

American Submariners Inc.
Silent Sentinel
c/o VFW Post 3787
4370 Twain Ave.
San Diego, CA 92120-3404



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The Silent Sentinel

October 2008



Our Creed

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

This Silent Sentinel is Dedicated to our Shipmate, Don Tetschlag: Sailor, Rest Your Oar.



Mess Cook Don Tetschlag
Marine Railway New London
1958



Sheboygan, Wisconsin
New Years Eve 1962
Left: Don Tetschlag TM1 (SS)
Center: Henry Gadreal EM2 (SS)
Right: Bob Dickfoss USAF

U.S. Submarine Veterans San Diego Base

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The Silent Sentinel via Email

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

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____

EMAIL: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

Would like the SILENT SENTINEL emailed: YES _____ NO _____

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USSVI Base Commander
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San Diego, CA 92120-3404

*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*

October Meeting

Our monthly meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month at VFW Post 3787, 4370 Twain Ave., San Diego. Our October meeting will be on 14 October, 2008. The post is located one half block West of Mission Gorge Road, just north of I-8. The E-Board meets at 6p.m. The General Meeting begins at 7 p.m. See you there.

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

BINNACLE LIST

- Richard Fullen (recuperating in Santee)
- Mike Hyman (Crohn's Disease)
- C J Glassford (had pacemaker put in and recuperating at home)
- Larry Freske
- Al Strunk (now recuperating at home and doing much better)

Submitted by Mike Hyman



Submarine Losses in September

Submitted by C J Glassford

GRAYLING (SS 209) - 76 Men on Board:
Probably Rammed and Sunk, on 9 September 1943, by Japanese Transport in South China Sea, West of Luzon :

“ ALL HANDS LOST “

CISCO (SS 290) - 76 Men on Board:
Sunk, on 28 September 1943, by Japanese Observation Seaplane, and Gunboat (ex – US River Gunboat “Luzon (PR#7) in the Sulu Sea, Off Panay Island :

“ ALL HANDS LOST “





*USS Grayback (SSG-574) entering San Diego Harbor.
U.S. Navy photo*

From USS *Barb* to the *Ohio*-class—The Use of Missiles on Submarines

by Thomas Holian

Undersea Warfare Magazine Fal 12006 / Winter 2008

With a flair for the dramatic, on Nov. 1, 2007 Rear Adm. William Hilarides, Program Executive Officer for Submarines, officially certified the first of four newly redesigned guided missile submarines (SSGNs), USS *Ohio* (SSGN-726), as having reached Initial Operational Capability (IOC), signing the document in the middle of a presentation to the Naval Submarine League in McLean, Va. *Ohio* is now “ready to assume its intended role in the Fleet” (according to the SSGN program office’s IOC definition), but what is that role exactly? And why did the Navy look to its four oldest missile submarines as the platforms for that role?

Briefly addressing the latter question will allow us to then tackle the former. The threat environment that the *Ohio*-class ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) were originally designed to address has changed in the ensuing years. In 1994, the Defense Department’s Nuclear Posture Review determined that only 14 of the Navy’s 18 SSBNs were needed to fulfill their nuclear deterrent role. As the Navy’s IOC press release puts it:

Rather than decommission the four oldest submarines, the Navy decided that it had been presented with a unique opportunity to gain four stealthy special operations and strike platforms at a fraction of the cost of any new platform with similar capabilities. The modifications made to OHIO and her sister ships, USS MICHIGAN (SSGN-727), USS FLORIDA (SSGN-728), and USS GEORGIA (SSGN-729), include improved intelligence, search, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities; improved communications via the Common Submarine Room; the ability to deploy with up to 154 TOMAHAWK cruise missiles; and special operations modifications including the ability to host a Dry Deck Shelter (DDS) and/or an Advanced SEAL Delivery System (ASDS) and two large lock-in/lock-out chambers to facilitate insertion and extraction of Navy SEALs and other special operators.

The Navy, then, intends to use its rebuilt submarines in a variety of roles, two of the most important being guided missile strikes and special operations missions. Neither of these may universally be thought of as a traditionally “submarine” role, but Navy planners did not simply dream up such missions as something the four old boats could do once it appeared they were destined for decommissioning. In fact, not only are the new *Virginia*-class submarines designed to accommodate such missions (albeit on a smaller platform), but many of the older *Los Angeles*-class submarines were converted to carry a few TOMAHAWK missiles and transport Navy SEALs. But why stop there? Looking even further back in the U.S. Navy’s history, one quickly discovers that submarine sailors have carried out missions involving the firing of guided missiles and the insertion of Special Operations Forces (SOF) since the days of World War II, when necessity was often the mother of tactical invention.

The first submariner to launch missiles from a submarine in combat was the noted tactical pioneer and World War II hero Rear Adm. Eugene Fluckey. Then-Cmdr. Fluckey, frustrated with the inherent limitations and design flaws of torpedoes, mounted a rocket launcher on the submarine he commanded, USS *Barb* (SS-220). After sneaking in to the harbor of

Shari, Japan, on June 22, 1945, Fluckey launched twelve “ballistic missiles” (as he called them) into the mining and lumber town, setting it ablaze.



*A Regulus I missile is loaded on
USS Tunny (SSG-282).*

U.S. Navy photo.

With the concept of submarine-launched missiles now proven in rather spectacular fashion, the Navy decided to study the idea further by testing and modifying captured German V-1 “Buzz Bombs” for potential use against Japan in 1945-46. The war ended before the modified V-1s could be employed thus, but testing continued and an Americanized version of the buzz bomb, known as the “Loon,” quickly entered production. It contained a preset guidance device that could target the missile and its 2,200 pound high-explosive warhead onto a fixed target. The Navy modified the fleet submarines USS *Cusk* (SS-348) and USS *Carbonero* (SS-337) with ramps to launch the Loon, and altered their air-search radar so that they could send codes to the Loons, commanding them to go faster, slower, higher, lower, left, right, or dive. During a test on Feb. 12, 1947, *Cusk* became the first submarine to launch a truly guided missile.

Loon was seen merely as a first step in the Navy’s guided missile efforts, especially in light of its poor range (50 nautical miles under guidance, extendable to 135 nautical miles when using a second submarine as a relay). The Navy also wished to arm a guided missile with a nuclear warhead, thereby developing a credible at-sea deterrent capability. The Navy contracted with two companies to develop Loon’s replacement, to be capable of carrying a 3,000 pound warhead 500 nautical miles. Chance-Vought’s Regulus missile won out and became the U.S.’s first sea-based nuclear deterrent. Regulus was a 42-foot long unmanned turbojet aircraft, weighed seven tons, and was capable of speeds up to Mach 0.91 (550 knots). It could carry either a 40-50 kiloton nuclear warhead or a 1-2 megaton thermonuclear warhead.

Regulus was first deployed, on a heavy cruiser, in 1955. Other cruisers and even aircraft carriers were equipped to carry the missile, but the submarine was destined to be the true Regulus workhorse. The World War II fleet submarine USS *Tunny* (SS-282) was brought out of mothballs and recommissioned as SSG-282. Her main modification was the addition of a pressurized hangar fifteen feet in diameter, just aft of the sail, with a ramp that could be extended further aft. The hangar could hold two Regulus missiles. *Tunny* launched the first Regulus missile in July 1953, and continued to serve for the next several years as a Regulus test platform. *Tunny*’s sister fleet boat USS *Barbero* (SS-317) was also restored to the fleet as an SSG and given the same modifications.

By mid-1956, it had become official Navy policy to keep one SSG in each ocean, which required more SSGs. In 1958 USS *Grayback* (SSG-574) and USS *Growler* (SSG-577) were built specifically to carry Regulus (four per boat), and all four SSGs (along with three of the four Regulus-equipped cruisers) were moved to the Pacific to counter the growing Soviet threat. These four submarines became Submarine Squadron ONE, and were tasked with fulfilling the Navy’s new policy that four Regulus missiles be stationed off the Soviet coast at all times (either *Grayback* or *Growler*, or both of the modified fleet boats). *Tunny* commenced the first of these deterrent patrols in October 1959, and *Grayback* and *Growler* each followed in 1960.



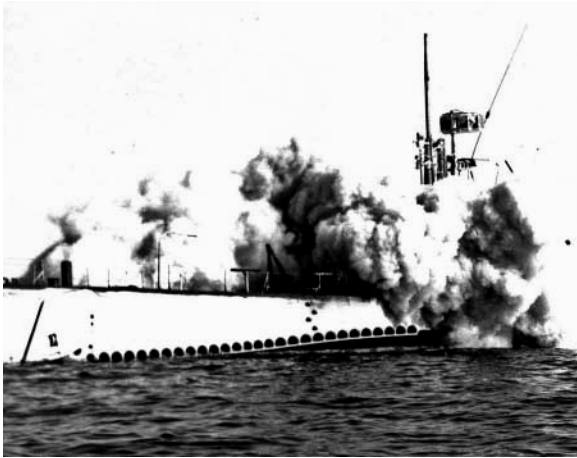
*A Regulus II Guided Missile aboard
USS Grayback (SSG-574).*

U.S. Navy photo

The first nuclear-powered submarine to carry Regulus, and therefore the first SSGN, was USS *Halibut* (SSGN-587), commissioned in 1960. By 1961, the Regulus-equipped cruiser patrols had ceased, and the would-be Regulus II, although successfully tested, succumbed to budgetary restraints. Soon thereafter, the dual technologies of compact nuclear warheads and

large solid-fuel rocket motors brought an end to Regulus and SSGNs, and ushered in the era of the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) and the new classes of submarines that carried them, the SSBNs.

With the demise of Regulus, the U.S. Navy took a decades-long hiatus from building guided missile submarines and the early SSGNs are now all but forgotten. Conversely, the submarine fleet's involvement with special operations forces has endured, but the nature of such missions means they are rarely revealed or acknowledged. In point of fact, *Virginia* was the first submarine designed with the intent of embarking special operations forces. Nevertheless, such missions took place, with some of the earliest taking place in the Pacific Theater during World War II.



A Loon test vehicle launches from USS Carbonero (SS-337) during a series for 1949 test flights from the submarine. USS Cusk (SSG-348) was eventually fitted with a hanger.

U.S. Navy photo.

In August 1942, the Navy planned a diversionary attack on Makin Atoll in the Gilbert Islands to draw Japanese troops away from the first major American offensive in the Pacific that was taking place at Guadalcanal and Tulagi. Companies A and B of the Marine Corps' 2nd Raider Battalion, led by Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson, were selected to attempt a clandestine assault on Makin. The only way to get the famed "Carson's Raiders" to the island without alerting the Japanese would be by two large 1920s-era submarine "cruisers." USS *Argonaut* (SS-166) and USS *Nautilus* (SS-168) displaced 4,000 tons submerged and had been converted to troop carriers for this mission by having all torpedoes removed except those in the tubes, and having tiered wooden bunks installed for the extra passengers.

The submarines were large, but not large enough for the men aboard. No less than 211 of Carlson's Raiders were split between the two submarines, in addition to the boats' own crews.

Conditions on the eight-day trek from Pearl Harbor to Makin were miserable. The Marines were essentially confined to their racks—except for brief exercise breaks on deck—to stay out of the crews' way, and the stifling heat and smell combined with the lack of ventilation to produce mass outbreaks of seasickness.

At 3:00 a.m. on Aug. 17, the Marines began disembarking the submarines for their assault on Makin. Plans called for the Raiders to split up in two groups and land separately on the beach, but, despite repeated practice in Hawaii, the sea swells, the surf noise, and the need to transfer some troops from *Nautilus* to *Argonaut* landing craft all conspired to force Carlson to consolidate his landing plan to one location. Despite the swamping of many of the rubber landing crafts' engines, all 19 craft miraculously landed, with only one boat missing the change in orders and landing a mile away at its originally assigned location. Luckily for the assault itself, this group eventually found itself behind the Japanese line when fighting broke out, and was able to inflict significant damage.

While fighting raged on the island, Carlson attempted to put the submarines themselves to use as sea-based artillery. *Argonaut* never received the message, but *Nautilus* successfully bombarded Japanese land positions and even sank a small transport and a patrol boat that shore-based Marines spotted. Later, both boats were forced to submerge when Japanese reconnaissance planes arrived. At 7:00 p.m., Carlson began his planned withdrawal from the island, but over the course of the day the surf had picked up, and only 100 men in seven boats made it back to the submarines. The remainder of the men faced only a brief skirmish that night, and in the morning

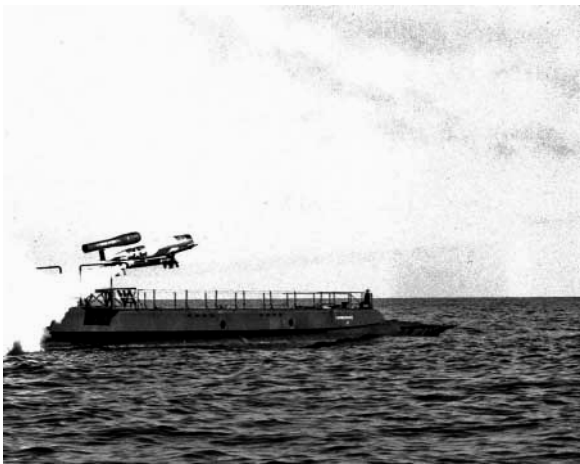


Bow view of USS Growler (SSG-577).

U.S. Navy photo.

four more landing craft were able to return to the submarines. At this point, *Nautilus* disembarked a boat with five Marine volunteers to return to shore with a line to pull the remaining boats out to the submarines, but a Japanese aircraft chose that exact instant to attack, forcing both submarines below and strafing the rescue boat. The boat and its volunteers were never seen again. The decision was made to postpone further rescue attempts until nightfall, but the Marines soon discovered that the surviving Japanese soldiers had evacuated the island.

The Marines spent the day gathering intelligence and destroying equipment at the Japanese headquarters, and then, under cover of darkness, four rubber landing craft were tied to a native boat in the lagoon and the men sailed out to the submarines. *Nautilus* and *Argonaut* departed Makin Atoll short thirty Marines, all of whom were assumed to have been killed in action. Tragically, nine of those left behind were in fact alive, were captured by the Japanese, and were ceremonially beheaded on Oct. 16. The Japanese officer responsible for that decision, Vice Adm. Kose Abe, was convicted of war crimes after the war and hanged at Guam. *Nautilus* went on to conduct several more missions similar to the SOF insertion at Makin Atoll, but in another demonstration of the horrors of war, *Argonaut* succumbed to depth charging with all hands onboard on Jan. 10, 1943.



U.S. Navy photo

Although the submarine troop insertion and extraction at Makin Atoll was not flawless, *Nautilus* and *Argonaut* had proven that such operations could be successful. As 1942 gave way to 1943, the Navy was turning its attention to the Japanese takeover of the Philippine Islands. Gen. Douglas MacArthur, in charge of the defense of the Philippines, was forced to draw back to Australia, and he began planning ways to bolster the Filipinos' own guerilla defense of their islands. It was clear to MacArthur that, while the Filipinos had the will to fight, they did not have the tactical leadership or supplies to be successful.

Inspired by his memory of American submarines successfully slipping away from their anchorage at Corregidor as the Japanese invaded,

MacArthur decided that those boats could also sneak back to the Philippines. His staff informed him that the standard fleet-type boats could carry between five and 10 tons of supplies, plus six passengers, when leaving Australia on regular combat patrols. In view of the sizable requests MacArthur was receiving from his guerrillas, he pushed for a better alternative. His staff suggested he ask for the services of the Navy's two much larger transport-type submarines, USS *Narwhal* (SS-167) and *Nautilus*. To MacArthur's dismay, he learned that those submarines were so old and in such disrepair that *Narwhal* would not be available until November 1943, and *Nautilus* needed a complete overhaul after her Makin Atoll mission before she could put back to sea. Instead, Adm. Chester Nimitz suggested that, with a modified wartime weapon load-out, the fleet-type submarines could carry up to 34 tons of cargo and 25 passengers, and would be better suited to the narrow passages in and around the islands anyway. MacArthur agreed, and a steady, top secret parade of submarines began operating between Australia and the Philippines.

The first such mission was carried out by USS *Gudgeon* (SS-211) under the command of Lt. Cmdr. William Stovall, Jr. Seven Filipino soldiers and intelligence officers, disguised as mess boys and led by Maj. Jesus Villamor, U.S. Army, boarded *Gudgeon* in Fremantle, Australia, on the night of Dec. 27, 1942. Despite a change in landing location en route, and initial poor landing conditions once on location, Villamor was eventually successful in landing his men and supplies on the island of Negros on the night of Jan. 14, 1943. The last submarine supply mission to the Philippines, performed by USS *Stingray* (SS-



Submarines anchored off Thimble Shoals Cannel for the International Naval Review. USS *Barbero* (SS-317) sits in the foreground with a *Regulus I* onboard. U.S. Navy Photo

186), took place on New Year's Day, 1945. In all, 19 submarines participated in a total of 41 top secret missions to the Philippine Islands, with the transport submarines *Nautilus* and *Narwhal* conducting six and nine missions, respectively. The whole operation ultimately delivered 331 people, evacuated 472, and delivered some 1,325 tons of supplies to the Filipino guerrillas. These missions would prove vital to the eventual liberation of the Philippines.

As is now apparent, the Navy's new *Ohio*-class SSGNs have been designed to perform a variety of missions that the submarine force has, in fact, conducted quite successfully over the course of its history. The difference now, of course, is the simple fact that the new SSGNs are a new class of submarine, designed as a whole to handle these very disparate missions on a much grander scale than ever before. One SSGN alone has the potential to deploy with the same guided missile firepower as an entire Battle Group, while at the same time deploying up to 66 Special Operations Forces and serving as their command and control platform for the entire mission—including directing other assets such as unmanned undersea vehicles (UUVs), unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and other friendly warships and operators. With the SSGNs, the Submarine Force has looked back over its history and created not only a single platform from many variegated missions, but because all those missions are encompassed in one platform, that platform is greater than the sum of its parts. And best of all, four submarines with twenty years of service life left a-piece now have a new lease on life.



USS Growler (SSG-577)
U.S. Navy photo

Mr. Holian is an analyst with Alion Science and Technology in Washington, D.C. and a contributing editor for UNDERSEA WARFARE Magazine.



A multiple all-up round canister (MAC) is loaded on USS Ohio (SSGN-726). Photo courtesy of General Dynamics Electric Boat

Checking Account Balance @ 7/31/2008

\$3,746.32

INCOME for AUGUST 2008

Hot Dog Donations	\$17.00
40/30/30 (7/10 & 8/11 meetings)	\$70.00
Subtotal	\$87.00
Membership	\$120.00
Scholarship Income from 40/30/30	\$71.00
Other Scholarship Income	\$0.00
Scholarship Income for August	\$71.00

Total Income for August (per Bank Stmt)

\$278.00

EXPENSES for AUGUST 2008

Silent Sentinel Postage	\$92.98
Membership	\$20.00
Printer Monthly Maintenance	\$50.00
SD Base Patches	\$429.92

Education Scholarship - S. Radinsky	\$500.00	
Education Scholarship - A. Franklin	\$500.00	
Condiments for Meeting Rats	\$10.77	
Total Expenses for August (per Bank Stmt)		\$1,603.67
Checking Account Balance @ 08/28/2008		\$2,420.65
ASSETS		
Base Checking (8/28/08)	\$ 2,420.65	
Scholarship Fund Included in Base Checking	#REF!	
Base Savings (8/28/08)	9,323.36	
Convention Account (8/29/08)	3,654.28	
TOTAL ASSETS		\$15,398.29

RAFFLE WINNERS

Shipmates,

The winners are in but the total money to be disbursed has not yet been determined as there are still funds coming in. We have at least \$16,000.00 to distribute.

The total income was in excess of \$32,000.00 with half of that going to the Bases receiving the donations. part of the accounting situation is that a couple of bases sent in all of their money and that must be compensated, while a couple other bases have yet to get their ticket money in. Tickets were in, just waiting on the money, which I have been assured is in the mail.

Assuming \$32,000.00 minus the \$16,000 for the bases would leave \$16,000.00 for the Costs, Charitable Foundation, and prize money: \$16,000.00

We pledged 10% to the Charitable Foundation: - \$ 3,200.00

Sub Total: \$12,800.00

\$800.00 in printing and postage out: - \$ 800.00

Second Sub Total: \$12,000.00

The contribution to the Charitable Foundation will be equally divided among the 6 sections of the Charitable Foundation.

Half of the remaining funds go to the Grand Prize Winner: \$ 6,000.00

Nine others drawn will receive equal shares of the other half approximately \$666.00 each.

666 X 9 = + - \$ 6,000.00.

Balance: \$000000000

The drawing was conducted by volunteers including Joan Peters and others at the conclusion of the Annual Banquet at the Convention Center in Ft Worth. The winners were announced at that time and as are follows:

GRAND PRIZE: ANTHONY WADDELL NORTH PORT FL
 SECOND PRIZE: PAUL GOETZINGER SAN DIEGO, CA
 SECOND PRIZE; JOHN BERRY PUNTA GORDA

SECOND PRIZE; HARRY METZGER MUNCIE, IN
 SECOND PRIZE: JOE KOCH FULLERTON, CA
 SECOND PRIZE; MEL POLEN DALLAS, TX
 SECOND PRIZE; MIKE WHITE PHILA, PA
 SECOND PRIZE: DAVE BALL SAN DIEGO, CA
 SECOND PRIZE; RONALD GIBSON SAN FRANCISCO, CA
 SECOND PRIZE: BILL DORNIK VALLEJO, CA

Any further questions please feel free to call me.

Best,

T Michael Bircumshaw EMCM (SS) USN Ret
 USSVI National Junior Vice Commander
 951-541-0900

Sailor Dies After Getting Caught In Rudder Ram

By Gidget Fuentes, Navy Times, September 24, 2008



The Navy identified the sailor who died Saturday aboard the ballistic-missile submarine Nebraska as Machinist's Mate 3rd Class (SS) Michael A. Gentile of Fairfield, Maine. Gentile, 21, who enlisted in 2005, was a member of Nebraska's Blue Crew and had been assigned to the Kitsap, Wash.-based submarine since Nov. 15, 2006, Submarine Force-Pacific officials said in a statement Tuesday.

"Our sincerest condolences and prayers continue to go out to the family and friends of Petty Officer Gentile," officials said in the statement.

Gentile had previously served on the ballistic-missile submarine Alaska. Officials said the incident remained under investigation and offered no other details about what the Navy calls the "apparent accident" as the boomer was operating off Oahu on Saturday.

Gentile apparently had become "entangled and pinned" in the rudder ram during a cleaning evolution, according to an item posted on the Naval Safety Center's Web site. The Nebraska arrived in port in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Monday, officials said.

"There was no damage to the submarine," said Lt. Cmdr. Dave Benham, a spokesman for Submarine Force-Pacific. "None of the other crew members were injured. The crew was brought into port to address the needs of the crew because of this tragedy" and to help in the investigations into the incident, Benham said, adding that it was premature to discuss what types of investigations will be conducted. Nebraska crew members had rendered medical assistance before the sailor was taken off the submarine by medevac helicopter, but he died en route to the hospital, said Lt. Kyle Raines, a spokesman with Submarine Group Trident in Silverdale, Wash.

Fallen Nebraska Sailor Remembered For Commitment To Work

By Ed Friedrich, Shipmates Kitsap Sun, September 26, 2008

Everything the USS Nebraska does from now on will be in honor of Michael Gentile, a pastor said Thursday during a memorial service for the sailor killed Saturday in an accident on the Bangor-based submarine.

Gentile died while the ballistic submarine was conducting operations off of Oahu, Hawaii. His Blue Crew remains at sea. Their families and the Gold Crew, which takes turns operating the sub, gathered at Jackson Park Community Center to remember the young man from Maine.

The 21-year-old machinist mate 3rd class was proud to be a sailor and submariner, speakers said.

Cmdr. Carl Lahti, Gold Crew commanding officer, read a quote by Gentile's father, Jay Gentile, from the Morning Sentinel newspaper in Augusta, Maine.

"Everything on that ship, he fixed," his father said. "The kid had everything going for him. There was nothing that he wouldn't do or couldn't do.

“He was doing what he loved to do. He loved the Navy. He just took his test to re-up.”

A cook aboard the sub sent a message remarking on Gentile’s commitment to his work and shipmates.

“I only wish I could have one more chance to sail the open seas with him,” he wrote.

Petty officer Anthony Jordan, who served with Gentile aboard the USS Alaska, said he couldn’t believe how Gentile had changed since then, from a “scared, unconfident, always-messing-up” kid to a “confident, knowledgeable, A-ganger (auxiliary division) that everybody seemed to know and like.”

“He was more than just a shipmate to me,” Jordan said. “He will always be a friend.”

Gentile attended Lawrence High School in Fairfield, Maine, where he was an honor student and played football. He joined the Navy soon after his graduation in 2005.

His mother, Julie Gentile, told the Morning Sentinel that Michael died from blunt-force trauma and excessive bleeding in his lower body. He was hit by the ram that operated the submarine’s rudder, his father said in the story.

Besides his parents, he is survived by brothers Dalton Patterson, Jeremy Gentile and Kevin Easler, and by sisters Tracy Young and Kelley Easler.

Hughes: Smaller Ships With Narrow Mission Should Be Fleet’s Future LCS Not The Answer?

By Rebekah Gordon, Inside the Navy, September 22, 2008

To combat the threat from China and wage successful “small wars,” the Navy needs to move away from big ships in carrier-based fleets and use smaller, less expensive ships that can operate inshore and have a narrower mission focus, a Naval Postgraduate School lecturer and former dean asserts.

To that end, the Navy’s new Littoral Combat Ship is not a panacea, Wayne Hughes, a retired Navy captain and senior lecturer in operations research, said in a Sept. 8 interview with Inside the Navy on the school’s campus here.

“I think we’ve got to get on with building an inshore Navy, a green-water Navy component, and LCS isn’t it,” said Hughes, the former dean of the school’s Graduate School of Operational & Information Sciences. “At \$500 million plus module costs, it’s not going to hack it.”

The changing landscape of smaller, irregular warfare has created a landscape where the Navy must either attack first so the enemy cannot shoot at all, or “develop some smaller ships that we can afford to lose and mix it up,” Hughes said.

“We can’t afford to lose billion-dollar DDGs, but we can afford to lose \$50- or \$100-million inshore combatants,” he said. “And instead of having a crew of 350 or 400, have a crew of 12. A combat crew of 12 people so that if the ship gets hit, you just save the survivors and leave the ship as a burning derelict as opposed to having to do damage control and create more casualties.”

The Arleigh Burke-class of DDG-51 destroyers are designed to launch guided missiles.

Hughes argued that this suggestion is particularly relevant for the emerging maritime threat from China. The Asian nation has purchased a new class of missile destroyers from Russia that appear to bear similarity to the Aegis cruiser, Hughes said, as well as stealthy diesel-electric and nuclear-powered attack submarines.

“The Chinese are getting so that they can give us trouble with our small number of big aircraft carriers and Aegis ships because they’re concentrating on confronting those ships specifically, and they’re developing really good seadial capabilities and anti-access capabilities,” Hughes said. “So we’ve got to beat them with something that upsets and gives them new problems to think about.”

The United States must influence China into thinking it never wants to go to war with the “big Navy” by having an effective presence and capability in the green waters, Hughes said.

If he had his way, offensive strike missiles would come off of destroyers and instead the Navy would build reasonably priced small missile ships “so the DDG can concentrate on blue-water operations again and we’d have these little guys to deploy wherever they were needed to provide the cheap firepower to support the land war.”

The Navy accepted the first-in-class LCS on Sept. 18. But one of Hughes’ thesis students has found that LCS may not be the most cost-effective solution for fighting in the littorals. In thesis research sponsored by the office of the chief of naval operations, Lt. Bryan Christiansen has found that the Sea Lance concept, which was developed by the school in the early part of the decade, might be the better alternative in multiple scenarios.

The concept is a fast-moving missile attack ship with a catamaran hull, estimated to cost just \$100 million to build.

Part of the Navy’s problem, Hughes said, is its feeling of being obligated to “be able to do anything it’s called upon to do,” which has created a culture of cramming as many capabilities onto ships as possible.

“There’s a spirit of the Navy which has said we’ve got to be able to go anywhere and do anything, and therefore I’ve always got to hedge my bet and add system X, Y, and Z, as well as its original mission which was to perform A, B and C,” Hughes said.

Navy Secretary Donald Winter has referenced containing the Navy’s ambition to put everything on a ship, stating in a June 17 speech at the Naval War College that the service must “get into the habit of appetite suppression” and develop “more thoughtful definitions of what we truly need to buy.”

According to Hughes, ships need to have a more narrowly defined mission, and waging small battles in the littorals and suppressing emerging threats like China ought to be at the top of the mission list.

“Have a primary mission and don’t cost yourself out of business by then adding other capabilities. It has a primary mission and you count to 10 before you add another capability,” Hughes said. Capabilities “have to be carefully thought through and be complementary. And not try and have all the ships be able to go anywhere, anytime.

That’s where it gets dangerous.”

A Pay Boost For Troops, But How Much Depends On The Text

By Josh Rogin, Congressional Quarterly, September 26, 2008

Defense appropriators touted an extra pay increase for troops in their fiscal 2009 appropriations package, but they didn't actually provide the military with the increased funds to pay for the full amount of the raise.

Both the House and Senate Defense Appropriations subcommittees had announced a 3.9 percent pay raise for the military, one half percent above President Bush's request, after marking up their bills behind closed doors.

But when the final text of the bill was released on Sept. 24, there was no mention of the pay raise at all, prompting many across the defense community to scratch their heads. Many read the top-line allocation of \$114.4 billion for the military personnel account — \$452 million less than the request — as a sign that appropriators had balked at giving troops the added increase. Adding to the confusion was the annual defense policy bill, which authorizes a 3.9 percent pay raise.

Even some top appropriators weren't sure how to account for the discrepancy. "It could be that somebody made a mistake," said C.W. Bill Young <<http://www.cq.com/members/details.do?personId=H0770>> of Florida, the top Republican on the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. But John P. Murtha <<http://www.cq.com/members/details.do?personId=H3460>>, D-Pa., the chairman of the panel, insisted, "It's 3.9 percent, period."

According to a top Senate aide, both House and Senate appropriators had agreed it was premature to fund the extra half percent because the authorization bill was still in limbo.

"If and when the authorization bill is passed, the troops will get a 3.9 percent pay raise," said Mike Yuen, spokesman for top Senate Defense appropriator Daniel K. Inouye <<http://www.cq.com/members/details.do?personId=S0210>>, D-Hawaii.

A House committee staffer explained that the extra pay increase will cost the Defense Department \$239 million above the amount given in the bill, so they will have to reprogram that money from other parts of their personnel budget after the authorization bill is signed. The overall personnel budget should be more than sufficient to cover that cost, the staffer said.

The Senate is expected to clear the authorization measure as early as Friday.

China's Submarine Fleet Projects Beijing's Power

By Jonathan Manthorpe, Vancouver Sun, September 26, 2008

Soon after dawn two weeks ago the captain of the Japanese destroyer Atago was on the bridge of his ship cruising within territorial waters off southwestern Japan when he saw something in the water about a kilometre away.

"Isn't that a periscope?" he asked.

Crew detected the target with the ship's state-of-the-art sonar. They then "pinged" what they took to be a submarine with their targeting sonar.

Under the rules of the sea the submarine should then have surfaced and displayed its national flag or faced being attacked by the Japanese warship with depth charges or torpedoes.

But, as the submarine captain was doubtless well aware, Japanese armed forces are heavily constrained by the country's pacifist constitution.

The submarine sped off, immune from attack, and revived a sharp debate in Japan about the constraints on the military at the time of a substantial arms race in Asia.

The Japanese believe, after talks with United States allies, that the submarine was Chinese and part of a now large naval force Beijing has been building and deploying in recent years to back its claim to be a regional power.

Indeed, Beijing has put special emphasis on creating a large and sophisticated submarine fleet as the cheapest and most effective way of projecting power well beyond China's coastal waters.

China's submarine fleet is now one of the world's largest with nearly 85 vessels. More than that, old and unreliable boats mostly acquired from the old Soviet Union are being rapidly replaced by modern submarines armed with highly sophisticated anti-ship missiles and radar-dodging cruise missiles able to attack land targets.

Beijing is even building at least five ballistic missile submarines, each carrying 12 intercontinental missiles and each missile having three nuclear warheads.

Meanwhile Japan has 16 submarines and no plans to build more and the American Pacific Fleet has 35 submarines, the world's most modern.

Beijing's emphasis on naval construction in recent years raises many eyebrows among military planners in Asian and Pacific Ocean nations because the intentions behind this huge investment in military power are so unclear.

It was again a central topic at the Maritime Security Challenge '08 conference of experts on Asian naval issues organized by Canada's Maritime Forces Pacific at Victoria last week.

At first the supposition was that Beijing's naval expansion aimed at backing its threats to invade and capture the independent nation state of Taiwan.

But the development of China's navy, both of surface warships and submarines, has now gone well beyond what is necessary to invade Taiwan and deter the island's main ally, the U.S., from rushing to its aid.

The vulnerability of the U.S. navy to attack from Chinese submarines was demonstrated with stark clarity in October 2006. A Song-class diesel-electric submarine shadowed a U.S. battle group led by the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk and was only detected when it surfaced close to the carrier to reveal its presence.

That incident undermined the confidence with which U.S. strategists always talk about the superiority of their naval technology.

So does the coming into operation earlier this year of a massive submarine base hollowed out of the cliffs of China's Hainan island in the South China Sea.

The base at Sanya can house about 20 submarines and the entrance is so large they can leave and return submerged so as to be undetectable by satellites.

The base comes into operation at a time of increased tension between Beijing and other countries, especially Vietnam, around the South China Sea. Beijing claims most of the sea is Chinese territorial waters, and therefore it owns the resources underneath it.

Beijing's determination to project power goes well beyond its claims to the South China Sea, however.

China's economic well-being and therefore its internal security is now wholly dependent on sea-borne trade. And most of that trade, especially vital imports of oil, come across the Indian Ocean and through the South China Sea.

This has brought China's navy face-to-face with regional rival India, which is rapidly developing its own substantial maritime force into one that can make its presence felt throughout the Indian Ocean and even into Southeast Asia.

Navy Seeks Six More Diesel Submarines After Scorpene Press

Times of India, September 26, 2008

India has initiated the process of acquiring six more submarines on the lines of the under-construction Scorpene submarines to augment its underwater warfare capabilities.

"The Navy has initiated the process of acquisition of six more diesel-electric submarines and has issued a Request for Information (RFI) to major manufacturers across the globe," top Defence Ministry sources told PTI today.

"The Defence Ministry will now await responses from these companies and will follow it up with global tenders or Request for Proposals (RFP) next year," they said.

In all, Navy plans to procure 30 new submarines to have formidable underwater fighting capabilities.

India already has 16 submarines of the Russian Kilo and German HDW Shishumar Class.

Among the countries from where India is seeking information are France, Russia and Italy, all with major submarine manufacturing capabilities.

The new submarines would be procured as a follow-on of the six Scorpene submarines being built at the Defence Public Sector Undertaking shipyard, Mazagon Dockyards Limited (MDL), in Mumbai.

"The additional six submarines will start joining the Indian Navy fleet after all the first set of six Scorpene submarines have joined the naval fleet," the sources said.

Medvedev Promises New Subs

By Denis Dyomkin, The Moscow Times, September 26, 2008

President Dmitry Medvedev said Thursday that plans to modernize its armed forces will not be affected by the current financial crisis.

"Regardless of any crisis, we should build new submarines, should simply deal with the modernization of the armed forces," Medvedev told the crew of St. George the Victor nuclear submarine during a visit to its Pacific home base at Kamchatka Peninsula.

"Our country has means and resources for that," he said in comments shown on national television.

Medvedev has said the war in Georgia showed that Russia needed to equip its army with more up to date weapons. His predecessor, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, has said the military budget will grow by 28 percent next year.

As opposed to Putin, who has flown a supersonic jet, made a short underwater trip on a nuclear submarine and appeared publicly in military uniform, Medvedev has previously stuck to a more civilian style during his visits to military installations.

On Thursday, the 43-year-old former corporate lawyer, known as a keen Internet user and a yoga fan, appeared at the Vilyuchinsk navy base in a navy uniform.

Medvedev, accompanied by Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and top brass, toured the submarine built in 1978 and armed with intercontinental missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads and joined the crew for a tea party.

He told the sailors that the government was committed to providing them with better social conditions, including housing.

"We are talking about tens of billions of rubles," Medvedev told the sailors. "I think we will finally solve the problem of proper housing for the military."

Medvedev said neither Western pressure nor economic woes could affect Russia's commitment to having strong armed forces.

"As far as other global problems are concerned, we have a sustainable economy," he said. "We have enough material and intellectual resources not to depend on anyone."

Addressing a meeting of local officials and several top ministers earlier Thursday, Medvedev said Russia could not function if all power was concentrated in the Kremlin, signaling a departure from Putin's hands-on style.

“It is too bad when all decisions, including those on operational issues, are made by the president,” Medvedev said in the capital of the easternmost Kamchatka region. “That means we do not have a system of management.”

“We simply cannot work. We need to act faster, make ... reasonable management decisions,” he said. “Otherwise, we shall simply feel ashamed about the missed opportunities.”

Putin’s eight years in office were characterized by a concentration of power in the Kremlin, drawing criticism from the West. Major decisions were made by the president, while the government and parliament found their role drastically curtailed.

Putin has argued that this approach — known in Russian as “manual control” — was essential to restoring order in the vast and sometimes unruly country.

But officials in Medvedev’s entourage say that if Russia does not switch to a more systematic approach to governance, based on clear rules and institutions, economic growth could start to splutter and Russia will not be globally competitive.

The Kremlin has set the target of making Russia one of the world’s leading economies by 2020.

Submarines: The Heat Is On

The Strategy Page, September 25, 2008

The U.S. is getting some valuable practice hunting submarines by searching for the increasingly numerous drug smuggling semi-submersible boats carrying cocaine from South America. U.S. anti-submarine aircraft are honing their skills at spotting very small objects at sea by spotting heat.

Between 2000 and 2007, 23 of these drug boats were spotted. But so far this year, over 60 have been seen or captured. The two most recent captures were the result of intelligence information at the source, not air and naval patrols out there just looking for them. These boats are hard to spot (by aircraft or ships), which is why they are being used more often. It’s very difficult to pick the boats up with airborne radar, but heat sensors are another matter. The boats engines, and the crew, give off heat, and there are airborne sensors that can detect that. The U.S. Navy will not reveal the range and sensitivity of the infrared (heat) sensors used on its P-3C maritime patrol aircraft, but apparently it’s possible to detect these boats from their heat. the P-3C has a cruise speed of 610 kilometers per hour, endurance of up to 13 hours. Flying a few thousand meters up, and with a heat sensor with a range of 5-10 kilometers or so, a P-3C can cover a lot of ocean. But the drug boats come up from Colombia, often 500 kilometers off the Central American coast.

That’s a whole lot of ocean.

These are not submarines in the true sense of the word, but “semi-submersibles”. They are 30-60 foot fiberglass boats, powered by a diesel engine, with a very low freeboard, and a small “conning tower”, providing the crew (of 4-5), and engine, with fresh air, and permitting the crew to navigate the boat. A boat of this type is the only practical kind of submarine for drug smuggling. A real submarine, capable of carrying five tons of cocaine, would cost a lot more, and require a highly trained crew.

The semi-submersibles are built, often using specially made components brought in from foreign countries, in areas along the Colombian coast, or other drug gang controlled territory. Russian naval architects and engineers have been discovered among those designing and building these boats. Based on interrogations of captured gang members, these subs cost over \$600,000 to construct, and carry up to ten tons of cocaine.

At one point it was thought that as many as half of them were captured or lost at sea. But this is apparently not the case. That’s because most of these subs are built for a one way trip. This keeps down the cost of construction, and the cost of hiring a crew (who fly home). That one voyage will usually be for about a thousand kilometers, with the boat moving at a speed of 15-25 kilometers an hour. So the average trip will take a few days. But going to Mexico takes about a week, with additional fuel and crew supplies reducing the amount of cocaine carried.

These subs are not stealthy enough to avoid detection all the time, and the U.S. is working to tweak search radars, and other types of sensors, to more reliably detect the drug subs. The U.S. Navy is also going to try using Predators, equipped with a maritime search radar. The heat given off by these boats is comparable to what a diesel-electric sub puts out when semi-submerged (with just its schnorkel, on top of the conning tower, above water to provide air for the crew and the diesel engine). There is technology that can decrease that “heat signature” and the drug gangs may be able to get help from their Russian technical advisors on that subject as well. And then the U.S. P-3C crews get a chance to defeat the improvement. In any event, the U.S. is gaining valuable experience searching to small objects at sea.

Secretary Talks About GSAs, Controversy Over U.S. Ships

By Travis J. Tritten, Stars and Stripes, September 26, 2008

Secretary of the Navy Donald Winter spoke with Stars and Stripes during his Wednesday visit to Sasebo Naval Base, Japan.

The Navy said earlier this year that placing individual augmentees into global war on terrorism support assignments was a top priority. Is that still true and do you expect more sailors to be offered – or forced – into the GSAs in the near future?

First, there are two things you are talking to. One of which is the way we select and position individual augmentees, and there we are making a significant change. We are going to the GSA approach where we are being able to better integrate them into the normal PCS-type rotation, both to be able to minimize the impact on the individual sailor but also to be able to manage the process and improve the support to the family.

The other thing that we are very mindful of is to be sure to give sailors the proper credit for what they are doing as IAs or GSA assignees. I watch very carefully some of the critical statistics. For example, taking a look at promotion rates to chief this year.

There is a very significant difference between those who have done an IA tour and those who have not, which is a good indication to me that we are in fact giving proper credit to those who make the effort to become IAs.

Will there be any new support programs or aid for deploying and returning IAs?

We are trying to provide services not only to the individual servicemembers but also to their families.

A lot of effort is going on right now in terms of outreach, being able to make sure the individual families know what is available to them whether or not they are living in the fleet concentration area where the support is easy to come to or whether they are living perhaps by themselves far from a Navy installation.

Protesters are expected to gather at Yokosuka Naval Base to greet the USS George Washington. The USS Houston, a nuclear submarine, caused outcry when it leaked small amounts of radiation at Japanese ports. Are you concerned the nuclear issue is affecting our military relationship with Japan, and is the U.S. Navy doing enough to allay Japanese concerns?

I have no concerns whatsoever relative to the safety of our ships.

I think much has been made about the leakage or seepage on the Houston. The amount of radiation that was leaked was truly insignificant and undetectable by any mechanism.

I think we just need to be able to continue to communicate such matters. We are open and transparent, and that is part of the reason we got the information out even though the overall radiation leak was undetectable by anybody.

Earlier this year, a fire aboard the USS George Washington did serious damage and delayed the ship's deployment to Japan. Will there be any changes to ensure a higher level of safety aboard Navy ships, especially nuclear-powered aircraft carriers?

We have gone through an investigation, and we have taken the appropriate corrective action relative to the specifics of what happened on GW. Also, we are taking a look at our overall policies and procedures for shipboard regulations and other activities to make sure that we are taking full advantage of the lesson learned in that incident.

You recommended Sgt. Raphael Peralta, an Okinawa-based Marine killed while serving in Iraq, for the Medal of Honor. But the nomination has been rejected. What's your reaction to that decision, and do you still believe Peralta deserved the country's highest honor?

We have a very high standard for the Medal of Honor. Basically, it's got to be an absolute certainty without any question, and I think there are certain issues that have come up ... I am absolutely certain of the events that took place and of his heroism.

I had no problem signing off on the Navy Cross, but at the same time, I understand the difficulty of being able to reach the level of certainty that the Medal of Honor requires.

Feds Propose Billions For Subs, Electric Boat, Region Appropriations Pass House; Senate Next

By Michael Gannon, Norwich Bulletin, September 24, 2008

Electric Boat and the Groton submarine base received huge boosts Wednesday as the U.S. House of Representatives passed the 2009 Defense Appropriations Bill.

The biggest prize in southeastern Connecticut is \$3.5 billion to continue the Virginia-class attack submarine program.

Calling passage a banner day for the state, U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, D-2nd District, said the figure is \$79 million more than President Bush asked for in his initial defense budget proposal.

He said the additional money will be used for advanced purchase of parts and components for future submarine construction.

"It will allow the Navy to build two submarines a year beginning in 2011, officially moving that up one year," Courtney said. The subs cost more than \$2 billion apiece.

Courtney also said the Navy's investment in construction at the sub base in Groton is a positive sign for a base that was targeted for closure only three years ago. The bill contains \$46 million to replace the dilapidated Pier 31, and \$11 million to replace the existing firing range with a state-of-the-art indoor facility. Pier 31, more than 30 years old, is unusable. The firing range, Courtney said, is "a ramshackle shed" unsuitable for training in winter months.

"Clearly the clock is ticking to modernize that base and make it less cramped," Courtney said. He said demolition and construction projects funded over the last two years indicate the Navy's commitment to keeping the base open. Courtney said depending on the Senate's schedule, the bill could be passed and on Bush's desk by the end of the week.

The bill also contains \$3.2 million for EB to continue research and design on the next generation of ballistic submarines, which would replace the aging Ohio-class subs. Courtney said the advance funding on both sub projects is important in supporting the region's technical work force.

EB President John Casey said if the Senate follows suit, it will allow EB to accelerate production and increase its efficiency.

"This bill is especially significant because the House has agreed to provide the actual funding that will accelerate the production of submarines earlier than planned," Casey said.

House Passes Bill With Funds For Dry Dock Project: Measure Now Goes Back To Senate, Then On To President For Signing

By Josh Rosenson, *Fosters Daily Democrat*, September 25, 2008

The U.S. House approved the defense authorization bill Wednesday which appropriates more than \$20 million for the construction of a new dry dock facility at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

“The Portsmouth Naval Shipyard is vital to New Hampshire’s economy and critical to our nation’s defense,” said Congresswoman Carol Shea-Porter, D-N.H., Wednesday night. “It means survival, and it means they will be ready when the Virginia-class submarines come to town (in 2010).”

The Senate is expected to tackle the defense bill and the continuing resolution today, and it is likely each will pass as neither are controversial, according to Laena Fallon, a spokeswoman for Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H.

“This project will make sure that Portsmouth is able to continue its gold-standard of performance, maintain a stable and robust workload, and make sure the shipyard has a state-of-the-art facility to best serve our nation’s submarine fleets for years to come. We will continue to support the employees at the yard by getting full funding for the Dry Dock number 3 project to the president’s desk and signed into law,” Gregg said.

O’Connor says he has no reason to believe the funds won’t pass through the Senate, citing the hard work by the senators, along with Shea-Porter and Congressman Tom Allen, D-Maine.

After the Senate passes the defense authorization bill and the continuing resolution there is no more back and forth with the House, and the measures will go to the president’s desk, Fallon said.

The full amount of funds needed for the reconstruction of dry dock number 3, \$20.6 million, has been authorized by the House. The construction of the new facility will enable the shipyard to work on Virginia Class submarines, the next generation of nuclear subs.

“This is great for our shipyard. We have been looking for this for a number of years,” said Paul O’Connor, president of the shipyard’s Metal Trade Council. “To be so close, we have been close before, but the bottom has dropped out. I don’t expect that to happen this time. It seems a lot closer to a reality for us at this point.”

Additionally, included in the measures passed by the House Wednesday was almost \$10 million to consolidate old facilities at the shipyard into a more efficient warehouse, which will reduce things such as overhead support costs, energy use and overtime.

“We are going to have a nuclear parts facility, and I am really excited about that. It’s all part of the support of all the work they are doing.”

The new facility is planned to house materials for the Virginia-class submarines and the older, Los Angeles-class submarines.

“Right now we have a lot of our material stored in buildings that are old and in tremendous need of repair. We have equipment stored in buildings that are rat infested and mold infested,” said O’Connor, who called Shea-Porter an “integral cog” in the process. “Carol is responsible for adding that project to the appropriations bill.”

Shea-Porter, along with Congressmen Ike Skelton, D-Mo., and Chet Edwards, D-Texas, toured the facilities, O’Connor said, and when they did they had to walk around buckets set up on the ground to collect leaking water. Edwards is the chair of the House Military Construction Veterans Affairs Committee, which sponsored the bill to which the funds are tied.

Shea-Porter said the shipyard workers won over the visiting congressmen. She said they showed their quality of work and character, the pride in the work, and the love for their country, and it left strong impressions on the Skelton and Edwards.

“Congresswoman Shea-Porter has been a very effective advocate for the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, which I visited at her invitation earlier this year,” said Skelton, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee. “Congresswoman Shea-Porter’s efforts were instrumental in securing funding for the Waterfront Support Facility in this year’s defense authorization bill.”

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Submarine First U.S. Participant in International Fleet Review

By Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Bobbie G. Attaway, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea Public Affairs, October 8, 2008

PUSAN, Republic of Korea (NNS) — The city of Pusan hosts this year's International Fleet Review 2008, commemorating the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Korean government and its armed forces Oct. 5-10.

The week-long event will feature 50 ships from 13 navies worldwide under the motto "All in One to the Sea, to the World." The first U.S. vessel to participate in the festivities was the USS Buffalo (SSN 715), a Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine.

The 130 member crew of the submarine participated in the event in conjunction with a routine port visit. The submarine hosted six distinguished visitor tours for Korean sailors and officers.

The chief's mess and the wardroom had socialized events with their Korean counterparts and even played a friendly game of soccer. Korean sailors also escorted 35 U.S. Sailors through Nampo-dong Market, which is Pusan's largest traditional market.

"The host submarine was great, they made us feel welcome and at home. They really supported us," said Master Chief Ashley McGee, Chief of the Boat. "I was impressed."

The Buffalo was commissioned on Nov. 5, 1983 in Norfolk and was transferred to the Pacific Fleet Submarine Force in 1984. In 2007, it was relocated from Naval Station Pearl Harbor to its current homeport at Naval Base Guam.

For more news from Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnfk/.

Man Seeks Relatives Of Officer Killed In WWII

By Pamm Smith, Yumasun.com, October 6, 2008

On Nov. 7, 1944, the World War II submarine USS Albacore was lost in action near the coast of Shikoku, Japan.

Among the 85 men aboard who were lost was Torpedoman 2nd Class Petty Officer Perry Aubrey Collom, the son of the late Homer Bevel and Lola Collom of Somerton.

Today, more than six decades later, Jim Converse of Kansas City, Mo., is helping organize a memorial ceremony in Oregon for the Albacore and its crew, and he's looking for anyone with connections to crew members to invite to the event.

Converse, a Navy veteran who has compiled information on the Albacore, thinks there may still be friends or relatives of Perry Collom in the Yuma area who might want to attend the Nov. 11 memorial dedication to the submarine in Beaverton, Ore.

Bob M. Lee, with the Oregon Loggers chapter of the United States Submarine Veterans of World War II, said, in a telephone interview, "After the war, each state was assigned at least one of the 52 lost submarines and charged with the task to build a memorial to its designated vessel. The Albacore is Oregon's."

The USS Perch SS-176 is the designated vessel for Arizona.

"The memorial is designed to look like the bow of a submarine coming out of the sea – 15 feet high at a 60-degree angle. Bow planes are extended, and are being engraved with the name of each lost crewman. A short wall extends outward from the bow to simulate streaming water," Lee said.

Information from the Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet explained, "Albacore has been awarded the Presidential Unit citation for her second, third, eighth and ninth patrols, ones in which she sank enemy combatant vessels.

"Her record of enemy combatant ships sunk is the best of any U.S. submarine. She sank a total of 13 ships, damaged five, during her first 10 patrols.

"Enemy information available indicates that Albacore perished by hitting a mine. The explosion occurred on Nov. 7, 1944, while Albacore was submerged, and was witnessed by an enemy patrol craft. The craft reported having seen much heavy oil and bubbles, cork, bedding and various provisions after the explosion," the Pacific Fleet report reads.

For the memorial, Converse said an intensive search is under way for any family or friends with connections to those lost on the submarine, to attend.

"There's going to be a time capsule for families and friends to leave something of the lost man's as a remembrance, something to show that man is still in their memory and hearts," Converse said.

"We have had reports that relatives of Lt. Cmdr. H.R. Rimmer, the commander of Albacore, will attend the dedication," Converse said.

Anyone who would like to attend the Albacore dedication can call Lee at 503-244-9933.

Perry Collom initially was declared missing in action following the submarine's sinking. It was not until November 1945, a year later, that Collom's parents were notified he had been killed in action.

Bernice Roberge, now living at Pinetop, has ties to Collom. She said, "Perry Collom was a stepbrother. We had the same father. I don't remember too much about him, because I was only about 10 when we learned of his death. Years later my sisters Ruth (Steen), now deceased, and Lola Mae Kelly of Chandler, and I were told about the submarine sinking.

"Our dad had lived in Somerton from 1922 until moving to Yuma in 1945. He died in 1991. I'm pleased about the memorial, it will be a way to remember," Roberge said.

Deadline Looms For Shipyard Vote

Northrop Grumman's union members push for better pay and pensions, hope to avoid a strike.

By Peter Frost, Daily Press, October 7, 2008

Northrop Grumman and the union that represents nearly 8,000 of its hourly Newport News shipyard workers are unlikely to have a new labor deal signed and approved before their contract expires Oct. 26, the union's top official said.

Although Alton Glass, president of U.S. Steelworkers Local 8888, expressed optimism with getting a tentative labor deal in the hands of the union's members on the day the contract expires, he said a full membership vote probably will not be held until later in the month.

That means yard workers will operate under terms of the previous agreement – signed in 2004 – until the vote and will have only one chance to approve details on a new, four-year labor contract without being considered on strike, Glass said.

Since the contract expires before union members have a chance to cast ballots, a 'yes' vote would be crucial in avoiding a labor interruption. If union members fail to approve the deal on first vote, Northrop and union negotiators would not have an opportunity to go back to the bargaining table under normal labor conditions.

The specter of a strike, which could be harmful to both the shipyard and the workers, is the primary reason union negotiators expect to lobby for a better contract until the last hour before the Oct. 26 deadline.

"We're working very hard on this, and we want to get every piece of the pie and get the pie in the oven before we bring it to our members," Glass said. "Halfway is not an option, and I don't want to leave nothing on the table."

Glass, who along with six other union members elected to represent members' interests and a host of experts from the national Steelworkers, are pushing for better wages, more time off with pay, enhanced health care coverage and better pensions for retirees. Union members pay dues equal to 1.45 percent of their weekly paychecks for representation.

While most of the union's members – which comprise between 76 percent and 80 percent of the yard's hourly workers – were pleased with the contract signed four years ago, Glass and other union representatives said economic conditions have changed, and workers need better pay and benefit packages to keep up.

Negotiations, which began Sept. 3, have so far focused on contract language, and other "low-hanging fruit," Glass said. This week, Northrop and union representatives will tackle the typically more contentious economic issues.

Some union members and representatives have spoken out against the negotiation process with fliers and mass e-mail messages. They claim the labor contract is being negotiated in parts and not as a whole, compromising the union's bargaining power.

That's a charge that both union leadership and a shipyard spokeswoman denied, and a rumor they've tried to stop.

"That information is not correct. The manner in which we negotiate is jointly agreed to by the company and the union," said Jennifer Dellapenta, a shipyard spokeswoman. She declined to comment further on the ongoing negotiations.

As talks continue, two issues figure to get the most attention: pension benefits and contract workers.

Under the current labor agreement, yard workers don't get credit for anything more than 30 years of service, a detail workers want to change.

"If I work here for 45 years, I get the same (pension payments) as a guy who has been here 30. I'll let you make up your mind about whether that's fair," Glass said. "Our members are saying they want credit for all years of service."

On the pension issue, Glass said, "I think it's going to be a daily contractual fight until we end negotiations."

The union also plans to focus on limiting the number of outside contractors Northrop employs in times of high manpower demand at the yard. This summer and fall, with three carriers in the yard and a number of submarines under construction, the company has had to beef up the number of contractors, many of whom work alongside union members. Local 8888 is urging Northrop to employ more full-time workers who are union eligible.

Union workers, Glass said, don't believe temporary helpers are as skilled at their jobs or take the same amount of pride in their work, leading to errors requiring re-work on some construction projects.

"If we were talking a few hundred contract workers, it wouldn't be an issue," Glass said. "But our members are seeing far too many of these guys to feel comfortable and secure with their own jobs."

Naval Base Fears 'Sapping The City'

The Plymouth Herald, October 6, 2008

UNCERTAINTY over the future of Devonport Naval Base and dockyard is sapping confidence in the city, says council leader Vivien Pengelly.

After a meeting of the cross-party Devonport Strategy Group at the weekend, Mrs Pengelly said: "In the current economic climate it means those employed at Devonport are even more uncertain over their futures.

"We risk losing vital skills if people see a more certain future in other jobs or other places.

“And a cloud hanging over a vital part of the city’s economy hardly helps our efforts to attract new investment.” She said talks were going on between council officers and Ministry of Defence officials.

In an interview last week, Admiral Sir Jonathon Band, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff, said the continued uncertainty was “like a cancer”.

A report by the Devonport Strategy Group earlier this year said that scaling back Devonport Dockyard could lead to the loss of about 11,500 jobs and cost the local economy £225 million.

The group was set up by Plymouth Sutton MP Linda Gilroy to bring together representatives of Babcock, which runs the Dockyard, the Royal Navy, trade unions and the city council.

Mrs Pengelly said at the weekend: “I was heartened when we met the Armed Forces Minister at the end of June that he understood the importance of removing the uncertainty the city has lived with as quickly as possible.

“But I am disappointed that we still await answers on crucial questions affecting the future of the Dockyard and Naval Base.

“We appreciate that decisions on base porting, on future refit work and on submarine work are linked together and linked with the conclusion of agreements with the major defence contractors – Babcock and BVT,” Mrs Pengelly said.

“But even Babcock do not expect a final signature on their terms of business agreement until the summer of 2009, alongside decisions on other naval base and ship support issues.

“My officers will be meeting MoD officials again in the future, and I hope that those meetings will be more productive in terms of providing clarity about the future of the dockyard, what activities are proposed, and how this will impact on the city.

“I shall be writing to the Minister once again seeking urgent assurances on the future of Devonport.”

Doubts over the Dockyard’s future intensified after multi-million-pound refit work on a Devonport-based frigate was switched to Scotland for the first time.

The Royal Navy frigate HMS Campbelltown is to have her 12-month overhaul at Rosyth.

This is thought to be the first time that a refit of any Type 22 frigate has been done outside Devonport since they were built in the 1980s.

Roger Darcy, GMB convener and chairman of the Industrial Trade Unions in the dockyard, said there was concern at the loss of work.

Mr Darcy said that the unions were reluctant to see any work moved from Devonport.

Babcock announced plans to axe up to 600 jobs – more than 10 per cent of its Plymouth workforce – in February this year because of a drop in Royal Navy submarine work.

A spokesman for Babcock Marine said the helicopter carrier HMS Ocean was being refitted in Devonport, to be followed by HMS Albion in October 2008 and HMS Westminster in March 2009.

Russia’s Sub Fleet Expansion Faces Problems

By Ilya Kramnik, United Press International, October 6, 2008

MOSCOW – Russian President Dmitry Medvedev’s remarks that Russia is resuming production of nuclear submarines for its navy have been widely commented on.

Russia’s submarine fleet is in critical condition and calls for renewal. The president’s words raise expectations for an early change.

Submarines play a special role in Russia’s navy. In the late 1950s, following the death of Josef Stalin, the new Soviet leaders opted for a nuclear missile-equipped submarine fleet, and now it forms the core of the navy’s might.

However, now a drastic cut in the number of warships, coupled with the freezing of construction of new units – only ship construction projects already started were completed – has led to a situation in which Russia’s submarine fleet is now facing the retirement of many vessels because of age.

The construction of new submarines, which has resumed in recent years, unfortunately is outpaced by the decommission rate of outdated vessels.

Medvedev made special mention of nuclear-powered submarines equipped with cruise missiles plus multirole submarines. These classes of boats have suffered the heaviest cuts in the previous years, and while Project 955 submarines are now being built for strategic forces, the situation with cruise-missile and multirole submarines is more disquieting.

Although Project 885 cruise-missile submarines – the first of them was named Severodvinsk – and later between one and three sister ships – according to various sources – began to be built, so far not even the first one has joined the Russian navy.

Many reasons are cited, including one that the design was raw and needed updating when construction began. The fact, however, is that no submarine is yet commissioned, and eight Project 949A submarines, built in the 1980s and 1990s, make up the force intended to confront aircraft carriers. These are excellent vessels, loved by their crews, and boast high-performance characteristics, but they are all slowly aging.

The situation with multirole submarines is even worse. No new vessels designed to engage hostile submarines, surface ships and to hit shore-based targets with strategic cruise missiles are under construction. At the moment, the Russian navy has 19 boats of this class, of three projects: 671RTMK – four units; 945/945A – three units; and 971 – 12 units.

Most of these submarines were built in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. They can still be considered modern, but the end of their service life is not far off. Some of the shipbuilding design bureaus are known to be developing new multirole projects, but specifics about dates and specifications are not reported.

How many cruise-missile and multirole submarines does the Russian navy need? Estimates vary, but the figure of 30 to 40 non-strategic submarines is considered optimal. At least 20 non-strategic nuclear submarines need to be constructed to maintain the strength of the submarine branch at the required level, considering that about half of the 27 cruise-missile and multirole submarines currently in service will retire after reaching the end of their service lives.

In theory, such rates are not too demanding: Russia has several shipyards that can build submarines at Sevmash, Admiralty Wharves, Komsomolsk and even Red Sormovo, which have the necessary experience.

The real problems lie elsewhere: in cooperating enterprises and, most important of all, in personnel, whose numbers and training quality have been drastically reduced. It is to be hoped that all these problems will be solved, and soon.

Making A Pitch For Nuclear Warhead Program

By Walter Pincus, The Washington Post, October 6, 2008

Continued study and development of a new generation of nuclear weapons and modernization of the aging manufacturing infrastructure needed to build them are necessary to maintain “the ultimate deterrent capability that supports U.S. national security.”

That is the conclusion of a nuclear policy paper released quietly last month by Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Energy Secretary Samuel W. Bodman.

The secretaries warn that without the Reliable Replacement Warhead (RRW) program, which Congress has delayed, the United States will have to keep an inventory of older, non-deployed nuclear warheads. That would be in addition to the 1,700 to 2,200 Cold War-era warheads — many whose useful life has been extended 20 years under the stockpile stewardship program — that are to be ready for use on strategic bombers and intercontinental land- and sea-based missiles from 2012 onward.

The Gates-Bodman paper is the last attempt by the Bush administration to have an impact on future U.S. nuclear weapons policy. A congressionally mandated study, co-chaired by former defense secretaries William J. Perry and James R. Schlesinger, is to be completed by December. The Pentagon is to do a Nuclear Posture Review next year.

The Gates-Bodman paper warns, in the strongest terms yet, that the stockpile stewardship program will soon have to modernize so many components and materials that the weapons may no longer be reliable.

“Without nuclear testing, at some time in the future the United States may be unable to confirm the effect of the accumulation of changes to tested warhead configurations,” they say.

They note that the United States “is now the only nuclear weapons state party to the [Non-Proliferation Treaty] that does not have the capability to produce a new nuclear warhead” and has not done so since the early 1990s. RRWs will be based on old, tested nuclear designs but put together with modern parts and technology.

What’s missing from the nuclear strategy, as outlined by Gates and Bodman, is the basic rationale that requires 1,700 to 2,200 deployed strategic nuclear warheads into the future. The authors concede that such numbers are important in determining how large the new nuclear production complex should be, but they never come to grips with how many warheads the United States should be prepared to build.

The paper notes that, in the past, the U.S. nuclear force was determined by the size of Soviet forces and the targeting requirements for nuclear strikes against them. With the end of the Cold War, President Bill Clinton and President Bush entered agreements with Russian leaders on reductions.

The United States decided to reduce the number of its deployed warheads from more than 6,000 to 1,700 to 2,200 by 2012. But rather than dismantling all warheads removed from delivery systems, the Bush administration plan placed many in storage, where they remain as a strategic stockpile — a hedge against any future threat.

Gates and Bodman say the U.S. deterrent force, no longer fixed by Russian targets, meets “a spectrum of political and military goals ... broader goals [that] are not reflected fully by military targeting alone.” One political requirement is that the United States maintain a nuclear posture that reassures NATO and Asian allies, such as Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, of Washington’s commitment to their defense and gives them no compelling need to acquire nuclear weapons.

Another goal of the U.S. nuclear force is to dissuade potential adversaries and even “near-peer competitors,” such as China and Russia, from adding sufficient numbers of nuclear warheads to wipe out U.S. systems. It also is based on “retaining a sufficient margin over countries with expanding nuclear arsenals to discourage their leaders from initiating a nuclear arms competition.”

Gates and Bodman also see the U.S. nuclear force as a deterrent against other types of weapons of mass destruction — such as chemical or biological — and attacks against American “deployed forces, allies and friends.” They also say the nuclear stockpile helps prevent “major conventional attacks.”

They say the number of strategic warheads on 24-hour alert will be “smaller” than the 1,700 to 2,200 that will be deployed. But the larger number could be reached within “a few weeks to months” by putting bombers back on alert or sending more submarines to sea.

Pursuing development and deployment of RRW is “key to sustaining confidence in the U.S. nuclear stockpile,” Gates and Bodman conclude. Once RRW is deployed in significant numbers, the paper says, “some or all of the reserve warheads ... can be retired and dismantled without incurring significant risk.”

National security and intelligence reporter Walter Pincus pores over the speeches, reports, transcripts and other documents that flood Washington and every week uncovers the fine print that rarely makes headlines — but should.

Russia’s Warships Head For Exercise With Venezuelan Navy

By Michael Evans, The Times Online, October 5, 2008

Russia displayed its military strength in the Mediterranean yesterday after warships heading to Venezuela passed through the Strait of Gibraltar in the second deployment of Russian naval vessels in the waterway since the Cold War.

The nuclear-powered missile cruiser Peter the Great, accompanied by the Admiral Chabanenko, an anti-submarine destroyer, as well as a reconnaissance vessel and a support ship, are destined for a maritime exercise with the Venezuelan navy.

En route, however, the aim appears to be to demonstrate to the West and Nato that Russia is once again back in business as a blue-water power.

“It’s all about strutting your stuff and cocking a snook at the West, in the same way that the Bears [Russian strategic bombers] have been doing since they began patrolling again,” said Andrew Brookes, of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies.

Jason Alderwick, naval analyst at the institute, said that the Russian warships, which set off from their base at Severomorsk, near Murmansk on the Arctic coast, were Cold War “legacy ships”, not the modern vessels deployed by Western navies with advanced communications and surveillance systems.

“This is a case of naval diplomacy rather than a demonstration of capability,” he said.

Mr Alderwick said that the only other occasion since the Cold War when Russian warships had passed through the Strait – coming within a few miles of the strategically important British naval base – was last year, when Russia’s sole aircraft carrier, the Admiral Kuznetsov, and five other ships were deployed from Severomorsk.

The dispatching of the Peter the Great was a significant event, he said, particularly because Moscow had clearly decided to make its presence felt in the Mediterranean before engaging with the Venezuelan navy during the exercise.

The Russian naval force is due to call at the Libyan port of Tripoli and the Syrian port of Tartus, which played host to Soviet ships during the Cold War.

Reports suggested that the warships may have made a stop-off in Tartus, but this was not confirmed by Moscow.

The flotilla may also visit the Syrian port of Latakia, where the Russians are helping to build a new facility. The arrival of the four Russian warships in the Mediterranean comes after Moscow’s military operation in Georgia.

After the defeat of Georgia in August, Moscow made it clear that it intended to deploy its military on regular manoeuvres around the world.

It has also moved to intensify contacts with Venezuela, Cuba and other Latin American countries. Russia has signed weapons contracts worth more than \$4 billion with Venezuela since 2005 to supply fighter jets, helicopters and 100,000 Kalashnikov AK47 assault rifles.

Despite the new muscular approach, there was evidence yesterday of Russian withdrawals from Georgia. Russian troops began dismantling checkpoints in the “security zones” they have occupied in Georgia since the brief war in the former Soviet republic.

Russia is supposed to be pulling back its troops under the terms of a deal brokered by President Sarkozy of France on behalf of the European Union. Moscow has said that it still plans to keep thousands of troops inside the two breakaway regions of Georgia – South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Russia has formally recognised the independence of both regions.

Russia Hopes To Deploy New Nuclear Missile Next Year

By Michael Stott, Reuters India, October 2, 2008

Russia hopes to deploy a new submarine-launched nuclear missile next year, underlining Moscow’s determination to upgrade its nuclear strike forces, a senior defence official was quoted as saying on Thursday.

Colonel-General Vladimir Popovkin, head of armaments for the Russian armed forces, told the Defence Ministry newspaper “Red Star” that Russia’s recent war with Georgia “compels us to rethink the current state of the armed forces and how they should develop further”.

President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin have both pledged to extend Russia’s recent military build-up with extra funds to buy new, high-tech arms. On Wednesday, Putin announced an extra \$3.1 billion of spending next year, partly to replace equipment lost in the Georgia war.

But despite the billions of dollars spent since Putin came to power as president in 2000, Russia’s 1 million-strong armed forces remain poorly equipped, badly paid and reliant on a large proportion of unwilling conscripts.

Defence analysts based in Moscow say much of the extra spending has not reached the front line because of corruption or mismanagement and many weapons programmes are running late.

One of these is the Bulava, a submarine-launched long-range nuclear missile which Putin says will be capable of penetrating any missile defences — a reference to Washington's plans for a new global system to shoot down hostile missiles.

The Bulava, a modified version of the land-based Topol-M, has had a chequered history with several test launch failures and is running at least two years late.

The navy pronounced the latest Bulava exercise on Sept. 18 a success, saying the missile flew from the White Sea right across Russia to the Far East.

Popovkin, who is also deputy defence minister, said he hoped the armed forces would accept the Bulava for service next year. Upgrading Russia's strategic nuclear forces remained a top priority because they were the cornerstone of its defences.

"As long as we are a nuclear power, no hotheads will venture to attack our country," Popovkin said in the interview.

"... We have already this year started fitting out strategic nuclear forces with the Topol-M missile," he added.

Russia also planned to modernise its nuclear-capable Tupolev TU-160 supersonic strategic bombers and to fully commission the first of three new nuclear-powered submarines to carry the Bulava missile, he added.

The first of these submarines, the Yuri Dolgoruky, was launched in February, six years after its original scheduled date, though it still lacks the missiles it was designed to carry.

What Is The Future For Russia's Submarine Fleet?

By Ilya Kramnik, RIA Novosti, October 1, 2008

Dmitry Medvedev's remarks that Russia is resuming production of nuclear submarines for its Navy have been widely commented on.

The country's submarine fleet is in critical condition and calls for renewal. The president's words raise hopes for an early change.

Submarines play a special role in Russia's Navy. In the late 1950s, following the death of Josef Stalin, the new Soviet leaders opted for a nuclear missile equipped submarine fleet, and now it forms the core of the Navy's might. A drastic cut in the number of warships coupled with the freezing of construction of new units (only ship construction projects already started were completed) has led to a situation where Russia's submarine fleet is now facing the retirement of many vessels due to age. The construction of new submarines, which has resumed in recent years, is, unfortunately, outpaced by the decommission rate of outdated vessels.

Medvedev made special mention of nuclear-powered submarines equipped with cruise missiles plus multi-role submarines. These classes of boats have suffered the heaviest cuts in the previous years, and while Project 955 submarines are now being built for strategic forces, the situation with cruise-missile and multi-role submarines is more disquieting.

Although Project 885 cruise-missile submarines (the first of them was named Severodvinsk) and later between one and three sister ships (according to various sources) began to be built, so far not even the first one has joined the Navy. Many reasons are cited, including one that the design was raw and needed updating when construction began. The fact, however, is that no submarine is yet commissioned, and eight Project 949A submarines, built in the 1980s-1990s, make up the force intended to confront aircraft carriers. These are excellent vessels, loved by their crews and boast high performance characteristics, but they are all slowly aging.

The situation with multi-role submarines is even worse. No new vessels designed to engage hostile submarines, surface ships and to hit shore-based targets with strategic cruise missiles are under construction. At the moment, the Navy has 19 boats of this class, of three projects: 671RTMK (four units), 945(945A) (three units), and 971 (twelve units). Most of these submarines were built in the late 1980s to mid-1990s. They can still be considered modern, but the end of their service life is not far off. Some of the shipbuilding design bureaus are known to be developing new multi-role projects, but specifics about dates and specifications are not reported.

How many cruise-missile and multi-role submarines does the Russian Navy need? Estimates vary, but the figure of 30 to 40 non-strategic submarines is considered optimal. At least 20 non-strategic nuclear submarines need to be constructed to maintain the strength of the submarine branch at the required level, considering that about half of the 27 cruise-missile and multi-role submarines currently in service will retire after reaching the end of their service lives.

In theory, such rates are not too demanding - Russia has several shipyards that can build submarines - Sevmash, Admiralty Wharves, Komsomolsk and even Red Sormovo, which has the necessary experience. The real problems lie elsewhere: in cooperating enterprises and, most important of all, in personnel, whose numbers and training quality have been drastically reduced. It is to be hoped that all these problems will be solved, and soon.

The opinions expressed in this article are the author's and do not necessarily represent those of RIA Novosti.



NR-1 Inactivation Ceremony, Reunion Nov. 21

From EMC(SS) Roy Hoagland, Chief of the Boat, Submarine NR-1

The Inactivation Ceremony for Submarine NR-1 will be held in conjunction with a crew reunion on November 21, 2008, at Submarine Base, Groton, Conn.

Questions or contact information can be forwarded to EMC(SS) Roy Hoagland at nr1reunion@nr1.navy.mil. You can also call Chief Hoagland at 860-271-6582 for more information.

Nuclear Sub Sails Under Arctic Ice as Russia Asserts Its Power

By Lyubov Pronina, Bloomberg, September 30, 2008

A Russian nuclear submarine completed a month-long mission under the Arctic ice as Russia reasserts its military power in the region.

The submarine Ryazan of Russia's Northern Fleet arrived today at the Vilyuchinsk base on the Kamchatka peninsula after sailing for more than 30 days without surfacing, the navy said today in a faxed statement.

"Russia's submariners haven't lost the skill of making long sub-ice voyages, and they gave a worthy confirmation of the quality of our national school of fulfilling complex missions in Arctic waters," Admiral Vladimir Vysotsky, head of the navy, said in the statement.

In the last year, Russia has conducted large-scale war games in the Arctic, including long-range bombers, beefing up its military presence as it tries to claim the region's vast resources. On Sept. 17, President Dmitry Medvedev said Russia's "main task" is to turn the Arctic into a "resource base."

Russia is jockeying for Arctic territory with the U.S., Canada, Norway and Denmark, which all have territorial claims in the region. Russian explorers planted a flag on the Arctic seabed directly beneath the North Pole last year, symbolically staking a claim to an area that may hold 10 billion tons of oil equivalent, as well as deposits of gold, nickel and diamonds, according to the Russian government.

Russia claims 18 percent of the Arctic region, which touches on 20,000 kilometers (12,000 miles) of the country's border, according to Nikolai Patrushev, head of the Security Council. The government will draft a development plan for the area by Dec. 1.

The mission also comes after Medvedev called for Russia's nuclear deterrent to be upgraded within 12 years, including the construction of more nuclear submarines. Wrapping up a visit to Russia's Far East last week, Medvedev said the country must boost its military presence there, reviving a policy abandoned after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Step Up To Plate On Sub Ceremonies

Seacoast Online, Editorial, September 28, 2008

The commissioning of the new Virginia-class submarine New Hampshire is scheduled to take place in less than a month at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard.

The commissioning of a U.S. Navy ship is no small matter, and it is an honor that Portsmouth and the entire Seacoast region has been chosen as the site. That the \$2.4 billion submarine will be commissioned on Oct. 25 as the New Hampshire, the first such Navy-named ship in more than eight decades, is indeed a major historical event in an area that prides itself on its seafaring history.

The New Hampshire commissioning is expected to draw tens of thousands of tourists to the city and region for the weeklong slate of activities. It will not only be a memorable week, but it will be an economic shot in the arm.

But it's an honor that some state and city officials have yet to embrace fully.

As written in our Page 1 story today, "\$50,000 sought from state for sub ceremonies," the local group in charge of the commissioning event is some \$65,000 short of its \$300,000 goal toward the cost of the ceremony and a host of activities for the New Hampshire's crew of 132.

While dozens of local, state and national businesses and individuals have contributed money and services to the effort, the story by Deborah McDermott said the Community Commissioning Committee's fund-raising schedule was cut short because the New Hampshire was built eight months ahead of its original finish date. The timing has not been fortunate as many businesses and corporations have already spent their annual charitable dollars and the increasingly tough economy has added to the difficulties.

Bruce Clark, chairman of the Community Commissioning Committee, said he hopes to meet with Gov. John Lynch soon to explain the situation and persuade the state to chip in.

"We will tell him in spades that we're trying desperately to raise funds," Clark told Seacoast Sunday. "We would like as much as the governor can see fit to give us – at least \$50,000 from the state. This is going to help the state, the Seacoast, the city and the yard. The whole thing is for the officers and the crew. That's what we're doing this for. There's no benefit that accrues to us."

Lynch hasn't been fully briefed, yet despite the state's budget woes, we encourage him to take appropriate and creative action to help with a ceremony worthy of the state of which the submarine is named.

The city of Portsmouth has offered in-kind services such as extended fire and police protection, which Mayor Tom Ferrini has rightfully called "meaningful assistance." Ferrini has said the city is not in the position to offer more, but we hope he and the City Council reconsider their position.

This is a once-in-a-generation event such as what happened in Wilmington, N. C., a city of 100,000, earlier this year. Its city council approved a \$50,000 contribution to the commissioning of the USS North Carolina, while county and state departments added another \$75,000.

For Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, “it was money well spent. It was a great event for our community. People are still talking about it.” Wouldn’t we like to have a similar, or perhaps even better outcome, with the commissioning of the New Hampshire? Consider it an investment well made to have this be an event worthy of Portsmouth and the region.

MoD In ‘Disgrace’ As Safety Breaches At Trident Bases Reach Record High

Lapses at Faslane and Coulport include power failures, spilled radioactive waste and contaminated workers

By Rob Edwards, *The Sunday Herald*, September 27, 2008

SAFETY BLUNDERS at the nuclear bomb bases on the Clyde have rocketed to a record high, shutting down submarine reactors, spilling radioactivity and contaminating workers.

An internal Ministry of Defence (MoD) report has revealed that there were exactly 100 nuclear safety lapses at Faslane and Coulport, near Helensburgh, between June 2006 and May 2007. This was 40% higher than the previous year and nearly three times higher than in 2000-01.

Safety at the bases - home to the UK’s Trident nuclear weapons system - has been condemned as “an absolute disgrace” by the Scottish National Party. The MoD, however, insisted that safety standards were improving.

The MoD’s latest annual review of “nuclear safety events” at the bases included dropping a reactor control rod, breaching reactor containment and 32 power failures.

Two of the most serious incidents occurred on Trident submarines in September and December 2006. In both cases, radioactive cooling water spilled from a faulty hose pipe. On one occasion it contaminated a worker’s shoe.

The second of the incidents was categorised as having had “high potential for actual radioactive release to the environment”. The first, along with 19 other incidents, was defined as having had “actual or potential for a contained release within building or submarine”.

Another 40 incidents were said to have had “potential for future release by failure to adopt good practice and continuous improvement”. According to the MoD, the remaining 39 safety breaches had “no or little potential for release”.

In one incident in March last year two workers suffered skin contamination when radioactive fluid leaked from a submarine reactor after a test rig was disconnected. The workers had to be decontaminated with a “wash-down procedure”.

Other lapses included an “unplanned reactor shutdown”, the “incorrect transfer of low-level waste” and “unauthorised helicopter operations”. A breach of safety rules when a Trident submarine was hoisted out of the water was blamed on a “breakdown in communication”.

According to the MoD report, 41 of the 100 incidents in 2006-07 were caused by “operator error”, while 24 were as a result of “equipment failure”. At least 20 involved one of the four Vanguard “bomber” submarines. Each submarine can carry up to 48 nuclear warheads on Trident missiles.

Among the 25 “lessons learnt” listed by the MoD are indications that the workforce may have been over-stretched. “Management should be aware of the increased potential for errors through excessive work and take action where possible to guard against operator fatigue,” said the report.

It warned that “external pressures” must not compromise safe operation and singled out some naval officers for criticism. “The quartermaster’s position is a busy one and his areas of responsibility are numerous and diverse,” the report said. “He must not allow himself to be distracted from his duties.”

The report was described as “deeply worrying” yesterday by the SNP MSP, Bill Kidd. “For there to be one safety incident would be bad enough, but 100 is an absolute disgrace,” he said.

“There is clearly an underlying problem with safety at Faslane and Coulport, one that will no doubt worry those who work there, and those who live and work nearby. Far from the MoD’s safety record improving, it is deteriorating fast.”

According to Kidd, the real dangers of maintaining nuclear weapons have now been exposed. Trident should be removed from Scotland, and plans to replace it should be abandoned, he said.

The MoD argued that the number of recorded incidents had increased because of the introduction of a new and more rigorous reporting system. Nuclear safety checks were carried out to the highest possible standard, it maintained.

“None of the incidents in the current report represented any threat to the health of any member of staff on the base or, of course, to any member of the public,” said an MoD spokesman.

John Ainslie, co-ordinator of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), pointed out that there had been a significant increase in the number of serious incidents. “The MoD’s attempt to dismiss this as better record-keeping is a sign of complacency,” he said. “This report suggests that safety standards at Faslane have fallen when personnel at the base have been overworked.”

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