



IN DEPTH

Official Newsletter of the Submariners Association

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Vice Patron: John Weale CB, OBE

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PRESIDENT
Commodore J Le S Perks CB

The Submariner

“Of all the branches of men in the Forces there is none which shows more devotion and faces grimmer perils than the Submariner; great deeds are done in the air and on the land, nevertheless nothing surpasses your exploits.”
Sir Winston Churchill 1943

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EDITORIAL

Hello Everyone

Happy Easter to everyone! Hopefully I have included all the usual items in In Depth No 84 - except for 'New & Rejoining Members' where no information is currently available – except to note that the Derbyshire Branch has now returned to the fold!. In this Issue there are Reports and Photos from the recent Families Weekend and Conference plus reports from around the Branches and from various SAC Officers.

There is a request from Nigel Mellor for volunteer 'Crossed the Bar' coordinators willing to liaise with family and friends when that time comes – see Page 25. If you think this is something you could do put your name forward.

Two book Reviews for to this Issue – the first is 'A Bit of a Life' - the story of the 14-year Naval career of Communicator/Telegraphist George Osborne from 1932 to 1946 – in his own words with further information from his son, Dave Osborne. The second book is 'Bubbleheads, Seals and Wizards' - all about the American Bases and Facilities in Scotland during those Cold War Years. I hope you will find something of interest to read in this Issue – if there is anything else you think I should include please let me know!

I checked up the other day and have realised that I have been Editing your 'In Depth' Newsletter for 60 odd Editions now – for some 15 years and the Barrow Branch 'Periscope View' Newsletter for 10 years. Still it keeps me out of the pub!

I hope you will find something of interest to read in this Issue – if there is anything else you think I should include please let me know. Please note that 'In Depth' Issue No. 85 will be published on 1st July 2024. Contributions are required to be with the Editor by 15th June 2024 - see contact details below. Please make sure I get your contributions in good time!

Regards

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CHAIRMANS DIT

The AGM/Family Weekend is the biggest Association social event of the year. The venue is traditionally in the central area of the UK, well this year I got the horizontal part right but veered to port on the vertical, ending up in Belfast.

I'm pleased to say it was not the fault of my navigation skills but more to do with giving the Northern Ireland Branch a break from travelling.

I will not go into the details on how the weekend went as Mark Pugh, the latest addition to the Committee has agreed to write a true dit on how the weekend went.

I will however mention the AGM.

We had one proposal from the Hull Branch:

Hull Proposal - To move the SA Annual Memorial Service from Middle Temple Hall in London to the National Arboretum in 2025.

- 324 Votes

- 46 for the proposal – 14%

- 278 against the proposal – 86%

On the committee, we said goodbye to:

Andrew Morgan / Roy Morden / Ian Fowler / Stevie Thorpe. I am sure you join me in thanking them for the work they all put into the Association.

New to the committee is Ian Leach / Mark Pugh / Stephen Middlemass. Thank you all for putting your heads above the parapet and welcome to the SAC.

Paul Swaby up for re-election, volunteered to continue for another three years. Thanks, Paul.

Disappointing news is that the National Secretary Ron Gordon is standing down from the 1st of June 2024. I am particularly upset as Ron has kept me in line and spends a lot of his time correcting my spelling and grammar; dont he!

We now have three volunteers to take over from Frank Pas your National Standard Bearer. Frank was a very professional standard bearer but ill health forced him to retire. I think that is all the main points to mention without stealing other people's thunder.

It is worth noting that a big thank you must go to Visit Belfast, Northern Ireland Veterans and The Submarine Family (TSF) who all assisted financially in the success of this year's event.

The Royal Naval Association Belfast donated the Rum and the Port which always goes down well!

Lastly, it would be remiss of me not to mention our hosts the Northern Ireland Branch, in particular, Davey George. Thank you all for your support and confidence in me.

This will be my last year as social secretary, so this was my swan song, I just hope I went out on a high note due to all the assistance I got.

Andy Knox is your new social sec and a more qualified man you could not meet.

Iain Mackenzie, Chairman

FAMILIES WEEKEND & CONFERENCE – THE TRUE DIT

By Mark Pugh

The weather might have been a mixed bag of heavy rain and glorious sunshine, but there was a beautiful glow inside the Stormont Hotel, Belfast over the weekend of the 22nd to 24th of March 2024.

David George and the Northern Ireland Branch helped to organise and hosted this year's Association AGM and Reunion, making it a truly Gala Weekend that saw a return of numbers of attendees to nearer pre-Covid levels with, 133 guests enjoying a carvery dinner and live music on the Friday evening by The Brokers Group.

Saturday saw the usual Association annual business of Church Parade and AGM attended by 22 branches. This was followed by a short SAC meeting and then the ever-popular Tot Issue. Then, although the Hotel bar was open, many of the guests took up the free coaches laid on by Giles Tours Belfast to take in some of the sights of Belfast.

Saturday Evening started with the annual Group Photo taken by a brace of WO Coxn's, enough entertainment to make anyone chuckle. Then, with all the guests seated in the Ball Room, we were again entertained and treated to a display of Irish Dancing by the Bangor School of Irish Dancing. The standing ovation at the end and the glowing smiles of pride of the young ladies' parents watching on spoke volumes of the Dancing Schools value to the weekend.

The Hotel laid on a fabulous dinner, the food was good and the drinks a plenty, old acquaintances were remade, and new ones made over the evening and the speeches were short, informative, and entertaining. The Dinner was concluded with the drawing of the raffle which raised £500 and then the Auction which included online

bidding for nearly a dozen donated items. Presented by the WO Coxn's version of Ant and Dec this brought the total raised on the evening to over £1,200.

The evening ran into the night and the wee hours of the morning for many in the Hotel Bar. The weekend felt this year more like a holiday than an AGM and Reunion. The flights and ferries out and home giving it that unique feeling.

They have heard it many times already, but I would like to thank all of those who worked to make this Annual event one that I, and all those who attended, one that we will all remember for the right reasons, and that will make us smile

VETERANS IDENTITY CARDS

Not got your Veterans ID Card yet?

Please see the link below for an update on applying for Veterans ID Cards:

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hm-armed-forces-veteran-cards-will-officially-launch-in-the-new-year-following-a-successful-assessment-from-the-central-digital-and-data-office?fbclid=IwAR0Vp4vH_D7kQUr6N96pgKEz5zZteXeCPgNj2wVHLt8SGEbPqGxjBUcQW8M

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Cover Picture: The Group Photo from the 2024 Families Weekend & Conference in Belfast

NEW & RE-JOINING MEMBERS 31st December 2023 to 31st March 2024

No Report on New & Rejoining Members is currently available but I expect to reintroduce this feature in future issues.

SUBMARINE & SUBMARINER LOSSES OF WWII

JANUARY 1944

No Submarines were lost in January 1944, but six Submariners died in accidents or from illness. They were:

A/Sto1 Roy Alfred Harris D/KX 159970

Roy Harris of **HMS DOLPHIN** was from Bristol and is reported to have died aged 20 on 4th January 1944 from cerebral malaria in HM Hospital Ship TJIJALENGKA. He is buried in Trincomalee War Cemetery in Grave No. 2.C.4.

Chief EA Henry Thomas Webber M10186

Henry Webber served as a Chief EA (Pensioner) from 18th November 1939 to 26th January 1944 in the Depot Ships **CYCLOPS**, **MAIDSTONE** & **TITANIA**. He is reported to have died in the Submarine Depot Ship **HMS FORTH** from blood poisoning from a septic ulcer on 26th January 1944.

SPO Thomas Herbert Barber MiD C/KX 85490

Thomas Barber from Daventry in Northants was a Prisoner of War in Italy after **HMS SARACEN** was

sunk in the Mediterranean on 14th August 1943. Thirty year old Thomas Barber was last seen alive in a POW Camp in Germany on 26th January 1944 and is presumed to have died on or about that date.

One member of the crew of Submarine **HMS P556** died on 28th January 1944. He was:

SPO Arthur E Edwards, MiD C/KX 80308

Arthur Edwards was born on 22nd December 1911, and he was the son of Henry and Alice Edwards. Having served in the RNVR, he signed on for twelve years with the Royal Navy on 25th March 1930 and volunteered for service in Submarines in 1933. Arthur Edwards served on both Ships and Submarines, including the Battleship **HMS VALIANT**, the Cruiser **HMS SUSSEX** and Submarines **L56**, **SWORDFISH**, **SNAPPER**, **L27** and **P556**. In January 1941, he was awarded a Mention in Dispatches for his actions during an attack on an escorted enemy supply ship. Arthur Edwards was killed in a Battery explosion on 28th January 1944 onboard Submarine **P556** whilst alongside at **HMS DOLPHIN** and all others onboard at the time were injured except one. Thirty-two-year-old Arthur Edwards was the husband of Marion Margaret Edwards of Barnes, Surrey, and father of Marion Alice Edwards. He was buried in the

Bebington Cemetery on the Wirral in Section A (C of E) in Grave No. 208.

NOTE 1: As stated above the remainder of the crew who were on board P556 at the time were injured except for Stoker Ernest P Small D/KX 8689 and it was he who provided information about Arthur Edwards.

NOTE 2. One of the others injured was Frank Heywood who was born on 26th July 1921. He was injured in the explosion and, it is understood, that both his legs were broken. He is reported to have died in 1974 at the age of fifty-three.

NOTE 3. HMS P556 was originally an American 'S' Class Submarine 'lend/leased' to the RN. After the Battery Explosion the submarine was 'laid up' on the mud flats at Porchester where she remained abandoned for many years until she was removed during the construction of the M271. For many years afterwards, as many of you might remember, the hulk was a fixture at Harry Pound's Scrapyard visible to all driving into and out of Portsmouth until she was finally broken up.

Two Submariners from the Submarine Depot **HMS ELFIN** at Blyth are reported to have died on 30th January 1944. They were both found dead after an explosion in a minefield on land near Blyth. They were:

ERA4 Lawrence Gilbert P/MX 636477

He was twenty two years old and from Mary Well Street in Aberdeen.

ERA4 John Richard Nash P/MX 636729.

Twenty two year old John Nash from Lickley Road in Birmingham.

It is understood that they were two of seven casualties found after three firefighters and a soldier tackling a gorse fire were also killed. The seventh casualty (unnamed) was a Naval Armourer

FEBRUARY 1944

One X-Craft Submarine was lost with all hands in February 1944 and two other Submariners are reported to have died in accidents.

On Monday 7th February 1944 **Submarine HMS SYRTIS** was towing the 'X' Craft - X22 in the Pentland Firth in bad weather when the Submarine was 'pooped' and the First Lieutenant of HMS SYRTIS was washed overboard and was lost. He was: Lieutenant Charles Blythe, RNR

His date of joining Submarines is not yet established but, on 7th July 1941 he was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS MEDWAY (1st Submarine Flotilla) at Alexandria, Egypt 'for Submarines'. He returned home with an appointment

to HMS DOLPHIN 'for Submarines' on 25th July 1941. His next appointment was to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS CYCLOPS 'for Submarine HMS OTWAY as Navigating Officer' to date 9th March 1942. This was followed by an appointment to HMS DOLPHIN 'for Submarine HMS SHAKESPEARE completing and as Navigating Officer on Commissioning' to date 6th June 1942. On 15th October 1942 he was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS FORTH at the Holy Loch 'for Submarine P614 as First Lieutenant' and then to HMS FORTH 'for Submarine HMS SYRTIS as First Lieutenant'. Charles Blythe was thirty-three year old and was from Berwick-on-Tweed.

After Lieutenant Charles Blythe was washed overboard from the bridge of HMS SYRTIS – see above the Commanding Officer of HMS SYRTIS (Lieutenant M H Jupp, Royal Navy) reversed course in an attempt to rescue his 'man overboard' and accidentally collided with Submarine X-22. Submarine X-22 sank at once 'with all hands' and Lieutenant MacFarlane and his crew were all lost. The Crew were:

Officers:

Lt Brian Mahoney MacFarlane, RANVR

Brian Mahoney was born in Cremorne, New South Wales, Australia on 30th June 1919. He was appointed to HMS VARBEL (12th Submarine Flotilla) at Loch Striven on 1st August 1943 and 'for X-22 in Command'. Brian MacFarlane died when X-22 was sunk in a collision with HMS SYRTIS in the Pentland Firth on 7th February 1944. Brian Mahoney was the twenty-four-year-old son of Commander John Clement MacFarlane, RAN and Mrs. Irene MacFarlane and the husband of Jeannie MacFarlane of Petersham, Surrey. He is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No. 91 Column No. 3.

Lt William Jack Marsden, RANVR

William Marsden he was born in Kalgoorlie in Western Australia on 10th July 1917 – the son of Henry C V & Emily Caroline Marsden.. He was appointed to HMS VARBEL (12th Submarine Flotilla) at Loch Striven on 1st August 1943 and 'for X-22 as First Lieutenant'. Twenty six year old William Marsden died when X-22 was sunk in a collision with HMS SYRTIS in the Pentland Firth on 7th February 1944. He was the husband of Winifred Marsden (nee Davey). He is commemorated on the Plymouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No. 93 Column No. 1.

Ratings:

ERA4 Cyril Ludbrook P/MX 116413

Twenty-one-year-old Cyril Ludbrook was the son of Walter Scott Ludbrook and Jane Anne Ludbrook of Stockton on Tees, County Durham. He is

commemorated on Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No. 85 Column No. 1.

Able Seaman John Pretty P/J 113298

John Pretty was the son of William and Minnie Pretty. He was Submariner before joining 'X' Craft and, on 16th February 1942 he had been serving in Submarine HMS THRASHER. He is commemorated on Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No. 88 Column No. 1.

One member of the crew of **HM Submarine L26** died on Sunday 27th February 1944 and it is understood that he died on board Submarine L56 as the result of injuries received in a battery explosion. He was:

PO Gordon Leslie Spriggs C/JX 136276

Gordon Spriggs was the twenty-seven-year-old husband of Mary Louise Spriggs of Merchantville, New Jersey, USA. He is buried at the Halifax (Fort Massey) Cemetery, Nova Scotia, Canada in the USA Section E. Grave No. 88

MARCH 1944

Two Submarines were lost with all hands in March 1944 and five other Submariners are reported to have died as follows:

Sto1 William Holt, DSM D/KX 132173 died on 1st March 1944. He was a Prisoner of War in Italy from **Submarine HMS SARACEN**. He is understood to have tried to make his way to Allied lines after the Italian surrender but was arrested and held in Perugia jail before being transferred to the Dachau and then the Buchenwald Concentration Camps. After an intervention by a Czechoslovak interpreter he was sent to Stalag XVIIIIC at Markt Pongau, Austria. It is understood that he was beaten by camp guards damaging his health and he later died from pneumonia. He is buried in the Klagenfurt War Cemetery in Austria in Grave No. 6.D.17. He was the husband of Gladys Holt.

A/L/Sto Walter Scott D/KX 109385 of **Submarine HMS P512** is reported to have died in the British Military Hospital, Prospect, Bermuda on 13th March 1944. It is understood that he died as the result of food poisoning. He had been serving Submarine HMS P512 - which was previously the United States Navy Submarine R17. Twenty three year old Walter Scott was the son of Percy and Rose Scott of Poole in Dorset. He is buried in the Royal Naval Cemetery in Bermuda in Grave No. 424.

A/Sub Lt Roy Charlton Elliott RN is reported to have died on 15th March 1944 whilst a Prisoner of

War in Italy from **Submarine HMS SARACEN**. It is reported that he had been sent to Rome with the other Officers from SARACEN but he escaped and made his way to the Vatican City but, unfortunately, he died after a fall from a window at the Vatican. Roy Elliott was the twenty one year old son of Christopher Charlton Elliot and his wife Margaret of Woodlands, Station Road, Benton, Northumberland. He is buried in the Campo Cestio Cemetery in Rome in Plot D.3.11.

Submarine HMS STONEHENGE

The first Submarine lost in March 1944 was Submarine HMS STONEHENGE which sailed from Trincomalee in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) on 25th February 1944 for her second patrol in the Far East in the area between Northern Sumatra and the Nicobar Islands. The Submarine was reported overdue on 20th March 1944 when she failed to return to Trincomalee. The cause of loss is unknown but the Submarine was declared as 'lost with all hands' - probably in the Malacca Straits - on (or about) 16th March 1944. The Crew Members were:

Officers:

Lt David Stewart McNeile Verschoyle-Campbell, DSO, DSC*, RN

Lt Peter Frank John Radwell, DSC, RN

Sub Lt Ronald Francis Drake MiD, RN

Sub Lt Reginald Edward Nobel Howes, RNVR

Sub Lt Patrick Gerald Maturin Clayton, RNVR

Warrant Engineer Arthur Bertram Uren

Ratings:

A/CPO Kenneth John Kirwin, DSM P/JX 149065

PO Joseph Hartland D/JX153277

PO Richard Henry Neale C/JX 145790

T/A/LSea Clarence Farlow D/JX 130510

LSea Robert Crowther D/JX 237674

AB Frederick George Coe P/SSX 17480

AB Robert William Andrews P/JX 327620

AB Peter Gresley Storey Christopher P/JX 383690

AB Henry Francis Ennis P/JX 330631

AB Samuel Hodgkinson P/JX 149628

AB Francis Arthur Howard P/JX 224077

AB James Boath Patterson P/JX 274178

AB George William Tombs P/JX 361221

AB David Lloyd Edwards D/JX 416872

AB Harry Edwards D/JX 347623

AB John Elwyn Rees D/JX 165627

AB Jim Clarke C/JX 152935

AB Leslie John Clark C/JX 163300

AB William Henry Rolfe C/JX 140762

AB Ralph Smith C/JX 258607

AB Leslie Frederick Trayherne, DSM C/JX 167448

PO Walter James Pace SS 13408

LTel Kenneth Irvine Sargeant P/JX 215439

Tel Allan Cucknell D/JX 179599

Tel William Wood P/SSX 17144
 LSig Peter Glanville Colton P/JX 138859
 PO Cook John Charles Kissane P/MX 48396
 ERA3 John Millar Robertson P/MX 54597
 EA4 Ronald Herbert King D/MX 86965
 ERA4 Thomas Corbett P/MX 79341
 ERA4 Bernard Holland D/MX 75245
 A/ERA4 David Russell P/MX 117297
 A/ERA4 Cyril James Molloy P/MX 79993
 SPO Gerard Martin D/KX 84320
 L/Sto William Armstrong Lowe C/KX 111156
 A/LSto Ernest Herbert Spender P/KX 106174
 A/LSto Leonard Hirst C/KX 103411
 A/LSto Christopher Bleakley C/KX 91459
 Sto1 Joseph Tivey P/KX 147221
 Sto1 Thomas James Powell P/KX 147018
 Sto1 Albert Charles Abbott C/KX 157500
 Sto1 Frederick Albert Hooper C/KX 130474
 Sto1 Gerald Atkinson D/KX 140781
 Sto1 Walter William Hardy C/SKX 956

Submarine HMS SYRTIS

The second Submarine lost in March 1944 was Submarine HMS SYRTIS which left Lerwick on 16th March 1944 for a patrol off the Norwegian Coast in Latitude 63° 36' North. On 20th March 1944 the Submarine was ordered to an area in the vicinity of Bödo. Records indicate that she carried out attacks on enemy vessels in the area on 22nd March. HMS SYRTIS was ordered to leave her Patrol Area on 28th March 1944 but failed to return to Lerwick as expected on 30th March 1944. An air search was carried out but no sign of the Submarine was found. Mines are now known to have been laid in the area in which HMS SYRTIS was working and it is almost certain that HMS SYRTIS was lost with all hands by striking a mine off Bödo sometime between 22nd and 28th March 1944. The Crew Members were:

Officers:

Lt Michael Hugh Jupp, DSC, RN
 Lt Frederick Edward Spratt, RN
 Lt Donald Alexander Fyson, RNVR
 Lt John MacPherson Ainslie, RNVR
 Warrant Engineer Denis Henry Lynch

Ratings:

CPO Donald Mackenzie D/J 107897
 PO Hugh Messer Fowler C/JX 152175
 T/PO Harold R Allam C/JX 156270
 PO Frederick Osman P/JX 130488
 LSea Geoffrey Henshall D/SSX 22749
 LSea George Charles Ashton D/J 107365
 LSea William George Picknell C/JX 154405
 AB William Charles Harris C/SSX 19504
 AB Hugh Gemmell Forsyth C/SSX 25989
 AB John Green P/SSX 24927
 AB Albert Beardsley P/JX 159090

AB Thomas Christopher O'Carroll D/SSX 28087
 AB Arthur Richardson D/JX 158363
 AB Sydney Steel C/JX 193464
 AB John Henry Readman P/JX 193267
 AB Frederick Arthur Storey P/JX 367602
 AB John Bancroft Hallworth P/JX 361955
 AB Leslie Edmund Wilson P/JX 217860
 Ord Sea Thomas Henry Shields C/JX 407347
 Ord Sea John Matthew Kay D/JX 564161
 PO Tel Robert Howard Powell D/JX 145188
 L/Tel William Thomas Parker P/SSX 33340
 Tel John Patrick Hagerty C/JX 224730
 Tel Richard Loudon Boyd C/JX 359213
 Sig Ronald Dowler McCarthy P/JX 161391
 L/Cook (S) Andrew Hosie D/MX 64044
 CERA George John Stubbs P/MX 49527
 ERA4 William Jamieson P/MX 88769
 ERA4 Arthur Charles Percy Willcocks P/MX 98380
 ERA4 Sidney Edwin Page C/MX 53249
 ERA4 Class James Hamilton Blackley C/MX 504341
 ERA Bernard John Goldsmith P/MX 98856
 SPO Leslie Malley C/KX 82455
 A/LSto Leslie Hull P/KX 137032
 A/LSto William McAllister P/KX 92004
 A/LSto Robert Aitken P/KX 83273
 Sto1 Frank Holder D/KX 15821
 Sto1 Bernard Herbert Denne C/KX 97606
 Sto1 Royston Herbert Hill D/KX 153006
 Sto1 George William Burgess D/KX 148044
 Sto1 William Young P/KX 145666
 Sto1 Percy Alexander P/KX 158363
 Sto1 Frederick Charles Woodards C/KX 140770

One Member of the Crew of the **Submarine Depot Ship HMS WOLFE** is reported to have died on 28th March 1944 in the Johnson Hospital at Spalding in Lincolnshire. He was **AB Kenneth Norman Blakey P/JX 387738**. He was at home on leave at the time and it is understood that he died from accidental coal gas poisoning overnight in the 'Writing and Rest Room' at the 'Toc H' Headquarters in Spalding. It appears he may have cycled to a Fair in Spalding with two other men (assumed to be friends but non-submariners). When they went to go home they found their cycles had been locked up so they booked into the Toc H HQ overnight. All three are reported to have died in the accident and a verdict of misadventure was reported at the inquest. Nineteen year old Kenneth Blakey from Holbeach, Lincolnshire was the son of George Edward and Louie Blakey, of Algarkirk and Earl's Marsh Farm, Forsdyke. Kenneth Blakey is buried in the All Saints Churchyard, Forsdyke in a plot south of the Church.
 (For full details of the accident see report on Page 8 of the Lincolnshire Free Press 3rd April 1944.)

One member of the crew of **Submarine HMS SUNFISH** is reported to have died on 31st March 1944 from injuries sustained in a fall from a train at Winwick, near Warrington, Lancashire. He was **Sto1 Thomas Edward Andrews D/KX 156636** and he was the nineteen year old son of Henry and Lottie Andrews of Brierley Hill. He is buried in the St. Michaels Churchyard at Brierley Hill in Row No. 3 Grave No. 15 which is sited south of the Church.

**Liverpool Echo Saturday 1st April 1944
FOUND ON THE LINE**

The body of a naval man found on the L.M.S. railway line at Winwick, near Warrington, yesterday, was identified to-day as Thomas Edward Andrews, aged 19 Willows Road, Dudley Fields, Brierley Hill, Staffordshire. The inquest will take place on Monday,

**Liverpool Echo Friday 28th April 1944
TRAGEDY OF A FAMILY TWO SONS DEAD.
ONE PRISONER, FOURTH LOST FROM
TRAIN**

Recording an open verdict at the Winwick, near Warrington, inquest, to-day, on Thomas Edward Andrews, aged 19, Royal Navy stoker, of Brierley Hill. Staffs.. Coroner C. Bolton said was a very sad case, because Mr. and Mrs. Andrews had already lost two sons in this war while another son was a prisoner of war. Evidence showed that Andrews boarded a corridor train at Glasgow and before it reached Crewe one of the doors was opened. The coroner said no-one would ever know exactly how the fatality occurred.

NOTE. Thomas Andrews' two brothers who were also lost in the War were a Petty Officer lost in HMS VETERAN and a Private in the South Staffordshire Regiment (2nd Airborne Battalion) who was killed in Libya

**SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW
LISTS**

Do you have any Submarine Commissioning, Decommissioning or Re-dedication Crew Lists. These are required for an ongoing 'Chronology of Submariners' Project. What is required are 'First Commission' Crew Lists as follows: PORPOISE, GRAMPUS, CACHALOT, WALRUS, OBERON, ONYX, ORPHEUS, ODIN, OTUS, UNICORN, AUDACIOUS & ANSON. Also Crew Lists for subsequent Commissions of any 'S', 'T', 'A', 'O' Class or 'P' Class Diesel Boats, 'V', 'C', 'S', 'T' & 'ASTUTE' SSNs & 'RESOLUTION' or 'VANGUARD' Class SSBN. Crew Lists for any Commissioning or Decommissioning of any Diesel 'A', 'S' or 'T' Class Boat refitting in Home Dockyards or in Malta, Singapore or Sydney are also required. Have a look through your records and 'Ditty Boxes' and see what you can find. Any lists sent will be copied and the originals returned. You can contact me by E Mail,

Snail Mail or Telephone - see Page 2. Thanks, Barrie Downer

DONATIONS & BEQUESTS

For anyone thinking about making Donations or leaving a Bequest in your Will please remember one of the following:

- (1) The Submariners Association
- (2) The Submarine Fund – part of the Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC) – details can be found on RNRMC Website.
- (3) The Submarine Family
- (4) The Royal Navy Submarine Museum. Any Donations or Bequests for the Submarine Museum should be directed to either the 'Friends of the Submarine Museum' or to the 'National Museum of the Royal Navy'.

WEBSITE

Over the recent months there has been an increase in Website traffic and improved search results, indicating a growing interest in our Submarine Community. This positive momentum is further fuelled by a wave of new Members who have successfully joined our Association.

Introduction: Overview of the current state of activities, including recent developments.

Key Activities:

Email Marketing platform: Live

Online Auctions: Live

One Member 1 Vote: Available

Website Performance:

Website visits: Reasonable, with potential for improvement

#346 members are not yet registered on the site (these members have email addresses)

Registered website users: #909

Registered on the TSF site but not on SA Website: #247

User Engagement:

Website contributions (posts): Disappointingly low overall (see next actions)

General user enquiries (issues): Few and far between (which is good)

External Contacts:

Three interesting contacts from 'outside': Film crew, Hurd Deep, and S/M A1

Conclusion:

Whilst we are making progress, it remains hard work and with greater branch engagement progress could be sped up.

Treasurers Report to SA AGM 2024

The Annual Accounts have been completed and have been available on the Website for perusal.

We have now completed and received our second Annual Grant from TSF for our operating costs. Over the last year we have donated £2,000 to the Kylesku Memorial. £1,000 to Military vs Cancer. Our Association Website has been replaced with an up to date one that is fit for purpose and regularly updated - at a cost of £4,000. We have set aside circa £6,000 for branded gazebos for use by branches. £10,000 sponsorship for the Waverley TSF cruise down the Clyde in July.

SAC Next Actions

1. Membership numbers to be increased, by email marketing, hopefully!
2. SAC to agree membership process and how we better engage with branches.
3. Posts for website, everyone needs to understand the importance of and continuing need for regular updates from ALL branches & members.
4. SAC need to understand why some branches are engaging better than others
5. So, ending on the positive. We are in the half power state, 4 knots, no clicks, or bangs, 'Control, Manoeuvring ...!'

Election & Changes of SAC Members

SA Secretary standing down after 1st June 2024 SAC meeting.

Paul Swaby to be confirmed in post.

Steve Thorpe standing down.

Roy Morden stood down as Membership Secretary and his post was merged with Webmaster.

Ian Fowler resigned.

Andy Morgan left the SAC.

New SAC Members confirmed in post – Ian Leach, Mark Pugh, and Stephen Middlemas. No vote required.

There are three volunteers to take over as National Standard Bearer from Frank Pas who has stood down due to medical reasons.

Membership Update

The Association now has 48 Branches with one new Branch (East of Scotland) and two recent rejoining Branches (Derbyshire and Espana Levante in Spain) Currently there are 909 members who are registered on the Website and 346 not yet registered with 247 listed on the TSF Website – a total of 1492.

ABSENT FRIENDS

Nearly 150 Submariners are known to have 'Crossed the Bar' in the last year which is quite a sobering statistic. This number includes 54 SA Members, 12 Members of Friends of the Submarine Museum, 54 reported via We Remember Submariners, 13 SAOC (Canada) Members, 12 CTBs via other sources plus 3 South African Serving Submariners.

Embracing Branch Engagement for Greater Visibility

Recent months brought a notable increase in Website activity, especially driven by the heightened interest in Remembrance Day events.

Currently, less than 15% of branches actively share updates on their events or activities. Assuming the remaining branches are also engaged in social, charitable, remembrance or other events, this presents a massive opportunity to raise the profile of the branch within the association. At the same time, it will also assist in further promoting the Association, so it's a 'win win'.

Website Registration

As our Association evolves, accessing the website will become more critical than ever. We are streamlining membership data updates through the website, making it essential for all members to embrace website registration.

If you haven't yet registered on our website, you are missing out on exclusive content. Many pages are accessible only to registered users.

Active Website participation is encouraged.

In conclusion, your active participation on our website is not just about staying informed; it's a chance to contribute to the collective growth and visibility of our Association. The website is a hub of valuable information, and you, our members, are key players in shaping its content. Let's make the most of this digital platform to strengthen our community bonds and enhance the overall Association experience.

Regards

Gary

THE ONLINE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE (OBOR) - AN UPDATE

The Online Book of Remembrance is live. Sponsored by the Friends of the Submarine Museum it all started with a need for a complete and accurate record of all those who had lost their life during submarine service, which could be easily updated to correct any inaccuracies – which have been found to be all too plentiful on the current Memorial Wall at the Museum.

You can access the OBOR at submarinefamily.uk/remembrance or by simply pointing your smartphone camera at



this QR code.

You will then be able to read the story of the development of the OBOR, a short history of the Submarine Service, by Iain Ballantyne, and browse the contents.

The OBOR contains the names of over 5,900 submariners and over 450 units in which they served, including 174 submarines which sank in peace or wartime. Each Unit and each Submariner has their own page which can contain pictures and stories. Each Unit Page lists those from that Unit who died. Any visitor to the OBOR is also able to submit comment and pictures to enhance the entries about an individual submariner or a submarine. Do have a look!

The OBOR is an element of The Submarine Family (TSF) Website and hosted on their Servers. Its development is funded by the 'Friends of the Submarine Museum'. Both the TSF site and OBOR have been created by MindWorks Marketing and managed by the huge efforts of our Digital Lead, Tom Herman.

The 'Friends' Treasurer (Peter Jeanneret) has been responsible for collating the data that is now contained within OBOR. This started well over a year ago by entering into a database all the names on the Submarine Museum Memorial Wall, assisted by Jock McLees. There has been considerable checking to iron out the many errors, omissions, and duplications. In this work there has been a major contribution by Barrie Downer (Barrow) and Malcolm Blenkinsopp (Espana Levante), both of whom have been researching details of deceased submariners for many years.

Here's some numbers: There are currently about 5,955 names in the OBOR for whom some 600 stories have been completed. But due an enforced break last Summer when the site was being updated, and some slowness in getting the team back on the job since, we have a backlog of completed minibios which have not yet been uploaded. So, when they are done, we will have just over 12% complete. Not bad going, but still a way to go.

"The OBOR site, along with the whole TSF site, has undergone a major redevelopment, translating it into a WordPress based environment. This has really, just been done to make future upkeep and development easier and cheaper, and from the user's point of view, there should be very little change. You are all encouraged to visit OBOR and post comments or personal tributes on any relatives who may be found therein. If you do happen to spot any issues as a result of the recent redevelopment, then the OBOR team would be pleased if you would report them, or submit any general comments about OBOR, to obor@submarinefamily.uk."

We think that the list of names is now about as accurate as it could be but, please contact us by email to obor@submarinefamily.uk if you can provide any further information, particularly with stories and pictures of people and units where we currently don't have them.

We hope that work will soon start on the next part of the Project to replace the 'Submarine Museum Memorial Wall' with better quality engraved stone or slate panels, and the effort to get the OBOR data in good shape will allow us to provide an accurate list of names for the new Wall.

A Memorial Wall Project Brief has recently been compiled by the NMRN Staff and reviewed by the Friends and will be sent out to prospective suppliers shortly.

HM NAVAL BASE, CLYDE & RN SUBMARINE NEWS

Royal Marines Officer to assume role as Commander Operations (COMOPS)

A senior Royal Marines officer is to take charge of commanding and orchestrating the Royal Navy's global operations for the first time in history.

Brigadier Rich Cantrill, OBE, MC, RM, will assume his latest role as the Commander Operations (COMOPS), to oversee the protection of UK shores and all Royal Navy and Royal Marine actions worldwide.

The current incumbent, Rear Admiral Edward Ahlgren OBE, RN will hand over command to Brig Cantrill later this year, when the Royal Marines officer will assume the role as a Major General. Brig Cantrill said the COMOPS

role is "the pinnacle" for all Royal Navy officers and he was "absolutely delighted to have the opportunity to deliver that role on behalf of the Fleet Commander and First Sea Lord.

The senior officer went on to say: "For me it means a chance to return to my own Service after a fascinating time in the joint domain, where I have learned a great deal about modern multi-domain operations."



Brigadier CANTRILL, RM



Rear Admiral AHLGREN RN

RFA STIRLING CASTLE AT NEW HOME AT HM NAVAL BASE CLYDE

12th February

By Jody Harrison@jodeharrisonHTReporter



RFA STIRLING CASTLE is going through a period of trials

The Commanding Officer of the Navy's new mine-hunting "mother ship" has spoken of his pride in the "wonderful" vessel after it recently arrived at its home on the Clyde. RFA Stirling Castle is part of the Navy's "paradigm shift" in how it deals with the threat of sea mines around the world and could be ready for operations later this year. A former oil rig support ship, it was purchased by the Ministry of Defence in 2023 and will be used to 'transport' and launch autonomous uncrewed boats which will scan the sea for mines. Its crew are going through an intense period of trials to prepare the 6,000-tonne ship for "initial operational capability", which they hope to reach later this year. A Dedication Ceremony could take place as early as April.

RFA STIRLING CASTLE and other ships like it will replace the Navy's ageing fleet of Sandown-class mine-hunting ships, most of which have left the service.

Last week, the Navy's mine and threat exploitation group (MTXG) showed some of their underwater drones to the PA news agency during a tour of the ship.

STIRLING CASTLE's commanding officer is Richard Reville, who has recently rejoined the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) after a career which included captaining super yachts. He described the challenges of bringing a new class of ship into the RFA, which supports the Royal Navy. He told PA: "There's been equipment fits on board that had to be done in order for the vessel to move into its military service. "So it's been a long process, it's been challenging but it's been rewarding. It's been very different for us."

The threat from mines is "ever evolving and very potent", he said, adding: "What we have the ability to do is deal with that safely by using autonomous and remote vehicles at a stand-off distance." He said he is confident RFA Stirling Castle and other ships of its class can take on the tasks performed by the fleet of Sandown and Hunt-class mine-hunters.

Mr Reville, who is from Milnathort in Perth and Kinross, said: "I have a soft spot obviously because for myself I'm not very far from Stirling Castle. "Being on the first, Scottish-named ship is an absolute pleasure. I'm very proud to be the commanding officer of such a wonderful platform with the capability that it has." RFA Stirling Castle arrived in Scotland at the end of January.

After final training on the south coast of England, the mine-hunting ship will return to the Clyde where it will spend most of this year. Its main job will be to carry mine-hunting boats which are being used to

clear the submarine lanes around the Faslane naval base.

As well as operating these boats, the MTXG uses underwater drones to pinpoint sea mines and historic ordnance.

One of these is the commercially available Iver 3, which can autonomously scan the seabed using sonar before reporting its findings back to crew on the surface. Lieutenant Chris Stone, of the MTXG's Zulu Squadron, told PA: "It's a paradigm shift for the Royal Navy, from the legacy (mine counter-measure vessels) that Scottish people will definitely have seen about on the Clyde. "We're bringing in a brand new remote and autonomous capability."

He added: "You only have to threaten to lay a mine in an area and that raises insurance premiums for shipping. "We need a credible capability to deal with that in the future and that's what we're working towards now."

As a former commercial ship, the comfort of the accommodation on RFA Stirling Castle is higher than on Royal Navy warships. Previously a Norwegian vessel, it has an onboard sauna and two gyms. The ship is relatively lightly crewed with 54 personnel but only 27 will be deployed at any one time. Mr Reville said the crewing arrangements gave a good "work and home life balance" and would help with recruitment

Minehunting Mothership tests new techniques to locate and destroy mines on Op Kipion

Sofie Cacoyannis

12th March 2024 at 10:34am



Modern mine warfare is changing, and trials are under way in Bahrain with autonomous systems to adapt how minehunting is done. RFA Stirling Castle, known as 'the minehunting mother ship,' will host several of these systems, operated by the Royal Navy. This advancement allows for broader coverage of sea areas while minimising risks to personnel.

Why does the UK clear mines in the Gulf?

The Gulf region is home to one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world – the Strait of Hormuz – and keeping it mine-free is essential to ensure the flow of oil and trade. Since 2006, the UK has strategically positioned itself in the Gulf to address the menace of mines, which serve as a fast and inexpensive means for nations to control vast maritime areas, disrupt vital shipping lanes, or inflict damage on maritime vessels.

What is Operation Kipion?

The UK Mine Countermeasures Force comes under the umbrella of Operation Kipion, the UK's commitment to promoting peace and stability around the Gulf. It typically involves three minehunters based permanently in the region and, as well as looking for mines, the ensure the safe flow of oil, gas, and trade. The minehunters are led by

the commander of the UK Mine Countermeasures Force, who is based on a Royal Fleet Auxiliary landing ship dock. The force also has an escort ship with Royal Marines from 42 Commando on board, maritime security specialists with board and search expertise, all of which are supported by the UK Naval Support Facility in Bahrain.



The 'mother ship' RFA Stirling Castle with a minehunter

(Picture: Royal Navy)

How are mines neutralised?

The minehunter ships hunt for mines, using sonar to detect objects on the seabed and then use a remotely operated system called Sea Fox to dispose of them. When a mine is detected, there are two options to deal with it. It can either be targeted by a remotely operated vehicle with an explosive charge that would cause a controlled explosion. Or if the visibility is poor, the task falls on to a team of specialist EOD (Explosives Ordnance Disposal) divers. "Minehunters are some of the smallest vessels within the Royal Navy," Commanding Officer of HMS Bangor Lieutenant Commander Andrew Platt said. "My ship's company is just 40 people. In that, I've got engineers, mine warfare experts, chefs,

divers. And that team really comes together in order to deliver our equipment and operations," he added.

How do autonomous mine-hunting systems work?

Harrier is an Uncrewed Minesweeper System. At 11 metres long it is designed to detect underwater threats in the challenging weather conditions found in the Gulf. The three coil boats attached to it are designed to trick a mine into thinking there's a ship on the surface. The mine then detonates – it's a quicker way of neutralising a minefield. The heat and dust make the Gulf region one of the more difficult environments to operate in. However, Richard Hurman, Commander of the UK Mine Countermeasures Force believes that if the Royal Navy can operate in the Gulf, they can operate anywhere. "As we know all too well at the moment, mines are being used in the Black Sea and nations are utilising them in order to close off sea areas and deny the enemy," Cdr Hurman said. "We have that ability to be able to sustain operations, to clear channels as quickly as possible in order to keep the movement of commercial and military shipping through any particular region as quickly as possible. "With heat, dust and environmental it makes it a difficult environment to operate in, so if we can operate here, we can operate pretty much anywhere else in the world," he added.

Defence giant awarded £560m to extend the life of UK nuclear submarine

Story by Matt Oliver

Babcock's refit will ensure HMS VICTORIOUS remains operational well into the 2030s - Andy Buchanan/PA Archive© Provided by The Telegraph Babcock has agreed a £560m contract to extend the life of one of Britain's nuclear-armed submarines.

The FTSE 250 Defence Giant on Friday confirmed the deal with the Ministry of Defence, following an initial agreement last year. It involves Babcock carrying out a major refit of HMS VICTORIOUS at its vast dockyard in Devonport, Plymouth, where a host of navy vessels go for servicing. HMS VICTORIOUS sailed to Devonport last summer and work has already begun on her multi-year refit.

Babcock has said the overhaul will extend the sub's lifetime by 15 years or more, ensuring she remains operational well into the 2030s.

Vice Admiral Martin Connell, the Second Sea Lord, said the refit would mean HMS VICTORIOUS remained able to carry out her duties until the next generation of nuclear-armed subs, known as the Dreadnought class, are ready to take over. Grant Shapps, the Defence Secretary, added: "In an increasingly dangerous world, it is crucial that we continue to invest in one of our most important assets, our nuclear deterrent." HMS VICTORIOUS is one of the Royal Navy's four Vanguard class submarines, which carry Trident ballistic missiles as part of the UK's continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent. One boat is always on patrol, poised to strike in the event of a nuclear conflict.

Because of the critical job they do and their need for stealth, keeping the vessels in top working order is essential. By the time of their planned retirement, the four subs will have been operational for around 40 years after HMS VANGUARD was commissioned into service in 1993, followed by HMS VICTORIOUS in 1995, HMS VIGILANT in 1996 and finally HMS VENGEANCE in 1999. HMS VANGUARD has already been refitted in a programme that overran significantly due to unexpected problems with the vessel's nuclear reactor. As part of the general modernisation of HMS VICTORIOUS's systems, it is understood that crew facilities including the galley, gym and entertainment system are being improved as well. The work will involve stripping out, then replacing, inspecting or refurbishing 90pc of the sub's current equipment and systems.

Harry Holt, head of Babcock's nuclear business, last month told investors this would involve giving HMS VICTORIOUS "the right capability upgrades, so she can perform her mission against not only the current threat but the future anticipated threat that she will face". The programme is expected to sustain about 1,000 jobs at Devonport, where Babcock is also in the process of constructing new state-of-the-art facilities for nuclear submarine maintenance and repairs. David Lockwood, the defence giant's chief executive, said: "Delivering the programme for this vital and complex defence asset is our top priority. "We are proud to have been awarded this complex defence programme which will use our deep engineering expertise to help keep the UK safe." Shares in Babcock rose by 2.5pc following the deal's announcement.

Extending the life of HMS VICTORIOUS

HMS VICTORIOUS arrived in Devonport to begin a multi-year Deep Maintenance Period (DMP) in May 2023. Here we provide some background and detail about the project.

Second of the 'Vanguard' class, HMS VICTORIOUS was launched in 1993 and has already exceeded her originally intended 25-year design life by 3 years. The DMP is intended to extend her life into the mid-late 2030s when she will be replaced by second of the 'Dreadnought' class, HMS VALIANT. The DMP follows the much-troubled project to refit HMS VANGUARD, which was plagued by COVID, poor planning and resourcing coupled with an underestimation of the complexity of the work required to extend the life of these ageing boats.

VICTORIOUS arrived in at Devonport in a poor state, suffering from being run on as her DMP was repeatedly postponed by the delays to VANGUARD. The full extent of the various defects she has suffered over the last few years are not in the public domain but in late 2022, she suffered a fire at sea. It is disputed whether the incident was sufficiently serious that she was forced to surface but fortunately, she was not assigned to a deterrent patrol at the time and was conducting exercises with the US Navy.

At the time of writing, VICTORIOUS is on the Power Range Testing berth in 5 Basin at Devonport and her DMP is already underway. Number 9 dry dock is not yet available to accommodate her as maintenance work is being conducted on the facility, following the extended period it was occupied by HMS VANGUARD. VICTORIOUS will enter 9 Dock later this year. Babcock has revised their submarine maintenance practices so that a significant part of the work package is started while the boats are still afloat before they enter dry dock. (Work has also started on HMS AUDACIOUS alongside on the tidal berth ahead of her going into number 15 dock later this year.)

As a precaution, HMS VANGUARD underwent a second unplanned reactor refuelling but fortunately VICTORIOUS does not have to undergo this complicated process. Despite this, the refit is expected to involve approximately 7.2 million man-hours of work and employ around 2,500 people, not just at Devonport but across the whole of the UK. 90% of the submarine's systems and equipment will be refurbished including the combat management system. Cutting open the pressure hull is avoided so this requires larger items of equipment to be dismantled so it can pass through hatches that are just 1.8m in diameter. Some of the critical systems have to be repaired and then reassembled ashore for testing before being broken down again to be

transferred through the hatch for reassembly inside the boat. This is just one of the many challenges of submarine maintenance.

The MoD announced last week that they had signed a £560 million contract with Babcock for VICTORIOUS' DMP. This seems like an extraordinarily high figure, especially when seen in the context of earlier projects. Between January 2005 and July 2008, VICTORIOUS underwent a Long Overhaul Period (LOP) and reactor refuelling which cost around £270m. HMS VENGEANCE undertook a similar LOP(R) between March 2012 and February 2016 costing £322m. Broadly speaking the £560M price tag can be explained by rising inflation, the increased age of the boat and a realistic approach to costs for a contract model that provides performance incentives for Babcock to complete the project on time.

Often the scale of expensive remedial work may only become apparent as survey works are undertaken and issues emerge as the refit progresses. For example, during VANGUARD's refit it was discovered that the entire tail section containing the rudder and aft hydroplane bearings was corroded to such an extent that it had to be virtually reconstructed, one of several complex engineering tasks that had never been attempted before. Babcock are reluctant to publicly commit to a completion date but lessons have been learned from the VANGUARD project and VICTORIOUS should return to the fleet within 3-4 years.

While there should be no compromise on UK nuclear capability, costs continue to spiral with impacts on the wider defence budget. The 'Dreadnought' submarine project has contingency funding but unforeseen costs of sustaining the existing deterrent come at the expense of other defence capabilities. Ensuring VICTORIOUS returns to the fleet on time and on budget, ready for another 10+ years of patrols, will be another enormous challenge.

Another Royal Navy nuclear sub is spotted in Scotland a day after HMS VENGEANCE returned from its epic 201-day mission under the sea

As the old saying goes, you wait ages for a bus and then two come along at once. Well, perhaps now the same can be said for the Royal Navy's nuclear submarines. Because just two days after HMS VENGEANCE made her triumphant return home after an epic 201 days underwater, another sub has been spotted back arriving back.

The second Vanguard-class 'doomsday' boat, which can fire the Trident nuclear missile, was seen sailing into Faslane, Scotland, this morning surrounded by a

police escort. The boat making its return was HMS VANGUARD - which was involved in the Trident missile test in America in January, which saw a test warhead malfunctioning before 'popping' back into the ocean.

However, the Navy remained tight-lipped about movements of the vessel, declining to name or comment on the boat pictured arriving on Wednesday.



The Royal Navy's fourth and final Vanguard-class submarine - HMS VENGEANCE - had spent an epic 201 days gliding beneath the waves, acting as Britain's nuclear deterrent

Britain has a fleet of four Vanguard-class vessels, which act as the country's ultimate weapon of last resort, able to rain down a devastating barrage of nuclear warheads from thousands of miles away.

Each of the 491ft behemoths can patrol undetected for months at a time, gliding silently beneath the waves. The boats can carry up to 16 Trident 2 D5 missiles, each armed with multiple warheads that are each more than 20 times more powerful than the nukes dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the Second World War.

After their epic stint at sea, the 132-strong crew face arguably the biggest challenge of all - readjusting to everyday life. For the duration of the patrol, they were unable to contact their families, see sunlight or eat fresh food. Defrosted oranges and dried egg powder featured prominently in their staple diet.

On what was one of the longest British submarine operations ever undertaken, their lives were measured out in six-hour shifts – while their days and nights were spent squeezed into a claustrophobic metal tube.

They had their sleep disrupted, were deprived of fresh air and many suffered vitamin deficiencies. Common health issues among submariners include ear problems, joint disorders, and an increased risk of certain cancers. Though, experts say the biggest trial was being cut off from their loved ones.

While 'attack' submarines do rise to the surface of the ocean during their missions and give their crews some respite in the process, ballistic missile vessels known as 'bombers' remain hidden on the seabed.

And as bomber submarines are 'receive only' vessels, they could read heavily vetted 'family grams' from the outside world but never respond – as sending a signal would have risked revealing the sub's location. Meanwhile, any information or detail that could have caused them distress would also have been deleted by their captain.



HMS Vengeance seen arriving home with the crew members standing on top of the vessel

Jolly Roger flag from First World War submarine to go on display in the Submarine Museum

Story by Anahita Hossein-Pour



Jolly Roger display © PA Wire

A Royal Navy submarine Jolly Roger flag believed to be the oldest surviving one of its kind is to go on display at the Gosport Submarine Museum.

The maritime antique from Submarine E54, which was flown in 1916 during the First World War, will be showcased from April 27 at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

Museum curators aim to tell the “fascinating” history of the Jolly Roger flag, which is commonly believed to be a pirate flag despite originating from the Royal Navy.

Each flag is a unique historical record of the boat, with submarine crews hoisting them to show pride in their wartime successes, in contrast to pirates who raised their banners to scare other ships, museum chiefs said.

Symbols with different meanings would be painted on or sewn onto flags, such as a dagger to indicate a secret mission, or a bar to demonstrate the sinking of an enemy merchant ship, Alexandra Geary, the artefacts curator at the National Museum of the Royal Navy, said.

She added: "Each action a submarine carried out had its own symbol. These symbols would either be painted or sewn on to a bit of black material.

"Visitors" are intrigued by our Jolly Rogers and enjoy deciphering their meanings. They give a fascinating insight into the often secret and mysterious world of the submariner under the waves and out of sight."

The tradition has continued with examples including the HMS CONQUEROR flying a Jolly Roger on return from the Falklands War in 1982 and HMS OTUS raising their flag on return from the Gulf War in 1991.

Another use for EXCALIBUR's Periscope at Elie Golf Course Starter Hut.

(article supplied by Peter Schofield)

The sight of a submarine periscope towering almost 10m above the starter's hut at Elie was one of the more unusual spectacles in world golf.

The Original Starters Hut.



The structure around the hut supports a periscope, due to a sand dune the first green cannot be seen from the tee. A mirror was used initially, but the club was presented with the periscope from HMS Excalibur which was scrapped at Barrow in 1968.

The New Starters Hut



At the end of April 2014, the periscope took up its new home in the newly built Starters' Office.

The periscope was salvaged from HMS EXCALIBUR in 1966 and presented to the club by member Gavin Reekie.

It gives the starter a perfect view over the hill at the first hole and having made sure the group in front are well on their way, he can then safely invite golfers on the tee to 'play away.'

Visitors and members alike are encouraged to take a look through the periscope and appreciate the unrivalled 360 degree view it provides.

Indeed, taking a moment to enjoy this memorable experience is all part of a round of golf at Elie. You will not be the first to imagine what it must have been like for the submarine's captain to peer out from under the waves while HMS EXCALIBUR was still in service.

Both the views north into the Fife countryside and south over the Firth of Forth are a real delight and the canny golfer will also take a moment to see just where the hole on the second green has been cut for the day!

It is perhaps fitting that the periscope from such an experimental vessel as HMS Excalibur has ended up in such an unusual resting place. To this day it remains a unique and much-loved feature of golf at Elie.

Investigation into fire onboard aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth



An investigation has been launched into the cause of a fire which broke out onboard HMS Queen Elizabeth while it was moored in Argyll and Bute. The aircraft carrier was en-route to Rosyth to undergo repairs when the blaze broke out during a stop on Loch Long at Glenmallon on 8 March. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) said the blaze was quickly extinguished and no ordnance was involved in the incident. A spokesman added that personnel in the vicinity were able to return to work.

A Royal Navy Spokesperson said: "An isolated fire was quickly brought under control and extinguished and there are no reported injuries. "We take the health and safety of our personnel extremely seriously and are investigating to understand the cause. "This will have no impact on HMS Queen Elizabeth's programme and the Royal Navy continues to fulfil all its commitments." A Scottish Fire and Rescue Service spokesperson said: "We received a call at 11.50pm on Friday, 8 March to assist partners at Glen Mallan Jetty, Argyll and Bute.

"Operations Control mobilised three appliances and a height vehicle.

"Crews remained on standby to assist and left at 2.15am on Saturday, 9 March." The ship had to withdraw from a Nato exercise last month because of an issue with a starboard propeller shaft coupling. HMS Prince of Wales was sent on the Steadfast Defender exercise instead, with HMS Queen Elizabeth setting sail from its base at Portsmouth to the Rosyth dockyard to fix the issue.

OPERATION SHINGLE 80

On the 22nd of January 2024 a small but loyal group of friends, Submariners, both Veterans and Serving, all connected by one thing, HM Submarine SPARTAN, joined relatives of the now gone crew of the WWII HMS SPARTAN, a 'Dido' Class Cruiser as well as the school children and people of the town of Anzio and City of Nettuno, the British ambassador Lord Edward Llewellyn and his staff and members of the UK NATO staff from Naples to commemorate the amphibious landing there of 1944, which led to the loss of the Cruiser SPARTAN. a few days into Operation SHINGLE,



This is an event that the Submariners started back in 2000 when the Submarine was in her last refit in Rosyth, after supporting the small and dwindling group of the WWII SPARTAN Survivors raise a memorial plaque to their shipmates who lost their lives on that fateful day, the 29th of January 1944.



After a day of respectful visits to the two British War Graves sites, the Beach Head Cemetery supported by the local school children, and the Anzio Commonwealth Cemetery, where Poppy crosses were placed on two of the graves of men lost from the Cruiser are buried. We then joined a Parade in the Plaza of Anzio before a separate Ceremony took place at the Memorial Plaques on the harbour front. On completion the British contingent gathered in a local Sea Food Restaurant for a meal and a 'Tot to 'Absent Friends', new friends, and the local people of Anzio who, over the years, have adopted the Submariners as honorary guests showing us nothing but friendship.



AROUND THE BRANCHES

AUSTRALIA

Australian Submariner of the Year Award



The annual Royal Australian Navy 'Submariner of the Year' award was conducted 15th December 2023. Mr Richard Drain, President of the Royal Navy Submariners Association (Australia Branch) presented the award to the successful submariner, PO C ISM Justin Beresford Cargin. The award had recently been renamed as the Roy Steadman Excellence Award, in honour of one of our Association's late World War II submariners. A certificate, signed by COMSUB Commodore Tom Phillips and the President was also presented and included a copy of Roy Steadman's autobiography, depicting life as a Part III on a wartime submarine, among many other aspects of Roy's memorable life. Mr Bill Clayton, President of the RAN Submarines Association, also presented PO Cargin with a certificate recognising his achievements.

GOSPORT

NEW MEMBERS STEVE WILKINS AND ANDREW PENDER PRESENTED WITH THEIR BRANCH MEMBERSHIP CARDS BY BRANCH VICE CHAIRMAN PONY MOORE.

At the AGM of the Gosport Branch of the SA, two new members Steve Wilkins and Andrew Pender, were presented with their branch membership cards by the Vice Chairman Pony Moore. The membership cards are created locally by the membership secretary George Guthrie.

Over the past 12 months the membership of the Branch has increased considerably and now stands at an impressive 209. This has been due to the endeavours of the Chairman Steve Thorpe and his committee. The Branch improved its website, forwarded articles on its events to the National website, local online newspaper, and social media. These initiatives combined with word of mouth about the branch social meetings undoubtedly increased awareness of the Branch and there are other new members pending.



BARROW

BARROW ANNUAL 'FIRST FOOTING' VISIT TO THE MORECAMBE BAY BRANCH



The Group Photo

On Friday 2nd February 2024 Barrow Branch Members, family and friends made their annual 'First Footing' visit to the Morecambe Bay Branch to join them at their monthly Branch Meeting - taking with them a bottle of Pusser's Rum.

Following a short Branch Meeting the Morecambe Branch President proposed a toast to the health of 'The King' and then there was a second toast to 'Absent Friends'.

On completion of the Meeting everyone retired to the bar for liquid refreshments and a traditional 'Pie & Peas' Supper followed by an evening of karaoke entertainment.

On the minibus on the way back to Barrow there were pies to eat and everyone was back home safely by just after midnight!

NEW REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL AT MILLOM, CUMBRIA



At 1100 a.m. on Saturday 24th February 2024 Barrow Submariners attended the dedication Ceremony for a new Memorial Plaque at the Cenotaph in Millom, Cumbria. This new Memorial Plaque is dedicated to all Service Personnel who have died in Service since the end of WWII.

The new plaque was unveiled by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Cumbria, Norman Thompson. The new Plaque was revealed at the WW1 Civic War Memorial and is dedicated to those who have lost their lives in conflict since 1945 - the end of the Second World War. Representatives of the town, along with representatives from The Royal British Legion, various Cadet Units and local Service Associations were in attendance. This included a member of Millom Coastguard Rescue - the water and mud rescue team that covers the West Cumbrian coastline.

A spokesperson said for the Coastguard Rescue: "We received an invitation from the town council clerk if we would like to send a representative. We were happy to do as it was a significant occasion.

"It was a very humbling, and moving, experience listening to all of the conflicts which have taken place since the end of WW2. "It was good to see many veterans in attendance. It showed just how many people from our town and surrounding area have been involved in the armed services over the years."

The Barrow Branch, Submariners Association was represented at the Ceremony by Richard Cambridge, Pete Hearn, and J J (Julian) Talks.

ROYAL BERKSHIRE

The annual Memorial Service for HM S/M TIGRIS was hosted by the Newbury Branch of the Royal British Legion, on Sunday 3rd March 2024. Three Standards, Newbury RNA, Newbury RBL and The Royal Berkshire Branch of the Submariners Association were Paraded. In attendance were the Mayor of Newbury, representatives from the Sea Cadets, the Royal Naval Association, and the Submariners Association. Wreaths laid at the TIGRIS Memorial within the grounds of the RBL.

Report by Bob McGuinness, Chair and Standard Bearer of The Royal Berkshire Branch SA

EAST OF SCOTLAND

The next NEC will meet at the newest Branch of the SM Association in Rosyth.

The NEC have been invited to attend the East of Scotland Branch Monthly Meeting on Friday 31st May at HMS CALEDONIA with the NEC taking place on Saturday 1st June.

Look out for dittance and photos at the next edition of In Depth (No. 85)

Best wishes

Alf

D C RAMSEY

EOS Branch Secretary

EAST KENT



The East Kent Branch held their AGM and Branch meeting Sunday 17th March at Ramsgate RNA club. The meeting began with a tot of rum with the toast to those in Sick Bay.

Following the meeting we were joined by the wife of our branch member Jon Gowens (ex-DREADNOUGHT). John has been confined to home for a number of years now due to health problems and it was good to share recent news and pictures of Jon.

Barry Harris
Secretary

ESSEX

Essex Branch Initiates County Ship Affiliation

For the first time in 30 years, the county of Essex will be affiliated with a new Royal Navy frigate, HMS VENTURER. This £250m Type 31 frigate is currently under construction in Scotland and should be ready to join the Royal Naval fleet in 2028.

The initial idea for an affiliation came from the Essex Submariners Association Branch in May of 2022, whilst the Submariner Association National Padre, Dr. Stephen Dray and Mark Turner were in attendance at the dedication of the Submarine Memorial in the National Arboretum. Mark conceived the idea after a conversation with the Chairman of the Hull branch, who had achieved considerable recruitment success following a similar association. On their return, Mark and Stephen contacted the local RNA and other civic leaders to confirm their support for the idea before sending the proposal to the local MP for Rochford and Southend-On-Sea East, Sir James Duddridge, who championed the idea to the Secretary of State, after which Commodore Robert Bellfield, Naval Regional Commander for London and Eastern England, pushed through the application to completion.

Although initially hoping to be associated with one of the new Dreadnought class submarines, Stephen and Mark were happy with the final outcome as HMS VENTURER has a famous submarine connection. On the 9th of February 1945, HMS VENTURER (P68) engaged with U-864, a long-distance 9D2-class diesel submarine off the coast of Norway. U-864 was on a mission code-named Operation Caesar, whose objective was to transport scientists, aircraft parts and 65 tonnes of mercury out of Germany to Japan. After a protracted cat-and-mouse pursuit with both boats remaining dived, HMS VENTURER fired a spread of torpedoes onto the enemy's predicted course. Despite taking evasive action, including a depth change, U-864 was struck by one of the torpedoes and sank with all hands in more than 150 meters (490 ft) of water. This is the only recorded successful action whilst both boats were dived. Lt J S Launders received the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) for the action.

While warships are generally affiliated with towns or cities, it was decided this 'Next Generation Frigate' be affiliated with the county of Essex. Commander Chris Cozens, the frigate's Senior Naval Officer, praised the choice, saying of Essex, "the rich naval and maritime history combined with its modern outlook [makes it] a fitting choice."



Education and Fun at the South Essex College



Mark Turner from the Essex Branch visited South Essex College in Southend-on-Sea in January and February. Mark, whose son Jayden is studying Public Service at the college, gave an insight into his career in the Royal Navy from 1989 to 2001, particularly his years serving on S-class submarines.

Mark's two one-hour presentations were well received by staff and students alike, with many interesting questions. In addition to showing a video about submarine escape training, one lucky student had an opportunity to try on an original escape suit Mark had borrowed from David 'Lester' Piggot of the branch.

John MacMahon, the course instructor, said of the visit, "It was great to receive Mark as a guest to our Public Service class. His stories about his experience in the Navy made a real impression on our students, some of whom are considering their options for a career in the military. I am sure that providing them with an insight into the role the Royal Navy plays in the defence of our country has given some of them ideas which they would certainly not have previously considered."

HULL



Hull Branch at the Families Weekend (Saturday)

MORECAMBE BAY

REMEMBERING JOHN ORTON 'A LIFE WELL LIVED'

Members of the Morecambe Bay Submariners Association were honoured to join John Orton's family, along with members of the Barrow Branch, to pay their last respects at the Barrow Crematorium on Thursday 14 March 2024, where both Branch Standards were paraded, along with the Morecambe and Heysham Royal Naval Association Standard. The proceedings were conducted by the Celebrant on behalf of the family, and the President of the Branch, Tim Roberts, delivered the Eulogy in a very moving and fitting Service to mark the end of a life well lived. John had been a member of the MBSA since February 2002. Although he lived in Flookburgh, nearer to Barrow, the journey to Morecambe with Tim was easier for him to achieve and so he

maintained a long and prosperous relationship with the MBSA. Attending many social events with his wife Shirley, he made a significant contribution to Branch matters, never to be caught without a dit or 2, he made the long journeys from Cumbria to Lancashire an absolute delight, even causing the Driver to have to stop on occasion because he was laughing so much, he could not really concentrate on driving.

John's family were appreciative of the presence of such a large group of his friends and associates at the Crematorium and were delighted that we could join them at the Old Farmhouse in Ulverston, where at John's insistence they were to call 'Up Spirits' in his honour one last time. John passed away suddenly and so the Branch will formally remember him in the time-honoured tradition at the next meeting of the MBSA on 5 April 2024, the family have been informed, and will raise a glass with us on that night.

Yours Aye, Mark Lister MBE, Secretary Morecambe Bay Submariners Association

NORTHERN IRELAND

From Davey George, Northern Ireland Branch.

I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all Members who attended the 2024 Families Weekend & Reunion. To have so many Members attending was fantastic and it was a pleasure to meet most of you personally. Many I did not know, and I think we might be fortunate to welcome you all back at some time in the future, as everyone sang their praises of the event and the hope of returning to our shores.

I am extremely grateful to each and every one of you for making my dream come true.

A huge BZ to you all. Yours Aye, Davy George NI Branch.

WEST RIDING



The West Riding Branch Table at the Families Dinner (Friday)

THE AUKUS PROGRAMME

Eric Thayer / Bloomberg via Getty Images file

By Reuters, March 13, 2024

Australia is confident the United States will follow through with the sale of nuclear-powered submarines as part of the AUKUS deal, a minister said Wednesday, after mooted cuts to the U.S. program raised concerns the deliveries could be delayed or scrapped.

Under the AUKUS partnership signed in 2021, the U.S. will sell Australia between three and five Virginia-class attack submarines starting in the early 2030s as a stopgap while Australia and Britain build a new SSN-AUKUS class due roughly a decade later.

Fears that long-standing backlogs at U.S. shipyards and a shrinking submarine fleet could undercut willingness for the sales boiled over this week when the Biden administration cut its funding request for the Virginia class.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, President Joe Biden, and Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Met in San Diego last year.

Defense Industry Minister Pat Conroy said Australia had total confidence in the AUKUS deal and that the U.S. was making good progress upgrading its shipyards so they could produce the Virginia class for both navies. “I see a lot of hyperbolic headlines about the death of AUKUS, I think it’s the fourth time AUKUS has died in the last year,” he told Reuters by phone. “We remain very confident that we’ll be in a position for the Virginia class to be sold to Australia on the timeframes articulated.” The U.S. Navy is building an average of slightly more than one Virginia-class submarine a year, well short of the estimated 2.33 needed to grow its fleet and sell Australia boats.

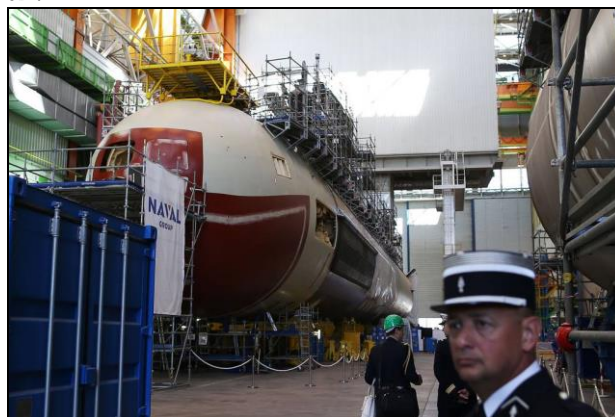
At a budget briefing on Monday, U.S. Under Secretary of the Navy Erik Raven said the submarine industrial base was stressed, but that an \$11.1 billion, five-year investment in the budget request plus a promised \$3 billion from Australia as part of AUKUS would lift production to target. By the time the sales near in 2030, the number of attack submarines in the U.S. Navy is set to fall to a historic low of 46 versus a target of 66, according to Michael Shoebridge, founder of Strategic Analysis Australia and a former defense official.

“It’s going to get harder for a commander of the U.S. submarine force to say, no, I can get by with less submarines, I’m happy to sell three to my Australian friends,” he said. “A U.S. president will come under more pressure to say, I need to look after my own security first.”

Former Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, whose plan to buy French submarines was scrapped by his successor in favour of AUKUS, said on Wednesday the U.S. was unlikely to make its own deficit worse by sending submarines to Australia. “This is really a case of us being mugged by reality,” he told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

France’s Naval Group wins \$6 billion Dutch Submarine Project

By Ruid Ruitenbergh, March 15, 2024



Workers and security personnel gather near a Barracuda-class nuclear attack submarine in Cherbourg

(Charly Triballeau/AFP via Getty Images)

The Netherlands has picked France’s Naval Group to build four attack submarines in a project worth €5.65 billion (U.S. \$6.17 billion), beating offers from Germany’s ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems and Sweden’s Saab Kockums in cooperation with Dutch shipbuilder Damen. Naval Group will provide a conventionally powered version of its Barracuda submarine to replace the Royal Netherlands Navy’s four Walrus-class attack submarines, the first of which the service retired in October. The French shipbuilder will be asked to deliver the first two vessels within 10 years after signing the contract, the Dutch Defence Ministry said in a statement Friday.

The new submarines will carry torpedoes, and they will be suitable for special forces operations. The vessels will be better suited for intelligence gathering due to improved sensors, while modern battery technology will give them greater energy capacity than the Walrus class, and therefore allow them to remain submerged for longer, according to the ministry.

The new vessels will be named ORKA (ORCA), ZWAARDVIS (SWORDFISH), BARRACUDA and TIJGERHAAI (TIGER SHARK), the Netherlands said. The country is targeting delivery of the first sub in the third quarter of 2033, with the final vessel delivered in the third quarter of 2037.

WE REMEMBER SUBMARINERS - CROSSED THE BAR COORDINATORS

“Are you able to listen with compassion to a bereaved person?

Can you offer a willing ear?”

If so, would you like to become a ‘Crossed the Bar’ (CTB) Co-ordinator for We Remember Submariners (WRS)? As a CTB Co-ordinator you will liaise with the bereaved relatives, close friends and funeral directors of submariners who have ‘Crossed the Bar’. You will ensure the submariner is remembered according to the wishes of the family.

These are challenging but very rewarding roles within this active charity”.

This is a voluntary post within the charity, and we would require the successful applicants to complete a full DBS disclosure. We will provide suitable training in safeguarding and working with vulnerable people”.

If you are interested and would like further details, please contact graham.bishop@weremembersubmariners.com or nigel.mellor@weremembersubmariners.com

Nigel Mellor, Operations Manager

We Remember Submariners

Charity Number 1176446

www.we-remember-submariners.com

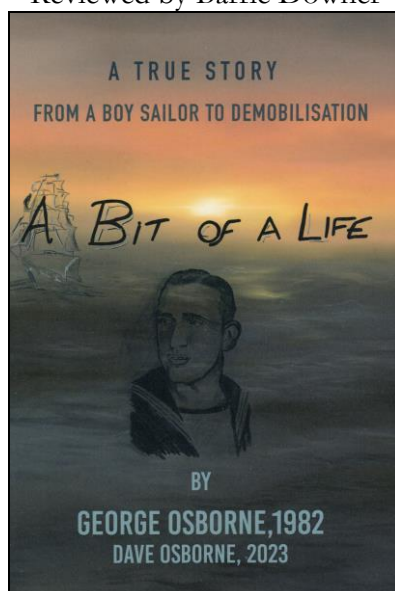
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BOOK REVIEWS

A BIT OF A LIFE

By George Osborne & Dave Osborne

Reviewed by Barrie Downer



Born in 1916 and brought up in Manchester George Osborne joined the Royal Navy as a Boy 2nd Class at HMS ST VINCENT in 1932. This was the RN Training Establishment for Boys in Forton Road in Gosport. The gates are still there but the Establishment has now gone. Here he completed his basic training as a Seaman and as a Telegraphist. In his fourteen year Naval career George served both ashore and afloat in Home Waters, the North Atlantic, the West Indies, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean and on the China Station. He served in shore establishments, Battleships, Cruisers, Destroyers and, later and unexpectedly, in Submarines.

Join the Navy and see the world! George certainly did and, with the help of his son Dave Osborne, he describes a world, places, people, and a Royal Navy he knew well, but which no longer exists – all from the ‘lower deck’ point of view rather than from the ‘wardroom officer’ perspective.

George remembered the things he did, the places he went, the people he met, events he was involved in, the ships (and submarines) he served in and, particularly, the radio & communications equipment and systems he used and the procedures for their operation.

Very few of us these days can remember the ‘slinging’ of, and the comfort of, sleeping in a hammock (albeit in a lower deck and over-crowded mess), the almost religious procedures of ‘tot time’, canteen messing, cooks of the mess and the preparation and serving of the food and the almost 100% take up of smoking.

All his ships, establishments, his way of life and his contemporaries are long gone but two amusing anecdotes about ‘cooks of the mess’ related by George, shows that lower deck humour has never changed. In the Battleship HMS MALAYA ‘Newbies’ were often teased with instructions along the lines of:

“putting eggs in to soak overnight to prevent them from boiling hard, and the one that George fell for when they were preparing bacon and eggs for breakfast, ‘Don’t forget to nick the bacon rind and then number the eggs 1 to 48 with a pencil,’ said the caterer. ‘Then,’ he instructed, ‘make sure I get numbers 22 to 37’, as these eggs were the ones for frying.”

“The most amusing recollection he had of this type happened one day when the caterer had decided to prepare macaroni as a sweet for us. We had two Cornishmen for ‘cooks’ that day, one a veteran matelot who had seen action in the First World War called ‘Zep’ Hobbah, and the other, a young ordinary telegraphist, whose full name I can’t recall but, in common with other west-countrymen was called Jan, who should perhaps have known better. The macaroni came in long hollow sticks shaped rather like a walking stick, with a curved ‘handle’.*

‘Hey, Zep,’ said Jan. ‘How do we prepare this macaroni?’

‘Get a very long dish,’ said Zep, ‘long enough to lay the macaroni sticks in, and we’ll have stuffed macaroni.’

‘Then, what do we do?’ said Jan.

‘Get a tin of jam out of the cupboard, not strawberry, that’s too lumpy,’ ordered Zep. ‘Then push each stick into the jam and suck the other end until it is full of jam. When all the sticks are done, lay them in the dish and cover them with condensed (Carnation) milk, add a couple of handfuls of sugar, spread thinly, and there you are - stuffed macaroni.’

Jan faithfully carried out these instructions, much to the amusement and joy of the rest of us, and the stuffed macaroni appeared in the galley, much to the consternation of the chefs. But Jan had the last laugh as the dish was delicious despite the unhygienic method of preparation.

**‘Zep’ was Leading Telegraphist James Wesley Hobbah O/N J34301 who had served in RN & RAN Submarines from 5th February 1916 to 12th February 1926’.*

In these days of almost instant communications it is difficult to imagine the difficulties that George (and many other in the Navy) experienced in staying in contact with their girlfriends, wives, close family, and their friends in times of peace and, particularly, war time when separated by weeks, months or years, distance, events, moves between ships, changes of programme etc. Where was my family living when I was last at home? Have they moved? Are they ok?

The book is packed with detail. There are stories of exercises, trials, visits, storms, and ‘runs ashore’ (some more lively than others) in Norway, the West Indies, Gibraltar, Malta, Alexandria, Singapore, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Nanking, Tsingtao, Wei Hai Wei. After first serving in the Battleship HMS MALAYA George joined the Cruiser HMS BERWICK. He returned to Hong Kong as a passenger in a submarine where he was drafted firstly to the Transmitting Station on Stonecutters Island but after a disagreement with his Chief he was transferred to the Receiving Station in HMS TAMAR although he later returned to Stonecutters. George reports returning to UK in the Troopship DORSETSHIRE with ‘about a hundred submariners and a whole regiment of soldiers’ and, luckily, he was messed with the Submariners. After his foreign service leave he was ‘pierhead jumped’ to the destroyer HMS BEAGLE where he met another submariner – Leading Telegraphist Leo Flanagan – who became a good friend. Leo had previously served the Submarine L26 in which he had been injured in a Battery explosion in 1933.

Another ‘pierhead jump’ took him to the Battleship HMS ROYAL OAK after which, in 1939 he completed training courses for advancement to the rate of Petty Officer (WT2). George then joined the Cruiser HMS CALYPSO and saw service with the Northern Patrol after the outbreak of WWII before being redeployed to the Mediterranean as his ship ‘was unsuited’ for operations in the North Atlantic. He was a survivor after CALYPSO was torpedoed in 1940 and sunk by an Italian submarine, he being rescued by HMS DAINITY and taken to Malta. After briefly serving in HMS MEDWAY – a submarine depot ship - he rejoined HMS DAINITY but now he was a member of the crew. George was again a survivor when HMS DAINITY was bombed and sunk in the Mediterranean in 1941. He spent the next year ashore in the Radio Station at Alexandria in Egypt before eventually returning to UK and his family and to a post in the Signals School at Devonport.

Somewhat to his surprise George was next sent for Submarine Training at HMS DOLPHIN and HMS ELFIN at Blyth before joining the vintage submarine HMS L27 at Rothesay. Later he was drafted the 4th Submarine Flotilla at Colombo in CEYLON (now Sri Lanka) where he joined the Submarine HMS TALLY HO as the PO Telegraphist serving there for several War Patrols in the Pacific before returning home in the Submarine to arrive in Blyth in February 1945 and a reunion with his long suffering wife. After a number of minor submarine postings and by now a Chief Petty Officer Telegraphist, and a scare that he might have contracted tuberculosis, George decided to leave the Navy which he did at the end of his 12-year Continuous Service engagement in August 1946.

Today's 'Communicators' will be interested in how Ship and Shore Comms were organised in the 30s and 40s – especially the complex and extensive changes required by wartime conditions both in Ships and Submarines and in Naval Wireless Stations such as that at Ras el Tin - opposite the Royal Palace in Alexandria, Egypt - which George described as the busiest Wireless Station in the Navy except for Whitehall Comms in London. Using George's notes and further information which has become available in recent years Dave Osborne has been able to produce a very readable book.

The book benefits from a Foreword by Australian Michael White OM, KC – a former Submariner, Author, and Professor of Maritime Law at the University of Queensland.

There are a number of typos and other minor issues in the book – including Devonport being referred to as Davenport in a few places, HMS DIOMEDE as HMS DROMEDE and HMS CALYPSO being credited on one page with 24-inch Torpedo Tubes -not 21-inch and, on another page, the Shore Establishment HMS GANGES is reported to have been sunk! However, these do not distract from a very informative and readable story.

Available from: Xlibris - the current price of the soft cover book is \$23.99 if purchased via them or from Barnes and Noble in the UK ('A Bit of A Life: From A Boy Sailor To Demobilisation' by George Osborne, Dave Osborne, Paperback | Barnes & Noble® (barnesandnoble.com))

Bubbleheads, Seals & Wizards - America's Scottish Bastion in the Cold War

By David Mackay

By Barrie Downer. This is a book for all you Cold War Warriors! I expect you may remember the US Navy Base at the Holy Loch with its Submarine Depot Ships, Repair Ships and Floating Dock and recall their SSBNs sailing up and down the Clyde either leaving on Patrol or returning for refit & maintenance. Other US Navy Ships were regular users of the Ammunitioning Jetty at Glen Mallon and the Armament Depot at Glen Douglas and various Oil Fuel Depots.

You will be less familiar with other American manned and operated Scottish Bases and facilities – mostly in the north and east of the country – Edzell, Mormand Hill, Kirknewton, Thurso and mostly concerned with Communications and Intelligence Gathering using a variety of equipment and facilities. One of the Facilities was on the West Coast at RAF Macrahanish - which some will know has a very long runway and which has been the subject of all sorts of rumour and conjecture over its use including as a possible Space Shuttle emergency landing site! And its rumoured underground hangar!

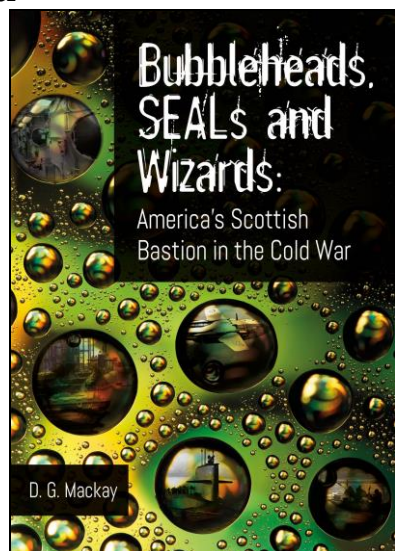
Did you know that one of their Bases was used for the preparation and launch of balloons carrying surveillance equipment and cameras to be floated across the Soviet Union and Iron Curtain countries with their payloads to be dropped and recovered when over friendly ally countries? This was before the days of the U2 Spy planes. This method of intelligence gathering doesn't seem to have been particularly

successful so was later abandoned but it is interesting to note that in recent months there has been much speculation about surveillance balloons being floated across the USA by unfriendly nations.

All these US Shore Bases and Facilities were closed down, and abandoned after the end of the Cold War and the Ships at the Holy Loch were withdrawn to the USA following the introduction of the Trident Submarines with their greater range and endurance, improved Weapons Systems and with their longer range missiles. The title of the book appears to be related to the nicknames of the various personnel and organisations using these facilities – I presume 'Bubbleheads' is supposed to refer to the Holy Loch Submariners but in UK /RN usage 'Bubbleheads' were Divers - especially those trained at HMS VERNON.

The author states that he has interviewed many US Personnel who served in Scotland and who used these Bases and, almost to a man, they are all keen to point out how professional they were and how proud they were of serving their country. I suppose they can be rightly proud of serving their country but some of their operations, particularly at the Holy Loch, seem to have been less than professional by RN Standards. The care of nuclear warheads and the reported dropping of a Polaris missile in a Depot Ship being of significant concern – was it ever reported to the UK authorities

The Publisher Data reports that this book shines a bright light on the significant role the Scottish bases played in supporting the United States military for more than three decades. It provides a detailed examination of all the American bases in Scotland, covering their operations and personnel. There are interviews with over 150 American and British Cold War military personnel



The American military presence in Scotland during the Cold War was greater than in either of the World Wars, bringing with it the largest peace-time number of foreign military personnel in Scotland's history.

This military power was delivered by individuals - the forgotten heroes. They worked to high standards of professionalism and most had no true concept of the danger they faced from the Soviet threat. This reality was only ever confronted during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962.

The author, a former Cold War special forces officer, brings his personal expertise into play, examining this intriguing story by reaching out to more than one hundred veterans and expert witnesses. Their contributions cover the nitty-gritty end of history, not high-end diplomacy. This fast-moving

account of their endeavours, often in long working conditions, highlights the value of teamwork, training, and determination.

It is clear that Scotland would have been a Soviet target of necessity once the American bases were established. Scotland was of great importance to the United States during the Cold War and this research shows that, for more than thirty years, Scotland was the capstone in Washington's early Cold War strategy. Scotland was an active centre of US strategic operations and the vital importance of its geographic position is clearly demonstrated as each location is examined, and its benefits listed. There were six significant bases, the most important being America's only nuclear-armed submarine squadron in the Holy Loch. He details the operations which were carried out by the large radio spy stations (SIGINT) at Kirknewton, Thurso and Edzell. And he reveals for the first time America's most bizarre intelligence gathering activity of the early Cold War, which also took place in Scotland.

Overall, this book provides an important addition to the conventional US/UK Cold War narrative. The United States desperately needed the assistance Scotland provided and the author presents a convincing narrative that Scotland was at the epicentre of the Cold War's most terrifying episode the Cuban Missile Crisis. Kennedy's success was greatly assisted by these Scottish bases which provided him with the firepower and intelligence to outwit Khrushchev. One section of the book deals with the visit of JFK's top advisor to Holy Loch - a story that has never been revealed before. It emphasises the simple fact that Scotland's role was a game changer. An interesting theme throughout the book is the espionage effort mounted by the KGB against these bases. The author has interviewed senior intelligence officers and their input is revealing.

These were exciting times for the young Americans who crossed the ocean to serve their country and this is their Cold War story.

Readership: this intriguing story will appeal to anyone interested in modern Scottish, British, American and Cold War military history.

About the author: David Mackay was an academic and a security consultant and journalist as well as a former Cold War Special Forces Officer.

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SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR' (Reported 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024 (** WWI Service)

Information on 'Submariners Crossed the Bar' compiled from CTBs reported by all available sources.

NAME	DATE/AGE	RANK/RATE	BRANCH	SM SERVICE	SUBMARINES
David Lord RCN	2 nd November 2017	Able Seaman (Electrician)	SAOC	October 1978 to 1980	OJIBWA
Phillip Raymond Heap	27th October 2023 aged 82	Warrant Officer (WEM) (O)	RNA HQ Group	Not reported	WALRUS (on recommissioning at Devonport on 3rd December 1969), NARWHAL, OSPREY & CACHALOT
John Joseph Ovens RCN 36135-H	17th November 2023 aged 85	Petty Officer 1st Class	SAOC (East)	Not reported	HMCS GRILSE and HMCS RAINBOW
John Charles Earle RCN	17th November 2023 aged 59	Leading Seaman Cook	SAOC (East)	1990s & 2000s	HMCS OKANAGAN (1998) & HMCS ONONDAGA (2000)
Paul Knowles	19th November 2023 aged 56	Not reported	We Remember Submariners	Not reported	Not reported
David (Ivan) Lomax	19th December 2023 aged 69	Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer (L)	We Remember Submariners	Not reported	SPLENDID (1st Commission Crew) on 21st March 1981 & TURBULENT
Victor Trevor Andrews-Gernand P/SSX 865873	20th December 2023 aged 89	Leading Seaman (RP2)	Brierley Hill Branch	October 1954 to January 1959	UNTIRING, AMBUSH, ALLIANCE & TURPIN
Graham J (Woody) Woodberry P/J936851	25th December 2023 aged 85	Leading Seaman	Dolphin Branch	June 1959 to August 1965	SCORCHER (1959 to 1960), ALARIC (1960 to 1962) & ARTFUL (1963 to 1965)
James F Bingham	29th December 2023	LWEM (O)	We Remember Submariners	1980s	SUPERB on re-commissioning on 28th September 1985 & TRENCHANT (1st Commission Crew) on 14th January 1989. Also served in SCEPTRE (?)
Cedric Fray	30th December 2023	Fleet Chief Marine Engineering Artificer (EL)	We Remember Submariners	Not reported	REPULSE (P) (1st Commission Crew) on 28th September 1968
Royston Cummings aged 92	1st January 2024	Able Seaman (UW)	Gosport Branch	June 1952 to December 1956	SENECHAL, ALCIDE & TRESPASSER
Robin J Brisley D053736G	4th January 2024 aged 79	Chief Petty Officer Coxswain	Plymouth Branch	7th November 1966 to 19th February 1991	DREADNOUGHT, RESOLUTION (S) (1st Commission Crew on 3rd October 1967), COURAGEOUS & SPARTAN
Christopher Adrian Hely-Hutchinson	11th January 2024 aged 92	Lieutenant Commander (E) (MESM)	Friend of SM Museum	Not reported	DOLPHIN, DREADNOUGHT (on Commissioning at Barrow 17th April 1963) & DG Ships
Brian Vincent Woodford CBE	12th January 2024 aged 87	Captain (E)	Friend of SM Museum	1964 to 1989	CACHALOT, OSPREY, NEPTUNE, RESOLUTION, Naval Base Rosyth. Weapons Department N) (1974 to 1976), D/Directorate Polaris, COCHRANE, MoD CSSE, MoD DSE & DEFIANCE (1987 to 1989)
Lee R Goldhill, MBE D172952G	18th January 2024 aged 71	Chief Petty Officer Cook	Dolphin Branch	May 1984 to 2002	REVENGE (1985 to 1991), VANGUARD (S) (1991 to 1996 1st Commission Crew at Barrow on 14th August 1993, SPLENDID (1998 to 2000) & SUPERB (2001 to 2002)
Andy Clyde	20th January 2024 aged 86	Radio Electrical Mechanician	Non-member	1960s	DREADNOUGHT (1967 to 1971) & SOVEREIGN (1st Commission Crew) on 9th July 1974. On board for DREADNOUGHT North Pole trip in 1971
Roy Cheshire P/J948105	22nd January 2024 aged 85	Chief Petty Officer (UW1)	Indalo (Spain) Branch	May 1959 to 1979	TRUMP (1959 to 1960), TIPTOE (1960 to 1963), ARTFUL (1964 to 1966), AURIGA (1966 to 1968), ANCHORITE (1968 to 1969) & DREADNOUGHT

					(1969 to 1972) & (1975 & on Recommissioning' at Chatham 9th October 1976 to 1978)
Eric Briscoe D053972X	January 2024 aged 93	Warrant Officer (WEM) (R)	Middlesex Branch	Not reported	CONQUEROR (1st Commission Crew from 9th November 1971)
David (Joe) Beaver	January 2024	Petty Officer (ME)	We Remember Submariners	Not reported	CONQUEROR & CHURCHILL
J A Y Plante	8th February 2024	Captain, RCN	SAOC (East)	Not reported	ONONDAGA (CO 1983 to 1984), OKANAGAN (CO Jan to Mar 1984), ONONDAGA (CO 1984 to 1986), OJIBWA (CO 1986 to 1987), Captain SM1 (RCN) (1990 to 1992, HMCS FRASER (CO 1990 to c 1990) & NDHQ
John (Pusser) Hill D088493R	10th February 2024 aged 78	Control Electrical Mechanician	Sheffield Branch	1974 to 1978	COURAGEOUS & WARSPITE
Nigel P Weatherill D136341H	11th February 2024	Leading Weapons Electrical Mechanic	We Remember Submariners	1973 to 1994	VALIANT, COURAGEOUS (1979 to 1981), CONQUEROR, REVENGE (P) & SCIT (Faslane)
John Howard James Gower	12th February 2024	Rear Admiral	Friend of SM Museum	1984 to 2013	OBERON (1984 to 1985), DOLPHIN (1986 to 1987), TIRELESS (1988 to 1989), TURBULENT (1990), NEPTUNE CSST (1991 to 1992), UNICORN (CO 1993 to 1994), TRAFALGAR (CO 1995 to 1997), MOD London (1998 to 2001 NL), BDS Washington (2002 to 2005), JSSC (2006), MOD Main (2007 to 2010) & ACDS NBC (2011 to 2013)
Christopher David Prentis	19th February 2024 aged 91	Commander (Hon.)	Friend of SM Museum	195* to 1962	DOLPHIN, SELENE (3rd Hand 14th July 1955), AMBROSE (1956 NL), TRESPASSER (IL November 1958 & on recommissioning at Rosyth on 15th December 1958) & DOLPHIN (1962 NL)
John C Shirley P/JX 871255	20th February 2024	Chief Petty Officer Coxswain	We Remember Submariners	196* to 1989	TOTEM on 'Commissioning' at Gosport on 28th January 1963, ANCHORITE (1966 to 1968), TIPTOE (July 1969)
Lorne Roman Markic RCN	20th February 2024 aged 64	Cook	SAOC	Not given	OJIBWA & ONONDAGA
Peter Kenneth 'Nobby' Johncock	20th February 2024 aged 86	Fleet Chief Engine Room Artificer	We Remember Submariners	196* to 1980	Including OTUS (2nd Commission Crew 28th January 1969) & DOLPHIN
Eric Vernon Travers P/JX 661852	21st February 2024 aged 94	Petty Officer (TI)	Exeter Branch	July 1950 to November 1960	TRADEWIND, TRESPASSER, ACHERON (on commissioning at Portsmouth on 7th February 1955), EXPLORER, AUROCHS on 17th May 1958 & TELEMACHUS
P 'Pedro' Dickinson P/MX 654723	22nd February 2024 aged 84	Chief Engine Room Artificer	Merseyside Branch	June 1962 to March 1973	SEALION, AMBUSH, TABARD, ODIN (twice), ORACLE & DREADNOUGHT Sealion, Ambush, Tabard, Odin (2), Oracle, Dreadnought
Trevor J Kinrade D177319N	24th February 2024	Able Seaman (Sonar)	We Remember Submariners	June 1979 to January 1986	SPARTAN (1980 to 1982) & TIRELESS (1984 to 1985)
Donald James Gregory Fraser P/KX 544480	27th February 2024 aged 98	Sub Lieutenant RNVR	Australia Branch	30th October 1944 to February 1947	ELFIN, UNBENDING (3rd Hand 1st February 1945), TANTIVY (20th July 1945 to 9th February 1946) & DOLPHIN
T G C (Tom) McCammont P/SMX 924292	February 2024 aged 89	Leading Electrical Mechanic	Australia Branch	July 1955 to February 1962	SERAPH, ACHERON, AUROCHS (twice), was one of a draft of 13 SM Ratings arrived Tilbury from Sydney in SS STRATHENDEN on 14th October 1958, SEA SCOUT on recommissioning 28th July 1960 & TELEMACHUS

Ray J 'Ginge' Pryor D143073Y	29th February 2024 aged 65	Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic (M)	Norfolk Branch	October 1975 to April 1998	VALIANT (on recommissioning at Chatham on 16th February 1980), TURBULENT, TIRELESS, TRAFALGAR & TORBAY
Terence W Stuart P/J934263	February 2024	Leading Radio Operator (T)	Sheffield Branch	1960 to 1965	ALARIC & ALCIDE
Colin J Way, MSM D093889T	February 2024 aged 75	Warrant Officer Coxswain	Gosport Branch	1968 to 1999	VALIANT (May 1969 to July 1970), REPULSE (S) (July 1970 to January 1973), REVENGE (S) (January 1974 to October 1976), CONQUEROR (May 1978 to January 1983), SOVEREIGN (July 1985 to September 1985), SWIFTSURE (October 1985 to November 1988), SCEPTRE (June 1989 to November 1989)
Andrew Mitchell D142912	February 2024	Petty Officer (Sonar)	We Remember Submariners	December 1974 to November 1997	COURAGEOUS (1974 to 1980), SCEPTRE, DREADNOUGHT, TRAFALGAR (1st Commission Crew on 27th May 1983), TRENCHANT (1st Commission Crew on 14th January 1989) & TURBULENT
John Kendall James	February 2024 aged 86	Radio Supervisor	We Remember Submariners	1960s & 1970s	TAPIR on Commissioning in Malta on 27th January 1961 & ANDREW (on Commissioning at Portsmouth in 1971)
John Orton P/KX 914450	3 rd March 2024 aged 87	Mechanician 1	Morecambe Bay Branch	May 1960 to January 1966	SENTINEL, TIPTOE, ASTUTE, OPPORTUNE on commissioning at Chatham on 29th December 1964 & SEA DEVIL
Louis Albert King RCN	4 th March 2024 aged 64	Not given	SAOC	Not given	WINDSOR
John Sheridan	8th March 2024 aged 98	Lieutenant (E) (ME)	Eastern States Branch	1958 to 1962	Commissioned Mechanician (1st February 1956) and served in HMS SHEFFIELD (1958 NL) Engineer Sub Lieutenant (ME) to Lieutenant (E) (ME) in TACTICIAN, SCYTHIAN, TANIN, RAHAV, TAPIR (EO on Commissioning at Malta on 27th January 1961) & TERROR (Spring 1962 (NL)
Michael Ernest Winter CO 10776M	8th March 2024 aged 82	Commander (E) (WESM)	Dolphin Branch	April 1965 to April 1994	DOLPHIN, ORACLE, OCELOT, SEALION MERCURY, NEPTUNE, REPULSE (P) (PSO 14th June 1974 to 1976), MoD (PE) & FOSM Northwood)
James (Jim) Currie D082117U	12 th March 2024 aged 76	Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer (P)	Portsmouth Branch	August 1974 to December 1987	FINWHALE (Final Commission Crew' on 15th November 1974 to 1977), ODIN (1979 to 1981) & OSIRIS (1982 to 1987)
Nigel Milnes	17th March 2024	Marine Engineering Mechanic	We Remember Submariners	1990s & 2000s	REVENGE, RENOWN & VANGUARD
Frederick Kingsley Morgan D102727E	17th March 2024 aged 71	Stores Accountant	Wales	February 1974 to May 1979	OLYMPUS (1974 to 1979)
David James Devins P/J 982566	22nd March 2024 aged 80	Radio Operator 2	Merseyside Branch	May 1963 to August 1970	AUROCHS, TRUNCHEON & RENOWN
Ralph Keenan D149923V	23rd March 2024 aged 66	Chief Petty Officer Weapons Electrical Artificer	We Remember Submariners	February 1976 to April 1997	ODIN, SEALION, ORACLE & OLYMPUS
John Lawrence Simpson	23 rd March 2024 aged 91	Lieutenant (L)	Friend of RN Submarine Museum	To 1963	THULE, EXCALIBUR, Refit Group Plymouth, ORPHEUS (LO on commissioning at Barrow on 25th November 1960) & DOLPHIN Training Electrical Officer)

M J (Yorkie) Pearson D145882V	23 rd March 2024 aged 65	Leading Seaman (UC2)	Gosport Branch	1975 to 1998	OSIRIS, OPPORTUNE, SEALION, ONYX, TIRELESS & TRENCHANT
John F (Sid) Cusse D181052R	25 th March 2024 aged 85	Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer (P)	Medway Towns	Not reported	AMPHION, ODIN on Commissioning at Rosyth on 19th August 1966, FINWHALE, CACHALOT, OPOSSUM 'on Commissioning' at Chatham on 2nd August 1974, ONYX (inc April to June 1982) & OTTER (on commissioning at Humber Ship Repairers on 29th November 1986)
George H Goodwin	25th March 2024	Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer	We Remember Submariners	Not reported	RESOLUTION (S) (2nd Commission Crew) on 10th July 1971, RENOWN, REVENGE & VALIANT
Christopher Gordon Ousley 'Kipper' Walker CO 10725X	26 th March 2024 aged 89	Lieutenant Commander (X) (SM)	Dolphin Branch & Friend of RN Submarine Museum	September 1954 to March 1980	SLEUTH, SCORCHER, SPITEFUL, TALENT, THOROUGH, AUROCHS, ANDREW, ARTEMIS (IL), CACHALOT (IL 5th April 1964), USS THORNBACK, AMPHION (CO 1966), NARWHAL (CO & DREADNOUGHT (IL)
Derek John Fruen	March 2024 aged 92	TBA	We Remember Submariners	1950s	SCORCHER & THERMOPYLAE (was one of a draft of 39 Submarine Ratings embarked in SS STRATHENDEN at Tilbury for Sydney on 21st September 1954)
Anthony Richards	March 2024	TBA	We Remember Submariners	TBA	Submarine Service in PORPOISE
John P Goldsmith D0809547	March 2024 aged 75	Chief Petty Officer (Ops) (TS)	Peterborough Branch	1968 to 1988	ALARIC, PORPOISE, GRAMPUS, FINWHALE 'Final Commission Crew' on 15th November 1974 & OBERON
Geoff Holmes	March 2024	Stoker	We Remember Submariners	Not given	AURIGA

