**Submarine Squadron 15 Guam**

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| **Submarine Squadron Fifteen** | |
| **Active** | 1963–1981, 2001-present |
| **Country** | [United States of America](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) |
| **Branch** | [United States Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) |
| **Part of** | [United States Pacific Fleet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Pacific_Fleet) |
| **Garrison/HQ** | [Naval Base Guam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Base_Guam) |

**Submarine Squadron 15** (also known as [SUBRON](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SUBRON) 15) is a squadron of [submarines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine) of the [United States Navy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_Navy) based at [Naval Base Guam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Base_Guam).

**Fleet Ballistic Missile squadron 1963-1981**

Submarine Squadron Fifteen was established on 1 September 1963 at [Pearl Harbor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_Harbor), Hawaii. Four of the seven submarines scheduled for this Squadron were being built at the time and the submarine tender, [USS *Proteus* (AS-19)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Proteus_(AS-19)), was undergoing overhaul at the Charleston Naval Shipyard.

During the first few months, the Squadron established Headquarters at Pearl Harbor and laid groundwork for Polaris Operations in the Pacific. One of the most difficult tasks was establishing and executing the vast training program required for the Blue and Gold crews of each submarine. To meet this requirement, close cooperation with the officers in charge of various schools throughout the nation and Commanding Officers and crewmen of the submarines was necessary.

On 23 April 1964, [USS *Daniel Boone* (SSBN-629)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Daniel_Boone_(SSBN-629)) was commissioned at [Mare Island](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mare_Island), California. She then became the Squadron Flagship and the first Fleet Ballistic Missile submarine assigned to the Pacific Fleet. In the early dawn of 27 May 1964, *Daniel Boone* surfaced off Diamond Head, Hawaii, after completing a submerged transit from the mainland, and steamed into Pearl Harbor where she became the first Polaris submarine ever to enter the historic port. As she passed the Arizona Memorial, she rendered honors to the Navy heroes resting there. [USS *Tecumseh* (SSBN-628)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Tecumseh_(SSBN-628)), [USS ULYSSES S. GRANT (SSBN 631)](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=USS_ULYSSES_S._GRANT_(SSBN_631)&action=edit&redlink=1), and USS STONEWALL JACKSON (SSBN 634) were then commission in rapid sequence. Meanwhile the Squadron scheduled shakedown operations, type training and made ready for the first Polaris Patrol in the Pacific scheduled to commence in early 1965.

In October 1964, the permanent assignment of Commander Submarine Squadron Fifteen was changed from Pearl Harbor to Guam. A rear echelon Staff known as Commander Submarine Squadron Fifteen Representative was established in Pearl Harbor to handle the myriad of personnel and training functions connected with keeping the Polaris submarines manned with the best qualified and trained personnel possible.

On the morning of 29 November 1964, the [USS PROTEUS (AS-19)](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=USS_PROTEUS_(AS-19)&action=edit&redlink=1) entered Apra Harbor where she commenced setting up the third FBM replenishment site to support Polaris submarines. Subsequently, seven Fleet Ballistic Missile Submarines joined USS PROTEUS (AS 19) in Guam. The USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SSBN 640) and USS KAMEHAMEHA (SSBN 642) arrived in 1966. The USS MARIANO G. VALLEJO (SSBN 658) was commissioned and assigned to Submarine Squadron Fifteen in December 1966.

The year 1970 represented a significant period in the history of the Squadron. During this period, the units of the 627/640 class completed Pacific service and departed for conversion to the Poseidon Weapons System, while 616 class overhaul units reported for duty as replacements in the Pacific Fleet strategic deterrent force.

On the morning of 14 October 1971, USS HUNLEY (AS 31) entered Apra Harbor, Guam and immediately upon mooring at Polaris Point, set about the complex chore of relieving USS PROTEUS (AS 19). On 2 November 1971, USS PROTEUS (AS 19) departed Guam en route to the U.S. Naval Shipyard, Mare Island, California for an extensive shipyard overhaul.

During 1972 USS HUNLEY (AS 31) served as Site III support tender and flagship for Commander, Submarine Squadron Fifteen. During the summer months of 1972, USS HUNLEY (AS 31) conducted REFIT work on numerous SSN’s in addition to SSBN’s normally assigned. This additional workload was in direct support of an increased national readiness condition.

In January 1973, USS PROTEUS (AS 19) returned to Guam and relieved USS HUNLEY (AS 31), who departed Guam for conversion at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Bremerton, Washington. The return of USS PROTEUS (AS 19) to Guam marked the end of the first significant time period that USS PROTEUS (AS 19) had been absent from Guam since establishing SSBN REFIT Site III in 1964.

The replacement of 616 class SSBN’s with 598/608 class SSBN’s, commenced in May 1973 when USS NATHAN HALE (SSBN 623) departed for conversion to the Poseidon Weapons System, and was relieved by USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSBN 598). Later in 1973 USS PATRICK HENRY (SSBN 599) and USS ROBERT E. LEE (SSBN 601) replaced USS WOODROW WILSON (SSBN 624) and USS JOHN ADAMS (SSBN 620). The following units were assigned to the Squadron: USS PROTEUS (AS 19) (Flagship), USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSBN 598), USS PATRICK HENRY (SSBN 599), USS ROBERT E. LEE (SSBN 601), USS HENRY CLAY (SSBN 625), USS DANIEL WEBSTER (SSBN 626), USS NATHAN HALE (SSBN 623), USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (SSBN 602), USS THOMAS A. EDISON (SSBN 610) and USS ETHAN ALLEN (SSBN 608).

During 1974, replacement of 616 class SSBN’s was completed with 598/608 class. The departure of USS JAMES MONROE (SSBN 622), USS DANIEL WEBSTER (SSBN 626), USS HENRY CLAY (SSBN 625), and the arrival of USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (SSBN 600) resulted in the following units assigned to the Squadron: USS PROTEUS (AS 19) (Flagship), USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (SSBN 598), USS PATRICK HENRY (SSBN 599), USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (SSBN 600), USS ROBERT E. LEE (SSBN 601), USS ABRAHAM LINCOLN (SSBN 602), USS ETHAN ALLEN (SSBN 608), USS SAM HOUSTON (SSBN 609), USS THOMAS A. EDISON (SSBN 610) and USS THOMAS JEFFERSON (SSBN-618).

From 25 December 1964 when USS DANIEL BOONE (SSBN 629) departed Guam on the first Polaris deterrent patrol in the Pacific until October 1981 when USS ROBERT E. LEE (SSBN 601) returned to Pearl Harbor from the last Polaris deterrent patrol, 23 different SSBN’s completed 398 Polaris deterrent patrols in the Pacific in support of the United States strategic defense. On 30 September 1981, Submarine Squadron Fifteen ended its eighteen-year existence when it was disestablished in ceremonies on board USS PROTEUS (AS 19) in Apra Harbor, Guam.

**Reactivation 2001**

In a reactivation ceremony onboard [USS FRANK CABLE (AS-40)](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=USS_FRANK_CABLE_(AS-40)&action=edit&redlink=1) on 23 February 2001, Captain Jose R. Corpus, USN became Commander, Submarine Squadron Fifteen, formerly Commander Submarine Group Seven Representative Guam. On this day, Submarine Squadron Fifteen became an operational command, providing administrative, logistics and intelligence support for submarines and submarine support ships assigned to Seventh and Fifth Fleets in response to Naval and JCS tasking.

During 2002, the Staff of Submarine Squadron Fifteen provided oversight and quality assurance monitoring during maintenance performed by the assigned tender on three forward deployed submarines prior to their emergent deployments to the Gulf region during Operations Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle. Submarine Squadron Fifteen was also actively involved in the force protection decisions and efforts of the Naval Station onboard COMNAVMARIANAS immediately following the 11 September 2001 attacks.

On 17 October and 18 December 2002, respectively, USS CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI (SSN 705) and USS SAN FRANCISCO (SSN 711) arrived in Guam as the Navy’s first forward-deployed and homeported submarines. Sailors, families, and residents of Guam welcomed the first and second of three U.S. Navy submarines to be homeported on Guam as both ships completed their 14,000 NM inter-fleet transfer that started at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard in Kittery, ME. The USS CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI (SSN 705), commanded by CDR Robert Schmidt at the time of the ship’s arrival in Guam, is the eighteenth Los Angeles class fast attack submarine. The USS SAN FRANCISCO (SSN711), commanded by CDR Paul Povlock at the time of the ship’s arrival in Guam, is the twenty-fourth Los Angeles class fast attack submarine.

On 5 July 2002, Typhoon Chataan, with sustained winds of 115 mph and gusts to 145 mph, struck Guam causing substantial property damage. Submarine Squadron Fifteen personnel, assisted greatly by some Sailors from the USS FRANK CABLE (AS 40), participated in post-typhoon recovery actions.

On 8 December 2002 Super-typhoon Pongsona struck Guam for a period of over 12 hours with destructive winds in excess of 200 knots. The President of the United States declared Guam a disaster area shortly after the storm passed. This storm, one of the two largest to ever strike Guam, significantly impacted the island’s infrastructure and damaged both civilian and military facilities. A major fire at the island’s gasoline storage facility delayed the recovery effort by limiting the availability of fuel for vehicles and emergency generators. Structures throughout the island, including homes, hospitals, businesses, governmental and military facilities, airports and seaports were damaged or destroyed. Loss of life was minimized and basic services were rapidly restored due to the timely, aggressive and selfless effort of military personnel assigned to units of Submarine Squadron Fifteen. USS FRANK CABLE (AS 40) steamed at Polaris Point for two weeks and completely supported the homeported submarines.

Submarine Squadron Fifteen, USS FRANK CABLE (AS 40) and both assigned submarines received the Humanitarian Service Medal for assistance provided to Guam and the Naval Installations following Typhoon Chataan and Super-typhoon Pongsona.

On 23 December 2003 USS CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI (SSN 705) completed the first-ever mission deployment in support of Commander, Seventh Fleet operations by a forward based attack submarine homeported in Guam.

On 8 January 2005 at 02:43 GMT, USS SAN FRANCISCO (SSN 711) collided with an undersea mountain about 675 kilometers (364 Nautical Miles, 420 statute miles) south-east of Guam while operating at flank (maximum) speed and more than 500 feet (150 m) deep. The collision was so serious that the vessel was almost lost, accounts detail a desperate struggle for positive buoyancy to surface after the forward ballast tanks were ruptured. Twenty-three crewmen were injured, and Machinist's Mate Second Class Joseph Allen Ashley, 24, of Akron, Ohio, died on 9 January from head injuries. Other injuries to the crew included broken bones, lacerations, and a back injury. San Francisco’s forward ballast tanks and her sonar dome were severely damaged, but her inner hull was not breached, and there was no damage to her nuclear reactor. She surfaced and, accompanied by the [USCGC *Galveston Island* (WPB-1349)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USCGC_Galveston_Island_(WPB-1349)), USNS GYSGT Fred W. Stockham (T-AK-3017), and USNS Kiska (T-AE-35), as well as MH-60S Knighthawks and P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft, arrived in Guam on 10 January. The U.S. Navy immediately stated that there was "absolutely no reason to believe that it struck another submarine or vessel. Later, an examination of the submarine in drydock showed unmistakably that the submarine had indeed struck an undersea mountain which had only vague references on the charts available to *San Francisco*.

Due to the accident with the USS SAN FRANCISCO (SSN 711), the USS HOUSTON (SSN 713) was scheduled to replace the USS SAN FRANCISCO (SSN 711). The USS HOUSTON (SSN 713) arrived in December 2004 and the third submarine; USS BUFFALO (SSN 715) arrived in July 2007.

Early 2011 [USS *Oklahoma City* (SSN-723)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Oklahoma_City_(SSN-723)) relieved USS CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI (SSN 705) kicking-off the Guam SSN rotation with Hawaii. [USS *Chicago* (SSN-721)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Chicago_(SSN-721)) Relieved USS HOUSTON (SSN 713) in April 2012. The rotation will be complete sometime in 2013 with the USS KEY WEST (SSN 722) replacing the USS BUFFALO (SSN 715).

Today, the squadron consists of the [Los Angeles class submarines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles_class_submarine) [USS *Oklahoma City* (SSN-723)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Oklahoma_City_(SSN-723)), [USS *Chicago* (SSN-721)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Chicago_(SSN-721)), and [USS *Key West* (SSN-722)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Key_West_(SSN-722)), with 76 personnel on staff, and with Commodore Grimes at the helm. While the submarine tender [USS *Frank Cable* (AS-40)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Frank_Cable_(AS-40)) is also homeported at Guam, she is directly responsible to [ComSubPac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ComSubPac). The squadron also supports every deploying SSN in the Pacific Fleet Area of Operations, as well as the SSGNs [USS Ohio (SSGN-726)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USS_Ohio_(SSGN-726)) and USS MICHIGAN (SSGN 727), which are home ported in Bangor, WA.

**Notes**

1. [**Jump up ^**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Submarine_Squadron_15#cite_ref-1#cite_ref-1) *Submarine Squadron 15 Public Affairs.* [*"Guam Welcomes USS Chicago"*](http://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=66766)*. United States Navy. Retrieved 25 June 2012.*

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