, the release of the QDR with the fiscal 2011 budget in February will at least create a new normal for Pentagon programs, one that Congress and DoD could use to make their next decisions.

9. OP TEMPO

Carrier strike groups saw eight-month tours in 2009. Attack subs were out eight to 13 months.

And with sailors being a key part of the Afghanistan push, overall op tempo doesn't look to let up in 2010.

The Dwight D. Eisenhower and Harry S. Truman carrier strike groups will pull eight-month tours in 2010. The extensions were caused by problems with the 48-year-old Enterprise, which was four months late in getting out of its 16-month overhaul.

But whether longer deployments are the exception, or the new normal, remains to be seen.

As for the ground force in Afghanistan, there are already 3,700 sailors on the ground, mostly explosive ordnance disposal, Seabees and medical personnel. Another 208 are building schools and roads. In January, another force of 1,100 Seabees will begin rotating into the war zone.

10. SHIP NAMES

Navy Secretary Ray Mabus will likely name seven ships in 2010, said his spokeswoman, Capt. Beci Brenton:

- The Zumwalt-class destroyer DDG 1002.
- Three littoral combat ships: LCS 5, LCS 6, LCS 7
- One Lewis and Clark-class dry cargo and ammunition ship: TAKE 14
- One Virginia-class attack submarine: SSN 786

- One joint high-speed vessel: JHSV 4

11. SHIP COMMISSIONINGS

- Jan. 16: Littoral combat ship Independence, Mobile, Ala.
- March 6: Destroyer Dewey, Seal Beach, Calif.
- June: Missile range instrumentation ship Howard O. Lorenzen, Pascagoula, Miss.
- July 24: Submarine Missouri, Groton, Conn.
- July: Destroyer Jason Dunham, Bath, Maine.
- September: Destroyer Gravelly, Pascagoula, Miss.
- To be determined: Submarine New Mexico, Newport News, Va.

12. LCS FUTURE

The Navy is expected to decide in the first half of the year which of its two littoral combat ship designs will go into full production. It doesn't get much bigger: Billions of dollars and 51 ships - a major portion of tomorrow's planned surface fleet - are at stake. The Navy will choose either a conventional steel and aluminum ship built by a contractor group led by Lockheed Martin, or an all-aluminum trimaran built by a General Dynamics contractor group.

13. THE FIGHTER GAP

Congress added nine F/A-18 E/F Super Hornets into the annual budget last year for a total of 18, but that won't resolve concerns about the looming shortage of tactical aircraft. The F-35 Lightning II is on its way, but Hornets are wearing out faster than planners predicted. The Navy expects the shortfall to be 200 to 300 aircraft, peaking about 2015. And now that Washington has resolved other key aviation issues - ending the Air Force's F-22 program and the overpriced presidential helicopter program - the Navy's fighter gap may draw more attention from lawmakers and lobbyists.

14. THE FUTURE OF AIR

Key advancements coming for naval aviation:

- The X-47B Unmanned Combat Air System demonstrator will have its first test flight during the first quarter of 2010.
- The F-35C, which is the carrier variant of the Lightning II, will continue testing at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Md., with a target ready date of 2015.
- The first EA-18G Growler squadron, Electronic Attack Squadron 132, known as the Scorpions, will deploy for the first time in 2010.

15. BMD PLANNING

The Navy has one year left to come up with the ships, sailors and plans to guard Europe from Middle Eastern ballistic missiles, a mission the service was given with apparently little internal notice.

The Navy and the Missile Defense Agency will spend 2010 figuring out how to coordinate ships, deployments, numbers of missile interceptors and the other essential elements of providing a BMD cover for Europe by 2011, when the U.S. has committed itself to defending the continent from the sea.

With an operational tempo that fleet officials say is already high, the Navy will have to apportion additional ships for the Euro-BMD mission.

16. HOUSING CRUNCH

The Navy will try to get more sailors into shore-based housing, but the crunch will likely continue as major bases will be at least 3,000 beds short of the Homeport Ashore program's stated goal of giving every sailor a place to live (other than the ship) by 2016. Meanwhile, budget cuts may begin to make it "difficult for regions to manage and operate bachelor housing," according to a 2009 report from the Naval Inspector General.

17. WOMEN & SUBS

It will be roughly two years before women will be underway as part of a sub's crew, but their training and selection begins in 2010.

Plans call for four integrated crews: the blue and gold crews of a ballistic-missile sub on one coast and the blue and gold crews of a Tomahawk shooter on the other. The female element of each will come from the Naval Academy's Class of 2010, where half of the 32 ensigns planning to head to nuclear propulsion school were women.

Integration will occur only in Ohio-class submarines. Attack boats are tightly packed, and modifications to accommodate women would be exceedingly expensive.

Because female cadres need to have one senior member to act as mentor, female supply officers or surface warfare officers who have served on a mixed-gender crew may also be selected for sub duty to assist in the transition.

18. 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL'

President Barack Obama's promise to repeal the law barring service by openly gay people was moved to the back burner in 2009, overwhelmed by concern about the sagging economy and the war effort in Afghanistan.

That will change in 2010. And although the outcome is far from clear, Congress in the coming months will face the long-delayed review of the law and policy that bans open service by gays.

Extensive hearings are planned in the House and Senate, with testimony from current and former troops, as well as from military leaders.

In June, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said he and Obama had discussed the issue, with a focus on whether "there's at least a more humane way to apply the law until the law gets changed," as Gates put it.

Most Americans - more than two-thirds - favor allowing gays to serve openly in the military, while about one-third are opposed, according to a May Gallup poll.

According to the latest figures available - through 2008 - 10,507 troops had been discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" since the Pentagon began tracking such discharges in 1997, according to spokeswoman Cynthia Smith.

The fight over changing policy will come to a head when lawmakers try to pass the 2011 defense authorization bill, which likely will happen in early spring in the House of Representatives. Those who want to repeal the ban will try, and probably succeed, in getting an amendment attached to the bill that would allow gays to openly serve. It appears they will have enough votes to get the measure approved by the full House, especially if Obama gets directly involved in selling reluctant members on the idea.

But House passage may be as far as the effort goes because advocates for repeal have not come up with a strategy to overcome the 60-vote majority that would be needed for approval in the Senate if opponents in that chamber try to filibuster over the issue.

With midterm elections coming in the fall, and with Obama sagging in public opinion polls, it will be difficult for conservative Democrats concerned about re-election to vote in favor of allowing gays to openly serve in uniform.

Skipper Fired In Wake Of Sub Problems

By Lance M. Bacon, Navy Times, Jan. 4, 2010

The commanding officer of the attack submarine Buffalo was fired Dec. 20 over what sources said was a series of problems that left the Guam-based boat out of commission.

Cmdr. Christopher Henry was relieved just four months after taking command of the Guam-based sub. The move was a precautionary measure resulting from a "loss of confidence in ability to command," said Lt. Cmdr. Greg Kuntz, spokesman for Submarine Group 7 in Japan. The decision followed shipboard evaluations of operations and overall trends.

"We found this problem before it became a significant issue," Kuntz said.

The decision by Capt. Doug Wright, commodore of Submarine Squadron 15, to remove Henry was not attributable to a specific item or incident, and operations had been conducted at a safe level, Kuntz said. But "[t]he conduct of operations fell short of high Navy standards."

Henry, who sources said was well liked and respected by many peers and subordinates, had little to say when contacted by Navy Times.

"Any judgment into my character or leadership should include the evaluations of the crew of Buffalo or shipmates who have observed my performance from my previous commands," he said. "I have no comment at this time into the decision made on my removal from command."

In addition to Henry, another crew member has been relieved, according to Lt. Cmdr. David Benham, a spokesman for Naval Submarine Forces Pacific. He would not identify the individual, citing privacy rights. Henry has not been charged with any offense, nor has he received nonjudicial punishment, Benham said.

That Buffalo had problems is not in dispute. But sources familiar with the situation question whether Henry should bear the brunt of the blame. Specifically, they said, there was a lack of situational awareness during the inport loading of variable ballast, which is water distributed between forward and aft tanks to maintain desired trim. A "valve line-up problem" resulted in water filling to the deckplate, resulting in a saltwater intrusion of the diesel engine. In addition, maintenance failures ruined motor generator and reactor cooling pump components, they said. As a result, a scheduled Operational Reactor Safeguard Examination, or ORSE, will occur at the pier.

"If you have to do an ORSE at the pier, you're already behind the eight ball," said a retired sub commander with knowledge of the matter who asked to remain anonymous. "If it's due to a maintenance problem you caused, it's hard to see around that eight ball."

A sub wouldn't leave the pier if a motor generator or diesel is down. In the event of a reactor shut-down, those components provide backup power until it can be restarted. The diesel is also used for emergency ventilation.

A second source said that while the commander is ultimately responsible, Henry was given a crew with "known issues" and some - specifically chiefs and department heads - failed in their duties, as well.

"If you have water up to the deckplates, there are a number of people not doing their job," said an active duty submarine officer who is familiar with Buffalo's problems but was not authorized to speak on the record. "The propulsion plant isn't manned with seamen recruits. You have nothing less than petty officers in there who should know better."

That may be, according to the anonymous retired sub commander. But Henry's judgment in handling those issues could have been at the heart of his dismissal.

"If your decisions are drifting, you'll get some rudder orders to get back on course," the former sub commander said. "You don't get fired the first time."

"This doesn't look like one mistake, but rather a collection of errors. What must be determined now is whether the individuals had proper training, whether they understood their orders and whether they were properly supervised."

How long this problem existed and how the previous skipper, Cmdr. Scott Pappano, may have handled it are not clear. During the change of command ceremony, Wright, the commodore, said he "would gladly serve under [Pappano] in combat," describing him as "exactly what the submarine force needs in a senior leader."

Kuntz said there are no safety issues with Buffalo, and Wright has "complete confidence" in the ship, which earned the Submarine Squadron 15 Battle "E" for 2008 under Pappano's command.

Henry took command Aug. 7, calling it "the greatest day in my naval career so far." The Ridgefield, Conn., native was commissioned April 13, 1990, and graduated from the University of Maryland in 1991 with a bachelor 'of science in aerospace engineering. He spent 17 years in the submarine community, including tours as executive officer of Los Angeles, engineer on Albuquerque and electrical assistant on Trepang.

Henry was replaced by Cmdr. Michael Lewis, who was a deputy commander at Squadron 15. Henry has been temporarily reassigned to Squadron 15 until the Navy determines his next job.

Henry was the 15th commanding officer - and third sub skipper - fired this year.

Navy Brings Submarine Show To San Diego Bay

By Richard Crawford, San Diego Union-Tribune, Dec. 26, 2009

Within the next twenty days San Diego harbor will assume a warlike appearance, for twenty vessels of the navy, including the two submarines Grampus and Pike . . . will be in the waters of the inner bay.

- San Diego Union, June 24, 1910

For nearly a century, San Diego has been a principle home base for U.S. Navy submarines.

The city's first submarines - the Grampus and the Pike - were the first built on the West Coast. They came to San Diego in the summer of 1910, exciting the city and beginning a long relationship with the "silent service."

The two boats were built by San Francisco's famed shipbuilders, the Union Iron Works. Commissioned in 1903 at the Mare Island Navy Yard, the twin submarines were first commanded by Lt. Arthur MacArthur III, the elder brother of the future general, Douglas MacArthur.

The Grampus and Pike were tiny vessels, 63 feet long and 11 feet in the beam. Powered by a 160-horsepower gasoline engine, the boats could move at only eight knots (less than 10 miles per hour) on the surface. Underwater, a small electric motor propelled the craft at seven knots. Armament consisted of a single torpedo tube in the bow and up to five torpedoes.

Called the "demon divers" by admiring San Diego newspapers, the submarines could submerge to about 60 feet. To dive, the commander set a horizontal rudder in the stern to give the proper pitch, several water compartments would be flooded, and the boat would slowly descend. To rise, water would be pumped out of the compartments. With a tank of compressed air for "long" dives, the submarines could stay under for over an hour.

But diving below periscope depth was rare and risky for these early subs. With no diving planes to control movement, stability control was difficult. If a single crewman moved forward in the boat, the change in weight balance could plunge the sub on a quick, one-way trip to the ocean floor.

The Navy understood the hazardous nature of submarine patrols. The hand-picked, seven-man crews earned an extra \$5 per day for their jobs and a \$1 bonus each time the boats submerged. They were also required to file wills and sign papers releasing the Navy from responsibility from the hazards of duty.

Grampus and Pike spent their first years in the San Francisco Bay Area, training and experimenting in the shallow waters of San Pablo Bay. In 1910, they were designated the 1st Submarine Division of the Pacific Torpedo Flotilla, and assigned duty in California coastal waters.

The two submarines headed south in June for "battle practice" in San Diego. Closely accompanied by the Navy tugboat Fortune and the collier Justin, the "midget flotilla" moved slowly, and took refuge in coastal harbors whenever bad weather threatened. A storm off San Luis Obispo put the boats in port for four days.

They arrived off Coronado on June 28. The 11-day trip had crossed 550 miles, "the longest sea voyage ever made in a submarine," noted a reporter for the San Diego Union.

Lieutenant K.B. Crittenden of the Pike promised a public viewing of the submarines in about two weeks after the boats were put into "apple pie" order. "We want a little rest and a chance to clean ship," he explained. "You know there are no sleeping quarters aboard a submarine . . . We traveled all night last night and we are pretty tired this morning."

In mid-July, the submarines began torpedo practice on the Coronado side of San Diego Bay. Submerged nets were the first targets. The submariners were embarrassed their first day out when they lost one torpedo. Valued at \$2,000 each, the torpedoes were usually recovered after firing by a hard hat diver who "fastened gear to it" for winching to the surface. On this occasion, the gear slipped while hoisting and the torpedo sank. Sailors spent the next several days dragging the muddy bottom of the bay, but never found the valuable weapon.

A torpedo firing combined with a diving exercise came next. On July 21, the Coronado shoreline was crowded with spectators, eager to see "the "Navy whales" submerge and launch their weapons. Others viewed the spectacle from small boats or yachts. Newspaper reporters were allowed on the tug Fortune to watch the action.

"Something akin to 'Forty Leagues Under the Sea' was the performance of the submarines Pike and Grampus," reported the Union. First, the Pike maneuvered, "hindered by craft carrying spectators." The boat dived, then fired a torpedo. Speeding at 24 knots, the torpedo "could be traced by a long string of disturbed water which was left in its wake."

The Grampus came next. But a local photographer in a launch "persisted in running his launch so close to the vessel that his life and those of members of the crew of the Grampus were in danger." Dodging the photographer, the boat sank to periscope depth and fired a hollow-shell torpedo aimed at a Navy ship. "The weapon traveled at tremendous speed for about 800 yards and then sheared off to the left, finally coming to a halt after its velocity had been spent."

The two submarines continued their exercises into late fall. The Grampus performed another feat by traveling eight miles underwater, from Coronado through the bay to the ocean beyond Point Loma. "Not a ripple appeared on the surface of the bay as the Grampus passed by torpedo boats and the big cruiser Pennsylvania, which it could have blown to pieces and continued with ease a voyage of destruction and carnage," the Union said.

Grampus and Pike ended their San Diego assignment the next year. Placed in reserve, the boats languished for a time in the Puget Sound Navy Yard. In February 1915, they were carried to the Philippines on the deck of the collier Hector. For the remainder of World War I, the twin submarines patrolled the waters off Manila.

The submarines were decommissioned in 1921. The next year, Grampus and Pike performed one last military service as targets for the Asiatic fleet and were sunk near Corregidor in Manila Bay.

Vietnam Takes On China With Russian Submarine Deal

By Ian Timberlake, Agence France-Presse, Dec. 24, 2009

A Vietnamese arms deal with Russia, which is reported to involve the purchase of six submarines, is part of a strategy to bolster rival claims against China over resource-rich islands in the South China Sea, analysts say.

While much of Vietnam's military hardware is antiquated, it has decided to devote substantial resources to developing an underwater fleet as tensions with its giant neighbour over the Paracel and Spratly archipelagos grow.

"I think their primary rationale is to counteract the military build-up that the Chinese have had in the South China Sea," said Richard Bitzinger, a regional defence analyst with the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

Vietnam and Russia signed the long-planned deal on Tuesday during a visit by Nguyen Tan Dung, the prime minister, to Moscow.

Details were not released but Russia's Interfax news agency reported that Vietnam had agreed to buy six Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines for about two billion dollars.

Vietnam's decision is not surprising "given the concerns they have about the maritime environment, particularly in the South China Sea," said Peter Abigail, director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

In the latest incident, Vietnam delivered a diplomatic note to the Chinese embassy in Hanoi on Tuesday demanding that China return two fishing boats and equipment seized from Vietnamese fishermen in waters around the Paracels.

Vietnam has previously reported similar cases, and fishermen earlier this year said they were seeing an increasing number of armed Chinese patrol ships in disputed waters.

Taiwan also claims the Paracels - which China occupies - while the Spratlys are claimed in full or part by China and Vietnam as well as the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

The sovereignty row has gone on for years. In 1988 Vietnam and China fought a brief naval battle near one of the Spratly reefs in which more than 50 Vietnamese sailors died.

Two years ago a Chinese naval vessel fired at a Vietnamese fishing boat near the Spratlys, killing one sailor, according to reports.

The archipelagos are considered strategic outposts with potentially vast oil and gas reserves, and rich fishing grounds.

Last week, Lieutenant General Nguyen Chi Vinh, Vietnam's deputy minister of defence, called the maritime tensions "a matter of concern".

That was the most forthright assessment yet by a Vietnamese defence official on the issue, said Carl Thayer, a Vietnam specialist with the Australian Defence Force Academy.

Vinh said the issue would not lead to conflict because international law provides a basis for a resolution, and Vietnam's policy is to ensure a peaceful outcome.

But Vietnam, with a long coastline and offshore oil potential, has faced a "strategic vulnerability" which it is now trying to address, Thayer said.

In Moscow, Dung confirmed only that the arms deal included submarines along with aircraft and "military equipment".

The aircraft order involved 12 Sukhoi Su-30MK2 warplanes worth more than 500 million dollars, Russia's Vedomosti newspaper reported earlier this year.

The fighters are among the world's most advanced and could provide air cover for the surface fleet, which Vietnam is seeking to enhance with new patrol craft, analysts say.

"What they're mostly trying to do is beef up their presence," Bitzinger said.

Vietnam's submarines will help to at least give it a capability of defending its maritime interests, Thayer said.

China's modernising military has prompted concern in the United States. Robert Gates, the US defense secretary, said that US military power in the Pacific could be undermined, and a Pentagon report said China's weaponry and aircraft could enable it to carry out extended operations into the South China Sea.

While Vietnam's prime minister was signing the deal with Russia on Tuesday, his defence minister was on a rare visit to Washington where he held talks with Gates.

A Chinese embassy official in Hanoi, when asked to comment on the submarine deal, said Vietnam, Russia, and other countries in the area "must think about peace, and peace in the South China Sea".

New Attack Submarine Ready For Mooring

Barents Observer, Dec. 28, 2009

Russia's newest nuclear powered attack submarine "Severodvinsk" is soon ready for mooring trials at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk. The sub is planned to be delivered to the Northern Fleet in 2010. The submarine is still standing at the building berth at Sevmash, but will start mooring trials within the end of the year, a press release from the shipyard reads. A source in the Malakhit Construction Bureau told RIA Novosti that the submarine could be ready for missile test launching in mid-2010. The crew for the submarine was established already in 2005 and arrived Sevmash two months ago, as BarentsObserver reported.

In connection with celebration of the 70 years anniversary for the Sevmash shipyard, a cooperation agreement between the submarine's crew, the shipyard and the city of Severodvinsk was signed. This is the first time the giant shipyard, which has built many of Russia's best submarines, takes on patronage of a vessel.

"Severodvinsk" is the first in the "Graney" class (in Russian "Yasen" class) of nuclear powered attack submarines. As BarentsObserver earlier reported, a source in the Russian Ministry of Defence told ITAR-TASS that at least six submarines of the "Graney" class will be built within the next eight years. Construction of the second submarine in the series, "Kazan", started in July 2009.

Vessels of the "Graney" class will be most silent submarines in the world. According to Wikipedia, they will have a maximum speed of 16 knots surfaced and 31 knots submerged. They will be 119m long, 13,5m wide and 9,4m high. They will be armed with 24 cruise missiles of the type SS-NX-26.

Group Calls On Obama To Trim Major Weapons Programs To Pay For Afghan Surge

By Marina Malenic, Defense Daily, Dec. 23, 2009

The Obama administration should cancel or scale back several major Defense Department acquisition programs in order to offset the cost of the additional 30,000 troops it plans to send to Afghanistan, according to a left-leaning think tank.

"We feel this would be a step in the right direction to begin dealing with the cost of these wars, which now have exceeded about one trillion dollars and have added immensely to our deficit problems," Center for American Progress Senior Fellow Lawrence Korb told reporters during a teleconference yesterday.

"You've got to stop getting these things on a credit card," Korb added.

President Barack Obama earlier this month announced plans to deploy 30,000 additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan is estimated to cost approximately \$30 billion beyond the \$65 billion already budgeted for the Afghan conflict this year.

The Center for American Progress yesterday released a report calling on Obama to cut defense programs not vital to national security. Some of the group's recommendations include: cutting spending on ballistic missile defense; purchasing just one Virginia-Class submarine per year; buying only two DDG-1000 destroyers instead of three; ending production of the V-22 Osprey; slowing development and purchase of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter; and scaling back the number of U.S. nuclear forces.

"These are all programs that can be reduced or delayed without any impact on national security," Korb said.

Michael Ettinger, the group's Vice President for Economic Policy, noted that defense spending accounts for about one-fifth of the federal budget.

"We spend 4.3 percent of [Gross Domestic Product] on defense, which is more than any other advanced country by far," Ettinger said. "If you add in what we're spending on the supplementals, it's more than the rest of the world combined."

The two also criticized the practice of paying for wars via supplemental appropriations. The Bush administration funded the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan through supplementals. Because they are sent to Congress for review during the fiscal year, they are not subject to the same amount of congressional scrutiny as the regular defense budget.

The report applauds the Obama administration's decision to submit funding for the wars at the same time as the fiscal year 2010 baseline defense budget.

"Yet this practice could quickly be reversed because President Obama has not explained how his administration will fund his troop increase in Afghanistan," the report adds. "At the very least, the president and his administration must immediately begin the process of explaining to Congress and the American people how they intend to fund the most recent escalation."

Lawmakers, meanwhile, have begun to discuss how to pay for the troop escalation absent such a plan. Rep. David Obey (D-WI), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has called for a 1 percent "war surtax" to pay for the new deployments.

Expecting The Unexpected

Strategy Page, Dec. 23, 2009

The U.S. Navy had discovered that the training it gives its submarine crews is sometime not keeping up with the complexity of new equipment. Case in point is the recent collision between the submarine USS Hartford and an American amphibious ship. The sub was at periscope depth, and the men on the bridge had been tracking the amphibious ship for nearly an hour. But the sonar data, and the automatic identification signals being received from another ship (moving in the same direction as the LPD, and apparently confused with the LPD) led the crew to ignore the sonar data indicating an imminent collision. The navy investigation of the incident blamed specific crew members for allowing the collision to happen, but also noted that there were a lot of sensors involved, and the navy procedures did not clearly deal with what you should do when conflicting data is being received. Nuclear subs rarely spend this much time near the surface, and have lots more sensors to detect what's above, and around the sub. Even the periscope

is a much more complex instrument, containing radar and image manipulation devices, along with the traditional visual information. The conclusion was that, without some new types of training, it's too easy to become confused by the flood of data. This, in part, was one of the causes of the Hartford accident.

The accident itself consisted of a 24,000 ton amphibious ship (the USS New Orleans, LPD 18) colliding with the submerged Hartford (a 7,000 ton Lost Angeles class boat), in the narrow Straits of Hormuz, at 1 AM, local time. Fifteen sailors aboard the sub were injured, while a fuel tank on the LPD was torn open, and 25,000 gallons of fuel oil got into the water. The Hartford rolled 85 degrees right after the collision, and substantial damage was done to the sail, including a leak.

The captain and chief of the boat (senior NCO) were dismissed shortly after the March 20 collision. The Hartford went to a Persian Gulf shipyard for emergency repairs (a metal brace for the sail, which was twisted so that it leaned to the right). Temporary decking, railing and antennas were added to the topside of the sub, to make it easier for the surface ride home.

Initially, the accident was blamed on sloppy leadership by the captain, and the senior chief petty officer. The subsequent investigation found that lax discipline was tolerated on throughout the ship. This led to sloppiness. In particular, the crew did not take all the precautions mandated for passing through a narrow waterway like the Straits of Hormuz. The investigation found many specific errors the crew made, that contributed to the collision. This included supervisors not staying with the sonar operator, who, it turned out, was chatting with someone when the collision (that the sonar would have provided warning about) occurred. The navigator was doing something else, while listening to his iPod, while the officer in charge did not, as he was supposed to do, check the surface with the periscope. The list went on, and ultimately amounted to 30 errors in procedure.

Accidents like these are part of a larger problem in the navy; finding and retaining sailors capable of running a nuclear submarine. Sub commanders are under a lot of pressure to keep their sailors from leaving the navy. But the long periods submarine sailors spend away from their families, creates pressure to get out and take a civilian job close to home. The Hartford had been at sea for five months when it had the accident.

The submarine sailors are very capable, and highly trained, people. Getting a better paying civilian job is not a problem. So sub captains try to keep the crews happy. That often leads to lax discipline. And that often leads to these collisions. Many sub captains see this as a calculated risk, as they know that, in wartime, their highly skilled crews would snap together and do the job. But a sub commanders first priority, at least in peacetime, is the safety of his boat. In wartime, the mission comes first.

There's precedent for this. During the early days of World War II, the U.S. Navy had to replace most of its sub captains. These men had risen to their positions in the peacetime navy by doing things by the book and always adhering to procedure. Moreover, the peacetime sub operations did not include the kind of unexpected, and highly stressful, situation typical of wartime. But in combat, you needed much more flexible commanders, and these were the ones who came in and won the American submarine war in the Pacific. The navy has found that the flood of new technology is creating unexpected situations, that crews have to be warned about, and trained to handle.

China Wary Of Russian Naval Repairs

UPI Asia, Dec. 22, 2009

China has procured from Russia 12 Kilo class submarines and four 956E/EM DDGs, or guided missile destroyers, since 1993. The first two Vasayanka-class Kilo submarines were exported to China in 1993, and the second two Kilo 636 submarines were delivered in 1996. The first two 956E DDGs were delivered in 1996 and 1999 respectively.

These battleships are now all due for overhaul or technical upgrading. But there are differences between China and Russia as to how this is to be done. Simply, China does not wish to trust its naval equipment to Russian technical experts.

A senior authoritative source from the Russian military industry said that for submarines, maintenance is more important than building the vessels themselves. Maintenance was not a major topic of discussion when the submarines were purchased, he said, but with the PLA Navy submarines due for overhaul, Russia and China have been involved in long drawn-out discussions.

In fact, the discussions have been under way for four years, the source said, adding that providing overhaul services was not necessarily included in the permit to export submarines.

The production and maintenance of submarines and missile destroyers are completely different industrial engineering processes, and the shipyards that produce them may not have the capability to repair or prolong the life of the vessels.

Russia has several enterprises that have full sets of manuals, permits, technologies and the proper facilities to maintain the 956E DDGs and Kilo submarines, among which the Zvezdochka Factory is one of the top firms, which has successfully repaired four Kilo submarines for India and is working on a fifth one.

It is well known that the best practice to overhaul, prolong the life or upgrade a submarine is to send it back to the country where it was originally built. So far, all of the Indian Navy's Kilo submarines have been overhauled and upgraded in Russia.

Under the guidance of technical experts, Club-S cruise missiles were also added to these submarines during their servicing. Meanwhile, the Indian technical staff that was involved in the upgrading also received training in the process.

Unlike the Indians, the Chinese did not want to send their submarines back to Russia for maintenance, however. Instead, they insisted that Russian technicians go to China to train maintenance staff and overhaul or prolong the service life of the submarines. The goal was that the Chinese would eventually be able to overhaul all their submarines themselves.

Impatient to acquire this ability, the Chinese contacted technicians at Sevastopol Shipyard in the Ukraine, through whom they acquired some of the Kilo submarine maintenance blueprints and started to carry out repairs on their own. This has resulted in poor quality repair work, according to the Russian military source.

Under the former Soviet Union, the Black Sea Fleet had Kilo submarines and Ukraine had the responsibility to maintain and overhaul the vessels. The technical information provided to China by the Ukrainians, therefore, was from manuals for the earlier edition Kilo submarines.

The Kilo 636 series has undergone a thorough upgrade since that time, with completely different battery, navigation and fire control systems, as well as weapon systems. The Ukrainian manuals were simply not adequate to instruct China in repairing the submarines.

As for the maintenance of the 956E DDGs, China's Bohai Shipyard insisted that it would overhaul the destroyers on its own, and that Russia only needed to train its maintenance workers. Thus in 2008 Russia trained 25 technical staff for this shipyard, and another 10 this year.

Still the Russian technicians advised that the Chinese send the destroyers back to Russia's Zvezdochka Factory for full maintenance, as moving the necessary heavy-duty equipment to the Bohai Shipyard would not be easy. This is why negotiations have continued over such a long period, with no agreement yet signed on the provision of follow-up service.

Meanwhile, the PLA Navy appeared to be repairing Kilo submarines at the Hudong Shipyard in Shanghai for some time. Interestingly, one submarine has been anchored at a berth there for at least two years. It is likely that China has dissected one Kilo submarine for the purpose of reverse engineering and maintenance testing.

It is worth noting that the physical appearance of China's Yuan class submarine has been listed by the Russian Defense Ministry as an imitation of the Russian Kilo submarine.

China's unwillingness to let Russia service its existing Russian-made naval equipment is similar to its attitude toward cooperation with the Russian air force with regard to its fighter planes. In other words, China's suspicion and distrust of Russia have not abated, and its aspiration to do everything indigenously has become stronger than ever.

WW2 Submarine Recovery Dispute

Ice News (Iceland), Dec. 23, 2009

The recovery of the sunken German World War II submarine the U-864, which holds a potentially dangerous cargo of some 65 tonnes of mercury, has been placed on hold after the group charged with its salvage seems likely to be prevented from doing so under its present contract.

The wreckage, which lies near Fedge on the western Norwegian coastline near Bergen, has seen the estimated cost of recovery balloon to somewhere between NOK 1.2 billion and 2.2 billion – double the cost of original forecasts. The submarine has been the subject of ongoing debate amongst salvagers, politicians, local inhabitants and environmental welfare groups who have labelled the wreck as hazardous.

The issue as to whether to bring the wreck to the surface or instead cocoon the vessel in a virtual sarcophagus in order to eliminate the risk of pollution has long been debated by experts involved in the drama, says Norway Post.

The issue appeared settled earlier this year, when the Norwegian government decided in January on raising the wreckage. The initial NOK 800 million contract was awarded to a Dutch salvage company.

However, a new report by the provider BAE Systems has won a five-year \$21m contract from the US Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC) to provide software engineering and other technical services.

Under the contract, the company will develop, maintain, and test software for sonars and other operational systems on ships and submarines and provide IT support for web-based documentation and data storage. The work will be undertaken at BAE Systems facilities in Groton, Connecticut, and Middletown, Rhode Island, and onsite at NUWC headquarters in Newport, Rhode Island.

Ian Rankin, vice president of strategic programs at BAE Systems' Technology Solutions & Services business, said: "Our employees have supported the Navy in Rhode Island for more than 30 years, and this continues the work we've long provided to NUWC and the warfighter." Last month, the company won a \$233m contract from the US Navy to provide information and operating systems integration and related services at land-based facilities and on various platforms such as ships, submarines, and ground vehicles.

Stop Training Range Or We'll Sue, Environmentalists Say

By Steve Patterson, Florida Times-Union, December 18, 2009

Environmental activists say they'll sue to stop construction of a Navy training range off Jacksonville's shore because they fear it could harm endangered right whales.

Lawyers for a dozen groups filed a letter Thursday giving the Navy and Commerce Department two months to change course on their plans for building the range 58 miles out to sea.

The waters between Jacksonville and the training area include part of a calving ground where right whales travel each winter to give birth and nurture newborns.

Many environmentalists argue the whales will be at risk for collisions with ships that use the range and could be harmed by sonar that will be used during anti-submarine drills.

The notice argues the agencies violated the Endangered Species Act in July by approving construction of the \$100 million range with the condition that a separate decision would be made, maybe in three or four years, about whether and how to actually use it.

"The fact of the matter is, once this gets built, they're going to use it," said Catherine Wannamaker, an attorney for the Southern Environmental Law Center, which filed the notice along with lawyers from other organizations.

A Navy spokeswoman, Lt. j.g. Laura Stegherr, declined to comment, saying the notice hadn't been received yet.

The environmental groups argue that federal law requires agencies to fully consider how their construction projects will affect government-protected species. They say that couldn't have been done with the information government agencies had at the time.

Navy-funded research about whales and other protected species off Northeast Florida is still ongoing and will be used to weigh effects of using the training range.

Wannamaker said the environmentalists are concerned about effects on other protected species as well, including several types of sea turtles.

The notice letter said parachutes and other gear left over from training could entangle some endangered animals.

The Navy has spent several years looking for a good coastal spot for the range, where crews from ships, helicopters and airplanes would practice finding and confronting submarines. An earlier proposal to train off North Carolina was scuttled because of other environmental issues.

The Navy says it badly needs such an area because more foreign navies are buying quiet, modern diesel-powered submarines meant to operate close to shorelines.

Supporters of the range point out sub purchases by China and Iran as examples, and note that crews from Jacksonville could encounter those forces during deployments.

State agencies in Florida and Georgia have raised concerns the sonar could harm the whales as they nurture their calves offshore each winter.

Sonar can cause hearing damage in whales, and some researchers suspected it can cause other injuries, including bleeding in the brain. The level of actual risk is widely debated.

There are only about 300 to 350 right whales alive, making them so endangered that activists and some scientists have warned even minor harm to young whales could point the species toward extinction.

In an order this year, Navy Assistant Secretary B.J. Penn wrote that the federal National Marine Fisheries Service has concluded operation of the range is likely to disturb whales, but not jeopardize their existence. Norwegian Institute of Transport Economics and the Norwegian project management organisation the Dovre Group criticises the Dutch salvage group Mammoet and claims a lack of clarity in several areas. The new report further states that going ahead with the operation under the current contract is not advisable, recommending instead that new tenders for the submarine salvage should be called for.

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China's Naval Prowess Overblown

Asia Times, December 18, 2009

Peter J Brown A disturbing article entitled "How the United States Lost the Naval War of 2015" describes China's destruction of a US aircraft carrier, the USS George Washington, in the East China Sea.

This fictitious account appears in the current issue of Orbis, a leading US foreign affairs quarterly published by the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, and shows how easily it is to generate a stark, one-sided portrayal of China as a hostile state ready to pounce.

Author James Kraska, a former adviser to the US Joint Chiefs of Staff's director of strategic plans and policy, is currently working at the Marine Policy Center at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

While Kraska makes many valid points, it is not what he is trying to say in his article that matters, but how he says it.

By endorsing the concept that China is contemplating acts of war, including a surprise attack on the US Navy in the near future, Kraska is ending 2009 on a very sour and controversial note.

The author is not breaking new ground by highlighting the increasing vulnerability of the US Navy and emphasizing that US aircraft carriers could be caught off guard in a surprise attack by China. These are concerns that are openly acknowledged and frequently discussed.

The abstract is sobering.

Abstract: Years of strategic missteps in oceans policy, naval strategy and a force structure in decline set the stage for US defeat at sea in 2015. After decades of double-digit budget increases, the People's Liberation Army (Navy) was operating some of the most impressive systems in the world, including a medium-range ballistic missile that could hit a moving aircraft carrier and a super-quiet diesel electric submarine that was stealthier than US nuclear submarines. Coupling this new asymmetric naval force to visionary maritime strategy and oceans policy, China ensured that all elements of national power promoted its goal of dominating the East China Sea. The United States, in contrast, had a declining naval force structured around 10 aircraft carriers spread thinly throughout the globe.

With a maritime strategy focused on lower order partnerships, and a national oceans policy that devalued strategic interests in freedom of navigation, the stage was set for defeat at sea. This article recounts how China destroyed the USS George Washington in the East China Sea in 2015. The political fallout from the disaster ended 75 years of U.S. dominance in the Pacific Ocean and cemented China's position as the Asian hegemony.

Perhaps the former PLA chief naval commander, Admiral Liu Huaqing, who branded the 21st century China's "century of the sea", is the one responsible for opening this can of worms.

Because US President Barack Obama has been talking recently about potential US-China cooperation in space, and because reports of alleged acts of Chinese economic espionage in the US are on the rise, the US public is exposed to all sorts of conflicting messages about China and its intentions.

In this case, the editor of Orbis, Mackubin (Mac) Owens who is an associate dean and professor of national security affairs at the US Naval War College prepares the reader for Kraska's article in his "Editor's Corner" by saying Obama has opened a dangerous new chapter in US history.

"Unlike his predecessors from both parties since World War II, President Obama has embarked on a grand strategy that seems to relegate the United States to the status of just 'one among many.' The president has firmly rejected the idea of American particularism and the status of the United States as the indispensable nation," Owens wrote. "This is a radical shift and a dangerous one. Of course President Obama, like his predecessors, also desires peace and prosperity, but he will discover that the liberal world order that provides peace and prosperity does not arise spontaneously. It must be underwritten by American power."

This statement might have been on target a few months ago, but today, Obama and senior members of his administration may be rethinking and gradually revising their overall approach to foreign policy.

The "discovery" that Owens discusses may have already taken place. Not seen as having hawk credentials in the past, Obama has taken a few tiny steps in that direction. His decision to send more troops into Afghanistan is seen as evidence that he is inclined to rethink his stance.

"With perhaps the sole exception of Jimmy Carter, President Obama's predecessors have recognized that the key to peace and prosperity is for the United States to maintain a dominant power position. The twin objectives of this grand strategy have been to underwrite a liberal world order by providing security, while preventing the emergence of a potential new rival along the lines of the former Soviet Union," Owens wrote.

"American primacy is based on the assumption that US power is good not only for the United States itself but also for the rest of the world."

Kraska uses his fictitious scenario to question the scope of this US power in the following statement about the US Navy's strategy and planning.

"When China acted, it was the culmination of a patient and focused national plan to couple naval technology and resources to a corresponding political, legal and diplomatic strategy in the oceans. The US Naval force plans had been in disarray for decades. The nation was implementing a 'cooperative' naval strategy designed for peace - preventing brushfire wars rather than deterring great power conflict," Kraska wrote.

In disarray for decades? The US Navy may not be not perfect but it outperforms all other navies on a daily basis. A country might want to think twice before doing anything that might result in the US Navy demonstrating that its force planning efforts have been relatively sound and comprehensive over the past few years. The US Navy is and will remain a remarkably responsive and formidable fighting force at sea despite the best efforts of some critics to highlight its deficiencies and failings.

Despite China's habit of displaying regional muscle and restlessness, the type of attack which invites and requires immediate escalation seems farfetched at best.

China's experience with a devastating war on its own soil - a past it shares with Russia - helps to explain why both routinely refuse to accept anything remotely hostile on or close to their borders or coasts.

Like many others who spend much of their time immersed in naval and maritime matters, Kraska fails to include any important information about the possible role and formidable might of the US Air Force and the US Army, let alone US land-based strategic forces in general. This is a major flaw in his article.

"B-2 bombers repositioned to Guam," is Kraska's lone remark about a hypothetical US Air Force response here.

Any attack of this magnitude by China would require swift and simultaneous attacks by China against a minimum of two other countries, Japan and the Republic of Korea. The list is actually greater because certainly India, and perhaps Australia and Vietnam - joined by other Association of Southeast Asian Nations including Singapore - would be compelled to act. Add Taiwan here, too.

Kraska sprinkles his article with passages such as this one: "The United States Navy was living off its legacy. The incessant search for naval 'partnerships' - 'no nation can do it alone' - was tacit recognition that President Reagan's 600-ship Navy was a shell of its former glory. The country lay under the illusion of naval superiority, but it was a mirage."

A mirage? This is very wide of the mark. The US Navy of today is no doubt suffering from multi-mission overload, but to say it maintains an "illusion of naval superiority" is to suggest that someone else's navy is superior. If Kraska sees China filling this role globally, or any other country for that matter, he does not back this claim up.

Would the US Navy suffer losses in a surprise attack? Of course, no question about it.

Because the author is a former adviser to the US Department of Defense, the underlying message and consequences of his writing cannot be divorced entirely from his prior affiliation. Orbis is a highly regarded publication.

A recent exchange in Vietnam needs to be mentioned. It illustrates how quickly talk of war - even when done with very little or no substantiation whatsoever via the Internet - can inflame an audience as well as shape discussions between countries.

These excerpts come from a lengthy interview last month in Hanoi. Sun Guoqiang, China's ambassador to Vietnam, was asked a series of questions by VietNamNet Chief Editor Nguyen Anh Tuan.

Tuan: The Vietnamese people are friendly with the Chinese people. The Party, government and people are always put great efforts into maintaining friendship with China.

[Some] Chinese websites posted articles that have a negative effect on the bilateral relationship. Sina.com published a plan for a 31-day attack on Vietnam.

Have the Chinese leaders a means to put an end to this situation?

Ambassador Sun: Both countries have people who release inappropriate and irresponsible information about the relationships between the two countries on the Web.

The point of view of the Chinese Party and Government in this issue is very clear. We aim to deal with this issue. We have been, and we still are, guiding the media to publish information that is appropriate to the relationship, stories that promote our bilateral relations.

Tuan: It's just a shame that a big website like Sina.com posts stories like that from time to time. [Earlier he specifically accused The Global Times, an English-language spinoff of People's Daily, of publishing content that denigrated Vietnam, too.]

Ambassador Sun: [These] are personal speeches, not the position of the Chinese Government. Vietnam also has blogs that post articles inappropriate to the bilateral ties between the two countries. Luckily, the viewpoints of (both governments are) to further (promote) bilateral relationships.

Vietnam, by the way, announced this week that it is buying patrol boats, frigates, submarines, and aircraft from Russia, among other things. Specifically, Vietnam will spend almost US\$6 billion to acquire six super-quiet Kilo-class Project 636 diesel-electric submarines, which are designed for stealthy operations in shallow seas.

The point here is that the Vietnamese are alarmed by the signals that a few Chinese are sending, and demand that something be done about it.

The reaction that this article is going to engender is unknown. However, count on it being a strong one. China and the US already have a rocky relationship that will require constant attention in order to minimize the risk of conflict. One does not have to sink a US aircraft carrier in the East China Sea to call attention to this.

U.S. Navy V. Iran

The Return Of Sea Control?

By Michael Auslin, *The Weekly Standard*, Dec. 17, 2009

A small splash is being made by accounts of a recent Office of Naval Intelligence report claiming that Iran has achieved the capability of "easily" closing off the Straits of Hormuz in wartime.

Supposedly, the Iranian navy has sufficient surface and subsurface vessels, along with advanced missile torpedoes, that can hold enemy naval ships at risk. This matters now because of concerns that an Israeli (or U.S.) attack on Iran's nuclear program could result in Tehran's retaliation, including choking off 40 percent of the world's oil supply.

Whether or not Iran truly maintains this capability—and it is hard to believe that even if Iran succeeded in closing off the Straits the U.S. Navy and Air Force would not be able to re-open them easily—any conflict in the Straits would prove to be the first test of the joint "Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower." Issued in October 2007, the Cooperative Strategy sought to provide an overall rationale for the use of U.S. naval assets, superseding the 1986 Maritime Strategy. The new strategy states that the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard will (among other goals) "secure strategic access and retain global freedom of action." This will be achieved through "regionally concentrated, forward-deployed task forces...continually postured in...the Arabian Gulf/Indian Ocean..." Among the rungs of operationalizing the maritime strategy is to maintain forward presence, to deter, and to achieve sea control. Each of these would come into play in a conflict in the Straits of Hormuz.

Given the emphasis the U.S. Navy puts on partnerships, goodwill missions, and the like—all of which are important—the ONI report on Iran's navy is notable for bringing back to the fore the traditional rationale for naval power: sea control. The Cooperative Strategy does not spend much time defining sea control, reducing it to "the ability to operate freely at sea," but it does explicitly state that "we will [not] permit an adversary to disrupt the global supply chain by attempting to block vital sea-lines of communication and commerce." Sea control would, in this rationale, be the prerequisite of "command of the sea," for that is what would ultimately keep the Straits open, while "sea control" would be the operational condition allowing U.S. naval forces to defeat the Iranians.

This task would largely fall to the U.S. Fifth Fleet, within Central Command's area of responsibility. The Fifth Fleet has already been heavily involved in both Iraqi and Afghan operations, as well as anti-piracy missions off Somalia. In addition, any action against Iran in the Straits would also likely involve the Ninth Air Force as the headquarters for Air Forces Central (AFCENT). Indeed, some Air Force thinkers, looking at contingencies in the Pacific, might claim that the job could be done largely with land-based air attack forces alone, but dealing with mines, submarines, and escort for tankers will require sea-based activity within the Straits and Gulf of Hormuz.

Thus, the test for the Navy, which has not conducted such operations since the "Tanker War" in 1987-88, in which U.S. Navy ships escorted U.S.-flagged vessels in the Gulf of Hormuz, targeted Iranian oil platforms used as bases for attacks, and cleared mines from the contested waters. Indeed, senior Navy leadership routinely point out that over 30,000 sailors have served ashore in Iraq and Afghanistan for the past eight years, doing everything from fighting to provincial reconstruction. On the other hand, retired admirals at maritime conferences in Washington have lamented what they consider to be the loss of sea fighting capabilities of the U.S. Navy since the end of the Cold War, and the concurrent lack of strategic thinking over the past generation. Any Iranian attempts to close the Straits, then, would highlight the Navy's core competencies in maritime battle.

Such an operation would certainly clarify the Navy's ability to achieve key elements of its maritime strategy. Yet there are numerous pertinent questions about its warfighting plans since the Sea Services have failed to follow up their strategy with a current doctrinal document. The long awaited doctrine, the Naval Operating Concept, was drafted but shelved last year, leaving observers with no idea of how the Sea Services would actually go about fighting. Would warplanners take the fight to the enemy, surging forces into the Straits and Gulf, or would they wait to defeat attacks as they materialized, slowly reducing threats? Right now, there is no way to know what doctrine will guide naval strategy.

The Sea Services repeatedly refers to deterrence, but how would it seek to deter Iran? Would the mere positioning of Fifth Fleet naval assets near the Straits in the aftermath of an Israeli attack be enough to deter any attempt to close the waterways? Would senior U.S. leadership make clear to the Iranians that such an aggressive action would open the door to further U.S. sea- and land-based air attacks on Iranian military installations? In other words, is our deterrent force credibly expressed?

Secondly, how skillfully would the U.S. Navy achieve sea control? Iran obviously could not prevail by going toe-to-toe with the Navy; it has only seven destroyers and frigates. However, anti-access strategies, based on submarine attack, mines, and its twenty-four fast attack torpedo boats would be the likely tactics. How good will U.S. maritime domain awareness be to track the Iranian forces? Chief of Naval Operations Gary Roughead lately has pushed the concept of "decision superiority" based on intelligence and tactical planning. How well will warplanning, intelligence gathering, and tactical execution respond to unseen challenges and setbacks?

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