Scorpion Down: Sunk by the Soviets, Buried by the Pentagon: The Untold Story of the USS *Scorpion*

(*See* J. B. Bryant, pp. 82-83, August 2007; E. Offley, pp. 78-79, September 2007; J. B. Bryant, pp. 78-79, October 2007 *Proceedings*)

Stanley L. Carmin, Ernest Castillo III, Edward K. Dalrymple, Frank Gambino, Joseph C. Guilfoyle, Charles D. Harding, Frank Harwood, Louis E. Haskins, John J. Holdzkom, Commander Donald B. Leach, U.S. Navy (Retired), George Miller, C. L. Polk, Bruce Rule, Ronald F. Smith, George P. Widenor—Author Ed Offley alleges that an Echo II class Soviet nuclear-powered submarine torpedoed and sank the USS *Scorpion* on 22 May 1968 and that the U.S. Navy engaged in a conspiracy to cover up Soviet involvement.

Declassified Navy documents provide two completely independent lines of evidence (acoustic and photographic) that conclusively establish the *Scorpion* was lost because the submarine's pressure hull collapsed at great depth from hydrostatic pressure. The first and strongest acoustic signal received by Canary Island underwater sensors on 22 May was produced by collapse of the pressure hull, probably at a depth near 1,900 feet. Subsequent, weaker acoustic events were produced by collapse of small internal structures such as spherical tanks, at depths as great as about 5,000 feet.

Extensive photographic coverage of the *Scorpion* wreck shows no structural damage consistent with explosion of a torpedo, nor any torpedo wreckage.

COMMENT & DISCUSSION

Offley alleges a U.S. Navy conspiracy to confiscate, suppress, and destroy SOund SUrveillance System (SOSUS) acoustic detections of an "underwater dogfight" between the *Scorpion* and the Echo II to prevent this detection event from being examined by the Navy's *Scorpion* Board of Inquiry.

We fifteen individuals, with a collective total of 400 years of experience at SOSUS sites and/or at activities that analytically supported SOSUS, agree that all acoustic data from 22 May were forwarded to the SOSUS Evaluation Center in Norfolk, Virginia. The analysis of these data was disseminated within Navy channels and beyond as appropriate. Most of these 15 individuals participated in this analysis effort.

Offley further alleges that a strong SOSUS detection (recording) of the "underwater dogfight" was viewed at the ASW Training Center in Norfolk circa 1982. Such a detection would have involved a range in excess of 1,500 nautical miles. This is difficult to accept when the more sensitive Canary Island acoustic sensors did not detect such an event at a range of only 400 miles. Offley does not explain how the purported dogfight tape first appeared 14 years after it was supposedly made or what has happened to it since. These, and other anomalies and inconsistencies indicate the tape was created at the ASW Training Center by copying three separate, unrelated detection events, a U.S. nuclear submarine, a Soviet Echo II class nuclear submarine, and a torpedo, onto a single tape for training purposes. This tape was then misrepresented to Offley's sources, a junior instructor and a basic-level student, as a real event. Bottom line: there was no SOSUS detection of a hostile encounter between the *Scorpion* and a Soviet submarine.

In summary, Ed Offley's allegations that the USS *Scorpion* was torpedoed and sunk by a Soviet Echo II submarine and that the U.S. Navy engaged in a conspiracy to cover up Soviet involvement are total fabrications. There was no Soviet involvement; there was no explosive event from a torpedo or any other source; there was no SOSUS tape. The *Scorpion* collapsed at great depth, most likely because of an on board problem the crew could not overcome.