

FISHERMAN REELS IN RUSSIAN ARTIFACT

Fisherman Erik Eidi made the catch of a lifetime about fifteen miles off the Washington coast. Despite its massive proportions and incredible weight (13 X 7 feet and 3000 pounds), his unique prize didn't put up a fight. That's because the Bellingham, Washington, cod fisherman didn't reel in a fish, but what is believed to be a Russian communication device that dates back to the Cold War. Eidi had a hunch that his discovery might have a national security value. That was verified when the Navy wanted to conduct an investigation. However, under maritime law, the artifact belonged to Eidi; and, after negotiations, he agreed to let the U.S. Navy "borrow" the Russian artifact. That's exactly what some of our Navy officials are doing now. It will be determined if this is of interest or not, since it is very old. The Navy plans to return the device to Eidi as soon as they complete the investigation. The fisherman sees the investigation as an appraisal because he wants to cash in on his find. He's even willing to negotiate directly with Moscow for the best price.

NAVY TO ESTABLISH EXPEDITIONARY AND RIVERINE FORCES

A July memorandum from the office of outgoing Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Vern Clark, spells out a series of actions to expand the Navy's capabilities to prosecute the so-called Global War on Terror. Key directives call for establishing expeditionary and riverine warfare units with the Navy. Specifically, Clark has ordered creation of:

An Active Component riverine warfare force by 2006 and two Reserve Component riverine units by 2007.

NAVY TAKES POSSESSION OF FASTEST EXPERIMENTAL SHIP

The Navy took delivery of its newest experimental ship, *Sea Fighter* (FSF 1), at Naval Station Everett, WA, in July. The Navy's fastest ship, *Sea Fighter* will operate at greater than 50 knots and has a range of approximately 4,000 nautical miles. The ship will move to San Diego. *Sea Fighter* is intended to serve as the platform to test the technologies and manning concepts that will allow the Navy to operate more effectively.

The ship will also be used to evaluate the hydrodynamic performance, structural

behavior, mission flexibility, and propulsion system efficiency of high-speed vessels, and will also serve as a test bed for developmental mission packages. The ship can accommodate two helicopters on its flight deck and has bays for 12 flexible mission modules, a stern ramp/cradle that can be lowered at sea to launch and recover a variety of manned and unmanned vehicles, and a small crew of 16 Navy Sailors and ten Coast Guardsmen.

CHINA DENIES BUILDING AIRCRAFT CARRIER

Chinese vice-minister of the national defense industrial commission says that China has no plans for building an aircraft carrier. The vice-minister of the Commission of Science Technology and Industry for National Defense said that there are no plans for an aircraft carrier, but said their navy is upgrading its equipment in other ways. China has a vast maritime space, and its navy is responsible for safeguarding the nation's maritime security and sovereignty.

USN TOUTS SUCCESS OF MARITIME PATROL AIRCRAFT PROGRAM

After awarding Boeing a \$3.89 billion contract to develop a multimission maritime patrol aircraft, the Navy said the effort has experienced "one success after another."

The P-8A is setting the standard for future acquisition programs. The P-8A, based on Boeing's 737 twin-jet commercial airliner, is intended to enter service in 2013, and will replace the propeller-driven Lockheed Martin P-3 Orion in the land-based maritime patrol mission.

MILITARY UPDATE: PANEL HAS DESIGNS ON RETIREMENT PAY

The Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation has a plan to study private sector-like changes to military pay and retirement, the kind that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has endorsed for several years. The committee adopted an agenda that calls for studying over the next few months a new military retirement system vesting members in benefits earlier than the current 20-year retired pay system, but also with reduced annuities for future service members if they retire before age 60; combining that reduced "defined benefit" plan with a 401(k)-type contributory plan, similar to the military's tax-deferred Thrift Savings Plan but with some government matching of service member contributions;

streamlining the military's arsenal of 67 special and incentive pays by eliminating those seen as ineffective and increasing the use of whatever "targeted" pays would remain; overhauling compensation for Reserve and National Guard forces to "recognize their full integration" into U. S. operational forces, as evidenced by their expanded role in Iraq and Afghanistan; and slowing growth in military health care costs by raising TRICARE enrollment fees and copayments. Studying these issues will help the committee recommend a "strategic architecture" for future changes to military compensation, said retired ADM Donald L. Pilling, committee chairman. Draft recommendations are due to David S.C. Chu, Undersecretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, in September.

SEABEES TASKED WITH NEW CIVIL AFFAIRS ROLE

The Naval Construction Force is formally getting a new job: civil affairs. Since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Seabees have done civil affairs work in Iraq, helping build and repair the country's electrical grids, water systems, roads, schools, and clinics. The Navy wants to expand that capacity with the formation of a Reserve Component (RC) civil affairs battalion to give Army and Marine Corps units a break. The starting point will be a Navy RC civil affairs unit being established by 2006, followed by a battalion in 2007. A Navy RC naval mobile construction battalion includes about 685 sailors. Turning to Navy RC to stand up the battalion is a natural choice because of a wealth of civilian experience resident there.

IRAQI PILOT TO BE BURIED WITH U. S. TROOPS HE CARRIED

The remains of CAPT Ali Abass will be buried with some of the remains of four members of a U. S. Air Force team who died beside him when their plane crashed near the Iranian border. Abass will be one of about 60 foreign nationals buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Families of the dead were presented with the remains that were identified, and they had their separate funerals and burials. Some of the remains were mixed together; and despite use of the latest technology, they could not be separated. Air Force regulations require that the commingled remains be buried together in a single coffin. The gravestone will bear all five names. ☪