



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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Cover Picture: ANOTHER LARGE SECTION OF HMS DREADNOUGHT ON ITS WAY TO THE DEVONSHIRE DOCK HALL AT THE BAE SHIPYARD ON 31st MARCH 2025

EDITORIAL

Hello Everyone

Firstly apologies for the later than usual arrival of In Depth No 89 - my excuse is that it was for reasons beyond my control! You will find all of the usual items in this Edition and I hope you will find something interesting to read. Please note that next year - 2026 - will see the 125th Anniversary of the Submarine Service - so I thought it might be interesting to see what happened in 2001 for the 100th Anniversary.

The National Celebrations for the 100th Anniversary in 2001 were based around the October date with:

- (1) A Luncheon in the Mansion House in London for 338 Guests on 17th September 2001
- (2) A Service of Dedication of the National Standard of the Submariners Association in Holy Trinity Church Gosport on Sunday 2nd October 2001
- (3) A Drumhead Service at Alecto Colonnade in HMS DOLPHIN on Sunday 6th October 2001
- (4) Service of Thanksgiving & Remembrance in Westminster Abbey on 2nd November 2001 followed by:
- (5) A Submarine Service Centenary Reception in the Royal Horticultural Halls, London also on 2nd November
- (6) SA Centenary Memorial Service at the National Submarine Memorial on Sunday 4th November 2001
- (7) A '167 Man' Platoon plus a Submariners Platoon in the National Remembrance Day Parade in Whitehall on Sunday 11th November 2001.

In addition to these events there were various others including at least two major weekend events arranged at Faslane and at Barrow (where the Freedom of Barrow was conferred on the Submarine Service) plus there many other branch organised Parades & Events.

At the moment I assume that for any National 125th Anniversary some similar events will also be programmed! I expect the SA National Standard may be much in demand next year. Also the 'Submarine Service' Colours may well be required – currently these are the 'QUEEN'S COLOURS' held at Faslane but will probably need be replaced by new 'KING'S COLOURS'.

Please note that 'In Depth' Issue No. 90 will be published on 1st October 2025. Contributions (especially reports of Branch Events and Socials) are required to be with the Editor (me) by 15th September 2025 - see contact details below. Please make sure I get your contributions in good time by Email or Snail Mail as appropriate!

Regards, Barrie Downer

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CHAIRMANS DIT

Dear Members of the Submariners Association,

Four Months In – Charting a Course for the Future

By Andy Knox, National Chairman, Submariners Association

It's been a quiet yet rewarding four months since I took up the position of National Chairman of the Submariners Association. I have been heartened by the energy, commitment, and warmth shown by our members across the country. It's clear to me that while our roots are proudly traditional, we must also look ahead to ensure the long-term vitality and relevance of our Association.

We have made early progress, but more importantly, we have started to lay the foundation for an ambitious and necessary transformation. I want to use this report to reflect briefly on what we've achieved so far and to share our collective direction for the years ahead.

A Promising Start

Since stepping into the role, I have prioritised listening to our members and branches, understanding the concerns of today and the hopes for tomorrow. It's clear there is widespread appetite for growth, modernisation, and a more visible presence in public life.

In that spirit, we, the Committee will take steps toward refreshing how we operate, how we are perceived, and how we serve our members — past, present, and future.

Committee Meeting – Face to Face in Morecambe

I'm very much looking forward to our first face to face SA Committee meeting on 18th July in Morecambe, where we will be joined by members of the Morecambe, Manchester, Blackpool & Fylde and Barrow branches. The SA Padre will also attend. Any members of the Association who live in the local area are also welcome to attend and should contact the National Secretary so that he can cater for exact numbers which are limited to 50 due to the venue.

These direct engagements are vital to building understanding, consensus, and momentum. Face-to-Face dialogue will be key as we set our course for the next three years.

Strategic Plan: 2025–2028

Our three-year plan is designed to ensure the Submariners Association remains relevant, visible, and resilient well into the future. The four pillars of our strategy are as follows:

1. Pursuing Charitable Status

We will actively seek charitable status for the Association. This will:

- Increase access to funding and grants.
- Boost our credibility with potential donors and public bodies.
- Help formalise and strengthen our support for veterans, bereaved families, and submariners in crisis.

A working group will be set up and begin gathering information and assessing the administrative and legal steps needed. This is a high-priority goal for completion as soon as practicably/legally possible, obviously this will require the members to vote on this subject.

2. Public Outreach and Visibility

Our submariner community has stories worth telling, values worth sharing, and service worth honouring. In the coming years, we aim to:

- Increase our presence at public events, parades, remembrance ceremonies, we have already provided several branches with outreach material for Armed Forces Day etc.
- Build partnerships with maritime museums, naval charities, and local councils.
- Introduce an Outreach Calendar featuring national and branch-level engagement activities.

We want to remind the public — and especially young people — of the unique contribution submariners have made, and continue to make, to our nation.

3. 125th Anniversary of the Submarine Service

The 125th anniversary of the Submarine Service in 2026 will be a landmark moment, and we are beginning the planning now.

Our goal is to ensure the Submariners Association plays a leading role in the commemoration. Planned elements will include:

- A national commemorative event.
- A published tribute or exhibition chronicling our history.
- Engagement with serving submariners to ensure today's generation is celebrated alongside those of the past.

This anniversary will be an opportunity to show unity, pride, and heritage – and to raise awareness of the silent service.

4. Attracting and Retaining Younger Members

To ensure the Association's future, we must be as relevant to today's serving submariners as we are to those who served decades ago. Our approach will include:

- Continuing to provide our Webmaster with refreshed communications and social media presence.
- Appointing Younger Member Representatives at branch and national level.
- Offering events and initiatives that reflect the interests and availability of serving submariners.

It's not about changing who we are – it's about widening the gangway to make sure more submariners come aboard.

Looking Ahead

As we prepare to meet in Morecambe and continue our journey, I want to thank all members for their support, ideas, and dedication. I firmly believe the Submariners Association has a vital role to play in supporting comradeship, honouring service, and keeping the spirit of the submarine family alive. The next three years will be about action – with purpose, with pride, and together.

Yours aye,

Andy Knox

National Chairman

Submariners Association

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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_D7kQUr6N96pgKEz5zZteXcCPgNj2wVHLt8SGEbPqGxjBUcQW8M

SUBMARINE & SUBMARINER LOSSES OF WWII

APRIL 1945

One member of the crew of Submarine **HMS TOTEM** died on Friday 20th April 1945. He was:
PO Tel Edmund John Flynn C/SSX 23598

Edmund Flynn was born in Sligo, County Sligo in Ireland on 15th April 1917 and he was the son of James Aloysius Flynn and Agnes Mary Flynn (nee Power). There was a younger sister – Margaret Mary Flynn (born in 1921). His father is reported to have

died in Sligo in April 1929. Edmund Flynn was accidentally drowned on Friday 20th April 1945 at Lerwick in the Shetland Isles where the Submarine had arrived on 19th April 1945 on completion of her 1st War Patrol. Twenty-eight-year-old Edmund John Flynn of Highfield, Queen's Road, Hertford (who was unmarried) named his widowed mother as his Next of Kin. He is buried in the Lerwick New Cemetery, Zetland in the Shetland Isles in Terrace No. 11 Grave No. 23.

An Officer appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship **HMS MAIDSTONE** died on 19th April 1945. He was:

Commander Reginald Robert Helbert

Reginald Robert Helbert was born in West Maitland, New South Wales, Australia in 1898 and he was the son of Lt Col Geoffrey Gladstone Helbert (a Staff Officer of the Union of South Africa) & Mabel Sophia Helbert. He joined the Royal Navy as a Special Entry Cadet in 1916 and served in the Battleship HMS REVENGE from March 1917 and the Destroyer HMS WARWICK from 12th January 1919. He served as Navigator in Submarines H28 (1921), H30 (1921), K12 (1922) and as First Lieutenant in H52, L26 & L27. He completed his 'Commanding Officers Qualifying Course' in 1926 and commanded H44 (1926 to 1927). He next served in Battle Cruisers HOOD and RENOWN before commanding L26, OSWALD (1931 to 1932). On 22nd July 1932 he joined the Submarine Tender HMS FERMOY at Portland. Reginald Helbert then served in the Submarines H27, STARFISH, SEALION. He was appointed to Submarine HMS SPEARFISH 'in Command' on 15th August 1936 and then to HMS TAMAR at Hong Kong 'in charge of DSEA Training, for Submarines, and as Anti-Piracy Officer' and 'for supervision of Merchant Navy Defence Courses'. On 8th September 1940 he was one of 32 RN Officers arriving at Liverpool in SS ORONTES – he having embarked at Bombay. He next served as an Acting Commander in the Submarine Depot Ship HMS TITANIA 'as Staff Officer Operations' from 28th October 1940 and then in the Submarine Depot Ship HMS FORTH 'and for duty with submarines' from 1st January 1942. Reginald Helbert joined HMS MAIDSTONE at Alexandria in 3rd June 1943 and remained with the ship on its transfer to Trincomalee and then to Freemantle where he was the 'British Naval Liaison Officer'. He is reported to have died in an air crash (a United States C37 Transport) on 19th April 1945. He was the forty-seven-year-old husband of Annie Vera Helbert and he is buried in the Perth War Cemetery in Western Australia in Grave SC 10.

One Chief Petty Officer drafted to the Submarine Depot Ship **HMS CYCLOPS** at the Holy Loch died on 26th April 1945. He was:

CPO William Edward Fisher P/J 98921

William Fisher was born in Wrexham in Denbighshire on 5th May 1905. He joined the Navy as a Boy Seaman on 17th September 1920 and, as a Torpedoman served mainly in Cruisers and in the Aircraft Carriers GLORIOUS, FURIOUS & HERMES and in the Battleship HMS BARHAM. By 1940 he was a Chief Petty Officer (LTO) and was later drafted to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS CYCLOPS. He was taken ill with a 'toxemia of unknown origin' and died from myocardial failure in the Southern General Hospital, Glasgow. He was the husband of Ellen Maud Fisher (nee Pilcher) and the father on Ronald Arthur Fisher.

MAY 1945

Three Submariners are reported to have died in Norway in May 1945. They were attached to **HMS CYCLOPS & HMS DOLPHIN**. It is unclear why they were in Norway and it is not reported how they died but the Norwegian Navy was operating 'U' Class Submarines 'on loan' but were in the process of being gifted several more submarines' and there three may have been on Loan or 'Liaison' duties. All three died from injuries received in a road traffic accident at Rona near Kristianstad. They were:

AB Peter Harsant C/SSX 20306

Peter Harsant of **HMS CYCLOPS** was the thirty three year old son of Peter and Annie Harsant and the foster son of Mrs E M Seal of Little Welnetham, Suffolk. He is buried in the Kristiansund Civil Cemetery on Norway in Plot VIA C1.

ERA4 Walter Charles Daniel Howard D/MX 508074

Walter Howard of **HMS DOLPHIN** was the twenty two year old son of William Howard and Nora Coumbo Howard of Plymouth and the husband of Dorothy Evelyn Howard of Oreston, Plymouth. He is buried in the Kristiansund Civil Cemetery on Norway in Plot VIA B2.

ERA4 Frederick George Lindon P/MX 503521

Frederick Lindon of **HMS DOLPHIN** was the twenty three year old son of Frederick George and Selina May Lindon of Foleshill, Warwickshire. He is buried in the Kristiansund Civil Cemetery on Norway in Plot VIA B4.

JUNE 1945

Two Submariners are reported to have died in June 1945. They were:

AB Norman Ward Badcock J17626

He was born on 23rd September 1896 and he was the son of Samuel Ward Badcock and his wife Annie. He joined the Royal Navy pre-WWI and trained as a Seaman Torpedoman and was noted to have served in HMS MINION at the Battle of Jutland. Having completed his Continuous Service engagement post WWI he re-entered the RN on 27th September 1937 with a new Official Number of D/JX 155150. Norman Badcock who had been serving in **HMS FERRET** (the Naval Base, Londonderry in Northern Ireland) died from uraemia in the Royal Naval Hospital, Stonehouse on 12th June 1945. He was the forty eight year old husband of Amelia Badcock of 22, Lynwood Road, Marsh Mills, Plympton, Devon and he is buried in the Ford Park Cemetery in Section R, Row 38, Grave No. 7.

Sto1 Eugene Larkin C/KX 141736

He was born in Middlesbrough in 1923 and he was the son of Thomas Henry Larkin (a blast furnace worker in a steel works) and Ellen Larkin. In September 1939 Eugene Larkin was listed as worker in the same steel works as his father. He joined the Royal Navy as a Stoker 1st Class and in June 1945 he was serving in the Submarine Depot Ship **HMS LUCIA** at Trincomalee in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). He is reported to have died (accidentally drowned) on 30th June 1945. Eugene Larkin is buried in the Liveramentu Cemetery in Colomo, Sri Lanka in Grave No. 1.F.8.

SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW LISTS

Do you have any Submarine Commissioning, Decommissioning or Re-dedication Crew Lists. These are required for an ongoing Project - the construction of a '**Chronology of Submariners**'. This Chronology is very useful when a Submariner who is not an Association Member 'Crosses the Bar' and details of his or her service are requested by the various Submariners organisations.

What I am looking for are 'First Commission' Crew Lists as for PORPOISE, GRAMPUS, CACHALOT, WALRUS, OBERON, ONYX, ORPHEUS, ODIN, OTUS, UNICORN, AUDACIOUS, ANSON & AGAMEMNON. Also Crew Lists for Commission or Recommission of any 'S', 'T', 'A', 'O' Class or 'P' Class Diesel Boats, 'V', 'C', 'S', 'T' & 'ASTUTE' SSNs & 'RESOLUTION' or 'VANGUARD' Class SSBNs.

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 if available!. Have a look through your Records and 'Ditty Boxes' and see what you can find. Scanned copies are preferred but any original paper 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) We Remember Submariners
- (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'.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION **WEBSITE UPDATE** **JULY 2025**

Registered Members:

There are currently 1,240 members registered on the website. The rate of new registrations has slowed significantly, which is likely to be expected.

Members manage their own data. If your contact details (e.g. mobile number) change, please update your profile accordingly.

Many registered members have yet to connect with their local branch. Branch meetings and activities are a great way to rekindle the camaraderie enjoyed during service (or continue it if still serving). Please consider reaching out to your local branch if you haven't done so already.

Website Contributions:

Submissions from branches or individuals have noticeably declined compared to last year's peak.

Thank you to those who do submit posts. These are vital for keeping the website engaging for both current members and potential visitors.

If branches or individuals attend events or visit places of interest, please share photos and any relevant information for publication.

CTB Process:

I have raised several times with the SAC that the process for reporting CTBs is, once again, not functioning as intended.

A documented and agreed process was created and published on the website to address previous issues, caveats included.

I would ask all members to revisit and familiarise themselves with this process. Doing so may help reduce some of the long-standing challenges we continue to face in this area.

A Condensed Autobiography
Able Seaman Torpedoman Fred Bottrell
C/JX 544353

Member Australia Branch

Born in humble circumstances on 5th November 1925 in the industrial City of Leicester. Times were hard in the thirties; in hindsight we did not realise how poor we were. At age 14 employment was found as a junior clerk in a wholesale grocery business in the City. My ambition was to be an electrician, so I was a square peg in a round hole. I had abounding energy to perform a large variety of tasks while learning. I was able to cope with whatever I was required to do; office work was a breeze. So much was I bored, I was reprimanded on several occasions for being absent from my desk. I used to find an excuse to go to the warehouse to talk to the real workers. In reality I should have been sacked but the boss was on a good thing I was doing a man's work for boys wages.

Wartime Britain required me to register for National Service at 17 years of age. To avoid being called up for the Army, or even worse, a Bevan Boy down the coal mines. I volunteered for the RN & was called up the day I turned 17 and a half. This to me was an escape from my dreaded office routine. Training at HMS GANGES was challenging, I had a thirst for everything nautical. I loved the learning process and went on to complete a Torpedo Course at Chatham Barracks. Any dreams I had of a draft to a Lend Lease ship in USA were shattered when a call to the Regulating Office informed me that I was in a draft of sixty ratings to HMS DOLPHIN for submarine training. So much for all Submariners being volunteers, times were desperate. The RN had lost many boats by 1943 along with the gallant crew members.

New Boats were being built while we were given rudimentary training to man them.

I went through the tank on my 18th birthday at Blockhouse. I recall HMS DOLPHIN had a huge barrage balloon anchored on the Parade ground. DOLPHIN & surrounding dockyards presented a potential target for the Luftwaffe. Consequently, we were drafted to HMS ELFIN at Blyth to complete the classroom studies. It was practice to study into the Dog watches. The popular beer canteen was the only UK shore base that sold duty free beer. Churchill had a soft spot for Submariners; I am led to believe that it was on his authority that we enjoyed cheap beer. I graduated in December 1943

just in time to be granted Xmas leave. My pay doubled from 3 bob a day to 6 bob a day plus 3 pence a day for Torpedo rating. After making an allotment to my Mother I still had more cash in hand plus board & keep than my meagre wage as an Office Clerk. The New Year found me Spare Crew in HMS CYCLOPS - a coal burner. There are few Submariners today that can boast that they have coaled ship, it was "All hands Coal Ship" and no excuses

I joined my first Boat, the H43, in Londonderry early January 1944 I was a mere Sprog with lots to learn. The WW1 "H" Boats were passed their 'use by date' however they made good training boats. Many technical faults kept everyone on their toes and the 'Tiffies' overworked. No Hydraulics, the Fore Planes were opened with a chain block! Main vents were opened by a hand-wheel. Steering was rod-gearing, 20 revolutions of a large brass wheel for 5 degrees of rudder. I served my drinking apprenticeship in Scotland trying to keep up with the Old Salts only to find myself being put to bed in the Church of Scotland shake-down in Rothesay. After a spell in Spare Crew in CYCLOPS I was able to get myself and all my gear clean. My next draft was a pierhead jump to UPROAR, she was at Harbour stations when I scrambled aboard. UPROAR was just out of refit at Barrow (Note: Uboat.net lists the refit as being carried out in the Green & Silley Weir Ship Repair yard at Blackwall in London from May to September 1944) with some of her original crew who served with her in the Med. The famous 'Gus Brittan' was the Signaller. UPROAR was fitted with a dummy snorkel to resemble a German U boat. Our deployment was to operate with Coastal command Liberators. Their task was to locate us with the very latest Radar. We had some very exciting times including some friendly fire. I had a short stint as Acting L TO this was the best job in the boat in my opinion.

I was back in DOLPHIN at the end of 1944 awaiting an overseas draft. The magic number, 60 spare crew, took passage on the Aircraft Carrier ARBITER. I found myself watchkeeping on the Fire Alarm panel five decks down as we headed out into the Atlantic. We joined HMS ADAMANT at Colombo as spare crew & sailed for Fremantle. I had the luxury of serving in the T Boats TIPTOE & TURPIN. TIPTOE under Lt CDR Jay had the doubtful honour of executing the last torpedo attack of WW2 on Aug 3/1945. We missed out on the Victory celebrations in Freo but made up with a Cabaret celebration in Perth. Later I was in TURPIN based in Hong Kong. I was part of a Naval contingent sent ashore to guard Jap POWs in Kowloon. This was a good experience with no

problems with the Japs. Every night they were returned to the cage while we had free gangway to seek out the local night spots.

A memorable incident occurred in TURPIN whilst alongside the Depot ship. Sandy Powell (the Gun layer) was doing his routines on the 4-inch gun one morning when there was an almighty bang. When he elevated the gun, the barrel slipped overboard denting the ballast tank. This I believe was caused by Tiffies working on the gun the previous day. We all thought this to be a great joke while the Depot Ship's divers had to recover the gun barrel. TURPIN carried out Anti-Piracy patrols, the Chinese pirates were playing havoc with the influx of supplies into Hong Kong & district. On New Years Eve 1945, as the youngest member of the crew I had the honour of ringing in the New Year on the ships bell. On return to Sydney, we berthed alongside HMAS ADELAIDE. By this time demobilization numbers were being juggled I was drafted to HMS/M VORACIOUS to return to UK. VORACIOUS was clapped out & along with two other V boats they paid off in Cochin India. The three crews completed the journey in the Depot Ship HMS WOOLWICH. On return to Blockhouse, I was demobbed & returned to civvy street. 1946 was a lovely summer, my fiancée Iris had waited for me so we had a lot of courting to catch up on. We married in December 1946. I became very unsettled after the war with severe food rationing and unable to get the job I wanted. Winter 1947 was the turning point with snow on the ground for three months. I did not see a future for me in UK, we decided to immigrate and arrived in Australia May 1949.

Times were tough, we had a cabin trunk of clothes & fifty pounds in the bank on arrival. I was very fortunate in being accepted for a rehabilitation course to become a Telephone Technician. I burned the midnight oil studying and in four years I was qualified. I loved my work and studied for further advancement. I retired as a Senior Technical Officer. I have always considered that my time as a Submariner stood me in good stead in my chosen career. There is never a day that I don't think back to my experience in Boats. An experience that money could not buy you had to be there.

Fred Bottrell

BAE Systems' (USA) facilities are ready to scale to support submarine manufacturing

8 Apr 2025

With a highly skilled workforce, available capacity, and over a quarter billion in investments, BAE Systems is prepared to grow submarine efforts. BAE Systems has invested more than \$260 million in its facilities over the past six years to increase

support to the maritime industrial base. Through these investments, the company is ensuring it has the strong manufacturing capability and capacity to build submarine structures, and support surface ship maintenance for the U.S. Navy and its maritime partners.

BAE Systems has upgraded its welding, machining, and heavy-lift capacity across its Louisville, Kentucky manufacturing site and Jacksonville, Florida shipyard to further support building submarines. Between these two facilities, the company has over 200,000 square feet of dedicated space to take on new submarine construction, as well as personnel ready to contribute to submarine construction.

"BAE Systems is ready to expand submarine production and build the submarine structures that are vital to safeguarding our nation," said Charles Lewis, director of Submarine Programs for Platforms & Services at BAE Systems. "As a prime contractor in many other areas of our business, we look forward to applying that mindset to bolster submarine construction, in partnership with shipbuilders, to support the U.S. Navy. Our facilities have the capacity for growth and our workforce has the skillsets required to manufacture major structures for these complex giants."

Over the last six years, BAE Systems' Louisville facility has invested more than \$60 million to support maritime industrial base construction. These investments include:

- Advanced machining centres

- Upgraded heavy-lift cranes

- Test and assembly capabilities

- Enhanced weld equipment

- Overarching facility upgrades

- Welder training and onsite school facilities

In Jacksonville, the company has invested over \$200 million into its shipyard. The investments include:

- A modern ship-lift, land-level repair facility

- Employee training

- Welding training centre and on-site school facilities

- Manufacturing training

- Submarine fabrication upgrades

BAE Systems' Louisville Site manufactures several different major structures for the U.S. Navy and its major shipbuilders. The Louisville workforce builds the Virginia Payload Module missile tubes and propulsor for the Virginia-class submarine. The site also builds the Bearing Support Structure for the Columbia-class submarine, a major structure that attaches the Columbia-class propulsor to the submarine.

Last year, the company's Jacksonville shipyard began fabricating deck structures for the Columbia-class submarine program. In addition to the shiplift and land level repair facility that will soon be operational, BAE Systems has invested in developing its skilled workforce and reorganizing its facility to take on submarine construction work.

Andrew Eversden
Manager, Communications
Combat Mission Systems

Royal Navy to replace tugs that escort nuclear submarines through Scottish lochs

More than 20 support boats to be ordered under £850m contract

Christopher Jasper, Transport industry editor

Daily Telegraph

18 May 2025 9:00am BST



Nuclear-powered submarine HMS ASTUTE returns to base at Faslane on the Clyde accompanied by two tug boats

Credit: PA/Alamy

The Royal Navy plans to replace the tugs that guide Britain's £1bn nuclear submarines through narrow Scottish lochs as part of an overhaul of its ageing support vessels.

Six tugs, including two that will operate at the Faslane nuclear base on the Clyde, are among 24 support boats due to be ordered under an £850m contract over the next decade.

The tugs will be responsible for towing ASTUTE Class 'Hunter Killer' Submarines and Britain's four Vanguard-class vessels that carry Trident nuclear missiles, which are themselves due to be replaced with 17,000-tonne Dreadnought Class in the early 2030s

The programme also involves the deployment of four new tugs to Devonport, a base for frigates and amphibious vessels. All of the craft are due to be built by Dutch shipbuilder Damen, which produces tugs, ferries and specialist craft.



Dreadnought subs will replace Britain's four Vanguard-class vessels from the early 2030s Credit: BAE Systems

Portsmouth, the main base for the Navy's surface warships, already has a new supertug, the Tempest, which was commissioned from Damen to help manoeuvre aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

The new vessels will replace some that are decades old, including the Faslane-based tug Impulse, which was built in 1993 and helped bring HMS ASTUTE back to port in 2010 after the submarine ran aground off Skye during sea trials.

Some of the tugs scheduled to be retired in Devonport were built before the Falklands War.

Also due for replacement are vessels that transport personnel between warships in port, ammunition barges, barge-mounted cranes, a pilot vessel and a fuel barge, as well as craft that flush out the holds of other ships.

Support services company Serco will be responsible for procuring the new fleet following a contract award from the Ministry of Defence.

The company's marine services arm operates more than 90 vessels and has been supporting the Royal Navy, Royal Marines and Royal Fleet Auxiliary for 28 years, although the latest renewal is the biggest it will have taken on.

Anthony Kirby, Serco's boss, said the modernisation programme was vital to provide the Navy with "the support it requires, day in, day out".

Serco was also awarded a five-year contract to support military training exercises at the British Underwater Test and Evaluation Centre, a marine firing range near Skye.

A third contract spanning 10 years includes offshore support for training exercises involving the Victoria and the Northern River, which carry rapid pursuit craft used by the Special Boat Service.

UK sub missile compartment project boosted in US deal

By Craig Langford - June 23, 2025

The UK's nuclear deterrent programme has received a further boost through a major US Navy contract modification worth nearly \$1 billion, part of which supports the joint Common Missile Compartment shared between Britain's Dreadnought-class and America's Columbia-class submarines.

The \$986,785,825 modification to an existing contract with General Dynamics Electric Boat includes "previously scheduled United Kingdom (U.K.) funding modification in the amount of \$16,035,000... for the continued support of the joint U.S. Columbia-class and U.K. Dreadnought-class common missile compartment program," according to a Pentagon contract announcement released 20 June.

The shared compartment design is a key element of the next-generation deterrent platforms for both nations, underpinning the Royal Navy's continuous at-sea deterrence capability through the future Dreadnought-class submarines.

The contract also includes support for wider industrial capacity under the U.S. Navy's Submarine Industrial Base (SIB) initiative, with the Pentagon noting that "the industrial base development work is for the furtherance of the Navy's plan of serial production of Columbia-class and Virginia-class submarines."

The work will be carried out at three US locations: Groton, Connecticut (70%), Newport News, Virginia (15%), and Quonset Point, Rhode Island (15%). Completion is expected by December 2031.

Crucially, the award aligns with the findings of the fiscal year 2025 Submarine Industrial Base Study (SIB25), which sought to enable what the Department of Defence calls "the once-in-a-generation recapitalization of the submarine force."

The contract confirms that "SIB projects in this contract modification directly support the direction of OMB, OSD CAPE, and the Navy."

Funding includes over \$794 million from the US National Sea-Based Deterrence Fund, alongside the UK's \$16 million contribution. The remainder is made up of other US Navy budget lines.

The Common Missile Compartment is a central feature of both Columbia- and Dreadnought-class submarines, enabling the deployment of Trident D5 ballistic missiles and maintaining full compatibility between UK and US launch systems. UK construction of the Dreadnought-class is underway at BAE Systems' Barrow shipyard, with first-of-class HMS Dreadnought due to enter service in the early 2030s

Rolls-Royce nuclear deal 'will safeguard city jobs'

10 June 2025

Steve Beech & Gavin Bevis

BBC News, Derby

Bosses at Rolls-Royce have said winning a government contract to build three state of the art nuclear reactors will help to safeguard research jobs in Derby.

The company has been selected as the preferred bidder to provide small modular reactor (SMR) technology, which it is hoped could bring down energy bills.

Tuesday's announcement follows a two-year bidding process run by Great British Energy - Nuclear, which saw Rolls-Royce competing against several international rivals. The firm says the £2.5bn deal will allow it to potentially become a world leader in what it sees as a growing international market. Chancellor Rachel Reeves has committed £16.7bn to nuclear power projects as the country shifts away from fossil fuels.

Officials hope SMRs will be cheaper and quicker to build than traditional power plants, and projects could be connected to the grid by the mid-2030s.

Rolls-Royce's reactors are likely to be built on the sites of existing nuclear power plants across the UK, with the hope of reducing the UK's reliance on imported gas.

The firm says each SMR power station will produce enough stable, affordable and emission-free energy to power a million homes for at least 60 years.

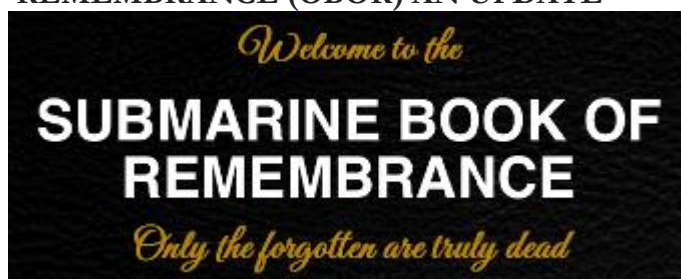
Company bosses told the BBC the contract announcement would protect research jobs at its Jubilee House base at Pride Park. The procurement process has taken two years

The news has been welcomed by Baggy Shanker, Labour MP for Derby South and chair of the all-party parliamentary group on small modular reactors.

He said: "This is a major step forward for Britain. Selecting Derby's very own Rolls-Royce SMR as the UK's preferred bidder shows the power of backing British engineering, skills and ambition."

Catherine Atkinson, Labour MP for Derby North and vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group, added: "This is about delivering practical change: lower bills for families, new opportunities, and a more secure future built here at home. "Cities like Derby have the skills and ambition to lead the way."

THE ON-LINE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE (OBOR) AN UPDATE



The OBOR content continues to make progress thanks to our amazing team of researchers, with stories now written for 994 of the 5,947 people listed (16.7%). Visitor comments continue to come in at about 14 per month and we have now had 208 comments on people alone - plus some on individual boats on which visitors or their families may have served. Clearly some of these are indicating that memories of those that sacrificed their lives in the submarine service remain alive for many people. The OBOR sub-title "Only the forgotten are truly dead" seems very apt. One ninety year old was searching for information about the grave of George

Husbands who died as a result of an electrical fire in HMS RORQUAL in 1958 and we were able to take a photograph of his grave in the Faslane Cemetery for him. If you had shipmates or family who died in submarine service, please look them up and leave a comment." Peter Jeanneret



PS. We may have started a trend at there is now an Australian Submariners Book of Remembrance- the 'ASORB' – more details to follow in due course but there are fewer names in the Australian Book and there may be some cross referencing to names in our OBOR.

We Remember Submariners 2025 Annual Pin

Saturday 28 June was the official launch of the We Remember Submariners 2025 Annual Pin going on general sale at the HMS COLLINGWOOD Open Day. The first pin was purchased by Commodore Paul Dunn CBE from the WRS Chairman Mick Dewhurst.



Mick was supported on the day by Membership Manager John Ireland and Trustee Graham Bishop. Meanwhile on the Hoe at the Plymouth Armed Force Day Leigh Dodds -the WRS Events Coordinator, and team; CTB Manager Dave Smith, CTB Coordinator Trisha Bolt, Trustee Bob Ansty, Caroline Ansty and Wesley McGuinness set up their stall where some notable VIPs visited to show their support amongst the many veterans and families.



Luke Pollard MP, Armed Forces Minister

Vice Admiral Burns CB OBE

Councillor Chip Tofan

Both events were a fantastic success, and a truly memorable occasion for We Remember Submariners. The sun shone down on a brilliant day filled with pride, camaraderie, and community spirit. The stands drew a steady stream of visitors throughout the day, and we were humbled by the generosity and interest shown by everyone who stopped by. From young families to veterans, it was heartening to see so many people take the time to learn

about the vital work our charity does in honouring the memory of submariners and supporting their families. A huge thank you goes out to everyone who came to the stands, donated, and took an interest in our cause—your support makes a real difference.

The entire team worked hard to make the day such a success; the dedication and passion were clear for all to see. The day was not just a celebration of service, but a reminder of the bonds that unite us in remembrance and respect. **Get your Annual 2025 Pin from the WRS website, priced at £6 Inc p&p**

Work begins on future British nuclear attack submarine

From the UK Defence Journal

By Craig Langford - June 28, 2025

Babcock has confirmed it has begun long-lead work on the UK's future SSN-AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines, with new contracts secured during the past financial year for the first elements of the vessel's weapon handling and launch systems.

The company disclosed the update in its preliminary results for the year ending 31 March 2025, positioning the announcement as a key milestone in its growing contribution to next-generation submarine programmes.

"Our Mission Systems business was awarded two significant contracts in FY25," the company reported. "These included a contract for Long Lead Items for the ASTUTE replacement, Submersible Ship Nuclear AUKUS (SSNA), enabling us to place orders for the first elements of the Weapon Handling and Launch System."

The contract represents one of the first known UK industrial contributions to the SSN-AUKUS programme, which will deliver a new class of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines to the UK and Australia. Babcock's involvement in providing early components for the launch system suggests a continuity of expertise built up through its work on the ASTUTE and Dreadnought programmes.

The SSN-AUKUS class is intended to replace the UK's ASTUTE-class submarines from the late 2030s and form the basis for Australia's first fleet of nuclear-powered attack submarines under the AUKUS security partnership.

Babcock's experience in complex submarine manufacture, integration and sustainment across both the Royal Navy's and US Navy's strategic deterrent fleets has underpinned its growing role in transatlantic collaboration. The company is already a long-term supplier of missile tube assemblies for the UK's Dreadnought and US Columbia classes, and this year secured an additional order for 36 tubes from General Dynamics Electric Boat.

"Our leading position in advanced manufacture of missile tube assemblies led to a further contract award of 36 missile tubes by General Dynamics Electric Boat, who is responsible for the design and the construction of the U.S. Naval Columbia submarines programme," Babcock noted.

The Mission Systems division was also awarded "an additional contract to supply Integrated Tube Hulls in support of the US Columbia Class programme," further broadening its role across allied submarine programmes.

Babcock's participation in SSN-AUKUS comes amid a strategic push to increase UK industry's role in submarine component development and systems integration. As part of AUKUS Pillar 1, the UK and Australia are jointly developing the SSN-AUKUS platform with support from the United States, and the UK is expected to deliver the lead boat for the Royal Navy in the late 2030s.

Babcock is one of several UK defence firms expected to contribute heavily to the design, supply chain, and construction of the class. These initial contracts reflect the early-stage investment now being made to prepare UK industry for the scale and complexity of the SSN-AUKUS build and sustainment programme.

HMCS OKANAGAN v/s RFA GREY ROVER 28th July 1973

(From the RFA Historical Website) By the 1st Officer of RFA GREY ROVER

I joined this ship where she was lying at anchor off the tiny harbour of Campbeltown, on the Mull of Kintyre, following a marathon 24-hour journey from my home at Plymouth. It all began with a four-hour train journey from Plymouth to London, to catch an overnight sleeper to Glasgow. The following morning I caught a local train down the north bank of the River Clyde to Helensburgh, from where I got a taxi to take me to the submarine base at Faslane. After a couple of hours delay and a bite of lunch, a 'tilly' (utility van), took me the last 103 miles to Campbeltown, driving through glens, past mountains and along the western coast of the Mull. It was all extremely scenic. A final boat trip took me out to the ship, which was anchored in Campbeltown loch, where I gratefully dumped my heavy suitcases in my cabin, in time for the evening meal.

As 1st Officer here, I was the senior bridge watchkeeper, on the 4-8 watch at sea. My duties were as the navigator/operations officer, sharing a bit of flight deck work with the Chief Officer. We were employed initially by "Comclyde", the Flag Officer responsible for naval activity in and around the Clyde area. This activity consisted mainly of exercises and trials involving nuclear and conventional submarines, operating out of their specialised base, "HMS Neptune", at Faslane on the Gairloch. Our frequent role was to act as a target ship for

their training exercises and the commanding officer qualifying courses known as 'Coqexes' or 'Perishers'. The ship would be asked to steam up and down the Firth of Clyde in zig-zag patterns or on a straight course, whilst the submarine would lay in wait and simulate torpedo attacks. If the sea was calm enough it was possible to detect the periscope on radar or even see it visually. If within the rules of the exercise, we were then free to steer towards our threat, to try to narrow the target profile or force the submarine to abandon the attack and go deep. Clearly these exercises did not involve the large strategic missile boats, who were not normally expected to attack shipping but remain hidden at all times.

Just eleven days after joining this ship I was involved in my only collision at sea, which involved a Canadian conventional submarine called "Okanagan". She was an 'Oberon' class diesel powered boat built at Chatham Dockyard in 1963. On this occasion she was going through her 'passing out' inspection with "Comclyde" staff, prior to returning to Canada and rejoining their fleet.

We had been with her the previous day, carrying out all the high-speed exercises where we were her target for several torpedo attacks. Overnight we had sailed around the back of the island of Arran, northwards through the Kilbrannan Sound, around the top of the island and east through the Sound of Bute. In the gathering dawn we were moving at a steady four knots on a south-easterly course down the Clyde estuary, passing about four miles off Brodick Bay. Somewhere in this area, "Okanagan" was to sneak up on us and film our underwater fittings through her periscope. At about 0730 and whilst I was still on watch, I spotted a periscope, still some way off, coming towards us out of Brodick Bay. I maintained a steady course and speed as required by the exercise orders and watched the tip of the periscope pop up every now and again as it got closer.

The Captain had come to the bridge for his morning stroll and I pointed the periscope out to him as it approached from just forward of the starboard beam on a steady bearing. It seemed to me that the submarine was getting quite close and from an unexpected angle. My thoughts were that it would have approached from astern, diving deeper in good time to take whatever pictures were required. Still it kept coming and at the same angle. The Captain and I went out onto the starboard bridge wing and we could actually see the dark shape of the submarine under the water as it came right up to us.

Suddenly there was an almighty thump, as the conning tower of the submarine struck our hull, almost below where we were standing. The stern of the "Grey Rover" was shunted round a few degrees to port and the bow to starboard. On the bridge we were in shock for a few moments with the realisation of what had happened. The propeller was quickly declutched from the engine and I took a position of our ship. The engineers below, who must have had an awful fright, were told what had happened and checked that we had not been holed.

A couple of hundred yards away, the "Okanagan" rapidly surfaced and we could see that she had lost a large piece of her conning tower. After getting in contact with her it appeared that her periscopes and other top sensors were a write-off but otherwise she was O.K. Fortunately her conning tower was made of glass-fibre, which had taken the brunt of the impact and we had not been holed.

We both proceeded directly back to Faslane naval base, where there followed a Board of Enquiry. At the end of this investigation we were absolved completely of any responsibility for the collision. A couple of days later we were ordered to take the ship to a dry-dock at Govan, where we underwent repairs to a massive indentation in the shell plating on the starboard side of the engine room and replaced a blade on our controllable pitch propeller. We were so lucky not to have been holed. Had the conning tower of the "Okanagan" been made of something more robust than glass-fibre it could have been a very different story.

When we returned to Faslane the "Okanagan" was still there and looking a rather sorry sight. We invited the officers across to us for a few drinks and a bite to eat. It was then that they presented us with a piece of their conning tower as a memento of the event!

Royal Navy Team win the RESOLUTION Cup during Lake District walk

From the Evening Mail 15th May 2025 By Staff Reporter

A 40-strong team of Royal Navy submariners beat a team from BAE Systems to win the coveted RESOLUTION Cup during the annual Keswick to Barrow walk. The teams included several serving Members of the Barrow Branch, submariners association

The 40-mile walk, which was held for the 48th year in the Lake District, saw submariners from the building Submarines HMS AGAMEMNON, ACHILLIES and DREADNOUGHT, beat their shipbuilding rivals by more than one hour. The gruelling route from Keswick, which takes in Coniston, Grasmere, Thirlmere and the exposed heights of Kirby Moor, took place in temperatures exceeding 24C.

The RESOLUTION Cup first took place in 1967 when the crew of HMS RESOLUTION were challenged by workers at Vickers (now BAE) shipyard in Barrow to walk the 40 miles from Keswick.

Each year the two teams raise more than £600,000 for local charities. The Royal Navy teams set off from Thirlmere at 0510 ready for what was ahead of them. The group was treated with outstanding views of the rugged glacier shaped terrain of the lakes, which spurred the team onto the first check point of nine miles, where the friendly faces of the support crew were waiting. The fine form continued as landmarks were checked off and calories consumed, all whilst being cheered on by the local community who appeared to be out en-masse.

The event's first finisher was the Royal Navy's Lt Cdr Joshua Crowther, (HMS AGAMEMNON) who completed the course in a time of 4 hours and 42 minutes. Able Seaman Rory Spicer and Commander Mikey Forrester (both HMS AGAMEMNON) also delivered fine performances of 5hrs 45 and 5hrs 50 to confirm their top 20 finishes. Submariners continued to dive across the line and it became apparent that the team had left their BAE counterparts in their wake.

Such was the strength of the performance the RESOLUTION cup was won by the Submariner team by a staggering margin of 1 hour and 40 mins. The RN team also won the Richardson Trophy for the best military team and the Len Redshaw Cup for best overall team.



STEWARDING THE KESWICK TO BARROW (K2B) WALK 2025

The following Members of the Barrow Branch, organised by Ian Clark, provided Stewards at the Finishers Entrance in Hawcoat Lane - 'Emma' Peel, 'Dickie' Cambridge, Brian "H", Steve May, Steve and Nikki Mackay, Jules and Kath, Bob Palmer, Tony Griffiths, Dave Cooper and Des Murphy.

The Navy Teams participating in the K2B Walk were:

HMS AGAMEMNON

Joshua Crowther - First Home
Rory Spicer
Michael Forrester
Sam Tagliaferri
Jonathan Sparks
Lowrie Deville
Ethan Kitsell
Isaac Street
Duncan McVey

HMS DREADNOUGHT

Jim Wright

Joseph Doyle
Edward Higgins
Maxwell Park-Davies
Stephen Cox
David Bell
T Rowbotham
Kirk Roach
Garry Anderson
Matthew Law

HMS ACHILLIES

Robert Wreathall
Gordon Stewart

Rory Force
Andrew Royer
Lana Chilton
Alex Jarvis
Connor McLoughlin
Alfie Holloway
Silas Rai
Paul Acton
Andy Seaman
Michael Quinn
Christopher Cullen

BAE DREADNOUGHT Delivery

Evening Mail (Barrow) 31st May

By Catherine Mackinlay

Barrow Island came to a standstill on Friday week as roads were cleared for a special delivery linked to one of the most significant defence projects in the country.

A massive unit was transported through the streets as part of the Dreadnought submarine programme, a once-in-a-generation undertaking led by BAE Systems' Submarines business based in Barrow.

These deliveries – unique to the town – formed part of the build process for the Royal Navy's new fleet of Dreadnought-class nuclear submarines, which will replace the Vanguard-class boats and maintain the UK's Continuous At-Sea Deterrent (CASD) Programme

Four submarines are scheduled to be delivered to the Royal Navy, with Barrow playing a crucial role in their construction and testing.) Barrow residents watched as the vast structure was slowly manoeuvred along Ferry Road/Bridge Road to the Devonshire Dock Hall (DDH), with police escorts and rolling roadblocks ensuring a safe route to the shipyard.



MOD pledges safety reports after MP Faslane concerns

From the UK Defence Journal

The Ministry of Defence has pledged to enhance transparency around nuclear safety incidents at HM Naval Base Clyde, following direct concerns raised by SNP defence spokesperson Dave Doogan MP.

The commitment, made in a formal letter from Defence Secretary John Healey dated 21 May 2025, responds to questions put to him during Defence Orals on 19 May regarding the safety and oversight of the Royal Navy's nuclear sites at Faslane and Coulport.

In his letter, Healey assured Parliament that nuclear safety is “of paramount importance” and reaffirmed the Government’s “triple lock” commitment to the UK’s nuclear deterrent. This triple lock guarantees: the construction of four new Dreadnought-class submarines in Barrow, the maintenance of the UK’s Continuous At-Sea Deterrent (CASD), and the implementation of all necessary future upgrades to ensure the deterrent’s safety and effectiveness.

“HMNB Clyde complies with international best practice as recommended by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA),” Healey wrote “Nuclear safety at these sites is independently overseen by the Defence Nuclear Safety Regulator (DNSR) and the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR), who have robust powers to address concerns and recommend changes where necessary.”

In response to long-standing concerns about the lack of routine public information, Healey announced a new policy of proactive reporting. “I have authorised the annual release of the statistics on Nuclear Site Event Reports (NSERs) for HMNB Clyde,” he said. “These will be laid as a Written Ministerial Statement at the end of each financial year.”

NSERs classify the significance of safety incidents at nuclear sites. While such data was previously only made available upon request, Healey said the new approach was designed to “enhance parliamentary oversight” and “recognise the importance of the subject.” The first of these new proactive disclosures will come in April 2026.



Healey also addressed the number and severity of recent incidents, revealing that *“all reported events [in the last financial year] were categorised as of low safety significance.”* He explained that in accordance with the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES), such events are ranked at level one—the lowest level on a seven-point scale.

He added that incidents classed at this level may include *“equipment failures, human error, procedural failings or near-misses where no harm [was] caused to the health of any member of Naval Base staff, any member of the public, or any resultant radiological impact to the environment.”*

Addressing a second issue raised by Doogan, Healey refuted suggestions that the MOD’s major nuclear infrastructure projects were being excluded from oversight by the government’s infrastructure watchdog. *“You also raised a concern that information on major projects within the Defence Nuclear Enterprise were not being reported to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) – now succeeded by the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA). I can confirm that this is not the case.”*

He noted that the IPA data published on 16 January 2025 includes information on all major MOD nuclear programmes and is publicly accessible via the government’s Major Projects data portal.

DREADNOUGHT PROGRAMME UPDATE

From the UK Defence Journal

The Ministry of Defence has again confirmed that the Dreadnought-class submarine programme remains on track, with the first of class, HMS Dreadnought, expected to enter service in the early 2030s. In response to a written question from Ben Obese-Jecty, MP on 17 April 2025, Defence Minister Maria Eagle stated: “The Dreadnought programme remains on track for the First of Class, HMS Dreadnought, to enter service in the early 2030s.”

However, Eagle also confirmed that the government will not disclose the precise in-service dates for the new nuclear deterrent submarines. She explained: “The planned in-service dates for Royal Navy submarines are withheld as disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the capability, effectiveness, or security of the Armed Forces.”

The Dreadnought programme is the cornerstone of the UK’s next-generation continuous at-sea deterrent, replacing the current Vanguard-class submarines. Four boats are planned, all to be constructed at BAE Systems’ Barrow-in-Furness shipyard, with a lifespan expected to extend well into the second half of the 21st century.

The submarine

The Dreadnought programme represents one of the largest defence projects in British history, ensuring the Royal Navy maintains its nuclear deterrent capability for decades to come.

The Dreadnought-class submarines are designed for an extended service life of 35 to 40 years, representing an increase of approximately 50% over the Vanguard-class they replace. Each submarine will operate with a crew of 130, including three chefs and a doctor, and will feature separate female quarters, a gym, a classroom, and a lighting system that simulates the time of day to support crew wellbeing during long deployments.

They will be powered by Rolls-Royce’s PWR3 (Pressurised Water Reactor 3), a more advanced and efficient nuclear reactor than the PWR2 used on previous classes. The PWR3 was selected over its predecessors due to its

simpler operation, extended lifespan, and reduced maintenance costs, with 30% fewer components, contributing to improved reliability and cost-effectiveness.

To enhance stealth and manoeuvrability, the Dreadnought-class will introduce X-rudders—a first for British submarines—which will help reduce noise, particularly at high speeds, in conjunction with a pump jet propulsion system. Unlike the Vanguard-class, movement control will employ a fly-by-wire system using BAE Systems' Active Vehicle Control Management (AVCM), improving handling and automation. The submarines will also be equipped with Thales' Sonar 2076, one of the world's most advanced sonar systems.

The missile compartments will feature four missile tubes each (quad packs), for a total of twelve missile tubes, shared with the American Columbia-class submarines as part of the Common Missile Compartment (CMC) scheme. Designed with five deck levels, the Dreadnought-class will provide a more modern, efficient, and survivable platform for the UK's continuous at-sea deterrent well into the latter half of the 21st century.

First Australian Sailors Complete Training to Serve on Nuclear Submarines

Roman Pryhodko

April 27, 2025



Royal Australian Navy sailors during a graduation ceremony at the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit in the hangar bay of USS Yorktown (CV-10), April 18, 2025. Photo credits: US Navy

Eight Royal Australian Navy sailors have graduated from the U.S. Navy's Nuclear Power Training Unit, becoming the first Australians qualified to operate reactors and related systems aboard nuclear-powered submarines, the U.S. Naval Institute reported. The sailors completed the six-month course on April 18 during a ceremony aboard USS Yorktown (CV-10). Their training covered mathematics, nuclear physics, reactor principles, and nuclear reactor technology. The skills acquired will allow them to independently operate nuclear submarine systems or integrate into American crews.

The training started in fall 2024 and is part of a broader trilateral agreement between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia under the AUKUS security pact. Australia will receive several U.S. Virginia-class nuclear submarines as an interim solution while awaiting the completion of the jointly developed SSN-AUKUS submarines.

Cooperation between American and Australian submariners in the Indo-Pacific has intensified over the past few years. Last spring, the tender USS Emory S. Land (AS-39) hosted 37 Royal Australian Navy sailors in Guam, where they received maintenance training and practical experience. This phase preceded the arrival of USS Hawaii (SSN-776) at HMAS Stirling, Australia's main submarine base, and formed part of the broader preparation for Australian crews to transition to nuclear-powered platforms.

"Six officers previously completed prototype training, each performing exceptionally well. I fully expect these recent graduates, especially our first enlisted personnel, will excel in the fleet," Capt. Robert Rose, Commander of NPTU Charleston, reported on the milestone event in a press release.

Australia's Transition to Nuclear Submarines

Australia's shift to nuclear submarines began on September 15, 2021, with the announcement of the AUKUS security alliance. A major component of the pact was the United States' decision to share nuclear propulsion technology with Australia, allowing it to acquire nuclear-powered attack submarines.

Within the agreement, Australia plans to purchase at least three Virginia-class submarines from the United States in the 2030s, with an option for two additional boats if necessary. These submarines, sourced from the U.S. Navy's fleet, will maintain Australia's submarine capability until the first SSN-AUKUS boats enter service. The SSN-AUKUS submarine will be fully designed in the United Kingdom, including its nuclear reactor, but will be equipped with American combat systems and weapons, reflecting Australia's strong defence ties with U.S. industry and its use of U.S.-made military systems.

The Royal Navy will invest £560 million in the regeneration of one of its Vanguard-class nuclear ballistic missile submarines

23 May 2025



Earlier today, the Royal Navy announced that the Vanguard-class nuclear ballistic missile submarine HMS Victorious has arrived at the refit complex at Devonport Naval Base, where it will undergo a regeneration program involving an investment of £560 million. The work will be carried out specifically in Dock 9 of the facility, which has recently undergone a significant series of upgrades that have greatly improved its infrastructure. According to the official statement, the newly arrived submarine is currently undergoing what is referred to as a Deep Maintenance Period—an extensive overhaul intended to keep it operational and ready to continue contributing to the UK's nuclear deterrent through the next decade. This includes inspection and upgrading of a wide array of systems, including its Rolls-Royce nuclear reactor, electrical generation system, sonar, communications, and missile launch systems, among other components.

For the Royal Navy, this is a highly significant project—not only due to the substantial investment—but also because it currently has only three Vanguard-class submarines available to maintain its nuclear deterrent until the new class is completed. In the words of Captain Ben Stafford, Superintendent of Submarines: “Everyone in the Defence Nuclear Enterprise recognises the importance of this maintenance period to the UK's national security and that is why our work to ensure HMS Victorious returns to operations as soon as possible matters”.

It's also worth recalling that this project represents an important opportunity for the Royal Navy to show it has learned from the experience with HMS Vanguard, whose overhaul took more than seven years and included a precautionary nuclear refuelling—far exceeding initial expectations. Following the completion of that process, the service worked to improve procedures aimed at reducing both timelines and associated costs, as well as contractor oversight. In this case, the primary contractor will be Babcock.

Finally, while the Royal Navy has chosen to invest in the upkeep of its Vanguard-class submarines, the process of building their replacement is already underway: the future Dreadnought-class. As reported last March, UK-based company BAE Systems held the keel-laying ceremony for the first unit at its Barrow shipyard, with the hope of delivering it to the Royal Navy in the early 2030s. As previously stated, a total of four submarines are expected to be built, each with a projected service life of more than 30 years.

Why French steel was used to build British nuclear subs!

By Craig Langford - April 30, 2025

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that specialised steel used in the construction of the Royal Navy's new Dreadnought-class submarines is being imported from France due to the absence of domestic production capability, according to a written parliamentary response published on 30 April 2025.

Responding to a question from Ben Obese-Jecty MP (Conservative – Huntingdon), Minister of State for Defence Maria Eagle stated: “There are no UK suppliers of the specialised steel required in the manufacture of submarine pressure hulls.”

She explained that UK submarine steel requirements continue to be met by a mix of domestic and international suppliers through prime contractors, based on availability and performance. “This reflects the need to source specific grades of steel, not all of which are available in the UK, and ensures competitive procurement in terms of cost, time and quality,” she said.

While submarine pressure hull steel must currently be imported, Eagle confirmed that “other grades of steel used in the manufacture of submarines are sourced from a range of suppliers, including a number of UK companies.”

The Minister emphasised that the government supports UK industry participation wherever possible. “We encourage the sourcing of UK steel wherever it is technically and commercially feasible and publish our future pipeline of steel requirements, enabling steel manufacturers better to plan and bid for government opportunities.”

She added: “This Government is committed to ensuring that defence spending supports British-based businesses and economic growth which will be a key tenet in the upcoming Defence Industrial Strategy.”

The Dreadnought-class submarine programme is one of the UK’s largest and most strategically significant defence projects, intended to replace the current Vanguard-class fleet and sustain the UK’s continuous at-sea nuclear deterrent into the 2060s.

No decisions yet on submarine floating dry docks for Faslane

By Craig Langford - April 29, 2025

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that no procurement decisions have yet been made for the floating dry docks required under Programme Euston, with a full market assessment planned as requirements continue to develop. In response to written parliamentary questions from Richard Baker MP (Labour, Glenrothes and Mid Fife), Minister of State for Defence Maria Eagle explained that Programme Euston remains in the Concept Phase. A “detailed assessment of market capacity and capability” will be conducted as part of the next stages. Eagle added that the programme will engage with both UK-based and international suppliers to assess whether they possess the required capabilities, but no final decisions have been taken at this time.

Programme Euston forms part of a broader initiative to modernise support infrastructure at HM Naval Base Clyde, the home of the UK’s Vanguard-class nuclear deterrent submarines and future Dreadnought-class vessels.

The current government’s approach builds on earlier work initiated under the previous administration. In November 2023, the MoD launched an early market engagement for what was then known as the Additional Fleet Time Docking Capability (AFTDC) Programme. The plan, outlined in a Prior Information Notice (PIN), set out an intention to procure two floating docks and associated infrastructure to enhance the out-of-water maintenance capability at Faslane, ensuring sufficient capacity to support the future submarine fleet. At that time, former Minister of State for Defence James Cartlidge said:

“The Ministry of Defence has conducted an assessment on its docking needs. This assessment has identified that two floating docks are required to enhance the out of water maintenance capability and meet future demand for submarine maintenance at His Majesty’s Naval Base Clyde.”

Cartlidge added that initial market engagement had been launched to shape the procurement strategy.

The project has taken on added significance given the growing demands on Faslane, both from the current fleet and preparations for the arrival of the Dreadnought class submarines later this decade. The need for resilient supply chains and sovereign capability in strategic defence infrastructure has been repeatedly highlighted by the Government, a theme that continues with Programme Euston.

SWIFTSURE Dismantling on Track

The Ministry of Defence has confirmed that the dismantling of the former Royal Navy submarine HMS SWIFTSURE remains on schedule for completion by the end of 2026, as part of the UK’s Submarine Dismantling Programme, according to a written response published on 30 April 2025.

Responding to a question from Graeme Downie MP (Labour – Dunfermline and Dollar), Defence Minister Maria Eagle stated: “The demonstrator submarine, SWIFTSURE, remains on track to be fully dismantled by the end of 2026.”

The dismantling of SWIFTSURE is the first full-scale disposal of a defuelled nuclear-powered submarine under the Submarine Dismantling Programme (SDP). The process is being carried out at Rosyth Dockyard in Fife.

Eagle confirmed that there are currently “six further defueled Pressurised Water Reactor 1 (PWR1) submarines awaiting dismantling in Rosyth.” These submarines, like SWIFTSURE have had their nuclear fuel removed and are being stored safely while awaiting dismantlement.

Regarding future plans for the remaining boats, Eagle stated: "Further announcements about dismantling the remaining PWR1 submarines will be made at the appropriate time." The SDP aims to address the long-standing backlog of retired Royal Navy submarines and ensure their safe and environmentally responsible disposal, while meeting regulatory and safety standards.

A Barrow Branch Social Report by Alex Webb – Social Secretary



April, what a very busy month, firstly eleven of us went across to Benidorm to join in with the Espana Levante Branch meeting. About fifty all in all turned up, including eight from the Morecambe branch. Obviously, we had a

very liquid weekend but also a bit of culture, some sea time and the meeting. The Spanish branch is brilliant and a good time was had by all.

Straight back to Blighty and the Barrow Branch Ladies Lunch at the Townhouse, my special thanks goes to all who came to that, there was seventeen of us in all, sadly, a couple of our ladies did not attend due to illness or recovery from hospital treatments. But those who did come along all said it was a lovely afternoon and thanked the Branch for remembering them and taking them out. Also, I would like to thank the three ladies who hosted the event Phyl Palmer, Nikki McKay and Jan Webb. Finally, I would like to thank the drivers who got the ladies there and back safely - Bob Palmer, Peter Hearn, Steve May & Steve McKay.



THE LADIES WHO LUNCED AT THE TOWNHOUSE

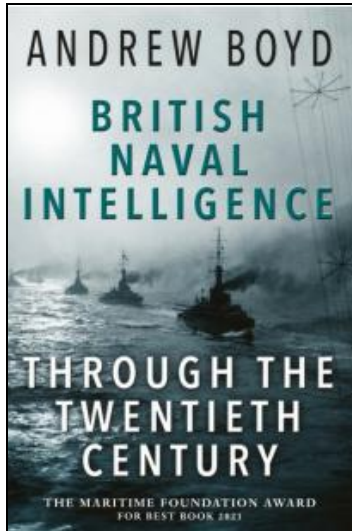
Then the very next day we turned to for the St Georges Day Parade, formed up outside the Victoria Park, marched up to the Memorial and had a quick service; led by the Army then back to the Legion for a few quiet pints before going to the Cross Keys for a few loud ones.

And last but not least we had our ANZAC Service held at the AE1 & 2 Memorial in town on Sunday.



BARROW ANZAC REMEMBRANCE APRIL 2025

BOOK REVIEWS



British Naval Intelligence through the Twentieth Century

By Andrew Boyd

Foreword by Andrew Lambert

This first comprehensive account of British naval intelligence in the modern era Challenges established perceptions of its role in the two World Wars Revised and affordable paperback edition

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This compelling history of naval intelligence, now in a new and revised paperback edition, will appeal to a wide body of naval historians and enthusiasts interested in the crucial part it played on naval policy and operations.

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'A remarkable book which for the first time puts intelligence in its place and tells us what happened and why. For any modern naval officer, gives a systematic picture of naval warfare in a way not done by anybody else.' Rear Admiral James Goldrick

ANDREW BOYD CMG, OBE, DPhil was educated at Britannia Royal Naval College and St

Johns College, Oxford. He served as a submariner in the Royal Navy before joining the Foreign & Commonwealth Office in 1980. He has had a long

standing interest in 20th- century naval history and was awarded a research fellowship to undertake a

DPhil. This was the basis of his first book, The Royal Navy in Eastern Waters, which was followed by the critically-acclaimed British Naval Intelligence

through the Twentieth Century. His most recent book, Arms for Russia and the Naval War in the Arctic 1941–1945, is a fascinating reassessment of Allied support for the Soviets

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TITANIC THE MANCHESTER CONNECTIONS

The sinking of the RMS Titanic on the night of 14/15 April 1912 remains one of history's most tragic maritime disasters. Striking an iceberg in the North Atlantic during its maiden voyage, the ship left countless heart-breaking stories of lives lost or changed forever.

Greater Manchester, in England's northwest, had strong ties to Titanic, with over thirty local people involved as passengers and crew, most of whom perished. Titanic: The Greater Manchester Connections recounts their stories. John Clarke, a Manchester-born band member, famously played on as the ship sank. Joseph Hyman, a Russian Jewish

passenger who survived, later opened a kosher delicatessen in Manchester named "Titanic's."



Chemist Adolphe Saalfeld carried 65 perfume samples aboard to break into the American market. Although he survived, his perfumes were lost until recovered in 1985. Thomas Hart missed the voyage after his discharge book was stolen, inspiring the card game scene in James Cameron's 1997 film *Titanic*.

The captains of two ships involved in the aftermath—the *Carpathia* and *Californian*—hailed from Bolton. The *Titanic* tragedy offers a glimpse into late Victorian and Edwardian society. Though the ship rests at the bottom of the Atlantic, its stories and legends continue to captivate worldwide.

Author Details

JAMES BANCROFT has produced more than 100 books and articles, the subjects of which reflect his varied interests.

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GALE FORCE 10

The Life and Legacy of Admiral Beaufort The Man Behind the Beaufort Scale

Discover the full story of Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, whose iconic wind scale is just one aspect of a life filled with adventure, innovation, and ground-breaking contributions to maritime science. Nicholas Courtney's biography unveils Beaufort's profound impact on fields like polar exploration, meteorology, and even Darwin's historic voyage on the *HMS Beagle*, painting a vivid picture of a nineteenth-century hero.

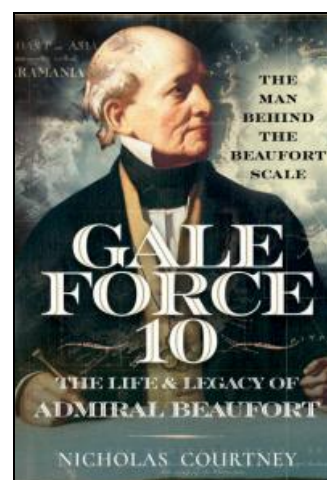
Through Beaufort's personal letters and journals, readers gain a unique glimpse into a life that rivals

fiction, filled with battles, scientific discoveries, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge that shaped the course of exploration and science.

Few who hear the shipping forecast, with its familiar sequence of numbers denoting the expected force of the wind, know what lies behind the man who gave the world the Beaufort Scale, a system that has never been bettered or replaced, but Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort's enduring contribution to maritime science is just one part of his remarkable legacy.

In this richly detailed biography, bestselling author Nicholas Courtney brings to life the adventurous and accomplished career of Rear-Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort (1774–1857). From a self-taught midshipman to Hydrographer to the Navy, Beaufort's life reads like a blend of *Hornblower* and *Longitude*, filled with pirates, wars, and royalty. His impact extended far beyond his famous scale, influencing polar exploration, meteorology, and even the voyages of the *HMS Beagle* that brought Charles Darwin to fame.

Drawing on Beaufort's personal letters, journals, and naval records, Nicholas Courtney uncovers both the public and private life of a nineteenth-century hero whose contributions to science and exploration remain crucial to this day.



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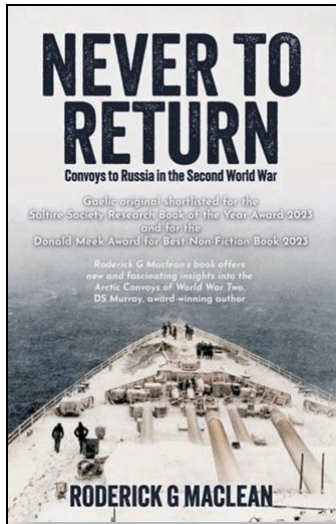
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Never To Return tells the story of the Russian convoys and the heroes who sailed in them with particular focus on HMS Achates. Roderick G Maclean has gathered primary and secondary source material to give a detailed and illuminating analysis of the Russian Convoys. He tells of the commodores who came out of retirement, risking their lives to navigate convoys to Murmansk and Archangel; the doctors who dived with death, jumping from one ship to another in rough seas to administer crucial medical aid; the astonishing behaviour of Adolf Hitler in belittling his Kriegsmarine admirals and captains, making them reticent to engage with the Royal Navy in December 1942; the rescue ships which pulled freezing survivors from the ice-cold Arctic waters. *Never to Return* shares the story of those who, despite their fears, sailed in these convoys.

The Scottish Gaelic original of this book was shortlisted for the Saltire Society Research Book of the Year Award 2023 and for the Donald Meek Award for Best Non-Fiction book 2023.

Readership: the story is told from the German as well as the British side, and is comprehensively backed up by photographs, maps and documents. The book will be enjoyed by those with a general interest in the subject and those who wish to research the topic further.

ISBN 978-1-0369-0326-8 234 × 156mm 224pp illustrated with c.18 colour images and c.49 b & w images with c.20 maps and diagrams, softback £18.99

'Never to Return is a splendidly researched and grippingly-presented history of the Arctic Convoys of 1941–45. These were statistically one of the most dangerous operations carried out by Allied forces during the Second World War'. Ronald Black, Senior Lecturer Emeritus in Gaelic at the University of Edinburgh

'It was a treat to read your book and learn so many aspects of the Achates' story. Thank you for all the hard research you must have done to put it all together and then for writing it up in such a readable style. I really enjoyed it – as I am sure many others will do'. James Peyton Jones, son of Lt. Loftus Peyton Jones, the surviving captain of HMS Achates which was lost in the Battle of the Barents Sea on 31 December 1942

'Enlightening, entertaining and informative, Roderick G Maclean's new book offers new and fascinating insights into the Arctic Convoys of World War Two. He provides a fresh perspective, showing how much those on board suffered and endured. His words took me into the lives of men like my Skye grandfather who also sailed during these years at war – and served on two vessels that sank'. DS Murray, award-winning author

About the author: Roderick G Maclean set up his own company PointMedia Ltd following a successful career in education. He is an experienced director of BBC Alba documentaries and an established writer. His first BBC documentary 'Fios ann am Fios/Finding David' was broadcast in 2013 and included footage of possibly the last major gathering of Arctic Convoy veterans at Loch Ewe.

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Naval survivor of 'Great War's Hiroshima' honoured in his Yorkshire hometown



9 April 2025

ROYAL NAVY NEWS

A memorial plaque has been unveiled on the former home of a Royal Navy sailor who survived one of the biggest non-atomic explosions in history.

Able Seaman William Becker was one of seven crew from HMS Highflyer who rowed across Halifax

harbour in Canada in December 1917 to tackle a fire raging on a merchant ship.

Despite travelling at just one knot apiece, the collision between the merchant vessels Mont Blanc and Imo in the harbour narrows was sufficient to set the former ablaze.

It wasn't long before the French crew first lost control of the fire, then lost control of their minds and panicked, abandoning ship, rowing ashore and running through the streets warning in their native tongue about impending doom. Their premonition was accurate. The flames reached the 2,500 tonnes of explosives in the cargo hold some 20 minutes after the collision.

Mont Blanc disintegrated in an instant, torn apart by a three-kiloton blast – about one fifth the strength of the atomic explosion at Hiroshima.

A blast wave moved at three times the speed of sound in every direction: factories, wharves, entire streets were flattened, trees and telegraph poles snapped in two. Mont Blanc's main gun was hurled more than three-and-a-half miles, her half-tonne anchor crashed down two miles from the wreck site.

The 5,000C heat from the explosion caused water in the harbour to vapourise - some Haligonians claimed they could see the harbour bed - and then caused a tsunami with a wall of water up to 66ft high. It swept into the port with such force that it lifted up the Imo and dumped it on the foreshore.



Devastation in Halifax after the blast (IWM Q 71057)

Destroyed either by the blast or the killer wave was Highflyer's whaler and six of its seven occupants.

William Becker somehow survived – and swam ashore through icy waters. The sight facing him on land was apocalyptic: not a single windowpane was intact. The shattered glass flew through the air like daggers. At least 600 people were blinded or lost an eye because of shards of glass. Arms and legs were shredded, jaws shattered, bodies blown out of buildings and left hanging in tangled telegraph and telephone wires.

Upwards of 2,000 people were not so fortunate; the last corpse was not recovered until 1919. More Nova Scotians died in the Halifax explosion than in the killing fields of Flanders.

Yorkshireman William was one of two Highflyer crew awarded the Albert Medal – forerunner of today's George Cross.

He spent the final five years of his life at No.40 Trinity Road in Bridlington, East Yorkshire, where yesterday a blue plaque was dedicated, the 19th installed thanks to the efforts of RN senior rate and author/historian Petty Officer Richard M Jones.

He has made it his mission in life to ensure local heroes and tragedies across the land – and especially in his native Bridlington – are remembered through numerous books plus monuments and memorials.

"It is great that William Becker's life and efforts are now remembered, one of only 568 Albert Medals ever awarded," said Richard, who serves in HMS Queen Elizabeth.

"Without the support of Bridlington residents and veterans these plaques would never happen."

Royal Navy: Enlightening details of HMNB Portsmouth upgrades unearthed as site set for critical investment

By Freddie Webb

The News (Portsmouth)

Defence Reporter 8th Apr 2025

Critical details have been unearthed on the upgrades which will be made to Portsmouth Naval Base.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced during her Spring Statement on March 26th that HMNB Portsmouth would see investment to renovate the site. She said the UK must "move quickly in a changing world" to up its defence commitment.

Shadow defence secretary James Cartlidge asked the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in a parliamentary written question how the funds for the regeneration will be allocated. Minister of defence procurement, Maria Eagle, confirmed money will be spent on several areas to freshen up the home of the Royal Navy.



Portsmouth is the UK's only island city and is completely surrounded by water

Picture: LA(PHOT) Paul A'Barrow

She said: "The funding for the regeneration of His Majesty's Naval Base Portsmouth will be allocated towards three main areas: refurbishment and upgrade of accommodation, jetty upgrade programme, and wider estate development. This allocation aims to provide good quality, safe accommodation, ensure the jetties can better meet the demand of the surface fleet, and create a resilient, efficient, and sustainable Naval Base."

The Labour MP for Liverpool Galston added that further restoration is currently being considered which is beyond the scope of the current plan. "This funding does not cover the totality of the regeneration needs, and future requirements will be determined following the Strategic Defence Review," she added.



HMNB Portsmouth has been branded as an "engine for defence jobs".

Minister for defence procurement, Maria Eagle, visited Portsmouth on February 28, 2025, after the government announced plans to increase defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by 2027.

The chancellor set out plans to bolster defence in the Spring Statement, with Ms Reeves aiming to turn the UK into a "defence industrial superpower". Speaking to the House of Commons, she said the government would increase spending by a further £2.2bn. This is in addition to the previously announced increase of £2.9bn in October 2024.

Plans have also been set to increase defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP by April 2027. Portsmouth North MP Amanda Martin previously said the announcement "delivers security for working people across our country and cements Portsmouth as the home of the Royal Navy"

Her Portsmouth South colleague, Stephen Morgan MP, added: "As the heart and home of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth has played a leading role in our nation's defence for centuries. I have long campaigned for investment in the Naval Base so I'm

delighted to see this Labour government delivering this at the Spring Statement. The Chancellor's announcement will make our city an engine for growth, delivering major infrastructure improvements, new buildings, housing and jobs of the future."

Ms Eagle previously visited Portsmouth and was given a tour of the naval base while also speaking to defence and manufacturing firms in the city

Tonino's in Royal Netherlands Navy submarine delivery

GREENOCK TELGRAPH 2nd April 2025

By Christopher Dodds [@chrissydodds](#)



An order for 50 pizzas on April Fool's Day would probably have most restaurants assuming they were on the wrong end of a practical joke - but one Greenock eatery rose to exactly that challenge.

The team at Tonino's, in Grey Place, took to social media to reveal how they'd been asked to prepare a bumper delivery to ensure crew members on a visiting submarine didn't go hungry. The Royal Netherlands Navy submarine HNLMS ZEELEEUW (Zeeleeuw being Dutch for 'sea lion') turned plenty of heads when it arrived in Inverclyde waters at the weekend before docking at Inchgreen Marine Park.

As previously reported by the Telegraph the sub began sea trials in 1988 and entered service in 1990 as the first submarine of the Walrus class. The vessel has been deployed in naval exercises and combat operations all over the world and is also involved in intelligence operations. In 2010, HNLMS ZEELEEUW took part in Operation Ocean Shield. She was upgraded between 2014 and 2016, and in 2017, she took part in a torpedo-firing exercise in the Bahamas.

And she was the centre of attention on her arrival on the Clyde, being snapped by many a keen photographer in the area, including members of the Greenock Telegraph Camera Club and Tele snapper George Munro.

And Inverclyde's enthusiastic photographers weren't the only ones to feel the benefit of the sub's visit to the area - with a pizza order at the top of the list when the crew's bellies began to rumble on Tuesday. However, Tonino's were more than happy to oblige when asked to serve the call of duty, helping to feed the crew before they set back off on their next mission.

A Tonino's spokesperson said in a post on Facebook: "Most people would doubt an order of 50 pizzas requested on April Fool's Day delivered to a submarine, but we did no such thing and fed the 60 strong crew before they head off on their underwater adventure!"

Fate of Aukus nuclear submarine deal may be delayed months as UK and Australia wait on Trump review

Story by Tom McLroy and Sarah Basford Canales

The author of the UK's Aukus review, Sir Stephen Lovegrove, has called for better strategic communications to maintain public 'legitimacy' for the multi-decade deal. Photograph: Colin Murty/AAP© Photograph: Colin Murty/AAP

Australia and the UK potentially face months of more uncertainty over the future of [the Aukus agreement](#), amid expectations a snap Trump administration review of the nuclear submarines deal will extend well beyond its initial 30-day timeframe.

The author of Britain's Aukus review, Sir Stephen Lovegrove, said both countries would contribute to the Pentagon assessment but warned there was "a way to go" yet before advice to US president Donald Trump was settled. "I think there's a bit of a way to go," Lovegrove said.

"I am anticipating that we will be in a position to reinforce and give supportive perspectives to the review. We've received messages that we will obviously be consulted. I think Australian colleagues have received very similar messages.

"Aukus needs constant love and attention. It is a huge thing. It is protean and it will change its shape a bit as time goes on, and that is quite right too."

Ahead of a visit to the Henderson naval base in Western Australia, set to deliver nuclear-powered submarine maintenance, Lovegrove called for better strategic communications to maintain public "legitimacy" for the multi-decade deal.

"As somebody said to me a couple of days ago, 'you don't buy a Lamborghini in order to take the children to school'. If you're going to do something like this, you've got to explain why you're making such a very big commitment."

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"As somebody said to me a couple of days ago, 'you don't buy a Lamborghini in order to take the children to school'. If you're going to do something like this, you've got to explain why you're making such a very big commitment."

An Australian defence department spokesperson said it was "natural" the US would want to examine progress against key milestones and identify further improvements in the deal.

"Australia engages widely and routinely with United States officials on Aukus and alliance matters. Australian defence officials have engaged with Elbridge Colby since his commencement in the Pentagon and we look forward to continuing productive engagement," the spokesperson said.

The foreign minister, Penny Wong, and her US counterpart, Marco Rubio, are both attending talks of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Malaysia this week and could discuss the review. They met earlier this month in Washington.

Wong told the meeting Aukus would transparently contribute to collective deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

"Above all, our objective is to prevent conflict, preserve peace and maintain the agency of all countries in our region," she said.

"We may be bound by the geography that fate has chosen for us, but we are strengthened by the partnership that we choose for ourselves. And that partnership means leaning in, not leaving it to others."

Colby's review could recommend the deal be changed, rather than scrapped, with Australia required to pay more to support US shipbuilding capacity or guarantee nuclear submarines be committed in the event of an American conflict with China.

The assistant minister for foreign affairs and trade, Matt Thistlethwaite, told the ABC that the government was confident Aukus remained strong and would be maintained, despite media "speculation".

"The defence relationship between Australia and the United States has never been stronger," he said.

The uncertainty about Aukus comes ahead of Albanese's visit to China, beginning at the weekend,

and amid concerns about Trump's growing trade war and threats to impose tariffs on pharmaceutical imports to the US.

The White House has already publicly called for Australia to lift defence spending to at least 3.5% of GDP

“Disaster as broken £1 billion nuclear submarine arrives in Plymouth”?

George Allinson reviews and critiques an example of the danger of sloppy reporting and failure to check facts.

A recent article published by Plymouth Plus, titled “Disaster as broken £1 billion nuclear submarine arrives in Plymouth,” has raised significant questions within defence circles for its handling of unverified claims, lack of transparent sourcing, and quiet edits made after publication.

The report, which implies that the Royal Navy's HMS ASTUTE suffered a potentially crippling reactor issue, cites only a single unnamed “defence source” and includes no corroboration from officials, contractors, or independent experts.

While anonymity in sourcing is not unusual especially in defence reporting it is the combination of unattributed claims, visibly reused social media content, and factually incorrect details that has led to a growing number of concerns about how this story was assembled and presented.

The article's central allegations that HMS ASTUTE was towed into Devonport covertly with serious technical faults, possibly a poisoned nuclear reactor, and had her armaments removed beforehand are serious and newsworthy. But the framing, timing, and language of the piece closely mirror a social media post shared hours before publication. That post originated from an account with no known ties to the defence community or any verifiable expertise in the field.

The account also posted video footage of HMS ASTUTE arriving in daylight, yet both it and the article initially claimed the arrival happened “under the cover of darkness” a statement demonstrably false based on the visual evidence. This detail, later edited to “under the cover of dawn” with no acknowledgement, raises questions about how the article was fact-checked prior to publication.

The footage used by Plymouth Plus appears to have been captured from the same location, at the same time, and under identical lighting and tidal conditions as the earlier social media post suggesting that either the outlet reused that public material, or that the person behind the post and the outlet's “defence source” are one and the same.

This distinction is important: if a claim of technical failure involving a nuclear submarine is being

presented to the public, readers have the right to know whether it came from a defence professional or an anonymous online commentator with no subject-matter credentials.

Transparency, Not Just Attribution, Is the Standard

It's worth stating clearly that not all important reporting requires on-the-record sources. In defence journalism, particularly where operational security or whistleblowing is concerned, anonymity is both necessary and expected.

However, anonymous sourcing still demands verification, editorial scrutiny, and clarity about credibility. Simply referring to a vague “defence source” especially when that source appears to be replicating social media commentary already available to the public does not meet the threshold of reliable reporting.

It's not the anonymity that's the issue it's the lack of context, the absence of corroboration, and the striking alignment with unverified online speculation. When reporters work with unnamed sources, they typically explain why the source was granted anonymity, what role they hold (or held), and — crucially — how the information was corroborated. None of those steps appear to have been taken or communicated in this case.

This story matters because it doesn't just reflect on one article it speaks to how the public understands and interprets issues of national defence. If there were a serious reactor issue aboard a vessel of this class, it would not only affect operational readiness, but could have implications for the safety of crews, the credibility of the ASTUTE-class programme, and broader policy debates on fleet sustainment and availability.

For that reason, reporting on such incidents requires a particularly high standard of accuracy and care. Sensational language especially when tied to vague sourcing and speculative language risks misleading readers and undermining trust in both journalism and the institutions being reported on.

Plymouth Plus has, since publication, revised elements of its article without issuing a correction notice. Phrases such as “under the cover of darkness” were changed to “under the cover of dawn.” Similarly, the claim that Rolls-Royce engineers were “seen observing the arrival” has been downgraded to “reportedly seen.” These are not just stylistic changes — they shift statements of fact into suggestion and introduce a layer of plausible deniability after the fact.

Industry standards generally dictate that when a published piece is updated or corrected, a footnote or editor's note should acknowledge the change. This protects credibility and helps maintain public

trust. The lack of such a note here further obscures the already hazy sourcing at the heart of the piece.

A Reversal of Journalistic Responsibility

In response to criticism, Plymouth Plus issued a statement defending its reporting, saying:

“Plymouth Plus is trusted by local people and backed by verified facts. Our content has amassed over 20 million views in less than 6 months and we maintain one of the largest and most engaged followings in the city. It’s disappointing, though not surprising, to see yet another attempt to undermine credible local journalism by someone with a long track record of criticising the media rather than spending their time reporting themselves.

Instead of resorting to tired accusations about “sourcing integrity” that don’t hold up to scrutiny, perhaps you should take the time to investigate the matter yourself and produce evidence that disproves our reporting.

When you do, we’ll be the first to apologise – but you won’t, because there’s nothing to find. In the meantime, we actually have a job to do covering real stories for the people of this city so we won’t be engaging in this kind of childish distraction any further.”

The statement, however, raises several concerns — not least for what it reveals about the outlet’s editorial priorities.

Firstly, the claim of “over 20 million views” appears to refer largely to short-form TikTok videos of incident scenes, rather than to in-depth investigative reporting or rigorous analysis. While social media content can be a valuable engagement tool, view counts on platforms like TikTok are not a substitute for journalistic credibility. Virality does not equate to verification, and the popularity of a video does not confirm the accuracy of its message.

Secondly, the suggestion that critics should “produce evidence” to disprove the outlet’s claims represents a fundamental reversal of journalistic responsibility. When serious allegations are made — in this case, that a £1.2 billion nuclear submarine may have suffered a reactor failure — the onus is on the publisher to provide clear, credible sourcing to support those claims. It is not the role of readers, analysts, or other journalists to retroactively investigate and disprove vague, unattributed reporting.

Thirdly, the tone of the response — referring to questions of sourcing as “tired accusations” and legitimate criticism as “childish distraction” avoids engagement with the core concerns:

The article’s language closely mirrors unverified social media posts.

Its footage appears to originate from a non-affiliated source already circulating online.

Several of its claims have since been revised, without acknowledgement, after factual contradictions emerged.

Criticism especially on matters involving national defence is not an attack on local journalism. It is part of the public accountability process that any serious publication must accept, particularly when its reporting carries implications for public understanding and national security. Ultimately, credibility in journalism is not built on engagement metrics, social media shares, or defensive rhetoric. It is built on clarity, evidence, and the willingness to be transparent when questions arise.

The Bottom Line

To be clear, everyone can make mistakes. We’re no strangers to the challenges of getting defence reporting right. We recently corrected an error involving the timing of a U.S. submarine’s operations. The moment we confirmed the mistake; we issued a public correction and updated the article transparently — because that’s how responsible journalism works. Not through silence, edits without notice, or blaming critics.

If there are genuine issues affecting the operational integrity of HMS ASTUTE, they deserve public attention. But that attention must be informed by clear evidence, responsible reporting, and transparency about where information comes from — not vague sourcing and speculative narrative.

When public social media commentary is repackaged as insider reporting, and when questions about sourcing are met with deflection rather than clarity, the result is a weakening of public trust — in journalism, in institutions, and in the truth itself.

George Allison

George has a degree in Cyber Security from Glasgow Caledonian University and has a keen interest in naval and cyber security matters and has appeared on national radio and television to discuss current events. George is on Twitter

SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR' (Reported 1st April 2025 to 30th June 2025 (***) WWII Service)

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

NAME	DATE/AGE	RANK/RATE	BRANCH	SM SERVICE	SUBMARINES
Carlton Chance	2nd April 2025	Chief Petty Officer	We Remember Submariners	Not Given	TURBULENT
David James Percival P/JX 911805	6th April 2025 aged 88	Radio Operator	Anglesea RNA	Not given	AENEAS, ANDREW, ANCHORITE, TALENT, TACTICIAN & TEREDO
Richard John Andrews P/JX 977460	8th April 2025	RO (G)	We Remember Submariners	1957 to 1970	ALARIC, AMPHION and AMBUSH (1960)
Simon (Sonny) Lister CO 36585K	11th April 2025 aged 65	Lt Commander (X) (SM)	We Remember Submariners	1977 to 2014	SWIFTSURE (1978 to 1979), SCEPTRE (1979 to 1981), SUPERB (1981 to 1983), SWIFTSURE (1983 to 1985), TURBULENT (1986 to 1989), TRENCHANT (1991 to 1993), TIRELESS (1994 to 1996), TRAFALGAR (1996 to 1998), SCEPTRE (2000) & TALENT (2000 to 2002)
Bernard Anthony Mitchell BSc MIEE	11th April 2025	Lt Commander WESM	We Remember Submarines	1974 to 2003	NARWHAL. OPPORTUNE, DOLPHIN, CWTA, TIRELESS, MoD Portland & MoD Bath
Anthony (Toby) Smyth D111769H	19th April 2025 aged 81	Chief Petty Officer Medical Assistant	Dolphin Branch	December 1969 to May 1988	DREADNOUGHT, RESOLUTION, AENEAS, CONQUEROR, RENOWN, SCEPTRE & TURBULENT (1st Commission Crew) on 28th April 1986
Richard George Heaslip	19th April 2025 aged 93	Rear Admiral	Dolphin Branch	September 1953 to May 1987	SENTINEL (4th Hand 7th Jun 1954), TABARD (1957), SPRINGER, AMBUSH (IL), COQC No 44/60), SEADEVIL (CO 1st July 1961), DREADNOUGHT (IL 1966 & 1977), DOLPHIN (1968 to 1970), CONQUEROR (1971 & 1972), DNOR (1973 to 1975), SM2 (1976 & 1977), DNW (1978 & 1979), NATO (1980), SAKER (1981 & 1982), ACDS Commitment (1983), NATO (1984 & 1985) & FOSM (1985 to 1987)
Keith Howard D088656	23rd April 2025	Chief Petty Officer	We Remember Submariners	Not given	SOVEREIGN, SWIFTSURE (1st Commission Crew) on 17th October 1972) & SUPERB
Jamie Bishop	24th April 2025	Leading Engineering Technician (MESM)	We Remember Submariners	Serving Submariner	ARTFUL
Gordon David Stephen, MBE D140363D	29th April 2025 aged 69	WO1 Weapons Engineering Artificer	West of Scotland Branch	May 1978 to July 2006	REVENGE (1978 to 1980), REPULSE (1981 to 1983), REVENGE (1987 to 1989), REPULSE (1990 to 1997) & VICTORIOUS (1999 to 2001) & (2005 to 2006)
Hamish Alexander Jones	30th April 2025	Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic	We Remember Submariners	Not Given	OPOSSUM on 'Commissioning' at DOLPHIN on 14th November 1981 & OTTER (on commissioning at Humber Ship Repairers) on 29th November 1986
T (Terry) Burrow	April 2025 aged 95	M(E)1	We Remember Submariners	1956 to 1963	DOLPHIN, ALCIDE, THULE, AMBUSH (on Recommissioning) at Chatham on 10th February 1958), AMBROSE, SENESCHAL, ALARIC & TACITURN
John L Davies P/JX 760276	April 2025 aged 95	Able Seaman (UC1)	Wales (Welsh) Branch	July 1953 to September 1959	ARTFUL, ARTEMIS, TIRELESS 'on commissioning at Portsmouth) on 21st March 1955 & AMPHION
Ronald Price-Tyrrell	April 2025	Petty Officer	We Remember Submariners	Not Given	Not Given

Philip C Jays P094942	April 2025 aged 75	Able Seaman (UC2)	Exeter Branch	July 1968 to October 1969	ALARIC, OPOSSUM & OLYMPUS
Christopher Hall D062114E	April 2025 aged 79	Petty Officer (UC1)	Plymouth Branch	June 1965 to January 1986	WALRUS, OPOSSUM, GRAMPUS, OCELOT, SCEPTRE & OTUS
Michael J Hanlon P/K934946	April 2025 aged 87	Chief Petty Officer (ME)	Australia Branch	December 1956 to October 1977	TIPTOE, TUDOR, TAPIR on Commissioning in Malta on 27th January 1961, SEA DEVIL, TABARD, FINWHALE on 'Commissioning' at Chatham on 27th January 1964, THERMOPYLAE on commissioning at Portsmouth on 21st July 1965, REVENGE (P) (1st Commission Crew) on 4th December 1969 & RESOLUTION
Keir Morris	2nd May 2025 aged 70	Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer	We Remember Submariners	Noy given	OTUS (2nd Commission Crew on recommissioning on 1st December 1967), RENOWN (Port), RENOWN (Starboard) & RESOLUTION (Port)
Malcolm Dennis Field D115854F	2nd May 2025 aged 71	Not Given	We Remember Submariners	Not Given	including OCELOT (1970s)
Adam D'Ambrosio	4th May 2025	Chief Petty Officer (TS)	SM3 Facebook	Not given	ONSLAUGHT (1980), TIRELESS, TRAFALGAR, PUGNACIOUS Trainer, VALIANT & RENOWN
Steve Victor Smyth	4th May 2025 aged 57	Chief Petty Officer Coxswain	We Remember Submariners	10th November 1975 to 7th June 2002	DOLPHIN, OSIRIS (20th February 1990 to 10th August 1992, RALEIGH,, DOLPHIN (12th March 1993 to 6th August 1993), FOSM, SM), TALENT (3rd January 1995 to 10th January 1997), FOSM (18th February 1997 to 7th August 1998), TALENT (10th August 1998 to 17th November 2000) & RALEIGH
Mark Patrick Hamilton D227390Y	7th May 2025 aged 54	Leading Cook	Plymouth Branch	from March 1999	TURBULENT, TORBAY, TIRELESS & TRENCHANT
Donald I (Don) Cleavin P/K952159	7th May 2025 aged 86	Chief Petty Officer MEM	Gosport Branch	November 1958 to January 1979	TALLY HO, TAPIR, TRESPASSER, THERMOPYLAE, ARTFUL, ANDREW, ANCHORITE, AURIGA & WALRUS
Robert (Gabby) Hayes D058877J	7th May 2025 aged 79	Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer (ML)	Barrow Branch	September 1964 to August 1985	ORPHEUS (January 1965 to September 1966), RESOLUTION (P) November 1966 - 1st Commission on 3rd October 1967), RESOLUTION (S) (2nd Commission on 10th July 1971), RESOLUTION (S) on recommissioning on 27th November 1976 & DASO on 14th July 1977), REPULSE (March 1980 to August 1981) & OCELOT (September 1982 to August 1985)
Peter Leonard Barlow D086943H	8th May 2025 aged 76	Chief Radio Supervisor	Dolphin Branch	September 1969 to March 1984	AURIGA, ARTEMIS, GRAMPUS, OBERON & ONSLAUGHT
Glen Aldred	8th May 2025 aged 72	Leading Cook	We Remember Submariners	Not given	SUPERB, SCEPTRE (at the Faklands 1982) & TALENT
John Neil Morrison	14th May 2025	Chief Petty Officer Weapons Engineering Artificer	We Remember Submarines	Not given	SWIFTSURE, VALIANT & ACO Slough
David A Gildea D189774U	May 2025 aged 63	Leading Stores Accountant	Middlesex Branch	November 1984 to November 1992	CHURCHILL (1985), CONQUEROR (1985 to 1986), TALENT (1988 to 1989) & TIRELESS (1990 to 1991)
Graham Van Marle	29th May 2025	Leading Cook	We Remember Submariners	Not given	ASTUTE (on commissioning at Faslane on 27th August 2010), AMBUSH (on commissioning at Faslane on 13th March 2013), AUDACIOUS and

					VANGUARD
Paul Lansdell	2nd June 2025	Chief Petty Officer Weapons Engineering Artificer	We Remember Submarines	Not given	OPOSSUM, TALENT, TRIUMPH (1998 to 2001) & DOLPHIN Submarine School
John (Arthur) Spivey	3rd June 2025	Steward	We Remember Submarines	Not given	CACHALOT (October 1969 to February 1970 for passage to UK from Singapore)
R T (Ginger) Crossley D164292Q	7th June 2025 aged 72	Leading Marine Engineering Mechanic (M)	Sheffield Branch & Diesel Boats F/B	1977 to 1986	FINWHALE, OTTER (on commissioning at Gosport on 17th May 1980, OSIRIS & ORPHEUS
Roy Hibbert 617432	11th June 2025 aged 95	Stoker	We Remember Submariners	Not given	TOTEM & ANDREW
Brian (Lester) Gippert	17th June 2025 aged 70	Warrant Officer (MEA) (ML)	We Remember Submariners	Not given	RENOWN (S) on rededication at Rosyth on 21st November 1992 & VICTORIOUS
Gavin H Scrimgeour P/K979565	17th June 2025 aged 82	Petty Officer ME	Australia Branch	1962 to 1970	TRUMP, TACITURN 'on re-commissioning for service with the 4th Submarine Division' at Sydney on 10th March 1964, NARWHAL & ALARIC

