

# USS Greenville/Ehime Maru accident

*“...tragic and regrettable.”*



JOSN Tim Walsh

USS Greenville pulls in past Hospital Point the morning of Feb. 10. Adm. Thomas B. Fargo addressed the media and answered some of their questions after the Greenville passed by.

**FRIDAY**

USS Greenville surfaces off the coast of Oahu. During the operation a Japanese fishing vessel, Ehime Maru, and the Greenville collided. The Ehime Maru sank within minutes.

**SATURDAY**

Adm. Fargo, Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, addresses the public and express the Navy's apology.

**SUNDAY**

National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) investigation team meets with the Navy in Pearl Harbor.

**MONDAY**

Coast Guard and Navy continues to search for the 9 missing Japanese crewmembers, instructors and students.

**TUESDAY**

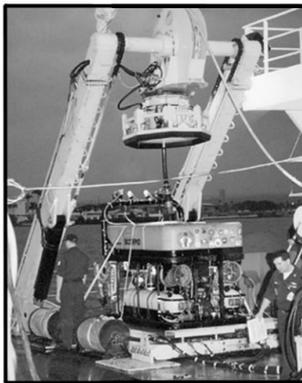
The deep submersible vessel, Scorpio II, arrives in Pearl Harbor to lead the Navy's underwater search effort.

**WEDNESDAY**

Navy / Coast Guard press conference confirms that surface search for missing will continue. Weather impacts operations.

**THURSDAY**

Navy makes final preparations for Deep Drone arrival in Hawaii to join search and survey efforts.



## Greenville: Navy Apology offered

Continued from A-1

Both probes will help the Navy determine whether it will take on the monumental task of raising the nearly 500-ton ship.

Both vehicles were involved in the search and salvage efforts of Alaska Airlines flight 261 off the coast of California Jan. 31, 2000. Scorpio helped map the debris field of the crash site and raised small tail sections of the plane as well as the aircraft's "black boxes."

"We were on scene 48 hours after the crash and recovered the two black boxes for the National Transportation Safety Board," said Hall. "It was quick because we were only 150 miles away and we did not have to fly to get there."

In response to how long he thought it would take to find the sunken Japanese ship, Hall said that it depends on many things.

"It depends on how good the locating data is that we've been given; which we believe is very good. It also depends on what else is on the bottom - such as debris or rocks, especially here where there is a volcanic bottom - although we're told it's an even sandy bottom. We just won't know until we get [the probes] down there."

**An unfortunate chain of events**

At approximately 1:50 p.m. HST on Feb. 9, the fast attack submarine USS Greenville on routine operations was surfacing when its stern collided with the Japanese vessel "Ehime Maru" approximately nine miles south of Diamond Head off Honolulu, Hawaii.

USS Greenville was returning to port after one day of routine training. Ehime Maru left Honolulu Harbor at about 12:30 p.m. At approximately 1:50 p.m., the ship conducted an emergency surfacing procedure for the purpose of training.

While surfacing, it collided with the 190-foot Ehime Maru. Within approximately five minutes, and as soon as the submarine could determine what happened, the submarine reported the incident to the search and rescue center. The submarine remained in the im-

mediate area, but was unable to take survivors on board due to the hazardous sea conditions. According to Navy officials, to attempt to bring the submarine close to the rafts and to attempt a transfer of people to the submarine would have increased the danger to those in the rafts.

Additionally, professional U.S. Coast Guard rescue services were immediately headed for the accident site.

Pacific Fleet ships (USS Salvor (ARS 52) and USS Lake Erie (CG 70)) and helicopters worked closely with the Coast Guard in the search for additional survivors immediately after the accident and through the night with both ships and aircraft.

On Feb. 10, Rear Adm. Al Konetzni, Jr., Commander, Submarine Forces Pacific reassigned Cmdr. Scott Waddle, the commanding officer of Greenville pending the results of an investigation surrounding the collision. Waddle was reassigned to the staff of Commander, Submarine Forces Pacific. Capt. Tony Cortese is currently serving as interim commanding officer.

On Feb. 11, National Transportation Safety Board officials began their investigation into the cause of the accident.

**Reparations**

"We deeply regret this tragic incident. Submarines have operating procedures to ensure the safety of such evolutions and a thorough investigation will be conducted into this incident," said Adm. Thomas B. Fargo, Commander-in-Chief U.S. Pacific Fleet in a statement released to the media on Feb. 10.

Pacific Fleet Headquarters worked with the Japanese Consulate in Hawaii to ensure medical care, lodging and transportation home were provided to the 26 rescued crewmembers.

Early Sunday afternoon, a Pacific Fleet representative made the following statement at a meeting of Ehime Maru families, "While it is not clear how this accident occurred, it is tragic and regrettable. We have a full investigation already started and we will determine the facts."



JOC Gerard Sekerak

Adm. Thomas B. Fargo reads a statement and answers questions the morning of Feb. 10



JOSN Tim Walsh

Media stand by at Hospital Point near the Nevada Memorial waiting for the Greenville to pass.

**Right:** Scorpio II arrives Feb. 13 to assist in the Navy and Coast Guard search and rescue operation. Inclement weather over the next couple of days interfered with attempts at using Scorpio II at the collision site.



PH2 Chad McNeely photo