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April 21, 2011

## The Submarine Force ~ Serving Silently for 111 years

*"Submarines proved their worth by giving us maximum flexibility in Operation Odyssey Dawn. They provided unprecedented ISR and terrific firepower, all from the sea. They are critical to winning any war against any adversary today and tomorrow."*

**- Vice Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander, U.S. 6th Fleet / Joint Force Maritime Component Odyssey Dawn**

The submarine force has been honorably and silently serving its Navy and nation for 111 years. The U.S. submarine force was officially born April 11, 1900, when inventor John Holland sold the 64-ton submersible Holland VI, to the U.S. Navy. USS Holland (SS 1) was commissioned in October 1900, but the Navy can track its submarine history back to as early as Sept. 5, 1776, when the submarine Turtle, invented by David Bushnell, conducted an attack on HMS Eagle in New York Harbor.

### A Proud Navy Heritage

- During World War II, submariners comprised less than two percent of U.S. naval personnel but accounted for 55 percent of all enemy ships sunk. U.S. submarine force losses, 52 submarines and 3,505 lives, were the highest percentage of any service in the U.S. military.
- In 1945, [USS Barb \(SS 220\)](#) successfully employed rockets against shore targets, marking a first for submarine warfare. Barb also conducted shore bombardments that paved the way for many of the submarine missions conducted today.

### The Cold War

- USS Nautilus (SSN 571) went to sea for the first time and signaled the historic message, "Underway on nuclear power," Jan. 17, 1955. Nautilus was the world's first operational nuclear-powered submarine and the first vessel to complete a [submerged transit across the North Pole](#).
- USS George Washington (SSBN 598) completed the first strategic deterrent patrol in 1961. The survivability of submarine ballistic missiles fundamentally changed the calculus of nuclear deterrence, virtually eliminating the advantage of a surprise attack and stabilizing superpower relationships.

### Current Operations

- Since the end of the Cold War, submarines have participated in Operations Desert Storm, Allied Force, Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and [Odyssey Dawn](#).
- Attack submarines USS Scranton (SSN 756) and USS Providence (SSN 719) and guided-missile submarine [USS Florida \(SSGN 728\)](#) launched more than 100 Tomahawk missiles to help establish a no-fly zone over Libya as part of a coalition to support U.N. Security Council resolution 1973.
- The U.S. Navy's Trident ballistic-missile submarines carry 54 percent of the nation's nuclear deterrent arsenal. The replacement for the Trident class will carry an even greater percentage of U.S. strategic warheads.

### Key Messages

- World War II submarine operations paved the way for many of today's submarine missions.
- The survivability of submarine ballistic missiles changed the calculus of nuclear deterrence, virtually eliminating the advantage of a surprise attack and stabilizing superpower relationships.
- Submarines use concealment and endurance to conduct anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, strike warfare, mine warfare, special operations, strike group operations and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

### Facts & Figures

- Today's submarine force consists of: 52 attack submarines, 4 guided-missile submarines and 14 ballistic-missile submarines. Any given day, more than 30 submarines are underway.
- April 11, 2011, marked the 111th anniversary of the U.S. Navy submarine force.
- The Medal of Honor has been awarded to eight submariners.
- Submarines participated in [Ice Exercise 2011](#): for information on this event and others visit [Navy.mil](#).