NAVY NEWS WEEK 13-1

24 March 2019

U.S. Coast Guard Offloads $360M Cocaine Haul in Miami

On Friday, the crew of the Coast Guard cutter TAMPA offloaded about 27,000 pounds of cocaine at Coast Guard Base Miami Beach, worth an estimated $360 million wholesale. It is the latest in a long series of multi-tonne drug seizures taken in the Eastern Pacific's busy trafficking zone. The drugs were seized off the coasts of Central and South America, and they represent the results of a dozen separate smuggling vessel interdictions. Three cutters contributed to the haul: the cutter Dependable interdicted two boats and seized about 2,900 pounds; the ***Tampa*** interdicted six boats and seized about 18,000

pounds; and the Venturous interdicted four boats and seized about 7,200 pounds. "***Tampa****'s crew is extremely proud of the work they accomplished over the past three months. There are few things more frustrating to our sailors than idle deployments, and none more gratifying than accomplishing a very important mission with impacts that resound across our nation. For many of the crew, this will be their last deployment on Tampa, and it's one they will always remember*." said Cmdr. Nicholas Simmons, the cutter's commanding officer. The Coast Guard has increased U.S. and allied presence in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean, which are known drug transit zones off of Central and South America. During at-sea interdictions in international waters, each suspect vessel is located and tracked by one or many of the federal agencies, military units and allied partners involved in the counternarcotics effort. The interdictions, including the actual boarding, are led and conducted by U.S. Coast Guardsmen. The law enforcement phase of counter-smuggling operations in the Eastern Pacific is conducted under the authority of the Coast Guard 11th District, headquartered in Alameda, California. The effort has yielded impressive results. In FY2017, the Coast Guard seized about 445,000 pounds of cocaine worth an estimated $6 billion, compared with about 36,000 pounds seized on shore by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. **Source : MAREX**

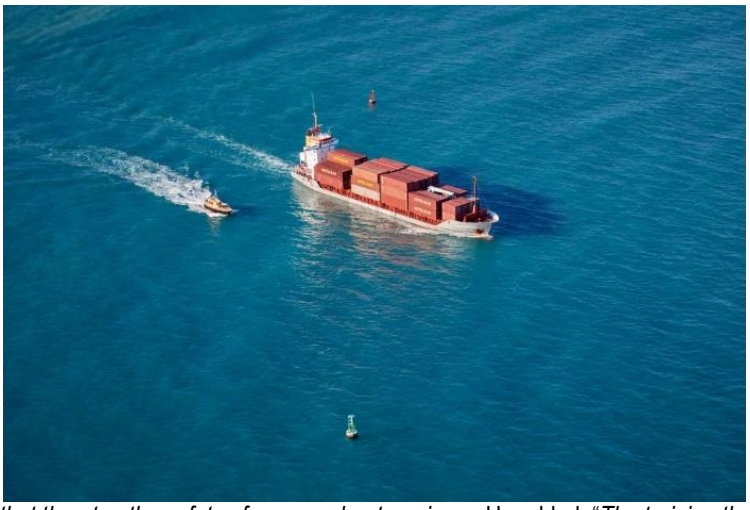
UK Hydrographic Office works with Seychelles Government to help tackle piracy in the Indian Ocean

in International Shipping News
22/03/2019

United Kingdom Hydrographic Office

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has presented Security of Navigation, Stabilisation Advice and Training (SONSAT) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Seychelles on behalf of the UK Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Funded by the UK Government's Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), the bespoke training is designed to strengthen maritime security and safety of navigation in the Indian Ocean by helping Seychelles to share vital maritime safety information with ships and partners in the region. Piracy at sea can threaten the security of trade routes, costing the international economy an estimated US $7 to $12 billion annually. And with some of the world's busiest trade routes passing through their waters, the threat of piracy is of huge concern to both the Seychelles and its neighbours. In tackling these issues, it is vital that authorities understand their responsibilities when broadcasting maritime safety information, so they can notify ships in the area of issues that could threaten their safety.

To help achieve this aim, UKHO experts delivered a series of maritime security capability development seminars and intelligence briefs to government officials in the Seychelles from 18 – 22 February 2019. One area of focus included raising awareness of existing infrastructure and services, such as the World-Wide Navigational Warning Service (WWNWS) and Rescue Coordination Centres (RCCs), that could help them to circulate vital security information in the region. UKHO delegates provided advice and guidance on how to coordinate operations between these services effectively and within the realms of the required legal framework. This training forms part of the UK Government's effort to improve maritime capability and security in the Indian Ocean region and support the newly-established Regional Centre for Operation Coordination (RCOC) in Victoria, the capital of the Seychelles. Paul Merchant, SONSAT Capability Development Manager at UKHO, commented: "*As an island state that is hugely reliant on a buoyant tourism industry, the threat of piracy and illegal and unregulated fishing in the Indian Ocean is of huge concern to the Seychelles and its neighbours. From a UK perspective, we also have a huge amount of trade that passes through these waters.*



"By working together with the Seychelles to improve Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in the region, and by building awareness of the legalities and obligations placed upon nations when broadcasting maritime safety information, we can help tackle the issues that threaten the safety of our merchant mariners. He added: "*The training that the UKHO's SONSAT capability delivers is specifically tailored to the needs of the state or region, depending on their existing knowledge and capabilities. In addition to our work in the Seychelles, we have supported the FCO with its Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme, providing advice and guidance on maritime safety and security to Cyprus, Gibraltar, St Helena, Tristan da Cunha and Ascension Islands. "Our work in the Seychelles is a reflection of the breadth of capabilities the UKHO has under one roof, and the world-class services we can offer as a world-leading marine geospatial agency and the UK's hydrographic authority*."

Source: United Kingdom Hydrographic Office (UKHO) vir **https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com**

Horizon Geobay (ex ***Salvanguard*** ex ***Dahlia***) a DP2 multipurpose vessel coming alongside at Falmouth UK after a period in drydock. Vessel built in 1978 and now under Panamanian flag, GT3502T, DWT 2404T, 87m x 15.68m. Also alongside is seen the **RFA *Argus***.

Photo : Tim Mark ©

ASC builds keel of first Arafura-class offshore patrol vessel for RAN

Australian defence shipbuilding organisation ASC has constructed the keel of Arafura, the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) first Arafura-class offshore patrol vessel (OPV). Luerssen Australia is the prime contractor for the A$3.6bn ($2.56bn) SEA1180 Phase I programme, which seeks to build the next-generation of OPVs for the Australian Defence Force (ADF). The company will build 12 OPVs under the contract to replace the existing Armidale-class and Cape-class patrol boats, Huon-class coastal minehunters, and Leeuwin-class survey ships. Luerssen selected shipbuilder ASC to construct the first two OPVs at the Osborne Naval Shipyard in South Australia. The remaining vessels under the contract will be built at Civmec's Henderson shipyard in Western Australia. Civmec and Luerssen will begin work on the construction of the remaining ships in 2020. "*This represents the ongoing success story of the Government's $90bn continuous shipbuilding*

endeavour in Australia." ASC has assembled more than 50t of steel at the Osborne shipyard for keel construction of the lead ship in the Arafura-class. Australia Defence Minister Christopher Pyne said: "*This represents the ongoing success story of the Government's $90bn continuous shipbuilding endeavour in Australia* "*ASC is working very well with Luerssen Australia to build the first two OPVs*." The Arafura-class OPVs construction project is projected to create around 1,000 direct and indirect jobs, according to the Australian Department of Defence (DoD). The keel laying ceremony of the first ship is set to take place after the blocks are structurally completed and moved to the fitting out facility, the DoD release added ASC and Luerssen started construction of the first OPV in November last year. The steel for the vessel was cut by Civmec in Western Australia. The Arafura-class vessels will be used to perform constabulary missions and maritime patrol and response duties. The ship is based on the Lürssen OPV80 platform and will be able to accommodate three rigid-hulled inflatable boats (RHIB).

Source: naval-technology

USS *Laboon* Crew Reconnects with Namesake's Family

Release Date: 3/22/2019 12:53:00 PM

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kyle Moore, Carrier Strike Group 2 Public Affairs

PITTSBURGH (NNS) -- Sailors from the guided-missile destroyer **USS *Laboon* (DDG 58)** traveled to Pittsburgh March 18-21 to visit the hometown of their namesake and members of his family. The Sailors visited with Sister Joan Laboon, the younger sister of the ship's namesake at her covenant, Sisters of Mercy at Carlow University. The ship is named after Capt. John Laboon, a Navy chaplain also known as Father Jake. "*The relationship with Father Jake's family is important because it helps tie our Sailors to him,*" said Cmdr. Robert Lightfoot, ***Laboon***'s commanding officer. "*To hear people who knew him personally, and hear the stories we don't hear every day, helps our Sailors understand who Father Jake was, and to better understand the example he set*." Sister Laboon was present at the ship's commissioning in March 1995, and this trip gave the current crew a chance to learn more about their namesake family. "*You can always form what you think what someone like Father Laboon was like, but hearing the stories from his family and those who knew him gives more meaning to the ship's motto, Without Fear*," said Lt. Ethan Everts, the chaplain aboard the **Laboon**. "*Continually reaching out and bringing the Laboon and the family together, and building those relationships are so important moving forward*." "*Making the connections with the Laboons who are living here is special for us and very dear to the crew*," said Ensign Morgan Crump, the administration officer aboard the ***Laboon***. "I*t's been really nice to reconnect with them*." The Sailors listened to Korean War veterans during a presentation for the Veteran's Breakfast Club at Point Park University where they shared their experiences during their time overseas. Lightfoot then gave a brief history of Father Laboon and the ship. The Sailors also made visits to many veteran's associations, including the Veteran's Association Hospital and the Veteran's Breakfast Club. "*This is a great way for veterans to tell their stories*," said Todd DePastino, the executive director of the Veterans Breakfast Club. "*Hearing such an incredible story about a Pittsburgh native is incredible*." Father Laboon joined the Navy during World War II and served aboard the submarine **USS *Peto* (SS 265).** One day on patrol in the Pacific Ocean, the ship spotted a downed pilot in the water. It was determined that it was too dangerous to move the submarine closer to save the pilot. Lt. j.g. Laboon volunteered to swim out to the pilot and bring him back. For his heroism, Laboon was awarded the Silver Star. Saving the pilot's life had such an impact on Laboon that he joined the Chaplain Corps and continued to serve until his retirement in 1980. The Laboon was commissioned on March 18, 1995 and is currently stationed in Norfolk, Virginia.

Source: https://www.navy.mil

21 March 2019 - The **CCGS *Louis. St. Laurent*** departing Halifax for ice operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. **HMCS *Ville de Quebec*** in the foreground. **Photo : John Attersley Quay Marine Associates Inc. ©**

Business of Shipping: China's Claims in South China Sea Could Impact Commercial Shipping

March 21, 2019

by gCaptain

By Ira Breskin –
The maritime territorial dispute between China and many of its neighbors, as well as the United States, has major negative, long-term policy implications for shipping, a leading academic says. China's contention that it has sovereignty over a large swath of the South China Sea violates the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (which China has signed) and other rules of international law and practice, said Dr. Mark Meirowitz this week at a seminar lecture. Meirowitz is an associate professor at State University of New York Maritime College in the Bronx, NY, whose doctoral dissertation addressed several UNCLOS clauses and the interplay of the law of sea with US domestic politics and policy-making. He is also an attorney.

U.S. Navy photo showing a confrontation between the **USS *Decatur*** (left) and PRC Warship 170 (right) in the South China Sea on Sunday, September 30, 2018. U.S. Navy Photo

Meirowitz's position mirrors that of the United States, which is not a UNCLOS signatory; however, Washington has, in effect, through actual practice, abided by the spirit and terms of UNCLOS, which took effect 25 years ago. That's because the United States supports international law, something that China, in this case, does not, Meirowitz said. The dispute, which has flared up intermittently as a result of close encounters with the US Navy vessels, most recently with **USS *Decatur***, a Navy destroyer, near the Gaven Reef in the South China Sea, is currently unresolved. And this situation could be problematic should China harden its position and restrict navigation in an area regularly transited by more than one-third of the world's maritime traffic. The US contends that when conducting its freedom of navigation operations (FONOPs) in the South China Sea it is promoting the principle of freedom of the seas, as articulated by Hugo Grotius in his groundbreaking 1609 Mare Liberum treatise, according to Meirowitz. China contends that the US is violating its sovereignty based on China's extensive claims to exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in the area. China has chosen to ignore the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration's 2016 ruling in connection with China's dispute with the Philippines. The tribunal found without merit Bejing's claim to control the disputed area because it is a Chinese territorial sea and sided with the Philippines It also rejected China's claims to sovereignty based on historical rights as well as China's establishing an EEZ based on land features the nation has developed and militarized, not qualifying under international law as an EEZ. Had China's claim been upheld, foreign-flagged vessels would be entitled to the right of free passage in Chinese waters, subject to Beijing's permission. Giving China such illegal discretion would establish a dangerous precedent and could be crimp worldwide shipping operations, Meirowitz said. The best approach is for be US to continue its FONOPs in order to preserve freedom of the seas for the US and all nations in the region, Meirowitz said. **Source: https://gcaptain.com**

Zr.Ms. *Luymes* (A 803) inbound at Gravesend 21/03/2019 heading for a berth near Tower Bridge.
Photo : David Berg http://ukshippinglog.blogspot.co.uk/ ©

No More Air: How this Chinese Submarine's Crew Died Is Horrifying

Here's what we know.

by Sebastien Roblin
March 20, 2019

Apparently, the motor consumed most of the submarine's air supply in just two minutes. The crew might have felt light headed and short of breath during the first minute, and would have begun losing consciousness in the second. The negative air pressure also made it impossible to open the hatches. A 2013 article by Reuters repeats this theory as well as mentioning the possibility that was exhaust was improperly vented back into the hull to fatal effect.

On April 25, 2003 the crew of a Chinese fishing boat noticed a strange sight—a periscope drifting listlessly above the surface of the water. The fishermen notified the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) which promptly dispatched two vessels to investigate. *(This first appeared last year.)*

At first the PLAN believed the contact to be an intruding submarine from South Korea or Japan. But when Chinese personnel finally recovered the apparent derelict they realized it was one of their own diesel-electric submarines, the Ming-class ***361***. When they boarded on April 26, they found all seventy personnel slumped dead at their stations. Military commissioner and former president Jiang Zemin acknowledged the tragic incident on May 2, 2003, in a statement honoring the sacrifice of Chinese sailors lives and vaguely characterizing the cause as "*mechanical failure*." A month later, an inquiry by his commission resulted in the dismissal of both the commander and commissar of the North Sea Fleet, and the demotion or dismissal of six or eight more officers for "*improper command and control*." Jiang and President Hu Jintao later reportedly visited the recovered submarine and met with the families of the deceased. The Chinese government is not disposed to transparency regarding its military accidents. For example, it does not release the results of its investigations into jet fighter crashes and it never publicly acknowledged earlier submarine accidents. At the time, some commentators expressed surprise that Beijing acknowledged the incident at all, and speculated it was obliquely related to contemporaneous criticism of Beijing's attempts to downplay the SARS epidemic. The Type 035 Ming-class submarine was an outdated second-generation design evolved from the lineage of the Soviet Romeo-class, in turn a Soviet development of the German Type XXI "*Electric U-Boat*" from World War II. The first two Type 035s were built in 1975 but remained easy to detect compared to contemporary American or Russian designs. Though China operated numerous diesel submarines, due to concerns over seaworthiness, they rarely ventured far beyond coastal waters in that era. Nonetheless, Chinese shipyards continued to build updated Ming-class boats well into the 1990s. Submarine *361* was one of the later Type 035G Ming III models, which introduced the capability to engage opposing submerged submarines with guided torpedoes. Entering service in 1995, she and three sister ships numbered 359 through 362 formed the North Sea Fleet's 12th Submarine Brigade based in Liaoning province. You can see them together in this photo . ***361*** had been deployed on a naval exercise in the Bohai Sea, the Yellow Sea gulf east of Beijing and Tianjing. Unusually, a senior naval officer, Commodore Cheng Fuming was aboard. In its last ship's log on April 16, the submarine was practicing silent running while off the Changshang island, heading back to a base in Weihai, Shandong Province. Because it was maintaining radio silence, the PLAN didn't realize anything was amiss until ten days later. The method by which ***361*** was recovered after its presence was reported remains unclear. Several accounts imply the ship was submerged, but the fact that it was promptly towed back to port implies that it had surfaced. The lack of clear official explanation has led to various theories over the years. The typical complement of a Type 035 submarine is fifty-five to fifty-seven personnel, but *361* had seventy on board. Officially these were trainers, but conditions would have been quite cramped. The presence of the additional personnel and the high-ranking Commodore Cheng leads to the general conclusion that ***361*** was not on a routine mission. Indeed, some commentators speculated that the additional crew were observing tests of an experimental Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system which would have offered greater stealth and underwater endurance. As it happens, another Type 035G submarine, ***308***, was used to test an AIP drive, and Stirling AIP drives would soon equip the prolific Type 041 Yuan-class submarines which prowl the seas today.

Another theory is that leaks allowed seawater to mix with battery acid, forming deadly chlorine gas that poisoned the crew. The Hong Kong *Sing Tao Daily* claimed the submarine had embarked on a "*dangerous*" antisubmarine training, and that "*human error*" led it to nose-down uncontrollably, causing it to get stuck on the seafloor. However, the most widely accepted explanation today was first published by the Hong Kong *Wen Wei Po* , a pro-Beijing newspaper: the crew was suffocated by the sub's diesel engine. A conventional diesel electric submarine uses an air-breathing diesel engine to charge up its batteries for underwater propulsion. This is usually done while surfaced—but a submarine attempting to remain undetected can also cruise submerged just below the surface and use a snorkel to sip air. The snorkel is designed to automatically seal up if the water level gets too high. According to *Wen Wei Po* , ***361*** was running its diesel while snorkeling when high water

caused the air intake valve to close—or the valve failed to open properly due to a malfunction. However, its diesel engine did not shut down as it should have in response. You can find what appears to be a translated version of the article here . Apparently, the motor consumed most of the submarine's air supply in just two minutes. The crew might have felt light headed and short of breath during the first minute, and would have begun losing consciousness in the second. The negative air pressure also made it impossible to open the hatches. A 2013 article by Reuters repeats this theory as well as mentioning the possibility that was exhaust was improperly vented back into the hull to fatal effect. Any of these explanations would reflect serious failings in both crew training and mechanical performance. The recent tragic loss of the Argentine submarine ***San Juan***, the fire raging amongst moored Russian Kilo-class submarines at Vladivostok (a drill, Moscow claims), and the fortunately nonfatal but highly expensive flooding of the Indian nuclear-powered submarine *Arihant* highlight that despite being arguably the most fearsome weapon system on the planet, submarines remain dangerous to operate even when not engaged in a war. Even brief breakdowns in crew discipline or mechanical reliability can rapidly turn the stealthy underwater marauders into watery coffins. Only high standards of maintenance, manufacturing and crew training can avert lethal peacetime disasters—standards which are difficult for many nations to afford, but which the PLA Navy likely aspires to it as it continues to expand and professionalize its forces at an extraordinary rate.

Sébastien Roblin holds a Master's Degree in Conflict Resolution from Georgetown University and served as a university instructor for the Peace Corps in China. He has also worked in education, editing, and refugee resettlement in France and the United States. He currently writes on security and military history for War Is Boring .

Source: https://nationalinterest.org

HMS ***Defender*** in Portsmouth on 18 March, photo courtesy of Derek Fox

A Dead North Korean Spy Submarine (Armed with Commandos) Almost Started a War

At 5 a.m. on September 14, 1996, a North Korean spy submarine commanded by Capt. Chong Yong-ku slipped out of its base in Toejo Dong. The thirty-four-meter-long ***Sang-O*** ("Shark") normally had a crew of only fifteen. This time, however, it carried a special cargo, including a team of three special forces operatives from the elite Reconnaissance Bureau, accompanied by Col. Kim Dong-won, director of the unit's maritime intelligence department.

by Sebastien Roblin

March 20, 2019

The incident at Gangneung demonstrated how deeply the North Korean regime has indoctrinated its troops, to the point that they would commit murder and suicide rather than face capture.

Since the end of World War II, the United States has routinely employed ships and aircraft on spying and observation missions of varying legality—and every now and again, something has gone wrong. A too-stealthy American submarine bumps into a Russian counterpart , a spy ship off Korea gets seized, a U-2 spy plane gets shot down , or a Navy P-3 collides with a Chinese fighter and is forced to land in Chinese territory. In the event the spies can't return to home base, they've mostly surrendered to local troops and were eventually repatriated after interrogation and diplomatic wrangling.

(*This first appeared several years ago.)*

Do You Know What Happened Today In History?

In September 1996, it was the turn of a North Korean spy submarine to experience such a mishap. But due to the North Korea's fanatical military culture, what could have ended as a diplomatic embarrassment ended in a tragic bloodbath. At 5 a.m. on September 14, 1996, a North Korean spy submarine commanded by Capt. Chong Yong-ku slipped out of its base in Toejo Dong. The thirty-four-meter-long ***Sang-O*** ("Shark") normally had a crew of only fifteen. This time, however, it carried a special cargo, including a team of three special forces operatives from the elite Reconnaissance Bureau, accompanied by Col. Kim Dong-won, director of the unit's maritime intelligence department. At the time, North Korea was in the midst of a devastating famine that would claim hundreds of thousands of lives. This only inspired Pyongyang to grow more paranoid that South Korea, with which it had never declared peace, would exploit its disastrous condition. Before departing, the crew of the submarine had sworn an oath not to return home without completing their mission: to spy on the South Korean military bases around the area of Gangneung, ninety miles south of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) separating the two countries. Captain Chong's mission was relatively mundane as North Korean special operations went. Another submarine had performed the same mission exactly a year earlier. During the 1960s and 1970s, North Korea had infiltrated thousands of operatives into South Korea , many of whom died on sabotage and assassination missions targeting South Korean leaders. North Korea also pursued a program of abducting civilians off the coast of Japan to serve as language instructors. The little submarine arrived a few hundred meters off of Gangneung the following day. Around 9 p.m., the special operatives swam ashore in scuba gear, accompanied by two divers to provide assistance. The infiltrators proceeded inland to pursue their mission, while the divers returned to the submarine, which crept back along the coastline to photograph South Korean military installations. The following evening, the mini submarine returned to recover the special-ops soldiers. But something had gone wrong, and the infiltration team was nowhere to be found. The submarine withdrew to the sea, and again attempted to recover the spies the night on the seventeenth. This time, though, the submarine ran aground on a rocky reef around 9 p.m. The 325-ton boat came to a rest just twenty meters off of An-in Beach, three miles away from Gangneung, its screw jammed with seaweed. The crew feverishly attempted to dislodge the vessel to no avail. Finally, Captain Chong gave the order to abandon ship near midnight, setting fire to the interior of his vessel before disembarking with his crew. As fortune would have it, at 1:30 a.m. that morning a passing South Korean taxi driver noticed the silhouette of the stranded submarine in the water—and the nearly two dozen men assembled near the beach. He alerted the South Korean military, which dispatched police and soldiers to investigate. By 5 a.m. the South Korean military had all of Kangwon Province on alert. The abandoned submarine was boarded at 7 o'clock that morning, and soon more than forty-two thousand troops from the Eighth Corps and the Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division were mobilized to hunt down the missing crew, assisted by helicopters and police tracking dogs. The Republic of Korea Navy organized a blockade in case additional submarines were present. That afternoon, a farmer reported a strange man walking in his fields. South Korean soldiers descended upon the area and managed to capture the submarine's thirty-one-year-old helmsman, Lee Kwang-soo, at 4:30 p.m. Lee claimed his submarine had experienced an engine failure while on a training mission, causing it to drift into South Korean territory. He did not mention the presence of the Special Forces operatives. Just a half hour later, South Korean troops made a horrifying discovery on the top of a nearby mountain—the bodies of ten men in a neat row, dressed in white civilian tee shirts and tennis shoes. Among them was Captain Chong and members of the submarine crew. An eleventh victim, Colonel Kim, lay dead on his side a short distance away. Every one of them had been shot in the head at short range. The government subsequently instituted a curfew across the entire coast. Meanwhile, the interrogation of Lee Kwang-soo progressed, assisted, as legend has it, by four bottles of soju, the popular mild Korean liquor. Lee confessed that his boat had been involved in an espionage mission, and noted the crew had been instructed "*to commit suicide to avoid capture.*" The dead crewmen had been executed because they were "*not strong and might have been captured*." It's thought their deaths may have a punishment for their accidental grounding of the sub, or due to their lacking the combat skills necessary to escape back to North Korea. Soo also revealed an important fact: his submarine had carried a total of twenty-six men, including the Special Forces personnel. This meant fourteen infiltrators were still unaccounted for. Starting at 10 a.m. the following morning, South Korean troops searching around the mountain lands around Gangdong-myeon engaged in the first of three firefights with dispersed teams of North Korean crew, killing seven by that afternoon at the cost of two wounded. Another four were killed in gun battles by the end of September, their bullet-riddled bodies displayed to the South Korean media, while one of the infiltrators killed a South Korean police officer on the twenty-ninth while he was leaving work in Gangbori. The three elite Reconnaissance Bureau operatives, however, were still on the run. South Korean president Kim Young-sam had issued a statement on September 20 that he might be forced to retaliate if there were further provocation. Pyongyang replied that its spy sub had *"encountered engine trouble and drifted*

south, leaving its crew with no other choice but to get to the enemy's land, which might cause armed conflict." It also threatened retaliation for the deaths of the crew. When South Korean consular officer Choe Deok-geun was assassinated in Vladivostok on October 1, it was generally believed his death was arranged in revenge for the crew. The poison used to kill Choi was identical to the type found aboard the captured North Korean submarine, which by then had been towed to Tonghae for inspection. The hunt for the North Korean agents would last forty-nine days as they sought to escape across the DMZ. On October 9, police found the bodies of three civilians who had been picking mushrooms near Tongdang-ri. Spent 5.56 millimeter casings from M16 assault rifles were found close to their bodies. Two weeks later, an off-duty Korean soldier was strangled to death. Finally, on November 4, a civilian driver spotted two strange men crossing a highway near Inje, just twelves miles short of the border, and called the police. The following morning, South Korean troops cornered the two agents in a running gun battle on Hyangro Peak. The North Korean operatives responded with blazing M16s and more than a dozen hand grenades, killing three ROK soldiers before being shot to death. A diary found on their bodies recorded their killings of civilians and their journey across nearly eighty miles of South Korean territory. This marked the end of the manhunt, which cost the province over 200 billion won ($187 million) dollars in economic damage. The North Korean spies killed four civilians, eight soldiers, a policeman and a reservist attempting to escape. In return, of the twenty-six men aboard the submarine, only two remained alive. The third North Korean special force soldier, Li Chul-jin, is believed to have escaped. On December 29, the North Korean government offered a rare statement of regret for the incident. In reciprocation, Seoul repatriated the cremated remains of the twenty-four North Korean agents the following day—the first ever such exchange between the two Koreas. Unfortunately, Pyongyang's habits had not truly changed. Another one of its spy submarines would meet a terrible—and again, avoidable—fate a year and a half later off the coast of the South Korean city of Sokcho, but that is a tale for another time. The failure to detect the spy submarine led to a shakeup of the Republic of Korea military, with twenty officers disciplined and two general relieved of their posts. In 2011, the South Korean military even staged a military exercise recreating the circumstances of the incident, in order to test whether it could respond more effectively. The incident at Gangneung demonstrated how deeply the North Korean regime has indoctrinated its troops, to the point that they would commit murder and suicide rather than face capture. Indeed, they likely did not expect mercy from their own government in the event they were captured and repatriated to North Korea alive. This led to the tragic and needless deaths of dozens in an incident emblematic of the perpetual state of conflict and provocation Pyongyang has maintained between the two Koreas for more than a half a century. As an interesting postscript to the event, Lee Kwang-soo, the captured helmsman, defected to South Korea and became a naval instructor. More than a decade later, he would speak out publicly that the sinking of the South Korean frigate ***Cheonan*** was the work of a North Korean submarine. As for the submarine he used to pilot, it is now on display in the Tongil Unification Park built at Gangneung.

Sébastien Roblin holds a master's degree in conflict resolution from Georgetown University and served as a university instructor for the Peace Corps in China. He has also worked in education, editing and refugee resettlement in France and the United States. He currently writes on security and military history for War Is Boring .

Source: https://nationalinterest.org

US and China's underwater rivalry fuels calls for submarine code of conduct to cut risk of accidents

Risk of accidents is increasing as navies step up their presence in strategically sensitive areas such as the South China Sea

Zhenhua Lu

China and a number of other countries are increasing their submarine presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Photo: Handout

The increasing number of submarines various countries are deploying to the Indo-Pacific region has fuelled calls for an underwater code of conduct to reduce the risk of accidents in the busiest waterways. The warning comes as Asian Pacific countries are engaged in a submarine arms race, with an estimated 228 full-sized submarines operating in the East and South China Seas – a number that is expected to rise to 300 within a decade. Unlike other warships, submarines are by definition difficult to detect – increasing the chance of accidental collisions and mishaps. In addition, there are no regionally accepted rules governing submarine operation. Speaking at an Asia Society forum in Hong Kong last Friday, David Shear, the former US assistant defence secretary for Asian and Pacific security affairs, warned that the risk of underwater accidents

was rising as regional heavyweights and smaller countries – many of which have competing claims to the South China Sea – are expanding their submarine fleets. "*The region – particularly the western Pacific, and particularly within the first island chain on the American front perimeter – is filling up with submarines*," Shear said. "*Not just American and Chinese submarines, but Korean and Japanese submarines and Malaysian and Vietnamese submarines as well*," he said. The first island chain – Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines – is viewed by China as an area it must secure and pass through in the event of conflict. According to the latest edition of Military Balance 2019, published by the British research institute IISS, the Indo-Pacific region has 228 full-sized submarines and 52 miniature vessels. At present the US Pacific Fleet has the most powerful force in the region, with 33 nuclear-powered subs giving it an asymmetric advantage. Although China has a larger submarine fleet overall, the majority are conventionally powered and it has only 10 nuclear-powered vessels. After that South Korea and Japan both have smaller conventional fleets with 22 and 20 subs respectively. Currently there are no rules governing underwater encounters, whereas a Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CEUS) was agreed by 21 countries – including the US and China – in 2014 in an effort to prevent accidents on the surface. An incident in September highlighted the danger of accidental collisions between rival navies when an American and a Chinese warship nearly collided near territory claimed by China in the Spratly archipelago, which is known as the Nansha Islands in China. The Chinese ship came within 41 metres (135 feet) of the **USS *Decatur***, prompting the Pentagon to accuse the PLA Navy of conducting an aggressively "*unsafe and unprofessional manoeuvre*". "*We need to reduce tensions among US, Chinese and other navies and air forces in the Western Pacific*," Shear said. "*We need to have some way of preventing accidents among all of these submarines. There are ways to do that*." Since 2015 Singapore has been pushing the navies of other countries to extend the existing CUES to include a UCUES – Underwater Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea. The first draft of UCUES was officially introduced in 2016 when Rear Admiral Timothy Lo, Singapore's former navy chief, warned that "*over the last 10 years or so, we have seen a proliferation of submarines and submarine-operating navies. When the underwater environment becomes more crowded, the risk of an inadvertent collision is higher*". "The draft lays out non-binding safety procedures designed to prevent collisions, including basic manoeuvring instructions derived from existing manuals or accepted practices," said Bonnie Glaser, an Asia security expert at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. "*Due to the sensitive nature of submarine operations – operating without revealing their location, I think it will be challenging for this goal to be realised*," Glaser said. Experts said that major players should take the lead, pushing forward the underwater code of conduct to avoid miscalculation. "*Any regional initiatives promoting submarine operational safety will necessarily have to get all players on board*," said Collin Koh Swee Lean, a maritime security research fellow at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He said it would be "*close to meaningless*" without the participation of the "*main players*" – which include China, Russia and the US – who have sizeable and expanding submarine fleets. Song Zhongping, a Hong Kong-based military analyst and a former instructor with the PLA's Second Artillery Corps, also warned of the increased risk of submarines colliding. "*While it is relatively easy for vessels to see each other on the sea, there is higher probability that submarines would not notice each other because of their stealthy capability*," Song said. He said the US should take the lead in setting the underwater rules because of the size of its nuclear-powered submarine fleet and said: "*China would be optimistic and positive in supporting the initiative.* " **Source: https://www.scmp.com**

Bollinger Delivers 33rd FRC to USCG

USCGC *Joseph Doyle* in Key West, FL **Photo : Bollinger**

Bollinger Shipyards has delivered the **USCGC *Joseph Doyle***, the 33rd Fast Response Cutter (FRC) to the U.S. Coast Guard. The Coast Guard took delivery on the 21st of March, 2019 in Key West, Florida. The 154-foot Sentinel-class Fast Response Cutter has a flank speed over 28 knots, state of the art command, control, communications and computer technology, and a stern launch system for the vessel's 26-foot cutter boat. The FRC has been described as an operational "*game changer*," by senior Coast Guard officials. Recently, the Coast Guard deployed the FRC 1124, ***Oliver Berry*** from Hawaii across the Pacific to the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The 4,400 nautical mile trip marked the furthest deployment of an FRC to date. This trip showcases the hugely expanded operational reach and capability that the FRC provides. Each FRC is named for an enlisted Coast Guard hero who distinguished him or herself in the line of duty. This vessel is named after Coast Guard Hero Joseph Doyle. Doyle was appointed keeper of the Charlotte, New York Life-Saving

Station in July, 1878. As keeper, he became known as one of the most distinguished surfmen of the U.S. Life-Saving Service. During 1878 with great skill and bravery, he achieved two impressive rescues. For his heroic actions during both rescues, Doyle was awarded the Gold Lifesaving Medal on August 2, 1879. **Source : Marinelink**

Royal Navy's new offshore patrol vessel named HMS *Tamar*

HMS *Tamar*, which is part of a five-strong OPV contract with BAE Systems, worth a combined £635m, was formally named in Glasgow today.

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HMS *Tamar* was formally named in Glasgow today. BAE Systems copyright.

HMS *Tamar*, the fourth of the Royal Navy's five cutting-edge new Offshore Patrol Vessels, has been formally named in Glasgow today. The next-generation River Class ship will boost Britain's counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling work and provide essential support to defence operations. The 90-metre vessel, which is equipped with a 30mm cannon and flight deck capable of accommodating a Merlin helicopter, is part of a five-strong OPV contract with BAE Systems, worth a combined £635m. Minister for Defence Procurement Stuart Andrew said: *From patrolling our coastlines and protecting UK waters, to anti-smuggling and counter terrorism operations, these ships are a key part of our Royal Navy fleet. Today's naming marks an important milestone in **HMS Tamar**'s programme ahead of starting sea trials and being accepted into operational service next year.* At Scotstoun today, the ship's sponsor, Lady Peach, officially named **HMS *Tamar*** by pressing a button to smash a bottle of Camel Valley 'Cornwall' Brut against the hull – in recognition of the ship being affiliated to Cornwall. All the vessels are initially constructed in BAE System's Govan yard, before being moved to their Scotstoun site to be fitted out with their systems ahead of rigorous sea trials. Alongside the Type 26 anti-submarine frigate programme, the Royal Navy work has filled the Glasgow shipyards' order books until the early 2030s, protecting 1,700 Scottish jobs and supporting a further 2,300 roles across the nation through the supply chain. Sir Simon Bollom, chief executive for Defence, Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement agency, said: ***HMS Tamar** continues the legacy of ships being built on the Clyde for the Royal Navy and will perform a vital role defending the UK's interests. It is great news that we are celebrating this milestone alongside our partners in the Royal Navy and BAES. We look forward to the delivery of the remaining OPVs and the further progress on the Type 26 build programm*e. All the Batch 2 OPVs, named **HMS *Forth*, HMS *Medway*, HMS *Trent*, HMS *Tamar*** and **HMS *Spey***, are set to be delivered to the Royal Navy by the end of 2020. Last year it was announced by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson that the Batch 1 Offshore Patrols Vessels, **HMS *Tyne*, HMS *Mersey*** and **HMS *Severn***, which currently support the Fishery Protection Squadron, would also be retained for at least the next two years. **Source: https://www.gov.uk**