

MARITIME NEWS – 07 DECEMBER 2016

75 Years Ago



Image : Kobal Collection

"December 7th, 1941 - a date which will live in infamy," declared President Roosevelt on the day after the Japanese attack on the main US naval base in the Pacific. Hundreds of Japanese planes took the base by surprise early that Sunday morning, sinking or disabling 21 warships, destroying nearly 200 planes, and killing over 2,000 people. It was a rude awakening for a country that had seemed determined to find its own path in the global conflict.

Today we remember all who died in Pearl Harbour on that day.

This Russian Nuclear Submarine Has a Very Special Mission: Kill American Aircraft Carriers



Russian submarine **Tomsk** in Vilyuchinsk. **Wikimedia Commons/Sergey Konovalov/Mil.ru**

Russia's enormous Oscar-class nuclear attack submarines, known as the Project 949A, were designed during the Cold War with a specific mission in mind: to go hunting for American aircraft carriers, the pride of American naval power. Because each U.S. flattop is protected by its own little fleet of escorting warships - many of them specialized in antisubmarine warfare - the Oscar's primary game plan isn't to creep up close for a torpedo attack. Instead, it's designed to lob enormous anti-shiping cruise missiles (ASCMs) from hundreds of miles away.

Cruise-missile submarines, designated SSGs and SSGNs by the U.S. Navy, were not a new concept. The earliest missile subs were adapted from more conventional submarines in the 1950s and the Soviet Echo class, commissioned in 1961, were the first ones designed to employ cruise missiles as their primary armament. Work on a large third-generation cruise-missile submarine, designated as the Project 949 Granit, began in the mid-1970s. It featured a double-hulled design, as was standard on large Soviet submarines. The primary hull with the crew compartments and ship systems is contained inside a more aqua dynamic outer hull of thin steel.

On those Oscar IIs still in service, the outer hull is separated by up to six feet or as little as two inches, depending on the location. Two nuclear reactors generated seventy-three megawatts of electricity for the enormous submarine. A crew complement of around one hundred occupied nine or ten compartments that could be sealed off from one another. The Oscar class is large, in order to carry its heavy armament. The main production model is more than one and a half football fields long (154 meters), and displaces 12,500 tons while surfaced, making it the fourth-largest submarine type ever produced.

Nonetheless, Oscar-class subs can attain an excellent maximum speed of thirty-seven miles per hour while submerged, and dive up to five hundred meters. However, they are reputed to be slow to dive and lacking in maneuverability. The Oscar's primary purpose was to serve as a firing platform for twenty-four enormous P-700 Granit missiles, code-named rather literally SS-N-19 Shipwrecks by NATO. The ten-meter long cruise missiles weigh almost eight tons each, and can be launched from underwater at surface targets nearly four hundred miles away.

The missiles boost from their launch tubes using a rocket motor before switching to a ramjet to cruise at speeds as high as Mach 2.5, depending on altitude. They are guided to the target by a satellite system, which the Oscar can link with via an antenna. If multiple Granits are fired in a volley, they can be networked together to relay targeting information and approach from different angles. The Granit missiles can also be equipped with five-hundred-kiloton nuclear warheads.

Although Kirov-class battle cruisers and the aircraft carrier **Admiral Kuznetsov** can also carry Granit missiles, they are far easier to detect than an Oscar, which can unload its missiles from underwater with far less threat of retaliation. The Oscar doesn't lack for shorter-range backup weapons. In addition to its four regular 533-millimeter tubes that can fire RPK-2 "Starfish" anti-submarine missiles, it has two 650-millimeter tubes that can fire extra-large SS-N-16 Stallion missiles, which can strike targets as far as sixty-three miles away. Both rocket-powered missiles can deploy either conventional torpedoes or nuclear depth charges.

The first two Oscars, the **Arkhangelsk** and **Murmansk**, were completed in the Severodvinsk shipyards in 1980 and 1982. These were followed by eleven Project 949A Antey boats between 1982 and 1996. These newer and likely stealthier Oscar IIs were ten meters longer, featured updated electronics, and were upgraded from four- to seven-bladed propellers. Construction of three more Oscars was commenced between 1992 and 1994, but then abandoned with the parts diverted to other purposes.

In the post-Soviet era, the Russian Navy concentrated on preserving and updating its Oscar fleet at the expense of its older designs. Oscars continued shadowing U.S. aircraft carriers during the 1990s, and one even became tangled in the nets of Spanish fishing trawler in 1999. As is true for all but handful of submarines since World War II, the Oscar has thankfully never been used in combat. However, submarine operations remain hazardous even when not being threatened by enemy torpedoes and depth charges.

On August 12, 2000, an explosion, followed by a massive detonation equivalent to three to seven tons of TNT, occurred on board the **Kursk** while it was submerged participating in a naval exercise off of Severomorsk. Up to twenty-three of the ship's 118-man crew managed to survive the initial blast in the ninth compartment of the vessel, but rescuers were tragically unable to intervene in time. An investigation concluded that hydrogen peroxide leaking from a poorly welded Type 65 torpedo was the likely source of the first blast, leading to a chain detonation of the other torpedoes. Another theory is that crew error due to lack of training caused the torpedo detonation.

Last year, on April 7, 2015, the Oscar-class **Orel** caught fire while at dry-dock in Severodvinsk. This time the culprit was insulation between the inner and outer hull that combusted while parts were being welded. Fortunately, the nuclear fuel and weaponry were not on board at the time. Today, seven or eight Oscar II-class submarines continue

to serve in the Russian Navy's Pacific and Northern fleets. The new, stealthier Yasen-class submarines are intended to eventually replace the Oscars in the anti-carrier role, though only one, the **Severodvinsk**, has been completed so far.

However, the Russian military has announced it is upgrading at least three—though possibly all—of the remaining Oscars to the Project 949AM model by 2020, supposedly at a cost of \$180 million per submarine. The upgrade will replace the old Granit missiles with seventy-two modern Oniks and Klub anti-shipping cruise missiles. Other upgrades would include new sensors, combat information and navigation systems. The Oscar-class subs are not at the cutting edge of stealthy submarine technology—but they may remain an effective means to threaten valuable surface ships from extremely long range with their cruise missile armament. **Source : The National Interest**

INS Sumitra visits Darwin, Australia



In pursuit of India's 'Act East' policy and outreach to friendly countries, the Indian Navy's Offshore Patrol Vessel **Sumitra**, has reached Darwin, Australia on 06 Dec 2016. The ship on a three day visit from 06-09 Dec, is on her return passage to India after participating in the Royal New Zealand Navy International Naval Review 2016. The ship had earlier visited Sydney from 04-07 Nov 16.

The visit to Australia is aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing maritime security cooperation between the two countries. During the stay in harbour, various activities are planned towards enhancing cooperation and mutual understanding between the two navies such as professional interactions with RAN and discussions towards further enhancing inter-operability. In addition, calls on senior Government and military authorities, sporting and cultural interactions and sharing of best practices would also be undertaken. On departure, the ship would also undertake a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with RAN ships.

Sumitra, is the fourth of the Saryu class ships, based on an indigenous design and constructed by M/s Goa Shipyard Ltd, India. Since commissioning in 2014, the ship has been deployed for multiple operational tasks, the most notable being 'Operation Rahat', which entailed the evacuation of personnel of various nationalities from war-torn Yemen in 2015. The ship has a range of 6,500 nautical miles and is capable of embarking one Dhruv/ Chetak helicopter. The ship is commanded by Cdr KP Shreeshan. **Source : India Defence News**

Fateh submarine will join Iran Navy fleet soon: Commander

A top Iranian Navy commander says the Islamic Republic will soon launch a new domestically-manufactured submarine. "The **Fateh** (Conqueror) submarine with a 100-percent domestically-sourced technology will join Iran's Navy and become operational soon," Rear Admiral Siavash Jarreh, a senior advisor to the Iranian Navy Commander Rear Admiral Habibollah Sayyari, told IRNA on Sunday. He added that few countries in the world are capable of manufacturing submarines and thanks to the great efforts of Iranian experts and reliance on domestic know-how, the Islamic Republic currently enjoys such a capability along with China, the US, Russia, France and Britain.

Iran's Navy deployed its first submarine some two decades ago and has succeeded in acquiring advanced technology in this sector despite all the sanctions imposed against the country, he said Iran has so far launched different classes of domestically-built advanced submarines including **Ghadir, Qaem, Nahang, Tareq** and **Sina**. The 600-ton **Fateh** is among semi-heavy submarines and is equipped with state-of-the-art weaponry such as torpedoes and naval mines. It can operate more than 200 meters below the sea surface for near five weeks. Jarreh further said Iranian naval forces are very strong and highly prepared to counter any move against the country.

"Iran's Navy monitors the moves of all foreign fleets moment by moment upon their entrance into the northern regions of the Indian Ocean," the commander said The Iranian naval forces are "fully prepared to counter any foreign fleet with a covetous eye" on the country, he added, emphasizing that Iran would never initiate any confrontation. Jarreh

also said the Iranian Navy has succeeded in protecting many ships from pirate attacks in the Gulf of Aden. Back in November, the Iranian Navy chief said the naval forces had managed to escort 3,844 Iranian merchant ships and oil tankers in the Gulf of Aden and emphasized that the naval forces would continue with their presence in the strategic area with the purpose of establishing lasting security.

In recent years, Iran's Navy has increased its presence in international waters to protect naval routes and provide security for merchant vessels and tankers. In line with international efforts against piracy, the Iranian Navy has been conducting patrols in the Gulf of Aden since November 2008, safeguarding merchant containers and oil tankers owned or leased by Iran or other countries. Iran's Navy has managed to foil several attacks on both Iranian and foreign tankers during its missions in international waters. **Source : PressTV**

There are submarines and then there are submarines! Even a Vietnamese peasant has developed one. The claims by the Iranians, as pointed out on a number of occasions need a pinch of salt. Their 'Atlantic Flotilla' is still in Durban with Bushehr not yet docked but with an oil boom around her as she pumps out fuel with a 12m gash in her hull.

NZDF Southern Ocean Fisheries Patrols off to a Flying Start



The New Zealand Defence Force's (NZDF) maritime and aerial surveillance patrols in the Southern Ocean are off to a flying start, with nine licensed fishing vessels boarded and checked for compliance. "Our patrols covered a lot of ground in the first week of operations. There was no mistaking the message that we want to get across – we are serious about ensuring compliance with fishing regulations in the Southern Ocean," Major General Tim Gall, the Commander Joint Forces New Zealand, said.

Gen Gall said the NZDF was "committed to enforcing the Government's pledge to safeguard the unique and fragile environment of the Southern Ocean". The NZDF has deployed offshore patrol vessel **HMNZS Wellington** and a P-3K2 Orion surveillance aircraft from the Royal New Zealand Air Force's 5 Squadron to carry out the compliance patrols as part of a multi-agency operation in support of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). CCAMLR cooperatively conserves the Antarctic marine ecosystem and regulates the Southern Ocean fisheries.

"We have boarded and inspected nine licensed fishing vessels so far," Lieutenant Commander Matt Kaio, the Commanding Officer of **Wellington**, said. The boarding party consisted of fishery officers from the Ministry for Primary Industries and crew from **Wellington**. All of the fishing vessels co-operated with the boarding team. The P-3K2 Orion surveillance aircraft located a number of fishing vessels during a patrol on 30 November. The sortie to the CCAMLR area in the Southern Ocean was about 2600km from Invercargill and took almost 13 hours. The licensed CCAMLR fishing season in the Ross Sea region south of New Zealand started on 1 December and will continue until the agreed limits are reached sometime in January or early February 2017. **Source : NZDF**

There is a lot we can learn from similar but smaller navies – not least the ability to communicate effectively with 'shareholders'.

HMS Illustrious sails out of Portsmouth for scrapyard



HMS Illustrious (*in better times*). Photo: Royal Navy

Royal Navy's former aircraft carrier **HMS Illustrious** will leave Portsmouth one final time today and sail for the scrapyard after 32 years of service with the Royal Navy. Sailors on board HMS Queen Elizabeth and public at the Round Tower in Old Portsmouth will bid farewell to the aircraft that they affectionately called Lusty. The UK government announced earlier this year that **Illustrious**, which sailed over 900,000 nautical miles during her carrier, was sold to a Turkish scrap company.

Loyal Ship Recycling will dismantle the ship after a two-year open competition which sought to retain part of all of the ship for heritage purposes in the UK. While a number of bids were received, none proved viable. **Illustrious** was commissioned in 1982 at the end of the mission to liberate the Falkland Islands and took part in a range of operations until 2014, including evacuating Britons from the Lebanon in 2006 and delivering humanitarian aid after typhoon Haiyan devastated the Philippines in 2013.

The second of the Navy's three Invincible-class aircraft carriers, **Illustrious** was built by Swan Hunter shipbuilders on the Tyne and launched by Princess Margaret in December 1978. Work to complete the 22,000-tonne ship was speeded up during 1982 after the outbreak of the Falklands War. Although the conflict ended before work was finished, **Illustrious** rapidly deployed and played an important role in the aftermath. So quickly was she deployed, her commissioning ceremony took place at sea en route to the Falklands on June 20 1982.

During the 1990s **Illustrious** helped maintain the no-fly zone over Bosnia and in 1998 operated in the Gulf carrying out similar roles over southern Iraq. She was soon called into action again in 2000, leading a task group aimed at restoring peace and stability to Sierra Leone. The following year she played an important part in the war on terror in Afghanistan following the September 11 attacks in America, staying in the region for several months. In 2006, along with Type 42 destroyer **HMS Gloucester**, **Illustrious** helped in the evacuation of British citizens from Beirut caught up in the Israel-Lebanon crisis. **Source : Naval Today**

I do miss some things BUT last I heard, HMS Queen Elizabeth was still in Rosyth! I do feel a tinge of sadness as I spent a day aboard her off Plymouth while FOST did his best to break her during her 'Thursday War'.

Lebanese, Abu Dhabi-owned yards said building Israeli Navy ships

Defense Ministry confident no classified information at risk during construction of corvettes in Germany

Four Israeli navy corvettes are under construction in a shipyard owned by Lebanese and Abu Dhabi-based companies, although officials insist that no classified information about the warships is at risk. Construction of the ships, needed to defend Israel's off-shore gas fields, was agreed in a 2015 deal between Israel and German company ThyssenKrupp which has sub-contracted the work out to the shipyard, the Hebrew-language Yedioth Ahronoth daily reported Sunday.

According to Yedioth, Abu Dhabi MAR, a major ship builder in the Persian Gulf, the docks where the vessels are being assembled. The company is owned by Lebanese Iskandar Safa, who has a 30% stake via his Privinvest shipbuilding

group based in Beirut; the remaining 70% is owned by Al Ain International Group, from Abu Dhabi, which serves as the capital of the United Arab Emirates does not recognize Israel and does not have official diplomatic or economic ties with the Jewish state.

Israel and Lebanon do not have diplomatic ties either and under Israeli law its northern neighbor is considered an enemy state. The Israel Defense Ministry told Yedioth in a statement that "the contract to buy protective ships was signed with the German company, with direct involvement of the [German] government that is even funding a third of the cost of the deal." "Before the contracts were signed the Director of Security of the Defense Establishment conducted checks with German government officials in order to confirm that no classified material from the project will be transferred to an unauthorized body that has not been approved as such.

It is important to note that the German shipyard builds only the body of the ships, all of the systems will be installed in Israel." The circumstances behind the arrangement are the outcome of a failed attempt several years by ThyssenKrupp to cooperate with Abu Dhabi MAR on military shipbuilding contracts. A contract signed between the companies in 2010 was to see civilian shipyards transferred from the Germans to the Abu Dhabi interest, while military projects would be split 50-50 between the two companies.

In 2011 ThyssenKrupp announced that the deal was off, yet a small part of the agreement was followed through, including the transfer of the HDW Gaarden shipyard, in Kiel, Germany, to Abu Dhabi MAR. As a result, the dock, which focused on civilian constructions, changed its name to Abu Dhabi MAR Kiel. However, as the civilian ship business slacked off the yard operators moved into the military market instead. Two months before the Israel-ThyssenKrupp naval deal the yard's name was changed again to German Naval Yards Kiel with sources saying it was to ease the contract with Israel, Yedioth reported.

In 2015 Israel signed a €430 million (\$480 million) deal with ThyssenKrupp to build four Sa'ar 6-class corvettes. Under the contract, Germany will provide the Israeli-designed corvettes to the Israel Navy, to be delivered over the five years, and will finance approximately one-third of the cost of the deal with a special grant of €115 million (\$122 million). The ships are slightly bigger than Israel's Sa'ar 5 corvettes, the largest ships currently in service with the navy.

In response to inquiries from Yedioth, German Naval Yards Kiel said it is a secondary contractor of ThyssenKrupp Sea Systems and that it contributes to the engineering of sailing vessels and to their construction in the Kiel shipyards. The company noted that all contact between the shipyard and Israeli officials was via ThyssenKrupp. The revelation came on the heels of reports that an Iranian government company owns 4.5 percent of ThyssenKrupp which is at the center of a scandal over its provision of submarines and other services to the Israel Navy.

Attorney General Avichai Mandelblit last week ordered the police to look into allegations that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's personal lawyer, David Shimron, used his close relationship with the premier to push Israel to purchase several submarines from ThyssenKrupp, award the company a contract for the naval vessels to defend Israel's Mediterranean gas fields, and allow it to build a shipyard in Israel. Shimron was a representative of the company in Israel. **Source: Times of Israel**

Salvage Underway After Crew Abandons Bulk Carrier Off Cape Town



MV Antaios (aka Eternal Fortune). Photo: MarineTraffic.com/Claus Schaeffe

A salvage operation is underway to retrieve an abandoned bulk carrier from the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of South Africa following a fire in its engine room on Sunday. The South African Maritime Authority confirmed Tuesday that all 19 crew members have been evacuated from the ship and are currently in Cape Town. SAMSA was alerted to the incident on Sunday after the Liberian-flagged **MV Antaios** issued a distress call reporting a fire and flooding in its engine while the vessel underway some 860 nautical miles west of Cape Town. The call was picked up by the Japanese ore carrier **Nsu Inspire**, which was diverted to the scene and picked up the 19 crew members who abandoned ship in life rafts.

"The 170 meter **Antaios** had reportedly experienced a fire in the engine room while sailing from Argentina en route to Saudi Arabia loaded with grain. The fire caused some damage which led to flooding in the engine room. When the flooding became uncontrollable, the captain decided to make a distress call and order the crew to abandon ship," SAMSA said in a statement. "The mayday call was picked by the **Nsu Inspire** which was sailing from Brazil to Singapore and China. The captain of the **Nsu Inspire** immediately informed the SAMSA CSWR and proceeded to the rescue," SAMSA said.

"Happily, by 20h39 MRCC was informed by the captain of the **Nsu Inspire** that his ship had arrived on-scene and had commenced recovering the **Antaios** crew from the two lifeboats they had escaped to. All 19 crew members were plucked to safety on board the giant 330 meter ore carrier and are currently on the way to be dropped off in Cape Town from where they will be repatriated," SAMSA said.

As of Tuesday's update the crew of a salvage tug from Smit already had the stricken bulk carrier under tow. "As at 12pm today, the (**Antaios**) crew are safe at a hotel waiting on the arranged flights to be finalized and all should have departed by Sunday. The **Antaios** is currently under tow by the salvage tug **Smit Amandla**, and at the time of the last position update, it was approximately 780 nautical miles from Cape Town," SAMSA said. **Source : gCaptain**

CMA CGM Supply Vessel Rescues French Yachtsman



File photo shows the CMA CGM-owned **MV Marion Dufresne**, sent to rescue de Pavant. **Photo: Vendée Globe**

On Tuesday, the CMA CGM vessel **Marion Dufresne** rescued the French yachtsman Kito de Pavant from his sailboat, which had suffered damage and was taking on water. De Pavant was competing in the Vendee Globe solo race, a famously challenging competition in which several dozen yachtsmen make a non-stop circumnavigation of the world, without outside assistance. De Pavant was about 100 nm off the Crozet Islands when his yacht, the **Bastide Otio**, struck an unknown object and began to flood.

"I hit something hard with the keel. The shock was brutal and the boat stopped dead . . . The keel hangs under the boat," de Pavant told race organizers Vendee Globe by satphone. "The keel box is torn, there is a large leak at this level but it is contained for the moment at the engine bay . . . The situation has stabilized for now." Vendee Globe said that the **Otio** was making about 16 knots in heavy weather at the time of impact. The **Dufresne**, a supply vessel operated by CMA CGM under charter to the French Southern Lands, was the closest ship to de Pavant's position at about 90 nm away. CMA CGM said that she immediately changed course to meet him.

The **Dufresne** made VHF contact at about midnight local time, and Kito's Facebook page reported that he was taken safely aboard just after daybreak. In a brief message, Kito said that he could not stay with the sailboat because he

could no longer control the flooding. He expressed sadness at having to abandon his yacht to the seas after years of preparation for the race, and he wished his competitors the best of luck. It was De Pavant's third Vendee Globe. He was forced to exit the race in 2008 when his yacht was dismantled, and again in 2012 following a collision with a trawler.

The **Marion Dufresne** is both a supply vessel and a research ship, and is based out of La Reunion. On her supply missions, she serves the Crozet and Kerguelen Islands, plus the small outposts on St-Paul and Amsterdam Islands. As a research vessel – her primary role – she sails in support of scientific missions around the world. The rescue of de Pavant is the **Dufresne**'s second for a participant in the Vendee Globe. In 2008, the **Dufresne**'s crew rescued race participant Bernard Stamm after he went aground off the Kerguelen Islands. **Source : Naval Today**

Bad luck but there are a lot more containers rounding the Cape by themselves than most realize. Possibly also the cause of Bushehr's gash. I remember in 1981 when OPW and JFE each expended 200 rounds of 20mm to try and sink two but had to leave after dark as they were settling very slowly. Then there was the time when logs were doing the trip, some ending up on beaches.

READER COMMENT

7th December 1941 – 7th December 2016. Tomorrow is the 75th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

Many thanks – hope you like the 'front page'.

AGS