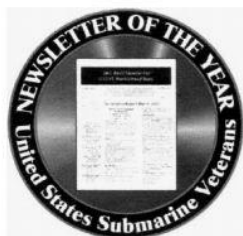


American Submariners Inc.
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404



The Silent Sentinel
AUGUST 2015



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.

***PLACE YOUR ORDER NOW FOR
THE USSVI 2016 CALENDAR! SEE
BASE COMMANDER BOB
BISSONNETTE FOR DETAILS!***

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

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this just became an
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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: _____

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Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

Robert Bissonnette
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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*

August 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 *11 August, 2015*. 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

George Koury, Frank Walker, R.C. Thompson.

Submarine Losses in August

Originally Compiled by C J Glassford



USS Bullhead (SS-332)

Lost on August 6, 1945 with the loss of 84 crew members in the Lombok Strait while on her 3rd war patrol when sunk by a depth charge dropped by a Japanese Army plane. Bullhead was the last submarine lost during WWII.

USS Flier (SS-250)

Lost on August 13, 1944, with the loss of 78 crew members while on her 2nd war patrol. Flier was transiting on the surface when she was rocked by a massive explosion (probably a mine) and sank within less than a minute. 13 survivors, some injured, made it into the water and swam to shore. 8 survived and 6 days later friendly natives guided them to a Coast Watcher and they were evacuated by the USS Redfin (SS-272).

USS S-39 (SS-144)

Lost on August 13, 1942 after grounding on a reef south of Rossel Island while on her 3rd war patrol. The entire crew was able to get off and rescued by the HMAS Katoomba.

USS Harder (SS-257)

Lost on August 24, 1944 with the loss of 79 crew members from a depth charge attack by a minesweeper near Bataan while on her 6th war patrol. Harder had won a Presidential Unit Citation for her first 5 war patrols and CDR Dealey was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously. Harder is tied for 9th in the number of enemy ships sunk.

USS Cochino (SS-345)

Lost on August 26, 1949 after being jolted by a violent polar gale off Norway caused an electrical fire and battery explosion that generated hydrogen and chlorine gasses. In extremely bad weather, men of Cochino and Tusk (SS-426) fought to save the submarine for 14 hours. After a 2nd battery explosion, Abandon Ship was ordered and Cochino sank. Tusk's crew rescued all of Cochino's men except for one civilian engineer. Six sailors from Tusk were lost during the rescue.



**San Diego Base, United States Submarine Veterans Inc.
Minutes of Meeting - 14 July 2015**

1903 - Base Commander Bob Bissonnette called the meeting to order

Conducted Opening Exercises - Pledge of Allegiance lead by Master at Arms - Fred Fomby

Base Chaplain Russ Mohedano lead the prayer and conducted Tolling of the Boats lost in the month of July.

Base Commander Bob Bissonnette recognized Past Commanders, dignitaries and a guest.

Secretary Jack Kane announced 26 members and one guest present.

The minutes of the 10 June 2015 meeting were approved as published in the Sentinel.

Treasurer David Ball gave his report. Checking Balance \$5126 with total assets of \$23,369.62. A copy of the Treasurer's Report will be filed with these minutes.

Base Commander Called For Committee Reports

Chaplain Russ Mohedano reported the following on the Binnacle List: Jack Lester in Hospice care with terminal cancer. Others on Binnacle are George Koury, Frank Walker, R.C. Thompson, and Mike Hyman.

Base Commander Bob Bissonnette announced new dues schedule for National starting after the Convention. Base Commander Bob Bissonnette announced new national website is in the works.

Parade Chair Joel Eikam announced the next parade is in Poway on 7 September starting at 10:00 am. Muster at 0900. Joel asked for input about attending the Mother Goose Parade in El Cajon on 21 Nov. We will put in an application. If we are accepted we will attend.

Membership Chair Ray Febrache announced we now have 288 members.

No Scholarship report this month.

Storekeeper Phill Richeson has new key chains for sale. Cost \$3.00.

Breakfast Committee. Base Commander Bob Bissonnette reported in absence of Senior Vice Commander Warren Branges. The next Breakfast is 30 August 2015.

52 Boat Memorial Committee. Base Commander Bob Bissonnette reported in absence of Senior Vice Commander Warren Branges. The 52 Boat Memorial conversion to a 501.3(c) Charity is still waiting awaiting approval by IRS. Flags were done on 4th of July. We were helped by Trieste Base.

Float Committee Chair David Kauppinen reported that some minor work will be done to the float at the picnic on July 25th.

1940 - Base Commander called for a break.

1950 - Base Commander called the meeting back to order. 50/50 drawing was held. \$58 was put into the operating fund.

1950 - Unfinished Business

Base Commander reported that more stringent requirements are in place for Base access. Those members and non-escorted guests will need to fill out DD Form 5512s for base access. Those forms are available on the back table. Forms were also sent to the email distribution list. These forms are will be good for one year. All bases in US are now at Threatcon Bravo.

Base Commander reported that San Diego Base Annual Picnic will be held 25 July at Smuggler's Cove on Naval Base Point Loma (fka SUBASE) from 0900-1900. Two submarine tours will be offered. One at 1000 and one at 1300. We will be able to send up to 30 on each tour. Send your tour list to Warren Branges immediately so we can get the list to Squadron PAO. Dave Ball and Russ Mohedano will cook. Warren Branges and Ron Gorance will act as escorts from the main gate.

Base Commander announced the Christmas Party will be held on 19 Dec 2015 at the VFW Hall, 4730 Twain Avenue, San Diego, CA 92120. Festivities start at 1330 with dinner served at 1400. Menu will be Pork Chops and Cornish Hens.

Base Commander reminded everyone the National Convention is 6 through 12 September 2015 in Pittsburgh PA. One of the highlights will be a visit to the 9/11 Flight 93 National Memorial in Shanksville PA. The September San Diego Base meeting will not be held on 8 September. That meeting date will be dark.

Base Commander reminded everyone that our functions depend on participation by all. If you commit to a function please honor that commitment or let someone know if you will be unable to attend.

The ongoing question of displaying our Submarine Memorabilia at Terri Ulmer's six acre Destroyer Wheelhouse WWII Tribute and Museum was discussed. Some objections were raised to that proposed plan. It was pointed out that the motion to have the Commander and others look into the particulars and feasibility of the plan was still outstanding. Base Commander Bob Bissonnette and Shipmates Rocky Rockers and David Kauppinen will visit Terri's facility and report to the membership in the next 120 days.

2007 - New Business

Base Commander Bob Bissonnette asked for volunteers to fill the vacant position of Base Junior Vice Commander. Jack Lester's health has forced him to resign the position. Please contact Bob if you are willing to fill Jack's term.

2016 – Good of the Order

The Horse and Cow is looking to open a location in San Diego. It may be a long time before that happens. So if you are looking for an establishment to frequent in meantime try BUBS as our guest tonight is their bartender.

Remember to bring your empty print cartridges to the August meeting for our recycle project.

Some members were opposed to a new proposal to sand blast the Confederate Monument at Stone Mountain Georgia.

The Meeting was adjourned 2020

Jack Kane, Secretary

/s/ Jack E. Kane

Sailing List for 14 July 2015

Fred Fomby	Jim Pope	Dennis McCreight
Phill Richeson	Joel Eikam	Alfred Varela
David Ball	Peter Lary	Ed Farley
Bob Bissonnette	Glen Gerbrand	William Johnston
Bob Farrell	Nihil D. Smith	Dennis Mortensen
Bill Earl	Ron Gorence	Bud Rollison
Russ Mohedano	Ray Febrache	Jim Harer
David Kauppinen	Rocky Rockers	Chris Stafford
Jack Kane	David Martinez	

Current News

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

Unauthorized Repairs Found On Navy's Three Newest Subs

Brad Lendon, CNN, Aug 6

Less than a week after the U.S. Navy welcomed its newest submarine to the fleet, the USS John Warner and two sister fast-attack subs are facing operating restrictions after a contractor was found to have made unauthorized repairs to parts on the nuclear subs.

"As part of an ongoing investigation into a quality control issue with a supplier, General Dynamics Electric Boat determined that three steam pipe elbows supplied by the vendor in question required additional testing and repair due to unauthorized and undocumented weld repairs having been performed on these elbows," a Navy statement said.

The elbows help take steam from the subs' nuclear reactor plants to their propulsion systems, Defense News reported Wednesday. It quoted a senior Navy official as saying the concern was "long-term wear-and-tear" on the affected parts.

Besides the John Warner (SSN-785), the affected vessels are its predecessors in the Virginia class of subs, the USS North Dakota (SSN-784) and USS Minnesota (SSN-783).

General Dynamics and the other builder of the Virginia-class subs, Huntington Ingalls Industries -- Newport News Shipbuilding, were making additional checks on the problem, the Navy said. The unauthorized work was done by a subcontractor to the shipbuilding giants.

Just last Saturday, the Navy commissioned the John Warner in a ceremony at Naval Station Norfolk in Virginia. Top officials and officers touted the new \$2 billion submarine's high-tech war-fighting capabilities.

Adm. Jonathan Greenert, then-chief of naval operations, said the Virginia-class sub program is one of the Pentagon's most successful weapons programs, especially considering what has been delivered.

The John Warner "is the most high-tech, it is the most lethal warship pound for pound that we have in our inventory," Greenert said.

Citing Threats, Pentagon Refocuses On Russia

Philip Ewing, Politico, Aug 5

Even as President Barack Obama tries to stave off a conflict with Russia, the Pentagon isn't taking any chances.

Each of Obama's picks for top Defense Department jobs says that Russia represents the biggest national security threat to the United States. The Army is giving heavier weapons to its frontline cavalry unit in Europe, while it also rotates more units into place. The Navy wants to upgrade its ability to hunt for submarines in the Atlantic and the Mediterranean.

And with Russian bombers nearing U.S. airspace in Alaska and Russian warplanes buzzing American warships at sea, both top current leaders of the Pentagon have begun talking about Russia in a way that sounds more like the Cold War than the era of "reset" between the two powers.

"While Russia has contributed in select security areas, such as counter-narcotics and counter-terrorism, it also has repeatedly demonstrated that it does not respect the sovereignty of its neighbors and it is willing to use force to achieve its goals," says the new National Military Strategy published by Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Martin Dempsey. "Russia's military actions are undermining regional security directly and through proxy forces."

The past two years, in short, have forced military leaders to resume their focus on an old adversary that they, Obama and European leaders had come to treat if not as a full ally, then at least a constructive player in the global scene.

Even though there appears to be a broad consensus about the potential danger from Russia, there are deep differences within the administration about what actions to take. In past, the disputes played out behind the scenes, bursting into the open in rare instances such as the resignation of the president's third defense secretary, Chuck Hagel. Today, the differences are aired openly in regular hearings in Congress.

Hagel's replacement, Ash Carter, as well as Obama's picks for the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Joe Dunford; for vice chairman, Air Force Gen. Paul Selva; and for Army chief of staff, Gen. Mark Milley, all have said they believe sanctions aren't enough to check Russian aggression in Eastern Europe or that they favor arming Ukrainian troops directly. A longer-serving top Obama administration senior defense official, Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, also said she believed Russia represented the biggest threat to the U.S.

The White House has tried to preserve strategic ambiguity about its position, but the president is understood to have all but ruled out sending weapons to Ukraine.

Carter broke with Obama on arming Ukraine as soon as his own Senate confirmation hearing, at which he said he'd "incline" toward supplying government forces there with weapons. Since his confirmation, the secretary has pushed the administration's line that sanctions, led by Europe, are the best response to Russia's invasion of Crimea and incursion into Ukraine, but Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain (R-Ariz.) pressed Carter about whether he still had the same personal position.

"Yes," Carter answered. "I haven't changed my view."

McCain and his fellow hawks welcomed the answers of Carter, Dunford and the others, but administration critics say they do not expect the Pentagon's new cadre of leaders to move the needle much with Obama in terms of major policy decisions.

"We're not going to see much of a change from this administration," said Luke Coffey, a former special adviser to British Defense Secretary Liam Fox who's now a Russia scholar with the conservative Heritage Foundation. "If I was a Ukrainian soldier, I wouldn't be holding my breath."

The Pentagon's rotational deployments to Europe, which involve frequent training exercises with allied units, are a good way to show the American commitment to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Coffey said.

But he also faulted the president for having withdrawn the Army and Air Force units that had previously been based there permanently – evidence, Coffey said, of Obama's incoherent response to Russian aggression.

"It's been a series of bad foreign policy assumptions that led to bad foreign policymaking which resulted in the crisis we have today in Ukraine," Coffey complained.

Asked about the administration's Russia outlook, the National Security Council pointed to the National Security Strategy and to earlier comments by White House press secretary Josh Earnest, who was asked about Dunford's statement to the Senate Armed Services Committee that Russia is the greatest threat to the U.S.

"These kinds of assessments are dynamic based on the activity and the situation on the ground" Earnest said then. "But again, certainly Gen. Dunford is somebody who has spent a lot of time thinking about these issues and has his own view. But I think he would be the first to admit that that reflects his own view and doesn't necessarily reflect the view of – or the consensus – analysis of the president's national security team."

Administration officials say Russian President Vladimir Putin bears the blame for the crisis and dismiss the idea they're anything but focused closely on the Russia problem. In fact, the Pentagon is asking Congress to move money around within the defense budget to support urgent requirements for dealing with the Russian threat both at sea and on land in Europe.

The Navy has asked to field a new "netted undersea sensor system" in response to an urgent need from the U.S. European, Northern and Strategic Commands that will help look for submarines. Those combatant commands also want the Navy to buy a new, \$24 million towed sonar array as part of the submarine search effort.

Meanwhile, the Army has asked Congress to begin reprogramming funds to install heavier weapons aboard the Stryker armored vehicles of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment. The commander of the regiment, Col. John Meyer, himself signed an urgent "operational needs statement" requesting an upgrade from the unit's current 25mm chain guns to 30mm cannons.

The Army has given the regiment high-profile deployments across Eastern Europe to signal to Russia that the unit is there and ready to support NATO allies if necessary. Earlier this year, cavalry troopers drove their Strykers on local roads from Estonia all the way back to Germany, stopping often to make their presence known.

Meyer told reporters at the Pentagon that the Russian incursion into Ukraine has created a high operational tempo for his unit, and so long as the west continues its standoff with Moscow, that's the way things will stay.

"I don't see that requirement going away," Meyer said.

Vietnam Commissions Two New Subs Capable of Attacking China

Franz-Stefan Gady, The Diplomat, Aug 6

On August 1, the Vietnamese Navy commissioned two new Russian-made Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines, according to Thanh Nien News.

The 184-Hai Phong and 185-Khanh Hoa were both commissioned during a ceremony held at Cam Ranh Naval in Khanh Hoa province, south of Hanoi.

The commander of the Vietnam People's Navy, Rear Admiral Hoai Nam noted that this constituted "a major step of modernizing the Navy, and the People's Army of Vietnam in general."

He also emphasized that the acquisition of the two new vessels should not trigger a new arms race in the region or deter other countries but merely protect Vietnam's sovereignty and help safeguard peace in the region.

The two new vessels will join the Submarine Brigade 189, which is already home to the Vietnam People's Navy's first two Kilo-class SSKs – the 182-Hanoi and 183-Ho Chi Minh. Vietnam is expected to field a fleet of six Kilo-class SSKs total.

Hanoi and Moscow signed a \$ 2.6 billion contract for the modernization of Vietnam's submarine fleet back in 2009 with the last two vessels to be delivered by 2016. The website naval-technology.com notes about the Type 636 Kilo-class:

Type 636 is designed for anti-submarine warfare (ASW) and anti-surface-ship warfare (ASuW) and also for general reconnaissance and patrol missions. The Type 636 submarine is considered to be one of the quietest diesel submarines in the world. It is said to be capable of detecting an enemy submarine at a range three to four times greater than it can be detected itself.

As I noted before (See: “Vietnam Buys Deadly New Missiles Capable of Hitting China”), once the last vessel is commissioned, Vietnam will have the most modern submarine force in all of Southeast Asia. Its principal purpose will be to act as a credible deterrent force to Chinese “adventurism” in Vietnam’s maritime domain.

What will make the new vessels particularly dangerous for the People’s Republic of China is that they will purportedly be equipped with land-attack cruise missiles.

“Vietnam is in the process of acquiring 50 anti-ship and land attack 3M-14E Klub supersonic cruise missiles for its burgeoning fleet of SSK Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines,” I noted back in April.

I also stated that “[w]hile it is unknown whether the anti-ship variant of the weapon sold to Vietnam is the 3M-54E Klub-S (range 220km) or 3M-54E1 (range 300km) – both of which can be launched from submarines – the land-attack variant is almost certainly the 3M-14E (range 300km), capable of carrying a 450kg warhead.”

The Chinese naval base at Sanya on China’s Hainan Island and military facilities that Beijing is building in the South China Sea could be potential targets for the newly acquired subs and their deadly missiles.

Upgrading U.S. Nuclear Forces is ‘Not Affordable’ Under Sequestration

John Grady, USNI, Aug 5

The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments acknowledges in a new report that modernizing U.S. nuclear forces — with programs such as the Ohio-class replacement ballistic missile submarine — will compete for funds conventional weapons upgrades like the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (JSF).

Speaking Tuesday at the Washington, D.C., think-tank, Todd Harrison, one of the report’s authors, said, “We won’t be able to do all at the same time.” He added in the mid 2020s “The Joint Strike Fighter [all three variants] will be in full-rate production at the same time” and the Army, which now has no major modernization programs in the pipeline, likely will be looking at replacements for its fighting vehicles and tanks.

“We always have budget constraints” and it becomes a matter of setting priorities, he said.

Harrison said that spending on the nuclear forces would rise from 3 percent to 5 percent of the defense budget as the “bow wave” crests but then would fall back to current levels when adjusted for inflation. That translates to \$40 billion in the peak years.

Studies from inside and outside the Defense Department vary widely on how much it will cost to modernize the nuclear forces. Eric Edelman of the center said the estimates range from \$600 billion to \$1 trillion to upgrade the land-based, sea-based, airborne triad of nuclear deterrence. “That is not affordable under BCA [Budget Control Act] and sequestration.”

Harrison asked rhetorically, “What can you save?”—then added, “We didn’t look at eliminating the sea-based part of the triad.”

The report offered three options for savings in the ballistic-missile submarine program by going down to a fleet of ten, Harrison said. Current Navy plans call for 12 replacements for the 14 Ohio-class submarines in the fleet.

One option would retire the four oldest SSBNs early. “Reducing the overall size of the fleet would also allow the Navy to delay the Ohio Replacement Program by three years and cut the final two SSBNs from its production run.” The report estimates savings of \$8 billion from Fiscal Year 2015–2019 and \$29 billion in the 2020s.

A second option would not retire any Ohio-class subs early but delay the replacement program three years and cut the last two from production. That option would also save \$8 billion from FY 2015–2019 and \$29 billion in the 2020s. But “it would also increase costs by \$9 billion in the 2030s by shifting peak funding years.”

The last option would be to maintain the current buying and retirement plans but cut the last two boats from the end of the production run. There would be no savings from FY 2015 to the end of the 2020s. “The estimated savings in the 2030s would be roughly \$17 billion,” the report said.

Overall, the report noted there are few immediate savings by cutting nuclear forces and the longer-term savings would occur after the Budget Control Act expired.

“Cutting nuclear weapons is unlikely to provide enough savings to manage near-term resource constraints, unless the United States were to make wholesale changes in nuclear strategy and force structure—changes that are not only unlikely, but could not easily be undone,” the report concluded.

America Sends Advanced Submarine to Strategic Philippine Base

Zachary Keck, The National Interest, Aug 4

One of America's most advanced submarines began a port call in the Philippines on Monday.

According to the U.S. embassy in the Philippines, the Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Chicago (SSN 721) made a port call in Subic Bay, Philippines on Monday. The site was home to one of America's largest oversea military bases before it was shut down by the Philippines in 1992.

The USS Chicago was the first fast-attack submarine to be built with a vertical launch system, the embassy noted in its press release announcing the visit. The submarine is more than 360 feet long and weighs some 7,000 tons when submerged.

The submarine is capable of supporting numerous different missions, the embassy noted, including intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, and strike. It carries a crew of 170 sailors.

The USS Chicago is forward deployed in Guam, the hub of U.S. Pacific operations. It made an earlier port call in Changi, Singapore back in March of this year.

That the submarine is making a port call to Subic Bay, Philippines is notable. After the Philippines kicked out the Americans in 1992, Manila converted the facility into a trading zone and industrial hub.

It was only last month that the Philippine military officially announced it was re-opening the former naval base for military usage, having leased some of the area from the governmental body that doles out leases for businesses in the zone.

"It's location is very strategic," Philippine Defense Department spokesman Peter Galvez said at the time, adding: "If we need to deploy to the West Philippine Sea, it (Subic) is already there, we do not deny that. It's a deepwater port."

The Philippine military plans to deploy aircraft and naval vessels at the base.

Last year, the United States and the Philippines signed a new military agreement that would allow the U.S. military to use some of the Philippine bases. That agreement, however, has been held up by a legal challenge in the Philippines. The case is currently being heard by the Supreme Court in the Philippines.

The USS Chicago's port call to Subic Bay also coincides with a major regional security conference in Asia. On Tuesday, Asian leaders opened up the ASEAN Regional Forum in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

U.S. Secretary John Kerry will be in Malaysia from Tuesday to Thursday to participate in the regional conference. Following the conclusion of the ASEAN Regional Forum, Kerry will travel to Vietnam to meet with a number of officials from that country, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh.

The USS Chicago's port call to Subic Bay also comes amid growing fears that China will convert the Scarborough Shoal into a military base. Philippine officials told the Wall Street Journal this week that they fear China will reclaim the partially submerged shoal in the near future, and turn it into an artificial island, which they will then militarize.

China seized the Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines in 2012. It is located just 120 miles west of Subic Bay.

Inferior Submarines Will Make Us Sitting Ducks (Australia)

Andrew Bolt, Herald Sun, Aug 5

PUT the hottest question in national defence this way: would you buy an Australian television or a Japanese one?

Then why must the Abbott Government buy Australian submarines, not Japanese?

What is this mad campaign — fanned by Labor and the unions — that's buckling even the will of the Government, which this week ordered nine frigates from Adelaide's Australian Submarine Corporation?

Or put the issue another way.

Say it's 2030. Say we're in some conflict with China and send dozens of our sailors in our three new submarines to protect our vital sea routes, so we don't run out of things like petrol.

There our sailors sit — half a kilometre under the ocean, as deep as they dare in a submarine running too noisily and running out of range, and facing what's even today the world's biggest submarine fleet.

They know that somewhere out there, perhaps even 200 metres below them, are updated versions of what China has now, the so-called "aircraft carrier killer" Type-093G, whispering on nuclear engines, able to stay down longer, and capable of firing supersonic anti-ship missiles vertically.

Outnumbered, outgunned and outperformed, our submariners are sitting ducks.

But with a brave smile the captain says: "Well, at least our subs were built in Adelaide."

Yeah, right. So can we start to treat our national defence seriously?

We invest in submarines not to protect jobs but our lives. They are not meant to create work for the beggar state of South Australia but havoc for our enemies.

That means we need the best, the deadliest and as many as we can get for our money. Stuff who builds them, as long as they're on our side.

True, I have no idea whether the ASC can cut costs to match the price and performance of the submarines offered by Japan, a world leader.

But I suspect the Government isn't considering Japanese subs because it hates Australian workers.

I also suspect then defence minister David Johnston was not off his chump when, exasperated with the ASC, he snapped "I wouldn't trust them to build a canoe" — even if that outburst helped get him sacked.

But go back to my hypothetical Australian sailors, sitting in submarines they know can't save us or even themselves.

So why would they have only three subs, when this Government promised to spend a massive \$49 billion for between six and 12?

Well, check the history of the ASC's Collins-class submarines, which tells us that local submarines are likely to cost more and be out of action longer.

Here is the central finding of a 1999 report commissioned by the Howard government: "The essential and the visible problem with the Collins-class submarines is that they cannot perform at the levels required for military operations.

"The underlying cause is a myriad design deficiencies and consequential operational limitations relating to the platform and combat system."

Incredible. To save jobs in Adelaide we built submarines there that for years were simply not fit to defend us in war — which is their whole point.

As the report admitted: "We have considered carefully whether the submarines could be 'sent into danger' ... In our view, the circumstances would have to be extremely serious indeed to risk the submarines in their present state."

And why did we build submarines that were duds until they were fixed and upgraded years later at huge expense?

It's partly because we just don't have the experience of building these things: "To some extent it is inevitable in a new class of equipment as complex as a submarine that there will be design deficiencies ...

"That said, we have been astonished at how many there still are some six years after the first boat was launched, the range and extent of them, the seriousness of some of them, the areas in which they have occurred, and how slowly they are being remedied."

Blame the government-owned and heavily unionised ASC for some of that.

As Lloyds Register concluded: "There appears to be an underlying atmosphere of confrontation and contempt for their customer's wishes ..."

Sure, that was 16 years ago, and perhaps the ASC has reformed.

Maybe that's why the Government, facing the loss of key South Australian seats, this week gave the Adelaide-based builder the \$20 billion contract to build more frigates.

Yet the ASC is still building us three Air Warfare Destroyers in a project now two years late and \$1 billion over budget, with leaked defence documents complaining of "numerous defects" — such "large volumes" that one ship needed "significant rework".

But at least they were built in Adelaide, right? Such a comfort to sailors in battle.

With New Paint and Grease, Navy Tries To Lengthen Subs' Life

Michael Melia, Associated Press, Aug 3

GROTON — As it tries to get the most out of each of its \$2.6 billion attack submarines, the U.S. Navy is finding a lot depends on the right paint job.

A new painting process that helps keep marine life from fouling the hulls is among dozens of innovations aimed at reducing the maintenance needs for attack submarines, which are coming out of service faster than they can be replaced.

"They're not very glamorous but they're huge in terms of payback to the fleet," said Navy Capt. Mike Stevens, a manager for the Virginia-class submarine program at Naval Sea Systems Command.

The changes were developed by private and government shipyards in response to a request from the Navy, which wants to squeeze more service life out of each vessel. In addition to the paint, updates include water-resistant grease for hatches, a special coating on the metal rods that extend the bow planes to minimize deposits, and redesigned water-lubricated bearings to improve support of the propeller shaft.

The goal is for the submarines eventually to go eight years between lengthy and expensive major overhaul periods, up from six years currently.

The USS Virginia was commissioned in 2004, and 12 others in its class are already in service. The country is now building two a year to replace the aging Los Angeles-class attack subs. The nuclear-powered Virginia-class subs, which typically deploy for six months at a time, are capable of conducting surveillance in shallow waters and firing missiles among other missions and are expected to have service lives of about 33 years.

While the submarine force says the demand on its 53 attack subs already exceeds their availability, the number in the fleet is projected to continue a post-Cold War decline and bottom out with 41 in 2029 before it begins rising again due to ramped-up construction, according to the Navy's shipbuilding plan.

The design changes are intended to reduce costs and increase the number of combat deployments.

"We want them to spend as much time at sea as possible," Stevens said.

In Quonset Point, Rhode Island, where the submarines are painted, the Navy has invested in facilities to apply anti-fouling paint more rigorously during construction. During overhauls, the Navy also has adopted powder-coat, high-gloss paint applications that hold up better under water and require less maintenance, Stevens said.

At Electric Boat, the Groton-based submarine builder, workers tasked with finding ways to reduce maintenance needs came back with 800 ideas. Those were whittled down to 128 ideas that were recommended to the Navy, said Ken Blomstedt, the company's Virginia-class program manager.

Nearly all of those changes have been incorporated into the design of submarines that are now in the beginning stages of construction, Blomstedt said. One challenge, he said, was ensuring that the submarine's sophisticated capabilities were not compromised.

"That tenet of maintaining combat capability was first and foremost," he said.

Will China Have A Mini U.S. Navy By 2020?

Prashanth Parameswaran, The Diplomat, July 30

A former admiral does the math – and the results are quite striking.

Much has been written about China's ongoing efforts to become what President Xi Jinping called a "great maritime power" and how the United States should respond. In light of this, it is useful to think about the future trajectory of the increasingly modern and powerful People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), which has been charged with both defending China's sovereignty in 'near seas' (eg. Taiwan) and protecting Chinese interests in the 'far seas'.

Rear Admiral Michael McDevitt, now a senior fellow at the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA), has attempted to do exactly that. In a recent paper delivered at a two-day CNA conference on Chinese maritime power, seen by The Diplomat, McDevitt projects what China's 'far seas' navy will look like in 2020 and how it would rank alongside the United States and other players – Britain, France, Japan, India and Russia. Getting a sense of the PLAN's 'far seas' capabilities is important since it tells us the extent to which it might be able to project power further from China's shores.

McDevitt's results, though not entirely surprising, are nonetheless quite striking. According to his projections, on paper by 2020 China's navy will already increasingly look like a smaller version of the U.S. Navy and will be "the second most capable 'far seas' navy in the world." In five years, the PLAN's capabilities would dwarf most other navies – China would have as many aircraft carriers as Britain and India, more nuclear attack submarines than either Britain or France, and as many AEGIS-like destroyers as all the other non-U.S. navies combined. China would have two aircraft carriers, 20-22 AEGIS like destroyers and 6-7 nuclear attack submarines, while United States would have eleven aircraft carriers; 88 AEGIS like destroyers; and 48 nuclear attack submarines.

While China would still be far behind the U.S. Navy, its growing capabilities could already begin to have significant implications for the United States and other actors in five years, McDevitt argues. He paints a rather grim picture. By 2020, seeing Chinese warships in the far reaches of the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean would become a much more routine affair, and some U.S. allies and partners may grow increasingly nervous. It would also become more challenging for the U.S. Navy to keep track of far seas deployed PLAN submarines, while U.S. sea control off of the Middle Eastern and East African hot spots can no longer be assumed. Most alarmingly, McDevitt notes that the image of a Chinese 'global' navy will attenuate perception of U.S. power.

The key qualifier, of course, is on paper, a point that McDevitt himself clearly acknowledges. Perhaps most obviously, looking purely at quantity hides the significant qualitative differences that exist between U.S. and Chinese equipment. Rising numbers also tell us little about how operationally competent PLAN far seas forces will be. These include lingering questions about the reliability of combat systems, the training of its sailors, and the functionality of the command structure. Furthermore, straight-line projections cannot reflect the domestic constraints China many face in the coming years that could alter the trajectory of its naval development, including an economic slowdown. Asked how China might confront these challenges, McDevitt said he expected the country to "muddle through," but that China also did not need to "breathe too hard" to come close to the numbers he projected.

Furthermore, in many ways the United States is still well-positioned to counter threats that a more modern, capable PLAN may pose. As McDevitt noted during the conference, submarines, for instance, continue to remain a distinct American asymmetric advantage. Even here, though, he warned that numbers still do count, a point that former Admiral Gary Roughead also emphasized in his keynote address to the conference on Tuesday. "We need as many subs as we need to make sure that the Chinese worry about that a lot," McDevitt said.

Refurbished Submarine Rescue System Passes Tests Undersea Rescue Command Completes ORE; Navy Returns To Deep Sea Rescue

MC2 Kyle Carlstrom, Jacksonville.com, July 29

Crew members from Undersea Rescue Command (URC) and contractors from Phoenix Holdings International (Phoenix) completed an operational readiness evaluation (ORE) July 19, re-certifying the Navy's deep sea submarine rescue capability.

The submarine rescue system had undergone an extensive refurbishment period.

The ORE, a component of crew certification, was the final step in a multistage process that enabled the URC-Phoenix team to become rescue-ready for worldwide submarine rescue.

"This was a tremendous effort by our rescue team, Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA) and Commander, Submarine Force U.S. Pacific Fleet (COMSUBPAC) in restoring this unique capability," said Capt. Gene Doyle, commander, Submarine Squadron 11 (CSS 11), who is responsible for administrative and operational oversight of URC. "Whether it's a U.S. submarine, or a partner nation submarine, URC is ready to respond if called upon."

Dedicated and professional submariners combined with robust and redundant submarine systems ensure that submarines are inherently safe. In addition, the Submarine Rescue Diving and Recompression System (SRDRS), operated by URC-Phoenix, provides a last line of defense for the rescue of a submarine crew.

The Pressurized Rescue Module (PRM-1) Falcon, which is the submarine rescue vehicle component of the SRDRS, is capable of diving to depths up to 2,000 feet and mating with a disabled submarine trapped on the sea floor. The SRDRS is capable of being flown anywhere in the world to rescue either U.S. or partner nation submariners in distress.

The initial effort of the overall re-certification process was the restoration of PRM.

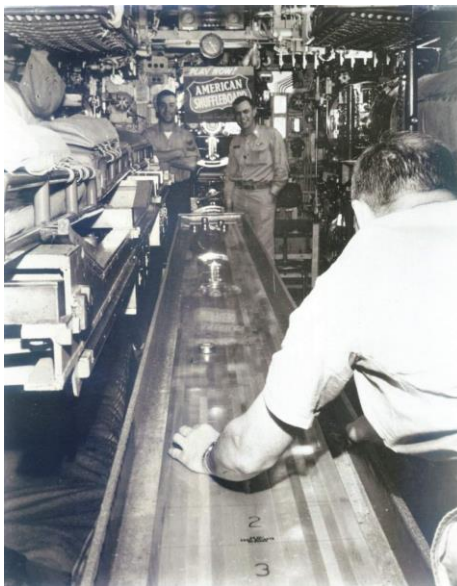
Key milestones during sea trials included three deep dives, the first of which was an unmanned 2,000-foot dive to verify hull and component integrity at the crushing depth of 61 atmospheres absolute, which is more than 900 pounds per square inch.

The third and final sea trials dive was a manned 2,000-foot dive in the PRM to a training fixture called "Deep Seat" to verify full system operational capability in the harshest conditions expected in a submarine rescue.

The final phase was the ORE, which was a scenario-based event that took the entire URC-Phoenix team through a rigorous simulated submarine rescue using SRDRS aboard HOS Dominator off the coast of Santa Catalina Island in Southern California.

The crew had to execute SRDRS evolutions and PRM dives, including drill anomalies, under timed constraints to conduct a simulated submarine rescue. In addition, PRM open-hatch operations were conducted at depth along with treatment of simulated medical conditions expected from those rescued.

"Re-certifying the Falcon put us right back into the deep sea rescue world," said Kimsey, "Not only can we supply a deep sea rescue response for our submarines, but for anyone else in the world. We're already looking to future engagements and exercises in 2016."



Underwater Shuffleboard on the Theodore Roosevelt
(Picture emailed to me by RM1(SS) [in a former life] Matt Baumann)

Special Supplement

The Last Cruise of the Monitor

by Greenville M. Weeks, U.S.N.
Atlantic Monthly, September 1863

and

Illustration from Peterson's Magazine
September 1861

THE LAST CRUISE OF THE MONITOR.

AN actor in the scenes of that wild night when the Monitor went down craves permission to relate the story of her last cruise.

Her work is now over. She lies a hundred fathoms deep under the stormy waters off Cape Hatteras. But "the little cheese-box on a raft" has made herself a name which will not soon be forgotten by the American people.

Every child knows her early story, — it is one of the thousand romances of the war, — how, as our ships lay at anchor in Hampton Roads, and the army of the Potomac covered the Peninsula, one shining March day, —

"Far away to the South uprose
A little feather of snow-white smoke;
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes
Was steadily steering its course
To try the force
Of our ribs of oak."

Iron conquered oak; the balls from the Congress and Cumberland rattled from the sides of the Rebel ship like hail; she passed on resistless, and

"Down went the Cumberland, all a wrack."

The Congress struck her flag, and the band of men on the Peninsula waited their turn, — for the iron monster belched out fire and shell to both sea and land. Evening cut short her work, and she returned to Norfolk, leaving terror and confusion behind her.

The morning saw her return; but now between her expected prey, the Minnesota, and herself, lay a low, black raft, to the lookers-on from the Merrimack no more formidable than the masts of the sunken Cumberland, or the useless guns of the Congress, near whose shattered hulks the Monitor kept guard, the avenger of their loss.

As the haughty monster approached the scene of her triumph, the shock of an unexampled cannonade checked her career. That little black turret poured

out a fire so tremendous, so continuous, that the jubilant crew of the Merrimack faltered, surprised, terrified. The revolving tower was a marvel to them. One on board of her at the time has since told me, that, though at first entirely confident of victory, consternation finally took hold of all.

"D—n it!" said one, "the thing is full of guns."

An hour the contest raged, and then the iron scales of the invincible began to crumble under repeated blows thundered from that strange revolving terror. A slaughtering, destroying shot smashing through the port, a great seam battered in the side, crippled and defeated, the Merrimack turned prow and steamed away.

This was the end of her career, as really as when, a few weeks later, early morning saw her wrapped in sudden flame and smoke, and the people of Norfolk heard in their beds the report which was her death-knell.

So fear ended for a time, and the Monitor saw little service, until at Fort Darling she dismounted every gun, save one, when all her comrades failed to reach the mark. Then, a little worn by hard fighting, she went to Washington for some slight repairs, but specially to have better arrangements made for ventilation, as those on board suffered from the confined air during action.

The first of September a fresh alarm came, when she went down to Hampton Roads to meet the new Merrimack, said to be coming out, and stationed herself at the mouth of the James River, between the buried Congress and Cumberland, whose masts still rose above water, a monument of Rebel outrage and Union heroism. Here she remained expectant for more than two months, all on board desiring action, but thinking the new year must come in before anything could be done.

1863.]

The Last Cruise of the Monitor.

367

The last week in December found her lying under the guns of Fortress Monroe, and busily fitting for sea. Her own guns had been put in perfect working order, and shone like silver, one bearing the name of Worden, the other that of Ericsson. Her engineer, Mr. Campbell, was in the act of giving some final touches to the machinery, when his leg was caught between the piston-rod and frame of one of the oscillating engines, with such force as to bend the rod, which was an inch and a quarter in diameter and about eight inches long, and break its cast-iron frame, five-eighths of an inch in thickness. The most remarkable fact in this case is, that the limb, though jammed and bruised, remained unbroken, — our men in this iron craft seeming themselves to be iron.

The surgeon who examined the limb, astonished at the narrow escape, thought at first that it might, by energetic treatment, be cured in a few days; and as the engineer, who had been with the vessel from her launching, was extremely anxious to remain on board, he was disposed at first to yield to his wishes, but afterwards, reflecting that confined air and sea-sickness would have a bad effect, concluded to transfer him to the hospital, the engineer remarking, as he was carried off, — “Well, this may be Providential.”

It was Providential indeed!

His place was filled, and the preparations went on briskly. The turret and sight-holes were calked, and every possible entrance for water made secure, only the smallest openings being left in the turret-top, and the blower-stacks, through which the ship was ventilated. On the afternoon of December 29, 1862, she put on steam, and, in tow of the Rhode Island, passed the fort, and out to sea under sealed orders.

General joy was expressed at this relief from long inaction. The sick came upon deck, and in the clear sky, fresh air, and sense of motion, seemed to gain new life.

The Rhode Island, like all side-wheel

steamers, left in her wake a rolling, foaming track of waves, which the Monitor, as she passed over it, seemed to smooth out like an immense flat-iron. In the course of the afternoon, we saw the Passaic in tow of the State of Georgia, like a white speck, far in advance of us.

As we gradually passed out to sea, the wind freshened somewhat; but the sun went down in glorious clouds of purple and crimson, and the night was fair and calm above us, though in the interior of our little vessel the air had already begun to lose its freshness. We suffered more or less from its closeness through the night, and woke in the morning to find it heavy with impurity from the breaths of some sixty persons, composing the officers and crew. Sunrise found us on deck, enjoying pure air, and watching the East.

“Where yonder dancing billows dip,
Far off to Ocean’s misty verge,
Ploughs Morning, like a full-sailed ship,
The Orient’s cloudy surge.
With spray of scarlet fire, before
The ruffled gold that round her dies,
She sails above the sleeping shore,
Across the waking skies.”

During the night we had passed Cape Henry, and now, at dawn, found ourselves on the ocean, — the land only a blue line in the distance. A few more hours, and that had vanished. No sails were visible, and the Passaic, which we had noticed the evening before, was now out of sight. The morning and afternoon passed quietly; we spent most of our time on deck, on account of the confined air below, and, being on a level with the sea, with the spray dashing over us occasionally, amused ourselves with noting its shifting hues and forms, from the deep green of the first long roll to the foam-crest and prismatic tints of the falling wave.

As the afternoon advanced, the freshening wind, the thickening clouds, and the increasing roll of the sea gave those most accustomed to ordinary ship-life some new experiences. The little ves-

sel plunged through the rising waves, instead of riding them, and, as they increased in violence, lay, as it were, under their crests, which washed over her continually, so that, even when we considered ourselves safe, the appearance was that of a vessel sinking.

"I'd rather go to sea in a diving-bell!" said one, as the waves dashed over the pilot-house, and the little craft seemed buried in water.

"Give me an oyster-scow!" cried another,—"anything!—only let it be wood, and something that will float over, instead of under the water!"

Still she plunged on, and about six thirty p. m. we made Cape Hatteras; in half an hour we had rounded the point, and many on board expressed regret that the Monitor should not have been before the Passaic in doing so. Our spy-glasses were in constant use; we saw several vessels in the distance, and about seven p. m. discovered the Passaic four or five miles *astern* to the north of us, in tow of the steamer State of Georgia.

A general hurrah went up,—"Hurrah for the first iron-clad that ever rounded Cape Hatteras! Hurrah for the little boat that is first in everything!" The distance between ourselves and the Passaic widened, and we gradually lost sight of her.

At half-past seven a heavy shower fell, lasting about twenty minutes. At this time the gale increased; black, heavy clouds covered the sky, through which the moon glimmered fitfully, allowing us to see in the distance a long line of white, plunging foam, rushing towards us,—sure indication, to a sailor's eye, of a stormy time.

A gloom overhung everything; the banks of cloud seemed to settle around us; the moan of the ocean grew louder and more fearful. Still our little boat pushed doggedly on: victorious through all, we thought that here, too, she would conquer, though the beating waves sent shudders through her whole frame. Bearing still the marks of one of the

fiercest battles of the war, we had grown to think her invulnerable to any assault of man or element, and as she breasted these huge waves, plunging through one only to meet another more mighty, we thought,—“She is stanch! she will weather it!”

An hour passed; the air below, which had all day been increasing in closeness, was now almost stifling, but our men lost no courage. Some sang as they worked, and the cadence of the voices, mingling with the roar of waters, sounded like a defiance to Ocean.

Some stationed themselves on top of the turret, and a general enthusiasm filled all breasts, as huge waves, twenty feet high, rose up on all sides, hung suspended for a moment like jaws open to devour, and then, breaking, gnashed over in foam from side to side. Those of us new to the sea, and not appreciating our peril, hurrahd for the largest wave; but the captain and one or two others, old sailors, knowing its power, grew momentarily more and more anxious, feeling, with a dread instinctive to the sailor, that, in case of extremity, no wreck yet known to ocean could be so hopeless as this. Solid iron from keelson to turret-top, clinging to anything for safety, if the Monitor should go down, would only insure a share in her fate. No mast, no spar, no floating thing, to meet the outstretched hand in the last moment.

The sea, like the old-world giant, gathered force from each attack. Thick and fast came the blows on the iron mail of the Monitor, and still the brave little vessel held her own, until, at half-past eight, the engineer, Waters, faithful to the end, reported a leak. The pumps were instantly set in motion, and we watched their progress with an intense interest. She had seemed to us like an old-time knight in armor, battling against fearful odds, but still holding his ground. We who watched, when the blow came which made the strong man reel and the life-blood spout, felt our hearts faint within us; then again

1863.]

The Last Cruise of the Monitor.

369

ground was gained, and the fight went on, the water lowering somewhat under the laboring pumps.

From nine to ten it kept pace with them. From ten to eleven the sea increased in violence, the waves now dashing entirely over the turret, blinding the eyes and causing quick catchings of the breath, as they swept against us. At ten the engineer had reported the leak as gaining on us; at half-past ten, with several pumps in constant motion, one of which threw out three thousand gallons a minute, the water was rising rapidly, and nearing the fires. When these were reached, the vessel's doom was sealed; for with their extinction the pumps must cease, and all hope of keeping the Monitor above water more than an hour or two expire. Our knight had received his death-blow, and lay struggling and helpless under the power of a stronger than he.

A consultation was held, and, not without a conflict of feeling, it was decided that signals of distress should be made. Ocean claimed our little vessel, and her trembling frame and failing fire proved she would soon answer his call; yet a pang went through us, as we thought of the first iron-clad lying alone at the bottom of this stormy sea, her guns silenced, herself a useless mass of metal. Each quiver of her strong frame seemed to plead with us not to abandon her. The work she had done, the work she was to do, rose before us; might there not be a possibility of saving her yet?—her time could not have come so soon. We seemed to hear a voice from her saying,—“Save me, for once I have saved you! My frame is stanch still; my guns may again silence the roar of Rebel batteries. The night will pass, and calm come to us once more. Save me!” The roar of Ocean drowned her voice, and we who descended for a moment to the cabin knew, by the rising water through which we waded, that the end was near.

Small time was there for regrets.

VOL. XI.

24

Rockets were thrown up, and answered by the Rhode Island, whose brave men prepared at once to lower boats, though, in that wild sea, it was almost madness.

The Monitor had been attached to the Rhode Island by two hawsers, one of which had parted at about seven p. m. The other remained firm, but now it was necessary it should be cut. How was that possible, when every wave washed clean over her deck? what man could reach it alive? “Who'll cut the hawser?” shouted Captain Bankhead. Acting-Master Stodder volunteered, and was followed by another. Holding by one hand to the ropes at her side, they cut through, by many blows of the hatchet, the immense rope which united the vessels. Stodder returned in safety, but his brave companion was washed over and went down.

The men were quiet and controlled, but all felt anxiety. Master's-Mate Peter Williams suggested bailing, in the faint hope that in this way the vessel might be kept longer above water. A bailing party was organized by John Stocking, boatswain, who, brave man, at last went down. Paymaster Keeler led the way, in company with Stocking, Williams, and one or two others; and though the water was now waist-deep, and they knew the vessel was liable to go down at almost any moment, they worked on nobly, throwing out a constant stream of water from the turret.

Meanwhile the boat launched from the Rhode Island had started, manned by a crew of picked men.

A mere heroic impulse could not have accomplished this most noble deed. For hours they had watched the raging sea. Their captain and they knew the danger; every man who entered that boat did it at peril of his life; and yet all were ready. Are not such acts as these convincing proof of the divinity in human nature?

We watched her with straining eyes, for few thought she could live to reach us. She neared; we were sure of her, thank God!

In this interval the cut hawser had become entangled in the paddle-wheel of the Rhode Island, and she drifted down upon us: we, not knowing this fact, supposed her coming to our assistance; but a moment undeceived us. The launch sent for our relief was now between us and her, — too near for safety. The steamer bore swiftly down, stern first, upon our starboard quarter. "Keep off! keep off!" we cried, and then first saw she was helpless. Even as we looked, the devoted boat was caught between the steamer and the iron-clad, — a sharp sound of crushing wood was heard, — thwarts, oars, and splinters flew in air, — the boat's crew leaped to the Monitor's deck. Death stared us in the face; our iron prow must go through the Rhode Island's side, and then an end to all. One awful moment we held our breath, — then the hawser was cleared, — the steamer moved off, as it were, step by step, first one, then another, till a ship's-length lay between us, and then we breathed freely. But the boat! — had she gone to the bottom, carrying brave souls with her? No, there she lay, beating against our iron sides, but still, though bruised and broken, a life-boat to us.

There was no hasty scramble for life when it was found she floated; all held back. The men kept steadily on at their work of bailing, — only those leaving, and in the order named, whom the captain bade save themselves. They descended from the turret to the deck with mingled fear and hope, for the waves tore from side to side, and the coolest head and bravest heart could not guaranty safety. Some were washed over as they left the turret, and, with a vain clutch at the iron deck, a wild throwing-up of the arms, went down, their death-cry ringing in the ears of their companions.

The boat sometimes held her place by the Monitor's side, then was dashed hopelessly out of reach, rising and falling on the waves. A sailor would spring from the deck to reach her, be seen for

a moment in mid-air, and then, as she rose, fall into her. So she gradually filled up; but some poor souls who sought to reach her failed even as they touched her receding sides, and went down.

We had on board a little messenger-boy, the special charge of one of the sailors, and the pet of all; he must inevitably have been lost, but for the care of his adopted father, who, holding him firmly in his arms, escaped as by miracle, being washed overboard, and succeeded in placing him safely in the boat.

The last but one to make the desperate venture was the surgeon; he leaped from the deck, and at the very instant saw the boat being swept away by the merciless sea. Making one final effort, he threw his body forward as he fell, striking across the boat's side so violently, it was thought some of his ribs must be broken. "Haul the Doctor in!" shouted Lieutenant Greene, perhaps remembering how, a little time back, he himself, almost gone down in the unknown sea, had been "hauled in" by a quinine rope flung him by the Doctor. Stout sailor-arms pulled him in, one more sprang to a place in her, and the boat, now full, pushed off, — in a sinking condition, it is true, but still bearing hope with her, for *she was wood*.

Over the waves we toiled slowly, pulling for life. The men stuffed their peajackets into the holes in her side, and bailed incessantly. We neared the Rhode Island; but now a new peril appeared. Right down upon our centre, borne by the might of rushing water, came the whale-boat sent to rescue others from the iron-clad. We barely floated; if she struck us with her bows full on us, we must go to the bottom. One sprang, and, as she neared, with outstretched arms, met and turned her course. She passed against us, and his hand, caught between the two, was crushed, and the arm, wrenched from its socket, fell a helpless weight at his side; but life remained. We were saved, and an arm was a small price to pay for life.

1863.]

The Last Cruise of the Monitor.

371

We reached the Rhode Island; ropes were flung over her side, and caught with a death-grip. Some lost their hold, were washed away, and again dragged in by the boat's crew. What chance had one whose right arm hung a dead weight, when strong men with their two hands went down before him? He caught at a rope, found it impossible to save himself alone, and then for the first time said, — "I am injured; can any one aid me?" Ensign Taylor, at the risk of his own life, brought the rope around his shoulder in such a way it could not slip, and he was drawn up in safety.

In the mean time the whale-boat, nearly our destruction, had reached the side of the Monitor, and now the captain said, — "It is madness to remain here longer; let each man save himself." For a moment he descended to the cabin for a coat, and his faithful servant followed to secure a jewel-box, containing the accumulated treasure of years. A sad, sorry sight it was. In the heavy air the lamps burned dimly, and the water, waist-deep, splashed sullenly against the wardroom's sides. One lingering look, and he left the Monitor's cabin forever.

Time was precious; he hastened to the deck, where, in the midst of a terrible sea, Lieutenant Greene nobly held his post. He seized the rope from the whale-boat, wound it about an iron stanchion, and then around his wrists, for days afterward swollen and useless from the strain. His black body-servant stood near him.

"Can you swim, William?" he asked.

"No," replied the man.

"Then keep by me, and I 'll save you."

One by one, watching their time between the waves, the men filled in, the captain helping the poor black to a place, and at last, after all effort for others and none for themselves, Captain Bankhead and Lieutenant Greene took their places in the boat. Two or three still remained, clinging to the turret; the captain had begged them to come down,

but, paralyzed with fear, they sat immovable, and the gallant Brown, promising to return for them, pushed off, and soon had his boat-load safe upon the Rhode Island's deck.

Here the heartiest and most tender reception met us. Our drenched clothing was replaced by warm and dry garments, and all on board vied with each other in acts of kindness. The only one who had received any injury, Surgeon Weeks, was carefully attended to, the dislocated arm set, and the crushed fingers amputated by the gentlest and most considerate of surgeons, Dr. Webber of the Rhode Island.

For an hour or more we watched from the deck of the Rhode Island the lonely light upon the Monitor's turret; a hundred times we thought it gone forever, — a hundred times it reappeared, till at last, about two o'clock, Wednesday morning, it sank, and we saw it no more.

We had looked, too, most anxiously, for the whale-boat which had last gone out, under the command of Master's-Mate Brown, but saw no signs of it. We knew it had reached the Monitor, but whether swamped by the waves, or drawn in as the Monitor went down, we could not tell. Captain Trenchard would not leave the spot, but sailed about, looking in vain for the missing boat, till late Wednesday afternoon, when it would have been given up as hopelessly lost, except for the captain's dependence on the coolness and skill of its tried officer. He thought it useless to search longer, but, hoping it might have been picked up by some coasting vessel, turned towards Fortress Monroe.

Two days' sail brought us to the fort, whence we had started on Monday with so many glowing hopes, and, alas! with some who were never to return. The same kindness met us here as on the Rhode Island; loans of money, clothing, and other necessaries, were offered us. It was almost well to have suffered, so much beautiful feeling did it bring out.

A day or two at the fort, waiting

372 *Lyrics of the Street.* [March,

for official permission to return to our homes, and we were on our way, — the week seeming, as we looked back upon it, like some wild dream. One thing only appeared real: our little vessel was lost, and we, who, in months gone by, had learned to love her, felt a strange pang go through us as we remembered that never more might we tread her deck, or gather in her little cabin at evening.

We had left her behind us, one more treasure added to the priceless store which Ocean so jealously hides. The Cumberland and Congress went first; the little boat that avenged their loss has followed; in both noble souls have gone down. Their names are for history; and so long as we remain a people, so long will the work of the Monitor be remembered, and her story told to our children's children.



Two Hot Chicks
Peterson's Magazine, September 1861