



USS Virginia Base Deep Water Gazette

First Quarter 2015
The Little Base That ~~can~~ Does



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

Base Commander Kenn McDermott



Greetings fellow undersea warriors and welcome to the fifth edition of our quarterly newsletter. As I am wont to do with my opening paragraph I again thank John Mosticone for volunteering to produce these, which are very much appreciated. By the time you read this we will have completed 2014, celebrated Christmas and welcomed in the New Year - so I trust you all enjoyed a great holiday season with family and friends. I look forward to a good 2015 for our Base and encourage you all to recruit new members and join your shipmates at meetings as often as you can. We do, after all, speak the same unique "boat sailor" language.

ANNUAL PICNIC A SUCCESS!

Many thanks to Al & Mary Ann Ptasznik for hosting our annual Base picnic at their beautiful home on Lake Anna on October 18th! It was our first try at a new venue and with a different way of providing the main course – for which an at-ta-boy goes out to John Lamsens for handling all aspects of getting the great barbeque and sides from Extra Billy's BBQ. The Texas-Styled Barbeque Brisket, which was recommended by member Rec Stanberry, was particularly

excellent and John and I have already decided we're going to order a larger quantity of that for next year's picnic. We had a number of guests and prospective members attend this year – including Base member and current active duty Chief of the Boat aboard USS Virginia (SSN-774), Cary Carroll.



Cary & Cathi
Carroll

Cary was joined by his lovely wife Cathi and their two daughters, Cassidy and Codee - who all came down from Connecticut. Cary also brought with him a wooden model of a Virginia Class submarine complete with a custom engraved nameplate for our hosts Al & Mary Ann. Additionally he brought two other submarine models and two flags flown from Virginia - all of which were auctioned off by certified auctioneer Al Ptasznik to raise money for our Base treasury. THANKS CARY!

Also joining us at our picnic was our newly elected National Treasurer, Paul Hiser. We congratulated Paul on his recent election and wished him well in his new position at USSVI.

AWARDS PRESENTED & HOLLAND CLUB MEMBER INDUCTED

At our November 8th meeting I presented recognition awards to the following people:

Sandi Anderson – At-Ta-Girl
Curtis Anderson – Commendation
Bill Anderson - First in Class Award
John Lamsens - First in Class Award
John Mosticone - First in Class Award
Jim Lencalis - First in Class Award

In addition to the At-Ta-Girl for Sandi and the Commendation for Curtis, I started a new category of USS Virginia Base awards that I titled “First in Class”. All award recipients received a certificate and the FIC awards included a walnut plaque with our newly redesigned Base seal and customized nameplate on it.



The idea is to honor members in the same correlation that USS Virginia is the first in a new class of nuclear powered, fast attack submarines - these members are considered to be “first in class” because of their work for our Base which brings great credit upon themselves, our Base and USSVI. I also inducted new member John Leonard into the Holland Club. John qualified aboard USS Catfish (SS-339) in 1957 and was joined for this special occasion by his lovely wife, Dottie.

CONGRATULATIONS to all award winners and new Holland Club member John Leonard!

ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR 2015

At our December 13th meeting our Nominating Committee chairman, Thurman Register, announced the slate of officers for 2015, asked for other nominations from the floor, held the election and then inducted the officers for 2015 as follows:

Base Commander - Kenn McDermott
Vice Commander - Pete Fortier
Secretary - Bill Anderson
Treasurer & Membership Chair - Jim Lencalis

You'll notice that these are the same members who have been serving for quite a few years.



I certainly thank our membership for continuing to allow me lead our little band of “Brothers of the ‘Phin” - and I thank our other officers for continuing to assist me so well. However, as I’ve expressed before at meetings and in e-mail - we need one or more members to take a hard look at the possibility of taking the helm. Ideally this would be done sooner rather than later and one way to prepare for that would be to tackle the Base Commander Qual Card - the link for which can be found in our last newsletter posted on our web site.

In addition to our four elected officer positions the following members have agreed to continue in their appointed positions:

Nominating Committee Chairman - Thurman Register
Ways & Means Committee Chairman (and 50/50 raffle coordinator) - John Lamsens
Storekeeper - Bob Kutzenberger
Newsletter Editor - John Mosticone

Greenboard/Straightboard and all the best!



LT, USN (Ret)



Boats Lost This Quarter



JANUARY --

[USS S-36 \(SS-141\)](#) was lost on 20-Jan-1942 when it was destroyed after grounding on Taka Bakang Reef in Makassar Strait, Indonesia, Near Makassar City, the crew were all rescued. Remarks: No known reports of wreckage being salvaged or sighted.

[USS S-26 \(SS-131\)](#) was lost on 24-Jan-1942 with the loss of 46 crew when it was sunk after ramming by USS PC-460 in the Gulf of Panama, 14 miles west of San Jose Light. Remarks: Ship reported dived shortly after sinking. In diveable water off Panamanian coast.

[USS Argonaut \(SS166\)](#) was lost on 10-Jan-1943 with the loss of 105 crew when it was sunk off Rabaul near 05° 155N; 153° 50E; (Another location given as 5° 40S; 152° 02E) Remarks: Water over 1000'

[USS Swordfish \(SS-193\)](#) was lost on or after 12-Jan-1945 with the loss of 90 crew when it was sunk near Yaku Island of Kyushu, water <600' deep near island; (27° 00 N; 128° 40 E). Remarks: Loss declared 15 Feb 45, some use this date.

FEBRUARY --

[USS Shark \(SS-174\)](#) was lost on 11-Feb-1942 with the loss of 59 crew when it was sunk East of Manado, Celebes
Remarks: Loss most likely was the result of one of 3 attacks. 11Feb42 E of Manado, 17 Feb 42 N of Kendari 21 Feb 42 E of Kendari (Ros).

[USS Amberjack \(SS-219\)](#) was lost on 16-Feb-1943 with the loss of 72 crew when it was sunk off Rabaul; Last Contact at 5° 05S; 152° 37E

[USS Scorpion \(SS-278\)](#) was lost on 1-Feb-1944 with the loss of 77 crew when it was sunk East China Sea.
Remarks: WDR date spread is 1-5-44 to 2-24-44

[USS Grayback \(SS-208\)](#) was lost on 26-Feb-1944 with the loss of 80 crew when it was sunk near 25° 47N 128° 45E.
Remarks: Japanese records indicate 26 Feb, US records state 27 Feb. Dateline difference.

[USS Trout \(SS-202\)](#) was lost on or after 29-Feb-1944 with the loss of 79 crew when it was sunk near 22° 40N; 131° 45 E, middle of Phillipines Basin.

[USS Barbel \(SS-316\)](#) was lost on or after 4-Feb-1945 with the loss of 81 crew when it was sunk in southern entrance to Palawan Passage 7° 49.5N; 116° 47.5E Palawan.
Remarks: Loss date could be as late as 6 February, however Japanese records indicate the 4th as the sinking attack date.

MARCH --

[USS F-4 \[ex-SKATE\] \(SS23\)](#) was lost on 21-Mar-1915 with the loss of 19 crew when it foundered off Honolulu Harbor.

Remarks: Hulk raised and reburied off Serria 13 north of Submarine Base, Pearl Harbor.

[USS H-1 \(SS-28\)](#) was lost on 12-Mar-1920 with the loss of 4 crew when it Grounded, Magdalena Bay, Mexico, was sunk in 9 Fathoms while being towed off.

Remarks: Hull reported located in 1995. Return expeditions have not relocated hull. Likely to be buried in sand and uncovered only periodically.

[USS Perch \(SS-176\)](#) was scuttled on 3-Mar-1942 30 Miles NW Soerabia, Java 60 crew were taken prisoner, 52 survived the war.

Remarks: All crew survived sinking and were rescued by Japanese forces. Reportely the wreck has been located and dived. No written report seen.

[USS Grampus \(SS-207\)](#) was lost on or after 5-Mar-1943 with the loss of 72 crew when it was sunk in the Blackett Strait; Possibly in Vella Gulf, last contacts at 4° 55S; 152° 30 E

[USS Triton \(SS-201\)](#) was lost on 15-Mar-1943 with the loss of 74 crew when it was sunk at 0° 09N; 144° 55E

[USS Tullibee \(SS-284\)](#) was lost on 26-Mar-1944 with the loss of 79 crew when it was sunk in operating area just north of Palau. (One man was taken prisoner and he survived the war)

[USS Kete \(SS-369\)](#) was lost sometime on or after 20-Mar-1945 with the loss of 87 crew when it was sunk somewhere between 29° 38N; 130° 02E and Midway.

Remarks: R states probably sunk off Nansei Shoto on or about 20 Mar 1945, WDrR gives date spread of 3-20-45 to 3-31-45

[USS Trigger \(SS-237\)](#) was lost on 28-Mar-1945 with the loss of 91 crew when it was sunk in area 32° 16N 30° 40N by 132° 05E-127° 50E, (Maybe near 32° 16N; 132° 05E).

District Commander Steve Bell



I am hoping that everyone had a good Christmas. I am writing this prior to Christmas assuming the newsletter will be published after Christmas. In any case, Merry Christmas for 2014 and Happy New Year for 2015.

If you have not paid your 2015 dues, both National and Base, you are “dink”. If you have not done that, please take the time to get them in. Your continuance as a member is very important to all of us, both you and the organization. We love having you but it is also important to keep our membership up. Besides, most of us enjoy it very much when we get together somewhere.

Our National leadership continues to get organized. By this I am saying they are approving various members to be heads of committees, working groups, etc. This is necessary as some people have stepped down from positions for various reasons (mostly justified) and this is also what keeps the ball rolling. I am sure that should anything necessary come up, they will act on it accordingly, but to date there is just not that much to inform you on.

I will remind you that on April 20-24, we will be having a Regional Meet at the Cape.

If you are planning on attending, please get your reservations at the hotel (that cost you nothing at this point) and follow up with your registration soon so the base hosting this event can plan better. If you are still up in the air about attending, consider making your hotel registration anyway, you can always cancel them. They do have a few things planned that seem to have good potential, not to mention just meeting up with fellow submariners. I hope to see some of you there.

Again, I have intentions on attending your base meeting in January (weather permitting). I hope to see many of you there. The hospitality that the USS Virginia Base gives me is very much appreciated. And since your new officers (new in the meaning of a new term for them) are installed, I would like to thank them for standing up and taking on those positions. Without folks doing that, we just would not exist. I am sure Mac has some appointed positions that need filling, so please consider taking one of those. None of the positions are really all that difficult or hard to fulfill.

Steve Bell

Commander, District One, Southeast Region

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Minutes for the Month of December 2014 On 12/13/2014

Meeting was held at Anna's Restaurant & Pizzeria Lasagna, pizza and salad were on the buffet menu

19 members and 11 guests were present

Sandi Anderson won the 50/50 raffle and received \$53.00

Ladies were excused

At 1200 Base Commander Kenn McDermott called the meeting to order

Vice Commander Pete Fortier led the Pledge of Allegiance, USSVI Creed and Tolling of the Boats, assisted by Base Storekeeper Bob Kutzenberger

4 Boats were lost during the month of December with the loss of 140 crewmen

Birthdays for the Month of November

Mickey Wins

Thurman Register discussed the Virginia War Memorial. He noted that in the theater there were flags from all branches of the military and various commands but no Dolphin/Submarine flag and so he asked if we could donate one. Base Storekeeper will look into the cost and design of a flag and further discussion will be held next month.

Base Officer elections were held and followed by the swearing in of the officers:

Base Commander - Kenn McDermott

Vice Commander - Pete Fortier

Base Treasurer - Jim Lencalis

Base Secretary - Bill Anderson

Kenn McDermott presents the new HD USS Virginia Base patch

Doug Blaha shared a story about the Russian Mike Submarine

A motion was brought and voted to skip the reading of the reports due to the lack of time.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 1430

Respectfully
Bill Anderson
Base Secretary

TREASURER REPORT

Nov14 to Dec14

Balance as of 13 December:

\$4520.52

DEPOSITS:

50/50 raffle from 11-8 meeting

\$ 53.00

2015 Member base dues

\$ 195.00

2015 Member USSVI dues

\$ 80.00

TOTAL: \$ 328.00

EXPENDITURES:

No expenditures this period

\$ 000.00

TOTAL: \$ 000.00

Increase for report period

\$ 412.84

PAYMENTS PENDING

2015 USSVI Dues payment

TOTAL: \$ 380.00

Payment base on 1yr membership dues for 19 members.

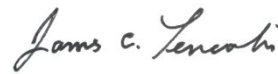
Several members will be paying for LIFE or multiple year dues, additional payments of greater than \$20.00 not reflected in above

MEMBERSHIP

2015 Membership Dues collection status as of 12-13-14:

Have not paid USSVI dues: 3

Have not paid Base: 3



James C Lencalis

COB's Locker

"Field days will continue until moral improves"

Our Base COB position is presently open and we are looking for an able body

submariner to fill the position. Please contact the Base Commander if you feel you have a few minutes to contribute at the meetings.



Chaplin's Corner

Our base Chaplin position is presently open and we are looking for an able body

submariner to fill the position. Please contact the Base Commander if you feel the calling to serve.



Welcome Aboard

Chris Knaggs!

Holland Club Members

Paul Benton	1958 SSR-269
Dick Brown	1959 SS-424
Tom Chaffee	1963 SS-331
Bill Hiesley	1957 SS-403
Dick Kanning	1962 SS-240
Bill Lewis	1963 SS-272
Mickey Martin	1957 SS-352
Kenn McDermott	1962 SS-385

Richard Moore	1960 SS-269
Ron Randolph	1963 SSBN-617
Thurman Register	1961 SS-523
Pat Rodgers	1951 SS-482
Warren Rucker	1951 SS-523
"Doc" Smith	1956 SS-476
Bob Stolarz	1962 SS-395
Bill Wellner	1961 SS-422
Sanford Harvey	1964 SS-488
Doug Blaha	1964 SSN-584
Bob Kutzenberger	1964 SS-214
Ron Irons	1959 SS-394
Al Ptasznik	1964 SSBN-610
John Leonard	1957 SS-339

Base Eternal Patrol

Jack Winn (founding Commander)

Sid Padgett (WWII sub vet)

Bob Mitchell FTC(SS), USN (Ret)

Crew Birthdays this quarter



Richard .Brown
Thomas Chaffee
David L Jonker
H. Gene Knight
David A Kratch
Robert Stolarz
Jon Washko
Sanford Harvey
Diederick Kanning
Robert Kutzenberger
James R. Randolph
John Leonard, Jr.
William Lewis, Jr
John H. Ortiz
Alfred E. Ptasznik, Jr.
William Wellner Jr

Upcoming Events

01/10 base monthly meeting
02/14 base monthly meeting
03/14 base monthly meeting

Elected Officers:

Commander – Kenn McDermott
kennmcd@pewterguy.com 434-286-2529

Vice Commander – Pete Fortier
p4tier@comcast.net

Secretary – Bill Anderson
ftb1ss@comcast.net

Treasurer – Jim Lencalis
j.lencalis@comcast.net

Appointed Officers:

Newsletter Editor - John Mosticone
jmosticone@gmail.com 540-672-4398

Ways & Means - John Lamsens
jlamsens@verizon.net

Nominating Committee - Thurman Register
thurman@tbrinc.com

Storekeeper - Bob Kutzenberger
kutzb@comcast.net 804-556-6932

Ships Store

Be sure to visit our Ships
Store at:



<http://ussvirginiabase.org/ship-s-store.html>

Base Bulletin Board

RAO Bulletin Dec 2014 VA Health Care Delays Update 07 Goal is Immediate Care

Veterans' health care facilities should strive to provide immediate mental health care for any who request it, the leader of the Department of Veterans Affairs said Wednesday in Atlanta amid concern in neighboring Alabama that average wait times are too long. Secretary Robert McDonald spoke with reporters while in the city to attend a conference for veterans who own businesses. McDonald's visit came

after U.S. Rep. Martha Roby of Montgomery's criticism of the average wait time of 67 days for an appointment in mental health care at the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System in recent federal statistics. A June audit found the wait was around 57 days. The system has disputed those figures because of incorrect appointment record-keeping.

Roby, speaking on the House floor Tuesday, said that doesn't excuse the wait time. "But if, after all this time, we haven't figured out how to properly schedule patients at the VA, we have worse problems than I thought," the Republican congresswoman said. "I don't expect it to magically improve overnight, but we shouldn't be moving in the wrong direction."

McDonald said the Atlanta VA Medical Center has no wait times for mental health appointments, adding "I'd like to get to be able to that point more around the country." He said the VA is working with universities to encourage more people to work in mental health care. He also defended the agency's work in Alabama, where the system's director was fired for neglect of duty. A federal appeals board upheld the firing last month.

"We know we have issues in Alabama," McDonald said. "We changed the leadership. We've sought disciplinary action against the previous leaders." The Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System serves nearly 42,000 veterans through major medical facilities in Montgomery and Tuskegee and outpatient clinics in Monroeville, Fort Rucker and Dothan in Alabama and in Columbus, Georgia. [Source: The Associated Press | Kathleen Foody | Dec. 10, 2014 ++]

ST

Submitted by Richard Moore

Military retirees and family members who use Tricare For Life will be required to start filling longterm prescriptions by mail starting Feb. 14, 2014.

Under an interim rule published by the government Wednesday, retirees and family members age 65 and older must begin filling their maintenance medication prescriptions by mail when they come up for renewal on or after Valentine's Day next year. The requirement applies to maintenance medications only, not those needed for acute illnesses. It also will not apply to prescriptions covered by other health insurance.

The Defense Department has determined that nearly half the 70 million prescriptions filled for Tricare beneficiaries at retail pharmacies in fiscal 2012 were for Tricare For Life beneficiaries, at a cost of \$2.2 billion to the government. Since DoD pays 17 percent less for maintenance medications filled by mail compared with those filled at retail stores, Pentagon analysts concluded that costs could be trimmed significantly — by at least \$120 million a year — if Tricare for Life beneficiaries were required to use mail order. The requirement also will save beneficiaries money: a 90-day refill of a generic medication costs nothing by mail, but require a \$5 copayment for a 30-day prescription at retail stores.

Brand name drugs cost \$13 for a 90-day prescription by mail but \$17 for a 30-day prescription at a store.

Over the next month, Tricare will begin publicizing the pending change. Affected beneficiaries also will receive letters.

Beneficiaries will be able to opt out of the five-year initiative after one year.

Their obligation starts when they first fill a prescription through mail order, according to the rule published in the Federal Register. To make up for any delays between ordering refills and receiving them, the new rule will allow beneficiaries to receive up to two 30-day refills at a retail store during the transition. Public Health Service Rear Adm. Thomas McGinnis, the Defense Health Agency's pharmacy operations chief, said recently that

Tricare and Express Scripts, Tricare's pharmacy contractor, have established a telephone concierge service to help beneficiaries make the switch. With a patient's permission, Express Scripts will contact the prescribing physician to help transfer the prescription. Express Scripts also will staff its toll-free number to serve customers as well as pharmacists and physicians. Case-by-case waivers may be granted out of person¹⁰ al hardship, emergency or "other special circumstance," according to the rule. Waiver requests would have to be made through Express Scripts.

Reading Locker

Another Sailor Bar

by Paul D Benton^{©1998}

Most of the bachelors, both unmarried and geographical, frequented the Honolulu saloons during week days. The favorite haunts of Pearl Harbor submariners were all nestled among other similar establishments within a square block area of sleazy joints known as the "Gut." The sleaziest joint was easily distinguished from the other seething bars by a large white sign stretched across the entire width of the building, proclaiming in faded blue letters "Dolphin Club".

The sign, unobtrusive during the day, was illuminated after dark by bare white light bulbs around its periphery, beckoning to passing sailors with a hint of the excitement awaiting them inside. The sign was especially convincing when the front door was open and familiar bar room odors, sounds of the juke box, and an occasional boisterous laugh drifted outside with the heavy air. The front door was usually open — so electric fans, suspended from the high ceiling, their propeller-like blades slowly

twirling above the patrons' heads, moved the warm air laden with odors of cigarette smoke, spilled draught beer, cheap perfume, and sweat to King Street, where it was absorbed into the tropical night.

Inside the Dolphin Club, wobbly square tables, crowded between the bar and a shuffleboard table pressed against the wall, graced the rude wooden floor. The tables extended to the rear of the long room, finally sharing a scarred, linoleum-covered dance floor with a pool table, which offered patrons crooked queue sticks and a diversion for two quarters.

The Long bar ran from the crusty neon-lighted front window almost the entire length of the wall to the dance floor. The bar's mahogany breakfront was most ornate, with carved pillars supporting a peaked canopy. A carved laurel wreath adorned the apex of the canopy's triangular cover, which reached nearly to the high flat ceiling, giving the whole affair a sense of classical symmetry. Large beveled mirrors, between the top shelf and canopy of the breakfront, reflected the visages of patrons as they stood at the bar observing themselves. This breakfront, without a scratch on its hard varnished mahogany surface- which had aged gracefully despite the influence of twenty five years of a seamy smoke filled atmosphere- presented a uniform dark reddish patina.

The same could not be said for the venerable bar: Nearly devoid of varnish, it was stained black with rot near the draught spigots where countless bartenders had slopped beer while filling myriad of glasses. Cigarette burns, deep scratches from wiping broken glass, and even patrons' initials- carved with mindless abandon- added to its shabbiness. High wobbly chrome-legged stools paralleled the long bar; dirty

white cotton escaped from holes in their green and red plastic covering, making the business part of the stool as lumpy as it looked. Never mind. Bar stools were only for loose women and surface skimmers. However, the redeeming feature of the bar and this entire dim, steamy joint was the shiny brass foot rail along its shoe-scuffed front, held in the talons of large, carved, standing eagles.

It was a pleasure for a submarine sailor to stand at this bar, one foot resting on that polished brass rail, smoking and joking with his shipmates. This was a great hall where Knights, some more pure than others, usually in competition with shit-kicking music on the juke box, recounted tales of adventure and great deeds- some with more to say- others with little to add to the conversation. Nonetheless, all had their turn as each man waited for a tale to finish, because to interrupt was bad style. They recounted stories of amusement, inside information, self-flagellation, the escapades of other men, whom they knew, and just plain "can you top this" bullshit. The most absurd narrations had to do with women, sexual prowess and liberty ashore.

These tales fell into the category of "Sea Stories", which are exaggerations of what a submarine sailor actually believes to be true or even plausible. However, the definitions of true and plausible were always open to question. I never swapped sea stories with my shipmates, that I didn't recall, and often shared, the immortal words of B.J. Stark concerning this subject.

" ... Remember, fairy tales begin with, 'once upon a time' and sea stories begin with, 'now this ain't no shit...'"

Standing at the bar in the Dolphin Club, especially when alone, was always an experience to remember.

"Hey, sailor! What you boat?" The short, seamy Samoan barfly, Moony, sitting three stools away asked...

"To Be Continued"

USS William D. Porter submitted by Doug Blaha

Subject:
USS William D. Porter ... an amazing story
A BIZARRE BIT OF U.S. NAVAL HISTORY ABOUT WHICH MOST AMERICANS KNOW > "ZILCH"

From November 1943, until her demise in June 1945, the American destroyer 'William D. Porter' was often hailed whenever she entered port or joined other Naval ships - with the greetings: "Don't shoot, we're > Republicans!"

For a half a century, the US Navy kept a lid on the details of the incident that prompted this salutation. A Miami news reporter made the first public disclosure in 1958 after he stumbled upon the truth while covering a reunion of the destroyer's crew. The Pentagon reluctantly and tersely confirmed his story, but only a smattering of newspapers took notice.

In 1943, the Willie D as the Porter was nicknamed, accidentally fired a live torpedo at the battleship Iowa during a practice exercise. As if this weren't bad

enough, the Iowa was carrying President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the time, along with Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and all of the country's W.W.II military brass. They were headed for the Big Three Conference in Tehran, where Roosevelt was to meet Stalin and Churchill. Had the Porter's torpedo struck the Iowa at the aiming point, the last 60 years of world history might have been quite different. The USS William D Porter (DD-579) was one of hundreds of assembly line destroyers built during the war. They mounted several heavy and light guns, but their main armament consisted of 10 fast-running and accurate torpedoes that carried 500-pound warheads.

This destroyer was placed in commission on July 1943 under the command of Wilfred Walker, a man on the Navy's fast career track. In the months before she was detailed to accompany the Iowa across the Atlantic in November 1943, the Porter and her crew learned their trade, experiencing the normal problems that always beset a new ship and a novice crew. The mishaps grew more serious when she became an escort for the pride of the fleet, the big new battleship Iowa. The night before they left Norfolk, bound for North Africa, the Porter accidentally damaged a nearby sister ship when she backed down along the other ship's side and her anchor tore down the other ship's railings, life rafts, ship's boat and various other formerly valuable pieces of equipment. The Willie D merely had a scraped anchor, but her career of mayhem and mishaps had begun.

Just twenty four hours later, the four-ship convoy, consisting of Iowa and her secret passengers, the Willie D, and two other destroyers, was under strict instructions to maintain complete radio silence. Since they were going through a known U-boat feeding ground, speed and silence were the best defense. Suddenly, a tremendous explosion rocked the convoy. All of the ships commenced anti-submarine maneuvers. This continued until the Porter sheepishly admitted that one of her depth charges had fallen off her stern and exploded. The 'safety' had not been set as instructed. Captain Walker was watching his fast track career become side-tracked. Shortly thereafter, a freak wave inundated the ship, stripping away everything that wasn't lashed down. A man washed overboard and was never found. Next, the fire room lost power in one of its boilers. The Captain, at this point, was making reports almost hourly to the Iowa about the Willie D's difficulties. It would have been merciful if the force commander had detached the hard luck ship and sent her back to Norfolk. But, no, she sailed on.

The morning of 14 November 1943 dawned with a moderate sea and pleasant weather. The Iowa and her escorts were just east of Bermuda, and the president and his guests wanted to see how the big ship could defend herself against an air attack. So, the Iowa launched a number of weather balloons to use as anti-aircraft targets. It was exciting to see more than 100 guns shooting at the balloons, and the President was proud of his Navy.

Just as proud was Admiral Ernest J King, the Chief of Naval Operations; large in size and by demeanor, a true monarch of the sea. Disagreeing with him meant the end of a naval career. Up to this time, no one knew what firing a torpedo at him would mean. Over on the Willie D, Captain Walker watched the fireworks display with admiration and envy. Thinking about career redemption and breaking the hard luck spell, the Captain sent his impatient crew to battle stations. They began to shoot down the balloons the Iowa had missed as they drifted into the Porter's vicinity. Down on the torpedo mounts, the crew watched, waiting to take some practice shots of their own on the big battleship, which, even though 6,000 yards away, seemed to blot out the horizon. Lawton Dawson and Tony Fazio were among those responsible for the torpedoes. Part of their job involved ensuring that the primers were installed during actual combat and removed during practice. Once a primer was installed, on a command to fire, it would explode shooting the torpedo out of its tube. Dawson, on this particular morning, unfortunately had forgotten to remove the primer from torpedo tube #3.

Up on the bridge, a new torpedo officer, unaware of the danger, ordered a simulated firing. "Fire 1, Fire 2," and finally, "Fire 3." There was no Fire 4 as the sequence was interrupted by an unmistakable whooooooshhhhhing sound made by a successfully launched and armed torpedo.

Lt H. Steward Lewis, who witnessed the entire event, later described the next few minutes as what hell would look like if it ever broke loose. Just after he saw the torpedo hit water on its way to the Iowa and some of the most prominent figures in world history, Lewis innocently asked the Captain, 'Did you give permission to fire a torpedo?' Captain Walker's reply will not ring down through naval history, although words to the effect of Farragut's immortal 'Damn the torpedoes' figured centrally within. Initially there was some reluctance to admit what had happened, or even to warn the Iowa. As the awful reality sunk in, people began racing around, shouting conflicting instructions and attempting to warn the flagship of imminent danger. First, there was a flashing light warning about the torpedo which unfortunately indicated the torpedo was headed in another direction.

Next, the Porter signaled that the torpedo was going reverse at full speed! Finally, they decided to break the strictly enforced radio silence. The radio operator on the destroyer transmitted "Lion (code for the Iowa), Lion, come right." The Iowa operator, more concerned about radio procedure, requested that the offending station identify itself first. Finally, the message was received and the Iowa began turning to avoid the speeding torpedo. Meanwhile, on the Iowa's bridge, word of the torpedo firing had reached FDR, who asked that his wheelchair be moved to the railing so he could see better what was coming his way. His loyal Secret Service guard immediately drew his pistol as if he was going to shoot the

torpedo. As the Iowa began evasive maneuvers, all of her guns were trained on the William D. Porter.

There was now some thought that the Porter was part of an assassination plot. Within moments of the warning, there was a tremendous explosion just behind the battleship. The torpedo had been detonated by the wash kicked up by the battleship's increased speed. The crisis was over and so was Captain Walker's career. His final utterance to the Iowa, in response to a question about the origin of the torpedo, was a weak, "We did it." Shortly thereafter, the brand new destroyer, her Captain and the entire crew were placed under arrest and sent to Bermuda for trial. It was the first time that a complete ship's company had been arrested in the history of the US Navy.

The ship was surrounded by Marines when it docked in Bermuda, and held there several days as the closed session inquiry attempted to determine what had happened.

Torpedo man Dawson eventually confessed to having inadvertently left the primer in the torpedo tube, which caused the launching. Dawson had thrown the used primer over the side to conceal his mistake. The whole incident was chalked up to an unfortunate set of circumstances and placed under a cloak of secrecy.

Someone had to be punished. Captain Walker and several other Porter officers and sailors eventually found themselves in obscure shore assignments. Dawson was sentenced to 14 years hard labor. President Roosevelt intervened; however,

asking that no punishment be meted out for what was clearly an accident.

The destroyer William D. Porter was banished to the upper Aleutians. It was probably thought this was as safe a place as any for the ship and anyone who came near her. She remained in the frozen north for almost a year, until late 1944, when she was re-assigned to the Western Pacific.

However, before leaving the Aleutians, she accidentally left her calling card in the form of a five-inch shell fired into the front yard of the American Base Commander, thus rearranging his flower garden rather suddenly. In December, 1944, the Porter joined the Philippine invasion forces and acquitted herself quite well. She distinguished herself by shooting down a number of attacking Japanese aircraft. Regrettably, after the war, it was reported that she also shot down three American planes. This was a common event on ships, as many gunners, fearful of kamikazes, had nervous trigger fingers.

In April, 1945, the destroyer Porter was assigned to support the invasion of Okinawa. By this time, the greeting "Don't Shoot, We're Republicans" was commonplace and the crew of the Willie D had become used to the ribbing. But the crew of her sister ship, the USS Luce, was not so polite in its salutations after the Porter accidentally riddled her side and superstructure with gunfire.

On 10 June, 1945, the Porter's hard luck finally ran out. She was sunk by a plane which had (unintentionally) attacked it from underwater. A Japanese bomber made almost entirely of wood and canvas slipped through the Navy's defense.

Having little in the way of metal surfaces, the plane didn't register on radar. A fully loaded kamikaze, it was headed for a ship near the Porter, but just at the last moment veered away and crashed alongside the unlucky destroyer.

There was a sigh of relief as the plane sunk out of sight, but then it blew up underneath the Porter, opening her hull in the worst possible place.

Three hours later, after the last man was off board, the Captain jumped to the safety of a rescue vessel and the ship that almost changed world history slipped astern into 2,400 feet of water. Not a single soul was lost in the sinking. After everything else that happened, it was almost as if the ship decided to let her crew off at the end.

Kit Bonner, Naval Historian

Russia's Second Next-gen Nuclear Sub Enters Service

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submitted by Richard Moore

On Monday, the Russian Navy's second Borey-class nuclear-powered submarine, the Aleksandr Nevsky, has entered service.

The sub is part of a next-generation class that will be the backbone of Russia's sea-based nuclear deterrent for decades to come.

The ceremony marking the submarine's entry into service was initially scheduled for Dec. 21, but was postponed by two days.

Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu was the highest-ranking government official present at a navy shipyard in the northern city of Severodvinsk, for the ceremony of the Aleksandr Nevsky raising her new flag.

"The St. Andrew's flag raised today is the boat's combat emblem, which symbolizes her readiness to defend this nation's interests in seas and oceans," Shoigu said.

The submarine had been undergoing sea trials since October 2010 and completed them in September.

It was also involved in test-firing Bulava intercontinental ballistic missiles, the designated nuclear weapon for all Borey-class subs. *"We had some 14 sea voyages. The boat proved to be quite reliable. She is also very fine in terms of speed and maneuverability,"* Vasily Tankovid, Captain first class of the Aleksandr Nevsky, told RT. Aleksandr Nevsky is the first series-built submarine of the class. Its predecessor, the first-in-class sub Yury Dolgoruky, has been part of the Navy since January.

"Aleksandr Nevsky has completed all its trials. All the specifications laid out in the project have been fully confirmed," said Nikolay Semakov, chief engineer at the Sevmash shipyard, which builds Borey-class subs. "I can assure you that the Navy is getting a modern boat on a par with its foreign counterparts."

Two additional Borey-class submarines are currently in the making, with Vladimir Monomakh undergoing sea trials and expected to enter service next year and Knyaz Vladimir currently being built.

As many as eight submarines of the class may eventually be brought into service. Five of them, starting with the Knyaz Vladimir, will feature a significantly upgraded version of the Borey design.

They can carry 20 of the solid-propellant Bulava ICBMs, as opposed to 16 for the original version.

The Borey-class subs are 170 meters long, can dive up to 450 meters and travel at speeds of up to 29 knots (54 kilometers per hour) when submerged. In addition to the ballistic missile launchers the subs are equipped with 533-millimeter torpedo tubes and carry RPK-2 Viyuga anti-submarine missile systems. Each vessel has a crew of 107 sailors and officers, and are fitted with a floating rescue chamber to evacuate all personnel in an emergency.

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