



IN DEPTH

Official Newsletter of the Submariners Association

Patron: Admiral Sir James Perowne KCVO, KBE

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: A View of the new Wet Dock Quay for the DREADNOUGHT Boats

EDITORIAL

Hello Everyone

Welcome to In Depth No. 92 – a bit later than planned but several items were necessarily delayed for various reasons. You will still find all of the usual items in this Edition and I am sure you will all find something interesting to read. There are Updates from the SA Chairman and the SA Secretary, an SA Membership Update, an Update on The Submarine Family (TSF) from Admiral Wilkinson, details of the rehosted Online Book of Remembrance (OBOR) – consequent on the discontinuance of the previous TSF Website - and I have included a copy of the recent Temporary Memorandum detailing the planned events programme and themes covering the 125th Anniversary of the RN Submarine Service and the new logo for the 125th Anniversary Events– see Page 36.

There have been a lot of recent articles about Submarines (so many I couldn't find space for them all) including items about the AUKUS Boats & programme, the US Navy COLUMBIA Class, the French Navy's replacement SSBN, an Iranian Navy Submarine (very topical at the moment), the rescue of a USN Submariner by a Danish military Helicopter off Greenland (also very topical), an Indian Navy indigenous build nuclear Submarine & Italian & Indonesian Boats. There are details of New Books which may be of interest. There is a report on the recent K13 Weekend, the Morecambe Branch 50th Anniversary Dinner and the Morecambe Branch visit to Faslane and to the SMERAS facility. The 'Submariners Crossed the Bar' list is included as usual but, given that this issue is a bit later than planned I have also included details of several CTBs for April to date – as well as for Jan, Feb and March 2026. For those of you planning to go to the 'We Remember Submariners' Anniversary service at the Submariner Memorial in the National Memorial Arboretum in May I have been advised that the Arboretum will be changing its name sometime later this year and will then be known as the 'Royal British Legion Garden of Remembrance'.

Please note that 'In Depth' Issue No. 93 will be published on 1st July 2026. Contributions (especially reports of Branch Events and Socials) are required to be with the Editor (me) by 15th June 2026 - see contact details below.

Please make sure I get your contributions in good time by Email or Snail Mail as appropriate!

Regards, Barrie Downer, The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ

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Submariners Association Chairman's Update

By Andy Knox, National Chairman

Our recent AGM and Reunion Weekend at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool, was a tremendous success and a great reminder of all that is good about the Submariners Association. It was wonderful to see so many members and partners come together once again in friendship, comradeship and remembrance.

The highlight of the social programme was undoubtedly the Gala Dinner on Saturday evening, attended by over 120 members and partners. It was an excellent evening and a fitting reflection of the strength of our Association, giving shipmates the chance to renew old friendships, make new ones and enjoy being together as part of the wider submarine family.

A particularly poignant part of the weekend was the memorial service for HMS THETIS in Birkenhead. This was a moving and dignified occasion, made all the more special by the attendance of the local Mayor and his wife. Their presence reinforced the importance of remembering those who gave their lives and demonstrated the continued respect held for our Submarine Service heritage.

The AGM itself also provided encouraging news for the future of the Association. Members were given a positive brief by Craig Fulton on our efforts to achieve charitable status. This remains an important objective and could bring significant long-term benefits to the Association. One of the clearest advantages would be the ability to claim Gift Aid, which would be especially valuable should we be forced to reintroduce annual subscriptions in the future. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Merseyside Branch for their support over the weekend. Thanks should also be extended to all of the Committee, especially our National Secretary for his hard work over the last twelve months and to Paul Swaby for his huge efforts in organising the 125th Submariners Association rum and gin which was hugely popular over the reunion weekend and will be available to all as soon as the new website goes live.

As members know, The Submarine Family has funded the Association's operating costs for the last few years, and we remain grateful for that support. However, with future funding uncertain, it is only prudent that we explore every option to protect the Association's long-term stability. Charitable status would place us in a far stronger position, not only financially, but also in terms of safeguarding our future and continuing to support our members and preserve our traditions.

Looking ahead, we also have a number of important events coming up as we continue to celebrate the 125th Anniversary of the Submarine Service. These events will provide opportunities for members, serving submariners, families and supporters to come together in remembrance, pride and celebration of this remarkable milestone.

Kind Regards,

Andy Knox

National Chairman

Submariners Association

SA Secretary's Update for the In Depth No. 92

Good Day to you all,

I hope this edition of In Depth finds you all well. Since my last In Depth Magazine update we had a Secretary's Zoom Meeting. Thank you to all those who attended, these are voluntary but worthwhile if you can make it. I am planning the next one for the end of May 2026.

The 2026 AGM at Liverpool was a roaring success and it was fantastic to see so many branches represented from both the UK and abroad. Both the AGM and the Gala Dinner were very well attended and an exceptional event, a big shout out to all those involved for making the event what it was, brilliant. Hopefully you have all seen the minutes and the Charity Presentation by Craig Fulton, which went out to all Secretaries on the 30 March 2026.

The website is still in the building phase and is holding back selling the Gin & Rum. It is anticipated that the website will be up and running (if only for the sale of the Gin & Rum) within the next 2 – 3 weeks...watch this space!

We did sell some Rum and Gin at the AGM. The reasoning for selling via the website is to allow most people a fair crack at ordering the bottles on a 1st come 1st serve basis. The cost will be Rum (£56) and Gin (£46) including P & P with direct dispatch from the Distillery. There are 256 Bottles of Rum for sale, split 128 of each label (Periscope and LS Reid) and 308 Bottles of Gin. Once I have the GREEN light for the website I will get the email out to all Branch Secretaries at the earliest opportunity.

Thank you to the MBSA members who allowed me to buy them a beverage in the Ardencaple on their visit to Faslane and I wasn't on subbies. It was great to catch up and apologies for my scruffy attire... 😊

The Chairman has provided a list of important dates for your diaries covering the 125th Anniversary of the Submarine Service, hopefully I will see a few at the different events. As always if you have any burning issues or questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Stickie, Secretary to the Submariners Association of the United Kingdom - secretary@submarinersassociation.com

A Message from the We Remember Submariners Charity Reporting Submariners Crossed the Bar (CTB)

One of the main objectives of the We Remember Submariners Charity is to ensure that no Royal Navy Submariner shall 'Cross the Bar' without recognition of their service. Something all those serving, veterans and families would want as well. This is achieved by funding a wreath, or donation in lieu, as specified by the Next of Kin, for the Funeral, along with a Card of Condolence and Memorial 'Moly' pins, to the immediate family, once we are made aware.

The key message here is that '*once we have been made aware*'. It requested that if you know a Submariner has 'Crossed the Bar', you report it as soon as possible to the WRS via our Facebook page, the WRS Website or using one of the following links

Crossed the Bar Notification - We Remember Submariners

Crossing the Bar – The Submarine Family

Email: CTB Manager at ctb-info@weremembersubmariners.com

The family's permission is required before we can publicly announce the CTB. If you know the family, please ask them to contact the WRS. It is helpful if you can give the CTB date, their Rate or Rank and any appropriate career details.

Membership in the WRS is encouraged so that we can continue to support Submariners and their families.

DISCLAIMER

This Newsletter is published by the Submariners Association and is © 2026. The opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily the opinion of the Editor, the Submariners Association, the MoD, or the Submarine Service unless otherwise stated. The Submariners Association may not agree with the opinions expressed in this Newsletter but encourages publication as a matter of interest. Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Otherwise, the Submariners Association accepts no liability on any issue in this Newsletter.

CAN YOU HELP? SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW LISTS

Have you been a Member of a Crew Commissioning or Recommissioning an RN Submarine? Do you have a copy of the relevant Commissioning Brochure and/or a list of Commissioning Crew? If you do would you either loan them or send a copy to Barrie Downer 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 – particularly 'We Remember Submariners' and 'Friends of the Submarine Museum'.

What I am looking for are 'First Commission' Crew Lists for PORPOISE, GRAMPUS, CACHALOT, WALRUS, OBERON, ONYX, ORPHEUS, ODIN, OTUS, UNICORN, AUDACIOUS, ANSON & AGAMEMNON. Also Crew Lists for any Commissioning or Rededication 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 in anticipation, 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 MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

SA Registered Members:

At the SA 2026 AGM in March it was reported that some 1,337 members have now provided Data for the new Membership Database. These Members came from 32 branches. This is an improvement from the July 2025 figures when it was reported that there were 1,240 members registered on the Website. However it is

disappointing to note that there are still 9 or 10 Branches that have not provided any Membership Data despite being hastened. Another hastener to Branch Secretaries will go out and then any issues will be discussed at the next SAC Online Meeting. Hopefully the hastener will result in more Members names being registered and the Membership Database will get closer to the 1,550 plus members listed back in February 2022.

If you are reading this and you are not sure if your name is included on the Membership Database then check with your Branch Secretary as soon as possible.

You may be aware via your Branch Meetings or from messages from your Branch Secretaries that there have been problems with the Submariners Association Website as a result of which it is currently in the process of reconstruction. Don't forget that, unless your Branch Secretaries have your up to date Service and Contact details you may miss out on what is going on in the Association

Also don't forget that Branch Meetings and Branch Social Activities are a great way to rekindle the camaraderie you enjoyed during service (or continue it if still serving). Please consider reaching out to your local Branch if you haven't done so already.

THE NEW ON-LINE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE (OBOR)



The new OBOR has now been launched!

You can find it at <https://submarineremembrance.uk/>. This is a new domain but all links to the previous submarinefamily.uk/remembrance address, including Google search results and QR code scans will all redirect to the new site.

Please browse around and I hope it will brighten up an otherwise dull weekend! You should find that it (intentionally) looks and works very much the same as the old Website but you will find it is much faster.

There are minor issues that need sorting but would be very happy to hear of any problems that you discover. Once we have fixed all the significant issues we will try to make progress toward incorporating some future developments - top of the list being to add the section on submarine memorials.

There is one annoying issue which the developers are unable to replicate, and we would welcome your help with this. It's intermittent and seems to occur for a while then go away. So what we're seeing is that, when starting to type in the search field of the people or submarines list, we get an error message. Click OK and the letters entered remain and start to narrow down the search. Type a few more letters and the same thing happens. Eventually the search narrows down to what you were looking for. The same message comes up when clicking any of the page buttons at the bottom, including records per page, but this completely prevents access to the subsequent records.

If you do, or do not, experience this error message, please let me know, together with details of computer, operating system and browser, with version numbers, that you are using.

We have made quite significant progress in adding stories for people, with about 17% achieved to date. But there is clearly a long way to go and I would welcome further assistance from any of you who feel able to help with research and story writing.

There are quite a few Submarines which are lacking a story too.

Peter Jeanneret

THE SUBMARINE FAMILY AN UPDATE

From Vice Admiral Wilkinson

23 January 2026

Dear Member of The Submarine Family,

Over the last 18 months or so representatives from The Submarine Family (TSF), We Remember Submariners (WRS), the Submariners Association (SA), the Friends of the Submarine Museum (Friends) and Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity (RNRMC), have been looking at the best way forward for TSF and the individual organisations that work with it.

The Chairs of these organisations agreed in 2025 that although this is not the right time for a full merger, they remain committed to working collaboratively. As a consequence, it has been decided that there will no longer be a separate Membership system for TSF. The long-established Membership Organisations of WRS, SA and

Friends will continue to provide Membership options (see the details at the end of this letter) and, alongside those, current TSF Members can continue, should they so wish, to hear about the work of TSF by becoming TSF Supporters instead.

TSF will continue to give out money through the recently created Submarine Family (TSF) Grants Committee which met twice in 2025. The Committee exists solely to support the Submarine Community and is administered by the RNRMC. Committee members include representatives from across the Submarine Service, ensuring that decision-making is rooted in a deep understanding of the needs of serving submariners, veterans, and their families. Any donations to TSF, as well as the £100k annual grant from the RNRMC, will be distributed by this Committee. If you currently give a donation then you can continue to do so, knowing that your money is “ring-fenced” and supporting Submarine Family beneficiaries.

It is important to stress that TSF remains a dedicated fund focused entirely on serving submariners, veterans, and their families and provides a clear route for beneficiaries seeking support and for donors wishing to contribute specifically to the Submarine Community.

A new home for the Online Book of Remembrance (OBOR) is currently under construction, to be managed by Friends of the Submarine Museum. TSF website has closed down with a new TSF page on the RNRMC website to share information about, both the Grants given through TSF and providing signposting to the support which is available to members of the submarine community. Further ways to develop this exciting collaboration are being discussed with the Director and Deputy Director Submarines and it is hoped that a further announcement will be made later in the year as these plans are developed further.

I would now like to ask whether you wish to remain part of TSF as a supporter? If you are not a member already, you can also join one of the individual organisations (The Submariners Association, We Remember Submariners, and Friends of the Submarine Museum) as we enter this new chapter. Your continued involvement and support is hugely valuable and your voice remains essential as we work together to support submariners and their families, especially in 2026 as we celebrate 125 years of the Submarine Service. RNRMC’s vision is a world in which our sailors, marines, and their families are valued and supported, for life. It is a real privilege to continue this important work on behalf of the Submarine Community.

VADM Peter Wilkinson

Chairman, The Submarine Family

A proud part of Royal Navy & Royal Marines Charity

RNTM 09-007/25 HM SUBMARINES 125 YEARS OF SERVICE

Sponsor: Rear Admiral Submarines – RAdm A Perks MBE Andy.Perks260@mod.gov.uk

Liaison: NAVY SUBFLOT-WOSM – WO1 Neil Brownson Neil.Brownson107@mod.gov.uk

28 Jan 26

Introduction

1. The Submarine Service celebrates its 125th Anniversary in 2026 (SM125). A year-long series of commemorations will mark this milestone. Alongside our partners across the Defence Nuclear Enterprise, the Submarine Service will acknowledge our heritage, the role of the Submarine Service as the cornerstone of national defence, whilst looking confidently into the future. The centerpiece of these events will be a Gala Dinner at Windsor Castle, Sep 26.

Programme of Events

2. The schedule of commemorative events taking place throughout 2026 is at Annex A. Where necessary, separate RNTMs will be released promulgating further details for individual serials.

3. All personnel, whether serving, veterans or members of the wider Defence Nuclear Enterprise are encouraged to fully participate in SM125. Volunteers to help support and deliver events are welcomed.

Coordination

4. SUBFLOT are responsible for the coordination of activity associated with SM125. The email address NAVY SUBFLOT-EVENTS (MULTIUSER) should be used for all matters relating to SM125 activity.

5. Any personnel interested in producing SM125-themed ‘gizzets’ or using SM125 branding on commemorative products are required to contact NAVY SUBFLOT-EVENTS (MULTIUSER). Support will be provided to ensure maximum visibility of any SM125-themed products whose proceeds support RNRMC/The Submarine Family or other military charities.

Communication

6. Royal Navy Communications and Influence have developed a media plan in support of SM125. They will also provide additional support for specific commemorative events where required. Units and individuals should take every opportunity to reference SM125 in internal and external messaging. This includes routine outputs such as newsletters, briefs, social media posts, and stakeholder updates. Key messages, and a brief precis of the history of the Submarine Service, is at Annex B. These messages are the cornerstone of discussing SM125 in any external and internal communications.

7. The official SM125 branding badge is provided at Annex C. The badge should be prominently featured in presentations, event materials and digital content to create a unified and recognisable brand for the anniversary. Digital copies of SM125 branding are available via NAVY SUBFLOT-EVENTS (MULTIUSER).

8. Cancel this RNTM, 31 Dec 26.

Annexes:

A. SM125 Programme of Events

B. SM125 Key Messages

C. SM 125 Logo

**Annex A to
RNTM 09-007/25
Dated 28 Jan 25**

SM125 Programme of Events

1. The schedule of events commemorating SM125 is outlined below. Further information concerning booking and agenda will be published separately. Enquiries regarding events should be directed to NAVY SUBFLOT-EVENTS (MULTIUSER) in the first instance.

| Event | Date | Location | Lead |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| K13 Memorial weekend | 23/24/25 Jan 26 | HMNB Clyde / Govan | Submariners Association |
| SA National reunion including 125th Anniversary gala dinner | 21-22 Mar 26 | Liverpool | Submariners Association |
| Gambit Dinner | 26 Mar 26 | HMNB Devonport | SUBFLOT |
| SM 125 Affiliates Gala Dinner | 22 Apr 26 | HMNB Clyde | SUBFLOT |
| SM Conference | 23 Apr 26 | HMNB Clyde | SUBFLOT |
| Dunoon Memorial weekend | 01-3 May 26 | 03 May 26 | Submariners Association |
| RASM Conference / Dinner (OF5 & above) | 14 May 26 | Regents Park Barracks, Guildhall | SUBFLOT |
| We Remember Submariners National Arboretum Event | 17 May 26 | National Arboretum | We Remember Submariners |
| CNE26 including SM125 Gala Dinner | 19-21 May | Farnborough Exhibition Centre | SUBFLOT |
| SM Service Presentation to the City of London | 24 Jun | Mansion House, London | Livery of the Tin Plate Workers |
| International Submariners Memorial | TBC Sep 26 | Dundee | International Submariners Association |
| Windsor Castle SM 125 Gala Dinner | TBC Sep 26 | Windsor | SUBFLOT |
| SM 125 Thales gala dinner | 02 Oct 26 | Govan | Thales |
| Submarine Awards 26 | TBC Oct 26 | Glasgow | SUBFLOT |
| Oardacious, Trafalgar Night | 22 Oct 26 | Greenwich Painted Hall | Oardacious |
| Annual Remembrance Parade and Service | 31 Oct-1 Nov 26 | London | Submariners Association |

Annex B to RNTM 09-007/25 Dated 28 Jan 25

SM125 Key Messages

The following are the key messages and should be used in the context of SM125.

Submarine Service History

Royal Navy Submarine Service was officially established in 1901 with the commissioning of HMS HOLLAND 1, marking the beginning of Britain's undersea warfare capability. Initially viewed with scepticism, submarines quickly proved their strategic value during World War I, where they were used for reconnaissance and offensive operations against enemy shipping. By the end of the war, the submarine had evolved from a coastal defence vessel into a formidable weapon of naval warfare.

During World War II, the Submarine Service played a critical role in disrupting Axis supply lines, particularly in the Mediterranean. Post-war, the introduction of nuclear propulsion in the 1960s transformed the service, enabling submarines to remain submerged for months and carry ballistic missiles as part of the UK's nuclear deterrent. Today, the Submarine Service remains at the heart of Britain's defence strategy, operating advanced nuclear-powered submarines that provide stealth, endurance and global reach.

Key Messages

- Since the commissioning of HOLLAND 1 in 1901, the Submarine Service has remained at the forefront of innovation, resilience and operational excellence safeguarding the nation beneath the waves.
- HM Submarine Service remains a cornerstone of national security and a symbol of professionalism and dedication. This anniversary is not only a celebration of history but a reaffirmation of the values that define the Royal Navy today.
- SM125 events unite our community, inspire the next generation, and showcase our enduring role in national security for decades to come. They recognise not just the contribution of the sailors who serve beneath the waves, but the support provided by generations of dockyard workers, engineers and civil servants who today constitute the Defence Nuclear Enterprise, all of whom provide critical support to the front-line.
- SM125 also recognises the support and sacrifices of the families of our submariners, who have provided their unfailing support to the Royal Navy Submarine Service. From early diesel-electric boats to today's nuclear-powered fleet, the Submarine Service has consistently demonstrated technological leadership and operational excellence.
- The seventh and final Astute Class SSN (HMS ACHILLES) will be launched in 2028. The Dreadnought Class is already in build and will swiftly follow to start relieving the Vanguard Class SSBNs of their duties. SSNA is already in development and will replace the Astute Class SSN. These new submarines are being jointly developed with Australia and the US in a first-time defence deal for the UK.

First Sea Lord orders 100-day plan to fix Royal Navy submarine availability crisis

Defence Eye reports that General Sir Gwyn Jenkins has launched an urgent 100-day drive to tackle systemic submarine maintenance delays. He has ordered the creation of a new Submarine Maintenance Recovery Plan designed to urgently address issues causing extended patrols for the Vanguard-class and the chronically poor availability of Astute-class boats.

Speaking to officers and civil servants during a 'clear lower deck' at NCHQ in Portsmouth last month, Jenkins said the navy must start "cutting through bureaucracy to get projects and ideas progressing faster" and warned that "unnecessary processes" were undermining combat readiness across the RN, Marines, RFA, and the wider MoD. He described the next 100 days as a defining test of whether the Service can regain control of its maintenance activity.

There have been several periods in the last few years when the RN has not had a single SSN at sea. Currently, only one of the six boats in commission is operational, and four of them are at very low readiness. Maintenance backlogs have also forced the four Vanguard-class SSBNs to remain on deterrent patrol for six months or more, almost doubling their intended length, placing additional strain on crews and equipment. "The nuclear deterrent is my number one priority and that is a whole force effort" Sir Gwyn said.

A core part of his directive focuses on rethinking the £1bn-plus Clyde 2070 infrastructure programme, which is intended to prepare the base for the Dreadnought-class and replace ageing jetties and equipment to support an expanding submarine fleet into the 2070s. (Note: Project EUSTON to procure floating dry docks at Faslane is part of a separate initiative).

A new model of delivery intended to give naval officers greater influence over work managed by contractors and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation may be required. "We need to agree how the Clyde 2070 programme will be owned and how the Navy will play its part in successfully delivering it," Jenkins told staff, signalling frustration with existing oversight arrangements that have led to repeated delays and cost increases.

Sir Gwyn's comments reflect a growing impatience with what he termed "red tape that stops you doing your jobs". He has urged senior officers to shed bureaucratic habits and empower front-line teams, saying the Navy must "focus on the things that matter" and "make the organisation more agile". The First Sea Lord also underlined that the Service must embrace new technologies more quickly: "We are in an age of great technological change, and our job is to keep up. We want to wield the latest technology in pursuit of our enemies, innovation not just in systems, but in how we work."

Jenkins' decision to place his personal authority behind this initiative reflects a recognition that the situation has become untenable. Whether his '100-Day Challenge' can overcome years of decline and restore the credibility of the UK's submarine enterprise will be a critical early test of his leadership. He will likely find himself up against a government system enabled by civil servants, quangos, unions and lawyers, many of whom are addicted to bureaucracy, inertia, risk aversion and adherence to process over common sense. Tight budgets and a shortage of qualified people also add to the difficulties. Either way, Jenkins' efforts and his unwillingness to accept the status quo should be heartily applauded, and we wish him every success.

First Sea Lord's 100-Day Review Puts People at the Centre of the Clyde Transformation.

7 November 2025

The Royal Navy's long-term transformation at HMNB Clyde, home of the Submarine Service, is at the forefront of the First Sea Lord's 100-day review, which places people, innovation, and modernisation at the heart of the Navy's future.

As part of a £166 million investment, four new Single Living Accommodation (SLA) blocks are currently under construction at Clyde. Once complete, these modern facilities will provide accommodation for up to 630 submariners, with the first two blocks designed for students undertaking the Submarine Qualifying Course (SMQ) - due to open in 2026.

"This £166 million investment underscores our commitment to improving the quality of life for our submariners," said the First Sea Lord. "These modern, comfortable, and practical living spaces will soon support our people as they train and serve. They are a clear example of how we are putting people first in shaping the future Royal Navy."

The project is being delivered through the Clyde Infrastructure Programme (CIP) by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Kier Graham Defence (KGD).

It forms part of the wider Clyde Capital Programmes (CCP) - an integrated series of initiatives designed to ensure HMNB Clyde remains safe, capable, and future-ready as it supports the Continuous At-Sea Deterrent (CASD) and the introduction of the Dreadnought and Astute-class submarines.

His Majesty The King visits Northwood Headquarters

Press release Published 27 February 2026

From:

Cyber & Specialist Operations Command & Ministry of Defence

His Majesty The King today visited the Northwood military headquarters in north-west London, paying tribute to the dedication and service of personnel, whose 24/7 work keeps the UK and its allies safe.



HM with Air Marshal Suraya Marshall, Deputy Commander CSOC & Lt Gen Nick Perry, Chief Joint Operations (MOD Copyright)

- His Majesty The King makes his first visit as monarch to the UK's top operational military headquarters.
- Military personnel and civil servants showcase their round-the-clock work to keep the UK and our allies safe.
- The visit reaffirms the enduring and close relationship between the Crown and the United Kingdom's Armed Forces.

Northwood HQ is the nerve centre of UK defence, directing military operations across the globe. Home to the UK's joint headquarters, as well as NATO's Allied Maritime Command, His Majesty The King met with soldiers, sailors, aviators, and civil servants from the UK and NATO allies who are always on duty; co-ordinating joint and combined military activities around the clock.

His Majesty met with personnel across the site, including the team who recently oversaw the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment to the Indo-Pacific, as well as those who play a vital role supporting Ukraine. The visit comes as the war in Ukraine enters its fifth year, with the UK standing to support Ukraine for as long as it takes.

His Majesty was welcomed by the Deputy Commander of Cyber & Specialist Operations Command (CSOC), Air Marshal Suraya Marshall, before being shown the operational control rooms from which all live overseas operations are managed.

Northwood, which was originally home to the RAF Coastal Command during the Second World War, is home to key military commands, including the UK's most recently established Four Star Military Command - Cyber & Specialist Operations Command (CSOC), as well as the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ), Allied Maritime Command (MARCOM), and the Royal Navy's Maritime Operations Centre (MOC). Together, they provide critical specialist capabilities working in alliance, to keep the UK secure at home and strong abroad.



HM the King with staff of PJHQ (MOD Copyright)

Air Marshal Suraya Marshall, Deputy Commander CSOC, said: His Majesty's visit means a great deal to everyone here at Northwood HQ. As one of the most strategically significant military headquarters for the UK and NATO, the work carried out here - day and night, at home and overseas - is critical to the security of the United Kingdom and our allies. To have that work recognised at the highest level is a tremendous honour.

The visit recognised the dedication and professionalism of the servicemen and women, civil servants and contractors based at Northwood, and the vital importance of the work they do every day in the service of the nation.

UK commits to building one new British Navy AUKUS nuclear attack submarine every 18 months

By Mawsel Marc 14th February 2026

Under a new defence blueprint, Britain is locking itself into a relentless rhythm of nuclear submarine construction, tying domestic industry, allied strategy and Indo-Pacific security into one long production line.

Britain signs up to an 18 month nuclear submarine drumbeat

The UK Strategic Defence Review 2025, released by Parliament on 24th November 2025, sets a striking target: one new nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Royal Navy every 18 months.

This is not a short-term surge. Officials say the tempo is intended to run into the late 2040s, supporting a fleet of up to 12 attack submarines built under the AUKUS SSN programme and shared between the UK and Australia. The Royal Navy is moving to a continuous-build model, with a fresh AUKUS-class attack submarine leaving the yard roughly every year and a half.

The plan hinges on major expansions at two industrial anchors: BAE Systems' Barrow-in-Furness shipyard in Cumbria and Rolls-Royce's nuclear propulsion site at Raynesway in Derby.



What the AUKUS submarine pact actually means

The move sits inside AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership signed in 2021 by Australia, the UK and the United States.

- **Pillar I:** builds a shared fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy, backed by UK and US design and technology.
- **Pillar II:** covers a grab-bag of advanced capabilities, including AI, cyber, quantum tech, hypersonics and undersea systems.

The new SSN-AUKUS design, sometimes shortened to SSN-A, is the crown jewel of Pillar I. It will underpin both the future Royal Navy and Royal Australian Navy attack submarine forces and is intended to operate seamlessly alongside US Navy boats in the Indo-Pacific.

SSN-AUKUS is planned as a common design, blending British hull and propulsion expertise with US combat systems and vertical launch cells.

From Astute to AUKUS: a generational shift beneath the surface

The Royal Navy currently fields six Astute-class nuclear-powered attack submarines and four Vanguard-class ballistic missile submarines, which maintain the UK's Continuous At-Sea Nuclear Deterrence (CASD).

French nuclear attack sub arrives in Scotland

By George Allison - February 23, 2026

A French Navy nuclear-powered attack submarine has sailed into the River Clyde.

Images shared online show a Suffren-class boat on the surface, the newest in French service, with the first entering operational duty in 2020. It may be the same submarine whose previous visit to Scotland was reported by the UK Defence Journal recently, although that has not been confirmed. The French Navy declined to comment, as is customary in matters concerning submarine movements.

Built by Naval Group, the Suffren class replaces the ageing Rubis-class attack submarines and will form the backbone of France's conventional nuclear-powered undersea fleet. Six boats are planned, with three now in service.

At just under 100 metres in length and displacing more than 5,000 tonnes submerged, the submarines are powered by a K15 nuclear reactor driving a pump-jet propulsor. Speed is reported to exceed 25 knots. Like other nuclear-powered submarines, they are not limited by fuel range; patrol length is determined largely by provisions and operational requirements, typically around 70 days.

The class is equipped with Naval Group's SYCOBS combat management system and a Thales sonar suite incorporating hull-mounted, flank array and towed array systems, alongside mine and obstacle avoidance sonar. Electronic countermeasures are provided by the NEMESIS system.

Weapons are launched through four 533mm torpedo tubes, with space for up to 20 munitions. These include F21 heavyweight torpedoes, Exocet SM39 anti-ship missiles and the MdcN naval cruise missile, giving the boats a land-attack capability as well as anti-submarine and anti-surface roles. Mines can also be carried.

Faslane regularly hosts allied submarines, reflecting close operational ties between the Royal Navy and its NATO partners.

George Allison is the founder and editor of the UK Defence Journal. He holds a degree in Cyber Security from Glasgow Caledonian University and specialises in naval and cyber security topics. George has appeared on national radio and television to provide commentary on defence and security issues. Twitter: @geoallison

Denmark evacuates US submarine crew member off coast of Greenland

It came as President Trump announced plans to deploy a hospital ship to the island

Anna Loren

Sunday 22 February 2026

Denmark's military has conducted an urgent medical evacuation of a United States submarine crew member off the coast of Greenland. The operation, confirmed by the Danish Joint Arctic Command on its Facebook page, took place on Saturday 21st about seven nautical miles (13 kilometres) from Nuuk, the capital of the vast, ice-covered island.

A Danish Seahawk helicopter, deployed from an inspection ship, retrieved the individual.

The crew member was subsequently transferred to a hospital in Nuuk for urgent medical treatment.

Also late on Saturday, President Donald Trump announced plans to deploy a hospital ship to Greenland, an autonomous territory of Denmark, alleging that many people there are sick and not receiving care!!

"Working with the fantastic Governor of Louisiana, Jeff Landry, we are going to send a great hospital boat to Greenland to take care of the many people who are sick and not being taken care of there. It's on the way!!!"

Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform, referring to his special envoy for Greenland.

The historically strong bilateral ties forged after World War II between Nato allies Denmark and the United States have come under severe strain in recent months.

Trump has ratcheted up talk of a possible US takeover of the mineral-rich and strategically located Arctic island, while Greenlanders have repeatedly said that the territory is "not for sale".

The president's Truth Social post prompted a defence of Denmark's healthcare system from the country's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen.

She wrote on Facebook on Sunday, that she was "happy to live in a country where there is free and equal access to health for all - where it's not insurances and wealth that determine whether you get proper treatment".

"You have the same approach in Greenland," she wrote, before adding: "Happy Sunday to you all" in front of a blushing and smiling emoji.

Defence giant about to start work on new warship in Glasgow

By George Allison - February 18, 2026

BAE Systems has said preparations are well underway to begin construction of the sixth Type 26 frigate for the Royal Navy, HMS NEWCASTLE, with long-lead equipment already in progress.

The update was included in the company's full-year 2025 results, published on 18 February, as the defence giant reported record sales and a growing order backlog amid rising global defence demand.

In its results statement, BAE Systems said: "Preparations to start construction of the sixth Type 26 frigate, HMS NEWCASTLE are well underway with long-lead equipment items already in progress."

The Type 26 frigates are being built on the River Clyde in Glasgow, with work split between BAE's Govan and Scotstoun shipyards. The programme is intended to deliver eight advanced anti-submarine warfare frigates for the Royal Navy, forming a key part of the service's future surface fleet.

BAE Systems highlighted continued progress on the wider Type 26 programme, noting that final outfitting work is ongoing on HMS GLASGOW and HMS CARDIFF at Scotstoun, while HMS BELFAST, HMS BIRMINGHAM and HMS SHEFFIELD are progressing through construction at the company's Govan site.

The firm also pointed to recent investment in its Glasgow facilities, including the opening of the Janet Harvey Hall at Govan, a large, covered assembly facility designed to allow two Type 26 frigates to be built side by side.

BAE Systems said the hall is already being used for work on HMS BELFAST and HMS BIRMINGHAM.

The company's results statement also highlighted the opening of its Applied Shipbuilding Academy in Glasgow, a £12 million training facility intended to support the long-term skills pipeline for warship construction on the Clyde.

BAE Systems' Chief Executive Charles Woodburn said the company remains well positioned to support defence demand, citing what he described as a "new era of defence spending" driven by escalating security challenges.

BAE Systems reported sales of £30.6 billion in 2025 and said its order backlog rose to a record £83.7 billion.

Australia funds AUKUS long-lead nuclear systems

By Craig Langford - February 24, 2026

Australia has announced an AUS 310 million payment to acquire long-lead items from the United Kingdom for Australia's future conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS partnership.

The funding will support the manufacture of critical components for nuclear propulsion systems destined for Australia's first two SSN-AUKUS submarines, which are to be built at Osborne in South Australia. Under current arrangements, the United Kingdom will deliver complete, welded nuclear propulsion units for the Australian-built

boats, with work already under way at Rolls-Royce Submarines in Derby. This adds to Australia's previously committed contribution of £2.4 billion over ten years to expand Rolls-Royce's production capacity.

Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Richard Marles said Australia continues to work closely with the United Kingdom and United States to develop the skills and industrial base required to operate nuclear-powered submarines.

"Early investment in components such as the nuclear propulsion systems will be critical to the delivery of AUKUS," Mr Marles said.

"By working with our AUKUS partners, the Albanese Government continues to support defence industry and workforce cooperation, which will in turn support jobs in Australia for generations to come."

The payment was announced alongside Minister for Defence Industry Pat Conroy's engagement at the Australia-United Kingdom Defence Industry Dialogue in London, the first such meeting since 2018. The talks focused in part on submarine industrial cooperation.

Mr Conroy said beginning work early on key submarine components was essential to maintaining programme momentum. "Starting work early on critical submarine components is essential to keeping this program on track. The next-generation SSN-AUKUS submarines will be an extraordinary capability, designed and built by trusted partners and powered by a company with decades of nuclear-propulsion experience," he said.

He added that Australia's investment was helping to establish a sovereign submarine-building capability. "Australia's investment is helping to lay the foundations for a sovereign capability that will keep Australians safe for decades to come. This is a concrete example of allied industrial capacity delivering real benefits for Australia."

The announcement follows the government's recent A\$3.9 billion commitment as a down payment for the new Submarine Construction Yard at Osborne, where construction of SSN-AUKUS boats is planned to begin before the end of the decade. At peak activity, at least 4,000 workers are expected to be employed in building the yard infrastructure, with around 5,500 direct jobs forecast for submarine construction in South Australia.

Craig Langford

Craig initially trained as a mechanical engineer, but after a brief and disillusioning stint designing ventilation systems, he pivoted to journalism

Building SSN-AUKUS: Australia's \$30bn Nuclear Submarine Yard at Osborne

Australia has just announced it will spend around AUS\$30bn (£15.6bn) to build a large nuclear submarine construction yard in Adelaide. The new facility at Osborne is intended to replicate the processes in use at BAE Systems' facility at Barrow. Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, Director-General of the Australian Submarine Agency, has confirmed that British and American experts are already advising on the development of the expanded Osborne Naval Shipyard. The manufacturing system will be 'identical' to that used at Barrow-in-Furness shipyard and the two yards will build SSN-AUKUS boats in parallel. The yard is being delivered by Australian Naval Infrastructure (ANI), a government business enterprise established in 2017 to own, develop and manage shipbuilding infrastructure. It will work closely with Defence, regulators and AUKUS partners to ensure nuclear safety and security standards are met. Construction is expected to span more than a decade.

British blueprint

Replicating Barrow's approach means far more than similar buildings. It implies common production methodology, shared nuclear and quality standards, interoperable supply chains and a digitally integrated build environment. In effect, Australia is inserting a fourth production line into the AUKUS ecosystem, alongside Newport and Groton in the United States and at Barrow. The facilities in Cumbria are constrained by their Victorian legacy and complicated access, but by contrast, Osborne will be purpose-built to support modern submarine construction methods. Designed around digital shipbuilding principles, the layout is intended to optimise material flow, module movement and assembly sequencing from the outset. If delivered as planned, Adelaide could become one of the most advanced submarine production facilities in the world, rather than simply a southern hemisphere clone. SSN-AUKUS is a trilateral programme and industrial coherence will be essential if common design authority, shared supply chains and cross-national workforce mobility are to function effectively. A yard operating to the same production logic as Barrow reduces technical risk and enhances resilience across the enterprise.

Costs and benefits

The Australian government has committed an initial AUS\$3.9bn (£2bn) as a down payment. The scale is reflected in the physical footprint. Plans include a 420 metre-long fabrication hall requiring some 710,000 cubic metres of structural concrete, alongside facilities for testing and commissioning nuclear-powered submarines. (For context, the giant Devonshire Dock Hall in Barrow is 260m in length). Osborne already hosts infrastructure supporting the Collins-class boats and the Hunter-class frigate programme. The expansion will effectively triple the size of the

yard. Upgrades reportedly include a third ship lift and potentially a graving dock to the north of the site to support construction and sustainment of SSN-AUKUS. Once complete, the yard is expected to be one of only a handful globally capable of building large surface combatants and nuclear-powered submarines simultaneously. For South Australia, already positioning itself as a defence manufacturing hub, the project represents a generational industrial commitment. The construction project will support around 10,000 jobs, and up to 1,000 apprentices per year will be trained on site.



Outline plan for the yard at Osborne, which has three distinct areas.



(Left) Area 1 – main fabrication hall and production facilities
(Centre) Area 2 blast and paint workshops
(Right) Area 3 consolidation hall, ship lift and graving dock
(Image: ANI).

SSN-AUKUS is central to the RN's future undersea posture and to sustaining the sovereign industrial base at Barrow. An Australian yard that truly mirrors UK processes should strengthen the overall programme. For the RN, whose own attack submarine fleet will transition from Astute to SSN-AUKUS over the 2030s, shared production architecture offers opportunities for collaborative problem-solving, distributed manufacturing and economies of scale. SSN-AUKUS is still being designed but they will be substantially larger than the Astute class and likely displace over 10,000 tonnes. They will be fitted with VLS cells, have X-form aft hydroplanes and be powered by PWR3 nuclear reactors made by Rolls-Royce in the UK.

Workforce challenge

Critics will immediately point to the slow pace of delivery of Astute and Dreadnought class at Barrow and wonder why Australia would want to follow the British model. To understand this better requires the long-term view that underpins AUKUS. Barrow is still dealing with legacy issues relating to strategic government failures dating back to the 1990s, which are slowly being addressed. The specialist submarine design skills gap that plagued the initial stages of the Astute class has been overcome – the development of Dreadnought has been smoother.

The extended construction and delivery times are largely down to a lack of skilled people, but between 2023-2027, the Barrow workforce should grow by about 5,000 people. This has been backed by a 'Team Barrow', a cross-government effort rarely seen in UK defence procurement, building a broader ecosystem required to grow and sustain a larger workforce. Australia will have to embark on a recruitment and training programme on an even larger scale.

It has been admitted that workforce expansion targets are currently behind schedule in the UK. It may take longer than hoped, but it does not invalidate the Barrow model as an example for Australia to follow. SSN-AUKUS is essentially a bilateral endeavour and there is little alternative but for Australia to deepen its partnership with the UK. Cost growth, schedule slippage and workforce bottlenecks remain risks for any nation navigating the complexities of nuclear submarine construction but can be gradually overcome with determination and solid political backing. In a controversial demonstration of the UK's unshakable commitment to AUKUS, in the next few weeks, HMS ANSON is due to arrive at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia. She will undertake a planned sustainment and maintenance period for about a month before commencing operations from the base as part of Submarine Rotational Force–West.

L3Harris wins major submarine comms contract

By George Allison
February 20, 2026

L3 Harris Technologies has secured its largest full-rate production contract for U.S. Navy submarine communications systems, receiving an award from General Dynamics Electric Boat to deliver 26 shipsets for Virginia- and Columbia-class submarines, the company stated.

Announced on 18 February 2026, the contract covers production for both submarine classes through 2033, with support potentially extendable to future Columbia-class boats and allied navies.

According to L3 Harris, the communications systems are designed to enhance situational awareness and connectivity for submarine crews while supporting the operational requirement for stealth.

Nino DiCosmo, President of Maritime, Space and Mission Systems at L3 Harris, said: “The ability for submarines to operate undetected is vital to the U.S. Navy’s strategic advantage.”

He added: “With decades of experience in submarine technology and in partnership with General Dynamics Electric Boat, L3 Harris will deliver highly reliable, undetectable communications systems to enhance operational effectiveness.”

The company said the award builds on its longstanding involvement in U.S. Navy submarine programmes, including support for Ohio- and Los Angeles-class vessels.

The Virginia-class submarines are nuclear-powered fast-attack boats designed for operations in both littoral and deep-sea environments. The Columbia-class, currently under development, is intended to replace the Ohio-class ballistic missile submarines as the core of the United States’ sea-based nuclear deterrent.

AROUND THE BRANCHES

WEST OF SCOTLAND & THE K13 WEEKEND 2026



AT ELDER PARK



BEFORE THE WOS BRANCH MEETING



SITTING DOWN FOR DINNER (the Barrow Branch end of the Table)



AFTER THE DINNER - SEE ANYONE YOU KNOW?

BARROW IN FURNESS BRANCH PARTIES



A DTS AT THE WALNEY WEST SHORE CLUB (above & below)





THURSDAY AFTERNOON XMAS PARTY AT THE HOPE & ANCHOR, ULVERSTON

Morecambe Bay Branch 50th Anniversary Dinner



The Morecambe Bay Submariners Association held their 50th Anniversary Dinner on Saturday 10 January 2026 at the Morecambe Golf Club. The Vice Lord Lieutenant of Lancashire, Brigadier Peter Rafferty MBE DL, was the principal Guest of Honour with his wife Joanne. Councillor Roger Dennison, a former Mayor of Lancaster and the Armed Forces Champion and his wife Glenys, were also present as guests of the Branch. Mrs. Christine McGuinness and her son Jason were pleased to represent their husband and father, a former member of the Branch who crossed the bar in 2024. Mrs Shirley Orton, wife of former member John Orton, was also remembered and the Branch will take the Anniversary to her over the coming weeks. Other guests included members of the Branch and their wives and members from the Barrow and Blackpool branches that made up the 54 who attended the dinner.

The Branch's very grateful thanks to the RNRMC and Greenwich Hospital for their unstinting work for the Royal Navy, and their very generous grant in support of the dinner, was given by the President in his speech, their logos and contact details being proudly displayed on the table place names and menus.

Dave Andrew, an inaugural member of the Branch in 1976, was in attendance at the dinner and was given special mention by Brigadier Rafferty for his support over the years.

In a great and humbling surprise to the Branch Standard Bearer, Keith Holmes, Brigadier Rafferty presented him with the Submariners Association Patron's Certificate of Appreciation for his more than 30 years of service in the role. The Vice Lord Lieutenant pointed out in his speech the importance of Military Associations now and in the future and that the Northwest provides about 18-20% of the UK armed forces. With Lancashire having less than 9% of the population of the UK, the County's contribution to the Armed Forces was well above the norm. The dinner was a great success, and the Branch looks forward to continuing its significant contribution to the Armed Forces and Morecambe communities as we march into the next 50 years.

MORECAMBE BAY SA VISIT TO FASLANE

The Morecambe Bay Submariners Association managed to visit the Submarine Base at Faslane over the weekend of 27/28 March. The itinerary was packed full of excellent experiences and all 8 members of the Branch enjoyed themselves immensely.

An effortless drive up country allowed time for a visit to the Submarine Centre in Helensburgh. Currently not open to the Public, Dave Tipple was kind enough to open the centre for our pleasure. The Centre was shown in its best light and refreshments were supplied, courtesy of the West of Scotland Branch of the SA. The floor show was immersive and gave a thorough history of the Midget Submarine evolution in part one of the presentation. The quality of the production was remarkable and there is no doubt that part two will be equally superb. After the visit to the centre a short stop in the Ardencaple Hotel for a swift one allowed us to meet up with the National Secretary, and member of the WOS Branch, so that we could thank him in person, he even got a round in!

Just a short hiccup at the Pass Office, which was sorted out with a quick conversation between Cdr John Humphreys, the Duty Naval Base Officer, and his old Navigator from their days in HMS OCELOT. Access granted we made our way to the Senior Rates mess to collect our accommodation passes and then off to dinner and back to Kennedy's to round the day off in style at the bar, meeting old friends and shipmates before getting our heads down.

The visit to HMS ARTFUL was eye opening and all of the team remarked on the level of automation in the systems and how they are operated. They also remarked on the excellent morale of the crew in their prolonged period of maintenance. They are still keen and ready to take her to sea when they are able. Our thanks go to the Duty Watch who were tested with the myriad of questions we were to ask, and they were not found wanting. The final visit in the base was conducted with CPO(SA) Tug Wilson of the SMERAS facility. None of the visitors had had experience of the facility before and were super impressed with the veracity of the training and the conditions that were achievable in the training tank.





The Chairman was keen to get his bathers on and have a go but alas Tug would not let him anywhere near the water. Without doubt it is a world class facility with a realistic training environment to prepare the students for the rigours of having to escape from a submarine.

All fun completed in the right timescale the only thing left was the journey home. A refreshment stop just over the border to whet our whistles and the final leg was conducted in darkness without incident.



A Swift Half in the Ardencaple

Our special thanks go to PO(MESM) Nathan Wilkinson, of HMS ARTFUL, for the meticulous coordination of the visit weekend. The whole thing was memorable for all the right reasons and just goes to show if you present the right documentation to the security team at HMNB Clyde you will always be allowed access.

HMS ANSON ARRIVED AT HMAS STIRLING – BUT DIDN'T STAY LONG

22nd February 2026

HMS ANSON arrived in Western Australia in February to undertake the first-ever maintenance activity on a Royal Navy nuclear-powered submarine in Australia. The visit marks a significant milestone in AUKUS preparations and Australia's ambition to operate conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

ANSON sailed from Gibraltar on 23rd January and completed the 8,200 nautical mile non-stop transit over the course of a month at sea before entering HMAS STIRLING. Her entry to the base was slightly delayed by infrastructure set up for the annual Rottneet Channel Swim preventing transit through the channel, although the swim was eventually cancelled due to bad weather.

ANSON's direct passage to Australia dispels speculation that she might be diverted for Tomahawk land-attack operations in the Middle East. Political signals from London, including the Prime Minister's refusal to authorise the use of UK airbases for US strikes on Iran, underline the government's choice to avoid action in the region.

To many observers, the timing of the deployment to Australia appears extraordinary. With no other RN attack submarines available and a weakening surface fleet, while tensions with Russia continue to rise, sending the sole operational SSN to the other side of the globe invites scrutiny. The UK must honour its commitments under AUKUS, but in the near term, there is a legitimate debate about whether more immediate regional concerns should take precedence. Positioning Britain's only available attack submarine so far from home waters risks appearing inconsistent with firm official messaging that any hostile act by Moscow will be met with strength and resolve. The small SSN force represents the UK's most potent conventional deterrent and most powerful asset to deter malign Russian underwater activity.

Over the coming weeks, around 100 personnel will work on the boat in a Submarine Maintenance Period (SMP). The effort brings together the RN, the UK Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA), the Royal Australian Navy (RAN), ASC Pty Ltd and specialists from Pearl Harbour Naval Shipyard. The activity represents the first time the UK has conducted such a maintenance period for one of its nuclear-powered attack submarines outside home waters.

This work builds directly on Australia's recent experience supporting USN Virginia-class boats, including USS HAWAII in 2024 and USS VERMONT in 2025. Each step incrementally develops the industrial skills, regulatory systems and supply chains necessary to sustain nuclear-powered submarines safely and routinely. HMS ASTUTE previously visited Australia in 2021, shortly after the AUKUS pact was agreed.

HMAS STIRLING will be the base for Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West), under which US and UK nuclear-powered submarines will rotate through Western Australia on a persistent basis. Establishing the workforce, facilities and nuclear stewardship arrangements to support this presence is central to the credibility of AUKUS Pillar I.

Two RAN officers are currently embedded aboard HMS ANSON gaining first-hand operational experience in a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine. More than 50 Australians are now embedded across the UK Defence Nuclear Enterprise, while the RN has delivered offshore nuclear safety training to over 950 personnel associated with the Australian Submarine Agency.

These exchanges illustrate that AUKUS is as much about people as platforms. Developing a cadre of experienced nuclear-qualified engineers, maintainers and operators will take years. ANSON's maintenance period accelerates this learning curve, exposing Australian personnel to the standards and procedures that underpin safe submarine operations. During the visit, AUKUS partners are expected to conduct combined Pillar I and Pillar II activities, including testing the interoperability of the C2 Robotics 'SPEARTOOTH' Large Uncrewed Underwater Vehicle (LUUV) with HMS ANSON. In parallel, ASW artificial intelligence algorithms associated with AUKUS Pillar II will be assessed and refined using data from the Royal Australian Air Force P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft.

Australian firms invited to join SSN-AUKUS submarine supply chain through new qualification programme

April 13, 2026

By Martin Chomsky (Defence Industry Europe)

Image: BAE Systems.

Australian firms invited to join SSN-AUKUS submarine supply chain through new qualification programme

April 13, 2026

By Martin Chomsky (Defence Industry Europe)

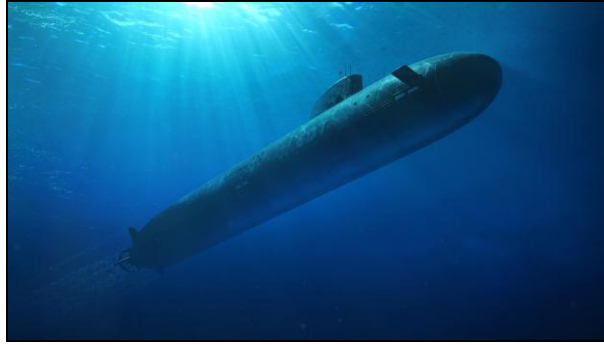


Image: BAE Systems.

BAE Systems Australia has announced a new qualification programme inviting Australian metal fabrication businesses to support the future SSN-AUKUS submarine programme. The initiative seeks to build a domestic supply chain for conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

BAE Systems Australia has announced a new qualification programme inviting Australian metal fabrication businesses to support the future SSN-AUKUS submarine programme. The initiative seeks to build a domestic supply chain for conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. The programme calls for expressions of interest from companies capable of producing components ranging from small fabrications to large structural elements. It is open to both established defence suppliers and firms seeking to enter the sector. The qualification process is designed to enable Australian industry to contribute to both Australian and UK submarine construction programmes. It complements ongoing work led by ASC under the Defence Industry Vendor Qualification programme.

The initiative was announced at the inaugural AUKUS National Supply Chain Conference in Adelaide. The event brought together representatives from government, industry and AUKUS partner nations.

The programme aims to establish a nationwide network of suppliers capable of supporting submarine construction. It is expected to play a key role in developing sovereign industrial capability. Craig Lockhart, Chief Executive Officer of BAE Systems Australia, said: *“Together with ASC, BAE Systems are drawing on decades of expertise and knowledge in establishing robust supply chains and facilitating advanced technology transfer, to ensure the creation of a lasting and sovereign industrial base for the SSN-AUKUS program.”*

He added: *“Australian industry will be key to the success of Australia’s future sovereign nuclear-powered submarine capability and will enable us to deliver these next-generation submarines to the Royal Australian Navy.”*

Alex Walsh, Chief Executive Officer of ASC, said: *“The SSN-AUKUS program represents one of the most significant industrial undertakings in Australia’s history, and Australian businesses will play a central role in delivering it.”*

He added: *“Through this qualification program we are opening the door for Australian manufacturers to demonstrate the precision, quality and capability required to support the construction of nuclear-powered submarines.”*

Walsh further stated: *“ASC has worked alongside Australian industry for more than four decades to build and sustain the Collins Class fleet — in partnership with BAE Systems — we look forward to building on that strong foundation as we help to grow a sovereign supply chain capable of supporting both the Australian and UK SSN-AUKUS programs.”*

The programme is intended to support long-term submarine construction and sustainment. It also reflects efforts to strengthen domestic industrial capacity within the AUKUS framework. Further opportunities for industry participation are expected to follow. The qualification process marks an initial step in integrating Australian companies into the SSN-AUKUS supply chain.

HMS ANSON, Britain's nuclear-powered submarine, has arrived in the Arabian Sea

Story by Swati Gandhi

The image below, taken and released by the United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence on February 22, 2026, shows the HMS ANSON submarine in transit to HMAS STIRLING – the Royal Australian Navy base in Western Australia but now reportedly, the British nuclear-powered Royal Navy submarine has now been positioned in the Arabian Sea, giving Britain the capability to launch cruise missile attacks targeting Iran, if the conflict in the Middle East escalates, according to the Daily Mail.

Citing military sources, the report noted that on 6th March, HMS ANSON, which is equipped with TOMAHAWK Block IV land-attack missiles, and has a range of 1,000 miles, along with Spearfish heavyweight torpedoes, left port in Perth and is believed to be taking position in the northern Arabian Sea. The Royal Navy submarine travelled 5,500 miles from Australia's west coast to await orders, the report said, adding that it rises to just below the surface every 24 hours, allowing it to maintain contact with the UK's military bunker at the Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) in Northwood, London.



HMS ANSON is positioned in the Arabian Sea

The report, citing sources, said that at PJHQ, Lieutenant General Nick Perry, the chief of joint operations, would give the order to fire if authorised by Starmer. Following such approval, HMS ANSON would rise close to the surface and fire four missiles.

The state-of-the-art submarine, based at Faslane in Scotland, does not use a traditional periscope. Instead, it displays surface views on a large television screen. Its nuclear reactor eliminates the need for refuelling throughout its 25-year service life. Additionally, its systems can purify water and air, allowing it to travel around the world without resurfacing. However, this endurance is limited by its food capacity, as the vessel can carry only a three-month supply for its crew of 98 officers and sailors.

Tehran targets joint US-UK base

HMS ANSON's positioning in the Arabian Sea comes two days after Tehran launched ballistic missiles at a joint US-UK base in Diego Garcia - a remote island in the Indian Ocean. Following the launch of the missiles, one was intercepted, and another failed mid-air, and no damage was reported. However, the incident brings to light Tehran's missile capability range, which was not previously disclosed.

Royal Navy certifying Astute for under-ice operations



By George Allinson 4th March 2026

The Royal Navy seeks to maintain a certified under-ice operational capability centred on its submarine force as competition in the Arctic grows, according to a written response from the Ministry of Defence.

Responding to a series of parliamentary questions from Conservative MP James Cartlidge, Defence Minister Al Carns said the capability has historically been provided by the Royal Navy's nuclear-powered submarines and is being continued through the Astute-class fleet.

Carns said: "The Royal Navy (RN) has maintained an under-ice capability centred on the Submarine Service through SWIFTSURE and TRAFALGAR class submarines and is certifying the new ASTUTE Class to uphold this capability."

The minister also confirmed that the most recent Arctic Ice Exercise conducted by a Royal Navy submarine took place in 2018 - HMS TRENCHANT conducted the last Ice Exercise in 2018."

When asked whether another such exercise is planned during the current Parliament, the Ministry of Defence declined to provide details of future submarine operations. Carns stated: “It is the longstanding policy of this Department not to comment on future submarine operations.”

The Government also linked the capability to the evolving strategic environment in the Arctic region. Carns noted that the Strategic Defence Review has identified the High North and Arctic as areas of increasing geopolitical competition.

Carns added that the Government is examining options to address this environment through the defence planning process. “The Strategic Defence Review highlighted the High North and Arctic as an increasing area of competition for the UK, and the Defence Investment Plan is considering a range of options to meet this threat.”

George Allison is the founder and editor of the UK Defence Journal. He holds a degree in Cyber Security from Glasgow Caledonian University and specialises in naval and cyber security topics. George has appeared on national radio and television to provide commentary on defence and security issues. Twitter: @geallison

CHANGES IN THE BARROW SHIPYARD

The redevelopment of the Barrow Shipyard to support the Dreadnought Programme (and future Submarine Programmes) has been going on for a good few years now. All those working in the shipyard and all those people who cross the Michaelson Road Bridge on a regular basis will know that work on the new ‘Wet Dock Quay’ has been progressing slowly - but mainly out of view. The recent progress on the supporting building and offices is a lot more visible as will be seen below. No doubt that as soon as the rest of the cladding has been installed the outfitting of the building & the offices will soon be underway.



Lead US Navy Columbia Submarine on Track for 2028 Delivery After Supplier Delay

From THE DEFENCE POST

By Rojoef Manuel 13th February 2026



First Columbia-class Ballistic Missile Submarine - Stern Section

Photo: Ashley Cowan/HII

The US Navy has said it is on schedule to receive its first platform under the COLUMBIA Class nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine program in 2028 and expects full-rate production by 2031.

Rear Admiral Todd Weeks (the initiative's chief officer) confirmed the timeline as he revealed that the lead boat, the future USS DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA (SSBN 826), is about 65 percent complete - *Breaking Defence* - reported.

The announcement serves as assurance after the program, which set an initial delivery date in 2027, faced shipment delays on "major items of materiel."

According to Weeks, the new, concrete timeline is a result of an "acceleration" framework established between the navy and defence contractors, which aimed to place all modules for the first vessel in the series at General Dynamics Electric Boats Shipyard in Groton, Connecticut, by the end of 2025.

The last piece under that plan is a bow that was delivered to the facility in November, reflecting the industry's commitment to the effort.

"By the end of this year, we will be pressure hull complete on that lead ship, USNI News [quoted](#) Weeks as saying. "Then next year the ship will go into the water, and we're driving towards delivering the ship in 2028."

Second & Third Hulls in the Works

The second Columbia boat, the future USS WISCONSIN (SSBN 827), is now 35 percent complete and remains on track for delivery by the end of the decade.

"It is today, one of only two US Navy ships under construction that are on schedule," Weeks said.

The official also gave a brief update on the third system, which as of 2025, has not yet been ordered by the Pentagon due to ongoing cost negotiations.

"The third ship GROTON (SSBN-828) is about 10 percent complete, and we're seeing good ramp-up there," Weeks noted.

The Columbia Submarine Program

The Columbia Class program was initiated in 2020 to replace the 1980s-era Ohio-class fleet that was commissioned for similar roles.

Washington plans to build up to 12 vessels under the plan, with each platform designed with a length of 560 feet (171 meters) and a beam of 43 feet (13 meters).

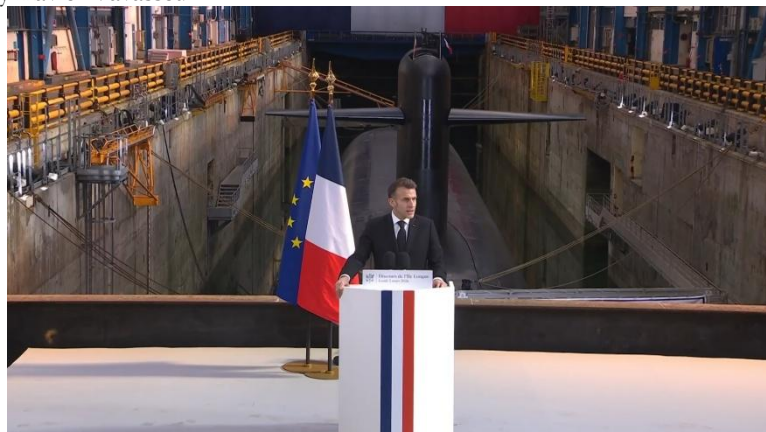
The ships will be armed with UGM-133 Trident II underwater-launched ballistic missiles, supporting their primary function as the sea-based arm of the Pentagon's nuclear triad strategy.

They will have an S1B nuclear reactor, which supplies power for propulsion and electricity, and a sensing suite with standards above current attack submarines.

A Columbia system will accommodate up to 115 people and operate at over 20 knots (23 miles/37 kilometres per hour).

Future French Ballistic Missile Submarines will be named Invincible-class

Published 02/03/2026 By Xavier Vavasseur



French president Emmanuel Macron

Speaking from the Île Longue ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) base in Brittany, French president Emmanuel Macron revealed that the first of the next generation SSBNs will be known as "Invincible". The announcement came as part of a highly anticipated address during which the head of state outlined new parameters for the French nuclear deterrence in response to the evolving strategic context.

Previously known as the SNLE-3G (Sousmarin nucléaire lanceur d'engins – 3rd generation for nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine) which is the programme name, the Invincible-class will succeed the in-service Le Triomphant-class SSBN. Speaking with Triomphant-class SSBN LE TEMERAIRE as a backdrop, President Macron also announced that first-in-class boat INVINCIBLE will sail in 2036.

Full scale development of the SNLE-3G was launched in February 2021. Steel cutting on the first submarine took place in March 2024. French shipbuilder Naval Group expects to start assembling the various sections of the first submarine around 2026-2027 ahead of a launch in the early 2030-ies and a delivery to the French Navy “after” 2035 (exact year is still confidential at this stage). The four submarines are expected to ensure the French sea-based nuclear deterrent until the 2080ies.

At first glance the new submarine is similar in size and form to the current Le Triomphant-class. But it is an entirely new design and is actually almost 10 meters (30 ft) longer (about 150 meters in length, 15,000+ tons displacement submerged, but official figures are still classified). The crew complement (110 sailors), number of SLBM silos (16) and torpedo tubes (4) will remain unchanged compared to the in-service Le Triomphant-class.

Update to French nuclear deterrence - Increasing the French nuclear arsenal

One of the main takeaway of Emmanuel Macron speech is that France will increase its nuclear weapons stockpile. “The evolution of our competitors’ defences, the emergence of regional power, the possibility of coordination between adversaries and the risks associated with proliferation. All this, after careful consideration, leads us to the conclusion that a strengthening of our arsenal is essential” the French president said during his address.

The head of state announced that he has ordered an increase in the number of nuclear warheads in the French arsenal, but from now on, these numbers won’t be communicated “unlike what had been done in the past”, “to *put an end to any speculation*”.

Advanced deterrence

Macron also shed light on the role of French nuclear deterrence in Europe and unveiled the “advanced deterrence” concept:

“Our security has never been conceived solely within the limits of our territory, whether conventional or nuclear,” he emphasised, “A new phase of French deterrence can therefore take shape. We are embarking on what I would call advanced deterrence.”

“There will also be no sharing of the definition of vital interests, which will remain a matter of sovereign judgment for our country,” Emmanuel Macron clarified, using the term “vital interests” of France, which are deliberately left undefined to complicate the calculations of the adversary, to prevent them from exploiting a potential red line.

This “*advanced deterrence*,” announced by Emmanuel Macron “*will strengthen our defence by giving it greater scope*.”

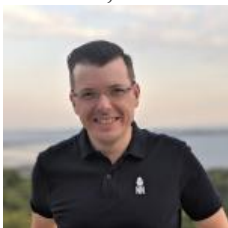
“*It will offer it a new strategic depth, consistent with the security challenges in Europe. Its value will, I believe, also be very strong for the partners who join us in this approach and whose territory will gain a stronger link with our deterrent*,” he argued, specifying that this mission “*would be in addition to NATO’s nuclear mission*.”

Emmanuel Macron assures that this European project “*was developed in full transparency with the United States of America and in close coordination with the United Kingdom*.”

Advanced deterrence is a gradual approach. “*It offers partners the opportunity to participate in deterrence exercises*,” the President of the Republic explained. “*It will allow for the deployment of strategic force elements to our allies as needed*,” he added.

Eight European countries have agreed to participate in the “*advanced deterrence*” proposed by France: Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece, Sweden, and Denmark will participate in the “support” component, that is, the conventional part of the exercise. These countries will notably be able to host “strategic air forces” from the French Air Force, which will thus be able to “disperse deep into the European continent” to “complicate the calculations of our adversaries,” Macron explained.

“*Advanced deterrence*” could also involve signalling, meaning the demonstration of nuclear capabilities, “including beyond our strict borders,” or even “the conventional participation of allied forces in our nuclear activities,” Macron added. “This winter, senior British officials attended, for the first time since the establishment of our deterrent, one of our strategic air force exercises,” Emmanuel Macron noted.



Xavier Vavasseur

Indian Navy commissions nuclear-powered submarine, INS ARIDHAMAN

Apr 03, 2026

India's Navy has commissioned its indigenous nuclear-powered submarine, INS ARIDHAMAN. This marks a significant step in enhancing national defence capabilities. The submarine is an advanced version of the Arihant-class. Its induction strengthens India's nuclear triad and maritime deterrence. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had earlier teased the development, calling the submarine a symbol of power.

The Indian Navy on Friday commissioned its indigenous Nuclear Powered Submarine INS ARIDHAMAN a crucial development in building national defence capabilities.

The development was hinted at by Singh in a post on X, where he described the submarine as more than just a name, calling it a symbol of power. "Not just a word, ' ARIDHAMAN ' is power!," said the post.

IRANIAN SUBMARINE

A satellite image reveals that Iran has returned one of its Russian Kilo submarines to service after months in dry dock, and the move comes just as the United States bolsters the Gulf with the USS GERALD A FORD



By **Sonia Ramire**

Published On: March 14, 2026



Satellite images of a key Iranian naval base show one of Tehran's Kilo class submarines back at its pier, freshly modernized and surrounded by a crowd of smaller boats in the shallow waters of the Persian Gulf. Open Source analysts say the overhaul took months in dry dock and coincides with a tense standoff with the United States, which has moved more warships into the region.

On paper this is a military story about torpedoes, missiles and nuclear talks. In practice it is also a story about one of the most stressed marine ecosystems on Earth, and what happens when dozens of submarines and at least two carrier strike groups share a semi-enclosed "bathtub" sea with coral reefs dugongs and millions of people who depend on coastal fisheries and tanker traffic.

Submarines in a crowded corner of the Gulf

According to the latest open source imagery, the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy has finished upgrading one of its Russian built Kilo submarines, known locally as the Tareq class. Up to 11 Ghadir mini submarines were also spotted tied up at nearby piers, alongside surface ships such as Alvand, Sabalan and Jamaran.

The Kilo boats Iran bought in the 1990s were expensive assets, with Western estimates putting their cost in the hundreds of millions of dollars per unit. They usually operate from bases near Bandar Abbas, close to the narrow Strait of Hormuz where close to one fifth of the world's oil supplies squeeze through a shipping lane only a few kilometres wide.

Those big Kilo hulls were never a perfect fit for this environment. The Gulf is shallow, hot and very salty which limits comfortable submerged operations and increases maintenance headaches for large submarines.

That is why Iran invested in compact Ghadir class boats that displace around 125 tons submerged, are optimized for shallow coastal waters and can sit almost motionless on the seafloor while waiting for targets.

At the same time, reports indicate that the United States Navy plans to keep two aircraft carrier strike groups in or near the Gulf, with ships such as the USS GERALD A FORD rotating through the area. The result is a dense mix of heavy steel and sensitive sonar equipment in a sea that is only about 50 meters deep on average.

A marine ecosystem already on the edge

Scientists have been warning for years that the Arabian or Persian Gulf is not just another stretch of open ocean. It is a small, semi-closed basin with extreme temperatures, high salinity and very limited water exchange with the wider Indian Ocean.

A 2021 review in the journal **Marine Pollution Bulletin** concluded that this is “one of the most adversely affected marine environments worldwide”, damaged by a combination of climate change, oil and gas activities and intense coastal development.

On top of that, Gulf countries host nearly half of the world’s desalination capacity, and the hyper saline brine discharged from those plants is already harming marine biodiversity . Add heavy shipping, chronic urban and industrial pollution and the legacy of multiple wars, including the 1991 Gulf War, and you get a sea operating uncomfortably close to its limits.

Now layer current tensions over that fragile base. Around 20 million barrels of oil per day pass through the Strait of Hormuz, roughly one fifth of global petroleum consumption. Any attack, accident or mine strike that ruptures a tanker could send thick slicks into mangroves, salt marshes and coral communities that are already struggling with heat waves and salinity spikes.

Confirmation that next generation Royal Navy SSNs to have Vertical Launch Tubes



March 23, 2026

A newly approved US support package for the SSN-AUKUS programme has effectively confirmed that the RN and Royal Australian Navy’s next-generation attack submarines will be equipped with vertical launch cells.

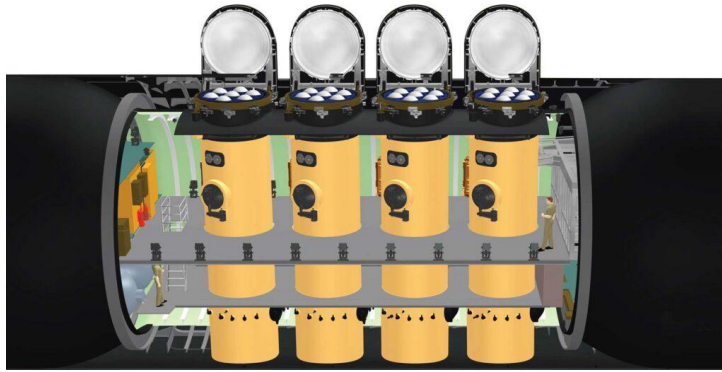
The detail, contained within a US Foreign Military Sales (FMS) notification provides one of the clearest indications yet of how the future boats will be armed. The notification outlines a wide-ranging UK request for technical assistance, equipment and embedded personnel to support submarine combat system development. Among the most significant elements is support for “*AUKUS-specific vertical deployment tubes*” and “*common weapon launchers*”, pointing directly to the integration of vertical launch cells into the design.

This represents a shift from current RN practice. Astute-class submarines launch Tomahawk land attack missiles through 21-inch torpedo tubes, sharing the Weapon Stowage Compartment with heavyweight torpedoes. However, earlier Tomahawk variants used by the UK are no longer in production, reinforcing the need to move to a new launch architecture. Vertical launch systems not only increase the number of weapons carried but also free up space in the WSC, allowing submarines to embark additional torpedoes (or mines).

The likely adoption of the US Navy’s Virginia Payload Module (VPM), or a close derivative, signals a significant enhancement in strike potential. The VPM consists of large-diameter vertical tubes, each containing seven cells capable of accommodating strike-length weapons. These tubes can house cruise or hypersonic missiles, as well as alternative payloads such as medium-sized uncrewed underwater vehicles (UUVs) or seabed sensors.

The Virginia Payload Modules are being incorporated in the US Navy’s Block V Virginia-class boats by inserting an extra compartment amidships. The VPM is accessible from within the pressure hull, allowing maintenance of larger payloads while alongside (Image: GDEB).

Vertical launch capability allows payloads larger than the 21-inch diameter limit imposed by torpedo tubes, greatly expanding future options. This is particularly relevant as both the RN and Royal Australian Navy seek long-range strike weapons able to penetrate anti-access and area denial environments. The ability to deliver such effects covertly from submarines provides a powerful conventional deterrent against peer adversaries.



Navy Lookout mock up

The US Navy has already moved in this direction, converting four former ballistic missile submarines into SSGNs equipped with large numbers of vertical launch cells. As these boats retire, their firepower is being partially replaced through the introduction of Virginia Payload Tubes (VPT) in earlier Virginia-class boats and the larger VPM in Block V submarines.

The additional hull section to house VLS partly explains the increased size, complexity and cost of SSN-AUKUS. It is also likely to preclude the fitting of a Dry Deck Shelter currently an option for the Astute-class boats. Theoretically, VPM tubes can be adapted as a diver lock-out chamber, supporting special forces operations. It is unclear for now how many modules will be fitted to SSN-AUKUS, but the number is likely to be a balance between cost and desired strike capacity.

Commonality also has strategic advantages. Australia, already heavily reliant on US weapons, would benefit from shared logistics and stockpiles at bases such as Guam or Perth. For the UK, compatibility with US launch systems could also support integration of future weapons, including a submarine-launched variant of the Stratus missile (Future Cruise and Anti-Ship Weapon) being jointly developed with France.

The broader FMS package also includes a “*submarine warfare federated tactical system*”, supported by advanced computing infrastructure, simulation tools and embedded US and UK personnel. As previously reported the General Dynamics AN/BYG-1 submarine combat control system is expected to be the core control element for SSN-AUKUS, although freedom to integrate predominantly European sensors and weapons will be retained. AN/BYG-1 is an open-architecture system already in service with the US Navy’s SSNs and the Royal Australian Navy’s Collins class SSKs.

The FMS Congressional notification reveals that the ambition of the programme has expanded significantly from an initial £40M (\$50M) to around £800M (\$1Bn), reflecting its growing scale and complexity. While many aspects of SSN-AUKUS remain undisclosed, the confirmation of vertical launch capability provides a clear signal of intent. The RN’s future attack submarines are being designed with substantially greater strike capacity and flexibility, closely aligned with US Navy concepts.

Fincantieri lays keel of first U212NFS Submarine

Published on 02/03/2026

By Naval News Staff



Fincantieri The keel-laying ceremony of the first U212NFS

On February 27, 2026, Fincantieri announced the keel-laying ceremony for the first next-generation U212NFS (Near Future Submarine) at Muggiano Shipyard in Italy.

Fincantieri press release

The keel-laying ceremony for the first next-generation U212NFS (Near Future Submarine) destined for the Italian Navy was held today at the Muggiano shipyard, as part of the program for the construction of four submarines and the development of related logistic support, managed and entrusted to OCCAR (Organisation Conjointe de Coopération en matière d'Armement, an international organization for the management of cooperative defense programs). Delivery of the first U212NFS is scheduled for 2029.

The U212NFS submarine class represents a substantial evolution compared to its U212A predecessors, thanks to greater design maturity, a higher level of national technological content, and improved integration of onboard systems. The innovations developed by Italian industry — including the lithium-ion propulsion battery and the new combat system — will ensure greater stealth, endurance, efficiency, and cyber resilience.

The U212NFS Programme makes a decisive contribution to preserving and enhancing national industrial know-how, consolidating the technological advantage of Fincantieri and the entire Italian supply chain – thanks to the increased development of components within the country, reinforcing its strategic role and in particular that of the Muggiano shipyard, which—with over a century of activity and more than one hundred submarines built—represents a historic benchmark for the construction of the national underwater component.

Italy's DRASS will provide six new-generation compact submarines in addition to SDVs to Indonesia

Published on 04/03/2026

By Luca Peruzzi



Italy's Drass company is to launch soon the construction of 2+4 new generation DGK compact submarines for Indonesian MoD. (Drass)

On 26 February, the Italian Ministry of Defence (MoD) submitted for approval to the Parliament the ministerial decree concerning the free transfer of the decommissioned Garibaldi aircraft carrier to the Indonesian MoD. Italy is further supporting the strengthening of the Indonesian Navy with other programs in cooperation with the local industry, according to the dossier accompanying the submission.

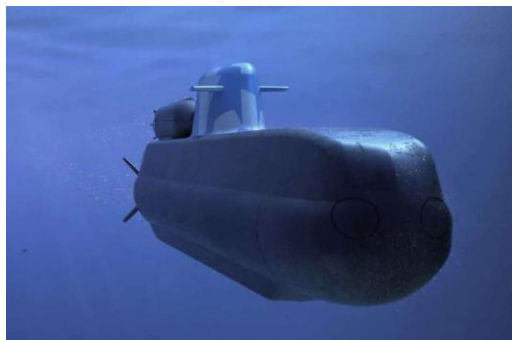
Among the “finalization of further naval contracts,” the dossier highlights the supply of “six class DGK submarines,” to be provided by the Italian company Drass.

No further details are provided by the dossier and the company is not commenting, but according to the information collected by *Naval News*, the contractualization is in the latest stage, after having finalized the export credit loan, bringing the programme to the execution phase. The programme is moving quickly thanks to the relationship and trust that grew up thanks to the Garibaldi transfer project, according to a source near to it.

The estimated value of \$480 million indicated in the dossier regards only the first tranche contract – including two boats plus support and training – of the programme, which according to the information obtained by *Naval News*, is worth approximately \$1.4 billion for the delivery of the six compact submarines in addition to training and logistics support.

On February 17, Republik Palindo of Indonesia and Drass signed “the Framework Agreement for the DGK submarine,” during the IDEX 2025 exhibition in UAE at the Italian Industries Federation for Aerospace, Defence and Security (AIAD) and the Italian MoD National Armaments Directorate (DNA) stand. According to the same press statement, “this partnership represents a key step in supporting the Indonesian Navy’s strategic requirement

for enhanced underwater deterrence through the upcoming serial production of midget attack submarines, reinforcing our shared commitment to delivering state-of-the-art subsea technology. As a trusted leader in high-tech underwater systems, Drass is proud to further strengthen its longstanding relationship with Indonesia in this critical domain.”



With a length of 34 meters and a 219 tons surface displacement, the Drass-developed DGK is capable to transport up to 6+1 special forces operators and a same company’s DS8 SDV. (Drass)

Indonesia will represent the launch customer for the new boat developed by Drass and a huge boost for the company on the international market.

With an overall length and height of respectively 34 and 7 meters, a hull diameter (equal to overall width) of approximately 3.5 meters and a surface displacement of 219 tons (ca 270 tons submerged), the new generation DGK compact submarine represents “a paradigm shift in the underwater warfare, combining the capabilities required in littoral waters, such as surveillance and special forces support, while maintaining significant deterrence value in blue waters, as it is equipped with weapon systems, command and control and sensors equivalent to those of conventional submarines, yet is less detectable by sonar thanks to its smaller size,” claims Drass. Although the boat is not designed for long-range ocean crossings, this limitation is not expected to represent a problem given Indonesia’s huge islands archipelago configuration, according to a source close to the program.

The compact dimensions and the exceptional quietness of the DGK, make it a formidable underwater target, Drass claims, avoiding detection even by advanced anti-submarines platforms. It can safely operate submerged in as little as 20 meters sea waters, further enhancing its capabilities, and reach an operational depth of over 200 metres. Combining an excellent L/D parameter value (Length/Diameter) and the X-rudder configuration for the stern hydroplanes, the craft features optimal manoeuvrability, alongside propeller boss vortex diffuser and other key features to minimize acoustic signature, essential for operations in littoral and restricted waters. The stern free-circulating are of the hydrodynamic hull sees the positioning of the two aft ballast tanks, duly designed to guarantee buoyancy in the case of damage.

With a fully redundant power and electric plant with reliable power generating sets and lithium-ion batteries, the new compact submarine has a maximum submerged, on surface and submerged cruising speed of respectively 15, 9 and 4 knots, a cruising range (snorkeling/submerged) of over 2,000 nm and submerged range (on batteries) of almost 100 nm.

BOOKS

Usually there are only one or two books which are suggested for inclusion in IN DEPTH but, unusually, there has been a bit of a rush of suggested and recommended reading on this issue. Unfortunately I haven’t got space for all of them in this issue so I have included three - a selection which, hopefully, you will find interesting

THE DIDO PAPERS

Whittles Publishing, Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland, UK. KW6 6EG

T: +44(0)1593-731 333; E: info@whittlespublishing.com www.whittlespublishing.com

Readership: this fascinating story will be of great appeal to anyone with an interest in biographies, maritime history, ships and shipping, especially during Victorian times.

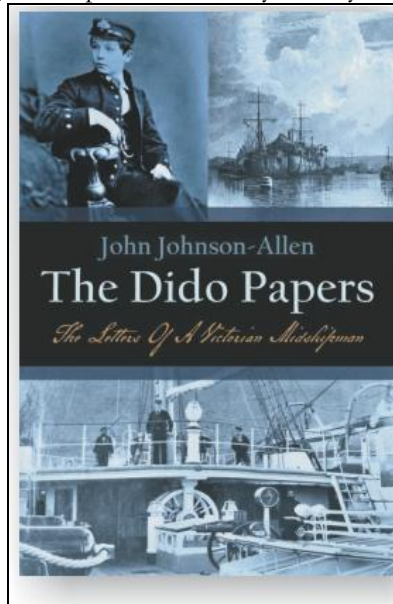
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After two years at the Britannia Naval College at Dartmouth, Bryan Godfrey Faussett joined his first ship, HMS Dido in June 1879. From the day he joined her he wrote long letters home to his family and friends. The Dido

went to West Africa; South and East Africa and the letters recount his experiences as a young man of fifteen from when he first joined. Remarkably, he made copies of all the letters that he wrote home and these copies provide a very rare glimpse of the life of a young midshipman in the Royal Navy of the mid-Victorian era.



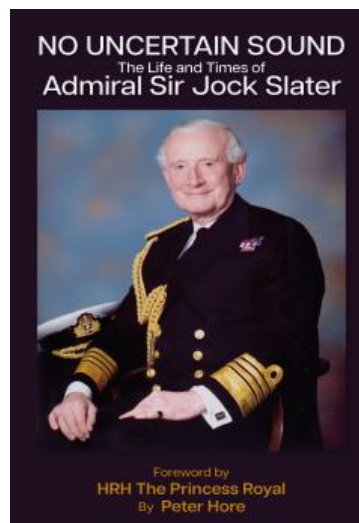
The letters cover the period from June 1879 until April 1881. He experiences not only the life of a young midshipman, learning the ways of a naval warship, but also visiting many places in West Africa which very few, if any, of his contemporaries at home would have any knowledge of whatsoever. His letters are fluent and well-written and it is easy to forget that they are written by a 15-year-old boy. His descriptions of West Africa, his visits ashore and the remarkable experiences that occur, including the death of the Dido's captain and his funeral only a few hours later in a west African graveyard, and a meeting of local kings and chieftains in a conference on board Dido in order to resolve disputes, are but two of the remarkable experiences that he undergoes and records. Dido also spends time on the East coast of Africa, anchored off Durban at the time of the first Boer war and his descriptions of that conflict, in which some of the crew of the Dido were sent to fight, are fascinating.

In his Foreword, Rear Admiral John Lang says '*Even a casual glance at this collection of letters is a joy. It is an extraordinary record of a cadet and midshipman in the Victorian Navy and opens a window of life in an era when the passage of time is marked by the receipt and dispatch of periodic letters to and from home.*'

About the author: John Johnson-Allen was a navigating officer in the Merchant Navy for nine years, joining his first ship as an apprentice at the age of 16. He is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, the Royal Institute of Navigation, and the Institute of Seamanship. He has written articles for various historical journals and is the author of six books including 'They Were Just Skulls' and 'Rosy' Wemyss, Admiral of the Fleet.'

No Uncertain Sound The Life and Times of Admiral Sir Jock Slater

By Peter Hore



The life and times of a famous admiral who helped to bring the Cold War to a close, told through his diaries and interviews with over one hundred politicians, senior and junior officers and colleagues who knew him well. Peter Hore's biography of Admiral Sir Jock Slater illuminates pivotal moments in the evolution of British naval and air power during the late twentieth century.

Uses as primary sources the memories of those who took part in events, such as the making nuclear policy, the decision to send women to sea, the end of the gay ban, UK- Russia relations and the establishment of British Maritime Doctrine.

This book will appeal to anyone interested in naval history.

"...throws a bright light on critical developments of British naval and naval air power in the late 20th century." Professor Nicholas Rodger

"...a masterly slice of contemporary naval history." Professor Richard Harding

"... a vivid account of Admiral Sir Jock Slater's life that blossoms further into a synthesis of British naval and defence policy at the end of the Cold War." John B. Hattendorf, Editor-in- Chief, Oxford Encyclopaedia of Maritime History

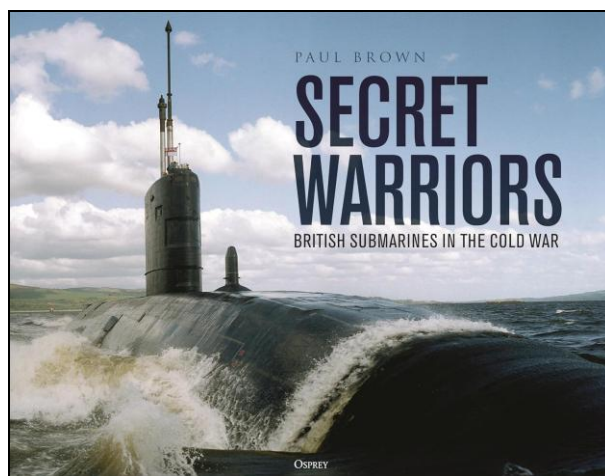
Captain Peter Hore's naval career included exchange service in the US Navy, and two tours in NATO's Standing Naval Force Atlantic. During the Falklands War he was joint logistics commander on Ascension Island, he was military assistant to the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff (Systems), he helped direct the Royal Navy's applied research programme, and he was Head of Defence Studies from 1997-2000.

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Secret Warriors: British Submarines in the Cold War

Hardcover, 272 Pages
OSPREY Books £45
ISBN 978-1-47286512-0
Paul Brown (Author)



A highly illustrated history of the Cold War operations of the submarines of the Royal Navy from 1948 to 1990. The Cold War was a period of intense activity for submarines of the Royal Navy, with many hair-raising incidents involving Soviet vessels. They were engaged in frequent hazardous surveillance patrols investigating Soviet submarines and surface warships and their operational tactics, and trailing Soviet strategic submarines (SSBNs), as well as conducting British deterrent SSBN patrols and protecting those patrols using attack submarines (SSNs). There were also dangerous patrols which trialled submarine operation under the Arctic ice-cap. In addition to these activities there were operations in other conflicts and war theatres including the Falklands War, the Suez campaign, the Northern Ireland Troubles, and the Indonesian confrontation.

The Author Naval history expert Dr Paul Brown presents the full history of this pivotal era in a fully illustrated volume, containing stunning black-and-white and colour images, technical drawings and maps. He has interviewed Cold War-era submarine commanders and engineers, submitted Freedom of Information requests, and trawled the National Archives, the archives of the Royal Navy Submarine Museum and Imperial War Museums, as well as been through personal accounts of the senior officers and many secondary sources, to bring to light new information that is published here for the first time.

SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR'

(Reported 1st January 2026 to 17th April 2026) _ Information on 'Submariners Crossed the Bar' compiled from CTBs reported by all available sources.

| NAME | DATE/AGE | RANK/RATE | BRANCH | SM SERVICE | SUBMARINES |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Tomas (Butters) Stevenson | 3rd January 2026 | LCH | We Remember Submariners | Dates not reported | TRENCHANT, TALENT, TRIUMPH & CLR (RMB Chivenor). |
| Sir Robert Charles Finch Hill | 4th January 2026 aged 88 | Vice Admiral | Friend of SM Museum | 1964 to 1991 | THERMOPYLAE (1964), DOLPHIN (1968), REPULSE (P) 28th July 1968, RNEC Manadon (1976), DG Ships (1982), CINC Fleet/CSO(E) Desig (1989), MoD Bath (1991). He held the senior roles of Chief Above Water Systems Executive, Deputy Controller of the Navy and Chief Naval Engineer Officer Also served in DECOY (1958) |
| James Bryan Elson | 12th January 2026 aged 91 | Captain, RCN | Submarines Association of Canada | From 1955 | AENEAS, SERAPH, EXCALIBUR (II), SIDON, ARTFUL, EXPLORER, OSIRIS & ALDERNEY Also commanded Canadian Ships RESTIGOUCHE, THUNDER, SKEENA & FRASER & was Base Commander, CFB Halifax |
| John Davies P052314 | 13 th January 2025 aged 84 | Petty Officer Electrician | North Staffs Branch | 1963 to 1969 | TOTEM, OBERON, AURIGA & ASTUTE |
| Lawrence Carr J926334E | 14th January 2026 aged 88 | Chief Petty Officer UW(A) | Barrow in Furness Branch | June 1956 to October 1977 | ARTFUL (1956), PORPOISE (1957 to 1958), TALLY HO & SEA DEVIL (1959), TRUNCHEON & EXPLORER (1962), SEALION (1963), ALCIDE (1964), ALLIANCE (1966), ORACLE (1967), REPULSE (S) (1968) COURAGEOUS (1972 to 1974) & SUPERB (1975 to 1977) |
| John M Hutchinson | 15th January 2026 aged 81 | Not reported | We Remember Submariners | Not reported | Not reported |
| William Charles (Bill) Johnson | 18th January 2026 aged 70 | Commander (E) (WESM) | We Remember Submariners | 1975 to 2004 | including DOLPHIN, RENOWN (S), REPULSE (TWEO), FOSM Staff (1989) & DGUW(N) |
| Michael Murphy Toole | 21st January 2026 aged 69 | RCN | Submarines Association of Canada | Not reported | ONONDAGA & OKANAGAN |
| Anthony T Wardale | 24th January 2026 | Captain (WESM) | We Remember Submariners | 1952 to 1988 | TRUMP, CACHALOT, OTTER, AUWE Portland, Captain Underwater Acceptance. Also served in HERMIONE, MINERVA, COLLINGWOOD & BULWARK |
| Peter Johnson P/SSX 864713 | 25th January 2026 aged 92 | Able Seaman (UC) | Derbyshire Branch | 1949 to 1958 | ANDREW, TAPIR & TRESPASSER. Also served in WRANGLER, CADIZ & CHEVRON |
| Paul John (Fred) Flint D153209H | 28th January 2026 aged 73 | Warrant Officer 1 Coxswain | West of Scotland Branch | from 1976 | RENOWN (1976 to 1981), OSIRIS (1984 to 1985), ODIN (1985 to 1986), TIRELESS (1986 to 1987), SPARTAN (1988 to 1989 & 2nd Commission 1988), WARSPITE (1989 to 1990), REPULSE (1993 to 1995) & TURBULENT (1999 to 2001) |
| David Slater | 30th January 2026 | CPO Marine Engineering Artificer | We Remember Submariners | from 1980 | CONQUEROR (at the Falklands), COURAGEOUS, WARSPITE & TRENCHANT & Shipkeeper for decommissioned boats at Devonport |
| Donald Francis Childs | 31st January 2026 aged 86 | Able Seaman EM | Submarines Association of Canada | 1956 to 1973 | DOLPHIN, THERMOPYLAE on commissioning at Portsmouth in 1965 & OJIBWA. Also served in BONAVENTURE, MICMAC & INCH ARRON |

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| Jim Hunt P/J960840 | 11th February 2025 aged 90 | Able Seaman (TM) | Derbyshire Branch Member No. 1208 | 1957 & 1958 | SCORCHER, TRESPASSER & MAIDSTONE (Spare Crew) |
| John E Harlow C/JX 246457 | 13th February 2026 aged 101 | Telegraphist (WT3) | Exeter Branch Member No. 3088 | 1942 to 1948 | ** WWII Service in H43, H48 (Training), TRUCULENT, SEVERN, RORQUAL & TEREDO |
| Derek H O'Malia D090514B | 14th February 2026 aged 77 | LOEM | Beds & Herts Branch Member No. 3571 | August 1968 to September 1974 | ARTEMIS (1969 to 1971) & ORACLE (1972 to 1974) |
| Keith Adam | 26th February 2026 | Chief Petty Officer (MEM) (L) | We Remember Submariners | Not reported | Not reported |
| Paul Lillywhite D161326R | 3rd March 2026 | Leading Cook | We Remember Submariners | 1976 to 1986 | WALRUS (August 1978 to September 1969), ORPHEUS (November 1979 to May 1980) & OBERON (February 1982 to June 1984) |
| Luc Daniel Rollin | 3rd March 2026 aged 73 | Electrician RCN | Submarines Association of Canada | Not reported | OJIBWA, OKANAGAN, ONONDAGA & CFFS Halifax (as SM Instructor) |
| Roger Earle Welby- Everard | 7 th March 2026 aged 83 | Lieutenant | We Remember Submariners | | ALCIDE & RESOLUTION Also served in CAVALIER & EXCELLENT |
| James Foley D058044K | 12th March 2026 | Charge Chief Marine Engineering Artificer (ML) | We Remember Submariners | 1960 to 1984 | TIPTOE, GRAMPUS, OLYMPUS, CHURCHILL & WARSPITE |
| Graham S Dibley P064844A | 14th March 2026 aged 81 | Marine Engineering Mechanician 1st Class | North Staffs Branch Member No. 6032 & We Remember Submariners | 1966 to 1977 | RORQUAL (1966 to 1969) & RESOLUTION (P) (1975 & on recommissioning at Rosyth on 27th November 1976 to 1977) |
| Roger J W Smith 054604 | 23rd March 2026 aged 83 | Leading Seaman | Norfolk Branch Member No 3878 | 1964 to 1969 | ALDERNEY, THERMOPYLAE & GRAMPUS |
| Alistair Thomas White | 28th March 2026 | Commander (E) (MESM) | Friend of SM Museum | 1972 to 1993 | DOLPHIN, NEPTUNE, SWIFTSURE, DRAKE, DOLPHIN, RESOLUTION (S), FOSM/Subelant, MoD London, MoD Bath & DEFIANCE FMU |
| Jess House | April 2026 | Chief Petty Officer WEA | We Remember Submariners | Not Reported | Including RENOWN (P) on recommissioning at Rosyth in 198* |
| John Staines | April 2026 | Chief Petty Officer (MEM) (M) | We Remember Submariners | Not Reported | Including RESOLUTION (P) on recommissioning at Rosyth on 27th November 1976 |
| David Fai D169847T | April 2026 aged 65 | Chief Petty Officer MEA (L) | Peterborough Branch Member No. 2909 | 1981 to 1986 | REPULSE & CHURCHILL |
| Timothy Richard Duchesne | 12th April 2026 aged 96 | Captain RAN | Submarine Association of Australia ex-Eastern States SA Member No. 2856 | June 1952 to January 1985 | RN in TELEMACHUS (52 to 54), ARTEMIS (54 to 56), SCYTHIAN (56 to 57), TALENT (57 to 59), SCOTSMAN (59 to 61), USS SEAWOLF (62), ASTUTE (64 to 65) RAN in OXLEY (68), OTWAY (70), Cdr SM1 RAN (Aug 73 to Feb 76) & Cdr RAN SM Squadron (Jan 82 to Jan 85) |



SM125

FROM HOLLAND 1 TO AGAMEMNON



125 YEARS OF
HM SUBMARINES