



## SUB TENDERS LIKE USS MCKEE PROVIDE CRITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE SUBMARINE FLEET.

USS *McKee* (AS 41) is a mobile support and repair facility with the capability of providing simultaneous repairs to 12 nuclear-powered, fast-attack submarines. A versatile and complex ship, she provides everything a submarine might need: full medical and dental facilities; cranes, elevators and conveyors to move material on and off the ship as well as between decks; large storage areas for refrigerated and dry food; nuclear system repair and testing; electrical and electronics repair; hull repair; sheet metal and steel work; pipe fabrication; foundry work; woodworking; printing; underwater diving and rescue; hazardous material management; and propulsion and weapons systems repair.

Most of *McKee's* men and women are involved with the repair and maintenance of submarines, from replacing deck tile to troubleshooting system components. Engineman 3rd Class Sonya Thomas says it's a tight fit sometimes, "When you compare the size of sub compartments and passageways to those on *McKee*."

Those tight spaces can make even the simplest job difficult. But *McKee's* Sailors gain satisfaction from doing their job well. "You feel a sense of pride when you get done with a hard job," said Machinist's Mate 3rd Class Cathy Green. "And knowing you did it right." According to her crew members, innovation and efficiency are hallmarks of *McKee's* success as a submarine tender. The ship was involved in more sub repair periods last year than at any other time in her history - 63. You might think a schedule like that would keep her crew pretty busy. It did - and still does - but crewmembers find time to develop and execute a comprehensive plan to stand up a Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity Submarine Maintenance Detachment (SSMD), a measure they felt was necessary to ensure quality submarine

Photo by PH12 Aaron Anisarov



Petty Officer 2nd Class Nonah Hadnot is a Hull Technician on board USS McKee.

Photo by PH12 Aaron Anisarov



Petty Officer 3rd Class Thuy Bu, a Machinist's Mate on board USS McKee, removes the boiler internals.

maintenance after *McKee's* deactivation in the fall.

The Navy is pulling personnel from *McKee's* crew as well as the rest of the fleet to staff the SSMD. After *McKee* is deactivated in September, USS *Simon Lake* (AS 33), homeported in Italy, and USS *Frank Cable* (AS 40) in Guam will be the only deployable submarine repair ships in the U.S. Navy. Shore-based facilities, such as the one established by *McKee's* Sailors, will maintain and repair submarines.



HT I David Brandenburg silver brazes a fitting for a submarine's air bank on board USS *McKee*.

***JO2 Stacey Moore is a journalist assigned to USS McKee.***

