

Welcome



Aboard



COMMANDER CHARLES K. MERKEL JR.
COMMANDING OFFICER

COMMANDER CHARLES K MERKEL JR UNITED STATES NAVY

Commander Merkel was born in Patuxent River, Maryland, into a Navy family. He joined the Navy in 1980 under the Nuclear Power Officer Candidate Program. Following graduation from Texas A&M University in 1982, with a Bachelor of Science in Nuclear Engineering, he attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned in October, 1982. During his career, he has also earned a Master's Degree in Engineering Management from the Catholic University of America.

Commander Merkel's first submarine was USS BREMERTON (SSN 698) from March 1984 to August 1987, serving in various division officer assignments and as Combat Systems Officer. BREMERTON completed three Western Pacific deployments and was awarded two Navy Unit Commendations, one Meritorious Unit Commendation and two Battle Efficiency "E" awards. He was assigned as Navigator and Operations Officer in USS OMAHA (SSN 692) from July 1990 to February 1993. OMAHA completed three Western Pacific deployments and was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation. He served as Executive Officer in USS TUNNY (SSN 682) from April 1995 to September 1997. TUNNY completed two Western Pacific deployments and was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation and Battle Efficiency "E" award.

Commander Merkel has served ashore as Shift Engineer and Staff Training Officer at the S5G prototype at the Nuclear Power Training Unit in Idaho Falls, Idaho, a member of the Commander Submarine Force United States Pacific Fleet's Tactical Readiness Evaluation Team and as Special Assistant for Enlisted Personnel and Training to the Deputy Director of Naval Reactors.

Commander Merkel's personal awards included the Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (four awards) and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards).

Commander Merkel is married to Joslyn Aguada from Waipahu, Hawaii. They have a son, Chris and a daughter, Stacey.

**UNITED STATES SHIP
KEY WEST
(SSN 722)**

KEEL LAID:	6 JULY 1983
LAUNCHED:	20 JULY 1985
SPONSOR:	VIRGINIA I. B. CONN
SHIPS COMPLEMENT:	
OFFICERS:	14
ENLISTED:	132
LENGTH:	360 FEET
BEAM:	33 FEET
DRAFT:	33 FEET
MAXIMUM DEPTH:	IN EXCESS OF 800 FEET
MAXIMUM SPEED:	IN EXCESS OF 25 KNOTS
SUBMERGED DISPLACEMENT:	6,900 TONS





SYMBOLGY OF USS KEY WEST (SSN 722) CREST

The focal point of the emblem is the Conch Shell, the fabled horn of the Greek god Triton and the symbol of the namesake city. The submarine emerging from the shell symbolizes the emergence of the city as the leading city of the Florida Keys.

The submarine is steaming in a southwesterly direction, symbolizing the direction that the Florida Keys point into the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico. The colors are symbolic of the National Ensign and Naval tradition. The submarine insignia symbolizes the heritage that the ship has with all past and future submarines. The motto "Liberate Clavis Tenacitas et Ingenium" translates to "The Key to Freedom is Tenacity and Resourcefulness." The phrase "The Key to Freedom" represents the namesake city and the ship's mission to protection of the fundamental rights and liberties of the American people. The phrase "Tenacity and Resourcefulness" was used by the Mayor of Key West during his speech at the ship's launching to describe the characteristics of a true Conch - a native of Key West. Additionally, "Ingenium" is the word used by the ancient Greek historians to describe the resourcefulness and ingenuity of Hercules during his exploits as a sailor.

USS KEY WEST (SSN 722)

History

USS KEY WEST was commissioned on 12 September 1987, by Mrs. Virginia Conn at Naval Base, Norfolk, Virginia. Following commissioning USS KEY WEST set sail for a brief port visit to her namesake city of KEY WEST, Florida followed by a successful initial weapons certification and accuracy testing. The final new construction phase and the post Shakedown Availability in 1988 was highlighted by the completion of the Vertical Launch System. In 1989, USS KEY WEST conducted her first overseas Eastern Atlantic deployment.

In 1990, USS KEY WEST embarked on her first Mediterranean deployment, where she received the coveted "Hook-em" Award for antisubmarine warfare excellence. In 1991 USS KEY WEST was awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for superb performance in "Cold War" operations conducted during her 1989 and 1990 deployments. This same year USS KEY WEST was also awarded the Submarine Squadron Eight Engineering "E" for excellence. USS KEY WEST conducted operations in the Caribbean and Western Atlantic in 1991, 1992, 1993, and 1994. In 1992 USS KEY WEST was awarded the Submarine Squadron Eight Battle "E" for excellence and efficiency, as well the 1992 TOP-TORP Torpedo Shooting Champion. In December 1992, while en route to operations in the Caribbean, USS KEY WEST visited her namesake city of Key West, Florida. In 1993, she was awarded the Submarine Squadron Eight Tactical "T" for antisubmarine warfare excellence. During the summer of 1994, the ship made the most recent visit to her namesake city.

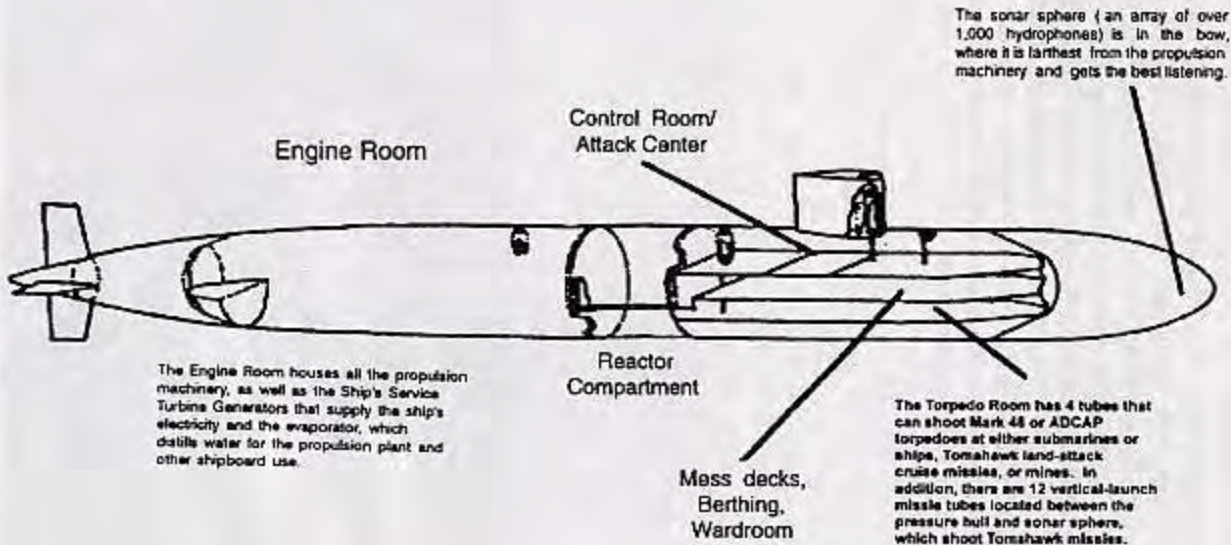
In 1995, USS KEY WEST deployed with the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN 72) Battle Group to the Mediterranean Sea and Arabian Gulf. USS KEY WEST operated with NATO forces in support of resolution to the conflict in former Yugoslavia. USS KEY WEST later made her first transit of the Suez Canal for operations in the Arabian Gulf. The crew of the USS KEY WEST was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation, Armed Forces Service, and NATO Service medals for their outstanding 1995 Mediterranean Deployment. Additionally the USS KEY WEST was awarded the Submarine Squadron Eight Green "C" for communications excellence in 1995.

The USS KEY WEST spent the first half of 1996 conducting operations in the Western Atlantic and preparing for Interfleet transfer to the Pacific Fleet. In June 1996, she departed from Norfolk, Virginia and transited the Panama Canal, arriving in her new homeport of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in July 1996 as a member of Submarine Squadron One. In April 1997, the USS KEY WEST deployed with USS CONSTELLATION (CV 64) Battle Group to the Western Pacific Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Arabian Gulf. In June 1997 USS KEY WEST joined the newly re-established Submarine Squadron Three. During January and February 1998, USS KEY WEST served as host ship in support of Prospective Submarine Commanding Officer underway tactical training. In spring 1998, USS KEY WEST deployed to the Eastern Pacific in support of CARL VINSON and ABRAHAM LINCOLN Carrier Battle Group predeployment training exercises.

In July 1998, USS KEY WEST participated in Rim of the Pacific '98 (RIMPAC), a biennial multi-nation naval exercise, off the coast of the Hawaiian Islands.

From October through December 1998, USS KEY WEST deployed to the Western Pacific. During the deployment, KEY WEST participated in FOAL EAGLE 98, Annual Exercise (ANNUALEX), and a torpedo exercise. FOAL EAGLE is a regularly scheduled training exercise comprised of Republic of Korea (ROK) and U.S. Forces, held at a variety of locations throughout the ROK. Annual Exercise (ANNUALEX) is a joint exercise composed of Japan and U.S. Naval Forces, conducted in the Sea of Japan. During this deployment, USS KEY WEST distinguished itself as the first submarine to launch and employ MK48 ADCAP exercise torpedoes in foreign waters.





The sonar sphere (an array of over 1,000 hydrophones) is in the bow, where it is farthest from the propulsion machinery and gets the best listening.

Engine Room

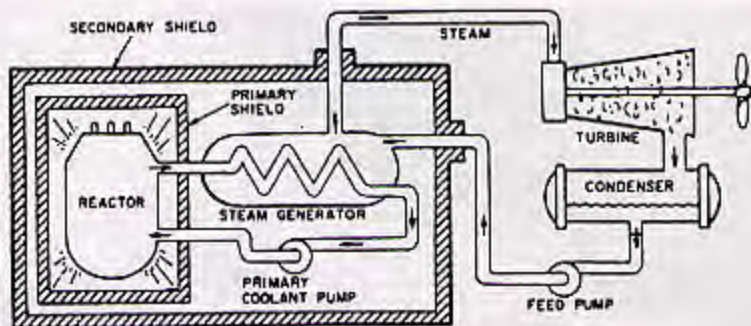
Control Room/
Attack Center

Reactor
Compartment

Mess decks,
Berthing,
Wardroom

The Engine Room houses all the propulsion machinery, as well as the Ship's Service Turbine Generators that supply the ship's electricity and the evaporator, which distills water for the propulsion plant and other shipboard use.

The Torpedo Room has 4 tubes that can shoot Mark 48 or ADCAP torpedoes at either submarines or ships, Tomahawk land-attack cruise missiles, or mines. In addition, there are 12 vertical-launch missile tubes located between the pressure hull and sonar sphere, which shoot Tomahawk missiles.



The power plant of a nuclear submarine is based upon a nuclear reactor which provides heat for the generation of steam. This, in turn, drives the main propulsion turbines and the ship's turbo-generators for electric power.

The Primary system is a circulating water cycle and consists of the reactor, loops of piping, primary coolant pumps and steam generators. Heat produced in the reactor by nuclear fission is transferred to the circulating primary coolant water which is pressurized to prevent boiling. This water is then pumped through the steam generator and back into the reactor by the primary coolant pumps for reheating in the next cycle

In the steam generator, the heat of the pressurized water is transferred to a secondary system to boil water into steam. This secondary system is isolated from the primary system.

From the steam generators, steam flows to the engine room where it drives the turbo-generators, which supply the ship electricity, and the main propulsion turbines, which drive the propeller. After passing through the turbines, the steam is condensed and the water is fed back to the steam generators by the feed pumps.

There is no step in the generation of this power which requires the presence of oxygen. This fact alone allows the ship to operate completely independent from the earth's atmosphere for extended periods of time.

During the operation of the nuclear power plant, high levels of radiation exist around the reactor and personnel are not permitted to enter the reactor compartment. Heavy shielding protects the crew so that the crew member receives less radiation on submerged patrol than he would receive from natural sources ashore.



COMMANDING OFFICERS

Warren N. Lipscomb Jr.
New Construction to
10 October 1987

Joseph G. Henry
10 October 1987 to
20 October 1990

Robert H. Kuppers
27 February 1993 to
16 November 1995

Kirkland H. Donald
20 October 1990 to
27 February 1993

George M. Wadzita
16 November 1995 to
29 May 1998

William H. Hilarides
29 May 1998 to
03 November 2000

Charles K. Merkel
03 November 2000 to
Present









COMMANDER WILLIAM H. HILARIDES
COMMANDING OFFICER

COMMANDER WILLIAM H. HILARIDES
UNITED STATES NAVY

Commander Hilarides was born in Charleston, West Virginia, and was raised in Chicago, Illinois. He attended the United States Naval Academy and graduated in 1981 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics. Prior to Nuclear Power Training, he served as master of the Naval Academy Sailing Squadron Sloop Avenger, competing in numerous off shore racing events. Upon completion of Nuclear Power training, he reported to the USS PARGO (SSN 650) where he served as Communications Officer, Main Propulsion Assistant and Weapons Officer, completing North Atlantic and Mediterranean deployments.

From September 1986 until August 1988, he served as aide to Commander Submarine Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet in Norfolk, Virginia.

Following the completion of Submarine Department Head Training, he served as Engineer Officer onboard the USS GURNARD (SSN 662), completing Arctic and Western Pacific deployments.

From October 1991 to October 1993, Commander Hilarides served as a Personnel Assignment Officer at the Bureau of Naval Personnel in Washington, D.C.

From December 1993 to July 1995, he served as Executive Officer onboard the USS MARYLAND (SSBN 738) (BLUE), completing three strategic deterrent patrols.

From August 1995 to August 1997, he served in the Joint Staff in the Force Structure, Requirements and Assessment Directorate. He relieved as Commanding Officer of USS KEY WEST (SSN 722) on May 29, 1998.

Commander Hilarides holds a masters degree from Catholic University of America in Engineering Management and has completed the Air Force Command and Staff course. His personal awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal (5), and the Navy Achievement Medal.

Married to the former Beverly Melton of Orlando, Florida, Commander and Mrs. Hilarides have two children, Benjamin and Candice.