USS Conynghams Fourth Commanding Officer

Home

About the
Photo Sales
Service

Order Photos

Pricing

Oral History
Program

Reference
Library

Photo Archives

Military
Reunion
Database

Photo Service
FAQs

Oral History
FAQs

Reference
Library FAQs

Membership
Benefits

Membership
Renewal

Address
Change

Gift
Membership

High School
Gift
Subscription

Nominate a
Friend for

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Harry DePue Train, II, Admiral, U.S. Navy (Retired)

Based on seven interviews by Paul Stillwell, conducted from July 1986 to October 1996. The volume contains 534 pages of interview transcript plus a comprehensive index. The transcript is copyright 1997 by the U.S. Naval Institute; the interviewee has placed no restrictions on its use.

Because he grew up in a Navy family, Train was imbued from childhood with the goal of attending the Naval Academy. His career as a midshipman included playing center on the football team that played a notable tie against West Point in 1948. After graduation in 1949, he served as a junior officer in the destroyer *Harold J. Ellison* (DD-864) in the Atlantic and Mediterranean and in the destroyer *Harry E. Hubbard* (DD-748), which was reactivated for Korean War service. After submarine school in 1951, Train served in the submarine *Wahoo* (SS-565), whose skippers, Dennis Wilkinson and Bill Anderson, both later commanded the *Nautilus* (SSN-571). After duty in 1957-58 on the Joint Staff, Train was executive officer of the submarine

Entemedor (SS-340) and submarine placement officer in the Bureau of Naval Personnel. In 1962-64, after resisting Admiral Rickover's efforts to draft him into the nuclear program, he was commanding officer of the diesel submarine *Barbel* (SS-580). After that he was administrative aide to Secretary of the Navy Paul Nitze and developed a close working relationship with Nitze's EA, Elmo Zumwalt. Subsequently, Train commanded the destroyer *Conyngham* (DDG-17) in the Med, served briefly on the Second Fleet staff, and then was executive assistant to Admiral Thomas Moorer, during Moorer's duty as CNO and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As a flag officer, Train commanded Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla Eight, headed the systems analysis division of OpNav, and was involved in Incidents at Sea negotiations with the Soviet Union. After service in 1974-76 as director of the Joint Staff, he spent two years as Commander Sixth Fleet, and then served from 1978 to 1982 as SACLant, CinCLant, and CinCLantFlt. Other items in the volume include his analysis of the 1982 Falklands War and discussion of his activities following retirement from the Navy. Included have been hiking the Appalachian Trail, running his own defense consulting firm, and serving in a variety of non-profit pursuits.

The Sonar that Brought up a Different Kind of Echo

An edited excerpt from the Naval Institute oral history of Admiral Harry D. Train II, U.S. Navy (Retired)

When I took command of the Sixth Fleet in August 1976, I had some specific guidance from Admiral Jim Holloway, the CNO. He told me to ensure that when the ASW squadron came over, that they not be just scooped into the assets of Commander Task Force 60, but rather employed in a specific way that would keep them at sea, performing their mission of evaluating the towed-array sonar. The ASW squadron consisted of five towed-array frigates and command ships.

Two types of towed-array sonar are the TACTAS and the interim tactical towed-array sonar system, ITASS. The McCloy had the ITASS, and the Moinester and Connole had the TACTAS. TACTAS was the towed array th at was streamed behind a variable-depth sonar buoy. ITASS was a long array with speed and maneuvering limitations. TACTAS, or tactical towed-array sonar, did not limit the speed or maneuverability of the ship upon which it was installed. The fourth and fifth ships were two more frigates that served as ASW command ships, Voge and Koelsch.

This was not in any sense a hunter-killer group. It was strictly a development group, and what Admiral Holloway wanted to do was get an up-or-down decision on whether the U .S. Navy should invest in towed-array sonar. He apparently believed that the previous employment of the ASW squadron had not worked, because it had just been swept into CTF 60 and used for plane guards and other chores. It wasn't easy to hold the line on t hat, but I understood those directions quite well. And while I had some fussing to do with people like Rear Admiral Dutch Schoultz, who was the CTF 60 commander, I held the line. The ASW squadron spent over 80% of the time at sea, doing their developmenta l work--and nothing else.

When we brought in this development group, I met with two of the Sixth Fleet's task force commanders, Rear Admiral Nick Nicholson and Rear Admiral Bill McLaughlin. McLaughlin had the land-based patrol aircraft, and Nicholson

was the submarine task force commander. We created a new task force, CTF 66, which was the theater ASW force. I placed Admiral Nicholson in command of CTF 66 and made McLaughlin his deputy.

The thrust of this was that, between the two of them, they owned all the submarines and all of the P-3 aircraft. The problem with the previous tests of the towed-array sonar was that surface ship sonarmen did not know how to read lofargrams. They did not know when they had a target in the same way that submariners and P-3 aviators did. So we got the submarine sonarmen and the P-3 sonarmen to tutor the surface ship sonarmen on how to read lofargrams, and it worked pretty well. In addition, both Nicholson and McLaughlin provided days and days of submarine and P-3 services to the ASW squadron.

The ultimate success story of the ASW squadron was when a Soviet Echo II-class nuclear submarine was picked up by an Atlantic Command submarine outside the Med, trailed through the Strait of Gibraltar without losing contact, and passed to the ASW squadron. Once in the Med, contact was alternately maintained by submarines, P-3s, and the ASW squadron. Contact was passed from the submarine to the P-3s to the ASW squadron and back to the P-3s. If the ASW squadron lost it, they would tell the P-3s and the submarines, and the submarine that was in trail would get the ASW squadron back on contact. They tracked them for ten days. The ultimate act was on 28 August 1976, when the skipper of the *Echo II* got mad and ran into the side of the USS *Voge.*

The *Voge*, the *Koelsch*, the *McCloy*, and P-3 aircraft were out there and had been tracking the submarine all the way from Gibraltar to the vicinity of Crete. Every time this *Echo* came up to periscope depth, he saw one of these ships around. For some reason, he thought that the ship that was tracking him was the *Voge*. The *Voge* was just a communication link. It wasn't a towed-array ship, but they all looked alike. So he decided the *Voge* was the ship that was causing him all this grief, and he came up to periscope depth and saw the *Voge* way off on the horizon. The *Moinester,* which was closer really had the array. But he didn't think the *Moinester* was his problem, because he hadn't seen it before.

When the *Voge* started to run, the *Echo II* came up alongside, about 600 yards out, ran with the *Voge* for several miles, and then just turned right towards the *Voge* and ran into it. Tore part of the propeller off the *Voge* and punctured the hull back there in one of the after compartments, after steering.
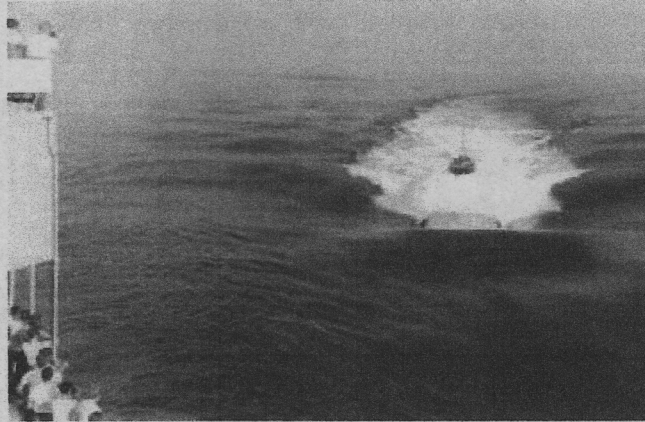
The only casualty on the *Voge* was that a sailor fell off the 01 deck onto the main deck from the impact. The *Echo* rolled over about 45 degrees from the impact and just went under and then didn't reappear. At the time that I was called, I was at home in Gaeta, Italy, the home por t for my flagship. I felt I couldn't leave home, because I didn't want to get out of contact. Captain Ted Parker, my chief of staff lived right down next to the flagship, which was the cruiser *Little Rock.* So he ran over to the flagship. He and I were talking back and forth, and he was sending the messages from the flagship. He personally told the *Koelsch* to send a flashing-light message to Vice Admiral V. I. Akimov, the Soviet Mediterranean Squadron commander, who was in the same anchorage aboard a Soviet submarine tender.

Just for background, the third Incidents at Sea conference occurred shortly before I relieved as Commander Sixth Fleet. This collision between the *Voge* and the *Echo II* was one of the first things that happened after I got over there. It was fairly close to the anchorage off of Greece, where the Soviets used to anchor in fairly sheltered waters. The *Koelsch* was there in the anchorage with them, anchored alongside of all the other Soviet ships that were there in that open-water anchorage.

The purpose of the message I had Ted Parker send to Akimov was to tell him that the collision had occurred. I told him where the collision occurred, and I told him he better send a ship there, because their submarine hadn't come back to the surface right away. I didn't know what had happened to their submarine.

He said, "Thank you very much, I'm sending a ship. What happened?" He hadn't heard about the collision from his own channels, because he had no ships in the vicinity when it happened.

By that point, then State Department and everybody else were plugged into this and I felt I had to ask them, "Can I answer the question?"

I was told by the Pentagon, "No, State says don't answer the question." As a result, I think we missed a golden opportunity to set the record straight. Then we fiddled around trying to get the information to him that I could have given him, because I knew what had happened. It was the most photographed, recorded collision, I guess, in history. P-3 aircraft taping it, we had tapes of the *Voge,* we had photographs of the *Echo II* coming all the way in.

After the collision itself, the *Echo* finally came up. The whole front of the sail was stove in, and I don't know if they had any antennas or not, but Akimov's ship got there pretty fast, and they went away with him. My Soviet friends told me the skipper of the *Echo* was drunk.

That collision was the most dramatic thing that happened during our ASW tests. Later during my tour as commander of the Sixth Fleet, there was a second deployment of the ASW squadron under a different squadron commander, but equally successful and with different ASW task force commanders involved. But by that time, the decision had been made that towed-array sonars were the way to go. And I am led to understand that it was those two deployments of the ASW squadron that resulted in a relatively early buy-towed-array-sonar decision on the part of the Navy.

back to top

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