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## Silent Steel: The Mysterious Death of the Nuclear Sub USS Scorpion,

James H. Patton Jr.

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instance, while Graham suggests that China's Song diesel submarine program may have "fail[ed] . . . to develop according to schedule," it is now noteworthy the extent to which Song development appears to have progressed in parallel to China's importing of Kilo diesel submarines from Russia.

Graham projects that SLOC security will continue to preoccupy Japanese planners as a fundamental national concern. He breaks significant ground by showing that Japanese policy makers, motivated by increasingly "realist" threat perceptions, are exploring new directions in the pursuit of SLOC security. The extent to which these emerging impulses can transcend funding constraints (imposed increasingly by demographic and economic challenges) and constitutional limitations (still protected, to some degree, by domestic politics) remains a pivotal question for all concerned with East Asian security.

ANDREW S. ERICKSON  
*Naval War College*



Johnson, Stephen P. *Silent Steel: The Mysterious Death of the Nuclear Sub USS Scorpion*. Hoboken, N.J.: Wiley, 2006. 292pp. \$25.95

Several years ago I received a phone call from Stephen Johnson asking about my service on the USS *Scorpion* (SSN 589), my first ship, between the fall of 1961 and the winter of 1962. He explained he was writing a book about its loss in late May 1968 with its entire crew of ninety-nine. I spoke with him at some length and sent some material about the vast "SubSafe" program changes that occurred within the Submarine Force after the loss of USS *Thresher* (SSN 593)

in April 1963. *Silent Steel* is the exquisitely researched result of my tiny input and that of more than 230 others—ranging from the widows of *Scorpion* sailors, submarine design engineers and naval architects, and a list of active-duty and retired personnel that reads like a "who's who" of the then and now Submarine Force. The bibliography itself spans two dozen pages of applicable books, journal articles, official reports, memorandums, and other miscellaneous correspondence.

Anyone expecting to find a clear and unambiguous set of events and circumstances that "explain" the *Scorpion*'s loss will be disappointed. Rather, along with fascinating personal insights into some key players, the reader will find erudite and technically credible discussions on the facts and assumptions of any number of popular and not so popular theories. For example, his dispassionate and objective examination of much of the same material that was available to formal Navy courts of inquiry virtually rules out any concept of "hostile action" and substantially weakens the plausibility of incidents involving the ship's own torpedoes. He subtly chides some advocates for having drawn three-significant-figure conclusions from one-significant-figure assumptions. In addition, by bluntly describing some bureaucratic foibles and tragic administrative decisions (such as shortchanging *Scorpion*'s SubSafe package during a 1967 refueling overhaul to save money), Johnson's work leads one to perceive that—as is true in virtually all submarine disasters *that we know something about*—there had to have been some series of complicating, cascading events that overwhelmed any efforts by the crew to bring

the (perhaps minor) initiating casualty under control. For those who delight in finding small technical mistakes, there are a few, if one looks closely enough—for example, the *Scorpion*'s fire control system was not a Mark 113 but a vintage Mark 101. But none detracts from the overall high quality of the investigative effort.

Even without a specific “cause célèbre” event to dissect and review for “lessons learned,” *Silent Steel* provides much to think about for anyone interested in or involved with combating casualties at sea. There is even some consolation, however small in comparison to the loss of life, in the knowledge that the United States has come to realize to a significant degree in the years since that “material readiness is a consumable”; we are reluctant to run ships (and people) as hard as we did in the early to mid-1960s. When I rode *Scorpion*, it averaged more than three hundred days a year at sea. Today, even with dwindling platform resources, the Submarine Force has begun to say no to many of the increasing operational requirements from senior regional and national commanders.

JAMES H. PATTON, JR.  
*Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret.)*



Keefer, Edward C., ed. *Foreign Relations of the U.S.: Vietnam, January 1969–July 1970*, vol. 6. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2006. 1,173pp. \$65

This State Department volume, the first of five that will cover the end period of the Vietnam War, documents major foreign policy issues of the Nixon administration, with a focus on U.S. policy toward Vietnam, Cambodia, and to

a lesser extent Laos during the period of January 1969 to July 1970. What a time it was!

In the 1968 presidential campaign, candidate Richard M. Nixon stated that he had a plan to end the war in Vietnam. As it turned out, the “plan” was embryonic. When he took office he moved slowly, convinced that how the United States ended the war would have an enduring impact on future American foreign policy. Henry Kissinger, Nixon’s national security adviser, became the key figure in the effort to end the war, a program that became known as “Vietnamization.”

Vietnamization was directed toward the upgrading of South Vietnamese forces, which was to be accompanied by phased withdrawals of U.S. forces. Completion would depend on how things went in Vietnam. This work, in addition to documenting policy efforts to move this program along, also documents efforts to convince Hanoi that it was dealing with a strong adversary: for example, secret U.S. bombing of Cambodia, integration of the secret war in Laos with the conflict in Vietnam, and covert operations against North Vietnam.

One of the principal themes developed here is the search for a negotiated settlement, first in the Paris Peace Talks and then through secret meetings between Kissinger and North Vietnamese foreign minister Xuan Thuy and special adviser Le Duc Tho. Here, and throughout the book, Kissinger’s memorandums to Nixon are the key documents. Many appear in Kissinger’s memoirs; however, in this work they are more complete.

In March 1970, Cambodia’s Norodom Sihanouk was overthrown by the Lon