



UNITED STATES SUBMARINE VETERANS



“To Honor Those Who Serve, Past, Present & Future”

August 2023

Volume 24, Issue 08

**Lest We Forget —  
“The USSVI Submariner’s Creed”**

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.

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**News Brief**

1. **Next Meeting:** At 1100, third Saturday of each month at the Knollwood Sportsman’s Club. Mark your calendars for these upcoming dates:
  - a. **August 19**
  - b. **September 16**
  - c. **October 21**
2. **Duty Cook Roster:**
  - a. AUGUST – CHRIS GAINES
  - b. SEPTEMBER – MANNY GARMENDEZ AND CLAY HILL
  - c. OCTOBER – BRET ZACHER
3. **August Birthdays:** Dick Anderson 4<sup>th</sup>; John McClellan 14<sup>th</sup>; and Frank Walter 25<sup>th</sup>. Happy Birthday, Shipmates.
4. **Submarine comedy skit** by Bob Newhart here: <https://youtu.be/RZA47I9f2xc?si=wxrtrEBIYQXrsv7M>

## Crash Dive Meeting Minutes July 15, 2023

Meeting was cancelled due to planned  
absence of officers.

### Lost Boats

USS BULLHEAD SS 332 8/6/45  
USS FLIER SS 250 8/13/44  
USS S-39 SS 144 8/14/42  
USS HARDER SS 257 8/24/44  
USS COCHINO SS 345 8/26/49  
USS POMPANO SS 181 8/29/43

## Navy, Shipyards Settle Dispute that Delayed Submarine Orders

It's unclear how the sides came to  
agreement, or just how late the two Virginia-  
class subs will eventually arrive.

[By Marcus Weisgerber](#)

Global Business Editor  
May 11, 2023



The Virginia-class attack submarine USS Vermont (SSN 792) makes its way up the Thames River and past New London, Conn. as it returns home after conducting routine operations to Submarine Base New London, Feb. 3, 2021, U.S. Navy / John Narewski

The U.S. Navy has settled an insurance dispute with two key shipbuilding companies that has delayed the ordering of two Virginia-class submarines, according to people familiar with the matter.

The [dispute](#) centered on who should pay if a Tomahawk cruise missile were to accidentally explode during construction, damaging or destroying a nuclear-powered submarine worth more than \$3 billion. For years, the Navy had indemnified the yards—Electric Boat, which is owned by General Dynamics, and Newport News Shipbuilding, a division of HII—essentially providing the insurance that the yards found difficult to obtain from a private insurer.

But in 2018, the Navy decided the arrangement heaped too much risk on the service, and ceased to offer indemnification. The service asked the shipyards to find private insurance, but they declined. In February 2022, the Navy suspended plans to order long-lead parts for two Virginia-class attack submarines. “Under the current law, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro makes the final decision on indemnification for Navy and Marine Corps contracts,” USNI News [wrote](#) in December.

In January, Del Toro [urged the companies](#) to come to the table and negotiate.

“I’m going to hold the ground and I’m willing to compromise on some things,” Del Toro said. “I’m not willing to compromise on everything. They’re going to have to come to the table with reasonable language that the American taxpayer can accommodate on that ground.”

Congress as well expressed worry about the impending delays to the delivery of the planned submarines, and alluded to the dispute in [the 2023 defense policy bill](#). This all comes as companies are trying to quell supply issues caused by the pandemic and hire workers.

Last week, Newport News Shipbuilding President Jennifer Boykin [said](#) delays in long-lead parts typically produce delays in sending the submarines to the fleet.

“In order for the assembly line to get healthy and to begin to increase the rate, the worst thing we can do as an enterprise is starve the beginning” of the supply chain,” Boykin said May 5. “That's part of what we're really working with the Navy on—to get advanced funding to those suppliers who are already struggling with workforce, etcetera, is key if we're going to, in two or three or five years later, actually increase our throughput rate. When you start the beginning, because the end is not coming out, you're not going to change the scenario.”

On Thursday, a Navy official said a deal had been agreed upon by the Navy and the shipyards.

“We have reached agreements with the companies that are involved here,” said the Navy official, speaking anonymously because the contracts for the sub parts had not yet been awarded.

The official declined to say what the deal entailed or whether the subs’ delivery would be delayed.

Both companies declined to comment before the contracts were awarded.

## Navy’s missile technology since the dawn of the Cold War.

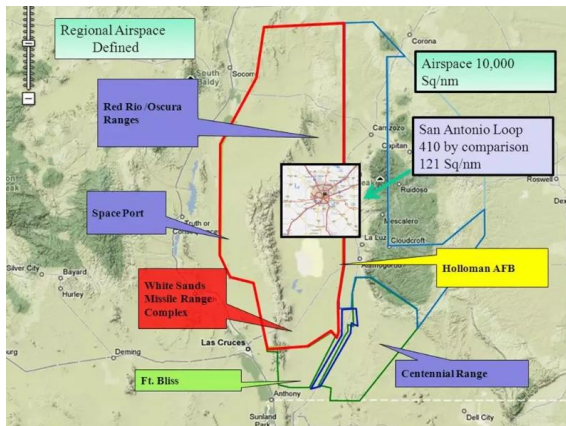
by [Tyler Rogoway](#) | UPDATED Nov 17, 2021 10:45 AM EST



Among the maelstrom [of operational](#) and abandoned test sites that speckle the desolate desert on the southern end of [White Sands Missile Range](#) sits a peculiar facility that has quietly helped develop the Navy's most important missile, gun, and fire control technologies for over six decades. The installation with a U.S. Navy ship's name and culture, but located thousands of miles away from where a ship should be, has put weapon systems that would change warfare forever through their paces. This place is USS Desert Ship, also designated LLS-1, for 'Land Locked Ship' number one. It is also known by the adjacent launch site that predates it, Launch Center 35 (LC-35).

LLS-1 is yet [another exotic installation](#) that makes up a constellation full of seemingly countless facilities arrayed across the United States that develop, test, and evaluate America's future combat technologies. LLS-1 is half ship-like concrete bunker and half launch pad. Built in the mid-1950s at the dawn of the guided missile age, its blockhouse was designed to

be stuffed with combat systems and to emulate the conditions found on an operational U.S. Navy fighting ship. Its upper deck was fortified to accommodate similar sensors and communications gear found on its seagoing counterparts as well as additional gear needed to support testing efforts and to interface with the highly networked and surveilled White Sands Missile Range complex which extends many miles to the North.



The WSMR Complex area (marked in red) is about 8 miles to the west of USS Desert Ship., *WSMR*

The facility was originally built to develop and test the massive and ultra-complex and optionally nuclear-armed RIM-8 Talos shipboard surface-to-air missile system. When I say complex and massive it is not for hyperbole's sake. Read all about this crazy Cold War weapon whose combined magazine and launch system was more akin to a highly armored assembly line at sea than anything else in [this recent feature of mine](#).



The facility from the air, with what looks like a box launcher installed for Sea Sparrow missile tests. Also, note the large trapezoidal building with GO NAVY on the top is the Talon assembly-magazine area just like the ones found on ships (Left image). Talos tests had to very lively affairs back in the 1950s (Right)!, USN

Eventually, the 'Three Ts' of the Navy's SAM ecosystem during the first couple of decade of the Cold War—Terrier, Tartar, and Talos—would be tested at the facility, with [all three launchers](#), including Talos' missile assembly magazine, being installed in front and just to the east of USS Desert Ship. Gun systems were also tested at the site. A 73,000 pound, Mk39 five-inch gun was used primarily. Tests included the evaluation of rocket-propelled shells back in the 1990s before the gun was removed in 2000.

Before any of this took place, back in 1947, a pad adjacent to where USS Desert Ship sits to today was constructed to launch Aerobee sounding rockets into the upper atmosphere. These rockets gathered important information on atmospheric conditions and cosmic radiation. Two big launch towers were used to send the Aerobees on their way. The name LC-35 comes from this precursor installation to USS Desert Ship.





*The large tilting launch rails used for Aerobee rockets at LC-35. These rockets could travel dozens of miles into the upper reaches of Earth's atmosphere. , UC Boulder*

By the mid-1970s, the facility began to slowly migrate away from primarily supporting tests of the 'Three Ts' to the doing so for the Standard Missile series and the Aegis Combat System. A large portion of Aegis developmental testing was executed at the site leading up to and after its certification in 1983. Since then, USS Desert Ship has continued to support the development of the latest Navy missile technologies. White Sands Missile Range officially describes the site's activities as such:

Launch Complex 35, known as the USS Desert Ship LLS-1, is primarily used for live fire testing the Navy's STANDARD Missile (SM). The Navy is currently testing SM and Evolved Seasparrow Missile (ESSM) at this site. All versions of STANDARD Missile have been tested at the Desert Ship including SM-2 Block II (Terrier, Tartar, AEGIS, and Vertical Launch AEGIS), SM-2 Block III/IIIA/IIIB (Terrier, Tartar, and Vertical Launch AEGIS), and SM-2 Block IV (Extended Range Vertical Launch AEGIS). Testing of SM-2 Blk IVA is in process. Other

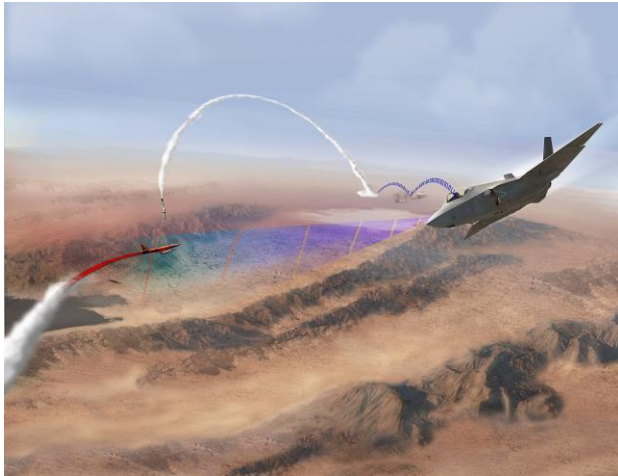
Navy systems that have been tested here include Sea Lance, NATO Seasparrow Missile (NSSM), and Vertical Launch ASROC (VLA). The Desert Ship functionally duplicates the fire control requirements of a surface ship. Dedicated telemetry, target monitoring, and data extraction and reduction systems Launch Complex 35 "The Desert Ship" complement the extensive instrumentation services provided by the Range...

Launch Complex 35 is a Research Rocket facility that includes a block-house, launch control equipment, and a payload assembly building. Current use of this facility is for NASA payload buildup, telemetry pre-launch and launch support, and uplink control of rocket payloads.



Some areas inside LLS-1 look a bit more like a NASA control center than the inside of a fighting ship, while others still supposedly appear similar to what you would see in a combat information center aboard a ship. And even though the facility is over 60 years old, it is still uniquely positioned to test the hardware that will end up on America's front-line fighting ships in the not so distant future., *USN*

More recently, in 2016, LLS-1 executed a [highly publicized cooperative engagement test](#) in which an F-35 provided targeting information to an SM-6. The facility continues to be an important part of moving improved versions of the [hugely versatile SM-6](#) that feature new capabilities into an operational state, but gone are the eclectic turreted launchers of the past.



*A basic concept drawing of the cooperative engagement test over White Sands Missile Range in which an F-35 provided targeting data for a SM-6 fired from USS Desert Ship. , USN*

Today, an upright Mark 41 vertical launch system, similar to those used at Aegis Ashore sites overseas, provides the launch interface for missile tests. A relatively new site handles the launches remotely from USS Desert Ship.

There is also a weapons assembly facility across the road from USS Desert Ship that provides munitions to be tested. It was built to make tests more seamless as transporting experimental weapons over long distances was deemed problematic, especially while trying to power through important trials. But by and large, there isn't anything but a handful of other test sites within about 10 miles of USS Desert

Ship, with the closest population center being the tiny town of White Sands that largely exists to support the missile range and its workforce.

WSMR

Even though only [roughly 30 sailors work](#) at the site, along with a number of contractors that can drastically increase or decrease depending on the testing schedule, it seems that some of those who have called the facility home actually enjoyed their time there.



*A newer remote facility located roughly two and a half miles north of USS Desert Ship is equipped with the vertical launch systems needed to carry out missile tests in conjunction to USS Desert Ship for the Navy., Google Earth*



USS Desert Ship and LC-35., Google Earth

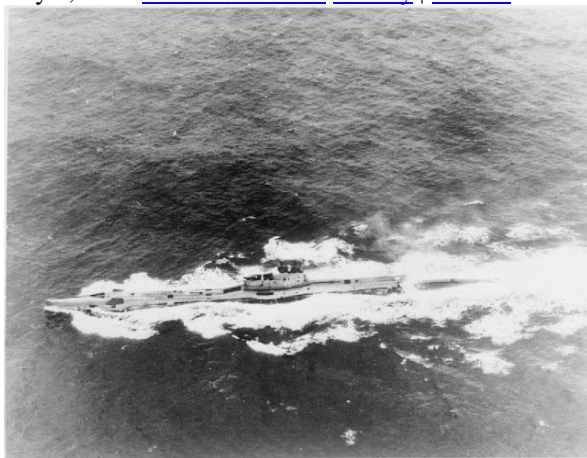
There are a handful of other ship-like structures built on land to help in naval combat systems research and development which we will discuss in a future article, but none are as remote or offer live fire opportunities like USS Desert Ship.

It's yet another oddity of the sprawling White Sands Missile Range—a place packed with history along with a sprinkling of mystery.

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## Diver Finds Lost WWII Submarine

July 4, 2023 [Rebecca McPhee History](#) | [Oceans](#)



A Greek diver and researcher has found the *HMS Triumph*, a special ops British submarine that disappeared in 1942. The

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wreckage was found in the Aegean Sea, off the coast of Cape Sounion at a depth of 203 meters.

Kostas Thoctarides first learned of the British submarine in 1998 and has been searching for it ever since. He called finding the lost vessel “the hardest mission I’ve ever undertaken in my life.” After scouring British, German, Italian, and Greek archives for details about the submarine and its downfall, he began searching for it. This is the fifth submarine he and his team have found in Greek waters.

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The vessel is heavily linked to helping end the German occupation in Greece during the Second World War. “The history of the submarine Triumph is

Crash Dive Base  
Rondout - Lake Bluff, IL



multidimensional and unique in maritime history, and is inseparable to national resistance and the secret services that acted in the dark days of occupation,” Thoctarides said in a Facebook post.

With the help of his daughter, who is the first certified female ROV pilot in Greece, Thoctarides found the submarine with an Echo Sounder. They then used ROV’s to explore the site due to difficult conditions. The strong underwater current and depth meant it was almost impossible for divers to reach the site themselves. Footage shows that the submarine’s periscopes and hatches were down when it sank, suggesting that the *HMS Triumph* was carrying out a deep dive when she met her watery end.

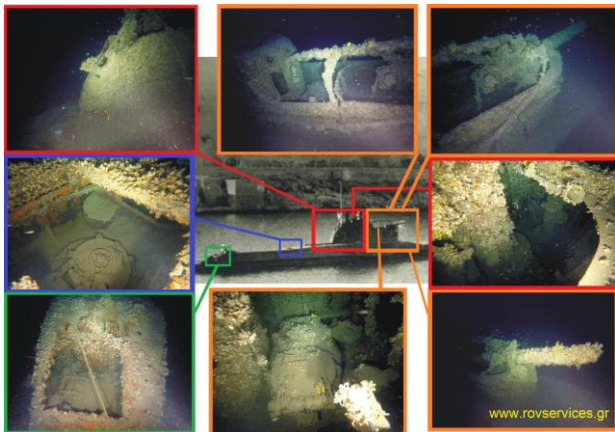


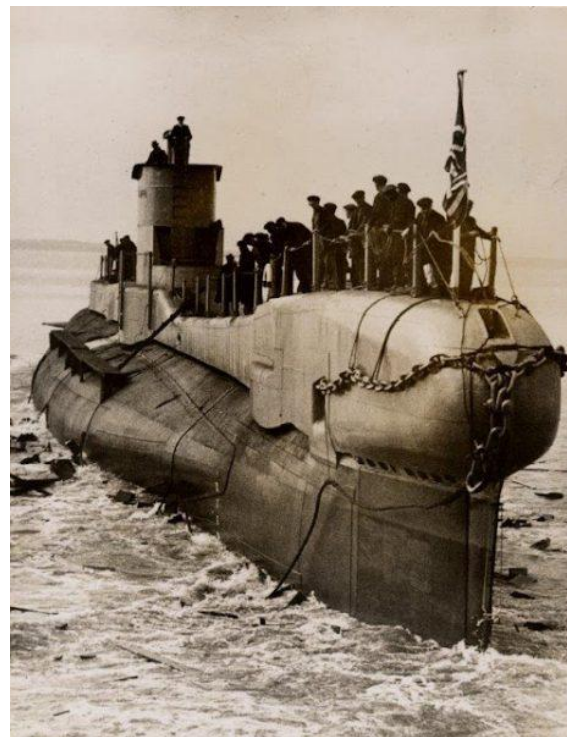
Photo: Kostas Thoctarides/Facebook

The front section of the submarine showed severe damage. The search team believe that an explosion likely sank the vessel. They are unable to tell if the explosion was internal or external. They are now working with experts to try and decipher exactly what happened.



Photo: Kostas Thoctarides/Facebook

Thoctarides was careful to treat the site with care and respect as it is the war grave of 64 people. When it sank on January 9, 1942, there were seven officers, two commandos, and 55 crew members on board. *Triumph* launched in 1938 and completed 20 successful missions during the Second World War.



HMS Triumph. Photo: Royal Navy Submarine Museum



The submarine brought down a number of enemy ships and submarines during her missions but was best known for its involvement in covert operations. Notable missions include recusing trapped soldiers from Egypt and involvement in Special Operations Executive projects. The SOE was a secret British WWII operation tasked with “setting Europe ablaze” by Winston Churchill. Agents would work with local resistance fighters to sabotage and subvert the enemy. *HMS Triumph* was part of one of the first SOE missions.



Photo: Kostas Thoctarides/Facebook

Records show that *Triumph*'s last mission saw her secretly land a British intelligence team in Despotikos Bay, near Antiparos on December 30, 1941. She was then scheduled to help 30 fleeing Britons from the island of Antiparos on January 9, 1942. The submarine never appeared and all 30 escapees were arrested. Two weeks later, the submarine and all 64 crew members were listed as missing in action.

## Report: 36 Percent of US Navy Attack Subs Out of Commission

By Michael Katz [www.newsmax.com](http://www.newsmax.com) Tuesday, 11 July 2023 09:51 PM EDT

The U.S. Navy is down to 32 attack submarines as maintenance delays at naval shipyards have led to 36% of the fleet being out of commission.

A [report](#) by the Congressional Research Service published July 6 said that of the Navy's 50 attack submarines, 18 are in maintenance or waiting for their turn. The report cited Rear Adm. Jon Rucker, who said in November 2022 the “best practice would call for just 20% to be tied up in repairs, or 10 boats instead of 18.”

Navy subs can fire ballistic and cruise missiles with nuclear warheads and torpedoes.

The report said, “Navy and Pentagon leadership repeatedly call the submarine force among America's top advantages over adversaries like China and Russia; yet the U.S. has 50 attack submarines and four related ‘large payload submarines,’ compared to a requirement for a combined 66 to 72 attack and large payload subs.”

Ronald O'Rourke, a specialist in naval affairs who authored the report, wrote the maintenance backlog has "substantially reduced" the number of nuclear submarines operational, cutting the "force's capacity for meeting day-to-day mission demands and potentially putting increased operational pressure" on submarines that are in service.

The report cited reasons for delays were there are only four naval shipyards in the U.S., a shortage of spare parts for Virginia-class subs, substandard steel used for building subs between 1987 and 2017, a problem with the hull coating for Virginia-class subs and

three Virginia-class subs that were reported in 2016 to be built with defective parts.

In 2022, the [Government Accountability Office](#) said the Navy lost 10,363 operational days from 2008 through 2018 — the equivalent of more than 28 years — "as a result of delays in getting into and out of the shipyards."

The Navy said by the 2026 fiscal year, it wants to reduce the number of subs in maintenance or waiting for work to be down to 10%.

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