

The enclosed is a mixture of something I saw and something someone at one of our breakfasts mentioned. That being of the birds sitting on the floating wire.

I mentioned to you before that I always have at least 'some' truth in my ventures.

The whole command reminds me of a 'dark night'. We have nothing but class when together. It reminds my wife of the times when we were with our own. We had no friends except shipmates and their families.

You know how blood is thicker than water? When we were stationed in the yards at Mare Island I would pull shore patrol as watch frequently. It was so odd that we, the crews of the submarines were not welcome in the enlisted club on base. We were welcome at the marine corp. club. They thought that the navy considered them their ugly little brother but also considered us their mean little brother. They could live with that.

...Floating Wire

Last night's satellite shot had us within enemy waters and off the coast of the people that utterly hated us as much as we utterly hated them.

The only thing out of the water was nine or ten inches of the observation scope.

I wasn't privy as to what was said on that shot but we were here to watch the sun come up and go back down.

We were going up and down or back and forth across their coast looking for something but as of yet whatever it was eluded us.

The boat would go to periscope depth for a short time then silently would go deep for a while. We went up to look around a bit and take a few pictures to look at later.

We were a billion dollar boat so stealth was our middle name. We had sonar absorbing paint and padding around our entire hull. We were painted black as the night and had even our white hull numbers were painted out. Our reactor and engineering spaces were as quiet as a ghost and we're

traveling at five knots or less. The entire ship was at battle silent and all public address systems on the ship were secured. They even took all the emergency alarms off line. We were present but not there.

The observation scope being used when at periscope depth was coated with radar absorbing material and as a backup it was raised under the water and the boat would drive it out of the water less than a foot. A few minutes out of the water for the commander to see and the 'spooks' to take the pictures. Then we would 'drive' the boat down again to hide and look over our photographic 'booty'.

When we were at sea and submerged as all United States submarines we would 'float' a wire out of the aft end of our sail to listen for emergency orders from the White House to launch missiles. This floating wire was virtually invisible to ships, planes, shore installations, and helicopters. The ocean is big and the wire is small. It just floated there like a black straw.

As we made our turn around '**again**' to go where we have already been the quartermaster chief went on the scope to take some bearings on some known landmarks for the exact confirmation as to where we were in the world. The SINS or Ships Internal Navigation System was an exact science and it almost always knew where we were. **ALMOST!**

It was redundant but we did it anyway. They told us in sub school that when the missiles, known as 'birds' targets were set they were aimed as to where they were in the world when they were set. The 'birds' thought **up** was up when off the coast of our home. After we moved from our home and up or down the worlds oceans 'up' was no longer 'up'.

If the dreaded 'launch' sequence was ever ordered the 'birds' would be taught new location directions as to where they were and where their targets

were in relation to that. Once they jumped out of the water they would veer left or right to reacquire 'up' then fly to their condemned target.

The quartermaster and navigator were almost done their calculations when the scope was turned aft to take one more bearing off a known mountain. The quartermaster blurted out more than one excited explanation of shock. The navigator was on the plot board with the commander figuring our new course order.

The captain pushed the quartermaster away and grabbed the scope away to look at what caused all the excitement and shock. He looked through the eye piece and repeated some of the same things the quartermaster had said.

We were at periscope depth or about seventy two feet and the floating wire was still floating behind the boat waiting for 'the order'. The trouble was not that the wire was malfunctioned. The trouble was that a small flock of sea gulls had landed on the wire and were getting a ride. We were just over the speed needed to keep control of the ship and the birds were just taking a little break.

The problem was that there were several big birds floating on the wire in a row. Anyone seeing these feathered friends going three or four knots 'sideways' across the ocean in a straight line would wonder how that could be? The list of answers is very short.

No one could know how long these birds had been tagging along but it was possible they have been doing it for hours and maybe we had been discovered.

The possibility that these clowns were there even when we went deep brought our mission to an abrupt end. The captain ordered the floating wire to be brought in manually was given as the attack scope, because it was not

hydraulic was used to scan the horizons for the enemies destroyers and or helicopters bearing down on us.

We left they area deep and without our floating wire dragging a bunch of birds across the ocean.