

**MINUTES OF THE USSVI NORTHERN VIRGINIA BASE
MEETING HELD ON SATURDAY, Oct 14, 2017**

The Base CDR, Chuck Martin, called the meeting to order at 1105 on Oct 14, 2017 at American Legion Post 162, Lorton, VA, and welcomed all members and guests.

MEMBERS AND GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Steve Bishop, **Cathy Chatham**, Howard Chatham, Brian Haller, Steve Jaeger, Chuck Martin, **Mary Lou Naughton**, **Mike Naughton**, Mike Niblack, Tim Oliver, **Joe Phoenix**, **Anita Varone**, Mike Varone, John Vlattas, Penny Wallace, George Wallace, and **Woody Woodworth**. (17 total)

 **Holland Club Member**

 **Associate Member**

 **Guest**

The Chief of the Boat, Mike Varone, led all hands in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Base Chaplain, Steve Jaeger, delivered the Invocation.

After a moment of silence, The Base VCDR read the list of boats lost in the month of October. These were:

USS Seawolf (SS-197)	Oct 3, 1944
USS S-44 (SS-155)	Oct 7, 1943
USS Wahoo (SS-238)	Oct 11, 1943
USS Dorado (SS-248)	Oct 12, 1943
USS Escolar (SS-294)	Oct 17, 1944
USS Shark (SS-314)	Oct 24, 1944
USS Darter (SS-227)	Oct 24, 1944
USS Tang (SS-306)	Oct 25, 1944
USS O-5 (SS-66)	Oct 29, 1923

The Chief of the Boat tolled the bell twice in Remembrance of the 22 USSVI NOVA Base members on Eternal Patrol.

In Memoriam: CAPT Terry, Camilleri, USN, Ret; SKCM (SS) L.V.”Red” Denson; and RADM Thomas David Ryan, USN, Ret. – 10/23/17 interment at Arlington National Cemetery.

MEETING MINUTES

The minutes of the September 2017 meeting were previously distributed by e-mail. There were no comments or corrections and were accepted as published.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Treasurer, Steve Jaeger, reported that the base bank account balance was \$9,463.14 in September; receipts were \$ 142.14 and expenses were \$766.35 with a subtotal of \$ 8,838.93 as of Oct 14, 2017. Minus the \$1460.59 in Walmart restricted use funds, leaves the discretionary total of \$ 7,378.34. The Treasurer's report was accepted as read.

MEMBERSHIP

NOVA Base has 82 members

- 40 Holland Club members

- 3 World War II members
- 32 Regular members
- 10 Associate members

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Base VCDR summarized the discussion at the **Executive Board** meeting held on September 28th, including:

- Membership
- The 2018 Base budget
- K4K plans
- Base website
- Scouting Recognition program
- The next EXCOM meeting will be held on Nov 8th. (no Base meeting in Nov)

VCDR: Nothing to report.

COB: Mike Varone reported that he has met with some submariners for breakfast and one cook who qualified on the USS Albacore may be interested in joining the Base.

Public Relations Mike Varone reported:

- Still pursuing the USSVI Highway Naming initiative with Prince Williams County.
- 2017 D.C. Area Submarine Association Fall Social
 - Friday, November 3rd, at the Fort Myers Officers' Club, Patton Hall in the Koran Room (on the second deck)
 - 1800-2100 with hors d'oeuvres, various beverages, and friendly conversation
 - Cost is \$35
 - Attire is "open collar": For Men - collared shirt, suit pants, slacks, and sport coat optional; For women - simple dress/skirt, nice slacks, khaki pants, blouse, knit top, etc.
 - RSVP by October 31 at <https://einvitations.afit.edu/inv/anim.cfm?i=358557&k=01644A0C7E50>

Historian: We are seeking a volunteer to be the Base Historian.

Veterans Affairs: The Base CDR reported:

- TRICARE Changes are effective 1 January 2018
 - For complete information on changes go visit website at <https://tricare.mil/About/Changes>
 - TRICARE for Life – NO CHANGE
 - TRICARE Standard and Extra becomes TRICARE Select
 - TRICARE PRIME Group A (prior 1/2018) enrollment cost: \$282.60 (Ind), \$565.20 (fam) plus Cost of Living adjustment
 - TRICARE SELECT Group A (prior 1/2018) enrollment cost: \$0
 - Must enroll annually during Open Enrollment Period

Chuck reminded us all to go to the DEERS website to ensure our information is correct in their records.

Storekeeper: Howard Chatham reported he had Challenge coins, several decals, a Submarine Crossing sign, and patches for sale.

Kap(ss) 4 Kid(ss): Steve Bishop reported:

1. The date for our next visit to Fairfax INOVA Hospital's pediatric oncology ward is Thursday, October, 26, 2017. We will muster at 2:00 PM in the first floor lounge near the outside playground near the INOVA green parking garage.
2. Our next K4K visit to the Walter Reed facility in Bethesda, MD will be on Thursday, November 16th at 10:15 AM. We intend have the USSVI National Chairman for Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS), John Riley, and the USSVI National Artist, Tom Denton, attend this session with us.
3. Our last visit was to the UVA Charlottesville Medical Center on September 26th when we visited with 33 children. One visit was particularly poignant with a 6-year old boy who hadn't spoken to anyone in two days. His immune system was compromised so we could not enter his room. We stood at his doorway and spoke to him and his mother bedside while our nursing hostess donned her hospital white version of our submarine yellow "Anti-C's" and mask to deliver the K4K cap, certificate, coloring book, challenge coin, and written directions for the parents to arrange a submarine visit in Norfolk. The boy held up his Honorary Submariner certificate (like Tom Brady holding up the Super Bowl trophy) and said clearly and loudly to us, "Thank you." He smiled ever so broadly as he donned his cap. As we were leaving his doorway and soaping up to go to the next room, a female orderly standing about 5 ft tall in the hallway looks up to ~ 6 ft 4 inch Mike Naughton and asks him, "Why do you guys come all the way down from Northern VA to do this?" Mike then leads her over to the door to the boy's room and points to him and says, "Do you see that smile on his face in there? That's why we do it."

Scouting Coordinator

- Chuck Martin, our Base CDR, reported that he attended two Eagle Scout Courts of Honor last month. Later today Chuck and Steve Bishop will attend the Court of Honor for three Eagle Scouts: Bradford Burgeson, Alexander Hansen, and Alexander Upright of Troop 152. The Court of Honor is being held at Vienna Presbyterian Church at 124 Park Street NE Vienna today at 5:30 pm.

NJROTC/School Program Coordinator: Chuck Martin reported:

- Brian Haller, Woodie Woodworth, Mike Varone, and Chuck Martin met with the NJROTC leaders
- Potomac Senior High School NJROTC is hosting an Area 5 Sanctioned meet on Saturday October 21, 2017. Volunteers are needed. Contact MAC(SS) Robert George at 703-441-4314 georgera@pwcs.edu if you can volunteer.
 - 0730-1500
 - Lunch and light breakfast will be provided
 - Potomac Senior High School 3401 Panther Pride Dr Dumfries, VA 22026

Submarine League Tim Oliver reported:

- Upcoming NSL Events
 - 2017 History Seminar October 31st - The Hunt for Red October: Fact and Fiction a panel discussion comparing a real Cold War submarine mission (which has been declassified) and the movie at the United States Navy Memorial
 - EVENT TIMES: 3:30 PM AND REPEATED (live) AT 7:30 PM
 - DOORS OPEN AT 3:00 PM AND 7:00 PM
 - \$10 TICKETS ON SALE at <https://www.navalsubleague.org/events/history-seminar/>
 - 35th Annual Symposium November 1st – 2nd at Hyatt Regency Crystal City
 - Registration for the 35th Annual Symposium is open. Here is the link to the hotel in order to receive the NSL's Group Rate (extended to midnight Monday 16 October.): <https://aws.passkey.com/event/15793309/owner/10336/landing?gtid=aaae1634772cc122dfe4d3336c5b84c3>
 - George Wallace will have an Author Vendor table during the symposium. He has offered to allow USSVI NOVA use of ½ of his table to set up a USSVI Outreach and Recruitment Display. We have done this for the last four (4) years. We need volunteers to assist Penny in manning the table. There is no cost to exhibitor's only. Please contact Penny Wallace at Wallace.penny@gmail.com

2018 Nominating Committee: Brian Haller, vice chair of the committee, reported:

- Known nominees are:
 - Commander – Chuck Martin
 - Vice Commander – George Wallace
 - Secretary – Steve Bishop
 - Treasurer – Steve Jaeger
- The Floor was opened for any additional nominees. None were nominated.
- Brian asked the nominees if they each accept the nomination; all four responded “yes.”
- The election ballot will be sent to members by November 17.
- Election ballot must be received by Steve Bishop by December 9th.
- Votes will be counted and the results announced during the Base meeting on December 9th

OLD BUSINESS:

- 2017 WWII SubVet Memorial Service in Kings Bay, GA.
 - The event is from November 1-5, 2017 with the WWII Submarine Veteran Memorial Service being held on Friday November 3, 2017
 - Information and Registration package was previously e-mailed to members.
- USS Scorpion (SSN 589) 50th Anniversary Memorial
 - May 25 - 27, 2018 in Norfolk, Va.
 - CNO, Admiral John M. Richardson, as keynote speaker for the memorial service.
 - Request each USSVI Base to donate \$99.00 in honor of the 99 crewmembers lost on SCORPION on May 22, 1968.

- EXCOM voted to place a donation of \$99.00 in the 2018 Base Budget.
- **Military & Veteran Legal Resource Guide** By Virginia Office of the Attorney General
 - Released in July 2017
 - Outstanding resource for Military & Veterans
- Joint USSVI National and Groton Base statement
 - On Monday, August 21st the leadership of USSVI and the leadership of Groton Base met jointly with their respective attorneys. Various tax issues and issues involving the operation of the Clubhouse and Bar were discussed, along with possible resolutions.
 - Both groups have come to an understanding that no laws were knowingly violated by either group, that the Groton Base has been compliant, and while all issues have not yet been resolved, an agreement was reached to proceed jointly to resolve the remaining issues in a manner that will allow us to proceed together in the best interests of both USSVI and of Groton Base.
- The 2018 USSVI National Budget has been posted on the USSVI National website under the “Organization” section of “Documents”
- USSVI Membership Policy for 2018 Calendar Year
 - Any Armed Services Active Duty member is eligible to join USSVI as a regular or associate member
 - Membership dues for first calendar year are waived.
 - Restrictions
 - An application must be sent into the National Office.
 - Membership card will not be issued until their first renewal in December of 2018.
 - Member will receive only the electronic version of the American Submariner during 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

- USSVI Charitable Foundation (CF) Brotherhood Fund has established both a Hurricane Harvey and a Hurricane Irma fund. You can donate to either or both by sending a check made out to the USSVI Charitable Foundation with a note in the memo line as to which fund. Send your check to the USSVI National Office.
- USSVI K4K Week is celebrated around Veterans Day (November 11). USSVI NOVA is celebrating K4K Week by visiting Walter Reed Bethesda on November 16th with the USSVI National K4K Chair and Artist both joining us as we premier/roll out our USSVI NOVA K4K coloring book.
- News from the Fleet and previous information emailed this month will be included in the minutes

Special Presentations by the base CDR:

Chuck Martin presented four Dick Higman Awards to Brian Haller, Woodie Woodworth, Penny Wallace, and Cathy Chatham. Dick Higman was the first USSVI Base CDR, and the four awards were from our Base CDR for each individual's specific and significant contributions to the NOVA Base activities.



The Base CDR then presented the USSVI 2017 Meritorious Award for Civic Involvement to Mike Varone.

This award goes to the member who “ most exemplifies the US Submarine Veteran’s motto, “Pride Runs Deep” and who by his efforts and involvement in local veterans affairs, parades, and school activities, has promoted the concept of honor, duty, and pride of the US Navy Submarine Force to the General Public.”



WELL DONE TO OUR FIVE AWARD WINNERS!! THANK YOU.

The Binnacle List Please keep the following in your prayers:
Al Anceravage, Linda Clement, Barbara Harmody, Steve & Darlene Jaeger for Darlene’s mom, Tony Poblete, Anita Varone, and Ray Stone.

For the Good of the Order, the VCDR read the list of birthdays for October: Al Anceravage, Louise Decker, Mike Kwiecien, Helen Laulor, Lou Maruzo, Ed Mattran, George Wallace, and the US Navy. The birthdays for November are: Rod Batiza, Art Bivens, Vickye Lowry, Francis McNamara, Dennis Mohr, Eva Waylett, and the United States Marine Corps.

The 50/50 raffle was won by Steve Jaeger.

The Benediction was delivered by the Base Chaplain.

The next meeting will be held on December 9, 2017, at American Legion Post 162 at 1100. We will then have our holiday luncheon at Madigan’s Waterfront Restaurant in Occoquan, VA.

The CDR adjourned the meeting at 11:55 AM.

After a short break, we assembled to hear our guest speaker, CDR JOHN VLATTAS, USN (ret.), Program Manager, SEA073 / Director of Undersea Technology within Team Submarine.

CDR John Vlattas served on the USS Portsmouth, USS Salt Lake City, and was then the Commanding Officer of the USS Dolphin. He then transitioned and became an Acquisition Professional. He holds a Doctorate in Theology and is fluent in both Greek and French.

His office does not procure systems for submarines. Instead, it works with industry, ONR, and DARPA to develop technology to insert on submarines. They work on DOD 5000 series Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 4,5,6, and 7 systems.

His focus is on getting systems placed on submarines doing tactical operations forward. His intent is to prove if these systems actually work or not at sea.

There are three main thrusts to his office's efforts in the area of Hull, Mechanical and Electrical (HM&E) systems (not sensor systems):

1. Fixed R&D infrastructure (large quiet test facilities at Idaho's Lake Pend Oreille)
2. Long Range R&D / Advanced Submarine Development
3. Rapid Prototyping, Sensors and Life Cycle Projects

The submarines of interest to his office are those coming in the future. Already, the USS Virginia class block 5 ships are past CPA and opening for his office's efforts. However, SEA 073 is looking at developing systems for inclusion on USS Virginia Block 6 subs and the Ohio Replacement class (Columbia) subs.

His office, among other systems, is looking at an advanced submarine control system (like the bow thrusters on cruise ships) to replace our outboards. Additionally, the promising new CO2 scrubbers will be much smaller and will use rechargeable pellets of amine – no more smelly clothes coming home after extended stays on the subs!! YEAH!

The Base CDR thanked John for his meaningful presentation and presented him with the USSVI NOVA Base Challenge coin.



Base CDR Chuck Martin and Guest Speaker CDR John Vlattas

Meeting Minutes Respectfully Submitted by
Stephen C Bishop
Secretary, USSVI Northern Virginia Base

USSVI News

Date: 9/10/2017
To: Distribution List

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NEWS-01: 2017 USSVI AWARDS ONS
Submitted by: Ray Wewers on 9/10/2017

2017 AWARDS ONS

NEGRI FREDERICK W. BORGMANN - BREMERTON BASE

LINK TERRY L. BOLEN - CORVINA BASE
 CHARLES W. BUTCHER - MARE ISLAND BASE
 BRIAN A. DAUGHERTY - HAMPTON ROADS BASE
 THOMAS S. McFADDEN - TARHEEL BASE
 CHARLES R. PETITT - CAROLINA PIEDMONT BASE
 GENE E. RUTTER - TARHEEL BASE
 BRIAN WATSON - BATON ROUGE BASE
 GENE A. WEISBECKER - USS CHICAGO BASE
 CHARLES (CHIP) WISARD – USS ASHEVILLE BASE
 BOWFIN BASE
 HAMPTON ROADS BASE
 MARBLEHEAD BASE

DCOY WARVEL (TOM) WILLIAMS - BRAZOS VALLEY BASE

MERITORIOUS AWARD (INDIVIDUAL)

 DOUGLAS A. BRYANT – MARBLEHEAD BASE
 JAMES IRWIN - ALBANY – SARATOGA BASE
 PAUL ORSTAD - GROTON BASE
 MICHAEL R. VARONE – NORTHERN VIRGINIA
 WILLIAM W. WHELAND – TARHEEL BASE

MERITORIOUS AWARD (BASE)

 USS CHICAGO BASE

GOLDEN ANCHOR

 CLASS ONE – HAMPTON ROADS BASE
 CLASS TWO – NO ENTRY SUBMITTED
 CLASS THREE – CENTRAL TEXAS BASE
 CLASS FOUR – USS SNOOK BASE

SILVER ANCHOR

 LARRY L. FERRELL - MAINE BASE
 DOMINICK GRIMALDI - GROTON BASE

JACK JEFFRIES – CAROLINA PIEDMONT BASE
THOMAS R. SHANNON – MARBLEHEAD BASE
DAVID M. VROOMAN – BLUEBACK BASE

BASTURA DON and DALE JOHNSON

NEWSLETTER AWARDS

CLASS ONE - HAMPTON ROADS BASE - ' CURRENTS '
CLASS TWO - GOLD COUNTRY BASE - ' CLEAR THE BAFFLES '
CLASS THREE – CAROLINA PIEDMONT BASE – “ PIEDMONT
PERISCOPE “
CLASS FOUR - CUTTLEFISH BASE – ' W. R. T. '

OVERALL WINNER – HAMPTON ROADS BASE - ' CURRENTS '

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NEWS-01: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Submitted by: John E. Markiewicz on 9/27/2017

This morning, Wednesday the 27th of September 2017, Jeff Walsh, Groton Base Commander, and I signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) spelling out our agreement on how the Joe Negri Clubhouse and the Bar operation existing therein will be operated and managed in the years to come.

This MOU was negotiated and approved by the Board of Directors of USSVI and the Executive Board of the Groton Base after being reviewed by the attorneys for both Boards to ensure that everything contained therein is legal and proper.

We are moving forward with a spirit of cooperation and look forward to a successful and positive business relationship in the clubhouse and bar operation.

John Markiewicz
USSVI National Commander

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CHARITABLE-01: Hurricane relief funds

Submitted by: Alfred H Singleman Jr on 10/2/2017

Shipmates,

We now have 2 Hurricane Relief Funds. One for those who were hit by Harvey and one for those hit by Irma. You can donate to either or both by sending a check made out to the USSV Charitable Foundation with a note in the memo line as to which fund you want to donate to. Send your checks to: USSVI National Office, POB 3870, Silverdale, WA 98383

For those shipmates requesting assistance please send your request to Brotherhood Fund Chairman Ken Nichols at ken2lorna@bellsouth.net

Thanks for your support.

Pride Runs Deep,
Al Singleman, Jr. Charitable Foundation President

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NEWS-01: Kap(SS)4Kid(SS) Week
Submitted by: John Riley on 10/9/2017

Shipmates,

US Submarine Veterans Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Week is just around the corner!

"No one stands so tall as when they stoop to help a Child" - Abraham Lincoln

Each year K4K Week is celebrated around Veterans Day (November 11th).

In addition to other K4K visits made during the year, I encourage USSVI Bases to schedule and make a K4K visit to Kids as close to Veterans Day as they can. This is done to:

1. Obtain local and national recognition of USSVI's Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program. This in turn will let our communities learn about the USSVI and why we exist.
2. Take advantage of a period when Child Care Facilities are more likely to welcome visits by Veterans.
3. Have Sub Vets interact with Children, their families and facility staff at a time when the appreciation for Veterans is at its highest.
4. Bring joy to sick Children and to the Sub Vets who visit them!

Please order any supplies early so that the USSVI National Storekeeper, or whoever your supplier is, has time to fill your orders.

"We begin by imagining that we are giving to them, we end by realizing that they have enriched us" - Pope John Paul II

Thanks for all that you do for sick Children by participating in this Life Changing USSVI Community Outreach Program!

John Riley
National Chairman -

Kap(SS) 4 Kid(SS) Program

US Submarine Veterans Charitable Foundation K4K Video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/DaHOrDe4U5E>

K4K Guidelines link: http://www.ussvi.org/documents/Charitable_CFDocuments_K4K-2012_GUIDELINES.pdf

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**Underwater Warfare News
(Selected)**

Trident Refit Facility Holds Change of Command

Anthony Casullo, DVIDS Hub, September 5

KINGS BAY, Ga. - Trident Refit Facility Kings Bay (TRF) held a change of command and retirement ceremony onboard Naval Submarine Base, Kings Bay, Sept. 5.

During the change of command, Capt. Paul L. Dinius relieved Capt. Gunter I. Braun as TRF's commanding officer. The time-honored ceremony marked an end to Braun's leadership at TRF, while a retirement ceremony marked an end to his Naval career.

Rear Adm. Randy Crites, Commander, Submarine Group Ten and guest speaker for the change of command, said Braun's aggressive planning and solution-based leadership were crucial to the top quality and timely maintenance of the submarine fleet at Kings Bay.

"Over the last two years, if you look at the performance record of Trident Refit Facility, you will see about an 85 percent accomplishment rate in achieving their submarine maintenance periods on time or early," Crites said. "There's no other shipyard in the world that can match that, and to do so with the complexity of the Ohio-class submarines is simply amazing."

Braun credited the readiness and success of TRF to the people who work there.

"This facility would be useless without the great men and women who show up every day to operate TRF and in doing so, ensure our nation's strategic assets are kept at maximum readiness," Braun said of the dedicated workforce.

Braun was presented the Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service as commanding officer from May 2015 to September 2017. During this period, he expertly commanded TRF and led the workforce through 32 pierside refit periods, including eight dry-dock refit periods, totaling more than 4,400,000 man-hours in submarine maintenance and support.

"I turn over a workforce today of which I am, and you should be, very proud," Braun stated. "Not only do we continue to excel in submarine maintenance and have done so continuously for the past 30 years, but we continue to set the bar for other shipyards and facilities like TRF across the fleet."

Braun retired immediately following the change of command and was honored for his 38 years of Naval service, which began after he enlisted in September 1979.

Retirement guest speaker, Navy Captain Jim Ransom (Ret.) acknowledged Braun's and the Braun family's distinguished Naval service.

"Captain Braun, you fulfilled your obligations, successfully discharged your duties, and you've maintained the integrity and trust required of a great Naval officer. The country is better off for your service and I am a better man today for serving with you," Ransom said. "Today is not just about Captain Braun and his service to our country, today a Navy family is retiring. To Captain Braun's family, you too have sacrificed. It takes an exceptional family to support a husband, father, grandfather and son throughout his military career, and I hope you are as proud of him as he is of you."

Dinius was commissioned in 1992 and has served at sea on five U.S. Navy combatants and four flag staffs, to include Command of USS HELENA (SSN 725). He has 25 years of active duty Naval service and has deployed to the Western Pacific, North Atlantic and the Caribbean.

Dinius addressed the men and women of TRF for the first time as the thirteenth commanding officer and described the tremendous value of the command.

"I am incredibly honored by the opportunity to take over as your commanding officer," Dinius said. "The CNO presented as his top priority in his Design for Maintaining Maritime Superiority to 'Maintain and modernize the undersea leg of the strategic deterrent triad.' Trident Refit Facility Kings Bay, and the talented and highly dedicated men and women who work here,

is at the very heart of maintaining our current fleet and preparing for our next generation of Columbia-class submarines and meeting the CNO's highest priority for the Navy. I look forward to being part of this incredible team and our continued evolution as the premier submarine repair facility in the Navy."

Pacific Submarine Force Holds Change of Command

MC2 Shaun Griffin, Navy.mil, September 11

PEARL HARBOR – Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet and Commander Task Force 134 held a change of command ceremony at the submarine piers on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 11. Rear Adm. Daryl Caudle relieved Rear Adm. Frederick "Fritz" Roegge. Roegge assumed command of the Pacific Submarine Force in September 2015 and oversaw 60 percent of the entire U.S. Navy Submarine Force. This included oversight of the nation's ballistic missile submarine fleet operating in the Pacific on behalf of Air Force General John E. Hyten, Commander of U.S. Strategic Command.

"I was recently asked what I was most proud of during my tour as commander of the Pacific Submarine Force," said Roegge. "What I'm most proud of is all of you, the people of the submarine force." During his command, Roegge deployed 40 submarines through 37 attack and guided missile submarine deployments and 43 strategic deterrent patrols in support of five combatant commands.

Roegge continued to praise the submarine force and stressed the importance of the Sailors who crew submarines.

"At the end of the day, the thing that makes our submarine force the greatest the world has ever known isn't the submarines and their impressive technology; it's the Sailors who take them to sea," said Roegge. "Without the crew, the only thing a submarine is capable of is to sit alongside a pier and rust."

Roegge coordinated the incorporation of enlisted women in submarines which resulted in two integrated crews with female enlisted Sailors. He laid the groundwork for further expansion of opportunities to include integrating two Virginia-class attack submarines with female officers. At the ceremony were guest speakers Gen. John E. Hyten, U.S. Air Force, commander, U.S. Strategic Command and Adm. Scott Swift commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet. "At heart, Fritz is a visionary," said Hyten. "Fritz's vision and leadership propelled the Pacific Submarine Force to the highest state of material, operational, and personnel readiness."

Swift also commended Roegge for his successful tour leading the Pacific Submarine Force. "The success of submarine operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is a testament to Fritz's superb leadership, as well as his dedicated mentorship," said Swift. During the ceremony, Roegge received a Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service.

Roegge was nominated for a third star and elevation to the rank of Vice Admiral. He will assume duties as the president of the National Defense University in Washington D.C. As Caudle assumed command, he thanked Roegge for a smooth turnover and for leaving him with a highly disciplined staff. "Fritz's work ethic, dedication, commitment, and decision-making skills have set the bar high for me to maintain and advance his vision and successes," said Caudle.

"Fortunately, Fritz professionally orchestrated a comprehensive and well-designed turn-over process that significantly helped me understand the details and nuances of such a demanding job." The Pacific submarine force provides anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, precision land strike, intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance and early warning and special warfare capabilities to U.S. Pacific Command and strategic deterrence capabilities to U.S. Strategic Command.

To watch the full video of the change of command, visit us on facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/SUBLANT/>

Navy's Nuclear Fleet Shipyards In Bad Shape, Report Finds.

Geoff Ziezulewicz, Navy Times, September 12

Despite the Navy's plans to improve its public shipyards, the four facilities and their equipment remain in "poor condition," featuring drydocks that are more than 100 years old and other shortcomings that will take decades to fix, according to a government watchdog report released Tuesday.

The naval shipyards in Norfolk, Va., and Portsmouth, ME, and the shipyard and intermediate maintenance facilities at Puget Sound, Wash., and Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, are vital to maintaining the nuclear fleet, the Government Accountability Office report states.

But while they are critical to maintaining the Navy's nuclear-powered fleet — 10 carriers and 70 boats — "their overall condition remains poor," according to the report.

Backlogged maintenance and restoration projects for the facilities have grown by 41 percent over the past five years, the report states.

Fixing them will cost roughly \$4.86 billion and won't be completed for nearly 20 years, according to the GAO.

A Navy analysis found that shipyard capital equipment has an average age that now exceeds its expected useful life, the report states.

The shipyards are not fully meeting the Navy's needs, partially due to these poor conditions, according to the GAO.

Inadequate facilities and equipment have led to maintenance delays that contributed to more than 1,300 lost operational days for carriers and 12,500 lost operational days for submarines from fiscal year 2000 to 2016, the report states.

As a result of the ongoing problems, the Navy will be unable to conduct more than a third of its 218 planned maintenance periods over the next 23 fiscal years, according to the GAO.

The report found that the average age of the 18 drydocks used to perform maintenance is about 89 years, with the oldest completed in 1891 and the newest completed in 1962.

Several drydocks can't support existing boat classes, while others can only support vessels when assisted by equipment or tidal schedules, the GAO reports.

As existing carriers and boats are retired and new classes come into the fleet, use of the existing drydocks will become even more limited, the report states.

Drydock flooding "during certain delicate depot maintenance tasks" risks worker safety, ship damage and potential environmental impacts," according to the GAO.

Shipyards equipment features submarine shaft lathes built in the 1930s and plate rollers built in the 1950s, and requests for repair have jumped about 28 percent from 2008 to 2016.

"The actual need for repairs may be greater than the number of repair requests indicates, according to shipyard officials, because shop-level employees are reluctant to submit repair requests when there is little hope of obtaining funding for a repair," the report said.

Navy data shows that 48 buildings across the four shipyards have been condemned or are unusable for ship repair, including some that are on the waterfront and could be used to improve the repair process, the report states.

"Shipyards officials noted that the shipyards were not designed for their current mission and that the layout, size of facilities, pier space, utilities, and safety systems contribute to reducing the efficiency of the shipyards for repair work," according to the GAO.

While the Navy has developed capital investment plans for shipyards and equipment, the sea service's approach does not fully address the problems because plans are missing key elements, according to the report.

Missing parts of the plans include no full assessment of the shipyards' resource needs, regular management reviews of progress, analytically based goals and reporting on progress to Congress, according to the GAO.

"Unless it adopts a comprehensive, results-oriented approach to addressing its capital investment needs, the Navy risks continued deterioration of its shipyards, hindering its ability to efficiently and effectively support Navy readiness over the long term," the report states.

The GAO recommends the Navy develop a comprehensive investment plan, conduct regular management reviews and regularly report to Congress.

The Pentagon concurred with the recommendations and noted planned actions to address the issues.

USS Cheyenne Holds Change of Command Ceremony

MC2 Michael Lee, COMSUBPAC Public Affairs, September 14

PEARL HARBOR – The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Cheyenne (SSN 773) held a change of command ceremony at the submarine piers on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 14. Cmdr. John T. Gonser relieved Cmdr. John W. Stafford as the commanding officer of Cheyenne and her crew.

Rear Adm. Richard A. Correll, commander, Submarine Group Seven, was the guest speaker for the ceremony and praised Stafford for his achievements and dynamic leadership during his three-year tenure.

"Cmdr. Stafford achieved success because he gets out of the way and lets the officers, chief petty officers and crew do their jobs," said Correll. "Our very best commanding officers, such as John here, know that their job is to really know their Sailors, and to help every member of their crew be successful by putting them in situations where their strengths are magnified." Under Stafford's leadership, the crew of the Cheyenne earned the 2015 Squadron Seven Engineering "E" award, 2016 Battle Efficiency "E" award and the 2016 Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award for superior performance in battle efficiency competition.

Stafford thanked the members of the Cheyenne crew, his family, the support on the waterfront and her namesake city. "Thank you to the great city of Cheyenne, Wyoming," said Stafford. "One of my biggest regrets was not making it to Cheyenne Frontier Days, but all the crew members, who did attend, remarked at the love the city has for its submarine. Thank you to the patriots of middle America." During the ceremony, Stafford received a Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service.

As Gonser assumed command, he praised his new crew for the incredible opportunity to continue carrying out his duty to uphold the reputation and demands of the Cheyenne. "This ship and crew have an impressive history and reputation," said Gonser. "While we should take pride in being part of this legacy, here is my challenge to you, and my promise to you. Together we will serve our country whenever and wherever our nation's security demands and live to make those who came before you proud of us."

Following his relief, Stafford will report to commander, Submarine Group Seven in Yokosuka, Japan.

Homeported in Pearl Harbor, USS Cheyenne is named after the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and was the last of the 62 Los Angeles-class submarines to enter service in the U.S.

Navy. Commissioned Sept. 13, 1996. Cheyenne measures more than 360-feet long and weigh more than 6,000 tons when submerged.

USS John Warner To Be First Norfolk-Based Submarine With Women On The Crew Brock Vergakis, The Virginian-Pilot, September 18

Women have served on submarines since 2011, but none have done so in Norfolk. The Navy says that will change next summer when the USS John Warner welcomes its first female crew members: a slate of three officers.

Navy officials say having women serve on submarines in Norfolk will greatly expand the talent pool and allow more sailors with spouses in the Navy to serve in the same geographic area. Virginia-class submarines like John Warner typically carry 15 officers and about 117 enlisted sailors.

Cmdr. Burt Canfield, the John Warner's skipper, says that while adding women will obviously be a change, he doesn't expect the integration to be a big deal for his crew.

"Most guys – 99.99 percent – they just want to get the work done," Canfield said. "There's more than enough work to go around. And if you waste your time doing stupid stuff, it just makes it harder to get your work done.

"At its most fundamental, if you can't be professional, if you can't achieve excellence, then you're just going to suffer – and you should suffer."

Female officers already serve aboard 11 submarines in four other ports, including some ballistic-missile submarines with two crews each that rotate between deployments.

Canfield noted that when men aboard the USS Wyoming secretly recorded women changing clothes, they were swiftly punished. That problem isn't unique to submarines, and sailors have been charged by the Navy with similar offenses aboard other types of ships, as well.

This past year the USS Michigan in Bangor, Wash., became the first submarine to integrate enlisted women into its crew, and the Navy is recruiting more women to serve on ballistic missile subs like it. The first enlisted women are expected to report aboard Virginia-class attack subs like the John Warner after 2020.

All officers aboard the John Warner share the same bathroom, which includes one shower, one toilet and one sink. An easily reversible sign hangs outside the bathroom to indicate whether a woman or a man is inside.

The sign got some use this past week when a female judge advocate general, public affairs officer and reporter rode on the John Warner for a brief underway assignment traveling from Naval Station Norfolk to Groton, Conn.

The Navy says there were no infrastructure changes needed to accommodate female officers on any of its classes of submarines.

For enlisted women, modifications will be made to Ohio-class ballistic-missile and Virginia-class attack submarines during scheduled maintenance downtime. That will include a dedicated living space and bathroom facility solely for women with the rank of E-6 and below, and a toilet and shower facility within the quarters for chief petty officers.

Beginning with the future USS New Jersey now undergoing construction, all Virginia-class and Columbia-class ballistic submarines are being designed and built to be gender-neutral.

Alabama Blue Holds Change of Command Ceremony

MC1 Amanda Gray, Navy.mil, September 19

BANGOR, Wash. – The Blue crew of the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarine USS Alabama (SSBN 731) welcomed a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony, Sept. 18.

Cmdr. Jeff Yackeren, from Darien, New York, relieved Cmdr. Paul Reinhardt, from Middletown, Virginia, during the ceremony held at the Bangor Chapel.

"It has truly been a distinct honor and privilege to be your commanding officer," said Reinhardt. "I thank you for giving me 100 percent every day. I have had the extreme fortune of serving on four Battle "E" boats. What makes Alabama Blue so different and special is the camaraderie and sense of teamwork that I have experienced nowhere else in my career." Reinhardt assumed command of Alabama's Blue crew on Dec. 18, 2014. During his leadership, the crew completed four strategic deterrent patrols, with three consecutive patrol extensions, and four refit periods. The crew received the 2016 Retention Excellence Award, 2017 Battle Efficiency "E" Award, 2015 and 2016 Red and Green Navigation "N" Awards, 2016 Trident Submarine Outstanding Performance Award, and the 2015 and 2016 Supply Blue "E" Awards. Reinhardt's will next serve in Washington D.C. at the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations on the Nuclear Weapons Policy Branch.

"Cmdr. Yackeren, I am confident that you are the right person to lead Alabama Blue through a very critical time in her history," said Reinhardt. "The extended refit patrol (ERP) scheduled for next year, will be challenging. But I believe that your experience as executive officer on USS West Virginia (SSBN 736) will help the crew navigate through the qualifications and certifications needed such that the transition coming out of the ERP will be smooth. Congratulations on getting here. The crew is lucky to have you."

Yackeren comes to Alabama Blue from Pearl Harbor, where he served as the submarine operations officer at Commander, Submarine Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

"It is a great honor and privilege to have been selected to relieve Cmdr. Reinhardt," said Yackeren. "I am well aware of the awesome responsibility I have to lead these men. I appreciate the trust instilled in me by the submarine force and the commodore, and am humbled to be in the company of so many dedicated Sailors and the people that support us all."

Alabama is one of eight Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines homeported at Naval Base Kitsap-Bangor, providing the most survivable leg of the nation's strategic deterrent forces.

USS West Virginia Blue Changes Command

Lt. j.g. Tyler Whitmore, Navy.mil, September 19

KINGS BAY, Ga. – The Ohio-class ballistic-missile submarine USS West Virginia (SSBN 736) (Blue) held a change of command at the Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay chapel, Sept. 18.

Capt. Joe Coleman was relieved by Cmdr. Jared Wyrick as commanding officer of the West Virginia Blue crew.

Retired Capt. Steven Gillespie was the guest speaker at the ceremony and stressed how vital West Virginia's mission is to the continued safety of the United States. "In terms of importance, our nuclear deterrent is not only the submarine force's and the Navy's most important mission, it is the Department of Defense's most important mission," said Gillespie. "Since its conception, our strategic deterrent has fostered world peace by preventing major power conflict, and no other element of our strategic deterrent has contributed more than this

little southeastern corner of Georgia and the SSBNs like West Virginia."

Coleman, a Pittsburgh native, spoke of his crew's unparalleled professionalism and dedication to their mission. "The warriors of West Virginia know that what they do is absolutely necessary and, most importantly, that what they do makes the world safer," said Coleman. "You are professionals. You are warriors. You are national treasures and it was the privilege of my life to lead you for a time."

Wyrick, a Little Rock, Arkansas native, was previously assigned as a defense fellow for U.S. Rep. Randy Forbes of Virginia. His most recent operational assignment was aboard USS Alabama (SSBN 731) (Blue) where he served as the executive officer. Wyrick relayed his excitement in becoming the commanding officer of West Virginia Blue. "I believe in the submarine force. I believe in the importance of the strategic mission, and I believe that what you guys do each and every day is the reason we are the number one priority in the department of defense," said Wyrick. "I am excited to join you guys as a proud member of West Virginia."

Coleman leaves West Virginia to join the staff of the chief of naval operations in Washington D.C.

West Virginia was commissioned in 1990 and is the third U.S. Navy ship to be named for the state of West Virginia.

Navy Accepts Delivery of the Future USS Colorado

Staff, Sea Power Magazine, September 21

WASHINGTON — The Navy accepted delivery of the future USS Colorado (SSN 788), the 15th submarine of the Virginia-class, Sept. 21, the service announced in a release of the same date. The submarine's sponsor is Annie Mabus, daughter of the 75th Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus.

The ship began construction in 2012 and is scheduled to commission next spring. This next-generation attack submarine provides the Navy with the capabilities required to maintain the nation's undersea superiority.

"Colorado's delivery brings another Block III Virginia-class submarine to the fleet within budget. The submarine's outstanding quality continues the Program's tradition of delivering combat ready submarines to the fleet," said Capt. Mike Stevens, Virginia-class submarine program manager. "The Colorado is the most capable Virginia-class submarine bringing advanced capabilities and technology to the Navy fleet."

Colorado is the fifth Virginia-class Block III submarine. Block III submarines feature a redesigned bow with enhanced payload capabilities, replacing 12 individual vertical launch tubes with two large-diameter Virginia Payload Tubes, each capable of launching six Tomahawk cruise missiles. This, among other design changes, reduced the submarines' acquisition cost while maintaining their outstanding warfighting capabilities.

USS Columbus Changes Command Following Western Pacific Deployment

MC2 Michael Lee, SUBPAC Public Affairs, September 21

PEARL HARBOR – The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Columbus (SSN 762) held a change of command ceremony at the submarine piers on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 21.

Cmdr. Peter French relieved Capt. Albert Alarcon as the commanding officer of

Columbus.

Retired Navy Capt. William Drake was the honored guest speaker for the ceremony, and commended Alarcon for Columbus' numerous accomplishments and leadership during his three-year tour aboard Columbus. "Your legacy is not this great warship, we're standing on, but the crew of highly trained, highly successful submarine professionals seated before you," said Drake. "This is your legacy. You gave this job your all and the results speak for themselves."

Capt. Robert Ronscka, commander, Submarine Squadron Seven, awarded Alarcon with a Meritorious Service Medal for outstanding achievements and service.

Prior to his relief, Alarcon thanked his crew and attributed successful missions of Columbus to the hard work of the crew. "Rather than focusing on the individual, we all know that it is the crew that brings a front-line fast-attack submarine to life, and it is the crew that allows her to accomplish the missions so vital to our freedom, our democracy and our national security," said Alarcon. "Their story is one of resiliency, commitment to each other, ownership and dedication to the mission."

As French assumed command, he thanked Alarcon for a smooth transition and the crew for the warm welcome as their new commanding officer. "Thank you for the warm welcome and support to make this a seamless turnover," said French. "You accomplished every mission tasked to you, and you did exceptionally well. It is an honor to serve with you, and I look forward to the next several years together."

Following his command at sea, Alarcon will report for duty at Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

USS Columbus is the 51st Los Angeles-class submarine and the 12th improved version of this class, which includes a vertical launch system for Tomahawk cruise missiles and an improved hull design for under-ice operations. In June 1994, she completed a post-shipyard maintenance availability in Groton, Conn., after initial construction and shakedown operations. In September 1994, the ship conducted an inter-fleet transfer to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, and joined the U.S. Pacific Fleet Submarine Force.

USS Cheyenne Holds Change Of Command Ceremony

Staff, Ho'okele, September 22

The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Cheyenne (SSN 773) held a change of command ceremony at the submarine piers on Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Sept. 14. Cmdr. John T. Gonser relieved Cmdr. John W. Stafford as the commanding officer of Cheyenne and its crew.

Rear Adm. Richard A. Correll, commander, Submarine Group Seven, was the guest speaker for the ceremony and praised Stafford for his achievements and dynamic leadership during his three-year tenure. "Cmdr. Stafford achieved success because he gets out of the way and lets the officers, chief petty officers and crew do their jobs," Correll said. "Our very best commanding officers, such as John here, know that their job is to really know their Sailors, and to help every member of their crew be successful by putting them in situations where their strengths are magnified." Under Stafford's leadership, the crew of the Cheyenne earned the 2015 Squadron Seven Engineering "E" award, 2016 Battle Efficiency "E" award and the 2016 Marjorie Sterrett Battleship Award for superior performance in battle efficiency competition.

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members, who did attend, remarked at the love the city has for its submarine. Thank you to the patriots of middle America.” During the ceremony, Stafford received a Legion of Merit for his exceptionally meritorious service.

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Following his relief, Stafford will report to commander, Submarine Group Seven in Yokosuka, Japan.

Homeported in Pearl Harbor, USS Cheyenne is named after the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and was the last of the 62 Los Angeles-class submarines to enter service in the U.S. Navy. Commissioned Sept. 13, 1996. Cheyenne measures more than 360-feet-long and weighs more than 6,000 tons when submerged.

DEVRON 5 Welcomes New Commodore and Establishes New Squadron

MC1 Amanda Gray, DVIDSHub.net

Commander, Submarine Development Squadron 5 (DEVRON 5), held a combined change of command and squadron establishment ceremony at Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Sept. 26.

Capt. Stephen Mack, from Silver Spring, Maryland, relieved Capt. Robert Gaucher, from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, as commodore during the ceremony held at Barb Hall.

In addition to welcoming a new commodore, the Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron (UUVRON) 1 was established, with Cmdr. Scott Smith, from Hartford, South Dakota, becoming its new commanding officer.

“It’s very important to note that today is not only a very important day for Capt. Steve Mack and me, but it is a historical day for the Navy, Submarine Force and DEVRON 5,” said Gaucher. “Today we are transitioning our UUV Detachment into the first UUV Squadron. Why is this historical? It’s because in standing up UUVRON 1, it shows our Navy’s commitment to the future of unmanned systems and undersea combat.”

Gaucher assumed command of DEVRON 5 March 23, 2016. During his leadership, Gaucher supported the development and launched the Navy’s first Unmanned Undersea Vehicle squadron, oversaw the successful deployments of the Seawolf-class fast attack submarines USS Connecticut (SSN 22) and USS Jimmy Carter (SSN 23), and provided Immediate Superior in Charge-level oversight of all three Seawolf-class submarines during major shipyard maintenance periods. “I have truly enjoyed this tour and hate to turn over the reins, but if you read Steve Mack’s biography, you’ll see he has an exceptional resume and I know that he’ll do great as commodore,” said Gaucher. “To the team of DEVRON 5, it has been an honor to be your commodore.” Gaucher’s next assignment will be in Norfolk, Virginia, where he will serve as the Chief of Staff for Commander, Submarine Force Atlantic.

“We have a strong group of devoted leaders in our commanding officers, officers-in-charge, and staff here on the DEVRON 5 team,” said Mack. “I am excited to be here serving with you and will endeavor to do my best every day to mentor, motivate, lead, drive, and work with you best to achieve your full personal and professional potential while we strive to reach our team goals in support of the submarine force and our great nation.” Mack comes to DEVRON 5 from U.S. Pacific Command, where he served with the current operations division.

DEVRON 5 is charged with multiple submarine warfare mission areas to include submarine rescue operations and the activities of its three Seawolf-Class submarines. DEVRON 5 is responsible for developing and testing new submarine warfare capabilities, including the use of Unmanned Undersea Vehicles.

The US Navy Has Created Its First Ever Underwater Drone Squadron

Joseph Trevithick , The Drive, September 28

The U.S. Navy has created its first ever dedicated underwater drone unit, Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Squadron One, or UUVRON 1, splitting it off from a secretive submarine unit in the process. The decision highlights the steadily growing importance of unmanned craft within the service, which hopes to have dedicated operational unmanned undersea elements by the end of the decade, and across the U.S. military in general.

The Navy formally activated UUVRON 1 at a ceremony at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center in Keyport, Washington. At the same time, the new organization replaced a smaller detachment that had been part of Submarine Development Squadron Five (DEVRON 5). This unit still contains a variety of unique elements, including the USS Jimmy Carter spy sub, which recently returned from a shadowy, but apparently successful mission, as well as the Detachment Undersea Research and Development, which has been associated with those covert activities in the past.

“Today we are transitioning our UUV detachment into the first UUV squadron,” U.S. Navy Captain Robert Gaucher, the outgoing head of DEVRON 5 said during the event. “Why is this historical? It's because in standing up UUVRON 1, it shows our Navy's commitment to the future of unmanned systems and undersea combat.”

The previous Detachment Unmanned Undersea Vehicles was already a relatively young unit. It only received its first underwater drone, a torpedo shaped vehicle known as a Large Training Vehicle 38, in August 2014.

“This is certainly a key milestone,” U.S. Navy Lieutenant Brian Nuss, then the officer in charge of the detachment, said at the time. “The future large-diameter vehicles will come in 2020 and in order for the detachment to fully prepare for the delivery of those vehicles we have to start with the tactics, training and procedures now to make it a successful program in the future.”

The implication here would be that, at least for a period, the Navy planned for UUVRON 1 to reach its full operational capability at some point in 2020. It is possible that the service may be able to get the squadron fully up and running sooner, depending on how the state of the training pipeline to staff the necessary slots and what additional equipment it needs to acquire.

Another possibility is that UUVRON 1 will continue to focus on research and development and test evaluation, while the Navy works to establish operational unmanned undersea units. It could be those organizations that the service expects to be ready to go by 2020. Whatever the case, the capability is important and it's a long time coming. By 2020, the Navy will have spent two decades working on achieving the broad goals outlined in its unmanned undersea vehicle master plans.

The service published the first of these white papers in 2000 and issued a new version in 2004. Seven years later, Seapower Magazine reported there was another updated document, but that it was classified.

“We actually have action plans on all the missions we are trying to achieve,” U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Matthew Klunder, then the director of intelligence, surveillance and

reconnaissance capabilities within the Navy's Information Dominance unit, told Seapower about the new plan. It "covers every spectrum," from a military missions, such as mine hunting and surveillance, to humanitarian assistance and research roles.

It's very likely that some of all of the missions in the 2011 roadmap were the same or similar to the nearly a dozen roles outlined in the 2004 document, which is publicly available. Some of these were intelligence gathering, time critical strike, anti-mine warfare, anti-submarine warfare, communication relaying, and force protection against enemy special operations forces and combat divers and terrorists. In addition, the Navy said it could be possible that a final unmanned undersea vehicle design could be modular, able to carry a number of payloads, including expendable weapons or remote sensors, depending on the needs of the mission.

In a speech on Feb. 3, 2016, and in line with the so-called "Third Offset" strategy to stay technologically ahead of potential enemies, then Secretary of Defense Secretary Ashton Carter said the U.S. military as a whole would be investing \$600 million in a variety of unmanned undersea systems. It's "a new capability you'll be seeing a lot more of" and would be part of larger plans for "making our ships and aircraft work together in ways that they haven't before but technology makes possible," he told sailors during the event in San Diego, California.

This suggested a significant increase over the Navy's budgeting at the time. In the fiscal year 2016 budget proposal, the service asked for just shy of \$5 million for various undersea drone projects, less than five percent of the annual expenditure Carter was suggesting. At present, the majority of the Navy's existing underwater drones fall into one of two categories, either being focused on mine hunting or employed in oceanographic mapping and research roles. In a bizarre episode in December 2016, members of China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) snatched one of the latter vehicles, commonly known as gliders, out of the water in the South China Sea, before unceremoniously returning it days later.

The benefits in both of these cases are relatively clear cut. Gliders can help gather information about the ocean and sea floor faster and cheaper than sailing a large research vessel along the same routes. It is possible that they may be able to get into areas that would be too shallow or narrow for a larger ship, as well. They are far more persistent than a manned vessel as well, allowing for collection of data over a far larger timeframe.

When it comes to mines, on land or at sea, using a remote sensor of some kind to identify an object help keeps personnel away from danger. A drone can move in very close to an object to examine it with relatively little risk and possibly disarm it without having to send out a specialized team. All of this helps commanders maneuver safely through potentially contested and congested waterways. Naval mines, including improvised ones that non-state actors are crafting, are a serious threat to both commercial shipping and naval vessels.

At the same time, the Navy is working on a so-called Large Displacement Unmanned Undersea Vehicle (LDUUV), as part of a program known as Snakehead. Detachment Unmanned Undersea Vehicles's Large Training Vehicle 38 had been a surrogate for this vehicle, the first prototypes of which are expected to be in the water by 2019, according to USNI News.

Not surprisingly, UUVRON 1 is slated to receive the first experimental LDUUV. There are also future plans for extra large systems that could operate as either a remote controlled or autonomous mini-submarine or even have the ability to be optionally manned if need be. In 2015, a team of Huntington Ingalls Underwater Solutions Group, Bluefin Robotics, and Battelle demonstrated on such vehicle Proteus. The next year, Boeing showed off the huge Echo Voyager, claiming it could operation underwater for up to six months.

There's no real definitive idea of what these vehicles might look like in the end, those most of the notional concepts are shaped like little subs. In 2014, though, the U.S. Navy showed off a underwater drone that looked and moved like a shark.

As of earlier in 2017, the Office of Naval Research was working on an unmanned flying craft that could hit the water and then turn into a subsurface vehicle, though purely as a proof of concept. A number of private companies are also working on similar convertible water craft that are both manned and unmanned.

Whatever it looks like, the Navy's initial goal for the final Snakehead is a design that can conduct a variety of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance functions. This could include gathering intelligence on enemy ships or facilities ashore, patrolling waterways for items of interest, or gathering information about a body of water, beach, or other landing side ahead of an attack naval or amphibious operation.

Again, the benefit of a using a drone for these functions is that it offers a lower cost and reduced risk option, especially when attempting to gather information about heavily defended or otherwise restricted areas. With regards to unmanned undersea vehicles, it also reduces the burden on larger submarines, allowing them to focus on higher priority missions that require their more expansive intelligence gathering and weapon systems.

The option to use a unmanned vehicle for these jobs will likely only become more important in the coming years, as well. Though we at The War Zone more often talk about concepts such as "anti-access and area denial" in terms of integrated air defense networks, many of the U.S. military's potential opponents are exploring similar arrangements at sea.

In May 2017, the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) said it was beginning construction of an expansive sensor net in the South China Sea for "environmental" purposes. Of course, these nodes could just as easily end up configured to keep watch for submarines and in a conflict, it would be especially useful to be able to find the exact locations of the nodes and attempt to size up their capabilities without risking detection in a manned boat in the process.

Further versions of Snakehead could carry actual weapons or electronic warfare payloads, to disable underwater sensors and mines or attack other undersea vessels, surface ships, or targets on land, depending on the final configuration. Though not mentioned specifically, it is possible that multiple LDUUVs could operate as a single swarm to confuse, distract, or overwhelm enemy defenses, or operate in combination with small underwater drones for that purpose. Networked together and connected to manned submarines, surface ships, or even aircraft, one or more of these unmanned underwater craft could just extend the situational awareness for the whole group along a broad front.

"I can think of so many missions that unmanned systems can help out," U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Robert Girrier, then Director of Unmanned Warfare Systems within the Navy's top Unmanned Systems Office, said during a talk at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in February 2016. Citing a desire for unmanned systems to be more of an integral part of operations in general, U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Mike Manazir, then Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Warfare Systems, shut down the office, also known as N99, in January 2017.

Exactly what sort of systems and tactics will work or not is likely to be UUVRON 1's primary concern regardless of whether it is considered an operational or trials unit. If the Navy sticks to its existing plans, we should start seeing some clues about what conclusions they've arrived at in the next few years.

US Navy To Commission Newest Virginia-Class Submarine Washington

Staff, Naval-Technology.com, October 6 (CDR Note: USS Washington was commissioned on October 7, 2017)

The US Navy is set to commission its future Virginia-class fast attack submarine, the future USS Washington (SSN 787), at Naval Station Norfolk. The 377ft-long navy boat is the 14th Virginia-class nuclear submarine and the fourth Virginia-class Block III submarine. It will be the third vessel to be named after the US state of Washington.

US Navy Under Secretary Thomas Dee said: "The future USS Washington is among the most technologically advanced platforms in the world. "This submarine not only represents the spirit, ingenuity, and strength of the American people but also recognises the critical role that the State of Washington provides to our national security."

With a width of 34ft, the Virginia-class submarine has a displacement capability of approximately 7,800t and can move at a speed of more than 25k. Construction on the US Navy's \$2.6bn future USS Washington started in 2011.

Block III Virginia-class submarines are equipped with a redesigned bow that can replace 12 individual launch tubes with two large-diameter Virginia Payload Tubes, with each capable of launching six Tomahawk cruise missiles. The vessels have been specifically designed to operate in the world's littoral and deep waters while carrying out anti-submarine and surface ship warfare, special operation forces support, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions.

The Virginia-class fast attack vessels are developed as part of a construction contract between General Dynamics' Electric Boat Division and Huntington Ingalls Industries' (HII) Newport News Shipbuilding.

While the keel on the future USS Washington was laid on 11 November 2014, the submarine was christened on 15 March last year and delivered to the US Navy on 25 May.

USS Washington Joins The Submarine Fleet

Hugh Lessig, Daily Press, October 7

The USS Washington joined the Navy's submarine force Saturday in a commissioning ceremony punctuated by the ship's rallying cry, "Fear the Blackfish."

Under sunny skies at Naval Station Norfolk, the crew heeded ship's sponsor Elisabeth Mabus, who uttered the time-honored phrase: "Man the ship and bring her life." The sailors clad in crisp white uniforms ran onto the ship, which was pier side.

Blackfish was the name given to orca, or killer whales, by Native American fisherman. The Washington's crest features a submarine emblazoned with a stylized Native American paint scheme that depicts the orca — black "fish" being a misnomer; the orca is Washington's official marine mammal.

Cmdr. Gabriel Cavazos, the ship's commanding officer, coined the phrase "fear the blackfish" when he took over earlier this year. Addressing the crew Saturday, he belted it out from the podium, and the crew shouted back its response. Fear the blackfish. Prepared for war.

The ceremony featured speeches by Gov. Terry McAuliffe and lawmakers from Virginia and Washington state. Among those making the cross-country trip was Washington's Lt. Gov. Cyrus Habib, who paid tribute to what is often called the silent service. "You may be unheard, but that does not mean you are silent to us," Habib said.

During her remarks, Mabus drew applause when she noted that the Washington would be

open to female sailors, as will other submarines. “We are a stronger country, and a stronger force, when we take advantage of all the talent, intelligence and experience the Navy has to offer,” she said. Moments later, she added: “Race, gender, sexual orientation or gender identity should never be a barrier for those who wish to serve. Our diversity is our strength.” The timing of the commissioning was a happy coincidence for a group of submarine veterans who came to Norfolk for a reunion.

Veterans of the USS Lapon (pronounced LAY-pon) chose Norfolk for their get-together before they knew the Washington would be commissioned, said Stan Westover, a retired master chief and a member of the original crew. “We picked this location coincidentally, and then the Washington appeared on our radar,” said the 27-year Navy veteran. “I did most of my growing up in the state of Washington, as did my dad.” This year is the 50th anniversary of the Lapon’s commissioning. The ship was built and launched at the Newport News shipyard. “The shipyard was wonderful,” Westover recalled. “The quality of the boat was absolutely magnificent. It was considered a stroke of good luck to have a boat that was built in Newport News in those days. They were making the Cadillacs.” “I started being fascinated by submarines when I was kid in grade school,” he said. “The thing that caught my eye was a World War II series on television called “The Silent Service.” It was very exciting. Of course, when I joined I thought I would be the man up there looking through the periscope, but it turned out the Navy had other ideas.” Still, as a master chief electrician and a certified Navy diver, he carved out an eventful career. “It was a great job,” he said. “We felt like we were doing something.”

The ceremony attracted other veterans of the close-knit submarine force who belong to United States Submarine Veterans Inc. The brotherhood of the submarine force stems from the nature of the surface, the veterans said. A submarine crew is relatively small, around 140, and sailors must know several jobs and support each other in emergencies. “Surface ships have damage control parties,” said Craig Werner, secretary/treasurer of the Hampton Roads Base of the group. “On a submarine, it’s everybody. There is nobody who stands back.” **Tom Denton**, a submarine veteran and an artist, said he’s impressed by new technology on the Virginia-class submarines, where touch screens and joysticks have replaced older controls. “It’s about time,” Denton said, noting that the submarine force has to operate throughout the world and needs the most up-to-date technology.

Washington is the 14th Virginia-class submarine to join the fleet. For Seaman Kevin Wilson, a crew member, it will mark another chapter of family history. Wilson, 22, is following his father and grandfather into the U.S. submarine force. A Colorado native, Wilson's service aboard Washington enables him to realize a lifelong dream. “All I wanted to do as a small child was be just like my dad,” he said. “It had a very strong influence on me because I thought what he did was cool. Even though I didn’t know much about submarines, I thought they were the coolest thing in the world because that’s what my dad did.” Wilson’s grandfather served on the USS Spinax, his father on the USS Phoenix. Befitting the Navy’s secretive nature, Wilson said his father cannot discuss certain aspects of his time in the Navy even today.

Virginia-class submarines are built in a teaming arrangement with Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of Huntington Ingalls Industries, and General Dynamics Electric Boat of Groton, Conn. Each yard builds components of the submarine, then take turns in final assembly and delivery to the Navy.

The Washington was assembled and delivered by the Newport News shipyard. It will be ported at the Navy base in Norfolk. It cost about \$2.6 billion. At 377 feet long, its top speed exceeds 25 knots, or about 29 miles per hour, according to unclassified Navy data.

The Navy orders its submarines in bulk, or blocks, to save money and allow the shipyards to plan more efficiently. The Washington is part of Block III. It features a redesigned front end,

or bow, that replaces 12 individual missile launch tubes with two larger payload tubes that can launch missiles or other payloads, such as undersea vehicles.

USS Jimmy Carter (SSN 23) Welcomes New Commanding Officer

MC1 Amanda R. Gray, Navy.mil, October 10

KEYPORT, Wash. – The Seawolf-class fast attack submarine USS Jimmy Carter (SSN 23) welcomed a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony, Oct. 6.

Cmdr. Keith Floyd, from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, relieved Cmdr. Melvin Smith, from Long Island, New York, as commanding officer of Jimmy Carter during a ceremony held at the Keyport Undersea Museum.

"I embrace this moment," said Smith. "I look forward to my future assignment with enthusiasm, and look back on this experience with pride and a huge sense of accomplishment. It is both bitter and sweet, but regardless of my thoughts, it is the end of my time as commanding officer of Jimmy Carter." During Smith's command tour, which began May 29, 2015, Jimmy Carter completed two major deployments, spending over 450 days at sea. Under his leadership, the boat also completed multiple inspections and maintenance availabilities. In addition, Jimmy Carter earned the Battle Efficiency Award, or Battle "E", for 2016 and U.S. Submarine Forces Pacific Retention Excellence Award for 2015. "To my crew, dang, it feels so good to have served with you guys," said Smith. "You energized my days, overwhelmed my sense of pride, exceeded my every expectation, and you delivered the world, asking only for respect in return. You certainly earned that and so much more." Smith's next assignment will be at Commander, Submarine Development (DEVRON) 5, where he will serve as the deputy for training.

"To the Jimmy Carter Sailors along with your families, I am grateful for how you welcomed me and my family into the Jimmy Carter family," said Floyd. "I look forward to serving as your Captain and promise to give you my all as we execute our mission and pursue operational excellence in everything we do." Floyd reports to Jimmy Carter from Washington D.C., where he served as the special assistant to the deputy director for Officer Personnel and Policy at the Naval Reactors Headquarters.

USS Jimmy Carter is the last and most advanced of the Seawolf-class attack submarines and is currently homeported at Naval Base Kitsap in Bangor, Washington. The one-of-a-kind vessel has all the capabilities of a Seawolf-class submarine, plus a 100-foot-long, 2,500-ton hull extension known as the multi-mission platform to test new generations of weapons and support Navy SEAL (Sea, Air and Land forces) operations.

21st Century Nuclear Deterrence & Missile Defense

Staff, Defense.gov, October 11

The U.S. Department of Defense has launched a web special on strategic deterrence.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Special-Reports/21st-Century-Nuclear-Deterrence-and-Missile-Defense/>

USS Pasadena Holds Change of Command Ceremony

MC1 Derek Stroop, Navy.mil, October 11

SAN DIEGO – The Los Angeles-class fast attack submarine USS Pasadena (SSN 752) held a pier-side change of command ceremony for friends, family, and crew on Naval Base Point Loma, Oct. 6.

Cmdr. Corey Poorman relieved Cmdr. Kenneth Douglas as commanding officer of Pasadena. Capt. Gerald Miranda, Jr., a former Submarine Squadron 11 deputy commander, served as guest speaker for the event.

"The crew has enjoyed the leadership and personality of Cmdr. Douglas for nearly three years. They have come together to meet his expectations and standards," said Capt. Miranda. "It is true that one man can make a difference, and Cmdr. Douglas, you did just that.

Congratulations on a tremendously exceptional command tour."

Following his remarks, Capt. Chris Cavanaugh, Commander, Submarine Squadron 11, presented Douglas with the Meritorious Service Medal.

"During my command tour, Pasadena completed a five month dry-docking availability, followed by a shortened deployment preparation period," said Douglas. "She then completed a 189-day deployment to the Western Pacific where she completed two missions vital to national security while supporting the Navy's maritime presence operations. Over my time onboard, Pasadena was the premier anti-submarine warfare training platform to support Commander, U.S. Third Fleet's deploying carrier and amphibious strike groups." Douglas also reflected on his tour in command of Pasadena. "As I look back at my time in command, I am continuously amazed by the superb young Sailors in the Submarine Force and their families who support them as they conduct the nation's business," said Douglas. "Leading such an impressive group of young Americans will forever be the highlight of my Naval career."

As Poorman took command, he addressed the crew of Pasadena on future operations. "To the Pasadena team, thank you for your warm welcome and support throughout the turnover process," said Poorman. "As you know from your most recent deployment, it is a challenging and dynamic world and our nation demands that we be ready to answer the call. I will promise that I will work hard for you each and every day and together we will ensure Pasadena is always ready to answer our nation's call."

Douglas will continue his career as deputy commander at Commander, Submarine Squadron 11.

Pasadena was commissioned in Feb. 1989. Throughout its proud 20-year history, Pasadena has deployed to and conducted operations in every part of the Pacific Ocean, from the west coast of North and South America to Australia and the Persian Gulf. Pasadena is capable of supporting various missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

USS Buffalo Holds Change of Command

PO1 Amanda Gray, DVIDs, October 12

BANGOR, Wash — The Los Angeles-class fast-attack submarine USS Buffalo (SSN 715) welcomed a new commanding officer during a change of command ceremony at Naval Base Kitsap Bangor, Oct. 12.

Cmdr. Paul Lee, from De Graff, Minnesota, properly relieved Cmdr. Micah Maxwell, from Hanford, California, during the ceremony held in the Trident Ballroom at Bangor Plaza.

“Men, thank you for your hard work, for trusting me to lead you, and for leading one another,” said Maxwell. “Part of my command philosophy is ‘we are family’. Thank you for accepting it and embracing it. Continue to look out for one another and you will succeed together.”

Under the command of Maxwell, Buffalo completed a western pacific deployment, where they conducted three missions vital to national security, an eastern pacific deployment, two Operational Reactor Safeguard Examinations (ORSE), and the crew departed Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii for a homeport change to Bremerton, Washington. The crew also received the 2017 Retention Excellence Award and 51 Sailors earned their submarine warfare insignias or “dolphins”.

“Cmdr. Lee, the crew of Buffalo is in great shape, they are more than ready for the challenges ahead,” said Maxwell. “I stand in awe each day of what this crew has accomplished so far. I expect they will do even more great things with you leading the way.”

Maxwell’s next assignment will be as Chief of Staff for Commander, Combined Maritime Forces at Commander, Naval Forces Central Command U.S. 5th Fleet in Bahrain.

Lee comes to Buffalo from San Diego, where he served on the staff of Commander, Submarine Squadron 11.

“To the crew of Buffalo, we will continue the tradition of the Buffalo warrior,” said Lee. “We will utilize the next 17 months not only to decommission our mighty warship, but also preparing ourselves to succeed in our next jobs. We will continue to hone our technical skills during the unique opportunities available here at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, making this shipyard experience an asset on our resume.”

Buffalo arrived at Naval Base Kitsap-Bremerton to commence the inactivation and decommissioning process, May 26, after completing 33 years of service. Buffalo was commissioned November 5, 1983. Buffalo is the third United States Ship to bear the proud name of Buffalo. Measuring more than 360 feet long and displacing more than 6,900 tons, Buffalo has a crew of approximately 140 Sailors. Buffalo is capable of supporting various missions, including anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface ship warfare, strike warfare, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.