

Arizona Sub Vets Perch Base



Midwatch

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Arizona Sub Vets, Perch Base Officers

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January Eternal Patrol Days

January 4, 1945 USS Barbel (SS316) All Hands Lost
January 11, 1942 USS Shark I (SS174) All Hands Lost
January 16, 1943 USS Amberjack (SS219) All Hands Lost
January 26, 1944 USS Grayback (SS208) All Hands Lost
January 28, 1944 USS Trout, (SS202) All Hands Lost

Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

Range and Bearings



It's been quite some time since the last newsletter, and for that I apologize. Through a series of circumstances, my life has been fuller than I anticipated. More balls in the air than I could handle and the newsletter was a casualty.

The Western Regional Conference was a success and for that, both Perch Base and I owe a debt of gratitude to all hands that were involved. The various newsletters from around the western region echoed the same kind words and Bravo Zulus to Perch Base for their hospitality. The meeting was as well attended as any I've been to and several good issues were discussed. It remains to be seen if any of the resolutions are acted upon by National.

Sherry Sontag, one of the co-authors of the hot new book "Blind Man's Bluff", the story of submarine espionage during the Cold War, flew in for the meeting and gave a presentation and book signing. If you haven't read it yet, I urge you to get it and enjoy. It's exciting and informative, even though most of us "were there". The "bigger picture" is presented; the one that most of us were not privy to.

As 1998 draws to a close, I look back on Perch Base's accomplishments and/or lack thereof. Through your efforts, we've expanded our roster by about a third (I don't have the exact figures in front of me). We've healed the rift between the WWII Vets and ourselves, at least to the point that we can hold joint memorial ceremonies, and we've successfully hosted a regional function. Not bad. We have yet to find the formula for greater attendance/participation in our meetings and functions. Lethargy, I think, is the word I'm looking for. I didn't get the 800 phone line that I had intended to. It just wasn't in the budget, perhaps that's a project that we can accomplish in the near future. All things considered, 1998 was not a bad year.

In closing, I'd like to wish all hands, and your loved ones, a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy and prosperous 1999.

Zero Bubble,

Rummy

Meeting Notice

The regular membership meeting will be held Saturday January 9, 1999 at the DAV Post #20, 8447 North 61st Ave., Glendale. That's between Northern and Dunlap/Olive. An E-board meeting will convene at 1200 followed by the membership meeting at 1300.

Booster Club

Mike Breitner, Joe Bernard, Wayne "Brad" Braastad, Bill "Sally" Hatcher, Steve Hough, Larry Kreiger, Bill McNay, Paul Miller, Roger Miller, Bob

Mitchell, Bob Moore, Jim Nelson, Jim Newman, Bob Ochoa, Tom Patterson, Royce Pettit, John Redding, Frank Rumbaugh, Joe Schwartz, Tyler Smith, Adrian Stuke, Bob Wonsley and Joe Otreba., Scott Beazley, Bob Wonsley, Earl Crowley, George Sara, Jim Newman, Jim Nelson and Charles & Sonny Greene, Roger Cousin, Layne Rumbaugh. Recent Booster Club doners: Billy Grieves, Bob May, Jim Newman, Jim Nelson, Charlie Marin (San Diego Base), John Flynn (Bullhead Base), Roger Cousin.

Thank your for your generosity.

Nominations

Nominations were opened at the December meeting for all officers of Perch Base. Balloting will be at the February meeting (2/13/99) and nominations will remain open until balloting. Nominations can be submitted to any Perch Base E-Board member or from the floor at our regular business meetings. To date nominations have been accepted for the following:

Base Commander: **Brian Thomason**
Base Vice Commander: **Roger Cousin**
Base Secretary: **Carl Scott**
Base Treasurer: **Bob May**

All nominees have agreed to serve if elected. The new slate of officers will be sworn in at the March business meeting.

Halibut; K-129 and Gary Patterson

"About a year and a half ago, Dr. Roger Dunham had the book 'Spy Sub' published by the Naval Institute Press. Roger was my leading 1st Class reactor operator on the **Halibut** and his book is mainly the story of two spec. op. patrols we made together on the **Halibut SSN587** in 1968. He was unable to publish the book until after the cold war ended due to the highly classified nature of these patrols and extreme sensitivity in our relations with the former Soviet Union. By this, I mean he was threatened with prosecution and jail if he revealed any part of our mission objectives or what we accomplished.

Over the last 5 or 6 years, I helped him put the book together by filling him in on many details that were fuzzy in his memory, constantly reminding him of the security ramifications of what he could and could not reveal.

After the Cold War ended, the classification of some operations was reduced somewhat and he pressed on for publication of the book. He was finally given permission with the condition that he change the name of the boat and names of all the crew. Now this doesn't make much sense because the actual photographs in the book are of the **Halibut** (one-of-a-kind) and of the real crew members, so not too many people were fooled by this maneuver.

Halibut was a "Super-Spook" boat and had

deep ocean technology on board that was highly classified and very few people knew we had the capability to locate objects in very deep water. We located and got photographs of the Soviet missile boat, K-129, that had sunk in 20,000 feet of water with all hands northwest of Midway Island earlier in the year. After marking the location with transponders, the Howard Hughes Glomar Explorer was dispatched to the site and actually retrieved most of the boat, including missiles, which was the primary objective. The Glomar Explorer is the continuing episode in another book titled 'The Jennifer Project'.

The families of the K-129 had never been told anything by the Soviet government of the demise of their husbands and sons. They only knew that they went to sea one day and never returned. Roger's book changed all of that when it reached Europe and Russia and they started putting all the pieces together.

The Russian government and the families of lost Soviet submarine crews during the Cold War are hosting a memorial service in St. Petersburg, Russia on September 29 for the K-129 crew as well as for American submarines lost; **Thresher** and **Scorpion**.

I have been invited to attend, along with 25 or so of the **Halibut** crew and their wives. The families of the K-129 want to meet us and I'm not too sure at this point what the topic of conversation will be. I guess I'll have to take off the war bonnet and put on my diplomatic hat for this one.

I'll put together a short report on the trip for you when I get back.

Gary Patterson, Prescott

Gary has attended and returned from the Memorial Service for the K-129 crew in St. Petersburg, Russia and a report will be forthcoming in the next issue.

"Cramped Seawolf impresses crew with stealth, speed."

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The newest attack submarine in the Navy, the **Seawolf (SSN21)**, has been impressing its officers and crew with its silence and speed.

Navy News went on a tour of the submarine as it sat off of the Maryland shore here in Chesapeake Bay. The boat's commanding officer, **Cdr. Mike Connor**, said the **Seawolf** represents the technological high-end of the submarine fleet, and should do so throughout the first half of its 30- to 40 year life.

The ship is the first of three Seawolf-class SSNs. The second, **Connecticut (SSN22)**, is under construction at Electric Boat, Groton, Conn. The third in the class has yet to begin construction.

The **Seawolf** is in the middle of its testing regimen, which will continue through the end of next summer, when it will go through post-shakedown,

Connor said. Its first operational deployment is expected around 1999 or 2000.

One of the ship's greatest assets, according to its officers, is its stealth capabilities. The ship is extremely quiet, and has a low-sonar signature, making detection very difficult, said **Lt. Mark Perreault**, assistant weapons officer.

During acoustic trials, said **Senior Chief Jeff Rowe**, the crew detected unfamiliar sounds that, upon closer inspection, turned out to be noise that would be dismissed as background noise on other subs.

Sounds generated by equipment from within the ship - such as rattling coffee pots - which other subs would not have detected, could be heard in the **Seawolf** due to its silence, he said.

Not only is it a quiet ship, **Perreault** said, but it can maintain that silence even at high speeds. **Connor** noted one of the ship's advantages is its ability to get on station faster than others subs. Its top-end and tactical speeds are better than the improved 688-class subs, he said, though he declined to specify those speeds.

The ship's weapons systems are improved over the previous class, and it carries two-and-a-half times the weapons load, **Perreault** said. The torpedo room, certainly the largest room in the forward half of the sub, supports eight tubes.

Loading is via a hydraulic system that inserts the torpedoes into the launching tubes. The tubes face outboard, **Perreault** said, so that once fired, the torpedoes move away from the sub.

The tubes are capable of launching Tomahawk cruise missiles as well, he said. The ship's weapons inventory also includes mines and Harpoon anti-ship missiles.

One of the many uses for computers on the **Seawolf** is inventory management, which can be monitored from a computerized map display. It also allows the crew to move the weapons by pressing the touch-screen.

The ship has roughly the same ratio of commercial, off-the-shelf (COTS) technology to Mil-Spec tech as the Los Angeles-class, **Connor** said. One of the challenges for **Seawolf**, he noted, will be its ability to keep up with new computer systems in the commercial sector.

The ship has reduced many of the paper manuals thanks to a Local Area Network. Many items are now on CD ROM, he said.

The fire control is paperless, which **Connor** said has improved performance. Rather than having to get updated with paper printouts, he said, he can look at monitors from his cabin and monitor the shipboard status. This has made decision-making quicker.

COTS tech helps the **Seawolf** keep a low profile. The ship has two radar systems, **Perreault** explained, one Mil-Spec and the other COTS. The COTS unit, while not as good as its military counterpart, offers the ship an alternative to avoid detection when its military radar

becomes recognizable.

Other systems also rely on redundancy between COTS and Mil-Spec items. The ship maintains one of each type of Global Positioning System sets, using the COTS model as back-up.

Moving through the weapons shipping hatch, visitors get an idea of the cramped conditions on board the submarine. Fitting new computer equipment into a hull 353 feet long means reduced walking space, less than on the sub-class' predecessor, **Perreault** said.

Many of the small offices in the ship are designed for more than one function. The medical corpsman, occupying a room the size of a walk-in closet, shares his space with the internal auxiliary launcher, a tube used to launch messages to the surface.

Crew space is also cramped. The torpedo room acts as a sleeping area for some of the 130 member crew when necessary, **Perreault** said.

Connor, while praising the technological capability on his ship, said he would have preferred it if a little more money had been spent on quality-of-life items. But it's a sub.

Scorpion (Scrapiron) cont.....

After rejecting this scenario, the court similarly discounted sabotage, a collision with an undersea mountain, a nuclear accident, structural failure, a fire, an irrational act by a crew member, loss of navigational control and with far less certainty, a weapons accident. Although it found no direct evidence that one of the submarine's own torpedoes had exploded, the court noted that on 5 December 1967 the **Scorpion** had confronted an accidentally activated Mark 37 torpedo in one of her firing tubes and had sidestepped disaster by expelling the torpedo before it could detonate. In May 1968, the **Scorpion** had 14 Mark 37's in an arsenal that included two Mark 45 Astor torpedoes with nuclear warheads and 7 other conventional projectiles.

She also had a new commander. When he took over on 17 October 1967, **Commander Francis Atwood Slattery** was 36 years old. A former executive office of the **Nautilus (SSN571)**, he was among a small cadre tapped for elite nuclear-propelled submarine duty.

His inexperience showed in December when Navy inspectors gave the **Scorpion** an unsatisfactory rating after she failed casualty drills involving her nuclear torpedoes and again in January when she engaged in an advanced submarine-against-submarine exercise and received the lowest tactical grade of all participants. Nevertheless, by the time she deployed to the Mediterranean in February 1968, the Navy rated her fully ready, and by March she was praised by the Sixth Fleet Command Staff for being a well trained, well run submarine. By April, seven of her 12 offices and 61 of her 87 enlisted men were fully qualified in submarines, and the court found no grounds to blame any of her men for what happened on 22 May.

In early November, **Admiral Austin** asked a

special technical advisory group, comprised of scientists and veteran submariners, to pore over the newly discovered physical evidence. **Admiral Thomas Moorer**, the Chief of Naval Operations, earlier had created this group to provide technical expertise to the court. Headed by **Dr. John Craven** and assisted by the Naval Research Laboratory, the technical experts first examined the acoustical recordings and made a startling discovery: the **Scorpion** had been heading East, instead of West toward Norfolk when the first cataclysmic explosion detonated. The advisors estimated that the first sound to register on SOSUS had been caused by at least 30 pounds of TNT, exploding 60 feet or more below the surface, and theorized that the **Scorpion** had been in a hastily ordered U-turn in a desperate attempt to disarm a hot-run torpedo that exploded and caused uncontrollable flooding. In an article published in The Virginian-Pilot & Ledger-Star, **Craven** indicated that the hot-run scenario was the only one that fit all the evidence.

Craven also related that the photographs indicated the **Scorpion's** torpedo room was still intact and had not been crushed by water pressure. In that interview, **Craven** said he believed the torpedo room did not implode, pointing out that it was the first part of the **Scorpion** to flood after the explosion and already had filled with water when the submarine began to sink. Noting the absence of visible damage from outside the hull, he added that a torpedo probably detonated inside the compartment instead of in one of the submarine's six firing tubes.

Craven also noted that the photographs showed several access hatches open to the torpedo room. This meant probably that they were pushed out by internal pressure. The other SOSUS recordings were sounds of the **Scorpion's** various compartments collapsing and buckling as she sank below her crush depth and slammed into the ocean floor at approximately 25 to 35 knots.

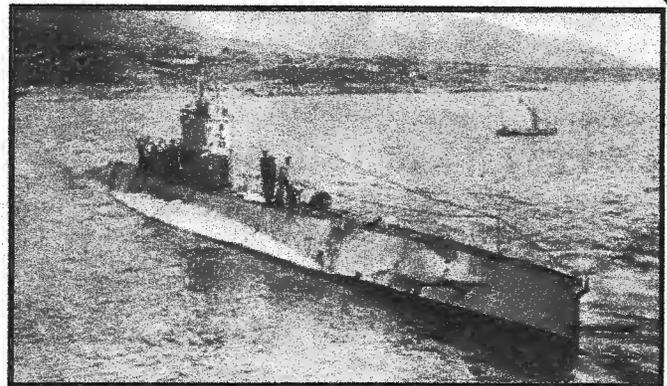
Although the court discovered that **Admiral Schade's** 20 May operational order did not specify whether the **Scorpion's** torpedoes were to be fully armed, it seems likely that **Commander Slattery** would have ordered them ready as she approached the Soviet ships. The court speculated that the **Scorpion** probably had begun disarming her torpedoes by the time she broadcast her final message on the evening of 21 May because of the Navy's strict policy forbidding submarines from entering Norfolk with fully armed warheads. If so, the investigators theorized that something as simple as a short in a piece of testing equipment accidentally could have activated one of the Mark 37's batteries and triggered a hot run. Left with only seconds to react, **Commander Slattery** would have ordered the **Scorpion** into the abrupt u-turn she was making when the torpedo exploded.

Almost immediately, the Navy's Bureau of Weapons challenged the hot-run theory and commissioned its own study to undermine it. **Admiral**

P. Ephriam Holmes, Commander-in Chief, Atlantic Fleet, and **Vice Admiral Schade** supported the bureau's position. Both pointed out that no torpedo damage to the **Scorpion's** hull was visible in photographs, that her weapons room showed no signs of a cataclysmic explosion that would have followed as the warship's torpedoes erupted in a massive chain reaction, and that her torpedo firing tubes were not deformed. Moreover, former crew members were unable to identify any objects for her torpedo room in the debris field.

Admiral Schade told the court that he believed the **Scorpion** simply was lost after she flooded and sank below her designed operating capacity. Although unsure of how the flooding started, he speculated that it happened while the submarine was at 60 feet, periscope depth, and that she already was full of water by the time she began to sink. In a letter to **Admiral Austin**, he wrote that he believed the most likely cause of the disaster to be an accident involving the submarine's trash disposal unit.

..... *to be continued*



USS L-11 (SS51)

Displacement - 450 tons surf., 548 tons subm.
 Length - 167', Beam 17.5'
 Speed - 14 knots surfaced, 10.5 knots submerged
 Armament - 1-3" MkIX forward
 Four 18" torpedo tubes forward
 Compliment - 2 Officers, 26 Enlisted men
 Class - L

Keel laid down by Fore River Shipbuilding-
 --Quincy, MA 17Feb15
 Launched: 16May16; Sponsored by-
 --**Miss Mary Latimer**
 Commissioned: 15Aug16 with-
 --**Lt Worrall R. Carter** in command
 Decommissioned and sold for scrapping 28Nov23

CineNova's TV production about nuclear submarines in the Cold War is now scheduled for broadcast in the United States on the Discovery Channel. The program will be aired on January 4th in Prime Time as the premiere of a program new, nightly feature on Discovery: "On The Inside." The submarine show is an in-depth look at secret, and sometimes dangerous submarine missions of the Cold War.

The first hour is dedicated to the well-known story of K-219, a Soviet Yankee which sank off Bermuda in 1986. In the program, an interview with the captain and crew of K-219 sets the story straight as we discover what really happened on board the Soviet 'boomer'. Other interviews with U.S. Navy Intelligence officers and with the skipper of the tug sent to assist the Soviets provide an American perspective. This is the "adventure" hour. A guaranteed pleaser for action-documentary submarine fans.

The second hour in about the loss of two submarines in 1968, the **USS Scorpion** and the Soviet K-129. In the cas of **Scorpion**, the show steers clear of the controversial theories surrounding the sub's disappearance. Instead, it focuses on **Scorpion's** career as an attack sub and reconstructs the events of her last

Assigned to the Atlantic Submarine Flotilla, **USS L-11 (SS-51)** operated along the east coast of the United States developing new techniques of undersea warfare until the United States became an active participant in the First World War during April of 1917. After America's entry into World War I, submarines were needed to protect allied shipping lanes between North America and Europe from enemy German surface raiders and submarines.

On 4 December 1917, **L-11** departed the Boston Navy Yard at Boston, Massachusetts, and transited a portion of the North Atlantic Ocean to the Azores.

Following a period of patrol and repairs in the Azores, **L-11** transited to the British Isles and arrived in Ireland in mid-February of 1918 to join Submarine Division Five in antisubmarine patrol off the United Kingdom. For the next nine months, **L-11** ranged in the shipping lanes and sighted German U-boats on three occasions. On 11 May 1918, the submarine made a torpedo attack on an enemy submarine with inconclusive results.

Seven L boats (**L-1, L-2, L-3, L-4, L-9, L-10,** and **L-11**), composing Submarine Division Five, were the only American submarines to have extensive contact with enemy German naval units during the First World War.

Looking for the editor...?

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