



# PERISCOPE VIEW

The Newsletter of the Barrow-in Furness Branch  
of the  
Submariners Association

Patron: Admiral the Lord Boyce KG GCB OBE DL

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### **Cover Picture:      The AE1 & AE2 Memorial in Ramsden Square**

The AE1 & E2 Memorial is pictured on the Cover with a wreath of yellow flowers which appeared on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March. The card (shown below) reads 'From the people of Australia – Lest We Forget'. Co-incidentally the Australian Minister of Defence had visited the Barrow Shipyard on 14th March.....



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## **EDITORIAL**

Welcome to the April Issue of PERISCOPE VIEW. No changes to the layout this month so I assume that everybody is happy with the current layout. The series of the biographies of World War One Submariner VC's continues this month with the story of Martin Eric Nasmith, VC (later Dunbar-Nasmith) who was awarded his Victoria Cross for his services in Submarine E11 at the Dardanelles.

Dates for your April diaries are the Branch Annual General Meeting in the RBL at 1930 on Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> April, an ANZAC Day Commemoration at the AE1 & AE2 Memorial in Ramsden Square on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> April (details to follow), the Branch Dinner on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> April (details in the Social Secretary's Report) and the St George's Day Parade & Service on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> April. This Parade will muster outside the Town Hall at 1240, march to St George's Church for a short service followed by the usual Social at the Engineers Club. Those who last long enough can finish up at the Steelworks.

Please enjoy your Branch Newsletter and don't forget that you can help by sending in your contributions and any comments you think relevant – polite ones only – of course!

Regards      **Barrie Downer**





The clocks have gone forward, lighter nights and spring is officially here. All we need is some warm sun and less rain and we can move forward and think about the garden or even a BBQ somewhere in the distant future. When you receive this newsletter we will just be about to hold or have just held the Annual Branch AGM. I guess you must be happy with the way things are being run because we have received not one item for the agenda and not one person has put their name forward for the committee apart from those already on the committee. The committee have been revamping the branch rules to bring them in line with the changes to the national rules and amend those we thought necessary. Due to the lengthy timescale in carrying out this task it would be inappropriate for me to expect you to be able to vote on their acceptance having just received them. My proposal will be that we make the June meeting an extraordinary meeting so that the rules can be accepted then. This gives you the opportunity to read and question any of the content before that date. Our existing rules state that any amendments to our rules can only be approved at an AGM or a meeting specially convened for that purpose. I am not long home from the National Annual Reunion and Conference which this year was held down in Kent. There were five of us from Barrow and we all had a great time. Thanks to Pedlar for doing the driving – for four of us anyway. One of the proposals on the agenda was that the existing Full Members Reunion and Conference be fully integrated so that our wives and friends can attend the reunion albeit the conference itself would be limited to Full Members of the Association. No more of the ‘split dinners’ with the members in one dining room and our wives and friends in another that we suffered in the past. Another proposal was that the existing Mixed Reunion later in the year be discontinued. As the first went through the second was a ‘no brainer’ mainly due to the drop in numbers over the past couple of years. So, both were successful with big majorities. This kicks in from 2015 the first fully integrated reunion being the last weekend in March in Leicester. The NMC were asked to look at moving this reunion to the old traditional October weekend. This they will do but the March 2015 Reunion/Conference will stay for next year as any change would require a conference decision. In any case the hotel is now booked and can’t be changed. I am hoping that this will appeal to those who want to bring their wives and friends as the majority clearly demonstrated. The last of the Mixed or Families Reunions will be in Runcorn in September. Last Saturday - 29th March - I attended the Memorial Service for the late Billy ‘Mac’ McNeil - previously of the

Central Lancs branch but then of the Dolphin branch when that one folded. Those of you who visited the Central Lancs branch in Leyland will remember him as a larger than life character. I was joined by branch Members Don Wade (who joined us when the Central Lancs branch was disbanded), Pony Moore and Robbie Roberts. Robbie’s brother Ian Moore was also there. Branch Member Norman Hart (also ex Central Lancs) had hoped to attend but was in hospital having had a short notice appointment to sort out a long standing problem his leg which he broke a couple of years ago. I took our Branch Standard but don’t manage the same level of competency as Ginge Cundell - our present incumbent Standard Bearer.

Did you attend the Dog Race Night? It actually ended up as a Horse Race night as the doggy DVD gave up on us part way through. Still a good night though. A head, four legs and a tail, what’s the difference? I even won a race. Well actually I paid the stake, put it in Fiona’s name so she kept the winnings. I am a loser all round! Still, we made £100 for the Motor Neurone Disease plus a handsome amount to augment the Social Fund. Well done Alex. This helps to subsidise the social events including the Branch Dinner coming up on the 26th April. See the Social Secs dit for more info.

The Town Council have finally advised us at this late stage that they are doing nothing at all to remember the start of WWI. We have been in touch with the Army and RAF and between the three of us we will be doing something to commemorate the start of that terrible war. We have some ideas but until we have met formally with them I will keep my powder dry.

Did you like the little touch at the AGM? It was the Treasurers’ idea so it just goes to show that they do have a heart somewhere beneath that thick skin. Were you not there? You dipped out.

Finally - a big thanks to the branch Committee for putting in all their hard work over the past year. It is very much appreciated by me and I suspect by the membership in general. Every one of them has contributed and they all deserve a big pat on the back. I think we can safely say that our 50th year passed eventfully and we can now look forward to the future with confidence whilst remembering the past with fondness.

Well that’s all for now.

**Dave**

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## **Britain's super-sub: Navy unveils James Bond-style mini submarine carried on board HMS Astute which can launch from under water**

By [Luke Garratt](#) 23 March 2014

(Images by AFP Getty Images and Douglas S Coult)

- Attached to the HMS Astute, the mini pod can carry up to eight commandos
- Designed to be as stealthy for covert ops, like counter intelligence
- Can launch underwater to carry commandos to their destinations covertly
- Currently the mini sub is attached to the HMS Astute, docked in Gibraltar

The Royal Navy's newest submarine - a miniature sub which can launch underwater that James Bond would be proud of, has been spotted moored off of Gibraltar. The submarine is intended to launch underwater in order to carry commandos to their destinations covertly so they can perform attacks or infiltration near the water. Attached to a large nuclear sub, the mini pod can carry up to around eight elite commandos in heavy assault gear and is designed to be as stealthy as possible.



**The miniature submarine atop the HMS ASTUTE**

The pod can be seen attached to the topside of the nuclear submarine, the HMS ASTUTE, currently off the coast of Gibraltar.

In a covert attack, the secret submarine pod will detach from the HMS Astute and head to its destination, absorbing sonar on the way to evade detection.



**HMS ASTUTE, one of British Royal Navy's new nuclear powered submarines, lays at dock in Gibraltar on its maiden call**



**The mini-sub opening its deployment hatch, where the commandos will leave from during their covert operations.**

The pod will be in use by Special Boat Service commandos in their covert operations, and the miniature submarine will likely make their activities hard to predict or anticipate.

Before it was mounted to the top of the HMS Astute, the miniature submarine had to be airlifted by helicopter to seas near its destination, before being picked up later. Now the submarine will move closer to the destination, and plans for deployment and support for the commandos will be more readily available.

The miniature submarine, codenamed 'Project Chalfont', has been tested since it was installed in 2012, but this is the first time it will reach active service.



**The miniature covert submarine is designed to be as stealthy as possible, and even comes with the ability to absorb sonar to avoid detection**

The HMS ASTUTE is the largest attack submarine the Royal Navy has at its disposal, and is the lead ship of its class. Thanks to air recycling it could theoretically circumnavigate the planet without having to resurface, and its nuclear power system means it will never have to refuel again during its 25-year-service.

However, its limit is that it is only able to carry three month's worth of food for the 98 crew needed to man it. The miniature submarine's main duties are for counter intelligence, as it allows for incredibly covert ops from discreet locations, and will now be able to deploy while hidden underwater, rather than having to travel by helicopter, which runs the risk of revealing its position.

## SECRETARY'S REPORT



Hello

This month is our AGM and as usual it starts with an early kick off at 1930. There is plenty to discuss this AGM as the Committee have reviewed our Branch rules to ensure they are up to date and the changes will be put to the Branch for ratification at a specially convened meeting in June.

As usual the Branch Officers will be presenting their annual reports to the Branch. On my front I have will compile it over the next couple of days, at present I have just arrived back from Thailand and looking forward to a good night's sleep. I am sure the Branch will have the normal sympathy for me but I am sure I will get there.

One thing I know is the assistance and understanding I have received from the Branch and Committee for my

lack of attendance this year due to work commitments. None of this would have gone as smoothly without the support of Barrie stepping in each time I have been called away. I am sure Barrie looks at it sometimes and think I gave this up a couple of years ago but seem to be in the seat more often than not.

Over the past year the Treasurer and I have been ratifying the membership list and now believe we have a stable list that does not incur the Branch paying out for National membership and not being able to recover the costs. Thanks Mick for your assistance.

This year the Chairman is up for re-election and I have received no other volunteers apart from our current Chairman Dave.

This coming year is also the centenary of the outbreak of World War 1 and the Committee is looking at ways the centenary can be commemorated. If you have any ideas then please let a member of the Committee know.

I shall give a fuller report at the AGM and look forward to seeing you there.

Regards **Ron**

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## SOCIAL SECRETARY



**Hi Shipmates,**

Firstly let me thank all who attended the race night on the 14th March; a good evening (despite some technical issues) with 44 people in attendance, as always the pie and peas were awesome. Once again I seemed to do very well, don't tell everyone but the secret is to become an owner!! We raised £175:30 of which £100 will be given to the selected charity; Motor Neurone Disease and the remainder goes in to the pot for the summer BBQ.

### **Diary Check:**

Sat 26th April - The Branch dinner is a 5 course dinner (one of which is coffee & mints?), with reception drink, ½ bottle of wine and copious amounts of port at the Crofters in Holbeck. The entertainment will be speakers both from our membership and imported with background music only in between 'dits'. This event is aimed at all (male & female), but specifically at members who just want to sit down eat, drink and spin dits. It is limited to 50 on a first come basis and costs £30. Kick off will be 7pm for 7:30 sit down, dress code will be

blazer or Jacket & tie, ladies just to come as beautiful as you normally do.

Luxury canal boat party Sat 17th May - this includes transport to and from Barton (near Lancaster) along various pick up points, 1 and half hour cruise with food (Curry, Chilli or Hot Pot) along the beautiful country in that area, a one hour stop over at a the Old Tithe Barn in Garstang and then 1 and half hour cruise back with live entertainment (total time 4 hours). The cost is £35 but will be subsidised by the social fund to JUST £30; this is going to be a great afternoon/evening out and is limited to the first 50. Only 9 places left. Please pay by the May Meeting.

As always at the meetings I run a raffle and the members (free) draw which in March was not won so rolling over to £10 for the April draw; all you have to do to win is be there, have paid your subs and get your number drawn – easy, ask Kenny & Hugh.

I am running a World Cup sweep stake with the cost of a team at £2; you can draw as many teams as you wish.

The prizes will be 50% of takings for winner, 25% for runner up & 15% for third place. So either come along to the meetings and draw one out for yourself or let me draw you out Honduras or even worse England!!!

And always remember those immortal words by the actor/comedian Billy Crystal "By the time a man is wise enough to watch his step, he's too old to go anywhere".

**Alex Webb**  
**Social Secretary**

## **HMS ONYX**

What is happening to HMS ONYX? Several enquiries have been made and the Submarine Museum recently asked what was planned - knowing that the plan to establish a Heritage Centre in Barrow was no longer a viable proposition. In the middle of last year there was quite a lot of activity and the Submarine was prepared for tow - after various demands from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency had been fulfilled. It was understood that the owner was a Peter Davies who had bought the Submarine from Joe Mullen and was planning to tow the submarine to Hull to be scrapped. The intention was that the Submarine was to leave Barrow in June 2014 whilst the weather was suitable. Nothing then happened and, by the end of the year ONYX was still in the Dock System with the weather deteriorating rapidly.

Towards the end of the year there was then an intervention from a group based at Greenock on the Clyde who wanted the Submarine to go to Greenock to be displayed in the James Watt Dock (ex Scott's Shipyard) as the centre piece of a Heritage Centre to be established there. The people behind this plan were a Bill Mutter and a George Byng. The only points of discussion seemed to be the price demanded by Peter Davies and arranging the tow to the Clyde. To this end there was a visit to Barrow in January by the Greenock team and other interested parties to view the submarine to discuss the way ahead.

The price quoted to the new Greenock Group by the owner was reportedly some £350k. This figure was based on the owner's estimate of the scrap values of the metals in the Submarine including a reported 150 tons of lead - apparently in the keel - the scrap value of the lead in the batteries, all the copper in the electrical systems and the steel of the hull. Of course there is no lead in the keel - it is pig iron - and a maximum of 120 tons at that - which reduces the overall scrap value considerably. This price then put the acquisition of the Submarine out of reach of the Clyde team and, in any case, their James Watt Dock option was found to be not possible (for technical reasons), a second plan to use the Victoria Dock then failed (the water is not deep enough and dredging was not possible owing to the bottom being rock) and, additionally, the anticipated funding from local authorities was not going to be available as had been expected.

The owner's plans then changed with the Hull scrapping option failing as, it is thought, that the relevant permissions and licences were not in place, there were concerns about the safety and practicability of a tow 'north about' and the alternative route via the Channel was out of the question. The alternative plan was then

to tow the submarine to South Wales and scrap it there at Cardiff. As the demand for £350,000 odd was a non-starter for the Clyde team their plan was then reduced to waiting for the tow to Wales to complete whilst negotiating with the owners to cut off the bow of the boat back as far as either the Bow Caps or the Rear Doors and cut this section in half vertically with the two halves then being transported from Cardiff to the Clyde to be shot blasted, painted, reassembled and put on display overlooking the James Watt Dock together with a Mk 8 torpedo. The cost of all this being estimated at some £35k.

This apparently remains the way ahead - although the whole boat plan could be reinstated if new funding sources are forthcoming.

Currently ONYX is still in the dock system at Barrow gently rusting away. The boat survived the recent storms only requiring the breasts and springs to be adjusted and the brow (on loan from BAE) to be recovered from the bottom after it fell off in the storms.

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### **DISCLAIMER**

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### **News Letter Contact Information**

Do you have a story to tell or have information you feel should appear in the Newsletter then ring Barrie Downer on 01229 820963 or if you wish to send me an article my postal address is listed above under Committee Members. You may also send your contribution by e-mail to me [barrie@downer55.freemove.co.uk](mailto:barrie@downer55.freemove.co.uk). Come on - every Submariner has a story to tell - some more than one! Let's see yours in print!

Constructive suggestions about the newsletter are also very welcome. The newsletter will be published in the last week of each month i.e. the last week March for the April 2014 issue. Please ensure you have any information with me by the 15th of each month to ensure its inclusion in the next issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition - keep them stories coming

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### **Submarine Victoria Cross Holders of WWI**

This is the fourth article of a series in this, the 100<sup>th</sup> year since the outbreak of the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, commemorating those Submariners who were awarded the Victoria Cross during that War. This was the fourth Victoria Cross awarded to a



submariner of the First World War in the Dardanelles area and the second Victoria Cross for Commanding Officers of E14.

### **Geoffrey Saxton White, VC**

Geoffrey White was born at Bromley in Kent on 2nd Jul 1886 and he was the son of William Henry and Alice White of Charlwood Park House, Charlwood Street, Charlwood, Reigate, Surrey. At the time of the 1891 Census he was listed as living at home with his parents, a brother and a sister. On Sunday 31st March 1901 when the 1901 Census was conducted Geoffrey White was listed as a student at Bradfield College, Bradfield, near Reading, Berkshire.

He joined the Royal Navy as a Cadet on 15th May 1901, promotion to Midshipman followed on 30th Nov 1902 and he was appointed to the 12,950 ton Twin Screw Battle Ship HMS GLORY in the Channel Fleet in July 1905.



Geoffrey White was promoted to Sub Lieutenant on 15th Feb 1906 and in August 1906 he was reported to be taking his Sub Lieutenants Courses at Portsmouth. On 26th Jan 1907 he was appointed to the 15,000 ton Twin Screw Battle Ship HMS VENERABLE in the Channel Fleet and promotion to Lieutenant followed on 1st Oct 1908. Geoffrey White was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS MERCURY (Portsmouth Submarine Flotilla) 'for Instruction in Submarines' on 11th Jan 1909 and then to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS FORTH (Devonport Submarine Flotilla) 'for Submarine B7 as First Lieutenant' on 1st May 1909. At the time of the 1911 Census which was conducted on Sunday 2nd April 1911 he was listed as a Lieutenant living in HMS VIVID (the Royal Naval Barracks) at Devonport. His first Command appointment followed, on 25th Jul 1911, with an appointment to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS ARROGANT at Portsmouth 'for Submarine A4 in Command'. This was followed, on 30th Nov 1911, by an appointment to HMS VULCAN (Submarine Section VII) at Chatham 'for Submarine C27 in Command'. Geoffrey White was relieved in C27 by Lieutenant Commander Claude C Dobson, Royal Navy by April 1914 having been appointed to the Battleship HMS MONARCH for his 'Big Ship' time on 7th Apr 1914. On his return to submarines in 1915 he was appointed (Nominal List dated 7th Oct 1915) to the

Submarine Depot Ship HMS MAIDSTONE (8th Submarine Flotilla) at Harwich 'for Submarine Duties' to date 29th Sep 1915. On 2nd Dec 1915 he was appointed to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS TITANIA (11th Submarine Flotilla) at Blyth 'for Submarine D8 in Command'. The Nominal List of 10th Feb 1916 shows his further appointment to HMS MAIDSTONE 'for Submarines' and, on 10th May 1916 'for Submarine D6 in Command' to date 15th May 1916. Submarine D6 was transferred to the Submarine Depot Ship HMS VULCAN (3rd Submarine Flotilla) at Immingham (Nominal List dated 1st Jul 1916). Geoffrey White then relieved Lieutenant Commander Edward Boyle with an appointment to HMS EUROPA (Special Service Flotilla I) 'for Submarine E14 in Command' to date 10th Aug 1916 – Nominal List dated 1st Sep 1916. In January 1918 Submarine E14 was transferred from Corfu to the Dardanelles in an attempt to locate and sink the Turkish Battleship GOEBEN that had been damaged by mines and had then run aground in the Dardanelles. Submarine E14 failed to find the target which, by the time that E14 reached the grounding position, had been re-floated and towed away to safety. On 28th Jan 1918 Submarine E14 was damaged by an explosion as the boat was leaving the Dardanelles. The Submarine sank after being run aground at Kum Kale. Geoffrey Saxton White was killed by shellfire, many of his crew were killed and injured and all the officers died. The survivors were made Prisoner of War. Lieutenant Commander White was later awarded the Victoria Cross. This was announced in the London Gazette of 24th May 1919.

*The KING has been graciously pleased to approve of the posthumous award of the Victoria Cross to the undermentioned Officer:-*

### **Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey Saxton White, R.N.**

*For most conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty as Commanding Officer of H.M. Submarine "E 14" on the 28th of January, 1918.*

*"E 14" left Mudros on the 27th of January under instructions to force the Narrows and attack the "Goeben," which was reported aground off Nagara Point after being damaged during her sortie from the Dardanelles. The latter vessel was not found and "E 14" turned back. At about 8.45 a.m. on 28 January a torpedo was fired from "E 14" at an enemy ship; 11 seconds after the torpedo left the tube a heavy explosion took place, caused all lights to go out, and sprang the fore hatch. Leaking badly the boat was blown to 15 feet, and at once a heavy fire came from the forts, but the hull was not hit. "E 14" then dived and proceeded on her way out. Soon afterwards the boat became out of control, and as the air supply was nearly exhausted, Lieutenant-Commander White decided to run the risk of proceeding on the surface. Heavy fire was immediately opened from both sides, and,*

*after running the gauntlet for half-an-hour, being steered from below, "E 14" was so badly damaged that Lieutenant-Commander White turned towards the shore in order to give the crew a chance of being saved. He remained on deck the whole time himself until he was killed by a shell.*

Geoffrey Saxton White was married to Daphne M Pemberton in Plymouth in Devon in 1911. He is commemorated on the Portsmouth Naval War Memorial on Panel No. 28. Geoffrey Saxton White's Victoria Cross and other medals are privately held.

### **Branch Birthdays April 2014**

J. (John) Dalton	01/04
T.A. (Tom) Rawbone	02/04
W.P. (Bill) Lorking	03/04
R.W (Edward) Anderson	10/04
R.K. (Ron) Hiseman	12/04
J.V. (John) Hart	18/04
S.N. (Steve) May	18/04
D.G. (Dave) Baker	23/04
G.V. (George) Buxton	24/04
I. (Ian) Winstanley	28/04
J.F. (John) Houlding	29/04

### **Calendar**

Next Branch Meeting	Tues 1 <sup>st</sup> April	AGM
ANZAC Day Ceremony	Fri 25 <sup>th</sup> April	
Branch Dinner	Sat 26 <sup>th</sup> April	
St Georges Day Parade	Sun 27 <sup>th</sup> April	
Committee Meeting	As required	

### **Defence boom to create thousands of BAE**

#### **Systems jobs in Barrow**

NWEM Thursday, 13 March 2014

The boom days of the 1980s look set to return to Barrow shipyard following a major announcement that more than £300m is to be spent on the site. The investment – the biggest in the yard in more than 25 years – is needed to prepare the BAE Systems site to build the huge Vanguard Successor submarines.

The eight-year programme, which will employ around 850 contractors at its peak, includes new builds and revamping of existing infrastructure.

THE major construction projects will include:

1. An extension to the Devonshire Dock Hall construction hall to include a new state-of-the-art manufacturing and installation facility.
2. Two new major buildings that will house pressure hull units ready for shot blasting and painting and the integration of submarine equipment modules.
3. The refurbishment of the site's main fabrication facility, together with its existing plant and machinery
4. An intention to build a 28,000m sq. off-site logistics hub to store submarine parts and materials.

The Successor programme, and infrastructure work linked to it, will create thousands of jobs and significantly boost the local economy.

Philip Hammond, secretary of state for defence formally announced the plans on a landmark day for the town.

The next generation of armed nuclear subs, to replace the original four Vanguard boats built in Barrow, remain subject to approval by the government in 2016.

But the process is already well under way, with around 1,300 people working on the design of Successor in Barrow.

In December last year, the Ministry of Defence awarded BAE Systems contracts totalling £79m to start procuring for the Successor programme which will carry the nation's nuclear deterrent capability from 2028.

With work on the seven-boat ASTUTE submarine programme still ongoing, multiple major construction projects will be under way over the coming years.

Demolition of some existing buildings will start this month – the first major activity of an ongoing programme. By Editor – believed to include demolition of the Boiler Shop and the old Foundry.

Tony Johns, BAE Systems Maritime – Submarines managing director, said: "We have to grow the shipyard for the Successor programme by another couple of thousand people and the facilities programme at its peak will probably employ another 850 people.

"So this is going to see the shipyard at its busiest in over 20 years.

"Subject to a satisfactory outcome at 'Maingate' in 2016, this is really giving us the opportunity to see a resurgence in the submarine capability and takes us back to something akin to what was happening in the mid-to-late 1980s in terms of the volume of submarine construction here.

"This is perhaps a once-in-a-generation opportunity in that respect and one which we've got to work hard at, through our own business performance and ability to deliver to the customer, to make sure we land that opportunity over the next couple of years. But it's great news for the town."

BAE Systems is leading on the design of the Successor submarine, working alongside the MoD, Rolls-Royce and Babcock on a programme that now employs more than 3,000 people.

### **BAE Systems Barrow Submarine Launch is Imminent**

NWEM Thursday, 13 March 2014

THE latest Astute-class submarine will be put into the water soon. Seven nuclear powered attack submarines are being designed, built and commissioned for the Royal Navy in Barrow.

The first two – HMS ASTUTE and HMS AMBUSH – have been handed over to the Royal Navy, while the remaining five are now in various stages of construction. And steel was cut this week on the seventh boat.



Tony Johns, BAE Systems Maritime – Submarines managing director said boat number three, ARTFUL, is nearly ready to be launched.

He said: “Hopefully in the next two to three months you will see ARTFUL going into water. The reason I’m slightly vague is because we always make sure the submarine is in the best condition it can be to go in the water, because that minimises the work that needs to be done downstream. But it’s not far away.”

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### **Australian Guest praises town’s reputation**

NWEM Friday March 14, 2014

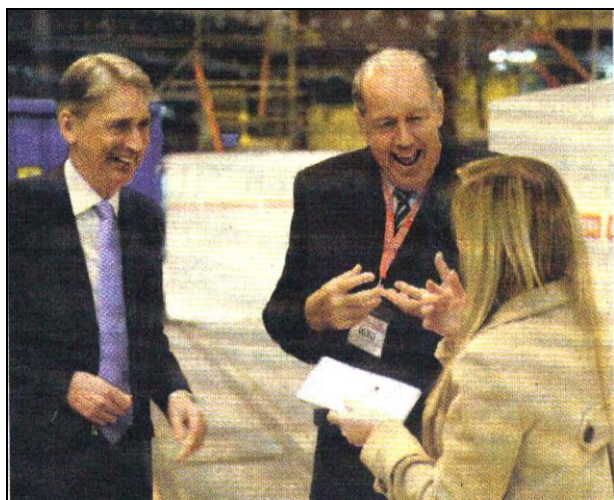
Australian defence minister David Johnston has declared his love for Barrow.

Mr Johnston was a guest of UK Defence Secretary Phillip Hammond during yesterday’s visit to the shipyard.

Mr Johnston revealed in an interview with the Evening Mail that he had grown up and spent much of his early career thinking of Barrow as being a key place for submarine building.

‘Barrow has a magnificent reputation in Australia’ he said before describing how the Royal Australian Navy’s first submarine HMAS AE1 was built in Barrow.

He added: ‘Barrow is a name I grew up with. It is a very significant visit for me to come to this famous town to see the manufacturing skills we have only read about.’



**Phillip Hammond (left) & David Johnston interviewed by NWEM reporter Amy Fenton**

Mr Johnston’s visit had been organised to allow him to witness the UK’s leading submarine building capabilities and he appeared to be very impressed.

‘It is my first time in Barrow.’ The senator told the Evening Mail.

‘As a young man I grew up with Barrow, through the Vickers name. When I first went to Kalgoorlie where I was a lawyer, representing the gold mining companies, there was a firm called Vickers Keogh, part of the same Vickers which owned the shipyard here.’

### **HMS TORBAY Ready for Sea After Refit**

26th March 2014



The Royal Navy nuclear-powered hunter killer submarine HMS TORBAY has emerged from refit at Plymouth at the cutting edge of war-fighting and surveillance capability.

The ‘Trafalgar’ Class submarine has been in a revalidated assisted maintenance period (RAMP) which has seen it upgraded and the nuclear power plant given a new lease of life.

Her Commanding Officer Commander Andy Johns said: “Having completed an extensive period of maintenance in Devonport, my Ship’s Company and I are genuinely excited about the prospect of heading out to sea and getting the boat underwater for the first time in over two years.

He continued, “With a busy and interesting programme to look forward to this year, we can’t wait to get on with it. 2014 will be the year of TORBAY!”

Although the submarine has been in harbour for over two years, this does not mean the crew has had an easy time, despite the common misconception that it is ‘easy being on a RAMP boat with early finishes and long weekends’.

The crew of HMS TORBAY will never again subscribe to these generally held beliefs as she comes to the end of an extremely busy period full of many challenges in one of the most technologically sophisticated single engineering projects.

HMS TORBAY will shortly return to operational duties, ready to take on the busy schedule of a duty patrol submarine.

The crew is now more ready than ever to return to sea and start making an important contribution to the nation’s defence.

However, first they have to undertake weeks of training and assessment under the staff of Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) to ensure man and machine are working smoothly together and are able to undertake the full spectrum of operations they might be called upon to perform; including fighting fires, flooding or dealing with other battle damage.

## **Indigenous Submarines an Unlikely Dream for Taiwan**

By Wu Shang-su March 21, 2014

Building a diesel-electric submarine looks technically and politically unrealistic.

Taiwan's Defense Minister Yang Ming has stated that his Ministry of National Defense (MND) is considering the possibility of independently developing small diesel-electric submarines (SSKs), which would displace between 1,500 and 2,000 tons. After losing the opportunity to procure SSKs from the U.S. in the 2000s, an insufficient number of SSKs has been a major strategic flaw in Taiwan's deterrence strategy. Its two Guppy II Class SSKs, of World War II vintage, are for training only, leaving two Dutch 'Zwaardvis Class vessels obtained in the mid-1980s as its only operational assets. In principle, Taiwan does meet several conditions for indigenous submarine development, such as an established ship-building industry and financial affordability; nevertheless, a range of technical and political factors are likely to hinder the project.

### **Foreign Reliance**

Independent SSK design today is still limited in a few traditional arms exporting countries, such as Russia and Germany. Despite their considerable defense industries, Israel and South Korea both rely on German designs and other technical assistance to develop their own SSKs. For inexperienced Taiwan, a purely independent design would be unrealistic. Yet if Taiwan wants to follow the Israeli or Korean pattern, China would doubtless exert comprehensive diplomatic and economic pressure to block its access to countries that have a submarine industry. After withdrawing its offer, the U.S. seems unlikely to provide a second chance in the near future. Moreover, since the U.S. has not produced any SSK since the 1960s, third-party technology would be necessary and again vulnerable to pressure from Beijing. Japan, which has lifted its ban on arms exports, has the potential to be a supplier of submarine technology, and its own geostrategic considerations may favor a stronger Taiwanese deterrence. However, quite apart from Chinese pressure, Taiwan's Beijing-friendly policies and endless incidents of Chinese espionage among its armed forces may well dissuade Japan from exporting classified technology.

### **Budget Constraints**

In addition to the technical issues, Taipei faces a challenge with its budget. With an economy among the world's twenty largest, Taiwan ought to have the resources to invest in a submarine project, but the significance of national defense has gradually decreased, despite serious strategic pressure from China. Since democratization in the early 1990s, the share of Taiwan's GDP allocated to defense has continuously fallen, dipping below 3 percent in the mid-2000s due to

domestic political struggles between a 'minority' government and powerful opposite parties. After the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) returned to power in 2008 with a parliamentary majority, it opted to focus on improving relations with China through economic and other integration rather than beefing up national defense.

As a consequence, Taiwan's defense spending remains below 3 percent of GDP and the number of military projects has declined markedly. Meanwhile, the shift to an all-voluntary military has raised personnel costs, further limiting the funds available for defense investment. Unless policymakers in Taipei radically shift direction, it is unlikely the MND will receive the money for a project as expensive as developing indigenous SSK.

### **Enough Time?**

Even if Taiwan could overcome the technical and budget challenges, building a credible submarine force would be an exceptionally time-consuming exercise. For example, Australia spent more than 15 years developing its flotilla of six Collins Class SSKs, semi-indigenously designed and domestically built. Whether the MND adopts a purely indigenous design or succeeds in obtaining a foreign one, it will still face a series of lengthy tasks including development, trials, modifications and full production. Although Taiwan's shipbuilding industry has successfully produced frigates, tankers and other types of surface vessels, it's been four decades since Taiwan built a submarine, and then it was with Italian technical support. Developing the relevant capabilities may thus push the timeframe out even further. Given an increasing military imbalance across the strait, it is doubtful Taiwan can afford to wait that long.

### **Fait Accompli**

Finally, SSKs will not prevent a Chinese fait accompli. In Crimea, Russia's rapid military deployment created a fait accompli, effectively preventing any Western intervention. China could conceivably do the same, using agents and special troops covered as Chinese tourists, students or businesspeople in Taiwan, aided by airborne divisions backed by its tremendous civil aviation fleets. In that scenario, submarines would be useless. Submarines assume a scenario in which robust Taiwanese resistance withstands missile attacks and air raids, forcing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to conduct a naval blockade operation or launch an amphibious invasion. However, recent events suggest that this scenario may no longer be as realistic as once assumed.

As an instrument of defense, SSKs would indeed be valuable for Taiwan, but defense is shaped by politics. And for Taiwan, the politics are likely to evolve too rapidly for an indigenous submarine project to be truly useful for its security.

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## CAPE HORN

As promised recently Branch Member Steve (Daisy) May sent in some pictures of an area of the world (Cape Horn) which most of us have never seen – and probably never will. However instead of battling head winds and storms in a 'windjammer' Steve did it in the relative comfort of his Cruise Liner. Why he chose to go to sea under such hard conditions we can never know – well - he could have stayed in the real comfort of Her Majesty's Submarine Service.



Steve (Daisy) May with Cape Horn in the background

As well as the photos of the rounding of Cape Horn Steve sent in the brief used by one of the crew to tell the passengers all about the Cape. It's far too long to include the whole thing so I have chosen a few extracts (with minor changes).

'Well, lots of interest about Cape Horn - famous for its terrible weather, there are several issues there mainly to do with wind against current and the large weather systems that develop around the bottom of the world. Its latitude puts it bang in the middle of the 'furious fifties'. South of Cape Horn are the Sub Antarctic Islands and below that the Antarctic Peninsula. The Cape, continually manned by Chile is the southernmost point of Tierra del Fuego and is situated on Hornos Island - named after the Dutch expedition that found it. Here you see some good wildlife. Birds found here could be Cape Petrels, several different types of Albatross, including the wandering Albatross, Black Browed and Grey headed. You might see some Magellanic Penguins as well as Giant Petrels and Storm Petrels. You can often see fur seals and, possibly, some elephant seals hauled out and in the Drake Passage you can easily see Humpback Whales. Further south it is common to see Fin Whales, Minke Whales and even Blue Whales which all go to Antarctica at this time of year from more northern latitudes to feed on the Krill which are very abundant in that area.'

Known as the 'end of the world' Cape Horn the last point of civilization for ships heading south to Antarctica, and Ushuaia is the most popular hopping off point to access Antarctica.

Cape Horn, the southernmost tip of South America, remains a maritime legend to this day as sailing around this remote point and then through the Drake Passage was (and still is!) one of the most challenging nautical routes on the planet.



The violent stretch of chaotic water between Antarctica and South America, one frequented by icebergs, huge waves and plagued by gale-force winds, is crossed by sailors with great trepidation. Many still prefer to use the sheltered Strait of Magellan.'



The opening of the Panama Canal in 1914 subsequently reduced the need for maritime travel around Cape Horn - the notorious site of many ship wrecks and the final resting place of countless sailors lost in its perilous waters.

At this spot the Atlantic and Pacific oceans meet - often in a confrontation. No land to the east, none to the west — winds sweep all the way around the world from the west. The closest arm of Antarctica, Graham Land of the Antarctic Peninsula, lies six hundred miles to the

south across the roughest stretch of water known on the planet, Drake's Passage.



Since its discovery by the Dutch mariners Jacques Le Maire and Willem Cornelis zoon Schouten in 1616, Cape Horn has become known as the graveyard of ships. Its precise geographical location is the southern headland of Horn Island, Chile, in the Tierra del Fuego archipelago at the bottom of South America. As ships got larger, they could not navigate the Magellan Strait and had to risk “rounding the Horn,” a phrase that has acquired almost mythical status. For most mariners, it means sailing windward, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, fighting winds, waves, and currents, for sailing with the wind is strategically simpler and carries no bragging rights.

Cape Horn lore is extensive, full of fear and fascination — summed up in the sailor's motto “below 40 South there is no law, below 50 South there is no God.” Over the past four hundred years, the Horn's cold, tempestuous waters have claimed more than one thousand ships and fifteen thousand lives.



Even successful passage of Cape Horn has often exacted a toll. For example, British Admiral George Anson's 1741 mission to attack Spanish possessions on the west coast of South America took three months to pass Cape Horn; of his six warships, two failed to round the Horn

and went home, and one was wrecked on the coast of Chile.



Captain William Bligh on the HMS BOUNTY tried for a month in 1788 to round the Horn on his way to Tahiti, but adverse weather forced him to turn around and take the longer route east past Africa and India instead. Since the opening of the Panama Canal in 1914, there has been no need for most commercial ships to run the risk anymore, though adventuring sailors and yacht racing enthusiasts continue to test their luck.

**SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION - MEMBERS CROSSED THE BAR – MARCH 2014**  
**RESURGAM**

Branch	Date	Name	Rank/Rating	O/N	Age	Submarine Service
Non Member	March 2014	Keith Barrett	Able Seaman (UW 3)	TBA	N/K	Submarine Service in AMPHION (on Commissioning for 8th Commission) on 3rd Jul 1961 & ANCHORITE (on Commissioning at Singapore) on 11th Oct 1962
Eastern States Branch	6th March 2014	Leslie Clarkson	Petty Officer (UC2)	TBA	78	Submarine Service from Apr 1954 to Aug 1970 in UNTIRING, SUBTLE, TRESPASSER, THOROUGH, TELEMACHUS, TURPIN, PORPOISE, TRUMP, PENGUIN on 'Commissioning' on 18th Aug 1967 & ONSLOW (on Commissioning at Greenock) on 22nd Dec 1969
Submarines Association of Australia	6th March 2014	Frederick Garry Bax	Chief Petty Officer (MTP) (SM)	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in OXLEY, OTWAY, OVENS, ONSLOW, ORION & OTAMA
Dolphin Branch & Submarine Officers Association	6th March 2014	Peter Watts, MBE	Commander MESM	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service from 1969 to 1992 in ODIN (69), REVENGE (P)(70-72), ORPHEUS (72-75), VALIANT (75-77) & RESOLUTION (P) (80-83)
Southampton Branch	8th March 2014	Victor B Collins	Leading Seaman	D/SKX 803344	85	Submarine Service from 1947 to 1953 in TIPTOE & SCYTHIAN
Non Member	9 <sup>th</sup> March 2014	Edward Alderwick	Marine Engineering Artificer (P)	TBA	TBA	Submarine Service in FINWHALE on commissioning on 15th Nov 1974