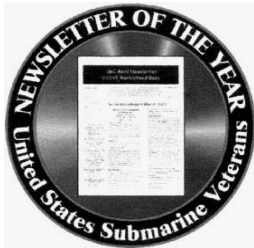


American Submariners Inc.
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404



The Silent Sentinel

APRIL 2013



Our Creed and Purpose

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

In addition to perpetuating the memory of departed shipmates, we shall provide a way for all Submariners to gather for the mutual benefit and enjoyment. Our common heritage as Submariners shall be Strengthened by camaraderie. We support a strong U.S. Submarine Force.

The organization will engage in various projects and deeds that will bring about the perpetual remembrance of those shipmates who have given the supreme sacrifice. The organization will also endeavor to educate all third parties it comes in contact with about the services our submarine brothers performed and how their sacrifices made possible the freedom and lifestyle we enjoy today.

First Nuclear Submarine Disaster Marks 50-year Anniversary: Vista Man Still Feels Impact : USS Thresher Sank in Atlantic in 1963

www.10news.com, March 19

VISTA-Fifty years ago next month, the U.S. Navy suffered one of the worst disasters in submarine history when the USS Thresher sank, killing all aboard. A North County man still feels the impact of that disaster on that day in April 50 years ago.

"It was one of a kind," said Bob Miller of Vista. Miller was among a handful of sailors who was actually aboard the USS Thresher during its launch on July 9, 1960.

Three years later, the nuclear-powered submarine sank in the Atlantic, killing the 129 people aboard.

The USS Thresher was designed to go faster and deeper than anything that came before it.

Miller had been to sea on the submarine at least 40 different times but in 1963, the electronics technician made a decision to advance his career and go to school. It was a decision that saved his life.

"I was driving back from school with three others in the car," he said. "When I heard the news that Thresher had sunk, I blacked out."

It was later determined that a weld on a pipe or valve gave way, which flooded the engine room and ultimately doomed everyone on board. The submarine sank in about 5,000 feet of water.

Initially, Miller was haunted by what had happened.

"I kept thinking that maybe if I was there, I could've done something to help save her," he said.

Miller said he has since come to realize that those who were aboard that fateful day were as skilled as anyone who ever sailed and that did all they could.

Miller is preparing to attend the 50-year memorial in Maine next month. A second nuclear-powered submarine, the USS Scorpion, sank five years later under different circumstances.

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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.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

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

April Meeting

Our monthly meeting is held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our next meeting will be on 9 April, 2013. 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 Al Strunk

Submarine Losses in March

Originally Compiled by C J Glassford



SKATE (SS 23) - 21 Men on Board
Sunk, on 25 Mar 1915, Following Battery Explosion, Off the Coast
of Honolulu, Hawaii : " ALL HANDS LOST "

SEAWOLF (SS 28) - 23 Men on Board
Foundered and Sunk, on 12 Mar 1920, Off Santa Margarita Island, California : " 4 MEN LOST "

PERCH (SS 176) - 59 Men on Board:
Scuttled, on 3 Mar 1942, after Severe Damage suffered from Japanese Destroyers, Entire Crew ended up in POW Camp :
" SIX MEN DIED IN POW CAMP "

GRAMPUS (SS 207) - 71 Men on Board:
Sunk, on the night of 5 Mar 1943, by Japanese Destroyer, In Blackett Strait :
" ALL HANDS LOST "

TRITON (SS 201) - 74 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 15 March 1943, either by Japanese Destroyer or by Submarine Chaser, North of Admiralty Islands :
" ALL HANDS LOST "

TULLIBEE (SS 284) - 79 Men on Board:
Accidentally Sunk, on 29 March 1944, by Circular run of her own Torpedo, Off Palau, Islands :
" 78 MEN LOST - ONE SURVIVOR "

TRIGGER (SS 237) - 89 Men on Board:

Sunk, on 28 April 1945, by Japanese Patrol Vessel, and Coastal Defense Vessel, In the Nansei Soto Area :
 "ALL HANDS LOST"



Minutes for Submarine Veterans San Diego, 12 March 2013.

1900 – Meeting of the Submarine Veterans Inc., San Diego Base was called to order by Base Commander, Bob Bissonnette.

Conducted Opening Exercises:

Reading of Our Creed:

Pledge of Allegiance: Lead by Bill Earl

Chaplain Lead in Prayer:

Conducted Tolling of the Boats for March:

Observed a moment of Silent Prayer:

Base Commander recognized past E-Board members, Past Officers and guest Tom Young, Past Commander Thresher Base.

Secretary announced 37 members and 1 guest present.

Treasurer announced \$17,239 in the Treasury. \$1300 in the checking account, \$226 in scholarship fund and that the float committee would not exceed the \$3000 authorized for the new float.

The Minutes of the February 12, 2013 meeting were revised to include the election of the new E-Board which was the same as last years except for Secretary Jack Ferguson replacing Manny Buciaga. Revised minutes were then approved.

Call for Committee Reports:

Chaplain Binnacle List: Al Strunk, Tom Cox, and Benny Williams. Chaplain Lester announced three members who are now on Eternal Patrol.

Parade Committee: Jack Kane reminded us of the LaMesa Flag Day Parade on June 1st at 9a.m., and the Linda Vista Parade April 27th at 8a.m.

Membership Committee: Ray Ferbrache reported 296 members and 4 renewals.

Scholarship Committee: Paul Hitchcock reported no submittals to date and the deadline for applications has been extended to April 15th.

Storekeeper Phill Richeson has automobile rear window decals.

Breakfast Committee: Bob Bissonnette announced next breakfast is June 30th at 0800 and encouraged members to help the Ladies Auxiliary with their breakfast 31 March.

Charlie Marin conducted the swearing in ceremonies for the newly election E-Board.

1930 - Base Commander called for a Break...

1945 - Base Commander called meeting to order.

Unfinished Business

David Kauppinen announced that the new float was finished and with a few minor additions such as a skirt and seating would be ready for it's first show and tell at the upcoming Oldtimers Luncheon. He discussed naming the float and a motion was made and passed for USS Los Angeles, Hull # 688 to be officially accepted. This float is 1/22 scale replica of the Los Angeles class and hull 688 was the first in the class. The members present thanked David, Ray Ferbrache, Rocky Rockers, Joel Eikam, and Mert Weltzien for their time and efforts in producing this new float.

Base Commander Bissonnette reminded us of the Old Timers Luncheon at Pt. Loma Navy Base on 22 March, 1030 in the Harbor Inn, and the Submarine Birthday Ball, Hilton San Diego Bay Front, March 23rd.

New Business:

The Base Commander presented Charlie Marin, past National Commander, with the USSVI Senior Member Award.

The 2013 National Convention in Rochester, MN will be held August 25-September 1, 2013. The Western Region District 6 Bases Conference is April 7-10 at the Aquarius Casino Resort in Laughlin, Nevada. Cut off for entry is March 22.

The Doug Smay Base March meeting will be at the American Legion Hall, 47 5th Ave. Chula Vista, on Saturday the 23rd at 1000. San Diego Base members living in Chula Vista may find this location convenient for them to attend a Base Meeting closer to their homes.

The raffle for the submarine model was won by Dennis Kimmel of the Scamp Base.

A letter was received thanking the San Diego Base for their \$99 contribution to the Scorpion Committee. Charlie Marin is attending the 45th Anniversary Memorial Services in Norfolk this May as the USSVI representative.

Good of the Order:

VFW Post 3787, our meeting place, is being painted 26 April.

Under sequestration, our Base Commander is being required to take 22 furlough days without pay so will be making a few less monetary contributions to benefit the base.

John Fox discussed getting our younger relatives to register to vote.

Video copies of C.J.'s burial at sea are available.

Thanks to David Ball for the chili and hot dogs.

Rocky discussed the MLK High School in Riverside whose Junior Class each year invites Veterans to talk about their individual service history and then the students write essays about them for credits. Recommended any member to give it a try for a very worthy experience.

Jack Kane reported that Ann George thanked the membership for their Christmas thoughts.

It was recommended that Rita McCreary be invited to our next meeting April 9th to discuss organ donations.

Base Commander Bissonnette adjourned the meeting at 2020.

Jack Ferguson, Secretary

Sailing List for March 12, 2013

JIM BILKA JACK LESTER JACK FERGUSON
 CHARLIE MARIN DAVID KAUPPINEN ROCKY ROCKERS
 TOM POLEN BOB FARRELL BILL EARL
 PHILL RICHESON BOB BISSONNETTE JACK ADDINGTON
 JACK KANE MIKE HYMAN RAY FERBRACHE
 MERT WELTZIEN PAUL HITCHCOK RUSS FILBECK
 BOB COATES JIM HARER BOB OBERTING
 BOB CHAPMAN RUSS MOHEDANO FRANK McCOY
 SERGIO FRISOT LARRY KENDALL CLIFF BRITT
 JOHN FOX DAVID BALL DENNIS MORTENSEN
 RON GORENCE MANNY BURCIAGA JOE DUBOIS
 GLENN GERBRAND GINO RILLAMAS BUD ROLLISON
 DON MATHIOWETZ TOM YOUNG (GUEST)

□

Thoughts on Thresher

by Sharkey Chartier: EM2(SS) '59-65'

With the upcoming 50th anniversary of the sinking of the USS Thresher SSN 593 on April 10, 1963, some information about the incident remains murky, at least to myself. I realize that, to some, I may seem to be re-writing history about a painful incident. I assure you my intent is not to do so, rather, I simply feel that if there are other data available it should be in the public domain.

I distinctly remember reading in the Naval Institute Proceedings shortly after the incident, an in-depth writeup which had published much more data about it than has ever been released, since. I was a designated "Emergency Nuclear Power Plant Welder" at the time, while aboard the Nathan Hale SSBN 623, under construction at Electric Boat, Groton, CT. As a trained welder, I had a personal, "vested", interest in staying abreast of such relevant material. I read everything published within assigned reading material and, also, all the outside publications that I could find. I do not forget such relevant material, even today. Mysteriously, most of what I read has disappeared from the public eye. Several attempts by myself to recover and re-read the article published in the Proceedings have been unsuccessful. Perhaps it is because what I was reading at the time was classified and not widely read outside circles of the submarine engineering Reactor Plant Operator and auxiliary equipment crews assigned to all the nuclear boats at that time. I have also discussed this with several Nuke submariners, from grunts to Sub Drivers (Sub Skippers). No other "A-Gang" sailors seem to remember any of these data except myself.

Some things I remember were the following: While the incident was happening, it was reported that the rescue vessel floating topside, the USS Skylark, was actually in communication with Thresher all the while, via "Gertrude", (the nickname for the underwater communications link). From what I remember, the sub was able to rise to a depth of around 200' before she began to slip back due to increased negative buoyancy. Also, the subsequent "Sub-Safe" program, mandated shortly after, specifically ensured that ALL hull penetrations were to be machined fittings, not welded ones, from that day forward. That fits with what I read in the Proceedings, which was that a 5" sweat-welded fitting, bringing in cooling water to the secondary cooling system, "popped" off the hull, directing a stream of water onto the electrical distribution systems, causing an immediate reactor scram. History Channel's and other's "explanations" do not jive with what I read, and place the incoming stream as coming from an internal pipe, on which a bolted fitting gave way, somewhere amidships. If that were true, why were ALL hull penetrations subsequently mandated to be "Machined" from a single piece of metal which was then "Built" right into the hull, while it was under construction? Also, because Thresher did not have any way to draw off emergency steam when the plant shut down, she

was unable to utilize the enormous amount of energy extant within the reactor core, to drive her to the surface. Sub-Safe put in that capability on all later systems.

Subsequent to the sinking, there was a virtual flurry of activity within the submarine community and as we, (Nathan Hale), were available for a special test, we were towed out into the stream of the Thames River and anchored all around. While on the surface we conducted several tests which mimicked those which purported to reflect those of Thresher during her fatal dive. The Hale was directed to perform an emergency blow of all main ballast systems for the amount of time that Thresher did and to then shutdown that blow after the same amount of time she did as well. What happened then was never recorded anywhere I recall yet it remains part my personal memory.

The system tested consisted of piping and quick operating “Marotta” valves which could be switched instantly from fully closed to fully open. The valves were 180 degree globular shaped valves operated by an electrical switch. This action caused pneumatic, (high pressure air), to operate the hydraulic operators which then opened or closed the “Marotta” valve. Our test revealed that the system operated as it was supposed to function and that Thresher then closed the valves, after determining they had achieved an up bubble and were rising towards the surface. After awhile they began to sink again and apparently attempted to facilitate another emergency blow. The system then failed just as did ours aboard the Nathan Hale. When we attempted to go to emergency blow again, all the valves failed to open and were found to be “Frozen” shut. I distinctly remember seeing a half inch or more of solid ice around each valve, which had formed as the air was released from thousands of pounds pressure to that pressure inside the ballast tanks. The valves had “Seized” and could not be made to open again until ours had warmed enough to do so. As a result of this seizure none of Thresher’s valves opened and she could not blow any more water out of either the ballast tanks or even into the internal spaces. Thresher then slowly sank until she reached “crush depth”. All the while she remained in communication with Skylark topside. All other data, of which I am cognizant, seems to be correct. I just want all the facts to be “out there”.

Current News

“Plataginet, I will; and like thee, Nero,
Play on the lute, beholding the towns burn” (*Henry VI*, Shakespeare)

North Korea makes fresh threats to US mainland

www.dw.de, Mar. 26

North Korea has said its artillery is combat ready to strike the US mainland, Hawaii and Guam, as well as South Korea. The threats come days after the US and Seoul inked a new military deal amid joint naval exercises.

North Korea’s military said Tuesday that its artillery forces are at their highest-level combat position in its latest threat to attack South Korea and the US.

“All artillery troops including strategic rocket units and long-range artillery units are to be placed under class-A combat readiness,” the Korean People’s Army supreme command said in a statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The units should be prepared to attack “all US military bases in the Asia-Pacific region, including the US mainland, Hawaii and Guam” and South Korea, the statement said.

However, South Korea’s defense ministry said it saw no signs of unusual activity by the North’s military but will monitor the situation. The US and South Korea are currently running joint military drills that end April 30, which they have stressed are strictly defensive.

Despite a successful long-range rocket launch in December, the North is not believed to have the capability to hit the US mainland with an atomic weapon. However, US military bases in the Pacific area are in range of its medium-range missiles.

The threats came days after the South Korean and US militaries signed a new pact, which outlined a joint military response to low-level provocative action by North Korea.

While existing agreements provide for US engagement in the event of a full-scale conflict, the new agreement addresses the response to a limited provocation such as cross-border shelling.

It guarantees US support for any South Korean response and allows Seoul to request any additional US military force necessary.

Tensions have been heightened in the region for months since North Korea conducted its third nuclear test last month. The United Nations Security Council responded by imposing fresh sanctions on the communist state.

The sanctions enraged the North, which has spent the past month issuing increasingly threatening statements about unleashing nuclear attacks.

The US has a long-standing commitment to protect South Korea, which technically remains at war with the North despite a decades-old ceasefire that ended fighting between the two countries in 1953. The US has more than 28,000 soldiers stationed in South Korea. The statement also coincided with the third anniversary of the sinking of a South Korean naval vessel that killed 46 sailors. Seoul insists the attack was from a North Korean submarine, however Pyongyang has denied any involvement.

In Nuclear Crisis, Navy Would Use Aging Network

www.defensenews.com, March 12

Talking to submarines isn't the only communications improvement that's dead in the water for the Navy.

In a nuclear crisis, emergency action messages from the president would travel to subs and Air Force bombers over a network with known problems regarding information assurance.

The network is collectively known as the Nuclear Command, Control and Communications Hybrid Solution — “hybrid” because it includes computers and antennas belonging to both the Air Force and Navy.

For the Navy, that means the Fixed Submarine Broadcast System sites that deliver emergency action messages to subs, plus a network element called Nova. The Air Force uses its own equipment and software to get emergency action messages to its nuclear-armed bombers.

Work on a ground-up replacement to be called the NC3 Long Term Solution were canceled during deliberations over the 2013 Pentagon budget request.

The Air Force needed its portion of the money for a higher priority, according to a February 2012 budget justification document.

How is the Navy coping without a long-term solution? The Navy monitors the network “to address issues as they become known,” said Capt. Miguel San Pedro, manager of the Navy's Undersea Integration Program Office in San Diego.

Luckily, the Navy didn't put all its eggs in the long-term solution basket. In 2009, the Navy hired SAIC to modernize the computers and software at the Fixed Submarine Broadcast System sites. That program is called LBUCS, for Low Band Universal Communications System.

LBUCS “addresses several information assurance issues that were identified. It takes care of some obsolescence issues and refreshes the hardware to the state-of-the-art hardware that's available now, and it makes use of modern crypto,” San Pedro said.

He plans to start formal developmental testing on LBUCS equipment in March at the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command lab in San Diego. If the equipment and software work properly, managers will ask Rear Adm. Jerry Burroughs for approval to procure and field it. That decision is expected in November.

That might be just in the nick of time. A color-coded Navy timeline document, dated March 2010, predicted that the Fixed Submarine Broadcast System would turn red — denoting “major issues” for product health — in mid-fiscal 2013. That would be about now.

San Pedro wasn't familiar with the document, but he said the Navy is monitoring the equipment.

U.S.S. Silversides submarine featured on CNN's list of top 5 'boatels' in the world

Michigan Live, March 13

MUSKEGON, MI — The U.S.S. Silversides, a World War II submarine that sits in the Muskegon Channel, has recently been featured as one of the top five “boatels” in the world by “MainSail,” a monthly sailing show on CNN.

A boatel is a cross between a boat and a hotel, according to a story posted CNN's website.

“Catering for those who seek the romance of the high-seas without sacrificing the creature-comforts of dry land, an increasing number of enterprising hoteliers are converting historic vessels into over-night stays,” reads the story, written by Sheena McKenzie.

The story bills the U.S.S. Silversides as a way for history buffs to “experience life as a World War II sailor – without the combat.” It also highlights the submarine's distinction as the third most prolific U.S. submarine during the war after it sank 23 Japanese ships.

Accompanying attractions and activities include a visit to the adjacent U.S.S. Silversides Submarine Museum and a remote operating vehicle (ROV) class, in which participants can build their own underwater robots, the article said.

Denise Herzhaft, business manager of the U.S.S. Silversides Submarine Museum, said the organization was excited to be included on the list.

“We are delighted,” she said.

Herzhaft said the submarine is a huge draw to the site and attracts Boy and Girl Scout troops, 4-H groups, church groups, reunions and veterans groups. All 72 beds are booked almost every Friday and Saturday throughout the year and during the summer, the Silversides is also occupied on weekdays, she said.

"We are open all year long," Herzhaft said. "It's been this way since the late '80s."

Overnight stays include a guided historical and mechanical tour of the submarine as well as workshops like knot-tying and Morse code, she said.

Rates are \$35 a night Friday through Sunday and \$30 Monday through Thursday. The Silversides is also starting to take reservations for 2014, although rates will increase by \$2.50 next year, Herzhaft said.

Groups need a minimum of 20 people to make a reservation. For more information, contact the museum at (231) 755-1230.

Also included in the list were boatels from New York, the Netherlands, Long Beach, Calif., and London.

Deployments Canceled for USS Jefferson City, USS Rentz

Stars and Stripes, March 25

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel has canceled the upcoming deployments of an attack submarine and guided missile frigate due to sequestration, Navy officials say.

The USS Jefferson City and the USS Rentz had been scheduled to deploy in April, according to a statement released Friday by the Navy's Pacific Fleet. For now, they will remain in their homeport of San Diego.

Hagel also approved the decision to cut short the current deployment of another guided missile frigate, the USS Thach, which is currently operating in the U.S. Southern Command area of responsibility but will return to its homeport of San Diego in April.

"While the final decision to cancel these deployments was deferred until the last possible moment, these commands had been previously directed to prepare for cancellation," the statement said. "Each respective chain of command has begun to notify the affected sailors of these cancellations."

Hagel has directed the Pacific Fleet to prioritize resources to support forward-deployed forces and the units being trained to replace them, the statement said. Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus has said previously this could include the canceling of deployments come April.

Sequestration kicked in on March 1 after Congress failed to pass deficit-reducing legislation. Under the plan, the Defense Department is required to slash \$46 billion from its budget for the rest of the fiscal year.

In a speech March 12, Deputy Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter said the cuts could reduce the operations of Navy ships and aircraft in the Asia-Pacific region by as much as one-third and leave gaps in the availability of Marine Amphibious Ready Groups. Cuts are being applied across the branches of service and in each theater of operations.

China Exports Soar in Asian Arms Build-Up

The Australian, March 25

ARMS purchases by countries in Asia and Oceania accounted for almost half the weapons sales made in the past five years as China became the world's fifth-largest exporter of conventional military hardware.

New data released by a top Swedish think tank shows the top five arms importers between 2008 and 2012 were all in Asia.

The data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute will bolster the case of defence experts who believe the tense security environment in Asia is contributing to an arms build-up, or even an arms race.

With the region's two main powers, China and Japan, at loggerheads and a host of other territorial disputes breaking out in the South China Sea, defence budgets are increasing across the region.

The US recently announced it would spend \$US1 billion (\$950m) installing missile interceptors along its west coast amid threats of attack from North Korea and China's growing military might.

Japan recently boosted its defence budget for the first time in many years and smaller powers in the region are also arming themselves to minimise the damage from being pushed around in territorial disputes by China.

In a preview of two upcoming reports, SIPRI released data showing that China's exports of conventional weapons grew by 162 per cent between the 2003-07 period and the 2008-12 survey. SIPRI said it was the first time China - which boosted its share of global arms exports from 2 per cent to 5 per cent over this period - made the top five since the Cold War.

“China’s rise has been driven primarily by large-scale arms acquisitions by Pakistan,” said Paul Holtom, director of the SIPRI arms transfers program.

However, a number of recent deals indicate that China is establishing itself as a significant arms supplier to a growing number of important recipient states.”

SIPRI pointed to Australia’s plans to upgrade or replace the Collins Class submarine fleet and purchase eight new frigates as an example of the trend towards increased armaments purchases in the region.

“Several countries in Asia and Oceania have in recent years ordered or announced plans to acquire long-range strike and support systems that would make them capable of projecting power far beyond their national borders,” the institute said.

“Last year notably saw the delivery of a nuclear-powered submarine from Russia to India and the commissioning of China’s first aircraft carrier, Liaoning.

“Other regional players are seeking to establish or strengthen submarine fleets, including several Southeast Asian countries and Australia, which is also acquiring large surface warships and combat aircraft.”

The report identified Russia as the leading supplier of arms to the Syrian regime.

Navy frigate sets sail for six months of busting pirates.

Sequestration and Budget Issues Begin to Impact SUBASE patrons

Dolphin-news.com, March 21

GROTON, Conn. – The impacts of sequestration and government budget issues became very visible to patrons of Naval Submarine Base New London (SUBASE) Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) programs and facilities, Monday, March 18.

As the base implements a number of changes to the way it supports the fleet, fighters, and families stationed here, SUBASE was forced to reduce hours of operation at the base gymnasium, pool, and library.

“During this period, we at SUBASE MWR will do our best to continue to provide the services you have come to expect,” said Robert Kydd, SUBASE MWR Director, in announcing the changes. “We also ask for your patience and understanding.”

The changes reduce Morton Hall gymnasium hours by 10.5 hours a week, swimming pool hours by 24 hours a week, and library hours by 11.5 hours a week.

The reduced hours of operation will continue through the remainder of the fiscal year, unless budget issues are resolved.

For Kydd if there is a silver lining to the cloud, it is that SUBASE MWR was able to limit any impact to the Liberty program and Liberty Center which support the base’s significant population of young, single Sailors attending Naval Submarine School.

“With a constricting budget, programs and or service hours have to give somewhere,” said Kydd. “For the foreseeable future, as we try to balance budget and services, we’re tipping the scale in favor of our active duty Sailor support and usage. They’re our primary reason for being here, and that’s why we’re extremely relieved that we were able to keep the Liberty program untouched.”

On March 2, the Secretary of the Navy issued an All Navy message informing the Department that sequestration had begun. Sequestration set in motion required automatic, government-wide cuts. These budget cuts to the Navy, and ultimately to SUBASE, will manifest themselves at various times according to SUBASE Commanding Officer, Capt. Marc W. Denno; some, like the MWR service hour changes, are taking place now and are very visible, while others may occur, or become more apparent, months downstream.

“Maintenance and base upkeep is being greatly reduced,” said Denno. “Repairs and upgrades to buildings and building systems are being curtailed, and additional cuts are already impacting training, travel, and purchasing.

New construction, support, and service contracts cannot be let and a hiring freeze also impacts SUBASE’s ability to replenish the natural attrition of the civilian workforce. But despite these compromises to our base efficiency and support effectiveness, I know Navy Team New London and SUBASE will continue to do their utmost for our fleet, fighters, and families and our Nation’s defense.”

In a message to senior leaders in Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, Rear Admiral Tim Alexander, Commander, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic, also acknowledged the impact that sequestration and budget issues are making.

“As we go forward in this uncertain fiscal environment, please know that we truly appreciate the effect these service level adjustments will have on your day-to-day operations and quality of life of your personnel and families,” said Alexander. “These decisions were not made lightly, but were necessary and prudent to sustain important support services to the Fleet.”

Russia to Modernise Akula Class Submarines

Russia & India Report, March 20

Russia will modernise its fleet of the third-generation Project 971 (Akula class) nuclear-powered attack submarines, Vladimir Dorofeyev, head of the Malakhit Design Bureau, said.

“The Defence Ministry has decided to overhaul all third-generation attack submarines,” Dorofeyev said on Tuesday in an interview with RIA Novosti.

“The first Project 971 submarine is already being upgraded at the Zvezdochka shipyard [in northern Russia],” he said without specifying the name of the vessel and the total number of submarines to be overhauled.

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Defence and Security According to Dorofeyev, the overhaul of the first Akula class submarine should be completed in two years, and it will rejoin the Russian Navy after sea trials.

The upgraded vessels will feature better “stealth” capabilities and improved electronics, the official said.

Together with Project 885 Yasen (Graney) class nuclear-powered vessels they will constitute the core of the Russian fleet of nuclear attack submarines.

The third-generation Project 971 submarine was developed by the Malakhit Design Bureau in the 1970s-80s as an alternative to costly titanium-hull Sierra class vessels.

A total of 15 submarines were built from 1984 to 2001 at the Amur shipyard in Komsomolsk-on-Amur and at the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk. It is not known how many of them are still in service, but one of the subs, the Nerpa, has been leased to India for 10 years under the name INS Chakra.

Akula class submarines feature very low acoustic signatures and can carry up to 12 submarine-launched cruise missiles with nuclear warheads and a range of 3,000 kilometres in addition to anti-ship missiles and torpedoes.

The Indian Navy is looking to spend more than \$10 billion on next generation submarines to scale up its undersea combat capabilities. India, at the moment has 10 Russian Kilo-class, four German HDWs and an Akula-2 nuclear-powered attack submarine leased from Russia at \$1 billion.

Israel Touts New Naval Capabilities

Upi.com, March 19

TEL AVIV, Israel – The Israeli navy is touting growing capabilities to counter regional naval threats.

“The Israeli navy may be less publicized than other elements of the Israeli security forces but it is nevertheless one of the (military’s) most crucial service arms,” it said.

“Israel’s maritime challenges have evolved in recent years as hostile forces in the region have improved their naval capabilities and terror groups pose the threat of underwater attack.”

The service’s underwater fleet is based on Dolphin class submarines equipped with advanced weapons and radar systems and feature a state-of-the-art weapons control system for sensor management, fire control, navigation and operations.

The naval force recently acquired three new Dolphin class submarines. One is operational and two more are on the way.

“We know that countries around us are strengthening their capabilities,” Col. Sasi Chodeda, head of the navy’s Combat Systems Division, said at a recent conference. “Egypt signed an agreement with Germany for the purchasing of advanced submarines, which were built from the same plans as our submarines.

“The Israeli navy is becoming a regional superpower in the submarine field. Our submarines provide a vital pillar in the state’s security.”

In reference to surface vessels, Chodeda said the Israeli navy has procured the Protector unmanned surface vehicle developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems.

The USVs are equipped with weapons and can identify and intercept threats during the day as well as at night through the use of forward looking infrared and laser rangefinders.

Vandals Steal WW2 Submarine Relics

www.iol.co.za, March 18

SYDNEY- Vandals have damaged the wreck of a Japanese mini submarine that famously attacked Sydney Harbour during World War 2, stealing parts and protected relics, authorities said.

The crews from two of the three vessels involved in the assault scuttled their boats and committed suicide but the fate of the third was unknown until 2006 when scuba divers discovered it off Sydney’s northern beaches.

Authorities put an exclusion zone around the vessel, which is believed to contain the remains of the two crew members and personal items such as samurai swords and good luck charms. It is supposedly monitored by long-range cameras.

But divers entered the site, damaged the hull of the midget submarine and stole relics, Australia’s Environment Department said in an appeal for information, without specifying what had been taken.

“The resulting damage includes the breaking off and removal of two of three visible propeller blades... of the submarine, causing permanent damage to a significant piece of Australia’s WWII heritage,” the department said.

The damage was discovered during an archaeological inspection.

Anyone found guilty of damaging or disturbing a protected wreck faces up to five years in jail. The site is also protected under New South Wales heritage laws, with a breach incurring a fine of up to Aus\$1.1-million (US\$1.14-million).

The lethal assault in 1942 came after a Japanese reconnaissance flight reported Allied warships anchored in Sydney Harbour.

The commanding officer of a flotilla of five Japanese large submarines cruising off the city decided to attack with three mini submarines, each carrying a two-man crew.

They avoided the partially constructed Sydney Harbour anti-submarine boom net and attempted to sink the warships but were detected and attacked.

One submarine attempted to torpedo the heavy cruiser USS Chicago, but instead sank the converted Australian ferry HMAS Kuttabul, killing 21 sailors.

Lockheed to Use Soviet Submarine Hunt Data in Sea Mine Plan *Bloomberg.com, March 14*

Lockheed Martin Corp. (LMT), the world's biggest defense contractor, is preparing to scour the Pacific Ocean seabed in a search for metals using data obtained in a cold-war hunt for a sunken Soviet submarine.

Lockheed has set up a unit, U.K. Seabed Resources, to explore for so-called polymetallic nodules that can contain copper, nickel, cobalt, manganese and rare earths, it said in London today. The company, supported by the U.K. government, has been granted the first commercial exploration rights for a 58,000 square-kilometer (22,000 square mile) area of the Pacific between Hawaii and Mexico.

"This is about giving the U.K. access to strategically important minerals and it's about growing a nascent industry, those are the primary motivators for us," Stephen Ball, chief executive officer of Lockheed Martin's U.K. unit and of Seabed Resources, said in an interview.

Rare earths comprise 17 elements used in magnets, oil refining and smartphone batteries. They became a political and legislative flashpoint in July 2010 when China moved to limit domestic output and slash export quotas by 40 percent, souring ties with the U.S. and Japan.

"The U.K. is leading the way in this exciting new industry," Prime Minister David Cameron said at the event to announce the new venture. The exploration "is expected to be worth up to 40 billion pounds to the U.K. economy over the next 30 years," the equivalent of \$60 billion.

Sea Law

Seabed Resources was granted the license by the International Seabed Authority under the sponsorship of the British government at a cost of about \$500,000, Ball said. The company is meeting with potential U.K. suppliers, he said. Seabed mining outside a nation's territorial waters is governed by the ISA, established under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Exploration will start late in the U.K. summer this year and the company expects to be ready to seek an exploitation license in about three years and to start extraction in five to six, Ball said.

Seabed Resources has applied for a second exploration license, with a decision due mid-year, he said.

Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed Martin surveyed the area targeted for exploration in the 1970s and 1980s after being subcontracted to search for a lost Soviet submarine by billionaire industrialist, aviator and filmmaker Howard Hughes.

Company Heritage

"We had survey data as part of the heritage of our company," said Ball. "We have conducted surveys in the past of that part of the ocean, so we understood what was there."

The polymetallic nodules Seabed Resources will look for are found at a depth of about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles), are 3 centimeters to 5 centimeters in size and lie on top of the seabed, the company said. Rare earths, along with materials such as tungsten and niobium, are on a British Geological Survey supply-risk list of materials needed to maintain the U.K.'s economy and lifestyle.

"Rare-earth metals are vital to many new innovations such as mobile phones and low carbon technologies," Universities and Science Minister David Willetts said in a statement. "The U.K. is well placed to lead this first exploration step which could pave the way for us to be at the forefront of significant new commercial, engineering and economic opportunities."

