

January Meeting at
Taco Surf in Los Alamitos

THE PERISCOPE

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PRIDE RUNS DEEP



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

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Editor's Corner

New Year's Resolution: to get this puppy past her r/c troubles and in the water ASAP. Japanese destroyers are just asking for it!—Jeff



USS Harder (SS-257)

Navy Submarine Honored with Top Unit Award for 3 Secret Intelligence Missions

(Reproduced from the Military.com website - Published October 22, 2024)

by Konstantin Toropin



The Virginia-class fast-attack submarine USS Washington prepares to moor at Naval Station Norfolk, Feb. 27, 2022. (U.S.N. Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Cameron Stoner.)

The USS *Washington*, a Navy fast-attack submarine, has been awarded a prestigious unit award for its work in securing key intelligence while deployed to the European theater, the service revealed in a statement.

The *Virginia*-class fast-attack submarine, also known as the "Blackfish," was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for "outstanding performance in action while conducting operations within U.S. Sixth Fleet" during a recent six-month deployment, a Navy statement announced Friday.

The citation can be awarded to any U.S. military unit that has distinguished itself through outstanding performance and heroism in action against enemy forces. The Navy's submarine service has a long history of earning the honor for secret and clandestine activities that have begun to become public only in the last several decades.

According to the Navy, the *Washington* "completed three demanding missions vital to national security that resulted in obtaining sensitive and unique intelligence information."

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From the Wardroom...



Dave Vanderveen,
Base Commander

Shipmates and Ladies,

A new year is upon us with all its promise and whatever fate will bring. My generally positive approach to life has me looking forward and intending to enjoy the good and handle the not-so-good. I heard a "sea dad" long ago say, "Deal with what you cannot control, and control what you can." Although he didn't say it to me, I took it to heart and continue to practice it.

In a shade over two months from now, we'll host the Western Region Roundup aboard RMS *Queen Mary* in Long Beach Harbor. The dates are March 6-8, and we have an excellent program planned. I hope you'll sign up to participate, especially those who live in Southern California. The ship has been refurbished by the City of Long Beach and is in great shape. The former First-Class Passenger staterooms are now the hotel rooms where attendees will stay. Sarah, my wife, reviewed the ship with me and said the staterooms are worth our while. This may be a unique opportunity to take part in Subvet business while you spend a few nights aboard a ninety-year-old piece of maritime history. If you don't have the link to register, please contact me at lapasadenabase@gmail.com and I'll resend it.

Deeper in this issue you'll find a few photographs of our recent Christmas party at the Navy Golf Course in Cypress. We had an excellent turnout of 42 folks, and I personally enjoyed catching up with old acquaintances and meeting some new ones. The conversations were entertaining and flowed easily. We reserved the same facility for the 2025 Christmas party on December 20th.

Marilyn has probably been in contact with you about dues renewal (if you are not a Life Member), and if that remains an "open action" for you, please get your dues to her ASAP. The National USSVI office is pretty quick to drop members for non-payment and we don't want to lose you!

Our January 18th meeting will be held at Taco Surf, 10542 Los Alamitos Blvd. in Los Alamitos. It's on the east side of the street between Cerritos Avenue and Sausalito Street. The E-Board will meet at 10:00 followed by the General Meeting at 11:00. Lunch and beverages will be at your expense as we have done in meetings at other restaurants. The VFW has an event scheduled for the same day we'll meet and they'll occupy the entire hall in Anaheim, so we set up at Taco Surf.

Whatever "crud" was flitting among our population last month is still with us, so please protect your health with your usual common sense measures.

Happy New Year!

Dave

Dave Vanderveen, Commander
Los Angeles-Pasadena Base

January Meeting at Taco Surf in Los Alamitos

Jan. Meeting

Date: Jan. 18, 2025

This month we're at a new spot since the VFW are using their own hall that day. Lunch & drinks are on you (especially if you spill 'em!) as with all our restaurant visits, but the good sub fellowship is on everyone!

Location:

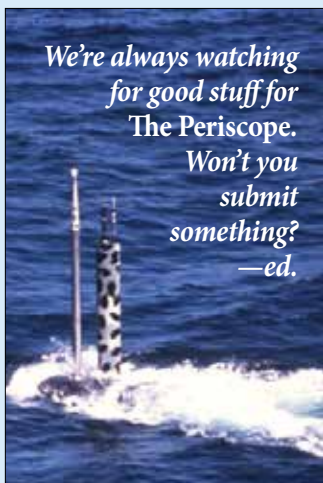
**Taco Surf Restaurant
10542 Los Alamitos Blvd.
Los Alamitos, CA 90720**

It's on the east side of the street between Cerritos Avenue and Sausalito Street. Come join us for something a little different as far as our usual monthly meetings go.

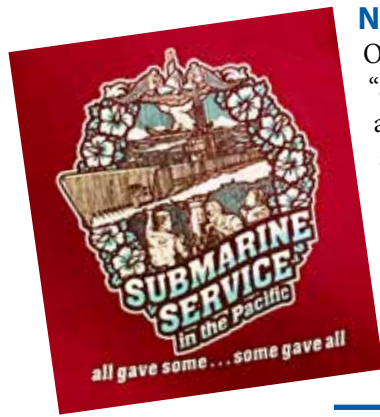
Jan. Birthdays

We hereby extend the happiest of wishes to all our L.A.-Pasadena Base birthday celebrants!

- Ron Levenson 1/3
- Bob Schive 1/3
- Brian M. Senior..... 1/8
- RJ Hansen..... 1/18
- Sam Higa..... 1/26
- Larry Smith. 1/30



Ship's Store



New Reduced Price on T-Shirts!

Our ever-popular L.A.-Pasadena Base "Submarine Service" tees are once again selling like fresh whites after a fall down the pump room hatch! Now a mere **ten bucks** apiece, there's no reason not to have a closetful. Contact Bill Moak for yours, or just bring a few extra bucks to the next meeting, you skinflint!

2025 Calendars Now Available!

Order your calendar through Bill Moak or the National Storekeeper. See the ad elsewhere in this issue of *The Periscope*.



Get in touch with our base Storekeeper, Bill Moak, at golfnsurf46@aol.com for more information!



**USSVI Logo Patch
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LOS ANGELES - PASADENA BASE

2025 FLOWER FUND and BOOSTER CLUB

A special thank you to the following folks whose generous contributions this year have helped make our base activities and charitable functions possible:

Wouldn't it be cool to see your name listed here?

Booster Club and Flower Fund donations are welcome in any amount and are often also popular with 50/50 Drawing winners at our base meetings. Contributions can be made in cash or by check payable to L.A.-Pasadena Base of USSVI. Checks may also be sent to Mike Swanson at 1149 W. Santa Cruz Street, San Pedro, CA 90731. To ensure proper credit, be sure to indicate Booster Club or Flower Fund on your check.



UNITED STATES SUBMARINE FORCE LOSSES ON ETERNAL PATROL

"I can assure you that they went down fighting and that their brothers who survived them took a grim toll of our savage enemy to avenge their deaths."

— Vice Admiral Charles A. Lockwood, USN

JANUARY TOLLING OF THE BOATS



USS SCORPION (SS-278)



USS ARGONAUT (SS-166)



USS SWORDFISH (SS-193)

USS SCORPION (SS-278)

Lost on January 5, 1944 in the East China Sea during her fourth war patrol. Seventy-seven officers and men were lost. It is assumed *Scorpion* struck a mine.

USS ARGONAUT (SS-166)

Lost on January 10, 1943 off Rabaul during her third war patrol. *Argonaut* had torpedoed a destroyer as part of her attack on a Japanese convoy, but it survived to depth charge her in coordination with two other escorting destroyers. Forced to the surface, *Argonaut* was then sunk by escort gunfire. She went down with 102 officers and men.

USS SWORDFISH (SS-193)

Lost on January 12, 1945 somewhere near Okinawa during her thirteenth war patrol. Eighty-nine officers and men perished. *Swordfish* was probably lost to a mine.

USS S-36 (SS-141)

Lost on January 20, 1942—with no loss of life—on her second war patrol. She ran aground on a reef and radioed for rescue; a Dutch ship soon picked up her crew. S-36 was then scuttled to keep her from falling into enemy hands.

USS S-26 (SS-131)

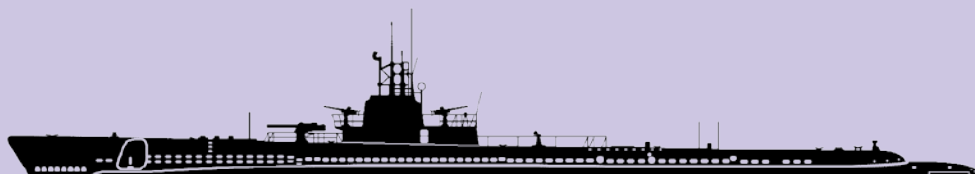
Lost on January 24, 1942 in the Gulf of Panama during her second war patrol. She was accidentally rammed by the USS PC-460 and sank within seconds. The CO, XO and one lookout on her bridge survived—all forty-six other officers and men were lost.



USS S-36 (SS-141)



USS S-26 (SS-131)



WE REMEMBER For those who gave their lives in defense of our country WE REMEMBER

U.S. Navy Sends Rare *Seawolf*-Class Submarine Right into China's Backyard

The U.S. Navy's nuclear-powered fast attack submarine, USS Seawolf (SSN-21) was recently spotted arriving in Yokosuka, Japan, thanks to sub watchers on social media. This marks the second notable appearance of a Seawolf-class submarine in recent months.

(Reproduced from The National Interest website - Published October 14, 2024.)

by Peter Suci



Seawolf-class fast attack submarine. (U.S. Navy photo.)

The United States Navy doesn't generally announce the movements of its submarine fleet. However, in the era of social media, it has become just a bit easier to track where the "Silent Service" operates—and a few weeks ago, sub watchers on X, the social media formerly known as Twitter, reported that the nuclear-powered fast attack submarine USS *Seawolf* (SSN-21) arrived in the port city of Yokosuka in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture.

Images of the submarine, the fourth to be named after the solitary fish, showed tug boats aiding her as she arrived in port. According to a report from *Newsweek*, "The prefectural government has confirmed the visit by the American sub."

The deployment puts the advanced attack submarine essentially in China's backyard, and the U.S. Navy likely wanted Beijing to know that USS *Seawolf* was in the neighborhood!

This is also the second time since May that a *Seawolf*-class submarine became a minor social media star after a photo of USS *Jimmy Carter* (SSN-23) was captured in May showing that the boat had arrived in San Diego before quickly heading back out to sea.

Sole *Seawolf*-Class Boat Currently in Service

The U.S. Navy operates just three *Seawolf*-class submarines, and the boats are known for their advanced capabilities, including speeds of 35 knots submerged and a robust armament capacity. The nuclear-powered fast attack subs were developed to replace the aging *Los Angeles*-class fast attack (SSN) submarines, but due to the end of the Cold War and budget constraints, the program was cut short. One factor for the reduction was the cost, with each boat coming in at around \$3.5 billion.

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Seawolf-Class Submarine Seen Near China

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In addition, the maintenance of these fast attack submarines has been costly and slow, particularly with USS *Connecticut* (SSN-22), which has faced extensive repair delays after a 2021 collision with an uncharted seamount in the Pacific Ocean. That collision caused significant damage to the boat, and eleven sailors were injured. The damage was to the forward section of the nuclear-powered submarine, including its ballast tank, and was significant enough that the sub was forced to make a week-long voyage home on the surface from the South China Sea to Guam.

The repairs could cost upwards of \$80 million, and it won't be until at least 2026 that USS *Connecticut* returns to service.

Though SSN-23 didn't suffer any similar mishap to that which sidelined her SSN-22 sister—or at least the U.S. Navy hasn't acknowledged one—the former boat has been at Bremerton, Washington for maintenance for an extended period. It isn't clear when USS *Jimmy Carter*, named after the 39th U.S. president, will be back in operation.

Nor is it known just how long USS *Seawolf* could be deployed to the Western Pacific, though the U.S. Navy does regularly rotate fast attack subs to the area. The presence of *Seawolf* in that part of the world underscores the U.S. Navy's strategic focus on the region, notably in response to maritime China's influence.

Peter Suci is a Michigan-based writer. He has contributed to more than four dozen magazines, newspapers, and websites with over 3,200 published pieces over a twenty-year career in journalism. He regularly writes about military hardware, firearms history, cybersecurity, politics, and international affairs. Peter is also a Contributing Writer for Forbes and Clearance Jobs. You can follow him on Twitter: @PeterSuci. Or email him at: Editor@nationalinterest.org.



PRIDE RUNS DEEP

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SUBMARINES IN NEED OF ADDITIONAL SPONSORS

USS <i>Columbia</i> (SSN-771)	USS <i>Montana</i> (SSN-794)
USS <i>Connecticut</i> (SSN-22)	USS <i>North Dakota</i> (SSN-784)
USS <i>Delaware</i> (SSN-791)	USS <i>Kentucky Blue</i> (SSBN-737)
USS <i>Greeneville</i> (SSN-772)	USS <i>Kentucky Gold</i> (SSBN-737)
USS <i>Helena</i> (SSN-725)	USS <i>Maine Blue</i> (SSBN-741)
USS <i>Hyman G. Rickover</i> (SSN-795)	

Questions?

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Fewer Than Two Dozen Shipyard Workers Involved in Suspect Welds; Delay in 17-Sub Contract Creates “Unpredictability”

(Reproduced from the Naval News website - Published October 31, 2024.)

by Sam LaGrone



USS New Jersey (SSN-796) during sea trials in 2024. (HII photo.) (Love the dolphins off her bow.—ed.)

Fewer than two dozen shipyard workers are responsible for suspicious welds that were discovered on aircraft carriers and submarines built at HII’s Newport News Shipbuilding, company officials said during an earnings call for the shipbuilder on Thursday.

Company leaders in the earnings call framed the suspicious welds, made on *Ford*- and *Nimitz*-class aircraft carriers and *Columbia*- and *Virginia*-class submarines, as the result of a small subset of workers in the yard.

“This is a process issue. This is a small fraction of some welders in the yard and a small fraction of welds that were impacted,” HII CEO Christopher Kastner said on the earnings call. “We’re working very closely with the cus-

tomers to bound the issue and come through the issue, and we think we’ll march through that very smartly.”

The suspicious welds have been found aboard *Nimitz*-class aircraft carrier USS *George Washington* (CVN-73), the *Virginia*-class attack submarines USS *Hyman G. Rickover* (SSN-795) and USS *New Jersey* (SSN-796), and up to twenty-three other ships built at the Virginia shipyard.

“An initial assessment at Newport News Shipbuilding determined that fewer than two dozen welders did not consistently follow procedures in their weld process,” said HII’s chief financial officer Thomas Stiehle. “We continue to work alongside ... the Navy through a comprehensive

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Submarine Builds Delayed by Suspect Welds

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investigation and analysis to determine the extent of any financial impact.”

The Navy and the shipyard are continuing to assess the extent of the weld problems. A Navy official told *USNI News* that tens of thousands of welds needed to be inspected but did not say how many need to be repaired or reworked.

Naval Sea Systems Command officials have been on Capitol Hill this week briefing legislators on the extent of the issue, two defense officials confirmed to *USNI News*. Members of Congress have asked the Navy for updates on the severity of the issue, when the service became aware of the problem, and the scope of an ongoing Department of Justice investigation into the work.

In a Thursday statement, a service spokesperson told *USNI News*, “the Navy is continuing to oversee and independently validate HII-NNS’s initial weld assessments, which are approximately ninety percent complete. To date, five ships have been cleared safe for full operation.

Later in the call, company officials lowered earnings projections for the year due to the delay in the Navy awarding contracts for seventeen submarines which were supposed to be issued earlier this year.

Newport News Shipbuilding builds the bows and sterns of both the *Virginia*- and *Columbia*-class submarines in a teaming arrangement with prime contractor General Dynamics/Electric Boat. The 17-boat contract includes multi-year deals for ten Block VI *Virginia*-class attack submarines and five Build II *Columbia*-class boomers, in addition to two Block V boats that Congress appropriated \$9.34 billion for as part of the Fiscal Year 2024 defense spending bill. However, during the negotiations for the Block V boats—the future *Baltimore* (SSN-812) and *Atlanta* (SSN-813)—the Navy realized the price tag would increase by twenty percent, mostly due to increased workforce costs.

To make up for the cost difference, the Navy developed a payment scheme called the Shipbuilder Accountability and Workforce Support plan, also known as SAWS, that would move workforce money from already awarded existing submarine contracts which have not yet begun construction—creating a pool of money to pay for labor cost increases and infrastructure improvements.

“[SAWS] was a Navy initiative that we supported. I still believe it’s the smartest, best way to get at this issue because it unlocks such investment in the workforce, the infrastructure and technology,” Kastner said. “It was a very good idea

that we think is still under review and potentially could be put under contract, although we don’t forecast that happening over the balance of this year.”

Kastner said during the call that balancing the submarine workload was key to the ongoing contract negotiations.

“When you think about the seventeen submarines, it’s really a reset of the portfolio. In Newport News, this is not business as usual. You can’t simply just put that much work into a facility and expect it to be executed—especially in this environment ... we’re operating in—relative to labor and the supply chain and the capacity in the industrial base,” he said during the call. “It does none of us any good to agree to cost or schedules on these submarines that are so urgently needed that we can’t achieve.”

Earlier this week, a bipartisan group in the Senate wrote to Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro asking for the status of the SAWS plan.

“The Navy’s hesitance to both notify Congress earlier and take a definitive stance is concerning ... We, therefore, urge more consistent communication with Congress and with [White House Office of Management and Budget] so that all parties clearly understand the Navy’s position on SAWS and overall plans to get our nation’s submarine production on track,” reads the letter to Del Toro. “It is critical that our submarine programs be on schedule and on budget. The news that the Navy is projected to be an astonishing \$17 billion short in the *Virginia*-class program alone in the next six years is especially distressing.”

In addition to the contract funding, Kastner also said HII is struggling with a green labor force and is shifting to hire more experienced labor to prevent the shipbuilder from having to redo work done by less experienced employees.

“We’re going to focus on more experienced labor, because we’re just out of alignment, or out of balance from an experience level right now, which leads to rework, which leads to inefficiency, and it’s not good for anyone,” he said.

“We just encountered rework on systems that we didn’t expect and that impacts schedule.”

Sam LaGrone is the editor of USNI News. He has covered legislation, acquisition and operations for the Sea Services since 2009, and spent time underway with the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and the Canadian Navy. Follow him on social media: @samlagrone.

Chinese Submarine That Sank in Harbor Had Exotic Hybrid Nuclear Powerplant

(Reproduced from The WarZone website - Published October 2, 2024)

by Thomas Newdick



The *Washington Times* first disclosed on July 16, 2004, that China had developed a new Yuan-class conventionally powered sub in secret.

The mysterious Chinese submarine that apparently sank in a shipyard earlier this year was the first of a new class featuring a hybrid nuclear/conventional propulsion system, according to a new report. The latest development in the saga of the Type 041 *Zhou* class submarine would seem to clear up some of the previous uncertainty about the boat as well as signal that China is working on novel solutions for its fast-growing underwater fleet.

In a recent report citing unnamed defense officials, the *Washington Times* notes that the Type 041 “employs both conventional and nuclear propulsion,” specifically, “a small nuclear reactor” in addition to a conventional powerplant.

When the Type 041 was first identified in Wuchang Shipyard, it was assessed as being one of the Type 039A series boats, also known in the West as the *Yuan* class or a variant of it. The Type 039A is the first Chinese submarine with an air-independent propulsion (AIP) system, which greatly increases the time that it can remain submerged and makes it harder to detect, compared with traditional conventionally powered subs.

Around a week ago, U.S. officials stated that the submarine in question had sunk, and identified it as the first of a new class of boat, the Type 041 *Zhou* class. This was described as being a nuclear-powered attack submarine, or SSN, a type of boat that was not previously known to be built at the Wuchang Shipyard, which sits on the relatively shallow Yangtze River just outside the city of Wuhan. The yard is part of the state-owned China State Shipbuilding Corporation (CSSC).

The latest information from the United States suggests that the truth is somewhere in between, namely that the Type 041 features both kinds of powerplant.

While still unconfirmed, this would make a lot of sense for several reasons and would also echo previous statements from Chinese officials.

China military affairs analyst Rick Fisher told the *Washington Times* that, back in 2017, retired People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) Rear Adm. Zhao Dengping announced plans to develop a low-power/low-pressure nuclear reactor small enough to serve as an auxiliary engine for conventional submarines.

Fisher says that the nuclear powerplant appears to be similar to a Soviet concept tested in the late 1980s on a single Project 651 Juliett class conventional cruise missile sub.

The ex-admiral said that the new reactor was intended to equip a 7,000-ton attack submarine that would also receive advanced weapons and electronics. He also said it would replace current AIP systems, as used in the Type 039A.

The concept of a hybrid propulsion system, with a nuclear reactor being used intermittently to charge batteries, or when a higher level of performance or longer range is needed, is an intriguing one, to say the least.

Even before the possibility of hybrid propulsion was raised, it was notable that Chinese submarine developments were following a two-pronged path, with both nuclear and conventionally powered designs, in stark contrast to the all-nuclear U.S. Navy.

Nuclear-powered submarines have the huge advantage of effectively unlimited range. Compared with conventionally powered alternatives, they are also faster and capable of staying submerged for time spans only limited to onboard provisions and maintenance demands. Even the most advanced AIP submarines, namely the ones that use fuel cell technology, still have to surface from time to time, including to refuel. This can be measured in weeks or less depending on how much energy is required during dive operations.

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Sunken Chinese Sub is a Nuke Hybrid

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On the other hand, conventionally powered submarines are invariably smaller and far cheaper to produce than their nuclear-powered counterparts. The latest AIP types also offer some capabilities that are similar to those of nuclear-powered attack submarines, albeit to a limited degree and only in certain ways. Notably, using lithium-ion batteries can provide extreme submerged endurance and very quiet operation and they are becoming an area of growing interest.

For China, specifically, a submarine small enough to operate with ease in littoral and shallower waters would be of huge interest. These points are of key importance for future contingencies in the South China Sea, or the Taiwan Strait, for example. Providing a smaller submarine with auxiliary nuclear propulsion, allowing it to remain at sea for an almost unlimited period, as well as for more extended periods submerged, would be better still.

There is also the possibility that the Type 041 may combine its micro-nuclear reactor with lithium-ion batteries, meaning they can remain charged while fully submerged as needed, which would be a hugely significant development. Normally, a submarine with lithium-ion batteries needs to snorkel for charging, while the fuel cell is range-limited. An onboard nuclear generator could solve those issues.

Meanwhile, putting these capabilities into a smaller hull should reduce costs and better contribute to the PLAN's fast-growing submarine force.

Size-wise, the Type 041 is reportedly around ten percent longer than earlier attack submarines—like the Type 039A. The Type 039A is around 250 feet long, compared with around 360 feet for the Type 093 nuclear-powered attack submarine. This would make the Type 041 notably smaller and easier to move around than an SSN, while also making it suitable for construction at Wuchang Shipyard, which has previously not been used to build nuclear-powered submarines.

At this stage, it's not obvious whether the Type 041 is intended for series production or if it's more of a testbed to trial novel systems.

We also know that it features an X-shaped stern. As we have discussed in the past, this feature is designed for improved maneuverability, efficiency, and safety, and also helps reduce the acoustic signature across significant parts of the submarine's operating envelope. It would also appear to be optimized for operations in littoral and shallower waters.

Whatever the plans for the Type 041, there's also the fact

that the first of these boats sunk, according to U.S. defense officials, raising questions about the status of the program and whether the boat is even salvageable.

Citing unnamed U.S. officials, a report in *The Wall Street Journal* on September 26 describes the attempt by the Chinese authorities to cover up the accident, involving a submarine “likely” carrying nuclear fuel when it sank. The boat had reportedly been undergoing its final fitting out before going to sea.

There were no details provided about possible casualties in the accident, the possibility of which was first raised by Tom Shugart, an adjunct senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) think tank and a retired U.S. Navy submarine warfare officer, who identified unusual activity at the Wuchang Shipyard in June of this year.

TWZ also examined satellite imagery showing the sudden appearance of four crane barges at the shipyard, as well as the disappearance of a sub that had previously been in the berth.

With the help of those four cranes, the submarine is said to have been salvaged, but getting it operational again will not be straightforward, with its internal spaces likely having filled with water, requiring the replacement of all the electronics and other systems.

Chinese authorities have not commented on the incident and are unlikely to, especially since the submarine in question is a new design and one that incorporates several advanced—and possibly even unique—features.

However, as more details about the Type 041 emerge, they shed light on the highly interesting nature of China's submarine development program.

On the one hand, the apparent sinking of the new submarine underlines questions that have been raised in the past about safety and quality control practices in Chinese shipbuilding.

On the other hand, there's no doubt that the expansion of the PLAN's fleet, both surface and sub-surface, is progressing very rapidly, even when it comes to large and/or complex vessels. With the latter point in mind, the Type 041 also seems to point to China's willingness to explore new and advanced technologies as it seeks to field submarines that are best optimized for its requirements, including in terms of operating around the South China Sea, Taiwan, and other potential flashpoints in littoral and shallower waters.

Contact the author: thomas@thewarzone.com.

Sub Gets Top Award for Three Intel Missions

(concluded from page 1)

No other information was provided by the service. Navy officials told Military.com on Tuesday that “due to the sensitive nature of the deployment, no other details are available.”

The sub left its homeport of Norfolk, Virginia, in May 2023 and returned in mid-December 2023. The Sixth Fleet oversees operations in the waters of Europe, and its website shows that its area of responsibility “covers all of Russia.” The Navy statement notes that the boat made port visits in Faslane, Scotland—a town north of Glasgow—and Grottsund, a town located on the northern tip of Norway.

The crew was also awarded the newly announced Arctic Service Medal “in recognition of the “Blackfish’s” exceptional service and dedication during operations in the strategic Arctic region.”

The statement suggests that the sub had to loiter in the waters in the Sixth Fleet area of responsibility for exceptionally long periods of time. It praises “the crew’s superb planning, discipline, and material management [that] ensured the submarine remained on task through long periods without readily accessible support.”

The *Washington* “garnered more days on station than any East Coast deployment on record,” the Navy’s statement added.

Vice Adm. Rob Gaucher, commander of the Navy’s submarine forces, called the Presidential Unit Citation “a profound honor, signifying the crew’s exceptional dedication and strategic impact.”

“Their work in challenging, high-risk environments completing vital national-level missions demonstrates the key role our submarines play in ensuring maritime security and global stability,” Gaucher added.

The Navy’s silent service has a quiet tradition of espionage and intelligence work that will occasionally bubble into public view when a boat receives a prestigious award like the Presidential Unit Citation.

Before the *Washington*, it appears that the last submarine in recent memory to publicly receive a similar honor was the *Seawolf*-class submarine USS *Jimmy Carter*, more than a decade ago.

The *Carter* is somewhat famous in Navy circles for having an aura of secrecy about the ship and its missions,

as well as just what its capabilities actually are.

In 2013, the *Carter* and her crew were awarded the presidential citation for conducting what is only known as “Mission 7.” According to the award citation, the ship “performed under a wide range of adverse and extremely stressful conditions without external support,” adding that “this deployment continued USS *Jimmy Carter*’s tradition of excellence in pursuit of vital national security goals.”

Carter’s submarine predecessor was the USS *Parche*—widely considered to be the most decorated vessel in U.S. naval history.

Among that submarine’s achievements, according to the authors of the book *Blind Man’s Bluff*, was successfully tapping into Soviet underwater military communication cables in the Sea of Okhotsk as part of a joint CIA and National Security Agency mission called Operation Ivy Bells.

Sherry Sontag and Christopher Drew, the authors of *Blind Man’s Bluff*, wrote that the mission to the Sea of Okhotsk was actually a trial of sorts for *Parche*—“to prove herself before anyone dared to send her to that other, far more dangerous sea.”

The book explains that, after the submarine was successful in the Pacific, she was sent to the far more crowded and dangerous Barents Sea where, in order to stay hidden, the submarine moved under the Arctic ice before making her way into congested shipping lanes.

Based on the *Washington*’s port calls and Arctic award, it appears that the ship operated in the same area for at least some of its deployment.

By the time *Parche* was decommissioned, she had amassed a staggering ten Presidential Unit Citations, nine Navy Unit Citations, and thirteen Expeditionary Awards, among other honors.

According to the Navy’s statement, the *Washington*’s crew was presented their citation by outgoing commander Capt. Timothy Poe at his change of command ceremony on July 19 at Naval Station Norfolk.

Konstantin Toropin is a reporter for Military.com, where he serves as the publication’s Pentagon correspondent while also specializing in coverage of the Navy. He is a Navy veteran, having served five years in the surface fleet as a signals intelligence analyst. Prior to joining Military.com, he covered breaking national news for CNN.

Fair Winds and Following Seas

by Bob “Dex” Armstrong

Gentlemen, I did my damndest to be conciliatory. I figured that you would make allowances for the ravings of a lunatic. Stone should have posted a warning stating that the “SURGEON GENERAL HAD DETERMINED THAT NUCLEAR POWER SAILORS WOULD GET HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE AND MAJOR HEARTBURN.”

I now remember the major problem I had with the moonbeam navy: arrogance. When a certain individual on Ron’s BBS tied my dislike of nukes to disrespect for the loss of fifty-two boats in WWII, I got caught up in the same crap I waded around in as a youngster. I am not numbered among the brightest of the species, but the stretch of *that* linkage was a real mind-boggler.

I rode diesel boats. They are all I know. For a variety of reasons—a number probably childish in retrospect, especially looking back over a forty-year span—I never really connected my service with anything involving generations beyond *Harder, Darter, Trigger, and Trout*. I was not alone; we all felt that way. I say “all” meaning all the guys I ran with.

Case in point. Early ’60s. Before *Thresher* went down. Submarine birthday dinner somewhere on NOB. Vice Admiral Elton W. Grenfell, SUBLANT—big Pacific war skipper and great gentlemen. Tickets are big bucks for non-rated men to pony up. We went—full dress canvas—looking like we’d just crawled off a “JOIN THE NAVY” recruiting poster. We even behaved ourselves!

Admiral Grenfell takes the mic, welcomes us, and begins: “It has been a wonderful year for our nuclear navy...”

COB gets up, chugs his drink, says, “Boys, we’ve bought tickets to a nuke pep rally. Anyone wants to join me, I’ll be at Bells tossing down a few in remembrance of the Great Year in the Ping Time Boats.”

Smoke boat sailors drifted out in twos and threes. In ten minutes, there were a helluva lot of empty chairs. Recognizing that public focus was rightly on achievements like the quantum leaps we were making in submarine technology didn’t really make it much easier to take. The family was celebrating before their ancestral element was dead. So we banded together, did our

diesel boat stuff, and divorced ourselves from whatever was going on in parts of the force where we didn’t really belong. I was not alone: somebody out there left an empty chair that night because Bells was packed with a lot of well-dressed sailors up until closing time. We sang the Gitmo song, drank beer, and yelled, “Still answering bells on the battery...four hundred feet, five down.”

My stories were for those lads—pure and simple. They have nothing to do with denigrating the memory of the brave men who paid the ultimate price in the Pacific. I will always burn candles in the altar of my heart to the members of those fine and noble ships. They gave me the legacy we held sacred. They put the meaning in my dolphins.

My stories reflect the myopic view of a lad who rode the worn-out boats they left us. They portray a time when we cannibalized retiring ships for hatch gaskets and anything else no longer available in the supply pipeline—the stuff essential to keeping us going. And we went... month after month: Target time. Out and down. Snorkel time. We did it all and did it well. Inside my little slice of submarine service pie I got to sail with some really good men and will be eternally grateful for that. We got no “Answering bells on the battery dead air run” pins. No “Get out of jail free” cards. No “Look at me, Mom” attention. That’s whining—and hell, we can only whine to folks who did it. But we can also laugh. We *always* laughed. Like a guy who gets his tallywhacker caught in his zipper—it hurts like hell but it’s really funny!

I loved—and still love—my submarine service. Hell, I don’t have a clue about the dead serious, highly professional, technocratic force of today. I relate to the “happy-go-lucky” force of yesteryear. It ran on beer and bunker oil and left antler marks on every tree in the forest.

Gringo remembers. Cowboy remembers. Sid Harrison remembers. Doc and the magnificent RamJet sure as hell remember. And God knows Stone was there. For a time, there was another “Camelot” where men danced with the devil and pissed against the wind.

Keep a zero bubble... Dex.



New Members

We proudly welcome aboard:

Brian M. Senior, Life Member
(EM1-SS E6—Petty Officer 1st Class)
Son of the Seniors; Spouse: Tamar
2015 Windmill Lane
Alexandria, VA 22307-1951
cell: 202-594-2050
email: briansenior@hotmail.com
Served '82-'94; qual'd on *Silversides*
(SSN-679) in '86; Nuc Operator;
in Navy Reserves 1990-1994.

Kathleen A. Carder
Associate; Significant Other of
Bill Moak; sponsor: Ray Teare
2865 Helm Street
Simi Valley, CA 93065-5257
cell: 662-335-5602
e: KathleenCarder@Outlook.com
Is now our new Sunshine Gal!

David "Dave" Geske
(ICC-SS) E-7 Chief Petty Officer)
Spouse: Evelyn
4567 Pennyroyal Drive
Corona, CA 92878-3283
cell: 801-889-0178
email: dave.geske@outlook.com
Served '75-'86; qualified on *Thomas Jefferson* (SSBN-618) in '77. Also
aboard *Ohio* (SSBN-726) '79-'82.

Charles B. "Charlie" McCarthy, Jr.
(LCDR - 04 - LCDR) Spouse: Anita
19068 Shadow Ridge Lane
Yorba Linda, CA 92886-2763
cell: 714-720-3837
email: cbmatylca@aol.com
Qualified in 1966 on *Geo. Bancroft*
(SSBN-643); served 1959-1976.
Former M.A.L.; docent, *USS Iowa*.

Laurie Ann Mabry
Associate; niece of Shipwreck
Kelly; sponsor: Ron Jones
Spouse: Harry
5923 Mildred Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4631
cell: 714-309-2367
laurieannmabry7082@gmail.com

Kelly Van Wagner
Associate; niece of Shipwreck
Kelly; sponsor: Stan Westrick
Spouse: Bill
20244 Septo Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311-3947
cell: 818-497-0988
email: kellyjvw@hotmail.com



"Get'cher Chapter News Here
— Read All About It! —"

When News Breaks, We Pick Up the Pieces...



A few Yule Luncheon shots for you, courtesy of Darin Detwiler. Another festive bash!

Binnacle List

Keep these shipmates in your thoughts; better yet, get in touch!

- **Sam Aboulafia** is in hospice care & would welcome contact.
cell: 702-274-7256
email: boomersam5@gmail.com
c/o C.W. Young Veterans Hospital
10000 Bay Pines Ave.
Hospice Unit #G-28
Bay Pines, FL 33447-8200

- **Charlie McCarthy's wife Anita** is undergoing neuro-logical and cardiological tests as she recovers from a recent bad fall. Please keep this couple in your thoughts and/or contact them at:
cell: 714-720-3837
email: cbmatylca@aol.com
We all wish Anita a speedy recovery!

- **Dave Semrau** is recovering from recent eye surgery. Contact him with your good wishes at:
cell: 949-589-7777
email: ssbnsubron14@gmail.com
May Dave be tracking targets through the attack 'scope again soon!



Harold Staggs 8/26/1924—10/11/2024 Memorial Service: 1-15-25

We've been informed by Gordon Staggs that Harold's Eternal Patrol Memorial Service will take place on **Wednesday, January 15, 2025 at 11:00 am at the Riverside National Cemetery, 22495 Van Buren Blvd., Riverside, CA 92518.** Navy Chaplain Carolyn Flanders will be performing the service. We hope there'll be a large gathering for our fallen shipmate. Harold will now be joining his wife, Kathryn Pearl Staggs, who predeceased him on December 29, 2016.



John P. Holland

L.A.-Pasadena Base 50-Year Holland Club

(75-year members noted with *)

Scott Hultner.....	2024
Stanley O. Westrick.....	2024
Ronald R. Jones.....	2023
Gerard A. Krudwig.....	2022
Gregory M. Paulson.....	2022
Michael J. Swanson.....	2022
Ralph J. Hansen.....	2021
Robert F. Schive, Sr.....	2021
Larry D. Long.....	2021
G. Judson "Jud" Scott, Jr....	2021
Edward E. Kushins.....	2020
Bruce Evan Neighbors.....	2020
David H. Vanderveen.....	2019
Dennis Bott.....	2018
Robert "Mike" Cailor.....	2018
Robert Miller.....	2018
John A. Anderson.....	2017
Roger C. Dunham, MD ...	2017
Richard McPherson.....	2017
Harry "Bill" Moak.....	2017
Louis A. Myerson.....	2017
Elliot Rada.....	2017
Ronald G. Wagner.....	2017
Dennis J. Walsh.....	2017
Michael Kish.....	2016
Charles B. McCarthy, Jr....	2016
Gary Wheaton.....	2016

(concluded next page)



Los Angeles-Pasadena Base 2025 Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 18:	Monthly Meeting at Taco Surf, Los Alamitos
February 15:	Monthly Meeting
March 15	Monthly Meeting - "Spring Fling"
April 19	Monthly Meeting Call for Memorial Day Prep Volunteers
May 17	Field Day at the Memorial Site - 0900 Monthly Meeting Nominating Committee Appointed Call for participants in the Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade
May 24	Field Day at the Memorial Site - 0900
May 26	Memorial Day Service - 1100 Submarine Memorial, West
June 21	Monthly Meeting - Annual "Steakfest" Call for nominations for 2026 Base Officers
July 4	116th Annual... Huntington Beach 4th of July Parade
July 19	LeRoy Stone Memorial Picnic Location TBA
August 16	Monthly Meeting - "Hawaii" Theme 2026 Base Officer Candidates Announced
September 20	ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING Election of Officers
October 18	Monthly Meeting Annual Officer Installation Luncheon
November 15	Monthly Meeting - Thanksgiving Theme
December 20	Annual Christmas Luncheon at the Los Alamitos Golf Course

(Holland Club Roster, concluded)

Lawrence R. Butler	2015
Samuel T. Higa	2015
Harry P. Ross	2015
Charles H. Senior	2015
Larry E. Smith	2015
Sam Aboulafia	2014
David Palagyi	2014
Earl Thomas Peratt, Jr.	2014
David D. Semrau, DDS	2014
Ray Tracy Teare	2014
Milton Harry Boudov	2013
Kenneth Jon Dorn	2013
M. Mark Hoffer	2013
Michael P. Klein	2013
Ronald L. Levenson	2013
Edward L. Arnold	2012
T. Michael Bircumshaw ...	2012
Raymond Cheesebrough .	2012
John V. Mahan	2012
Lee Melody	2012
Clyde Matthew Turner	2012
George R. Walrath	2012
John L. Weisenberger	2012
Edward A. Barwick	2011
Joseph W. Koch, Jr.	2011
Stephen D. Diumentì	2009
David Whittlesey	2009
Dennis A. Yure	2009
Armen Bagdasarian	2008
Paul A. Riggs	2008
Rex L. Shields	2008
Francis R. Traser	2006
Ronald K. Thompson	2004
James Rogers	2003
*James E. Carter	1999
*William F. Long	1999
*Kenneth E. Chunn	1998
*Patrick Zilliacus.	1994
*William J. Dillon	1993

U.S. Falls Behind China in Submarine Production

(From the BulgarianMilitary.com website, published October 13, 2024 - by Alexy Lenkov)

As geopolitical tensions escalate and China's naval capabilities continue to grow, the U.S. Navy finds itself facing mounting challenges to its once-unquestioned dominance at sea. Historically, the U.S. maintained a clear advantage, but that edge is now being steadily undermined—not only by China but also by other rising competitors, both in terms of fleet size and technological sophistication.

One of the most glaring disparities between the U.S. and China is in shipbuilding capacity. For years, experts have been raising the alarm about this growing gap. Chinese shipyards now outpace America's by an astonishing 232-to-1 ratio. This discrepancy isn't limited to surface ships—an area where China's rapid expansion has been well documented—but extends to submarines, a critical asset for maintaining naval superiority.

China's shipbuilding power isn't just about quantity—it's also about speed and innovation. While the U.S. has prided itself on advanced naval technologies, China is quickly narrowing that gap, producing not only more ships but also increasingly sophisticated ones.

Retired U.S. Navy Captain Jerry Hendrix has been vocal about another pressing issue: the slowing pace of U.S. submarine production. "Submarine production has dropped from two per year to just over one," Hendrix remarked, emphasizing that this comes at a time when production should be accelerating. The Navy's thirty-year shipbuilding plan calls for three fast-attack submarines and one ballistic missile submarine annually, a pace far from being met. This production shortfall is occurring just as global threats are becoming more complex, making the need to bolster the U.S. submarine fleet even more urgent.

Submarines are one of the Navy's most strategic assets. Falling behind in their production could leave the U.S. vulnerable in future conflicts, particularly in contested regions where control of undersea domains could determine the outcome.

The problem is occurring amid broader concerns about the U.S. submarine program. In September, Representative Ken Calvert called the situation a "crisis," citing a staggering \$17 billion budget overrun and construction delays of up to three years in key submarine programs. "Without significant intervention, I have zero confidence that Navy shipbuilding will get back on track," Calvert warned, expressing frustration with the Navy's leadership for not being transparent about the scope of the challenges. According to Calvert, the Navy's plans to fix the problem are, at best, "aspirational"—a concerning assessment given the gravity of the situation.

Calvert's concerns echo those of other lawmakers, defense officials, and military analysts who have expressed similar apprehensions about the state of America's submarine capabilities. To address these growing challenges, the U.S. Navy will need more than just increased shipbuilding capacity—it will require a holistic overhaul of its naval strategy. One area that deserves more attention is unmanned and autonomous underwater vehicles [UUVs]. These cutting-edge systems could supplement the existing submarine fleet, providing additional surveillance and combat capabilities without the same production and maintenance constraints.

Additionally, closer partnerships with allied nations, such as Australia, Japan, and NATO members, could help distribute the burden of maintaining a strong naval presence in key regions. Joint submarine development programs, shared technological innovations, and coordinated patrols could serve as force multipliers, ensuring that the U.S. and its allies can collectively counter rising naval threats.

Ultimately, the U.S. must prioritize investment in both traditional shipbuilding and new, disruptive technologies if it hopes to maintain its naval dominance in the 21st century. The challenges are immense, but so too are the stakes.

2025 United States Submarine Veterans Calendar

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USS NORTH CAROLINA (SSN 777)
USS *North Carolina* (SSN 776), the second of four Block I submarines, joined the fleet in February 2006, after problems with the boat's steam valve and internal piping system had forced two delays in the acceptance of the vessel. The boat has physical connections to four previous ships named *North Carolina*. Sections of the task deck from USS *North Carolina* (BB 55), a fast battleship that served in World War II, are reused within the submarine, and several pieces from a silver serving set made for USS *North Carolina* (ACR 12), a World War I-era armored cruiser, transferred through the state governor to the battleship will be used aboard the submarine.

March 2025

(Eight submarines and 422 men lost)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

February	March	April	May	June	July
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Proceeds to benefit USSVI operations and projects.

A Gathering of Submariners

March 6-9, 2025



Western Region Roundup

aboard the historic Queen Mary in Long Beach, California

www.wroundup.com

*In memory
of the
fifty-two
submarines
lost in
World War II*

SEALION
S-36
S-26
SHARK I
PERCH
S-27
GRUNION
S-39
ARGONAUT
AMBERJACK
GRAMPUS
TRITON
PICKEREL
GRENADIER
RUNNER
R-12
GRAYLING
POMPANO
CISCO
S-44
DORADO
WAHOO

CORVINA
SCULPIN
CAPELIN
SCORPION
GRAYBACK
TROUT
TULLIBEE
GUDGEON
HERRING
GOLET
S-28
ROBALO
FLIER
HARDER
SEAWOLF
DARTER
SHARK II
TANG
ESCOLAR
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GROWLER

SCAMP
SWORDFISH
BARBEL
KETE
TRIGGER
SNOOK
LAGARTO
BONEFISH
BULLHEAD

