Packaging and Handling Group Oral History

By: Jay Scalise

The "On the Surface" dated 7 July 1978 had some interesting history. This particular issue had several pictures that highlighted equipment developed by the Packaging and Handling Group (E344) in the late 60's and early 70's. The first picture is the QUICKSTRIKE mine in its shipping skin being readied for vertical transfer by helicopter. The next picture is the same mine being transferred from an ammunition ship to the carrier America. The skid shown in this photo typify the type of shipping and handling equipment E344 developed for CAPTOR, Mk 48 Torpedo components, SLMM, and the submarine cruise missile. The skids and containers furnished by NSWC did their job with little fanfare, but there is anecdotal evidence that they went beyond the rigors of normal handling. It was reported that a CAPTOR being handled on an ammunition ship was accidentally pushed down one of the ships elevators, falling some 60 feet. The CAPTOR was checked and found to be still operable except for the parachute package. Also reported was an accident involving a tractor trailer carrying a load of Mk 48 warheads. The warheads in their shock mounted shipping container got scattered across the highway. The warhead survived with little or no damage.

In the third picture, six mines pre-load on a multiple electron rack being loaded on an A-6 aircraft using the HLU-196 bomb hoist developed by E344. This 80-pound bomb hoist was powered by a McCullough chain saw engine with a lifting capability of 2,000 pounds. It replaced the 4,000 pound loader. The HLU-196 was used by the Fleet during the end of the Viet Nam War.

The Packaging and Handling Group consisted of Jay Scalise who designed packaging for mine components; Mike Mijan, who developed packaging for the Swimmer Weapons Systems; Bob Armstrong and Evelyn McMullen, who prepared the detailed drawings and documentation for all the special packaging and handling equipment.

As noted above, E344 designed and developed the shipping and storage skid for the submarine launched cruise missile. NSWC was selected to do this job because the equipment was needed ASAP for shipping the first production cruise missiles to the Fleet. E344 provided the design; the sheet metal shop fabricated two engineering test units; Charlie Fridinger and Del Reynolds coordinated the testing; and the Supply Department contracted for the production quantities of skids. It was the multiple capabilities that made NSWC so valuable to the Navy. We delivered a good product, on time, and at a reasonable cost thanks to the skills and dedication of many WOL people.