



AHOY SHIPMATE

RNA Torbay Newsletter

Volume 6

Issue 2

April 2017

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Editorial

By Shipmate Norrie Millen

Hi! Shipmates,

My sincere apologies shipmates for not producing a March edition of Ahoy. Time just ran away with me, and I had so many commitments, plus my ten day break in Spain, where I went not only for a break but to scatter some of Angela's ashes. As she lay dying she begged me to take her back to Spain one more time. Sadly in her condition it just was not possible. Now some of her ashes are mixed with the sand at La Herradura, just feet away from the Mediterranean, I am sure wherever she is that she will love what I did in her memory.



I really needed the break and did nothing but laze around in the nice sunny weather, temperatures ranging from 22° - 27°. Probably consumed far too much Spanish brandy washed down with some excellent Spanish Beer ñ Una Grande Espana Cerveza!

Quite a shock to my system, leaving Malaga on last flight to Exeter, it was still a balmy 22° late evening in the airport. Last 50 miles, severe turbulence and a rocky return to Devon, to 8° and very high chilly winds, came down to earth with a bump - excuse the pun!

Are you sick of listening to the why's and wherefores of Brexit? I know I am, it's almost as if nothing else is happening in the world. It is getting more coverage than that terrible attack a few weeks ago on Westminster Bridge in London. Now I believe Malta and France maybe pulling out of the EU, certainly being talked about by some.

However no matter what we think about it, whether we voted to stay in or opt out the politicians will always get their own way regardless.

The way I see it anyway!

PUNS FOR EDUCATED MINDS

The fattest knight at King Arthur's round table was Sir Cumference. He acquired his size from too much pi.

I thought I saw an eye-doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.

She was only a whisky-maker, but he loved her still.

A rubber-band pistol was confiscated from an algebra class, because it was a weapon of math disruption.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.

A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.

Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.

A hole has been found in the nudist-camp wall. The police are looking into it.

Two hats were hanging on a hat rack in the hallway.

One hat said to the other: 'You stay here; I'll go on a head.'

The midget fortune-teller who escaped from prison was a small medium at large

Chairman's Corner

By Shipmate John Soanes



I am very pleased to report that the branch is well on its way to securing sufficient funding for our Harrison VC Memorial project.

In the last week we have been notified that we have been successful in being awarded an as yet undisclosed sum from the Torbay Mayor's Fund. S/M Paul Lomas and I attended the Palace hotel on 5th April to receive a certificate with the news that RNA Torbay had been awarded £300.00 towards our Harrison memorial project, a letter of thanks has been sent. and our very own Pat Brown has kindly donated the sum of £50.00 towards the fund, Pat said "It is what Peter would have wished".

I have been in contact with the Council and a site meeting will be arranged between the stonemason, the Council and ourselves at Roundham Head to ensure that we are all *"singing from the same hymn sheet"*.

A little true 'dit' from my time in the far east many moons ago:

In the early 1960's when serving as Coxswain of a Ton Class minesweeper engaged on Confrontation Patrols off Tawau, Borneo, we had cause to rendezvous with a Royal Marine Unit in an assault craft who, that afternoon had been on a 'Boar Shoot' in the jungle, they were actually towing a large black hairy pig which they informed us they had chased and shot. The Marines offered me the pig which I readily accepted, thinking 'fresh meat'.

We were informed by our gift-bearers that they quite often shot, slaughtered, cooked and ate wild pig (or boar) and the flavour was not unlike domestic pork. Full of enthusiasm we hoisted the pig on board and there it lay on the sweep deck, weighing over 300lbs, black, hairy with a wild looking head complete with tusks.

This was the start of my problems. My first thought was 'how do we butcher it?' I was

aware that my 'Tanky' had completed a butchery course at Pompey prior to joining the ship so I awoke him from his afternoon 'siesta' explained his task and was immediately met with cries of "Not me, it was never like this on my course".

My next consideration was our Chinese chef, Yu Pak Nui. He took one look and said words to the effect of "Me no butcher, me cookie, I no touch" and disappeared back to his galley. However, after Tanky had got over the shock, he set to work, ably assisted, advised and cheered on by others in the butchering of the wild hairy pig.

I will spare the gory details of how, but after a couple of hours we were left with quite lot pork joints. The Buffer wasn't too happy that his sweep deck was temporarily converted to a butchery hall, but it was soon cleared up.

We had pork on the menu quite regularly for a few days in various guises, but in fairness to those who couldn't face it, it was put on the menu as a second choice due to its acquired taste.

It also had the thickest crackling I've ever seen, As a roast it was very much like domestic pork but with a much stronger flavour!.

One bright spark had the notion that it would be a good idea to keep the head of our wild boar, and on our return to Hong Kong have it stuffed and mounted. I was not too keen, but in order to maintain harmony on board, I agreed. The head, complete with tusks which were uneven, wild bulging eyes, floppy bitten ears, with the ugliest snout and yellow teeth one has ever seen, was placed in a plastic bag and stored in our one and only deep freezer.

I well remember its face staring at me every time I opened the freezer, to say nothing of the disgust by the Chinese cook.

It can now be revealed that someone who remained nameless until well after the 30 years disclosure rule, decided one dark night to see if the head could float. *IT FAILED as I watched it slowly sink into the depths of the Sulu Sea!*



The Story of "Bad Angel"

Researched from Internet by Shipmate Norrie Millen

In 1942, the United States needed pilots for its war planes lots of war planes; lots of pilots. Lt. Louis Curdes was one. When he was 22 years old, he graduated flight training school and was shipped off to the Mediterranean to fight Nazis in the air over Southern Europe.



Lt. Louis Curdes

Louis and a few other pilots escaped before the Nazis could take control of the camp.

One might think that such harrowing experiences would have taken the fight out of Louis, yet he volunteered for another combat tour. This time, Uncle Sam sent him to the Philippines where he

flew P-51 Mustangs.

He arrived at his 82nd Fighter Group, 95th Fighter Squadron in April 1943 and was assigned a P-38 Lightning.

Ten days later he shot down three German Messerschmitt Bf-109 fighters.

A few weeks later, he downed two more German Bf -109s. In less than a month of

Soon after arriving in the Pacific Theater, Louis downed a

Mitsubishi reconnaissance plane near Formosa.

Now he was one of only three Americans to have kills against all three Axis Powers: Germany,



combat, Louis was an Ace.

During the next three months, Louis shot down an Italian Mc.202 fighter and two more Messerschmitts before his luck ran out. A German fighter shot down his plane on August 27, 1943 over Salerno, Italy.

Captured by the Italians, he was sent to a POW camp near Rome. No doubt this is where he thought he would spend the remaining years of the war. It wasn't to be. A few days later, the Italians surrendered.

Pilot Lt. Louis Curdes in his P-51 Mustang "Bad Angel".

Italy, and Up until this point, young Lt. Curdes' combat career had been stellar. His story was about to take a twist so bizarre that it seems like the fictional creation of a Hollywood screenwriter.

While attacking the Japanese-held island of Batan, one of Louis' wingmen was shot down. The pilot ditched in the ocean.

Circling overhead, Louis could see that his wingman had survived,



so he stayed in the area to guide a rescue plane and protect the downed pilot.

It wasn't long before he noticed another, larger airplane, wheels down, preparing to land at the Japanese-held airfield on Batan. He moved in to investigate. Much to his surprise the approaching plane was a Douglas C-47 transport with American markings.

He tried to make radio contact, but without success. He maneuvered his Mustang in front of the big transport several times trying to wave it off. The C-47 kept to its landing target.

Lt. Curdes read the daily newspaper accounts of the war, including the viciousness of the Japanese soldiers toward their captives.

He knew that whoever was in that American C-47 would be, upon landing, either dead or wish they were. But what could he do?

Audaciously, he lined up his P-51 directly behind the transport, carefully sighted one of his .50 caliber machine guns and knocked out one of its two engines. Still the C-47 continued on

toward the Batan airfield. Curdes

shifted his aim slightly and knocked out the remaining engine, leaving the baffled pilot no choice but to ditch in the ocean.

The big plane came down in one piece about 50 yards from his bobbing wingman. At this point, nightfall and low fuel forced Louis to return to base.

The next morning, Louis flew cover for a rescuing PBV that picked up the downed Mustang pilot and 12 passengers and crew, including two female nurses, from the C-47. All survived.

For shooting down an unarmed American transport plane, Lt. Louis Curdes was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Thereafter, on the fuselage of his P-51 "Bad Angel", he proudly displayed the symbols of his kills: seven German, one Italian, one Japanese and one American flag.

Some versions of this story say that when Lt. Curdes looked over the list of names of those rescued at sea, he found the name of one of the nurses with whom he had gone on a date the night before the incident.

But that seems way too implausible. Doesn't it?

If you'd like to know the back-story as to why the C-47 pilot was so determined to reach that Batan airfield, I suggest

you have a conversation with one of the extremely knowledgeable docents in Hanger #4, such as Dave Russell.



One of "Bad Angel's" .50 caliber machine guns built into it wings.



.50 caliber ammo for P-51 Mustangs.

Clotheslines

Submitted by Shipmate Ken Dustan

I do miss that fresh smell of sheets from a clothesline! This is funny & quite true. We are probably the last generation that will remember what a clothesline was.



It's the poem at the end that's the best!

There is one thing that's left out of the picture. We had a long wooden pole (clothes pole) that was used to

REMEMBERING MUM'S CLOTHESLINE

push the clotheslines up so that longer items (sheets/pants/etc.) didn't brush the ground and get dirty. I can hear my mother now.

THE BASIC RULES FOR CLOTHESLINES:

(If you don't even know what clotheslines are, better skip this.)

1. You had to hang the socks by the toes... NOT the top.
2. You hung pants by the BOTTOM/cuffs... NOT the waistbands.
3. You had to WASH the clothesline(s) before hanging any clothes - Walk the entire length of each line with a damp cloth around the lines.
4. You had to hang the clothes in a certain order, and always hang "whites" with "whites," and hang them first.



5. You NEVER hung a shirt by the shoulders - always by the tail! What would the neighbours think?

6. Wash day on a Monday! NEVER hang clothes on the weekend, Or on Sunday, for Heaven's sake!

7. Hang the sheets and towels on the OUTSIDE lines so you could hide your "unmentionables" in the middle (perverts & busybodies, y'know!)

8. It didn't matter if it was sub-zero weather... Clothes would "freeze-dry."

9. ALWAYS gather the clothes pegs when taking down dry clothes! Pegs left on the lines were "tacky"!

10. If you were efficient, you would line the clothes up so that each item Did not need two clothes pegs, but shared one of the clothes pegs with the next washed item

11. Clothes off of the line before dinner time, neatly folded in the clothes basket, and ready to be ironed.

12. IRONED? Well, that's a whole OTHER subject!

And now a POEM...

*A clothesline was a news forecast,
To neighbours passing by,
There were no secrets you could keep,
When clothes were hung to dry.*

*It also was a friendly link,
For neighbours always knew
If company had stopped by
To spend a night or two*

*For then you'd see the "fancy sheets",
And towels upon the line;
You'd see the "company table cloths",
With intricate designs.*

*The line announced a baby's birth,
From folks who lived inside,
As brand new infant clothes were hung,
So carefully with pride!*

*The ages of the children could,
So readily be known
By watching how the sizes changed,
You'd know how much they'd grown!*

*It also told when illness struck,
As extra sheets were hung;
Then nightclothes, and a dressing gown
too,
Haphazardly were strung.*

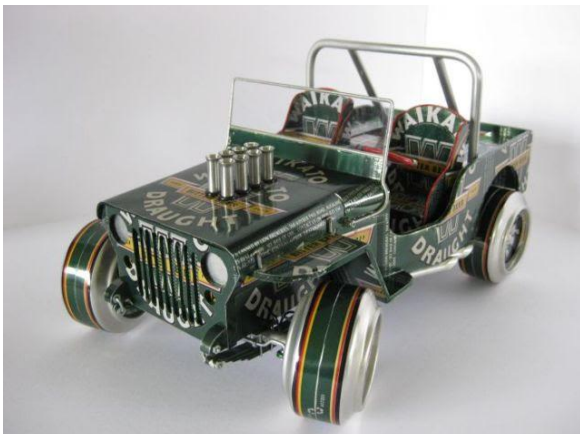
*It also said, "On holiday now",
When lines hung limp and bare.
It told, "We're back!" when full lines
sagged,
With not an inch to spare!*

*New folks in town were scorned upon,
If wash was dingy and grey,
As neighbours carefully raised their
brows,
And looked the other way.*

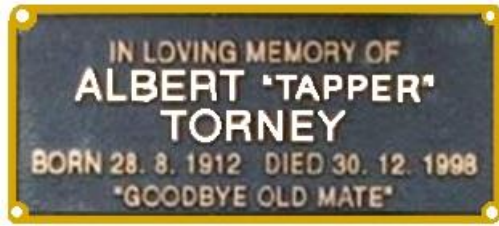
*But clotheslines now are of the past,
For dryers make work much less.
Now what goes on inside a home,
Is anybody's guess!*

*I really miss that way of life,
It was a friendly sign
When neighbours knew each other
best...
By what hung on the line.*

What are these? See rest of story on page 7



Sums up the phrase
ōTin Canō!



Submitted by Shipmate Ken Dustan

He used to go to all the public functions....especially the picture theatre's.

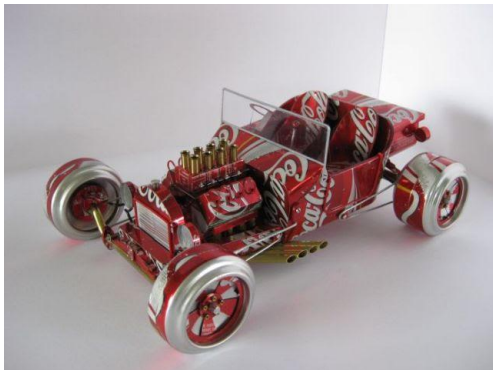
He always carried a Potato Sack to collect empty bottles and cans.

His name was Albert (Tapper) Torney. Everyone thought he was a bit eccentric and kids would tease and hassle him. However it was discovered he was very talented and only sold the empty bottles and some of the cans.

After he died in 1998 (aged 86) His large collection of Model Cars he made from the Aluminium Cans was discovered.

This goes to prove....."You Shouldn't Judge A Book by its Cover", or a Sculptor by his sugar bag.

Some of his collection .Amazing!





Students in an advanced Biology class were taking their mid-term exam. The last question was, 'Name seven advantages of Mother's Milk.' The question was worth 70 points or none at all. One student was hard put to think of seven advantages. He wrote:

- 1) It is perfect formula for the child.
- 2) It provides immunity against several diseases.
- 3) It is always the right temperature.
- 4) It is inexpensive.
- 5) It bonds the child to mother and vice versa.
- 6) It is always available as needed. And then the student was stuck. Finally, in desperation, just before the bell rang indicating the end of the test he wrote:
- 7) It comes in two attractive containers and it's high enough off the ground where the cat can't get it. He got an **A**

I hate it when I see an old person and then realize that we went to high school together.

Barbie

One day a father gets out of work and on his way home he suddenly remembers that it's his daughter's birthday.

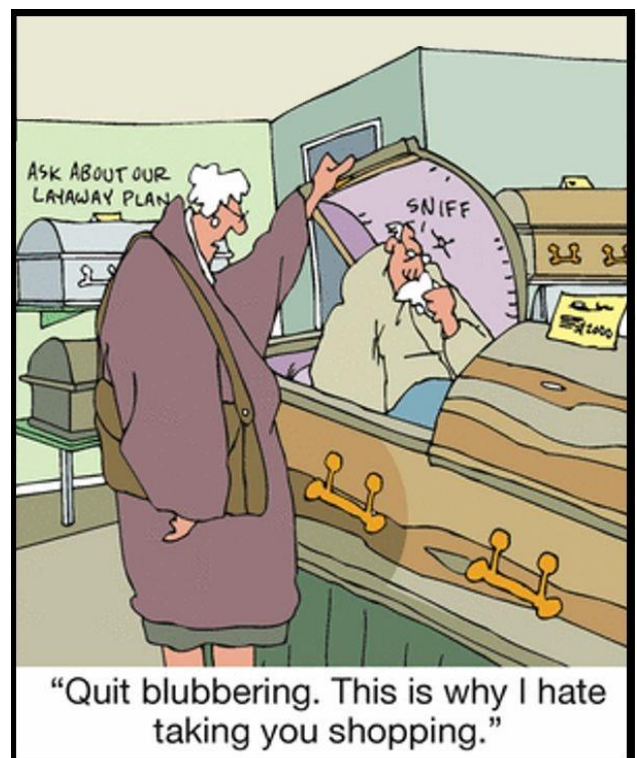
He pulls over to a Toy Shop and asks the sales person, "How much for one of those Barbie's in the display window?"

The salesperson answers, "Which one do you mean, Sir?"

We have: Work Out Barbie for \$19.95, Shopping Barbie for \$19.95, Beach Barbie for \$19.95, Disco Barbie for \$19.95, Ballerina Barbie for \$19.95, Astronaut Barbie for \$19.95, Skater Barbie for \$19.95, and Divorced Barbie for \$265.95".

The amazed father asks: "It's what?! Why is the Divorced Barbie \$265.95 and the others only \$19.95?"

The annoyed salesperson rolls her eyes, sighs, and answers: "Sir..., Divorced Barbie comes with: Ken's Car, Ken's House, Ken's Boat, Ken's Furniture, Ken's Computer, one of Ken's Friends, and a key chain made with Ken's balls.



Naval Hospital Bremerton remembers their 'Beans and Bullets' Patrol Boat Chief.

Submitted by Steve Jackson our USN Associate shipmate

BREMERTON, WA, UNITED STATES

03.26.2017 -Story by Douglas Stutz, Naval Hospital Bremerton

He was gruff, full of vulgarities, and had a wealth of experience. He readily shared all three.

After a career serving his nation for 21 years, followed by involvement in countless volunteer activities and sharing invaluable guidance, assistance and mentorship, retired Chief Boatswain Mate Jerry Irvine has finally slowed down.

He passed away on March 26, 2017, at age 82.

"This country lost a true American hero and patriot. Jerry Irvine passed away at home. Jerry received multiple personal awards, including the Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam. He was a master of nautical knot tying and his work can be seen in many different places from Naval Hospital Bremerton (NHB) to the USS Turner Joy museum. He loved his family, this country, the Navy and his fellow chiefs. It's a very sad day. He was a great friend and shipmate. He will be greatly missed," said Casey Pruett, NHB Suitability Screening and Exceptional Family Member Program coordinator.

During his three tours in Vietnam he was on nine ships, including being assigned to River Section 523 in the Mekong River Delta, and with River Section 521 near Hue City.

Irvine is mentioned prominently in numerous dispatches, such as on February 25, 1968, 'where as a

courageous chief petty officer with much combat experience, during the first attack in Tet Mau Than, he advanced under enemy fire, conducted patrol boat river (PBR) operations, directed precision fire destroying the North Vietnamese

Regular Forces in the south bank of the Perfume River, raised the siege for friendly forces at Con Dau near Hue, effectively providing protection to the vital supply ships going to Hue, which contributed substantially to the reoccupation of the city. Irvine and his PBR team were also responsible for helping to ferry military and civilian casualties out of the immediate lines of fire. For this he was awarded the Gallantry Cross (Vietnam),' read the dispatch.

Boats, as he is affectionately called by all at NHB, attests that his team was in so many fire fights that they simply became a normal part of the day. They would go back to their floating barge base for 'beans and bullets' and then head back out. There were times on a routine three-day patrol that they would be so fatigued that they didn't care, they just up and did their jobs.

A few months later on May 30, 1968, a 15-man Marine Corps Combined Action Platoon (CAP) was in ambush position with popular forces around the hostile village of Thon An Duong. The CAP reported being surrounded by enemy forces and taking personnel casualties from hostile fire.

Six PBRs, led by Irvine and two other chiefs, sped to the rescue. Despite



coming under enemy fire, they evacuated all of the Marines and Vietnamese troops without any further casualties. Because of his expert handling of his units, his courage under fire, and expert direction of his unit's fire within 50 feet of friendly positions, the massacre of the entire CAP unit was prevented.

The Bronze Star, with Combat "V" for valour, was awarded to Irvine for meritorious achievement in connection with operations involving conflict with an opposing foreign force while serving in the Republic of Vietnam from September 20, 1967 to September 18, 1968.

While serving as a PBR patrol officer and boat captain in the River Patrol Force, he participated in 215 combat patrols on the island waterways of the Mekong Delta and I Corps. His patrols involved the boarding and searching of indigenous craft, enforcement of the curfew, assisting Popular Force Outposts under enemy attack, aiding friendly forces in search and destroy operations and medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) of numerous wounded personnel.

His patrols also played a vital role in securing a landing zone for MEDEVAC and resupply helicopters in the besieged city of Hue during the 1968 Tet Offensive. His patrols were instrumental in maintaining the flow of supply craft to and from the city of Hue throughout the month of February and greatly enhanced the defeat of North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Viet Cong forces in that city.

On March 27 and 28, Irvine's patrol participated in the destruction of an entire NVA company which had moved into Toan Tuan Hoa Village on the banks of the Perfume River.

His award citation read in part, "His courage, dedication and determination

were in keeping with the highest tradition of the United States Naval Service."

Along with retired Chief Storekeeper Gene Hanson who also passed away on January 23 at age 92, Irvine was considered an unofficial 'adopted' staff member at NHB.

Irvine held classes on what he considered a dying art of nautical knot tying. His handiwork in the craft is on display all over the command. Irvine and Hanson would also take it upon themselves to pass out holiday greeting baskets to NHB clinics as their way of saying thank you to the young service members. They were also there for every active duty deployment wave departing and returning during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"He was always going out of his way to help. If anyone ever needed any assistance, he was there. I remember meeting him back in 2003. He's a top notch chief and a great loss," said NHB Command Master Chief James Reynolds.

**Hi! Mum,
Training camp is fine, but
I think our drill instructor
is a little hard of hearing.
Every time we say something,
he yells "I can't hear you!"**



Habitual Maritime Law Violator "China" Wants Other Countries to Sail Above Sea In Its Waters

In this Aug. 28, 2014 photo, fishermen look at a Chinese nuclear submarine sails past Yalong Bay in Sanya, south China's Hainan Province.



Several Asian nations are arming up, their wary eyes fixed squarely on one country: a resurgent China that's boldly asserting its territorial claims all along the East Asian coast. The scramble to spend more defence dollars comes amid spats with China over contested reefs and waters. Other Asian countries such as India and South Korea are quickly modernizing their forces, although their disputes with China have stayed largely at the diplomatic level.

China is mulling a new law that would require sub surface naval vehicles to travel above surface and report its movements to authorities and report their movements to government authorities. In other words, it's asking submarines not to act like submarines, which is hilarious coming from a habitual maritime law violator like China.

Here's an excerpt from the draft of the proposed rule changes, via *Reuters*:

"Foreign submersibles, passing though (sic) territorial waters of the People's Republic of China, should travel on the surface, raise their national flag, and report to Chinese maritime management administrations," the news service cited the draft revision as saying, without giving details.

The draft makes no mention of the South China Sea, but that it is almost certainly the reason why Beijing is seeking these changes.

Washington and Beijing spared briefly in December when the Chinese Navy seized a U.S. Navy drone that was actually nothing more than an ocean glider, as Foxtrot Alpha reported at the time; China eventually gave it back.

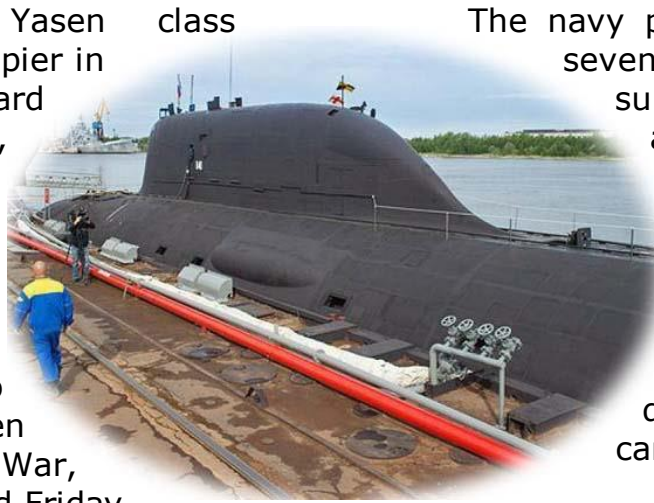
The comical part about this rule revision is that China is hardly a nation that respects maritime law. We have reported extensively on China's artificial island build up in the disputed territory that the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Brunei, Malaysia, and Japan have also laid claim to. These smaller nations have also complained for decades that China has used its military might to bully its influence over the sea.

Last summer, an international tribunal at the Hague ruled in favor of the Philippines' territory dispute against China and rejected Beijing's claim of historical rights to the sea, ruling its actions have caused environmental damage, and endangered the Philippine's ships and fishing and oil exploration.

Russia launches attack submarine armed with ballistic cruise missiles already battle-tested in Syria

RIA NovostiA Yasen class submarine at the pier in Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk, Russia.

MOSCOW — Russian submarines have increased combat patrols to the level last seen during the Cold War, the navy chief said Friday.



The navy plans to commission seven Yasen-class submarines that are armed with torpedoes and long-range Kalibr cruise missiles, which for the first time have been tested in combat during the Russian campaign in Syria.

Adm. Vladimir Korolyov said that Russian submarine crews spent more than 3,000 days on patrol last year, matching the Soviet-era operational tempo.

"It's an excellent level," he said in remarks carried by state RIA Novosti news agency.

The Russian military had fallen on hard times after the 1991 Soviet collapse when it was forced to scrap many relatively new ships and keep most others at harbour for lack of funds. The military has revived its strength thanks to a sweeping arms modernization program amid tensions with the West over Ukraine.

Korolyov spoke after attending the launch of a new Yasen-class nuclear-powered attack submarine called the Kazan. He hailed the new ship as the most modern in the world, emphasizing its low noise level making it hard to track it.

"It represents the cutting edge of nuclear submarine design," Korolyov said in televised remarks.

