

LOBO JR.

SUMMER 2021



USS RAZORBACK ASSOCIATION USS394.ORG



**WORK WEEK APRIL 2021
& BOB OPPEL MEMORIAL**

Dedicated to our past and present military members.
Thank you for your service.

NEWSLETTER FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



USS RAZORBACK ASSOCIATION

Web: uss394.org

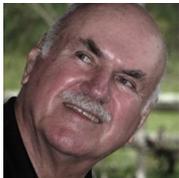
USS RAZORBACK ASSOCIATION USS394.ORG



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Lobo Jr. newsletter is produced with acknowledgement & appreciation to the authors & writers of articles and to photographers, stories submitted and photos sourced. Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the USS Razorback Assn.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?????

Membership Dues were to be paid by December 31st, please forward if you haven't done so. To:
Wayne Hildebrand P.O. Box 125 Vida, OR. 97488-0125



EDITOR'S CORNER

Hello Shipmate's and Friends of the USS Razorback Association.

In April as former crew members were finally able to gather in North Little Rock, Ak. for their annual Work Week Party they learned of the tragic and sad news of the missing submarine from Indonesia KR1 Nanggala-402 and her crew of 53. Needless to say the outcome and loss was a sobering reality of the risk submariners face daily in their tour of duty. We shall remember them.

The former crew members worked diligently on Engine 1, success was in their reach and the engine was fired up. A great moment of success for all.

During their visit a Celebration of Life was held for the passing of Bob Opple who was instrumental in return of the boat to the US.

USS Razorback was commissioned in 1944 during WWII and served the US for 26 years until 1970, was decommissioned and sold to Turkey, renamed TCG Muratreis and served another 31 years until 2001. It was Bob who got the ball rolling to acquire the Razorback from Turkey. (story [Nostalgic sailor saves sub destined for the scrap pile](#) on Page 12).

The men learned that another dear friend and active member Max Bassett passed away. We will remember these fellow crew mates and all others who have gone on Eternal Patrol. We thank them for their dedication and service. A life long friendship and the connection kept with the Razorback.

Submariners are different from skimmers, like no other seamen. Bubbleheads (submariners) consider skimmers to be targets that just haven't been sunk yet.

Only those who have been below deck know of the comradery and friendships made for a life time. Lets face it, you really got to know your buddies in tight quarters, hot and smelly, three minute showers, food stored in places you would never think possible, and hot bunking, no other life like in the navy. You toughen up real fast.

I also encourage you to send in your stories, fun

memories, jokes played, a rescue, or maybe a challenging watch for our new column Shipmate' Sea Stories.

Fred Reker has shared a couple of stories in previous issues and now Rick Pressly has submitted an article for Shipmate's Sea Stories which I know you will enjoy. Thank you both for coming forward and sharing your experiences while serving on the Razorback.



I look forward to hearing from you with a story of your own to share with fellow crew members. Time is no longer on our side, so please make sure to share your stories with us and don't forget the photos. Also make not that your photos will be passed on in the future to the AIM Museum.

I have asked if one of you would arrange a Zoom meeting so you all can chat with other shipmates you may not have seen for many ears. As yet no one has come forward to organize it. Is anyone interested in trying this new media? Please let me know.

In closing, just a note there are a couple of reunions in the works. Not sure if San Diego will happen next year, however an important 80th reunion in NLR 2024 and a reunion of the port call made in 1968 visiting in Victoria, BC, Canada for 2023. Hopefully you will be able to attend. Pass the word along, and if you know a shipmate who doesn't belong to the association please encourage them to join.

Stay Safe, and Play Hard

Valerie Braunschweig,
Editor, Lobo Jr. Newsletter

Send your articles to: valerieanddick@telus.net





FROM THE BRIDGE

5/1/2021

The Razorback Association and the boat itself are alive and well. In spite of Covid setbacks, we completed Work Week with several nice accomplishments.

We got #1 engine running again and had an impressive memorial service for Bob Oppler. We added a new member, John Nasinec, who is moving from Minnesota to Yuma, AZ. Those attending work week include: John Hertzberg, Ron Sagaert, Mel Kleinsorge, Bobby and his son Stuart Barge, Fred Reker, Steve Lowrie, John Nasinec, Jim Franks, Mike Marmon, and Mike Keil. Covid forced cancellation at the last minute of Bob Hick-eyes trip with his family. Don David and Maurice Barksdale had to cancel also.

On a further sad note Max Bassett went on Eternal Patrol Thursday of work week (4/22). He was in ICU during the week and scheduled for Hospice Sat but never made it. See the article on Max by Ron Sagaert later in this newsletter. The submarine community is also mourning the loss of the Indonesian submarine KRI Nanggala 402 with all 53 crew members lost. It sank in 2750 foot deep water off the resort island Bali. The submarine was a German built diesel powered boat built in 1981.

We held a business meeting Thursday morning and scheduled two future reunions: 2024 on Razorback's 80th birthday at the boat in NLR and 2023 in Victoria, BC on the 55th anniversary of the Razorback visit to Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt, BC, Canada in 1968. This is where Valerie met Dick Braunschweig, and they eventually got married. See the minutes of the business meeting elsewhere in this newsletter.

I can recommend several books involving Razorback: Growing Up Lucky, by Dori Newman, the widow of a former Razorback sailor, and Of Wives and Submarines, by Edward Monroe-Jones, a story of the USS Razorback, a guppy IIA and of the men and women who made her what she was. And Dive, Dive, by Captain Lennis Lammers, who wrote short stories about his experiences on the Razorback Circa 1963-1966. All are available on line.

Steady bubble, DBF, and start making plans for April Work Week next year.

Fred Reker, Captain, USNR-R





Bob Opple's Celebration of Life

Robert (Bob) W. Opple Jr
 01/22/1940 - 01/10/2021
 EM2(SS) USS RAZORBACK (SS-394)

Today we remembered the life and submarine service of our former USS Razorback sailor, Bob Opple. Bob played an incredibly instrumental role in returning our beloved submarine to the City of North Little Rock.

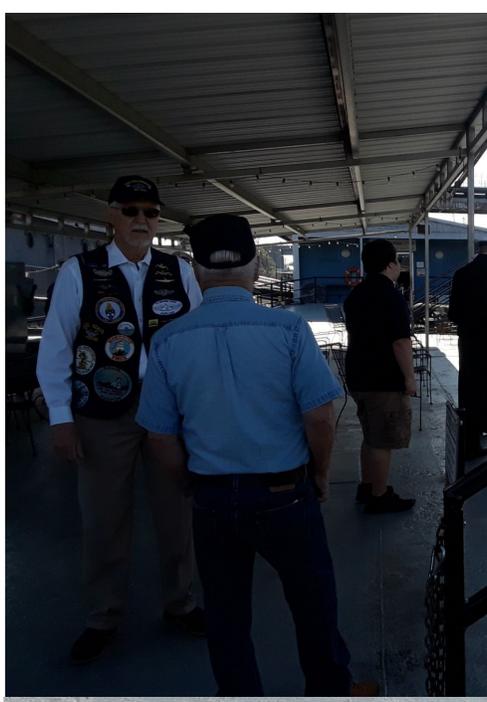
Sailor, Rest Your Oar
 Special thanks to Rev. Joe Manning
 and the North Little Rock PD Honor Guard



Front row: (L-R) Camille Smith, Myna Miller, Joe Mathis and the base preacher Dr. Joe Manning.
 Back row: (L-R) Steve Lowerie, John Nasinec, John Hertzberg, Ron Sagaert, Bobby Barge, Fred Reker, Mel Kleinsorge, Jim Franks, Mike Keil.



WORK WEEK APRIL 2021 & CELEBRATION OF LIFE CEREMONY

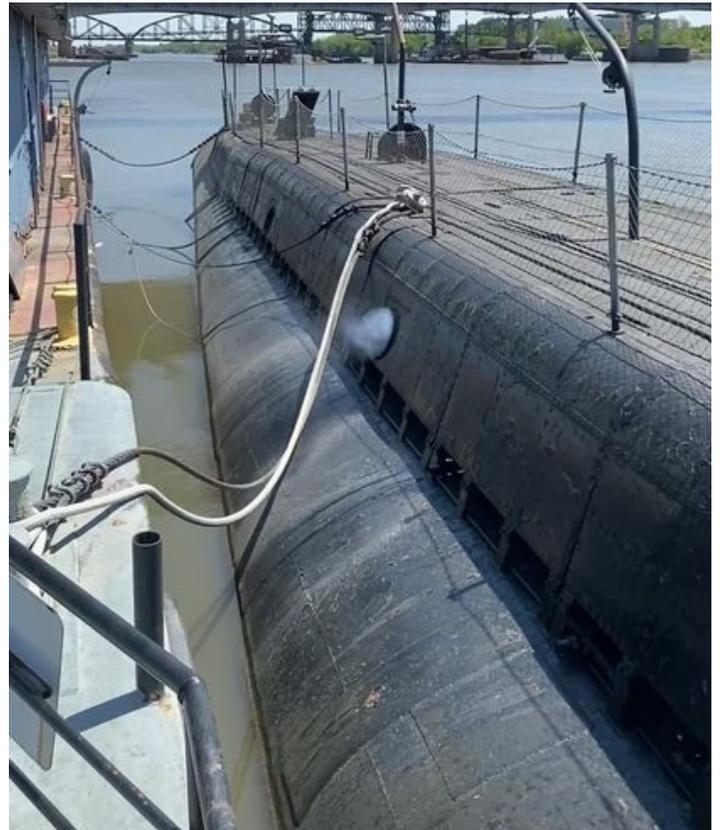
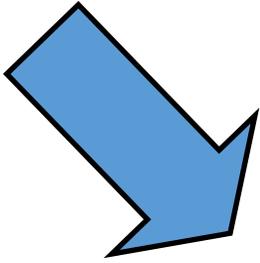




RAZORBACK WORK WEEK APRIL 2021

View video—the 'boys' got engine 1 running

Gentlemen,
start your **ENGINES**... 



<https://www.facebook.com/AlMMuseum/videos/323947315822764>





ETERNAL PATROL

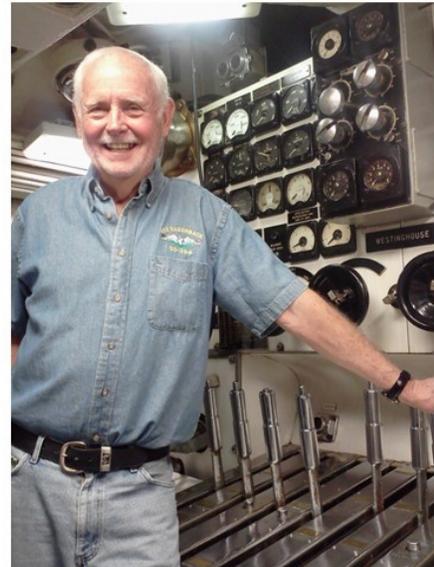
Bob Opple



Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bid'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep;
O hear us when we cry to Thee,
For those in peril on the sea.

Bless those who serve beneath the deep, through
lonely hours their vigil keep.
May peace their mission ever be,
protect each one we ask of thee.
Bless those at home who wait and pray, of their
return by night or day.

In Memory of



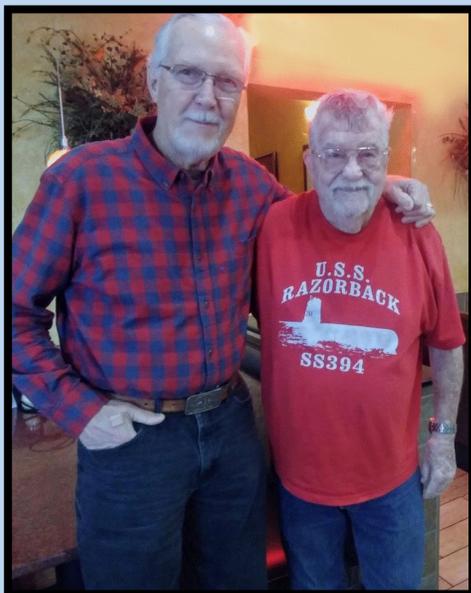
Robert W. Opple Jr
1/22/1940 - 1/10/2021
EM2(SS) USS Razorback (SS-394)
1960 - 1962



Opple's plaque at Reunion 4/2019

Ron Sagert talks about Bob Opple and the value of shipmates on a USN submarine. He presents Bob with a plaque of Appreciation from the USS Razorback Association.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XScz_RwgHc



Ron Sagert & Max Bassett

ETERNAL PATROL

MAX BASSETT



USS RAZORBACK
55 394

Max Bassett; shipmate, Razorback crewmember, story teller extraordinaire, US Navy submarine veteran of 31 years and friend of all sub vets anywhere, shipped out on his final patrol on 23 April 2021. Max was originally from Rock Springs, WY. He retired as a MMC (SS). He was married to the love of his life, Jerris (also a US Navy Chief (ret) and they lived in Middleburg, FL.

Max was qualified on the USS Razorback in 1960 and was a proud member of the A-gang in the Forward Engine Room. He went on to serve in the nuclear navy on several boomers. He spent time in recruitment duty in MN but always came back to his beloved submarines.

Max, along with Bob Ople and Maurice Barksdale, was instrumental in returning the USS Razorback to the US from Turkey. He assisted in convincing the city of North Little Rock, AR to purchase the boat from Turkey and set up a Maritime Museum around her on the Arkansas River. Max rode the tug that was towing the Razorback across the Atlantic, checking on the interior of the boat every other day with a flashlight.

Max was a plank owner in the USS Razorback Assoc. and was always a part of the yearly Reunions and Work Parties on the boat. There was only one Max and he will be sorely missed.



2021 Business Meeting Minutes

The meeting was called to order by president Reker at 0815 Thursday April 22, 2021 on the barge at AIMM in North Little Rock, AR. Razorback Association members Present: Mike Keil, Mike Marmon, John Hertzberg, Mel Kleinsorge, Bobby Barge, Stuart Barge, Fred Reker, Greg Zonner. Also attending work week but unable to attend the meeting: Ron Sagaert, John Nasinec, Steve Lowrie, Jim Franks.

1. Treasurers Report: Bank balance is about \$10,400. Six
2. Members have paid this year and Nasinec is a potential new life member.
3. We discussed next reunions. The 80th birthday of Razorback is 2024 and we should have the 2024 reunion on the boat in NLR. We agreed to have next reunion in 2023 in Victoria Canada, with Hertz and Valerie hosting and coordinating with Submariners Association of Canada. 2022 is not decided.
4. John Hertzberg agreed to write a sea story about the 5000th dive and difficulty blowing Negative with celebrities on board. He also will look for a copy of the association by-laws. I lost my copy during a recent move and need an updated copy. Anyone who has a copy please forward it to me at : fredreker326@gmail.com.
5. Fred will work with Camille Smith of AIMM to get a link on AIMM Facebook page to Razorback Association.
6. New Coffee Urn. There was no interest in buying a new coffee urn which probably would never be used.
7. Mike Keil will look into a possible web page expert so we can update our website. Zonner has all back issues of Lobo and Lobo Jr. He can upload them to our website if we get it working again.
8. Membership Chairman. No volunteers, but Hertzberg agreed to work with Valerie to update his information.
9. Accomplishments for work week. Memorial Service for Bob Oppe, Got #1 main engine running, and pumped the bilges.

Meeting adjourned at 8:35 AM

Fred Reker acting secretary.

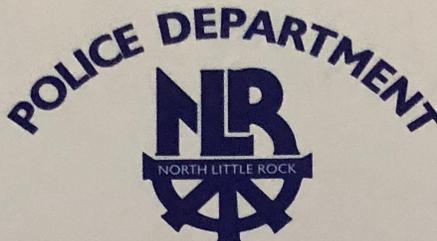


CELEBRATING
77
YEARS

USS Razorback Commissioned
April 3, 1944



PATRICK THESSING
CHIEF OF POLICE



200 WEST PERSHING BLVD.
NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS 72114-2294

PHONE: (501) 758-1234
FAX NUMBER: (501) 771-7157 (SERVICE)
FAX NUMBER: (501) 771-7194 (CHIEF)

May 5, 2021

USS Razorback ASSN
c/o Fred Raker, CAPT, USNR (Ret)
1660 Glenview Rd., 78 C
Seal Beach, CA 90740

RE: Monetary Donation

Dear Mr. Hildebrand,

I would like to personally thank you for the generous donation to the North Little Rock Police Department. The North Little Rock Police Department Honor Guard was humbled to be a part of the ceremony. On behalf of the Honor Guard, I want to pass on their gratitude for having the privilege to participate in the ceremony. The vision of Mr. Robert Opple, and his dedication to bringing the USS Razorback to North Little Rock, have contributed to the growth and development of our city.

The North Little Rock Police Department established a Police Athletic League in October 1998. This program provides FREE sports to the youth of our city. Your donation will help provide sporting equipment to help with the growth of the program.

Sincerely,

Patrick Thessing
Chief of Police

PT/ce





Nostalgic sailor saves sub destined for the scrap pile

*By Warren Cornwall
Seattle Times Eastside bureau*

More than four decades ago, Bellevue resident Bob Opplé went to sea on the USS Razorback. He was a 19-year-old kid on a submarine enlisted in the secretive underwater battlefield of the Cold War.

Wednesday he pulled out of an Istanbul dock with the Razorback once again, a 64-year-old man realizing a nostalgic dream to save the ship from the scrap yard.

"I'm like a kid in a candy store," he said last week as he prepared to leave his suburban home and rejoin the boat in Turkey.

Opplé hatched the idea of bringing back the Razorback in late 2001, shortly after he discovered the World War II-era diesel-powered submarine had been turned over to the Turkish navy and was being retired from service.

Since then, the upbeat heavy-equipment salesman has turned his skills to the submarine, enlisting a cast of boosters that includes Navy veterans, leaders of the Arkansas town of North Little Rock and Turkish politicians.

"Bob Opplé was, in my estimation, the lead salesman," said Steve Nawojczyk, project manager of North Little Rock's plan to make the submarine a cornerstone of a maritime museum on the Arkansas River. "I pegged him right away as the guy who had about 500 pounds of enthusiasm in about a 170-pound body. It's obvious that he's married to that boat."

Now the submarine is being towed from Turkey to North Little Rock, and Opplé is along for the first leg of the ride, to Gibraltar, near the meeting point of the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. He is riding in the tugboat, though he plans to spend at least one night sleeping on the submarine.

Opplé had moments of doubt in the years leading up to Wednesday.

"It was just a dream," he said of the initial idea, which he hatched while talking with a few Navy buddies after learning the submarine was still afloat.

Rescuing the boat would take more than \$1 million and approval from Congress, the State Department, the Navy and the Turkish government. Also, where do you put a 311-foot-long submarine?

Opplé enlisted the help of Navy veterans in Arkansas, whose trademark animal is a wild hog called a razorback. That led to the city of North Little Rock, which was looking for a centerpiece for plans to develop its waterfront.

City officials embraced the idea of incorporating the submarine into a proposed \$15 million Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum, and took the lead in navigating the political and military waters involved in getting a military vessel from a foreign country.



Opple's work also captured the imagination of submarine veterans in the Puget Sound area.

The Razorback was the first boat Shane Foraker served on. Now a retired Navy commander living in Poulsbo, he spent roughly \$5,000 printing color brochures about the Razorback and mailing them around the country.

Foraker recalled life in the submarine as cramped, smelly and brutally hot at times. It also helped forge him into the man he became. The chance to see it again was irresistible.

"Did you ever forget your first love?" he asked.

The deal appeared near completion in 2002 when the march toward war in Iraq upset U.S.-Turkish relations. That put a hold on efforts to have the Turkish government give the submarine to North Little Rock.

Opple's wife, Chris, said he would sometimes come home discouraged and uncertain.

"He's said off and on, 'You know, this might be stupid.' And I said, 'I don't think so.' "

Finally, in March of this year, the Turkish government turned the submarine over to the city. A Little Rock-based investment company donated \$400,000 to the project, and a coal-



Photo by John Hummel, courtesy northlr.org/maritime-museum.

tion of veterans groups promised \$1 million over five years.

There is now more than the \$2 million needed for the museum's first phase, said Rose Crane, who heads the fund-raising effort. That will include the submarine, the USS Hoga — a tugboat that survived the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 — and two barges that will house the museum's visitor center. It should be open to visitors by the late summer or early fall, Nawojczyk said.

Opple's only disappointment is that they can't sail the submarine back to the United States under its own power. It was too expensive to make needed repairs on the boat. Instead, it will be towed across the Atlantic Ocean, up the Mississippi River and then up the Arkansas River. The Razorback is scheduled to arrive in late June.

Then Opple wants to turn his attention to acquiring one of the few other diesel submarines still in existence. That one, he said, should come to Puget Sound.

Warren Cornwall: 206-464-2311
or wcornwall@seattletimes.com

Full story: <http://archives.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/cgi-bin/texis.cgi/web/vortex/display?slug=sub07e&date=20040507>



Photo courtesy of Sait Kucuk, CPOS (Retired), Turkish Navy.



SHIPMATES SEA STORIES

By Rick Pressly, MM2/SS
Razorback Crew member
1966-1968



I reported to Razorback fresh from Nuclear Power School as a designated Nuclear Machinists Mate Third Class. I was assigned to the After Engine Room for the whole two years. A learning experience to say the least! I never did find the "Reactor".

While we were in WestPac in 1967, I took the opportunity to reenlist when we passed thru the war zone in the Tonkin Gulf on our way to Singapore. I re-enlisted for a cash bonus and "The Auxillaryman Package" course, which I found out later, I was not eligible for. Little did I know that eventually, that is the direction my Submarine career would take me.

When we returned to San Diego and made preparations to head for Hunters Point and overhaul in the Shipyard, I was appointed as the Spare Parts Petty Officer, responsible for making sure that all the parts needed during overhaul were ordered and accounted for.

I guess I did a pretty good job, because my Engineering Chief give me a 3.6 professional performance mark during that period of evaluation. When the evaluation made it to the Engineer (CWO Sandler), in his infinite wisdom, decided to lower my professional performance mark to 2.8 and put in the eval, *"That he did not think that I was doing what was required of a Second Class Petty Officer"* and sent the eval to the Bureau of Personal.

When the eval reached the Bureau, the 2.8 professional performance mark immediately caused me to be dropped from the Nuclear Power program and when my eligibility for transfer came up in the Spring of 1968, it opened the door for me to receive orders to the USS Finback SSN-670 and New Construction in Newport News Virginia by way of the Non-Nuclear Machinists Mate Auxiliary Package course. Captain Brown (*the crew referred to him as "Captain Candy" because of his sweet tooth*), I never did have the opportunity to see CWO Sandler again to thank him for changing the course of my Naval Career.

When I reported to the Finback for New Construction, there were six of my classmates from Nuc School on board. While they were standing 12 on and 12 hours off for the first six months aboard, I was reporting in a couple times a week and standing no duty. They wanted to know how I had gotten out of Nuclear Power, because they were not too happy!

That is how I went from a Third Class Nuclear Designated Machinists Mate in 1966 to a Second Class Non-Nuclear Machinists Mate in 1968, soon to be a First Class Petty Officer as I past the test and reported to the Finback as Leading Auxiliary man for A-Gang for the next three years.



L/R: EN1 Garielson, MM2 RICK PRESSLY, EN2 Marty Reeves, EN2 Bbb Holmes, FN John Wilkinson, FN Bill Dempsey



YOU'VE GOT MAIL



Subject: Re: RAZORBACK'S LOBO JR. SEPT-OCT NEWSLETTER/MAGAZINE

Hello Valerie

Your most recent addition, Issue 5, of the Lobo Jr. is most interesting and thought provoking as usual. Your new column "Razorback's- Below Decks Tales" *was of special interest to me as I, being unqualified and a 9901 designate, was the lowest member of the crew on that WESTPAC cruise. Capt. Reker's account of the rescue of Admiral Bogan on our return trip brought back a flood of memories.

During that trip Captain Davis presented me with my first dolphins. Later on, I was assigned to three other submarines, but I never forgot my Razorback experience. I still have my original Qualification Training Card signed by Captain Davis and many other crew members of that time.

Also, on page 25 of your recent Lobo Jr. there is a picture of the engine room on the Razorback. In this picture you see a couple of blue Naugahyde covered tool benches as they now look in Little Rock Arkansas. In the day, those benches were covered with green colored Naugahyde and served as my bunk for most of that WESTPAC cruise.

I have many memories of my Razorback experience mostly good some character building.

Thank you very much for your time and effort in producing LOBO JR.

Wayne Howie

**Editor's note- Below Decks Tales column has been renamed to Shipmate's Sea Stories*

Life On A Diesel Submarine: Raunchy, Cramped, And Occasionally Smells Like Sh*t





Regularly deployed to the [Seventh Fleet](#) into the sixties *Razorback* sailed into the [South China Sea](#) on her 1965 deployment where she earned her first [Vietnam Service Medal](#). She returned to San Diego on 1 February 1966, but was in the western Pacific from 29 December 1966 to 3 July 1967 and from 6 August 1968 to February 1969. During 1969 she continued to operate on the west coast out of San Diego, winning her third Battle "E" on 2 July 1969. *Razorback's* last deployment, again to the western Pacific, was from 30 January to 7 August 1970.

During a stopover in Guam, scenes for the film [Noon Sunday](#) were shot aboard the boat. Not long after her return to the West Coast, she was decommissioned at [Hunter's Point Naval Shipyard](#). Concurrent with her decommissioning on 30 November, 1970 *Razorback* was transferred to the [Turkish Navy](#).

In her 26 years of service in the U.S. Navy *Razorback* earned five [battle stars](#) for [World War II](#) service, four campaign stars for [Vietnam War](#) service and two awards of the [Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal](#).

Thanks to the efforts of retired crew members and the state of Arkansas, and North Little Rock, Ak. *Razorback* was purchased from Turkey, and returned to the United States, whereby she has been turned into a waterfront museum. The Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum is located in North Little Rock, Arkansas, and is available for public tours. Details of how the *Razorback* was acquired are detailed on page



THANK YOU
NAVY
VIETNAM WAR
VETERANS





HII-General Dynamics team win submarine

by Navy Technology

option to build tenth US Navy

March 2021

The US Naval Sea Systems Command has awarded a contract to construct the tenth



The US Naval Sea Systems Command has awarded a contract to construct the tenth Block V Virginia-class submarine with Virginia Payload Module (VPM). General Dynamics Electric Boat (GDEB) is the prime contractor for the Block V Virginia-class programme.

The approximately \$2.42bn fixed-price incentive modification to a previously awarded contract will see GDEB continue to subcontract with Huntington Ingalls Industries – Newport News Shipbuilding (HII-NNS). In December 2019, the [US Navy awarded a \\$22bn contract](#) to the shipbuilding team for the construction of nine new Block V Virginia-class submarines. This contract included an option for one additional Block V submarine with VPM.

The latest contract modification exercises the option for the new submarine. It brings the cumulative face value of the contract for Newport News to \$9.8bn. So far, HII's Newport News and GDEB have built and delivered 19 Virginia-class submarines.

HII Newport News Virginia-class submarine construction vice-president Jason Ward said: "We are pleased that Congress supported the restoration of funding for the tenth Virginia-class boat in Block V.

"We look forward to building and delivering the final boat of the block that maintains production at two submarines per year and continues to stabilise the industrial base."

Construction of the yet to be named submarine is expected to start in early 2024. Work under the contract will be carried out throughout the US and other areas outside of the country. Delivery of the first Block V submarine is expected to take place in fiscal year 2025.

Earlier this month, HII-General Dynamic launched the US Navy's newest Virginia-class multi-mission nuclear-powered submarine Montana (SSN 794).



Movies:



USS Razorback (SS-394)

USS Razorback is the subject of a full-length documentary film, **"Greyhound of the Sea: USS Razorback,"** slated for release in 2016. The film is a joint effort between the Arkansas Inland Maritime Museum and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock School of Mass Communication.

U.S.S. Razorback Tour by Neil Bullock

The History Of The Razorback a series not to be missed on UTube with interviews of former crewmembers talking about the Razorback and a tour of the boat.

Books:

			<p>ALL THREE BOOKS</p> <p>FROM</p> <p>THE HOOD BROTHERS</p> <p>AVAILABLE TODAY</p> <p>AMAZON BARNES & NOBLE APPLE BOOKS</p>
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Captain L. Lammers: USN, RET. shares his short stories and experiences while serving on the Razorback 1963—1966

Dori Neuman : in Part 2 the 1940's begins as seen during WWII from the Atlantic seaboard, when the U-Boats brought havoc so close to our shore

Edward Monroe- Jones: A story of the U.S.S. Razorback, a Guppy IIA submarine, and of the men and women who made her what she was.

It's Official: The USS Bonhomme Richard Can't Be Saved

After a catastrophic fire, the Navy must scrap one of its biggest warships, which is damaged beyond repair. \

By Kyle Mezowski DEC 1, 2020



The U.S. Navy has announced the USS *Bonhomme Richard*, a large deck amphibious warship that was [severely damaged last summer in a catastrophic fire](#), won't be rebuilt and returned to service.

The ship, which is designed to carry U.S. Marines into battle, was nearly gutted in a July fire that saw it [burn for several days](#). The Navy has decided it isn't worth the cost and effort to rebuild the 22-year-old *Bonhomme Richard*, so [it will be scrapped](#)

The *Bonhomme Richard* caught fire on July 12, 2020 while docked at its home port in San Diego. The firefighting effort spanned four days, involving hundreds of seamen and even water drops by Navy helicopters on the burning ship. The fire, which started in the lower decks of the ship reserved for storing Marine vehicles, spread to the stern and bow and up through every level of the ship.

The fire was so strong that it caused the flight deck to collapse, and it also destroyed the bridge, leaving the ship completely inoperable.

According to a [U.S. Naval Institute News report](#), the Navy conducted a lengthy engineering inspection of the ship and concluded only 40 percent of the *Bonhomme Richard* is still viable; the service would need to tear down and rebuild the remaining 60 percent. The cost of returning the ship to its original form would total between \$2.5 and \$3 billion dollars. A new, comparable ship would [cost about \\$4.1 billion](#).



The Navy also studied the cheaper alternative of rebuilding the *Bonhomme Richard* to serve as a hospital ship or submarine tender. Ultimately, the service decided to settle on scrapping the ship entirely, which is the cheapest option at \$30 million.

One small benefit of scrapping? The parts the Navy can salvage from the *Bonhomme Richard* will be made available to her seven sister *Wasp*-class amphibious assault ships, likely making future maintenance and repairs less expensive. The ship's engineering spaces, for example, were reportedly unscathed.

The loss of the *Bonhomme Richard* is a real blow to the U.S. Navy. The 844-foot-long, 40,000-ton ship—[one of 10](#) amphibious assault ships equipped with full-length flight decks—had just completed a \$200 million modification to accommodate the [new F-35B fighter](#). The Navy, which is already overworked by a high tempo of at-sea operations, will need to reshuffle its amphibious fleet to cover the lost ship.

The Navy would like to build a new ship, but the reality of building large, complicated ships means it won't get one any time soon.

According to [shipbuilder Huntington Ingalls](#), the America-class landing ships, which are gradually replacing the older *Wasp*-class, take more than 5 years to build. The Navy commissioned the latest ship, the *USS Tripoli*, into the fleet in 2020. The service ordered another ship, the *USS Bougainville*, [in 2017](#), and it will probably commission in 2023. About eight more ships should follow over the next 25 years.



Did a Sailor Set Fire to the *Bonhomme Richard*?

RELATED STORY

One of the Navy's concerns about rebuilding the *Bonhomme Richard* was the strain it would take on America's large warship industrial capacity. At any one time, U.S. shipbuilders are building at least one aircraft carrier and one large amphibious assault ship each, as well as refurbishing or conducting maintenance on several more.

Shipyards capacity is already so tight, it became a factor in what to do next with the stricken warship. This doesn't bode well for the U.S. fleet in a future conflict, when the Navy might need to proceed with ongoing construction, place an emergency order for several new large warships, and repair battle-damaged ships.

The bottom line: the Navy isn't getting a replacement ship for at least three years, and won't fill the hole the *Bonhomme Richard* leaves for several more years after that. The best the Navy might be able to do is to accelerate delivery of new amphibious ships while delaying retirement of older ships.

In the meantime, the already hardworking fleet will have to work even harder to cover the loss. The *Bonhomme Richard*'s tragic loss will be felt among the fleet for years to come.

Navy fires submarine CO after probe reveals 'leadership and command climate problems'

by Geoff Ziezulewicz



The Navy fired the commanding officer of the fast-attack submarine Charlotte, Cmdr. Joseph Lautenslager, this week. He is shown here being piped aboard the sub in 2019. (Navy)

Submarine Force Pacific officials declined to specify what that investigation revealed about Cmdr. Joseph G. Lautenslager's tenure as Charlotte's commanding officer, but a statement released Wednesday said the higher ups lost confidence in his ability to command.

"Commanding officers are held to a very high standard," SUBPAC said. "Their position requires the utmost responsibility, reliability and leadership, and the Navy holds them accountable in cases where they fall short of those standards." Lautenslager could not be reached for comment.

Cmdr. Christopher Hedrick, Submarine Squadron 7's deputy commander, has assumed command of Charlotte until a permanent replacement is named.

Lautenslager was commissioned in 1999 and took command of Charlotte in February 2019, according to service records.



TKMS reaches agreement with Germany and Norway for U212CD project

25 March 2021 by H I Sutton

Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) has reached an agreement with the defence materiel organizations of Germany and Norway for the procurement of six Type 212 Common Design (CD) submarines.



Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) has reached an agreement with the defence materiel organizations of Germany and Norway for the procurement of six Type 212 Common Design (CD) submarines.

The agreement follows years of negotiations. All parties involved in the project have approved the technical content and contractual terms. Under the agreement, Norwegian Defence Materiel Agency (NDMA) will purchase four submarines and Germany's BAAINBw will receive two from Thyssenkrupp.

TKMS was selected in 2017 as the preferred bidder for the project through the signing of a strategic, maritime cooperation. The total project cost is valued at \$5.2bn.

Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems CEO Rolf Wirtz said: "This order represents the most important project for Thyssenkrupp Marine Systems for the next decade and will secure employment, not only in Kiel, for years to come.

"The contract, which has yet to be signed, contains tough conditions for us. Nevertheless, for now we are happy to take this big

step towards signing the contract and thank our customers for the trust they are placing in us."

The new submarines are based on Type 212A submarine design, which will be developed further by incorporating advanced technologies. Type 212A vessels are already in service in Germany and Italy. The first submarine is scheduled to be delivered to the Royal Norwegian Navy in 2029 and the first two submarines for the German Navy are planned for 2031 and 2034. The Type-212 class (aka U-212) has a reputation for sophistication, largely thanks to its first-use of Fuel Cell AIP (Air Independent Power). It is considered the elite model in the German submarine design list, above the later Type-214 and Type-218 products. And until recently it was also viewed as a 'not for export' design, although that has been relaxed for close ally Norway. It is also being promoted to the Netherlands to replace their highly regarded Walrus class. The design is interesting in a number of ways.



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Type-212 Submarines



U212A, Batch-I
U-31, U-32, U-33, U-34



Todaro Class, Batch-I
Salvatore Todaro (S 526), Scirè (S 527)

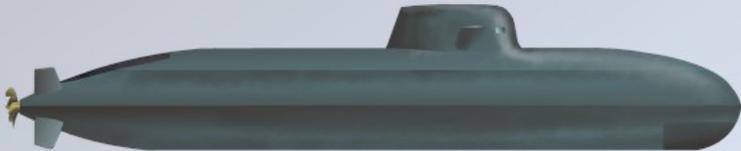
Todaro Class, Batch-II
Pietro Venuti (S 528), Romeo Romei (S 529)



U212A, Batch-II
U-35, U-36



Type-212CD
2 boats Germany, 4 for Norway (Tbc)



NFS (Near Future Submarine)
2 boats



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U-212A Batch-II Submarine

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- 1 Supports for torpedo loading deck
- 2 Water accumulators for torpedo push-out (water rain)
- 3 Forward pressure hull bulkhead
- 4 Torpedo loading hatch
- 5 Flooded area under casing
- 6 Passive Acoustic Sensor (PAS)
- 7 Removable lockers for buoys (trape)
- 8 Main crew berthing
- 9 Forward access hatch
- 10 Emergency marker buoy
- 11 Forward access to sail / main hatch
- 12 Side hatch for 4 person lock-out chamber
- 13 Navigation lights
- 14 Hydroplane
- 15 Pop-up water shield for bridge
- 16 Surface bridge
- 17 Radar mast (Siemens Hughes 1700)
- 18 Electronic attack scope (Siro-40X)
- 19 Gable HF radio mast
- 20 Optical search scope (OMS 300)
- 21 LHf SATCOM mast
- 22 Searcher sled
- 23 CALISTO buoy (SHH SACCOM, SHF LOS, VHF/HF, GPS, I/A, Z)
- 24 Cylindrical independent Array sonar (ISA)
- 25 Aerial
- 26 All access door to sail
- 27 Passive Acoustic Sensor (PAS)
- 28 Exhaust
- 29 Mountings for deck shelter (Italian boats)
- 30 Towed Array Sonar (TAS) cable reel



- 31 Liquid Oxygen (LOX) tanks (x2)
- 32 CABO Capteurs Deep Guardian Special Forces hanger
- 33 Air-seal crane
- 34 Cradle for Somenet Delivery vehicle (SDV)
- 35 CABO Capteurs Deep Shadow Sauterres Delivery vehicle (SDV)
- 36 Passive Acoustic Sensor (PAS)
- 37 X-Some radars
- 38 Propeller guard
- 39 Sonar (propeller)
- 40 Towed Array Sonar (TAS)
- 41 Foldable Towed Array Sonar (TAS) dispenser
- 42 Mounting points for Special Forces pressure container
- 43 Hydrogen flasks
- 44 Special Forces pressure container (port side)
- 45 Diesel generator
- 46 Fuel Cell Air-Independent Power (AIP)
- 47 Control room
- 48 Bank Array Sonar (BAS)
- 49 Gallery
- 50 Scuba-like Mk44 ER torpedo
- 51 DMZAA Sauterres wire-guided torpedo
- 52 Chalkera wire dispenser
- 53 Self-renewed 2100 class wire-guided torpedos
- 54 Black Shark wire-guided torpedo
- 55 Torpedo room

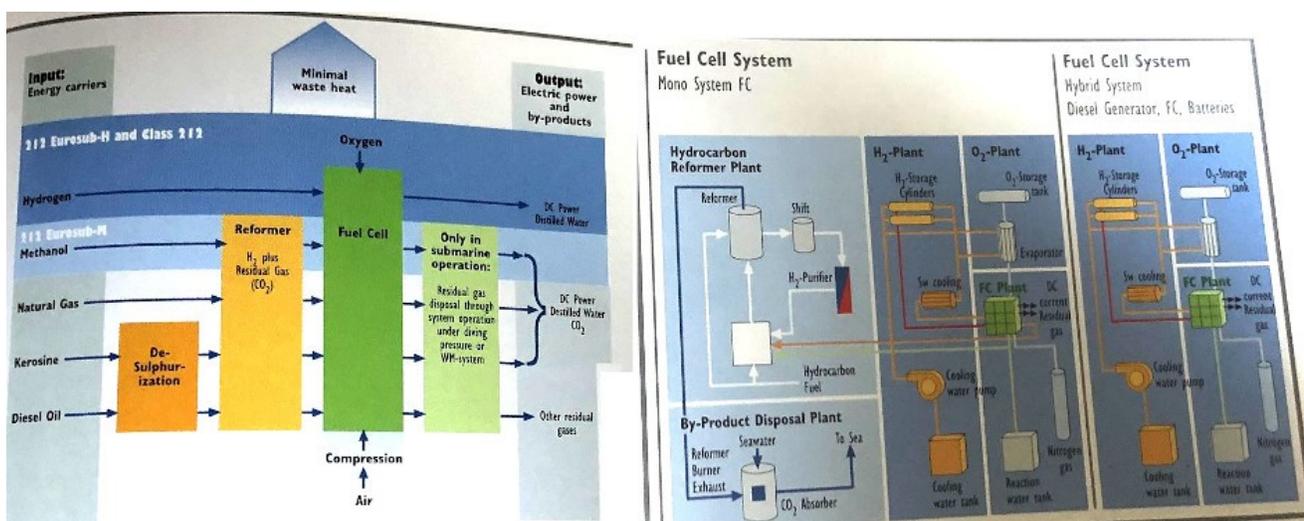
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Although the submarine is relatively short, it has a larger diameter hull than the larger displacement Type-214. This allows for an extra level, in effect 3 decks. This permits a significant difference in the torpedo room relative to most other postwar German built submarines. (*The Israeli Dolphin Class is worth its own article*).

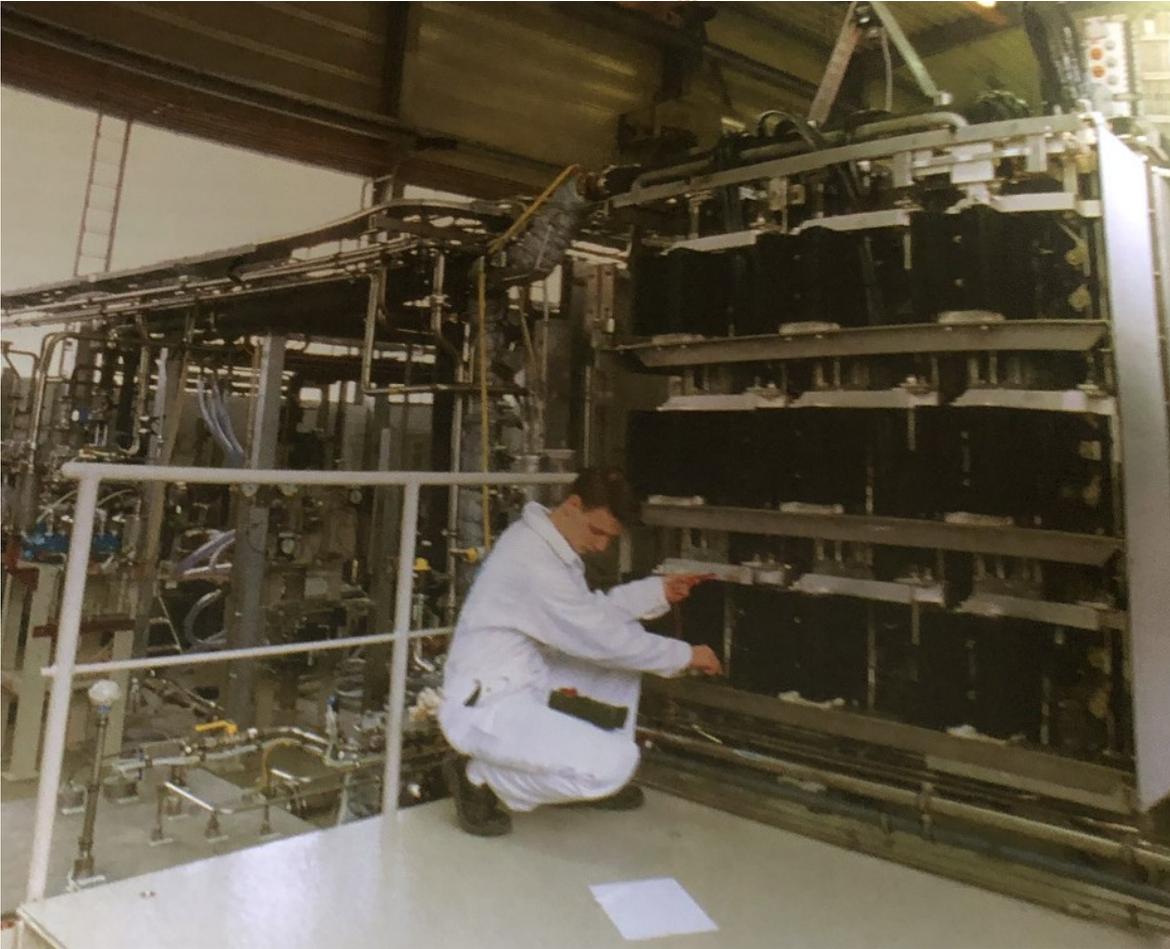


The unfinished bow section on the left of this photo shows the six torpedo tubes offset to port.

The torpedo tubes are offset to the port (left) side. This allows the torpedo stowage to also be offset, which in turn means that the mess area can be a permanent structure on the starboard side. Some mess tables in the central corridor still need to be folded to allow reloading of the central two tubes, but the crew does not have to live in the torpedo room in the same way as narrower boats. This must increase operational efficiency and help crew comfort. The torpedoes are loaded into special containers for safer handling within the magazine.

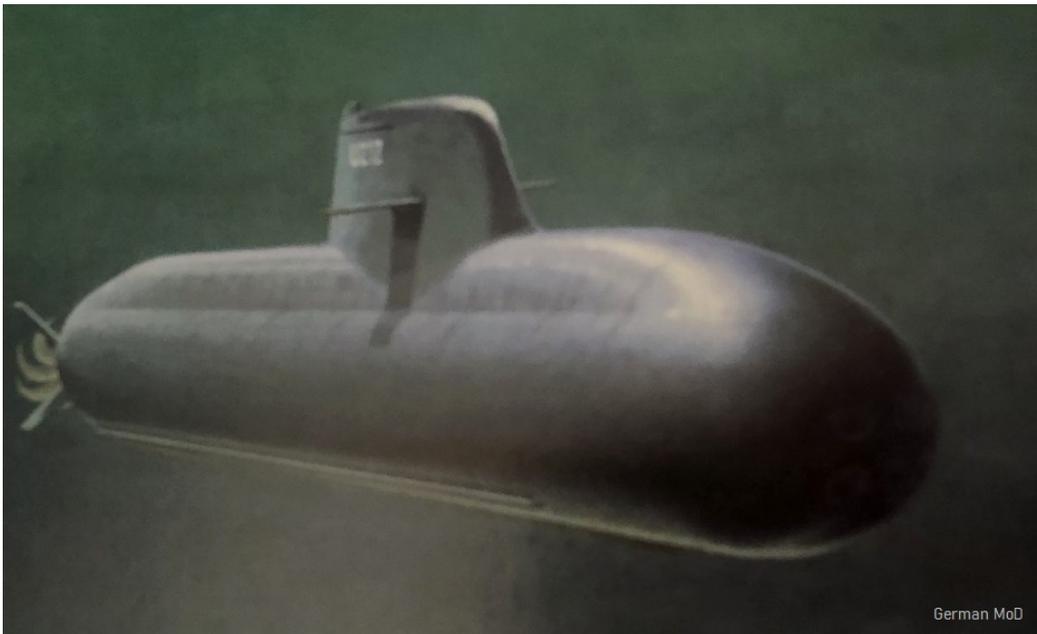


The fuel cell AIP provides an alternative power source while the boat is submerged, increasing underwater endurance by a couple of weeks. It is used to directly power the electric motor and, in exceptional circumstances, to top up the batteries. The fuel cells are relatively weak so the submarine can only cruise slowly on them. So the batteries are retained to provide high power for fast dashes, and as a fall-back. And the diesel generators are also retained to recharge the batteries and for surface running. but because it has to run the diesels less frequently, it has to snorkel less frequently. This will increase stealth.



An engineer from shipbuilder HDW monitors a test rig of fuel cells, 1990s.

The first German boat, U-31, had 9 HDW/Siemens PEM (polymer electrolyte membrane) fuel cells @ 30–40 kW each. Subsequent boats had 2 HDW/Siemens PEM fuel cells with 120 kW each. Since the Type-212 the PEM fuel cells have been exported on Type-209 (Greece only) and Type-214 submarines, as well as the Israeli Dolphin-IIs and Singaporean Type-218SG. The Italian boats had the German fuel cells.





Development & versions

The post-war West German Navy submarine force was built around the Type-206 submarine.

These small boats were considered ideal for the confined waters of the Baltic. But as the German submarine building trade boomed, the types being constructed outmatched the Type-206s. There was a period in the 1980s-90s when the submarines Germany was exporting were larger and more modern than those in service with their Navy. This was particularly true of the Ula Class built for Norway and the Dolphin Class built for Israel.

The Type-212 would reverse the trend, at least in terms of sophistication. As originally conceived in the 1990s it was still a relatively small boat optimized for the Baltic. But with Italy joining the program, to replace the early Sauro Class boats, the Type-212 grew. Italy needed a boat suitable for the Mediterranean, and also its Special Forces strength. The resulting Type-212A was built in both Germany and Italy. In many respects it is an interesting and capable design.



Type-212A Batch-I, German Navy. 4 boats to baseline configuration. U-31, U-32, U-33, U-34.



Type-212A Todaro Class Batch-I, Italian Navy. 2 boats in baseline configuration. Salvatore Todaro (S 526) and Scirè (S 527). Very similar to German Batch-I but with some Italian systems.



Type-212A Batch-II, German Navy. 2 boats in upgraded configuration. U-35, U-36. Increased length for Callisto mast, 4-person lock-out in sail, mounts for Special Forces containers and enlarged torpedo tube (#6, centerline, lower) for Special Forces.



Type-212A Todaro Class Batch-II, Italian Navy. 2 follow-up boats for Italian Navy, essentially per first batch. Pietro Venuti (S 528), Romeo Romei (S 529)



Type-212CD, German Navy. Lengthened variant for global deployments with improved range, speed and endurance. 2 boats ordered in 2019 to match Norwegian design. CD stands for Common Design.



Type-212A NFS (Todaro Class Batch-III), Italian Navy. 4 improved boats to be built for the Italian Navy known as Near Future Submarine(NFS). These will be slightly longer to accommodate an extra EW mast (so similar to German Batch-II). They will have Italian developed lithium-ion batteries in place of the lead acid batteries of other Type-212s. This is likely to be a major enhancement to endurance. They are expected to be equipped with land attack cruise missiles, possibly the TESEO MK2/E.



Type-212CD, Norwegian Navy. Order for 4 boats expected. The first submarine is scheduled to be delivered to the Royal Norwegian Navy in 2029 and the first two submarines for the German Navy are planned for 2031 and 2034.



Italian Special Forces adaptations

The Italian Navy has a world-class naval special forces capability and can be credited with inventing many aspects. During both World Wars it was one of the definition capabilities of the navy, providing a strategic advantage at a time when its conventional fleet struggled.

Consequently the postwar COMSUBIN special forces unit is particularly secretive about its capabilities. Even allies are rarely given a full picture.



The Italian Type-212As do not have the enlarged lockout chamber in the sail of the German Batch-IIIs (and the preceding Sauro Class). But they are fitted for a special forces hangar on the aft deck, or a cradle for an SDV (Swimmer Delivery Vehicle).

Recently Italian manufacturer [Cabi Cattaneo](#) has begun to open up to a wider export market. So some information is available on the export versions which is indicative of Italian Capabilities.

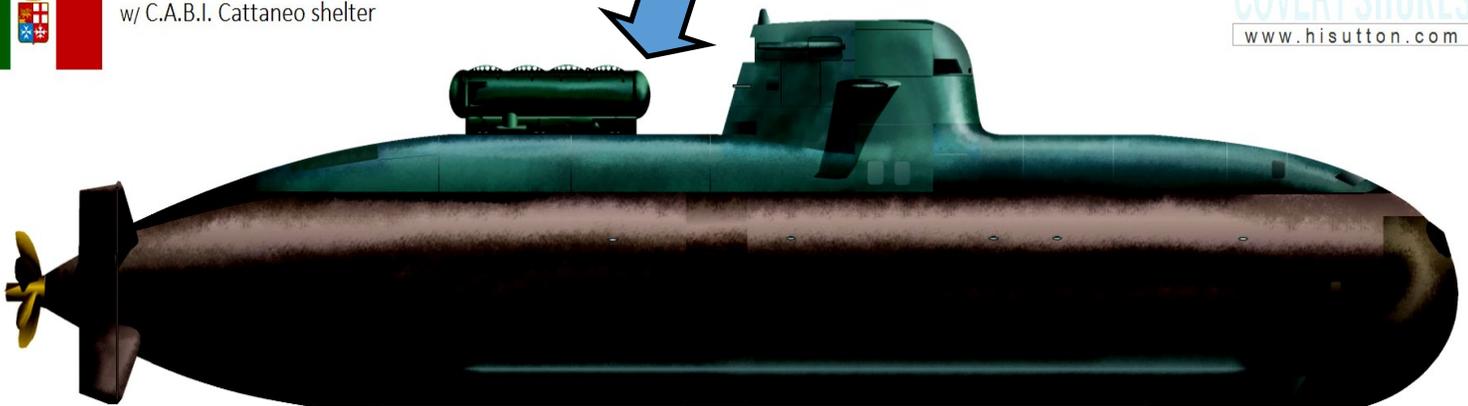
COMSUBIN has additional underwater vehicles however and is set to build more, so will stay ahead.



Todaro Class SSK (U-212)
w/ C.A.B.I. Cattaneo shelter



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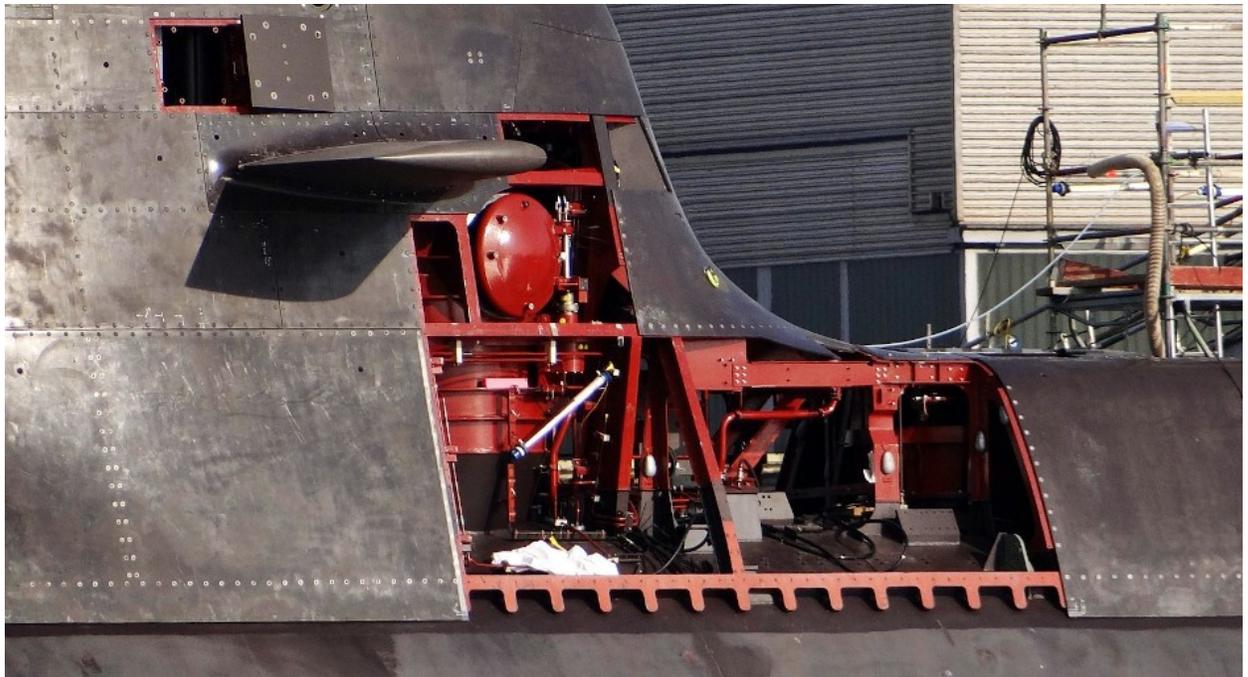


The Deep Guardian hangar is smaller than a [DDS \(US Navy Dry Deck Shelter\)](#) and is used for inflatable boats and similar loads.

Multiple Rotinor Black Shadow diver bvehicles can be loaded. For larger SDVs, COMSUBIN are known to use a cradle system from CABI Cattaneo. The system can also be fitted to the Sauro Class:



Rare photo of a CABI Cattaneo 'Deep Guardian shelter' on a Todaro Class boat.

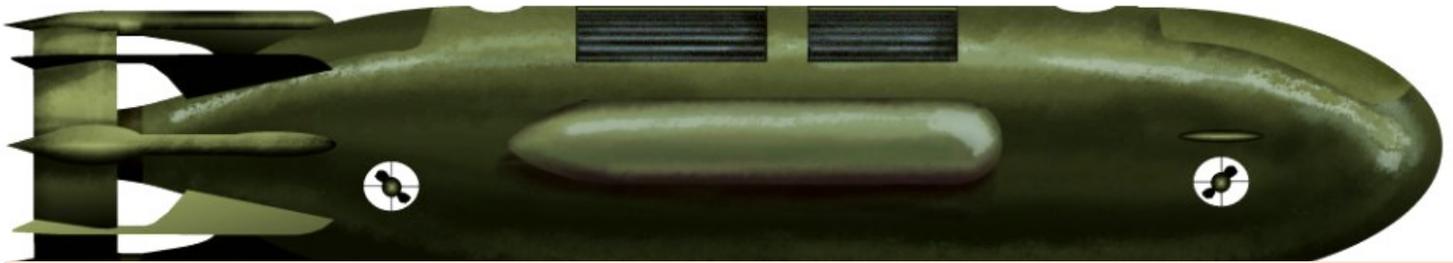


The 4-person lockout chamber with side access



Deep Shadow SDV

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German Special Forces adaptations

The German Batch-II boats incorporate a number of special forces adaptations. A 4-person lock-out chamber is located in the sail, and one of the torpedo tubes has been enlarged for special forces equipment.



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