

damaged its sail, hull and port bow plane. But the destruction turned out to be far worse than expected.

The sail leaned 15 to 20 degrees to the starboard side. Seventy-five percent of it was torn off. It would have to be removed to patch the hull.

There would be no saving the sub if the Hartford did not keep its shape when welders cut into the hull to remove the damaged section, or after they patched it.

And the team discovered after the submarine was taken out of the water that the bow plane had caved in to the ballast tank. The masts and antennas weren't working because hydraulic fluid had shot through the system after the collision and damaged many valves.

"In my 38 years here, we have never worked on something of this magnitude, repairwise," said Stanley J. Gwudz, the director of ship's management who likened the repairs to reconstructing a Model T.

This type of repair is "about as complex as they come," said Rear Adm. David M. Duryea, deputy commander for undersea warfare.

RETIREES SHARE KNOWLEDGE

Because EB and its relatively young work force are set up for building today's Virginia-class submarines—not for major repairs to the aging Los Angeles class—some former employees came out of retirement to share their knowledge.

The trick was figuring out how to combine today's technology with yesterday's hand-drawn designs, some of which didn't match up. Daniel Vieira, the ship's manager for the repair project, laughed when asked how such a feat was accomplished.

"I lived it, and I'm not sure," Vieira said. "It was through a lot of pain. You know, you depend on a lot of people with a lot of experience and training to come back to you and say, 'This is right. This isn't. We need to fix this.'"

The biggest problem was that the sail had crushed into the pressure hull. It had been 20 years since anyone in the shipyard had performed a major cut into a submarine's hull, the pressure-tight shell of a submarine, while maintaining the circularity of the ship.

"The pressure hull is sacred ground," Vieira said. "It keeps water out. Anytime you have anything that penetrates the pressure hull, it's a big deal."

The half-moon shaped patch to fix the hull measured more than 150 square feet.

"It's very easy to get warping or misalignment or change the geometry with all the welding, which would have significant effects," Vieira said. "The ship is shaped that way for a reason."

Welders and shipfitters at EB's Quonset Point facility built a new sail using the modular construction techniques developed for the Virginia class. Years ago they would have had to fix the hull, then build the sail piece by piece on the submarine.

The repairs could have taken years if each step were done in sequence, instead of at the same time, Gwudz said.

USEFUL LESSONS LEARNED

Few vendors still make parts for Los Angeles-class submarines.

In the crash, the bow plane was forced back into its locking mechanism, caving the structure into the ballast tank. A 16-inch diameter shaft bent 4 inches, but a new shaft wasn't available. So EB engineers incorporated the 4-inch bend into the design. A new, fully functional bow plane was built around the bent shaft to dive the sub.

The damaged valves were replaced.

Testing at sea in January showed the repairs to be successful.

Gwudz could only recall one other repair job at EB where the level of damage on a submarine came close to the severity of the Hartford's. In the early 1980s, he said, a Los Angeles-class submarine needed its masts fixed and a patch underneath. The graving dock was secured for this confidential job and Gwudz said he was never told how the submarine sustained its damage.

EB can now use what it learned working on the Hartford to repair other Los Angeles-class submarines more effectively, Gwudz said. The USS Alexandria (SSN 757) is at EB for routine maintenance.

Instead of taking a ventilation valve apart to see which of the older parts are corroded, for example, Gwudz said they will know to get new flappers or linkages because these parts were corroded on the Hartford. That gives vendors more time to make the parts so they are ready when EB needs them.

Robert Hamilton, an EB spokesman, said the Hartford repair job "used 50 Connecticut suppliers with a total spend of \$3.5 million."

The project took more than one million man-hours and the efforts of 450 people at its peak.

The \$120 million price tag is less than 5 percent of what it would have cost to replace the Hartford with a new Virginia-class submarine.

"Everybody in the Navy had a lot of confidence in EB and the NAVSEA team to execute the repairs," Duryea said, referring to the Navy command responsible for overseeing the construction and maintenance of the Navy's ships. "Certainly we knew it would be a challenge, but EB does a very good job at executing complex work. This was just another example of the fine work they were able to do."

"We needed this capability out in the fleet," Duryea said. "Hartford has a lot of good life left in her, and we wanted to get her back to sea."

HARTFORD AT FAULT

EB originally built the Hartford at a cost of about \$900 million.

The submarine returned to the Naval Submarine Base in February, nearly two years after the March 2009 crash and 18 months after arriving at EB.

The submerged submarine and the USS New Orleans (LPD 18), a San Diego-based amphibious ship, had both been heading into port when the collision occurred.

The fuel tank ruptured on the New Orleans, creating a 16-by-18-foot hole and spilling about 25,000 gallons of diesel fuel. Two ballast tanks were damaged.

Navy investigators concluded the crew of the Hartford was at fault. The sub's leadership was called "ineffective and negligent" and sailors were accused of falling asleep on the job, spending too much time away from their stations and chatting informally while working.

Vieira could see a silver lining in the task of repairing the Hartford. He said the repairs were an opportunity for senior employees to impart their knowledge to the younger ones so these newer employees will be able to help with work on the Los Angeles class in the future.

Duryea agreed that there were technical lessons learned but, he said, "my only hope is we don't have to do these types of repairs again."

RAISING THE DEBT LIMIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAUL. Mr. Speaker, the Congress is concerned about the debt. The people are concerned about the debt. The markets are concerned about the debt. The world is concerned about the debt and what we're doing here today because we live with a world fiat dollar standard, and so the whole world is engulfed in this very serious problem.

I do not understand, though, that if the debt is the problem, and I agree, the debt is the problem, that for us to come here and raise the debt by \$2.4 trillion is the solution. That just baffles me. I think it's a distraction, because when a country gets indebted to the degree that we're indebted, the country always defaults. This is historic, especially if the country is a significant country. On occasion a small country will quit sending the checks and they'll go bankrupt. We're not going to do that, but we will default because the debt is unsustainable.

This year it is said that we have a debt increase of \$1.6 trillion, but that's not true. If you count what we borrow from the pension funds, the Social Security and highway funds, it's \$2 trillion. But if you include the increase in the entitlement obligation, it's \$5 trillion. So this is a huge, huge problem.

But the argument here is how do you default. And it is said that if we don't raise the debt limit, we're going to default and not send out the checks. I don't believe that for a minute. Somehow or another the checks are going to go out.

But if you really wanted to live within the technicalities of law, there's a very simple thing you could do. We owe the Federal Reserve \$1.6 trillion. Well, that's not a real debt. They bought those Treasury bills with money out of thin air. We could just write that off or quit paying the interest, tide ourselves over and get down to serious business and cut back and live within our means, and that would be a solution.

But to increase the national debt will only encourage another type of default, and that's what we're going through. We're engaged in the most difficult and a very bad way of defaulting, and that is through the destruction of the currency.

Today we have an inflation rate of 9 percent, and that is defaulting. So if a government can default and print money, and if they can get a 50 percent inflation rate over a period of time, they've cut that debt in half. That is the goal; that is what's happening. And that is very, very serious.

Just in these last 3 years in dealing with this crisis, the dollar has been devalued 50 percent against gold. And gold, of course, is the best measurement of the value of a currency. It's been that way for thousands of years, and it cannot be denied because it's economic law. So we are defaulting.

And when the American people go out and start buying goods and services, like they are now, they are recognizing they cost a lot of money. So right now we are in the early stages of

rampant inflation, which means we're going to be hit with higher prices and higher interest rates. That is going to be a tax.

So I see the only solution is to cut spending. Now, the reason we don't cut spending is one side loves entitlements and the other side loves war. And even this token attempt, \$100 billion of cuts when we have this huge, huge deficit will accomplish very little.

But there's no mention of cutting military spending. I don't want to cut defense spending. This military spending doesn't defend us; it makes things worse.

Our problem in this country doesn't come only from the Congress; it comes from the people. The people still have a strong appetite for Big Government programs. They're not willing to cut. They think government can take care of us from cradle to grave and that we can be the policeman of the world.

So some day we, as a country, we, as a people, and we, as a Congress, will have to ask, what should the role of government be? The Founders had a pretty strong suggestion. They wrote a Constitution and said the government should be very limited and the government should be protecting our liberties and providing national defense and a sound currency. We don't do any of that. We've embarked on a course that was destined to end badly, and this is where we are today.

So if we don't understand this, this default will not be because we don't send out the checks. We will send out the checks. It will be defaulted on because people will get their money back, or they will get their Social Security checks, and it won't buy anything. That is much, much worse than facing the fact that we not raise the debt limit and work our way out of this.

That is devastating economically, and it's devastating politically, because we just saw a taste of what happens, how the anger is built when you see other countries in Europe now defaulting and can't pay their bills. So this is more significant than ever because we provide the reserve currency of the world.

THE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT TO VOTE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, the right to vote is a fundamental right which is at the heart of this Nation. This right is under attack.

I came to this floor, after the stolen Presidential elections in Florida and Ohio, to protest the results of these two elections that were filled with voter suppression. Now, years later, 34 States, once again, in our map of shame, require voters to present IDs to vote in Federal, State, and local elections. And in 15 of those States, voters must present a photo ID. Some States require that the ID be government-

issued, mind you, in order to cast a ballot.

However, for any number of reasons, 21 million Americans do not have a government-issued ID required by these voter ID laws; and, thus, the fundamental right of American citizens is taken away. Most State legislatures have enacted or have proposed legislation echoing similar detrimental voting changes. Many of these bills have only one true purpose, and that is the disenfranchisement of specific populations of eligible voters.

In California, unfortunately, there is a voter ID bill pending to suppress voter participation. It would cost, mind you, \$26, \$26 just to get the required documents to qualify for a government ID. This certainly looks like a poll tax to me, which all of us from the South know and remember as a way to keep African Americans from voting.

These voter ID laws have a partisan agenda seeking to deny specific populations of people the opportunity to not to vote, which is really very shameful before they have an opportunity to elect their representatives in government. And we cannot allow this.

So I have to thank Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, the Congressional Black Caucus, and all of our colleagues for their voices to protect the right for all citizens across this Nation. And I urge the Department of Justice to be vigilant and aggressive in protecting the civil rights and voting rights of Americans.

We go around the world preaching democracy and the importance of voting; yet we are going in the opposite direction in our own country.

Now I would like to yield to the gentleman from Tennessee, Representative COHEN.

Mr. COHEN. Thank you, Ms. LEE. I appreciate your yielding, and I appreciate Congresswoman FUDGE for bringing this issue to the floor.

We previously heard from other Congresspeople and particularly the distinguished Congressman JOHN LEWIS, who was a civil rights hero in the 60s and risked his life, as others did, and gave their lives for the right to vote.

We are experiencing today, after International Nelson Mandela Day, yesterday was Nelson Mandela's 91st birthday. Next month we'll dedicate a memorial to Dr. Martin Luther King on the Mall. When you think about Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela and JOHN LEWIS, you've got to think about voting rights and how far the Nation and the world have come in the last 45 years and how long it took to get there.

And to think that there are impediments being placed in the way of people to vote, whether intentional or not, I believe those impediments are being placed there intentionally to dissuade African Americans and Democratic-leaning groups from voting in the 2012 election, Rovian tactics to stop President Obama from being re-elected and

from the public to pick Democratic Representatives to switch the priorities of this House to those that would be more reflective of the middle class and people who are yearning for opportunity.

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But whether they're intentional or not, if they have an effect that is harmful to voting rights, just like other laws, if they have an effect in practice, they are just as harmful and just as wrong as if they were intended. And there is no question that these types of impediments to require people to get voter IDs, when 25 percent of African Americans in this country don't have that type of ID and 8 percent of Caucasians are in the same limitation of not having that type of ID, it's obvious that African Americans and students and others are the ones that are designed to be targeted by these laws.

In my State of Tennessee that passed such a law, to get a photo ID is not easy. I went myself to get a driver's license with a photo ID. It took 1 hour and 20 minutes, constantly standing in line, no place to sit. It was not easy and people will not be able to do it. It will be an impediment to them and limit their opportunity to vote. It's wrong.

I would like to thank Ms. LEE and Congresswoman FUDGE for bringing this to the American public's attention.

Ms. LEE. Thank you.

IT'S TIME TO BALANCE OUR BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Missouri (Mrs. HARTZLER) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Mr. Speaker, only in Washington can you hear people say that it's irresponsible to balance the budget. I actually heard Democratic leaders on TV this weekend complaining that it would require a supermajority vote to raise taxes on the American people but only a majority to cut spending.

Well, maybe some people have been in Washington too long to realize it, but the American people want to tie Washington's hands and make it easier to cut spending than raise taxes. They want to cap the growth of government. They want to require a balanced budget.

For decades we've heard excuses for why Washington's special and shouldn't be forced to balance its budget. It's time to tell those people that their scare tactics are over. This is a new day. In America the people are sovereign, and today the people demand accountability. They demand a responsible, constrained government. They demand a balanced budget. Clearly Washington is never going to choose to balance its budget; so the people demand that we force it to.

Forty-nine out of fifty States have some form of a balanced budget amendment. If 98 percent of the States know