

## Welcome to “See Stories”

Hi, welcome to my collection of short stories and thank you for showing an interest in it (them). Each chapter in this collection can stand on its own, they are a collection of stories about experiences spread across three years of my life in the US Navy riding on submarines. Stories such as these from the Navy are typically called “Sea Stories” and they usually start off with “And this is a no shitter.” In this case, they may or may not be. They are stories about what I saw, so a slight change of the name was called for, from “Sea” to “See”, and hopefully my eyes did not fool me and my memories are fairly accurate in the telling.

Some aspects of what I “saw” will overlap from one story to another. One story may lead to another, but they may not be in order. They are in no specific order, for any one aspect, but if you read something and feel I have mentioned it before, you are probably not wrong; it’s just that it may have a different implication in the context of what I was experiencing in that moment for that story.

The next thing you should know is “why me”. Well, to answer that, I am no real authority on submarines, I was what they called a “rider”. I was on board for specific well-defined missions that were very brief periods of time in the life of a submarine. I was not permanent “ship’s company”. All of my orders were TAD (Temporary Additional Duty). But the value is; I was on board nine different submarines, on ten different missions (yes, I was on one boat twice, on two separate occasions). I rode the boats in both the Pacific Fleet and the Atlantic Fleet, and performed all the different missions that were assigned to submarines between 1970 and 1980 (1978 actually). And finally perhaps the biggest value I bring to the telling of these stories, I rode both Diesel- and Nuclear-powered Fast Attack Submarines. Secondly to that, the missions I was on board for were the paramount missions that each of those types of submarines were designed for. So with those two factors, I feel I am qualified to relate the stories to you. I was not “qualified” in submarines, I was a visitor, and I participated in their missions with that vantage point. Being “Qualified in Submarines” is an entirely different aspect altogether and if you want to know more, skip to the chapter on “Submarine Dolphins”, and then come back here, as I’m about to explain the layout of both Diesel and Nuclear Submarines. You really should know the differences because it is an aspect that comes up in a lot of the stories that follow.

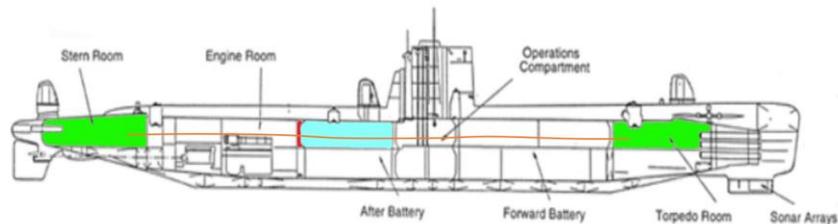
The major differences between the Diesel-powered submarines and the Nuclear-powered Fast Attack submarines is exactly that, their power source. Throughout the stories I keep referring to Diesels as Diesels and Nuclear-powered Fast Attacks get shortened to Nuc or nucs. Now yes there were Nuclear-powered Fast Attack submarines and there were Nuclear-powered Ballistic Missile Submarines, both were “Nucs”, but one was designed to be silent and fast, and the other silent and carry ballistic missiles. So the fast attacks were called Nucs as slang, and the missile boats were called FBMs or “Boomers”, because they made things go boom.

Now then the major differences that keep coming up throughout most of the chapters in this book, is the life on-board. I used to say, and I continue to say, because it hasn't changed:

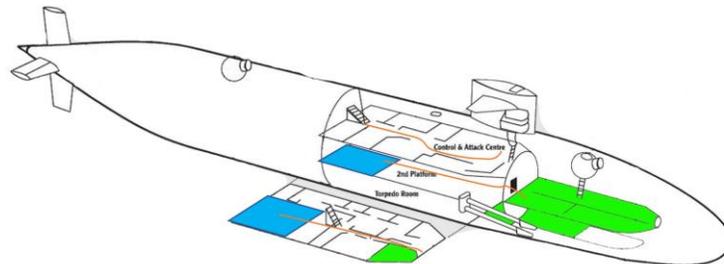
“When the last mooring line comes in all the bills are paid. It doesn't matter if they actually are or aren't because it doesn't matter, you are at sea for a long time and you're leaving all the normal human responsibilities behind you. You are going to be 40 yards from where you sleep, where you eat, and where you work. Nothing else matters.”

To illustrate that point, the two classes of submarines I rode are shown here and are meant as references for the entire collection of stories. The spaces highlighted in green were the berthing compartments where you slept, the light blue is where you ate, and depending on what your job was you worked in the white spaces. And the orange line shows the passageway that connected those three focal points of your life on the boats.

### USS Tang SS563 Name-sake Boat for the class of Diesel Boat



### USS Sturgeon SSN637 Name-sake Boat for the class of Nuclear-Powered Boat



OK so you are interested in the differences, you flipped the page to see if there was more. You didn't stop and depart from the drawings. Good for you, you're curious, so some more detail:

First, there are two screws on the Diesel boats, and they have bow and stern planes, whereas the Nuc has one screw and sail and stern planes. This allows the Diesel boats to be best performers in shallow waters where maneuvering in tight spaces is important, and you don't want to be going too fast for those conditions. Whereas the Nuc is designed for open ocean at high speed. BTW the actual screws are not shown, as their shape is highly classified. I can tell you they are not brightly polished gold looking screws, as shown in the models.

On the Diesel boat you will note that there are actually only two interior decks, and that the bottom deck is filled with diesel engines and batteries. So life on the Diesel boat is all done on one deck. Whereas there are three decks on the Nuc – but nothing aft of the mess decks (light blue middle level – with the middle level also shown extended out the starboard side.) The reason nothing is shown aft of that location (actually called Frame 57) is everything that is nuclear power plant related and highly classified – so we don't show anything aft of Frame 57. Actually those little steps shown on the upper level, going up to the bulkhead that is Frame 57. That's the one and only entrance to "back aft". When you go back aft to the machinery spaces, you actually go up and over the top of the reactor compartment itself.

On the 563 class you will note, that there is a small section of red in the pictures. It is between the crew's mess (blue) and the Engine room. It is red because it was an air lock. When the diesels were running there was one hell of a lot of air movement through the boat getting from the Snorkel Mast (or open Bridge Trunk Hatch) and the diesels. SO, there was a very dangerous airlock that you had to pass through, such that hatches did not experience the tremendous wind forces, and was actually routed through the passages designed for the task of getting air to the diesels – not past a perhaps sleepy sailor headed to bed back aft. So this airlock was very similar to frame 57 on the nucs. You didn't pass through those hatches without good cause.

That's it for now, there is enough detail to get you started. I might recommend covering the basics first with two of the chapters that deal with those very basics. The first is "Breathing". The second is "Sleep". I chose those two as starters because in order to experience it you have to be alive, and to be alive you have to be able to breath. And since you are most likely going to spend one third of your time on the boats sleep – you should be up to speed on that as well. Sleeping comes up a lot in many of the stories, it was the best way to pass time.