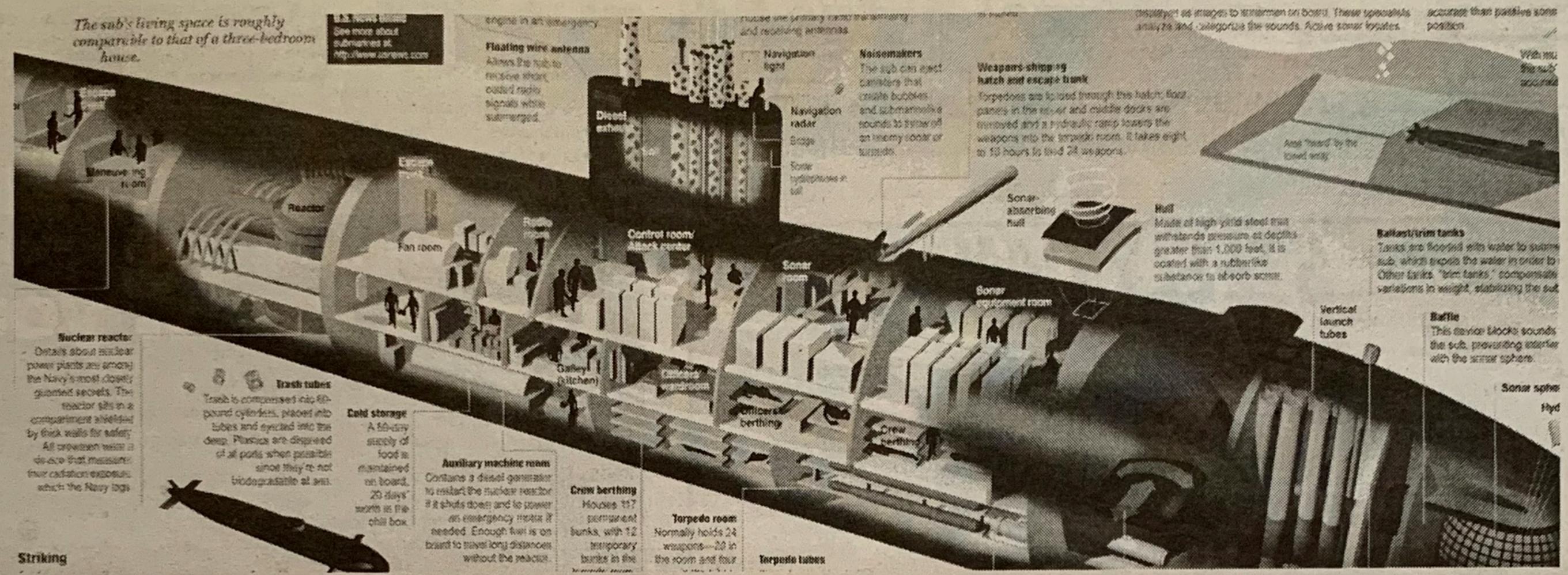
Calendar

A Century of Silent Service

Submarines in Hollywood



A look inside a Los Angeles-class submarine

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ike it or not, the U.S. Navy knows where most of us get our information about submarines: at the movies.

On its website, not a few references to popular films are made. To one frequently asked question — "How are people rescued from a sunken submarine?" — the Navy replies this way: "You may have seen [the Deep Submersible Rescue Vehicle] in the movies, Hunt for Red October or Gray Lady Down."

To answer another typical query—"What does it look like

LOCAL

through the periscope?"—
the site refers to World War II—era films, confirming

what many of us merely, and perhaps unthinkingly, presume. The view is, indeed, seen through "the dashed lines of the eyepiece."

About a year and a half ago, the San Diego Maritime Museum had the idea to use Hollywood's storehouse of submarine celluloid to help commemorate this year's centennial of the U.S. Submarine Service. "A handful of us down here at the museum began to talk about a film series," says Joseph Ditler, development director. They decided they would show one movie a month from April through September. Even though Ditler and the others all had their own opinions about what the best submarine films were, Ditler thought it would be interesting to ask the men who know "the difference between Hollywood and history" to come up with a list of their own

favorites. "So we asked the crews and officers of the six Fast Attack subs based here in San Diego."

The final choices, one for each boat, are immediately suspect, however. Can it be true that the USS Bremerton, USS Portsmouth, USS Helena, USS Jefferson City, USS Houston, and USS Salt Lake City chose without duplication? It's too tidy. And one begins to wonder if the lineup, like the movies themselves, is part fact, part fiction.

Ditler admits that, yes, there were duplicates when the votes were counted. "The PAO — public affairs officer — helped us wade through [the initial ballot]." Ditler also says the list was doctored a bit, for a couple of reasons.

Early on, Ditler reserved the right to eliminate choices, thinking, "Oh, how wonderful to have the men choose, but what if they pick real boners?" He was, after all, the one who would have to market the films to the public. As it happened, one of the subs did select a so-called boner, in Ditler's judgment. "What was that Kelsey Grammer one? Down Periscope or Up Periscope?" (It was the former.)
"Anyway, it was a really lame comedy released about four years ago."

So he nixed it and asked the public affairs officer for permission to substitute one of his personal preferences. "And she said, 'Okay. Nobody will mind down here.' And I picked Crimson Tide, which I thought was a great movie, with Gene Hackman and Denzel Washington and a whole cast of backup characters."

Crimson Tide, however, was vetoed by the Navy. "They made a very

polite request to us," says Ditler. "They didn't approve of that movie. They did not cooperate with the filming of that movie. And, essentially, they thought there was nothing about the movie that was true. The situations that occurred would never have happened, and they were very sensitive about it. And so I very politely said, 'That's no problem. I'll substitute a film."

That's how Ice Station Zebra, with Rock Hudson, made the cut.

The other five deemed worthy of inclusion are Hunt for Red October, Enemy Below, Torpedo Run, Das Boot, and this month's selection, Run Silent, Run Deep, starring Clark Gable



Burt Lancaster, Clark Gable

and Burt Lancaster.

The cost of admission to each movie includes a tour of the museum's new exhibit, "Submarines: A Century of Silent Service," which chronicles the history of this most complicated technology and a world that is one of the nation's few remaining all-male subcultures.

Additionally, a speaker has been invited to introduce each film and to give a commentary afterward. Run Silent, Run Deep will feature San Diegan Morris F. "Brick" Landon, who served for four years on three different submarines during World War II and received the Silver Star for heroic action aboard the USS Cobia. Landon says that he saw the movie when it first came out in 1958. He is eager to see it again and to make himself available to those in the audience who may want to ask a question of "someone who was there."

The "there" is the Pacific, between Pearl Harbor and the coast of Japan.

Landon has not yet seen the latest submarine film, *U-571*, currently showing in theaters. But Ditler has. "Historically, it's way off the charts," he says, adding that a German U-boat captain was asked about it. "And he goes [in a German accent], 'Ah, I tell you, it's bunk! Bunk, I tell you! Hollywood!"

— Jeanne Schinto

A showing of
Run Silent, Run Deep
Wednesday, March 24
Gate opens 7:00 p.m.;
movie starts at dusk
Upper deck of the
ferryboat Berkeley
San Diego Maritime Museum
1306 North Harbor Drive
Tickets: \$8 for adults;
\$5 for seniors 60 and over
and for children 15 and under;
\$3 for museum members
Info: 619-234-9153,
ext. 101 or 128