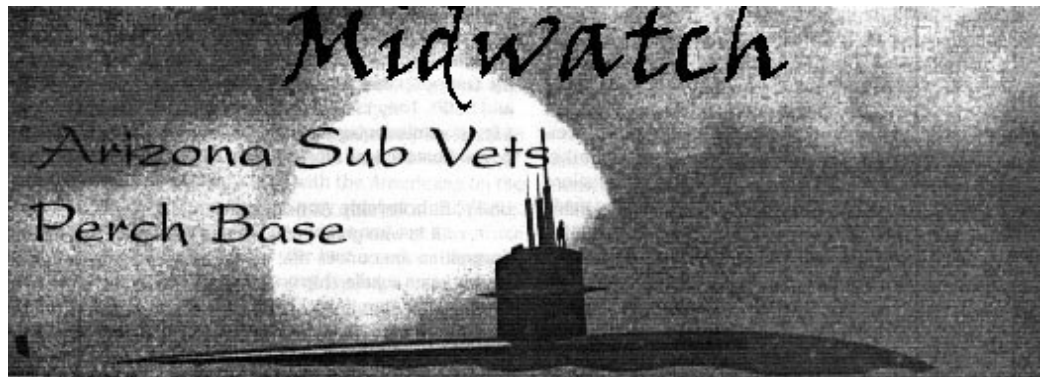




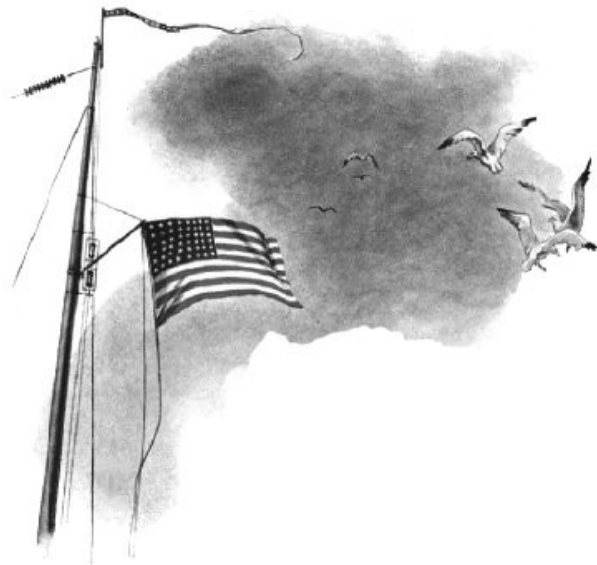
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<http://perch-base.org>

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Lest We Forget Those Still On Patrol

JULY ETERNAL PATROLS

USS S-28	SS133	July 4, 1944	52 men
USS Robalo	SS273	July 26, 1944	81 men

DON'T FORGET!

Next meeting is July 12 at the American Legion Post #62
1101 N. 99th Ave. at 1200 hours
Lunch available at \$3 a head

U.S. Merchant Marine Veterans World War II



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Sailing Orders



Next regular meeting is July 12, 2003
American Legion Post #62
11001 N. 99th Ave. at 1200 hours
Lunch provided at \$3 a head
(see "From the Wardroom," Page 4)

Latest information on Joint National Convention
Reno, NV September 2-5, 2003

Host base (USSVI): CORVINA Base, Reno - Don Brown, Co-chairman
Host chapter (USSVWWII): Las Vegas Chapter - Paul Dornberg, Co-chairman
Host hotel: Reno Hilton (1300 rooms blocked off), over two-thirds have been booked, reserve now!
Approximately 45 boat reunions are planned!
All of the convention functions (with the exception of the golf outing) will be held at the host hotel.
"See You In September"

S.S. Lane Victory tour is Sept. 13, but **we have to get our money in to Dave Harnish by July 18!**
Check the flyer (opposite page) and page 15 for photos and ship details.

**August Meeting is in Prescott.
Details to follow in the next newsletter.**

From the Wardroom

Shipmates,

Well as I look at the calendar, summer officially is on us. I thought it was here the first triple digit days we had several weeks ago. Many of you will be taking your leave of the valley, and Phoenix.

While getting out of the heat is your main goal, the rest of us, that didn't pay enough of our "dues" have to sweat it out here in the valley. Oh well that's life, here's my hope that you that you have a great time and a safe trip both ways.

Several Board members had a chance to set down with the powers to be, at American Legion Post # 62, Tuesday night after our June meeting. What we found out was that person I had talked with over a month ago, is no longer in charge of our luncheon buffet, for our meetings.

We were told that the price would remain the same as we have been paying. They would also improve on the selections of food for our future meetings. We were very pleased to learn that every thing was going well with the building fund, and that the progress of the Post's building schedule is on track.

I would like to remind everyone that was thinking about the trip on the S. S. Lane Victory that Dave Harnish is putting together for September 13 out of San Pedro, CA, you need to get your deposits to Dave by July 18. A number of us are planning on going. It should be fun and a great time to visit with shipmates and ride on the last of a kind, a World War II Victory ship. For more information please contact Dave Harnish at 623 846 0367 or e-mail him.

Fraternally Yours,
Glenn Herold
Base Commander



WWII - Boats

Short Facts

Plunger, SS-179 carried the first radar set into battle. She also suffered the very first depth charging of any U.S. Submarine.

June Meeting Minutes

*Minutes of a Meeting
of the Arizona Submarine Veterans - Perch Base*

The regular monthly meeting of the members of the Arizona Submarine Veterans B Perch Base was convened at the American Legion Post #62; Peoria, AZ at 1306 hours, 14 June 2003. The meeting was called to order by the Base Commander – Glenn Herold.

Adrian Stuke read the "Purpose" of the organization. The members were then led in the Pledge of Allegiance; followed by the Dedication, Moment of Silence for our departed shipmates, Tolling of the Boats, and the Invocation by Base Chaplain, Howard Doyle.

There were 25 members and 2 guests attending the meeting according to the sailing list.

The members welcomed new members – Stanley Reinhold and John Zaichkin. The members also greeted Shipmate Bob Gilmore who has returned to attending the meetings. Stanley and John briefed the membership on their interesting backgrounds and experiences following which they were welcomed to Perch Base with a round of applause.

The members also welcomed guest Brandi Hershey and her friend Alysa Galboth.

A motion was made and seconded that the minutes from the May meeting be approved as published in the Base newsletter, "The MidWatch." The motion carried by voice vote of the members present.

Treasurer - Robert May reported the Base's financial status as of the first day of June, 2003.

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Treasurer's report as read. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

REPORTS BY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Vice Commander – Adrian Stuke updated the members with regard to acquiring individual engraved plastic name tags. It was suggested that the Base Treasury pay the cost associated with the name tags and each member be asked to donate a reasonable amount to the treasury for having them engraved. A motion was made, seconded and approved by voice vote to accept this procedure.

Chief of the Boat – Doug LaRock had nothing to report. However, Glenn Herold asked the members to join him in

commending Doug for his successful efforts in preparing the Submarine Memorial for the 2003 Memorial Day ceremonies. The members gave Doug a huge round of applause.

Chaplain – Warner Doyle reported that Shipmate Don Wannamaker was still ill and asked the members to remember Don in their prayers. Warner also reported that Sandi Prophet has undergone surgery and will be released from the hospital in the next couple of days. Glenn Herold thanked the members on Sandi's behalf for the flowers and cards sent to her in the hospital.

Membership Chairman – Ramon Samson reported that the drive to enlist new members is doing well. The Base Web Site is obviously a big part of letting prospective new members know how to reach us and where we meet. The link from the USSVI Web Pages makes this function extremely well for those from outside Arizona.

Ramon also reminded the members of the Base Library and the availability of many good books about the Navy and submarines. The selection of books is on the Base Web Site (www.perch-base.org). There is no charge for borrowing the books and all you have to do is let Ramon know which book(s) you want to borrow and he will bring them to the next meeting.

Newsletter Editor - Chuck Emmett asked the members to provide him with information relating to members and their spouses, historical submarine facts and other information that can be printed in the newsletter.

Base Storekeeper – Jim Nelson announced that he has placed an order for a number of new items for the Ship's Store and expects to receive them in the next few days. Everyone was encouraged to support the Ship's Store by buying the memorabilia being sold. The proceeds from Ship's Store sales all go to the Base Treasury.

OLD BUSINESS

Glenn Herold reported that the working party to do maintenance on the Perch Base parade float and trailer was a big success. Most of the work was completed and only a couple of items still remain to be done.

Glenn also announced that the Base has received the documents for entering the 2003 Phoenix Veteran's Day Parade. Warner Doyle and Ben Acosta will coordinate with Palo Verde and submit the Base's application as soon as the arrangements are firmed up. The parade will be held on Tuesday, November 11, 2003. Tentatively, the elements of the Palo Verde/Perch Base entry will include the USS Bang Float, the submarine flags, the Goodyear classic fire truck and the Naval Reserve Unit Color Guard.

WWII - Boats

Short Facts

A total of 93 Presidential Unit Citations were awarded to 35 different boats during WWII.

Perch Base will also be combining efforts with the Phoenix Chapter of the Submarine Veterans – WWII who will be participating as a part of the Perch Base procession.

Glenn informed the members that the 2003 Memorial Day services at the National Cemetery went well. The Submarine Memorial was in excellent shape thanks to Doug LaRock. As of this year, Perch Base will assume responsibility for maintaining the torpedo and plaques associated with the Submarine Memorial. Perch Base will also be responsible for the Memorial Day Ceremony (Tolling of the Boats, etc.).

Dave Harnish read a recent announcement from the USSVI Point of Contact Broadcast which indicated that the sail from the USS Hawkbill SSN-666 will be dedicated as a part of the Hawkbill Submarine Memorial in Arco, Idaho. USSVI – Hawkbill Base is sponsoring the memorial and has asked for donations to fund the construction. Individuals or organizations can purchase an inscribed brick for a yet to be determined unit price.

Chuck Emmett reported that the Palo Verde outage parade was a success, in large part because of the Perch Base parade float. Chuck commented that the float has always been the highlight of the parade.

NEW BUSINESS

Dave Harnish briefed the members on the June meeting of the Submarine Veterans – WWII – Pigboaters Chapter. Dave indicated that the Pigboaters had voted to buy a \$350 maintenance kit for cleaning and coating the plaques associated with the Submarine Memorial at the National Cemetery. The kit will be given to Perch Base for our use. Dave also reported that the Pigboaters had tabled an item to donate \$1,000 to the American Legion Post #62 building fund. The proposal will be published in their newsletter to allow comment by the entire membership prior to being voted on.

the Submarine Veterans – WWII as associate members. The yearly dues are \$5 for national and \$5 for the Chapter

(Continued on "MINUTES," page 6)

(continued from "MINUTES," page 5)

dues. The meetings are held in Scottsdale the 2nd Thursday of each month.

Dave also briefed the members on his Memorial Day participation at the Denver, Colorado National Cemetery and its Grayling Memorial. Dave was visiting with USSVI Rocky Mountain Base and attended the memorial services as their guest.

50/50 DRAWING

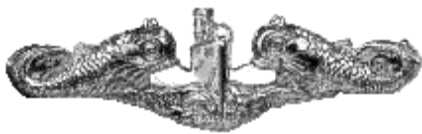
The 50/50 raffle was conducted and Glenn Herold was the winner. The winner's share of the drawing was \$45. Glenn donated the winnings to the Base treasury.

ADJOURNMENT

All the outstanding business being concluded, it was moved and seconded that the meeting of the Arizona Submarine Veterans - Perch Base be adjourned. The motion carried by voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 1355 hours.

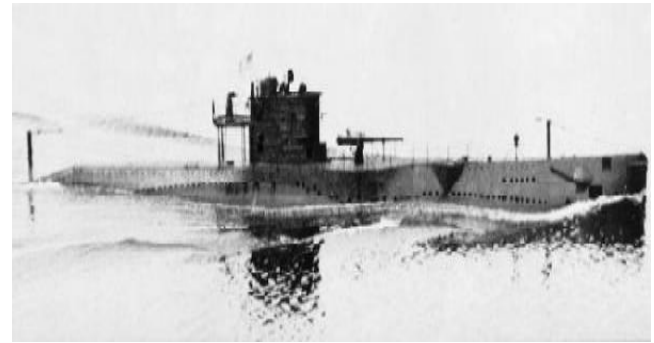
Edgar (Ed) Brooks - Perch Base Secretary



Eternal Patrol July 4, 1944

Editors Note: *Less we forget, each month, one boat on eternal patrol will be highlighted in this newsletter. Sailors, rest your oars.*

U.S.S. S-28 (SS-133) 58 men lost



On June 20, 1944, LCDR J.G. Campbell assumed command of S-28, his first command. The ship had finished a normal upkeep period on June 12 and continued on her assigned duty of training enlisted personnel and engaging in sonar exercises with ships under control of COMDESPAC.

On July 3, S-28, in accordance with orders from COMDESPAC, got underway from the Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor, to conduct a week's normal operations. During the day on July 3, S-28 acted as a target for anti-submarine warfare vessels until about 1700 local time. At that time she made two practice torpedo approaches on the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter RELIANCE. On July 4 S-28 again carried out sonar exercises as on the previous day, and at 1730 again undertook a practice approach on RELIANCE.

At 1730 S-28 dived about four miles distant from RELIANCE. At about 1805 RELIANCE made sound contact with S-28 at a range of 1700 yards. The range decreased to about 1500 yards and then steadily increased, as the bearing drifted aft. Although sound contact was temporarily lost by RELIANCE at 3,000 yards, she picked up the submarine again at 3,300 yards. At 1820, with range 4,700 yards, RELIANCE permanently lost sound contact with S-28. At no time during the approach or the ensuing sound search were distress signals from S-28 seen or heard, nor was any sound heard which indicated an explosion in S-28.

When by 1830, S-28 had not surfaced or sent any

(See "S-28," on Page 8)

This Old Boat

For the first time, since "This Old Boat . . ." has been running, we have two winners for correctly identifying June's picture. What do they win? Our undying allegiance in acknowledging them as "Masters of Arcane Knowledge." But keep up the good work! We may have REAL prizes in the future. Way to go, shipmates.

"The pictured boat is the USS SEAWOLF (SSN 575). Noteworthy, the EB sail, the raised bow with sonar akin to the SSKs (K-1 and converted thin-skins). But what is this about "old?" She was new stuff, keel not yet laid, when I got out of sub-school and became the warm body replacement for the officer scheduled to be Seawolf's engineer, as he went off to nuclear power school."

Royce Pettit [bayaco@cox.net]

"The boat is SSN-575 USS Seawolf the picture was taken in Washington state in 1980 during operations with Special Project of Submarine Development Group One Detachment, Mare Island Naval Shipyard, Vallejo, CA.

I was station on board when the picture was taken by PHC(SS) Ron Wold, USN."4

Stan Reinhold [sreinhold@cox.net]

CORRECTION

WWII - Boats

Short Facts

We also have a correction to one of the WWII - Boats Short Facts. This just proves that, as a group, NOTHING gets past Perch Base.

"I believe the WWII - Boats Short Facts on page 14 of June issue of Midwatch is incorrect. If my memory is correct LCdr F.W. "Mike" Fenno was in command of Trout when she took the gold out of Corregidor in early 1942. Ramage didn't take command of Trout until mid '42 or later."

Warren Grossetta [mooseg43@comcast.net]

Two correct answers in one month embarrasses me! Try and guess this one.



Do you recognize this old boat? Send your answer to the editor

chuckster41@earthlink.net



*Need a book about submarines?
Have you checked out our base library?
It's easy. Find the book online at:
[http://perch-base.org/
perch_base_library.html](http://perch-base.org/perch_base_library.html)*

WWII - Boats

Short Facts

U.S. submarines sank 214 Japanese warships, totaling 577,626 gross registered tons.

(continued from "S-28," page 6)

signals, RELIANCE retraced her course and tried to establish communication with her. Although previous tests had showed that no difficulty would be experienced in exchanging messages by sound gear at ranges up to 2,000 yards, RELIANCE was unable to contact S-28. The Coast Guard vessel called in other vessels from Pearl Harbor at 2000, and a thorough search of the area was instituted, lasting until the afternoon of July 6, 1944. A slick, which was unmistakably made by diesel oil, was the only sign of S-28.

The Court of Inquiry which investigated the sinking determined that S-28 sank shortly after 1820 on July 4, 1944 in 1400 fathoms of water. Because of the depth of the water, salvage operations were impossible. The Court recorded its opinion that S-28 lost depth control "from either a material casualty or an operating error of personnel, or both, and that depth control was never regained. The exact cause of the loss of S-28 cannot be determined." The Court found, further, that, "the material condition of S-28 was as good, or better than that of other ships of her class performing similar duty," and that "the officers and crew on board S-28 at the time of her loss were competent to operate the ship submerged in the performance of her assigned duties."

It was stated that the loss of S-28 was not caused by negligence or inefficiency of any person or persons.



FIRSTMATES COLUMN

Perch Base Wives

For the ladies of Perch Base:

(Nothing to report this month. If a member has any information on wives' activities, please contact the Midwatch editor.)

Do you have any information to share with shipmates? Contact the Midwatch Editor, Chuck Emmett at:

(602) 843-9042
chuckster41@earthlink.net

SHIPMATES COLUMN

EDITOR: I'm continuing to run small facts, or "factoids," on submarines in World War II throughout the newsletter as "WWII Boats - Short Facts." Look for the small box with the fleet boat silhouette. Shipmate Jim Newman was kind enough to send them and I'll run the until they're gone.

I would also like to thank shipmate Frank Rumbaugh for sending me the story from the Washington Times on possible female crews on submarines.

I'm getting more and more input and THAT'S GOOD. This is your newsletter.

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Submarines in History

World War II in the Aleutians

Even as the likelihood of Japanese aggression mounted in the 1930s, Alaska and the Aleutian Island chain remained virtually undefended. Although the Aleutians themselves stretch nearly 900 nautical miles west from the tip of the Alaskan Peninsula to the outermost island of Attu – and reach to within 650 nautical miles of what was then Japan’s northernmost naval base at Paramushiro in the Kurile Islands – they seemed unlikely candidates for Japanese conquest. Cold, inhospitable, virtually unpopulated, totally lacking in any natural resources but fish, and afflicted with some of the worst weather in the world, the Aleutians held little military interest for either the United States or Japan.

Submarines to Alaska



The Aleutian Islands stretch 900 nautical miles westward from the Alaskan Peninsula to the outermost island of Attu, only 650 miles from what was then Japan’s northernmost naval base at Paramushiro in the Kurile Islands. The principal U.S. base was at Dutch Harbor on the island of Unalaska.

Even so, with the Japanese conquest of Manchuria in 1937, defense of the northeast Pacific region assumed new importance, and seaplane bases were established first at Sitka, southwest of Juneau – and later on Kodiak Island (south of the Alaskan Peninsula) and at Dutch Harbor on Unalaska in the eastern Aleutians. The last two of these were also provided with the support facilities for basing six submarines each, and by late 1941, they were ready for operation under a newly-formed Alaskan Naval Sector, part of the 13th Naval District headquartered in Seattle. When the war began, the sector commander controlled a small force of hand-me-down gunboats, two World War I destroyers, and a few Coast Guard cutters and improvised patrol craft, plus ten PBY Catalina flying

boats. Meanwhile, the Army had established an Alaskan Defense Command and begun the construction of an airfield on Umnak, near Dutch Harbor, from which land-based bombers could be staged.

After Pearl Harbor – and in accordance with the Rainbow Five war plan – COMSUBPAC RADM Thomas Withers sent two older submarines, S-18 (SS-123) and S-23 (SS-128) to Alaska from the U.S. West Coast, and they arrived at Dutch Harbor on 27 January 1942. Within two weeks, they had departed on their first war patrols, defensive sweeps south of the Aleutian chain and easterly toward Kodiak Island. Although no contact was made with the enemy, the two S-boats were the first to experience the full rigor of the weather and ocean conditions that characterized Alaskan submarine operations for two miserable years. An entry in S-23’s deck log for 13 February 1942 notes:

Shipped heavy sea over bridge. All hands on bridge bruised and battered. Officer of the Deck suffered broken nose. Solid stream of water down hatch for 65 seconds. Put high pressure pump on control room bilges; dry after two hours... Barometer 29.60, thirty knot wind from northwest.

RADM “Fritz” Harfinger, who served on S-boats in the Aleutians, later described how dreadful it was:

The conditions those boats endured up there are simply indescribable. It was God awful. Cold. Dreary. Foggy. Ice glaze. The periscopes froze. The decks and lifelines were caked with ice. Blizzards. You could never get a navigational fix.

Moreover, the tides, currents, and weather throughout the region were often unpredictable and frequently treacherous, and the rocks and shoals of the island-studded archipelago posed a constant danger under the usual conditions of poor visibility from driving snow and rain, particularly during the long northern nights.

After their relatively brief patrols, S-18 and S-23 returned to San Diego for an overhaul that included superstructure modifications and additional internal heating in accordance with the “lessons-learned” from their first Alaskan experience. Simultaneously, a division of six additional S-boats – originally intended for Brisbane, Australia – was redirected to Dutch Harbor. These submarines – S-30

(See “ALEUTIANS,” on Page 12)

Military Readiness - Mixed Sex Crews on Submarines?

EDITOR: The following story is thankfully provided by shipmate **Frank Rumbaugh** [rumbaughf001@hawaii.rr.com] via e-mail. It makes me think on how some of the things I went through would be darn near impossible in a mixed crew. What are other member's thoughts?

The photographs are from the Australian Royal Navy, which is incorporating women in its submarine service. Details of this trial can be found at:

<http://www.navy.gov.au/fegs/submarines/womensubs.htm>

"Decisions on what roles women should play in war must be based on military standards, not women's rights."

GEN Norman Schwarzkopf, Washington Times, October 28, 1999

Mixed-Sex Sub Crews Planned By Navy Study

Report fails to sway Pentagon panel,

By Rowan Scarborough, The Washington Times

A confidential Navy-financed study concluded mixed-sex crews, "could increase risks" for submarine sailors, but the finding failed to deter a Pentagon advisory committee this week from recommending an end to an all-male "silent service."

The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services (DACOWITS) urged that future submarines accommodate female crew members, meaning the Navy would have to redesign Virginia-class ships now under construction.

The 27 women and two men on the panel unanimously approved the non-binding recommendation. The Navy, whose senior admirals oppose putting mixed-sex crews in such tight quarters for months at sea, had no immediate comment.

DACOWITS voted in favor of female submariners after reviewing a confidential report commissioned by the Navy in 1994 when it was removing barriers to women on combat aircraft and ships. The Navy pointedly exempted submarines from the order.

Prepared by Science Applications International Corp.

(SAIC), the report laid out a series of potential problems the undersea Navy would face if women broke the sex barrier.

"A mixed gender crew will complicate submarine life — from simple things like shipboard supplies, watch [duty] and bunk management to the far more complex areas of potential



fraternizations and harassment which would be difficult to deal with in the uniquely confining environment of a submarine," said the analysis by the private defense contractor.

"These added burdens could increase risk where the object has been to minimize unnecessary risk in

order to provide the trained crew with the maximum advantage to cope with the stress and special demands of the submarine combat environment."

The study comes to light at a time when some Navy officials are urging the submarine service to rethink its all-male domain.

Earlier this year, Navy Secretary Richard Danzig, in a speech to the Naval Submarine League, warned the close-knit service it is running a "white-male preserve."

"The most Narcissus-like thing about creating something in your own image, about being in love with your own image, is the continued and continuous existence of this segment of the Navy as a white-male preserve," he told the audience.

Now, the women's advisory committee, made up of civilians appointed by the defense secretary, is adding to the pressure.

"DACOWITS recommends that, beginning now, plans for future submarine platforms incorporate appropriate berthing and privacy arrangements to accommodate mixed gender crews," the panel said in its approved resolution.

"Because submarines currently in the fleet are expected to stay in service as long as 40 years, plans must be made now for gender integrated crews. This would allow the assignment of the most highly qualified personnel regardless of gender."

A Navy spokesman said accommodating women would add up to \$4 million to the cost of each Virginia-class attack

sub. It would cost the Navy \$5 million to remodel each Los Angeles-class submarine and \$3 million for Trident ballistic-missile boats.

The Navy's most senior leaders, including Adm. Jay Johnson, an aviator and chief of naval operations, are firmly against female submariners.

Opponents cite the ships' extremely tight living quarters, the alternating sharing of bunks and the sexual tensions that can develop during long months underwater.

Elaine Donnelly, director of the Center for Military Readiness, said the consultant's report should end the debate.

"The obstructions are just so great I can't imagine why the issue wasn't put to rest then," said Mrs. Donnelly, who



recently obtained a copy of the 1994 report and provided it to The Washington Times.

"This report should have been made public at that time. To continue to bring it up as Secretary Danzig did earlier this year, wasn't very helpful," added Mrs. Donnelly, who opposes women in combat.

The SAIC study backs the reasoning behind the Navy's decision to keep submarines all-male.

Among its findings:

"The total living area for more than 130 people is equivalent to a medium-size house. Unencumbered deck space in sleeping areas, toilets and showers is about one-half to one-third that afforded to a crew member on a small surface ship."

Navy regulations require ships to offer equivalent berthing and sanitary facilities for men and women. Meeting

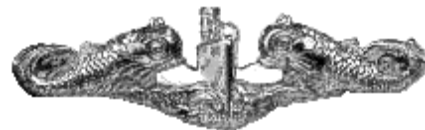
regulations on existing subs would require "significant modifications."

"Introducing women into submarines is less a question of whether they can do the day-to-day work than it is a question of whether the added complications of a mixed gender crew will undermine the operational effectiveness of the ship. Therefore, the focus should not be on women, per se, but on the ramifications of having mixed-gender crews in the unique submarine environment."

"The need to keep submarines fully manned, coupled with the need to have enough people of the right gender to match with available living accommodations, would impose a burden not only on the ship but on those who would have to recruit, train, assign, retain and ensure equal career opportunities for both male and female personnel."

A Navy briefing document obtained by The Washington Times says creating coed living quarters on Virginia-class subs "would be expensive and have two negative effects: further degrade habitability for both genders and require removal of operational equipment reducing war-fighting effectiveness."

Of 311 Navy ships, 192 are open to women. Of those, 120, or 63 percent, now have women on board.



WWII - Boats

Short Facts

U.S.S. Albacore holds the record for most Japanese warships sunk with a total of 10 vessels.

Gudgeon, SS-211, made history by sinking the first enemy warship to go down from the fire from a U.S. submarine.

ALEUTIANS (continued from page 9)

through S-35 (SS-135 through 140) – arrived in the theater between April and August 1942, to be augmented by S-27 (SS-132) and S-28 (SS-133), which headed north from San Diego in late May. Thus, when S-18 and S-23 completed their overhauls and returned to the theater at that same time, a total of ten S-boats had been assigned to Alaskan waters. In April, on the first Dutch Harbor war patrols into Japanese territory, both S-34 and S-35 penetrated as far as Paramushiro, but despite several attacks on merchant ships, they scored no successes.

The Japanese Seize Attu and Kiska

Even before the Battle of the Coral Sea in early May 1942, cryptologic intelligence had revealed that Japanese Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's next major offensive in the central Pacific would be the invasion of Midway Island, some 1,100 miles west of Hawaii early in June. This main attack would be accompanied by a diversionary thrust toward the Aleutian Islands. In response to the latter, CINCPAC Admiral Chester Nimitz assigned two heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and ten destroyers to a North Pacific Force under RADM Robert Theobald, who also assumed command of the existing "Alaska Navy," including the Dutch Harbor submarines, then under CAPT Oswald Colclough.

Since RADM Theobald expected the Japanese attack – possibly including amphibious landings – to be directed against military facilities on the Alaskan Peninsula and the eastern Aleutians, he deployed his main surface force south and west of Kodiak Island during the first days of June. Of the six submarines that had already arrived in the theater, four were set to patrolling off the approaches to the expected Japanese objectives in the east and the remaining two as far west as Attu in hopes of intercepting the enemy.

In fact, RADM Theobald's surface task force made no contact at all with the Japanese. Except for bombing raids by aircraft from the carriers IJS *Ryujo* and IJS *Junyo* on Dutch Harbor on 3 and 4 June, Japan had no designs whatsoever on the eastern Aleutians, and all along had planned only to occupy Attu, Kiska, and Adak well to the west. Several thousand miles to the south, however, the Japanese suffered a major setback in the Battle of Midway on the 4th through the 6th, and Admiral Yamamoto had nearly cancelled the Aleutian invasions. In the event, he was persuaded by his staff to proceed with the seizure of Attu and Kiska, which was accomplished without opposition on the 6th and 7th. The attempt on Adak was abandoned. Only S-34 and S-35 were in any position to oppose the Japanese landings. Both had been patrolling north of Attu since the end of May, but neither had sighted

any elements of the invasion force by the time they were ordered back to Dutch Harbor on 11 June.

To consolidate their hold on Attu and Kiska, the Japanese began convoying reinforcements and supplies into the islands from Paramushiro and Ominato (on northern Hokkaido). To protect these supply lines, they formed a powerful task force around the heavy carrier *Zuikaku*, the light carriers *Zuiho*, *Ryujo*, and *Junyo*, and two battleships, which operated south of the western Aleutians until mid-July. These were discontinued in August 1942 in favor of supporting the Guadalcanal campaign, seven fleet boats had made sorties into the northern theater – in order, *Growler* (SS-215), *Triton* (SS-201), *Finback* (SS-230), *Grunion* (SS-216), *Trigger* (SS-237), *Tuna* (SS-203), and *Gato* (SS-212).

Of these, only *Growler*, *Triton*, and *Grunion* scored sinkings. The most spectacular success was achieved by *Growler* under LCDR Howard Gilmore – later to be awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously. [Ed. Note: See "Submarine Hero – Howard Walter Gilmore" in the Summer 1999 issue of *UNDERSEA WARFARE*.] On 5 July, Gilmore came upon three Japanese destroyers anchored off Kiska and in his first attack of the war loosed torpedoes at all three, scoring hits on each. *Growler* went deep to avoid two torpedoes fired back at her, but when the smoke cleared, one of the destroyers – IJS *Arare* – had sunk, and the other two were so severely damaged they had to be towed back to Japan for repairs. Similarly, the day before, *Triton* sank another destroyer off the island of Agattu, and *Grunion* destroyed two patrol craft near Kiska on the 15th. Unfortunately, that same war patrol ended tragically, because contact was lost with *Grunion* after 30 July, and she was never heard from again.

The Travail of the S-boats

The Alaska-based S-boats did even less well in the months after the Japanese invasion. In a total of 14 war patrols from Dutch Harbor targeted on Japanese shipping in the western Aleutians between July and September, no enemy sinkings were credited. Moreover, S-27 was lost to grounding on a reconnaissance mission to Amchitka Island, when an undetected current carried her onto the rocks while she was charging batteries on the surface during the night of 19 June. S-27's Commanding Officer, Herbert Jukes, managed to get his entire crew ashore in rubber boats, and after being stranded for six days, they were discovered by a PBY and brought back to Dutch Harbor.

Built to a World War I design based on early submarine technology, the S-boats assigned to the Aleutians were 20 years old, largely worn out, and clearly regarded as "second-line" submarines. [See associated sidebar.]

Powered by only two 600-horsepower diesel engines, they could make only 12-14 knots on the surface – perhaps 10 submerged on battery – and with a test depth of 200 feet, there was little margin for error. Moreover, their surface displacement of somewhat less than 1,000 tons and their low freeboard made operating in the stormy, northern waters of the Aleutians and the Bering Sea a grueling, daily challenge. Despite the electric heaters that had been installed for the northern climate, life below decks was dispiriting, cold, and wet, not only from seawater sloshing down through the conning tower, but also from the condensation of atmospheric moisture on all the metal surfaces inside.

Engine breakdowns, battery trouble, and electrical “shorts” were continuing problems, exacerbated by the age and condition of the machinery. *S-35* was nearly lost in December 1942 to a chain of events that began when she took several massive waves over the bridge during a storm near Amchitka, sending tons of water into the control room and injuring her captain, LT Henry Monroe, who was forced to go below. Shortly thereafter, electrical fires broke out in both the control room and forward battery and began to spread, filling the boat with acrid smoke and forcing the engines to be shut down and the control room sealed off. The crew fought back with every trick they could think of, including bucket brigades to lower the water level, eventually restarting the engines under local control, and the boat retreated toward Dutch Harbor, fighting recurrent fires so serious that twice the crew was driven up to the bridge. After three days, they reached Adak, where assistance was available, and finally, on 29 December, under escort, *S-35* made it back to Dutch Harbor and eventually to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, where she was completely overhauled – only to return to the Aleutians again six months later.

Alaskan Countermoves

As a first step in regaining the islands lost to the Japanese, the U.S. Army occupied Adak in late August 1942 and commenced building an airfield that could threaten Attu and Kiska more directly. Then, in January 1943, meeting no resistance, they invaded and secured Amchitka, only 70 miles from the latter. Pressure mounted on the two enemy-held islands with sporadic bombardments by both Army aircraft and Navy surface forces, and the Japanese began to fear that their loss could become the prelude to an invasion of the Kurile Islands from the northeast, perhaps with the intervention of Russia. Thus newly resolved to hold Attu and Kiska at all costs, they stepped up the reinforcement of their garrisons there, and in particular, sent a powerful convoy from Paramushiro, escorted by virtually the entire Japanese 5th Fleet, including two heavy cruisers. This move precipitated the Battle of the Komandorski Islands on 26 March, in which an outnumbered force of U.S. cruisers



and destroyers fought a retiring action in which the heavy cruiser USS *Salt Lake City* (CA-25) was heavily damaged and went dead-in-the-water, yet survived to fight another day. More significantly, the enemy supply ships broke off their mission and returned to Japan.

On 11 May 1943, the Army landed in force on Attu.



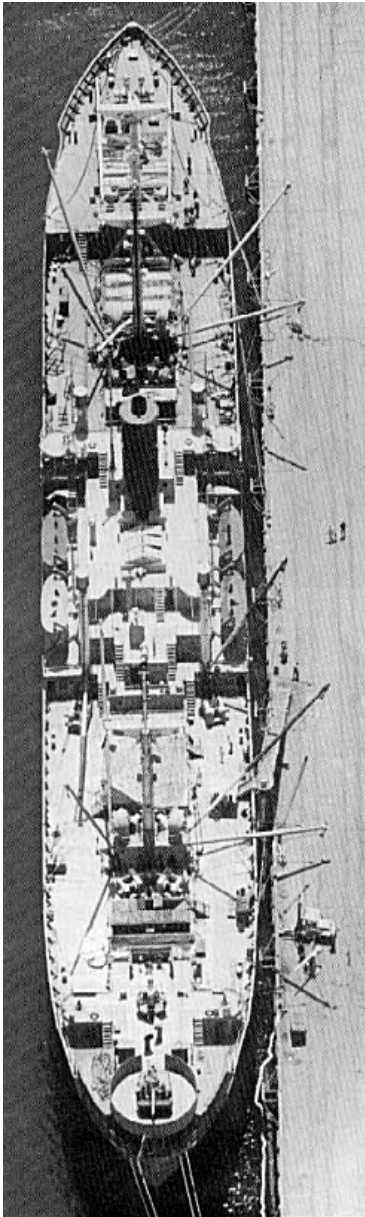
In preparation for the U.S. invasion of Attu in May 1943, USS *Narwhal* (SS-167) and USS *Nautilus* (SS-168) carried 215 Army Scouts to the island and inserted them behind enemy lines. Here, *Nautilus* (formerly V-6), with Scouts and raiding craft on deck, rehearses the mission at Dutch Harbor. Earlier, in August 1942, she had joined USS *Argonaut* (SS-166) in bringing Carlson's Raiders to Makin Atoll.

Several days prior to the main assault, USS *Narwhal* (SS-167) and USS *Nautilus* (SS-168), coming from Dutch Harbor, had clandestinely inserted 215 officers and men of the Army's 7th Infantry Scout Company behind enemy lines. Nonetheless, Attu was fiercely contested by the Japanese, and it wasn't until the end of the month, when over 2,300 of their number had been lost in several suicidal “banzai” attacks, that they yielded the island to the invaders.

With Attu retaken, attention shifted to Kiska, which was blockaded by a ring of destroyers and bombed regularly, weather permitting. A powerful surface bombardment

(See “ALEUTIANS,” on Page 15)

S.S. Lane Victory Cruise - Sept. 13



Ship Type: VC2-S-APS

Built: 1945, at Cal Shipyard of Los Angeles, CA

Length: 455 feet

Width: 62 feet

Draft: 28 feet

Tonnage: 10,750 deadweight tons

Ballast: 3,129 tons

Fuel Oil: 2,833 tons

Fresh Water: 300 tons

Cargo Holds: 5

57 to 81 feet long

Hatches: 22 feet wide and 23 to 35 feet long

All cargo holds have tween decks

Masts: 3, about 100 feet above Main Deck

Main Propulsion: One cross compound steam turbine with double reduction gears

Horsepower: 6000, at 90 r.p.m

Speed: 15 1/2 knots

Propeller: 19 feet in diameter

Fuel Consumption: about 40 tons per day

Boilers: 2

Forced draft, oil fuel, water tube type, with superheaters and economizers

Steam Pressure: 525 lbs. at 750 degrees Fahrenheit

Life Boats: 4, 24 feet long, one with an engine



ALEUTIANS (continued from page 12)

force, including several old battleships, pounded the island on 22 July, and an invasion fleet was assembled for an assault in mid-August. Meanwhile, however, the Japanese had reluctantly decided to relinquish the island, and 13 large I-class transport submarines were assembled to evacuate the garrison. This plan was revealed to the U.S. high command in a series of cryptologic intercepts, and after seven of the 13 I-boats were lost or crippled in evacuating only 820 men, that approach was abandoned. Instead, on 28 July, under a heavy fog, the Japanese managed to sneak in two light cruisers and six destroyers and spirit away the remaining 5,200 personnel without being detected by the waiting Americans. When the latter came ashore after heavy bombardment on 16 August, they found Kiska entirely abandoned. The Japanese had held the western Aleutians for only 13 months.

Last Operations in Northern Waters

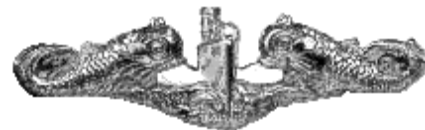
In preparation for the retaking of Attu and Kiska, seven more S-boats (*S-40*, *S-41*, *S-42*, *S-44*, *S-45*, *S-46*, *S-47*) had been ordered north in the spring of 1943 and trickled into Dutch Harbor between May and December. Until August, the Dutch Harbor boats concentrated on the supply lines between Japan and the western Aleutians, but after the re-conquest of Attu and Kiska, the emphasis shifted to more general hunting expeditions in the northern Kuriles. Again, little was achieved. The 24 war patrols mounted from Dutch Harbor between May 1943 and the end of the year – generally about a month long but as much as 40 days – produced only four enemy victims totaling some 13,000 tons, all Japanese merchant ships sunk near Paramushiro. *S-28*, *S-30*, *S-35*, and *S-41* (SS-146) were the lucky boats, but *S-44* (SS-155), caught on the surface by a Japanese destroyer on 7 October during her first Alaskan patrol, was lost with all hands save two crewmembers, who survived to become prisoners of war for the duration.

At the end of 1943 with the end of a credible Japanese threat to the Aleutians, COMSUBPAC RADM Charles Lockwood finally acknowledged the futility of sending the Dutch Harbor submarines into harm's way for so little return, and he ordered the remaining S-boats withdrawn from Alaska and for the most part assigned to training duties in both the Southwest Pacific and home waters. In the very last war patrol mounted from Dutch Harbor, *S-45* (SS-156) left the submarine base there on New Year's Eve and returned to Attu at the end of January 1944, before departing for San Diego and a general overhaul. And thus ended the U.S. submarine campaign in the Aleutians.

It had to have been the worst duty in the world. The privation, hardship, and danger endured by the more than

1,000 U.S. submariners who served in the Aleutians during 1942 and 1943 – most of them in small, obsolete, and worn-out boats – were never repaid by the spectacular success later achieved by submarines in the wider Pacific conflict. Only nine confirmed kills were scored in over 80 war patrols conducted in the Alaskan theater in those years – and four of these were claimed by Pearl Harbor-based fleet boats, which accounted for only one eighth of the total sorties. On the negative side of the ledger, two S-boats – *S-27* and *S-44* – and one fleet boat – *Grunion* – were lost, two with virtually all hands. In retrospect it is an extraordinary tribute to the seamanship, dedication, and perseverance of the men who suffered and died there that an even larger toll of ships and men was not exacted by the many perils of the williwaw, the frozen and desolate islands, and those awful seas.

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Return To:

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Sun City, AZ 85351-3252

<http://perch-base.org>



Next regular meeting - July 12, 2003