

USS Seahorse
SSN-669



Decommissioning Ceremony

17 August 1995
Puget Sound Naval Shipyard
Bremerton, Washington



USS SEAHORSE (SSN 669)

Commissioned 19 September 1969



THE COMMISSIONING PENNANT

At the moment the commissioning pennant is broken, a ship becomes the responsibility of the Commanding Officer, who, together with the ship's officers and men, has the duty of making her ready for any service required by our nation, whether at peace or at war.

The commissioning pennant has for centuries been the symbol of a man-of-war. It is believed to date from the 17th century, when the Dutch were at war with the English. Dutch Admiral Maarten Harpertzoon Tromp hoisted a broom at his masthead to symbolize his intention to sweep the English from the sea. This gesture was answered by British Admiral William Blake, who hoisted a horsewhip indicating his intention to chastise the Dutch. The victorious British thus set the precedent for a long, narrow commissioning pennant to symbolize the original horsewhip as the distinctive symbol of a ship of war.

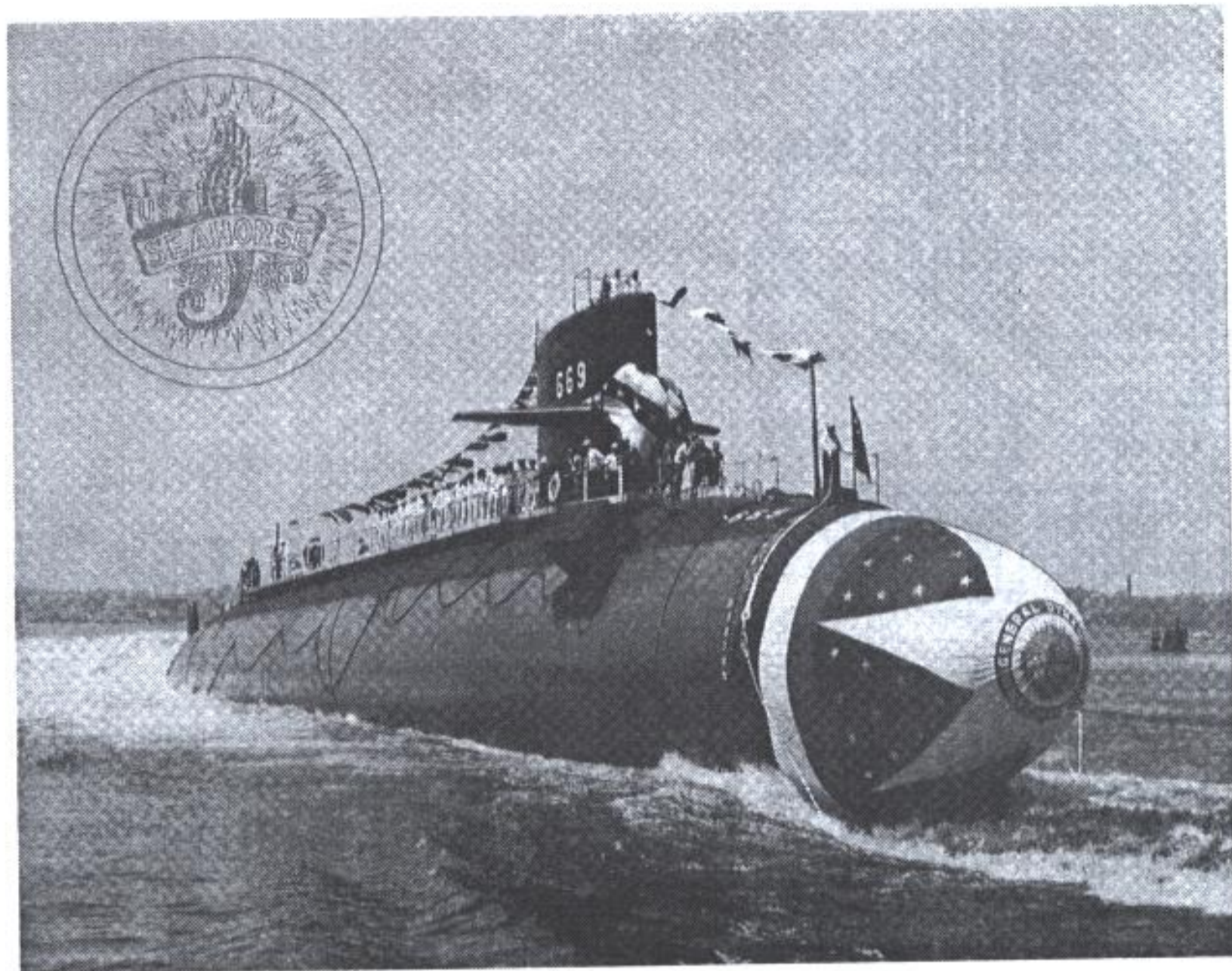
The modern U.S. Navy commissioning pennant is blue at the hoist with a union of seven white stars, and a horizontal red and white stripe at the fly. It is flown from the masthead, except when displaced by the personal flag of an admiral or commodore aboard a flagship.



DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY

17 August 1995

The ceremony today commemorates the accomplishments of USS SEAHORSE throughout her long life. The solemn ceremony where the commissioning pennant is hauled down and the watches are secured for the last time is the traditional last tribute to the ship and the men who sailed her.



USS SEAHORSE LAUNCHED 15 JUNE 1968 AT ELECTRIC BOAT, GROTON, CT

Keel Laid: 13 August 1966

Launched: 15 June 1968

Commissioned: 19 September 1969

First Major Deployment: 30 November 1970 Mediterranean

Final Major Deployment Completed: 1 December 1994 South America

Builder: General Dynamics, Electric Boat Division

Sponsor: Mrs. Paul R. Ignatius

Length: 292 Feet

Beam: 32 Feet

Maximum Depth: In Excess of 400 Feet

Maximum Speed: In Excess of 20 Knots

Surfaced Displacement: 4,060 Tons

Ship's Complement: 15 Officers and 126 Enlisted

Number of Torpedo Tubes: 4



USS SEAHORSE (SSN-669)

19 September 1969 - 17 August 1995

Thoroughbred of the Fleet



Command at Sea

THE PRESTIGE, PRIVILEGE AND BURDEN OF COMMAND

by Joseph Conrad

Only a seaman realizes to what an extent an entire ship reflects the personality and ability of one individual, her Commanding Officer. To a landsman, this is not understandable, and sometimes it is even difficult for us to comprehend-but it is so.

A ship at sea is a distant world in herself and in consideration of the protracted and distant operations of the fleet units, the Navy must place great power, responsibility and trust in the hands of those leaders chosen for command.

In each ship there is one man who, in the hour of emergency or peril at sea, can turn to no other man. There is one who alone is ultimately responsible for the safe navigation, engineering performance, accurate gunfiring and morale of his ship. He is the Commanding Officer. He is the ship.

This is the most difficult and demanding job in the Navy. There is not an instant in his tour as Commanding Officer that he can escape the grasp of command responsibility. His privileges in view of his obligations are almost ludicrously small; nevertheless, command is the spur which has given the Navy great leaders.

It is a duty which richly deserves the highest time honored title of the seafaring world. - "CAPTAIN"

COMMANDING OFFICERS

USS SEAHORSE (SSN 669)

CDR	George T. Harper, Jr.	19 SEP 69	to	25 SEP 70
CDR	William E. Ratliff	25 SEP 70	to	13 DEC 73
CDR	Nathan A. Heuberger	13 DEC 73	to	22 JAN 77
CDR	Henry C. McKinney	22 JAN 77	to	12 JUN 80
CAPT	Joseph D. Sharpe, Jr.	12 JUN 80	to	23 AUG 83
CAPT	Jasper B. Johnston, Jr.	23 AUG 83	to	11 APR 85
CDR	Winn A. Harding	11 APR 85	to	31 AUG 87
CDR	Paul E. Taylor	31 AUG 87	to	22 JUN 90
CDR	James R. Alley	22 JUN 90	to	30 APR 93
CDR	Richard N. Current	30 APR 93	to	17 AUG 95

History of USS SEAHORSE (SSN 669)

USS SEAHORSE (SSN-669) was the Navy's 47th nuclear attack submarine. Constructed at Electric Boat Company in Groton, CT, she was sponsored by Mrs. Paul R. Ignatius, wife of the Secretary of the Navy. SEAHORSE was commissioned on 19 September 1969, with Commander George T. Harper, Jr. in command. Following a Caribbean shakedown cruise and visits to Puerto Rico and St. Croix, SEAHORSE arrived at her new home port, Charleston, SC, to join then Submarine Division Forty-Two. For the remainder of 1969 through November 1970, the submarine conducted local operations in the Atlantic and Caribbean.

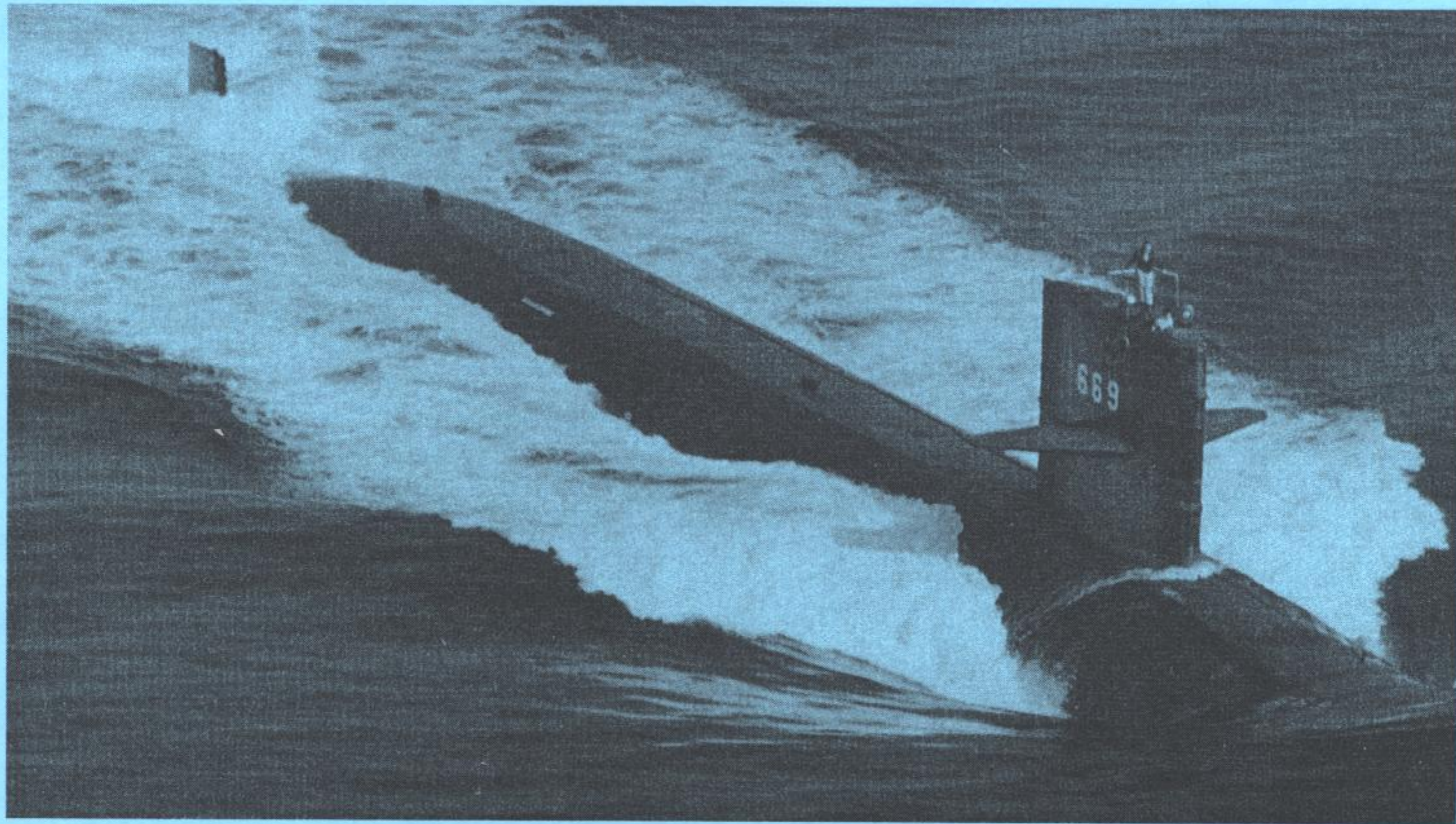
SEAHORSE was underway on 30 November 1970 for her first major deployment, during which she conducted operations in the Atlantic Ocean and visited Bremerhaven, Germany. On 21 June 1971, SEAHORSE departed for a Mediterranean deployment, for which SEAHORSE was awarded her first Meritorious Unit Commendation.

On 9 February 1972, SEAHORSE departed for her third major deployment in 14 months. She again operated in the North Atlantic, visiting Faslane, Scotland, and returning to Charleston on 11 May. In September of that year the ship participated in a major NATO exercise followed by exercises with Great Britain, Netherlands and Canada. SEAHORSE got underway on less than one day's notice on 25 October 1973 and deployed to the Mediterranean in support of U.S. Forces in the Middle East crisis. From 16 August until 26 September 1975 SEAHORSE was underway in company with the USS NIMITZ and USS SOUTH CAROLINA as a unit of Navy Nuclear Task Group '75. In 1976 SEAHORSE again deployed to the Northern Atlantic for three months. On 30 November 1976 SEAHORSE deployed to the Mediterranean and returned 11 May. Throughout 1978 and 1979 SEAHORSE underwent a refueling overhaul at Charleston Naval Shipyard.

In 1980 SEAHORSE deployed to the North Atlantic and Mediterranean for five months. In July 1981 SEAHORSE participated in a Second Fleet exercise. She got underway for the Indian Ocean in October. After a 46,000 mile, six month around-the-world voyage through five of the world's seven oceans, SEAHORSE returned to Charleston on 19 April 1982, completing a 181 day deployment. During the remainder of 1982 SEAHORSE deployed to the North Atlantic, conducted Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) operations and participated in MARCOT 82, a joint U.S./Canadian ASW exercise. SEAHORSE began 1985 deployed north of the Arctic Circle and again deployed to the North Atlantic from August until late October. In July 1986 SEAHORSE deployed to the Arctic and surfaced at the North Pole. The ship completed her second transit through the Panama Canal and reported to Bremerton, WA, for overhaul where she remained from February 1987 to March 1989.

From April to June 1990 SEAHORSE deployed to the North Pole. During 1991 SEAHORSE was awarded another Meritorious Unit Commendation for operations in which she surfaced at the North Pole, deployed to both the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean. In January 1993, while at the midpoint of a highly successful Mediterranean deployment, SEAHORSE was awarded the Battle Efficiency "E".

During her final year of service, SEAHORSE deployed as the submarine element in UNITAS XXXV-94, a five month circumnavigation of South America, for training and good will among our southern hemispheric neighbors. She completed her fourth Panama Canal transit returning to Charleston in December 1994. Following a brief upkeep period, SEAHORSE departed Charleston, her home port of over 25 years, for her final destination of Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, WA, where she would be inactivated. After transiting the Panama Canal SEAHORSE participated in Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle operations prior to her arrival at Bremerton. SEAHORSE has been awarded a Navy Unit Commendation, three Meritorious Unit Commendations, and two Battle Efficiency "E"s.



UNITED STATES SHIP SEAHORSE
SSN 669