

The Seven Seas Tattler Issue 4.7 – December 2020



Good day to all members and welcome to our last Tattler of 2020. Twenty Twenty - the year of perfect sight but not perfect health! We trust that our members have managed to avoid the lurgy and have had a happy year despite the lockdown restrictions. Our ability to socialise, drink, smoke and just enjoy ourselves have been seriously constrained- we can only hope for a better year in 2021. As always, we welcome your comments and contributions which can be sent to me jonathanagolding@gmail.com.

Tattler - It is always nice to receive positive feedback. The following arrived early in November:

“Dear Glen,

Another very interesting newsy November 2020 Tattler Newsletter .

The hard work in putting together the newsletter for the interest of the members of our prestigious Club is highly appreciated.

Kind regards to all concerned.

Yours aye

Capt. Allen Pembroke SAN (Ret)

Country Member”

Message from the Chairman

As we reach the end of an extraordinary year it is pleasing to be able to report that despite the lockdowns and restrictions our club is surviving and we keep our head above the water.

Our year to date financials look reasonable thanks to your support and the efforts of my committee, club management and staff. We look forward to the new year.

Unfortunately the loss of our tenants is impacting our cash flow. Much effort has gone into replacing them and whilst we have a few "leads" at this time, we appeal to you for assistance in this regard.

I hope that we all will have a very happy festive season and wish all members well.

Birthdays in December

The Club wishes the following members many happy returns and a great year ahead.

Tattler – Some birthday fun! See who shares your birthdate.

Capt V.R. Neilson (Ret) – 13 December

(1927) - Christopher Plummer, actor

Mr K.S. Collins – 18 December

(1916) - Betty Grable, actress

R Adm A.G. Green (Ret) – 19 December

(1906) - Leonid Brezhnev, Soviet leader

Mr J.V. Carne – 20 December

(1868) - Harvey Firestone, tyre manufacture

Mr D.G. Nelson – 21 December

(1879) - Joseph Stalin, Soviet Russia Dictator

Capt F.J. Van Der Merwe (Ret) – 21 December

(1892) - Walter Hagen, golfer

Mr P.B. Leggatt – 21 December

(1940) - Frank Zappa, musician, songwriter

Mr D.C. Law-Brown – 22 December

(1949) twins Maurice and Robin Gibb, singers, musicians, members of the "Bee Gees"

R Adm (JG) T. Honiball (Ret) – 25 December

(1899) - Humphrey Bogart, actor

Lt C. Chiste (Ret) – 25 December

(1946) - Jimmy Buffett, singer, songwriter

Mr J.A.H. Golding – 25 December

(1642) - Isaac Newton, scientist

Cdr F. Jordaan (Ret) – 31 December

(1943) - Ben Kingsley, actor

100 club for December - We congratulate the following winners of the 100 club :

R300 - R Adm D.R. Faure No 51

R1000 – Mrs E Hammond No 91

R300 – Mrs A. Manning No 14

R300 – Mr J. Winter No 71

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Navy News

Navy Forges Ahead with 500 Ship Plan in Wake of Esper's Firing

Military.com – By Gina Harkins



Two U.S. Air Force B-1 B Lancers assigned to the 37th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron, deployed from Ellsworth Air Force Base, South Dakota, along with U.S. Navy F/A-18 Hornet fighter jets, perform a flyover of the USS Ronald Reagan (CVN 76), USS Nimitz (CVN 68), and USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) Carrier Strike Groups in the Western Pacific, Nov. 11, 2017. (James Griffin/U.S. Navy) - 15 Nov 2020

Plans to build a 500-ship Navy are still intact though the top admiral overseeing shipbuilding says challenges remain.

Battle Force 2045, Defense Secretary Mark Esper's ambitious plan to nearly double the size of the Navy fleet, is still underway. Esper was fired this week, and several new civilian leaders were installed to replace him and other top policy staffers.

So far though, there's no indication that the plan Esper announced last month won't move forward, Vice Adm. William Galinis, the head of Naval Sea Systems Command, told reporters this week.

"I don't see any change to that right now," Galinis said. "We'll have to see how things play out over the next several weeks here, but I don't see any change."

The plan calls for aggressively building a fleet of more than 500 manned and unmanned ships and submarines. And for a force that has run into some challenges with shipyard capacity and getting vessels built and fixed on time, the plan won't come without challenges.

"The underlying analytics and the requirements [of Battle Force 2045], I think, remain sound," Galinis said at a Thursday Defense Writers Group event. "How we meet those requirements, that's a topic for further discussion."

Esper, when announcing Battle Force 2045, said building up the size of the U.S. Navy is crucial to countering China's troubling and "brazen destabilizing" actions in the Asia-Pacific region, along with the country's plans to form "a world-class military by 2049." Russia has also stepped up its game, with more submarine presence in the Atlantic and its icebreaker fleet in the Arctic.

But building hundreds of new vessels -- including three Virginia-class subs (see images below) per year, which Esper called the most vital part of the plan -- likely won't be easy, Galinis said.

"In terms of the industrial base's ability to build those ships, I think there are some capacity challenges out there," he said. "... Especially when we start talking about maybe going to three Virginias a year, and what it takes to transition from two to three per year.

"There's some capacity issues not just within the shipyard, but the supply base as well."

Galinis said some of the top needs he sees are for welders, electricians and mechanics.

The Battle Force 2045 plan for between 140 and 240 unmanned ships could lead to new opportunities for the Navy though, he added. Since they're smaller than traditional manned ships, the Navy might be able to tap small- and medium-sized shipyards they haven't worked with in the past.

"So there's some capacity we can bring into that so, there are some things we have to go work on to be able to meet that," Galinis said, "and we've got to get going."



Virginia Attack Class Submarines SNN



Tattler - sounds crazy?

Actually, unmanned surface vessels have been around a while. In 2018 one sailed from San Diego to Hawaii and back!



The Sea Hunter, a 132-foot-long self-driving ship, made history by traveling from San Diego to Hawaii's Pearl Harbor and back again without sailors aboard to guide its way. DARPA photo

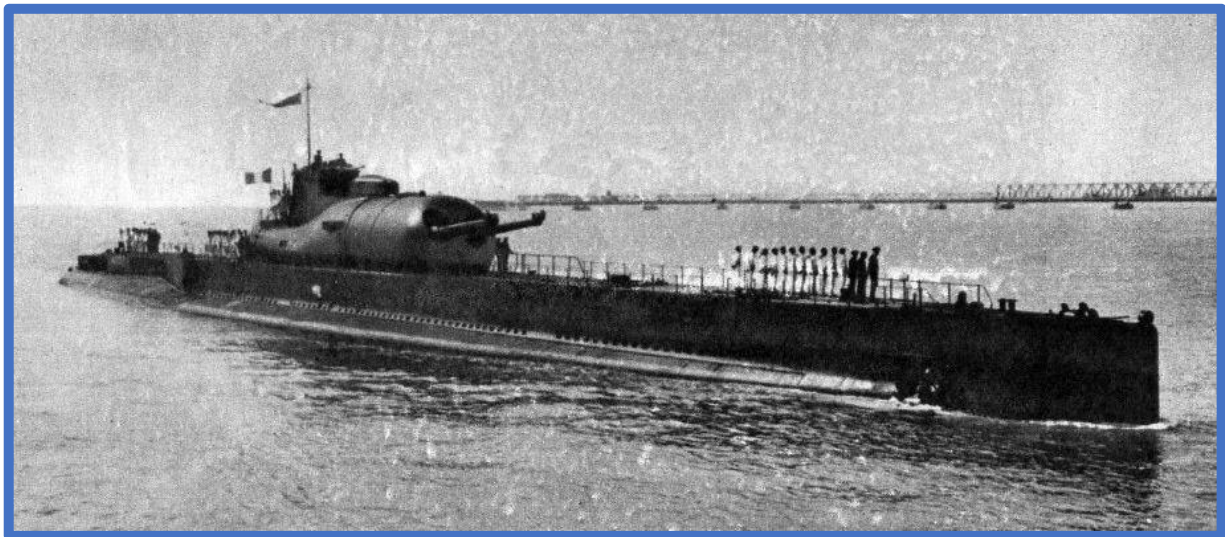


The Sea Hunter Drone ship

Featured large submarine - Surcouf

Source: Wikipedia

Surcouf was the largest French cruiser submarine. She served in both the French Navy and the Free French Naval Forces during the Second World War. She was lost during the night of 18/19 February 1942 in the Caribbean Sea, possibly after colliding with an American freighter. Surcouf was named after the French privateer Robert Surcouf. She was the largest submarine built until surpassed by the first Japanese I-400-class submarine in 1943.



Surcouf c. 1935 painted in Prussian dark blue

The Washington Naval Treaty had placed strict limits on naval construction by the major naval powers in regards to displacements and artillery calibers of battleships and cruisers. However, no accords were filed in motion for light ships such as frigates or destroyers or submarines. In addition, to ensure the country's protection and that of the empire, France mounted the construction of an important submarine fleet (79 units in 1939). Surcouf was intended to be the first of a class of submarine cruiser; however, she was the only one completed.

Surcouf had a twin-gun turret with 203 mm (8-inch) guns, the same calibre as that of a heavy cruiser (the main reason of Surcouf being designated as *croiseur sous-marin* - "cruiser submarine") provisioned with 600 rounds.

Surcouf was designed as an "underwater heavy cruiser", intended to seek and engage in surface combat.[1] For reconnaissance purposes, the boat carried a Besson MB.411 observation floatplane in a hangar built abaft of the conning tower. However, the floatplane was also mainly used for gun calibration purposes.

The boat was equipped with 10 torpedo tubes: four 550 mm (22 in) torpedo tubes in the bow, and two swiveling external launchers in the aft superstructure, each with one 550mm and two 400 mm (16 in) torpedo tubes. Eight 550mm and four 400mm reloads were carried.[2] The 203mm/50 Mod^vle 1924 guns were in a pressure-tight turret forward of the conning tower. The guns had a 60-round magazine capacity and was controlled by a director with a 5 m (16 ft) rangefinder, mounted high enough to view an 11 km (5.9 nmi; 6.8 mi) horizon, and able to fire within three minutes after surfacing.[3] Using the boat's periscopes to direct the fire of the main guns, Surcouf could increase this range to 16 km (8.6 nmi; 9.9 mi); originally an elevating platform was supposed to lift lookouts 15 m (49 ft) high, but this design was abandoned quickly due to the effect of roll.[4]

The Besson observation plane could be used to direct fire out to the guns' 26 mi (23 nmi; 42 km) maximum range. Anti-aircraft cannon and machine guns were mounted on the top of the hangar.

Surcouf also carried a 4.5 m (14 ft 9 in) motorboat, and contained a cargo compartment with fittings to restrain 40 prisoners or lodge 40 passengers. The submarine's fuel tanks were very large; enough fuel for a 10,000 nmi (19,000 km; 12,000 mi) range and supplies for 90-day patrols could be carried.

The test depth was 80 m (260 ft).

The first commanding officer was Frigate Captain (Capitaine de Frigate, a rank equivalent to Commander), Raymond de Belot.

The boat encountered several technical challenges, owing to the 203mm guns.[citation needed]

Because of the low height of the rangefinder above the water surface, the practical range of fire was 12,000 m (13,000 yd) with the rangefinder (16,000 m (17,000 yd) with sighting aided by periscope), well below the normal maximum of 26,000 m (28,000 yd).

The duration between the surface order and the first firing round was 3 minutes and 35 seconds. This duration could have been longer in case the boat was going to fire broadside, which meant surfacing and training the turret in the desired direction.

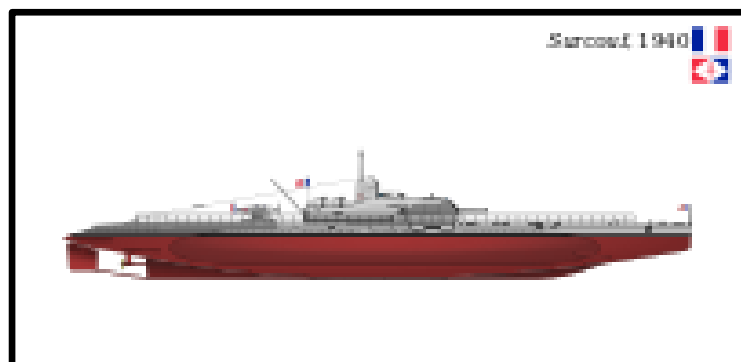
Firing had to occur at a precise moment of pitch and roll when the ship was level.

Training the turret to either side was limited to when the ship rolled 8° or more.

Surcouf was not equipped to fire at night, due to inability to observe the fall of shot in the dark

The mounts were designed to fire 14 rounds from each gun before their magazines were reloaded.

1940 configuration, with twotone gray paint and 17P identification number on the conning tower



In 1940, Surcouf was based in Cherbourg, but in May, when the Germans invaded, she was being refitted in Brest following a mission in the Antilles and Gulf of Guinea. Under command of Frigate Captain Martin, unable to dive and with only one engine functioning and a jammed rudder, she limped across the English Channel and sought refuge in Plymouth.

On 3 July, the British, concerned that the French Fleet would be taken over by the German Kriegsmarine at the French armistice, executed Operation Catapult. The Royal Navy blockaded the harbours where French warships were anchored, and delivered an ultimatum: rejoin the fight against Germany, be put out of reach of the Germans, or scuttle. Few accepted willingly; the North African fleet at Mers-el-Kebir and the ships based at Dakar (West Africa) refused. The French battleships in North Africa were eventually attacked and all but one sunk at their moorings by the Mediterranean Fleet.

French ships lying at ports in Britain and Canada were also boarded by armed marines, sailors and soldiers, but the only serious incident took place at Plymouth aboard *Surcouf* on 3 July, when two Royal Navy submarine officers, Cdr Denis 'Lofty' Sprague, captain of HMS *Thames*, and Lt Patrick Griffiths of HMS *Rorqual*,^{[5][6]} and French warrant officer mechanic Yves Danie were fatally wounded, and a British seaman, Albert Webb, was shot dead by the submarine's doctor.

By August 1940, the British completed *Surcouf*'s refit and turned her over to the Free French Navy (Forces Navales Françaises Libres, FNFL) for convoy patrol. The only officer not repatriated from the original crew, Frigate Captain Georges Louis Blaison, became the new commanding officer. Because of Anglo-French tensions with regard to the submarine, accusations were made by each side that the other was spying for Vichy France; the British also claimed *Surcouf* was attacking British ships. Later, a British officer and two sailors were put aboard for "liaison" purposes. One real drawback was she required a crew of 110-130 men, which represented three crews of more conventional submarines. This led to Royal Navy reluctance to recommission her.

Surcouf then went to the Canadian base at Halifax, Nova Scotia and escorted trans-Atlantic convoys. In April 1941, she was damaged by a German plane at Devonport.

On 28 July, *Surcouf* went to the United States Naval Shipyard at Portsmouth, New Hampshire for a three-month refit.

After leaving the shipyard, *Surcouf* went to New London, Connecticut, perhaps to receive additional training for her crew. *Surcouf* left New London on 27 November to return to Halifax.

In December 1941, *Surcouf* carried the Free French Admiral Vâmile Muselier to Canada, putting into Quebec City. While the Admiral was in Ottawa, conferring with the Canadian government, *Surcouf*'s captain was approached by The New York Times reporter Ira Wolfert and questioned about the rumours the submarine would liberate Saint-Pierre and Miquelon for Free France. Wolfert accompanied the submarine to Halifax, where, on 20 December, they joined Free French "Escorteurs" corvettes *Mimosa*, *Aconit*, and *Alysse*, and on 24 December, took control of the islands for Free France without resistance.

United States Secretary of State Cordell Hull had just concluded an agreement with the Vichy government guaranteeing the neutrality of French possessions in the Western hemisphere, and he threatened to resign unless President of the United States Franklin D. Roosevelt demanded a restoration of the status quo. Roosevelt did so, but when Charles de Gaulle refused, Roosevelt dropped the matter. Ira Wolfert's stories - very favourable to the Free French (and bearing no sign of kidnapping or other duress) - helped swing American popular opinion away from Vichy. The Axis Powers' declaration of war on the United States in December 1941 negated the agreement, but the U.S. did not sever diplomatic ties with the Vichy Government until November 1942.

Later operations

In January 1942, the Free French leadership decided to send Surcouf to the Pacific theatre, after she had been re-supplied at the Royal Naval Dockyard in Bermuda. However, her movement south triggered rumours that Surcouf was going to liberate Martinique from the Vichy regime.

In fact, Surcouf was bound for Sydney, Australia, via Tahiti. She departed Halifax on 2 February for Bermuda, which she left on 12 February, bound for the Panama Canal.

Fate

Surcouf vanished on the night of 18/19 February 1942, about 80 mi (70 nmi; 130 km) north of Cristóbal, Colón, while en route for Tahiti, via the Panama Canal. An American report concluded the disappearance was due to an accidental collision with the American freighter Thompson Lykes, steaming alone from Guantanamo Bay, on what was a very dark night; the freighter reported hitting and running down a partially submerged object which scraped along her side and keel. Her lookouts heard people in the water but the freighter did not stop, thinking she had hit a U-boat, though cries for help were heard in English. A signal was sent to Panama describing the incident.

The loss resulted in 130 deaths (including 4 Royal Navy personnel), under the command of Frigate Captain Georges Louis Nicolas Blaison.[citation needed] The loss of Surcouf was announced by the Free French Headquarters in London on 18 April 1942, and was reported in The New York Times the next day. It was not reported Surcouf was sunk as the result of a collision with the Thompson Lykes until January 1945.



The Free French Memorial on Lyle Hill, Greenock:

"A la memoire du Capitaine de frigate Blaison, des officiers et de l'equipage du sous-marin Surcouf perdu dans l'Atlantique Fevrier 1942"

Featured Women in War- Grace Banker (1892-1966)

Source: Wikipedia

Tattler – This month's Tattler features two heroic women from two different world wars.

Near the battlefields of France — often with shells falling all around her — American telephone operator Grace Banker led a group of 33 women who connected critical calls between Allied forces: they were the first group of U.S Army Signal Corps Telephone Girls, also known as the Hello Girls.

Communications between Allied forces were dependent on a battle-rigged telephone system, but local operators were rarely fluent in English.

U.S. General John Pershing put out a call for multilingual women to become "switchboard soldiers," and Banker, who worked at AT&T as a switchboard instructor, was one of the first selected.

With her Telephone Unit No. 1, Banker operated the switchboards while under artillery bombardment and being bombed by German planes during the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives.

At the height of the war, the Hello Girls were connecting 150,000 calls a day; in total, 223 American women served in this critical role over the course of the war. After the war, Banker was given a Distinguished Service Medal, but even though she and the other Hello Girls swore the Army oath and were subject to military discipline, the Department of War denied them veterans' status and benefits. It wasn't until 1977, after decades of petitioning presidents, that the Hello Girls were finally given their due and recognized for their service as veterans.



Featured Women in War- Ruby Bradley (1907 to 2002)

Source: Wikipedia

Army Col. Ruby Bradley entered the U.S. Army Nurse Corps (ANC) as a surgical nurse – she would retire as one of the most decorated women in U.S. military history.



“Retired Col. Ruby Bradley, an Army nurse who became known as an “Angel in Fatigues” by caring for fellow captives while she was a prisoner of war in the Philippines during World War II, has died. She was 94.” *Los Angeles Times*

Bradley was serving as a hospital administrator at Camp John Hay in the Philippines when she was taken prisoner by the Japanese Army, only three weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. She was eventually interned with other prisoners of war (POWs) at the Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila.

On Dec. 7, 1941, the 34-year-old Bradley was serving in the Philippines as a hospital administrator at Camp John Hay in Baguio, on Luzon Island, 200 miles from Manila. Just 3 weeks after the Attack on Pearl Harbor, the army evacuated and the Japanese took over the camp on Dec. 23, Bradley, a doctor and another nurse hid in the hills. But they surrendered five days later after they were betrayed by a couple who helped hide them. They were sent to their former military post, by then a POW camp.

Bradley helped set up a dispensary, and at great risk she and a doctor smuggled drugs, including World War I-era morphine, and surgical instruments from the camp hospital. “Three days after that, we had an appendectomy,” she told the Washington Post in 1983. “The Japanese thought it was wonderful we could do all this without any instruments.

"During her 37 months in captivity, Bradley assisted in 230 major operations and the delivery of 13 babies.

In September 1943, Bradley was transferred to Santo Tomas Internment Camp in Manila, where she remained until it was liberated. "A lot of people died in the last few months," she said. "There were several deaths a day, mostly the older ones, who just couldn't take it."

At the Santo Tomas camp, the military and civilian captives dubbed Bradley and the other imprisoned nurses who provided them with medical treatment "Angels in Fatigues."

The POWs subsisted mainly on rice--half a cup in the morning and half a cup at night--but Bradley shared her limited rations with the children. "I'd save part of my food for the children later in the day, when they started crying and being hungry," she said. Bradley also learned to be "a pretty good thief. I would take food and put it in my pockets for the children," she said. By the time the camp was liberated by the Americans on Feb. 3, 1945, the formerly 110-pound Bradley had shrunk to 84 pounds.



She taught school before becoming a nurse in 1933. The following year, she joined the Army Nurse Corps as a surgical nurse. After World War II, Bradley worked in several base hospitals and took advantage of an Army training program in which she earned a bachelor's degree in nursing education from the University of California.

A month after the start of the Korean War in 1950, Bradley returned overseas, working as a combat nurse in evacuation hospitals as the 8th Army's chief nurse. At one point during the war, when thousands of enemy soldiers had overrun American troops and Bradley was dealing with wounded patients who had been ambushed five miles up the road, a plane was sent to evacuate her and her patients. Bradley was the last one on the plane, jumping aboard just as her ambulance exploded from an enemy shell. When she left Korea in June 1953, Bradley was given a full-dress honour guard ceremony, the first woman ever to receive a national or international guard salute.

For her service in two wars, Bradley earned 34 medals, including two Legion of Merit medals, two Bronze Stars, the Philippine Liberation Medal and the International Red Cross' prestigious Florence Nightingale Medal.

In 1958, Bradley became the third woman in Army history to be promoted to the rank of colonel. Bradley, who never married, retired in 1963, and spent the next 17 years supervising a private-duty nursing service in Roane County, W.Va.

Feature - Finnish Navy

Source: Wikipedia

Tattler - Who knew that Finland has the eighth largest navy in the world?



Standing NATO Maritime Group One trains with Finnish fast-attack missile boat FNS Hanko during a passing exercise in the Baltic Sea, August 28, 2017. NATO/Fran CPO Christian Valverde

Finland borders the Baltic Sea, between Russia and Sweden. It has 270 naval assets, including eight patrol craft and 18 mine-warfare vessels, in addition to landing craft, transport ships, and other vessels like tugs and cable layers.

Like other countries in Northern and Eastern Europe, Finland has grown increasingly wary of Russian military activity. Finland is not a NATO member, but it has taken part in recent NATO exercises, including a crisis-management exercise in October 2017.

Finland is looking to increase domestic defense spending. The US State Department recently cleared a \$730 million sale of naval weapons to Helsinki, including ship- and surface-launched missiles.

The current Commander-in-Chief of the navy is Rear Admiral Jori Harju. The navy is organized into the Navy Command and three Brigade-level units and Naval Academy. Since 1998 the navy also includes the Nyland Brigade in Dragsvik, where Finnish Marines or Coastal Jaegers are trained. Nyland Brigade is also the only Swedish language unit in the country and it carries on the traditions and battle-honours of the Nyland (Uusimaa) Regiment of the Swedish Army.

History

During the Swedish era, the Finnish Gulf saw many battles between the Swedish and Russian fleets. Many of the Swedish naval bases were located in present-day Finland and many sailors came from Finland (see Archipelago Fleet).

During the Russian rule (1809–1917) an entirely Finnish Navy unit, named Suomen Meriekipaasi was defending the Finnish coast, alongside the Baltic Fleet of the Imperial Russian Navy. The Meriekipaasi participated in the Crimean War, albeit mostly with on-shore duties. The Meriekipaasi also manned the coastal batteries at the Santahamina Island during the siege of fortress Viapori in Helsinki. The ships the Meriekipaasi operated included the steam frigates Rurik and Kalevala, named after the Finnish national epic. These ships later served in the Russian Pacific Fleet).



Finnish Naval Jack

Independent Finland

The first ships that the independent Finnish Navy obtained were a mix of obsolete vessels left behind by the Russians during the Finnish Civil War and vessels, who had not been able to make the winter voyage to Kronstadt as the Russian Navy retreated from German forces. Thus, the Finnish Navy of the late 1910s and early 1920s consisted of some gunboats (Klas Horn, Matti Kurki, Turunmaa, and Karjala), six S-class torpedo boats, eight C-class torpedo boats, one minelayer (Louhi), several minesweepers, and five T-class minelaying boats. In addition to the warships, the Russians also left behind numerous other types of vessels.

Additionally, the Germans handed over two netlayers (Hämeenmaa and Uusimaa) to the Finnish Navy, and these two ships formed the core of the Finnish Navy until the coastal defense ships were commissioned. With the Treaty of Tartu, Finland had to return some of the equipment they had operated earlier. This equipment included three S-class torpedo boats (S3, S4 and S6), the minesweepers Altair, Mikula, MP 7, MP 11, Ahvola, T 12, fifteen tugs, four smaller transports and 54 motorboats. Finland lost three more ships (the torpedo boats C 1, C2 and C3) in supporting the British campaign in the Baltic Sea. The three vessels remained in the Baltic even when winter froze over the sea, and the expanding ice damaged the vessels beyond repair, and they were all scuttled. The last remaining C-class torpedo boats were placed in reserve after this incident.

In 1927, after years of wrangling with various plans for how to modernize the navy, and partly due to the loss of the torpedo boat S2 in heavy seas in October 1925, the Parliament of Finland approved a plan to build two coastal defence ships (Panssarilaiva in Finnish), as well as four submarines. Motor torpedo boats were also acquired both from Britain, as well as from domestic sources. New minesweepers were also constructed. The training ship Suomen Joutsen was also acquired

Current status

In the late 1990s, the Finnish Navy was developing a new missile squadron called Laivue 2000 (English: Squadron 2000). At first it was supposed to consist of two Hamina class missile boats (already built at this date) and four Tuuli class hovercraft. The Navy experimented with one prototype hovercraft, but announced in 2003 that the Tuuli class would not enter active operations and that no more of them would be built. Instead two new Hamina class missile boats were built, and the extra weaponry from the hovercraft were installed on the Hämeenmaa class minelayers.

The cable layer Putsaari and pollution control vessel Hylje were replaced in 2011 by a new multipurpose vessel built by the Uudenkaupungin Työvene shipyard. A new icebreaking oil spill response vessel was named Louhi on 8 March 2011.

The 1979-built minelayer Pohjanmaa was decommissioned in 2013, after which minelayer Hämeenmaa took over the role of flagship of the Finnish Navy.

In February 2015, it was reported that fatigue damage had been discovered in the hulls of the recently refitted Rauma-class missile boats and that the vessels would be removed from active duty to prevent further damage until its cause has been found. However, while peacetime use is now limited, the missile boats can be taken back into full service if needed.



Hamina-class fast attack craft Pori, commissioned in 2006, is the newest fast attack craft of the Finnish Navy

Future vessels

Once Squadron 2000 was operational, the Navy shifted its attention to mine countermeasures with a view to replacing the old Kuha- and Kiiski-class minesweepers with three Katanpää-class mine countermeasure vessels, previously known as the MCMV 2010 and MITO classes.

In October 2012, The Finnish Navy signed a 34 million euro contract for 12 fast transport boats with an option for more vessels with Marine Alutech, a Finnish company that had also built the Uisko- and Jurmo-class transport boats. The 19-metre (62 ft) Jehu transport boats can carry 25 troops and have a maximum speed in excess of 40 knots (74 km/h; 46 mph). Defensive capability is provided by a

remotely controlled turret capable of providing fire support during a landing operation. The new class of landing craft has been named the Jehu class.

The next-generation surface combatant, which will be larger than the current missile boats and more capable for international co-operation, is currently in the pre-development stage. This new class of multi-purpose naval vessels, referred to as Monitoimialus 2020 ("Multi-purpose vessel 2020") or Laivue 2020 ("Squadron 2020") in the preliminary papers, is intended to replace the Hämeenmaa- and Pohjanmaa-class minelayers and Rauma-class missile boats as they are retired. The goal is to replace seven vessels with four new corvette-sized surface combatants. In September 2015, the Finnish Minister of Defence Jussi Niinistö officially authorized the Finnish Navy to start developing "Squadron 2020" and an official Request for Information (RFI) was sent to shipyards in December. Consequently, the Finnish Defence Forces signed a letter of intent with Rauma Marine Constructions for the construction of four vessels under the "Squadron 2020" program on 14 September 2016. The design stage is planned to continue until 2018 and the vessels will be built in 2019–2024. The projected cost of four vessels with a lifespan of at least 35 years is roughly 1.2 billion euro. The new vessels will be called Pohjanmaa class.



Preliminary 3D rendering of the Pohjanmaa class

Naval History - 1 December Battle of the Falkland Islands

Source: Wikipedia

The Battle of the Falkland Islands was a First World War naval action between the British Royal Navy and Imperial German Navy on 8 December 1914 in the South Atlantic. The British, after their defeat at the Battle of Coronel on 1 November, sent a large force to track down and destroy the German cruiser squadron. The battle is commemorated every year on 8 December in the Falkland Islands as a public holiday.



Admiral Graf Maximilian von Spee commanding the German squadron of two armoured cruisers, SMS Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the light cruisers SMS Nürnberg, Dresden and Leipzig, and the colliers SS Baden, SS Santa Isabel, and SS Seydlitz[4][5] attempted to raid the British supply base at Stanley in the Falkland Islands. The British squadron consisting of the battlecruisers HMS Invincible and Inflexible, the armoured cruisers HMS Carnarvon, Cornwall and Kent, the armed merchant cruiser HMS Macedonia and the light cruisers HMS Bristol and Glasgow had arrived in the port the day before.

Visibility was at its maximum; the sea was placid with a gentle breeze, and the day was bright and sunny. The vanguard cruisers of the German squadron were detected early. By nine o'clock that morning, the British battlecruisers and cruisers were in hot pursuit of the German vessels. All except Dresden and Seydlitz were hunted down and sunk.

Casualties and damage were extremely disproportionate; the British suffered only very lightly. Admiral Spee and his two sons were among the German dead. Rescued German survivors, 215 total, became prisoners on the British ships. Most were from the Gneisenau, nine were from Nürnberg and 18 were from Leipzig. Scharnhorst was lost with all hands. One of Gneisenau's officers who lived had been the sole survivor on three different guns on the battered cruiser. He was pulled from the water saying he was a first cousin of the British commander (Stoddart).



HMS Inflexible picking up German sailors from Gneisenau after the battle

Convoy HX90 – (Halifax to Liverpool) Battle of the Atlantic World War II

Source: Wikipedia

HX 90 was an eastbound convoy of 41 ships which sailed from Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada, on 21 November 1940 bound for Liverpool, England, and carrying war materials. The convoy, made up of contingents from Halifax, Sydney and Bermuda was led by convoy commodore V. P. Alleyne in Botavon.



The escort for the crossing had been sparse, as was common at this stage of the campaign, and the Western Approaches

escort did not generally meet incoming convoys until south of Iceland, reckoned to be the limit of any patrolling U-boat's endurance. In HX 90's case the ocean escort was the Royal Navy armed merchant cruiser HMS Laconia, and she was due to rendezvous with the Western Approaches escort on 2 December.

Also at sea were several other convoys; Convoy SC 13 was to the north of HX 90, also heading east, while heading towards them was the westbound Convoy OB 251. To the south, heading to the United Kingdom from Gibraltar, was Convoy HG 47.

Ranged against them was a pack of seven German submarines – U-boats – reinforced by three Italian submarines operating with them in the Atlantic Ocean. These were deployed in a patrol line at the fringe of the Western Approaches, hoping to intercept eastbound convoys before they met their escorts.

On 1 December 1940, some 500 nautical miles (926 km) south of Iceland, HX 90 was sighted by U-101, which reported its position. Her skipper, Mengersen, was ordered to shadow and report. During the day, the first Western Approaches escort, the Royal Navy destroyer HMS Viscount under Lieutenant Commander M. S. Townsend, arrived from OB 251.



That evening, Mengersen was no longer able to resist attacking. He fired all twelve of his torpedoes, claiming four ships sunk and two damaged; in fact he sank three ships during the night – Apalachee, Kavak, and Lady Glanely – and damaged another, Loch Ranza.

Just after midnight on 2 December, U-47 joined, skippered by U-boat ace Gunther Prien; his attack sank one ship, *Ville D'Arlon*, which had become separated from the convoy, and damaged another, *Conch*. Prien attacked a third ship, *Dunsley*, with his deck gun, but was driven off by an escort ship. Later *U-95* joined, attacking the damaged *Conch*; *Conch* was again hit, but remained afloat. *U-99*, commanded by another ace, Otto Kretschmer, was en route to join the attack, but encountered the Royal Navy armed merchant cruiser *HMS Forfar* on her way to join OB 251 as ocean escort. Kretschmer attacked her, and hit *Forfar* five times with torpedoes; she sank with the loss of 172 of her crew, leaving 21 survivors.

U-43 also missed the convoy, but fell in with OB 251, sinking two ships, while the Italian submarine *Argo*, having attacked HG 43, also missed HX 90, but found SC 13, attacking and sinking one ship.

On the morning of 2 December the pack was joined by U-52, which sank two ships, *Tasso* and *Goodleigh*. The convoy was joined by a further two escorts, the British sloop *HMS Folkestone* and corvette *HMS Gentian*, also from OB 251. They were assisted by the Royal Canadian Navy destroyer *HMCS St. Laurent*, which had been travelling with *Forfar* but had detached to reinforce HX 90's escort. *Viscount* and *St. Laurent* attacked numerous asdic contacts, making thirteen depth-charge attacks over four hours. No U-boats were hit, but all were kept submerged and silent, allowing HX 90 to escape.



Later that evening, however, the convoy was sighted again, by newcomer *U-94*; she attacked during the night of 2–3 December and sank two more ships, *Stirlingshire* and *Wilhelmina*. Also that night, *U-99* found and sank a straggler, *Victoria City*, (though other sources say she was sunk by *U-140*) and the damaged *Conch*, which she also sank.

No further U-boat attacks developed for HX 90, though on 3 December *W Hendrik* was bombed by German aircraft and sunk. The convoy met its local escort on 5 December and arrived in Liverpool later that day.

50 years ago - December 1970

General

10 December - Lee Iacocca became the new president of the Ford Motor Company elected by the U.S. automobile manufacturer's board of directors. Iacocca, credited with revitalizing the company with the design and introduction of the Ford Mustang automobile, had been one of the three members of a triumvirate that had managed the company since the firing of President Semon "Bunkie" Knudsen on September 11, 1969.

15 December 1970 - The USSR's Venera 7 became the first spacecraft to transmit data from the surface of the planet Venus. Information was transmitted for 35 minutes after the probe reached the Venusian atmosphere and a parachute opened to slow its descent. Unlike three previous probes that had reached Venus, Venera 7 was reinforced with an extra shield to give added protection against the temperature 198 °C (388 °F) and atmospheric pressure of almost 1,500 pounds per square inch (10,000 kPa) on the surface.

21 December - The new U.S. Navy F-14 Tomcat made its first flight. Nine days later, the prototype F-14 was destroyed in a crash after taking off from the Grumman Corporation test facility near Calverton, New York. Test pilots William Miller and Robert Smyth were able to safely eject prior to the F-14's failure as it approached a landing.

23 December - The North Tower of the World Trade Center in New York City was topped out to its full 110-story height when a 36 feet (11 m) steel column was locked into place at 11:30 in the morning, raising the incomplete structure's height to its goal of 1,370 feet (420 m), as the tallest building in the world. On October 20, the edifice's height had reached 1,254 feet (382 m) to surpass the Empire State Building.

31 December - Paul McCartney filed a lawsuit against John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr in London to dissolve The Beatles's legal partnership.

Music

Album	Artist
The End of an Ear	Robert Wyatt
Wishbone Ash	Wishbone Ash
Pendulum	Creedence Clearwater Revival
Ginger Baker's Air Force 2	Ginger Baker's Air Force
John Lennon/Plastic Ono Band	John Lennon
Lizard	King Crimson
Yoko Ono/Plastic Ono Band	Yoko Ono and Plastic Ono Band
T. Rex	T. Rex
The Black-Man's Burdon	Eric Burdon and War
Daughter of Time	Colosseum
Desertshore	Nico
The End of the Game	Peter Green
False Start	Love
H to He, Who Am the Only One	Van der Graaf Generator
Highway	Free
I Like Your Lovin' (Do You Like Mine?)	The Chi-Lites

Album	Artist
if 2	If
Kingdom Come	Sir Lord Baltimore
Lick My Decals Off, Baby	Captain Beefheart & the Magic Band
Looking On	The Move
Ry Cooder	Ry Cooder
<u>Soul Rebels</u>	The Wailers
'Til the Band Comes In	Scott Walker
Watt	Ten Years After
What About Me	Quicksilver Messenger Service
Just Another Diamond Day	Vascht Bunyan

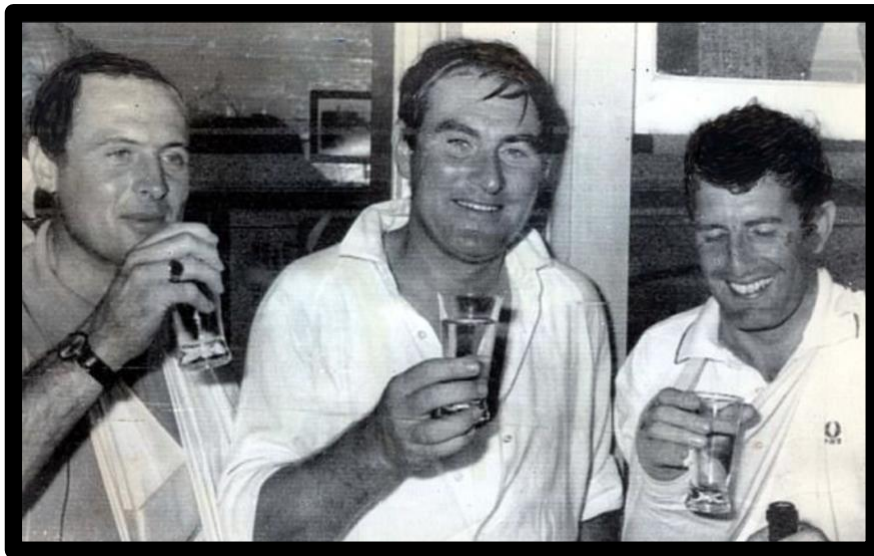
Tattler – December 1970 releases (original movie posters)



Sport

Tattler - Not much of note went on in December 50 years ago

The Ashes - December to February 1971 - Ray Illingworth captained the English cricket team in Australia in 1970-71, playing as England in the 1970-71 Ashes series against the Australians and as the MCC in their other matches on the tour. They had a successful tour, but an acrimonious one as Illingworth's team often argued with their own management and the Australian umpires. When they arrived the Australian selector Neil Harvey called them "rubbish", and others labelled them "Dad's Army" because of the seniority of the players, whose average age was over 30, but these experienced veterans beat the younger Australian team. They are the only touring team to play a full Test series in Australia without defeat. England won the (7 test) series 2 -0.



Celebrating their victory - Wikipedia

Older Folks Share Their Views



Tattler - I have watched this dozens of times and still laugh out loud each time. With apologies to those that have seen it before – click LOL below!



Tattler – From the BFD Comedy Corner Offensive Fun, a very clever contribution by Rob J Whitney, a sales software development engineer in the UK

Oxford University researchers have discovered the densest element yet known to science. The new element, Governmentium (symbol=Gv), has one neutron, 25 assistant neutrons, 88 deputy neutrons and 198 assistant deputy neutrons, giving it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton-like particles called pillocks. Since Governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected, because it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

A tiny amount of Governmentium can cause a reaction that would normally take less than a second, to take from 4 days to 4 years to complete. Governmentium has a normal half-life of 2 to 6 years. It does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places. In fact, Governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisation will cause more morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron promotion leads some scientists to believe that Governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a critical concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as a critical morass. When catalysed with money, Governmentium becomes Administratium (symbol=Ad), an element that radiates just as much energy as Governmentium, since it has half as many pillocks but twice as many morons.

Tattler - Did you know these things had names?

The space between your eyebrows is called *glabella*

The way it smells after the rain is called *petrichor*

The plastic or metallic coating at the end of your shoelaces is called an *aglet*

The rumbling of stomach is actually called a *wamble*

The cry of a newborn baby is called a *vagitus*

The prongs on a fork are called *tines*

The sheen or light that you see when you close your eyes and press your hands on them is called *phosphenes*

The tiny plastic table placed in the middle of a pizza box is called a *box tent*

The day after tomorrow is called *overmorrow*

Your tiny toe or finger is called *minimus*

The wire cage that holds the cork in a bottle of champagne is called an *agraffe*

The 'na na na' and 'la la la' which don't really have any meaning in the lyrics of any song are called *vocables*

When you combine an exclamation mark with a question mark (like this !?) it is referred to as an *interrobang*

The space between your nostrils is called *columella nasi*

The armhole in clothes where the sleeves are sewn is called *armscye*

The condition of finding it difficult to get out of the bed in the morning is called *dysania*

Illegible handwriting is called *griffinage*

The dot over an i or a j is called a *tittle*

That utterly sick feeling you get after eating or drinking too much is called *crapulence*

The metallic device used to measure your feet at the shoe store is called *bannock device*

Tattler - How many of the above did you already know?

That's it for this year good people. I hope you have a tremendous December and stay safe.

Regards from my very able assistant Colette and me.