



PERISCOPE VIEW

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

Issue No: 276

www.submarinersassociation.co.uk

July 2023



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“Nothing in the world, nothing that you may think or dream of, or anyone may tell you, no arguments however specious, no appeals however seductive, must lead you to abandon that naval supremacy on which the life of our country depends.”

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL

COVER PHOTO:

THE SUBMARINER MEMORIAL AT THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM, ALREWAS

EDITORIAL

Hello Everybody,

I hope everyone is keeping fit & well? Here is your July Branch Newsletter – a bit later than intended for reasons somewhat beyond my control - but better late - than never!

As you will see from the Secretary and Social Secretary's Reports this has been a bit of a busy time for the Branch with Social events in Bridlington (Buddies in Boats), Kendal (the Branch 60th Anniversary Dinner) and at Alrewas (visit to the Submariner Memorial at the National Arboretum). Our thanks must go to all those involved in the hard work organising of these events. Unfortunately I was unable to attend any of these Events (much as I would like to have done) – again for reasons beyond my control). Margaret and I do, however, very much appreciated being invited to be Guests of Honour at the Branch 60th Anniversary Dinner and we very much anticipated attending and were very sorry to cancel out at short notice. We were delighted, however, to receive our engraved Tot Glasses even though we hadn't attended and we thank the Branch Members and the Committee. There is a selection of photos from the Branch Dinner and the Arboretum Excursion in this Newsletter – is your photo included?

I will also have to miss out on the Brewhouse Run and the Canal Trip but hope to get back to attending Branch Functions once more when I am allowed out and about again. Meanwhile I have to rely on Members and others sending in photos and reports of these events in to me so I can compile your Newsletter. Submissions by Email are preferred!

Thanks also to those Branch Members who attended the funeral of the late CPO MEM (M) Jim Wynn at Thorncliffe on 5th July. I am sure it was much appreciated by his Family.

I have included a couple of articles about the AUKUS Submarine Plans. One from the US and one from Australia. As you will see there seems to be a bit of confusion both in the States and in Australia about what is actually intended and even the number of Collins Class Boats and how many AUKUS Boats – either VIRGINIAs or AUKUS. However I am sure we will all find out in due course!

Now we are into Summer, School Holidays and the Holiday Season is with us again. I hope you all have your plans for a little rest and relaxation and building up your strength for a busy time to come. Hoping to see you all at the August Branch Meeting – all being well!

Best Regards
Barrie

SECRETARY'S DIT **July 2023**

The Barrow Branch 60th Anniversary Dinner

A fantastic night was had by all who attended the Branches 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at the Castle Green Hotel, Kendal. All the hard work put in by Steve May and Alex Webb paid off. The weather held which enabled 'al fresco' pre-dinner cocktails to be consumed in the gardens of the hotel.

Steve May 'MC'd' the evening making sure the usual protocols were followed and the evening ran smoothly. Steve also gave a special mention and tribute to our absent honoured guests, Barrie and Margaret Downer and John and Margaret Hart, who could not make the evening due to circumstances beyond their control.

Alex Webb lit the Candle for Absent Friend's and Tony Plater, from the Morecombe Bay Branch, gave the grace. The dinner was served in a timely and efficient manner by the Hotel Staff. Dolphin-engraved glasses, for the Port and Toasts, had been arranged by Steve and Alex which were kept by the attendees as a memento of the evening.

After dinner, Bob Sherriff gave the toast to the Ladies and Jean Brumby gave the response. Formalities over the Absent Friend's Candle was extinguished and the entertainment and dancing commenced. The function room activities ceased at midnight but the hotel lounge bar remained open for guests - an opportunity taken up by most of the guests.

Date of next Branch Meeting – 1900, 1st August 2023.

SOCIAL SECRETARY REPORT

Hello shipmates.

June saw us enjoy a good old fashioned weekend in Bridlington, lots of old submariners around, lots of singing, dancing and drinking and on top of that it was sunny. Think I shall be heading to the next one held in Bridlington.

Also we had our 60th birthday party at the Castle Green Hotel in Kendal, wonderful setting and a great weekend. Thanks go to Steve May and all those who helped organise this wonderful event.

Finally, we went to the theatre to see the Everly Brothers story, can't say a lot because I don't know how it ends yet, but sure to be a lot of fun.

Programme

1st July about 21 of us are headed off to the National Arboretum to see the new Submariner Memorial, have a photo call and to enjoy a night away with great company.

15th July we have our trip to the Brew House in Morecambe, where we will meet up with our brother Submariners and blow the froth off a couple. I still have 4 seats available for this so if you fancy a DTS, a lot of laughs and Dickie Cambridge's birthday party then this is for you.

Below is the updated Branch Events List:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Day</u> | <u>Event</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Day</u> | <u>Event</u> |
|-------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1st Jul | Sat | Arboretum Run Ashore | | | <u>October</u> |
| 15th Jul | Sat | Brewhouse Run | 7th Oct | Sat | DTS West Shore Club |
| | | <u>September</u> | | | <u>November</u> |
| 9th Sep | Sat | Canal Trip | 12th Nov | Sun | Remembrance Sunday |
| | | | | | <u>December</u> |
| | | | 23rd Dec | Sat | Christmas Party - Adult |
| | | | 28th Dec | Thu | Half Time Free Drinks |

I won't be at the August meeting so don't forget that the Canal Trip is on Saturday 9th September, limited to 30 people, cost is £45 per person, which gives you transport to and from, vodka jellies, wine and nibbles table, 4 hours canal party cruise, packed lunch, Absent Friend's cocktail and a really good night out. I am collecting names now so don't miss out and get your name down; I will start collecting monies this meeting and the September meeting.

Don't forget the meeting this month has the added promise of someone winning the £50 members draw, to celebrate this I shall be organising a little quiz (1 hour max) and some smally eats. Don't miss out – see you there.

Alex

POST MEETING NOTES.

The lucky winner of the £50 Members Draw was Associate Member Sue Smith whose number was drawn by Barrie Downer.

Not quite sure who won the Quiz but they did seem to have quite a few more points than the rest of us! Most of us were a bit mystified by the pictures of the sportsmen!

JULY BRANCH CALENDAR

| | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Arboretum Run Ashore | Sat 1 st Jul |
| Branch Meeting | Tues 4 th Jul |
| Brewhouse Run | Sat 15 th Jul |
| Committee Meeting | As Required |

AUGUST BRANCH CALENDAR

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Branch Meeting | Tues 1 st Aug |
| Committee Meeting | As Required |

SEPTEMBER BRANCH CALENDAR

| | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Branch Meeting | Tues 5 th Sep |
| Canal Trip | Sat 9 th Sep |
| Committee Meeting | As Required |

JULY BRANCH BIRTHDAYS

| | |
|-------------------------|------------|
| B.D. (Brian) Downie | 13/07/1948 |
| M. (Mark) Butchart | 13/07/1979 |
| P (Phyllis) Palmer (A) | 14/07/1943 |
| M. (Malcolm) Hogg | 15/07/1957 |
| R. (Dickie) Cambridge | 16/07/1947 |
| V (Veronica) Pointer(A) | 17/07/1949 |
| J.A. (John) Davies | 20/07/1969 |
| S. M. Stephen McKay | 24/07/1961 |
| C. (Cheryl) Hagen (A) | 25/07/1974 |
| B. (Barney) Naylor | 25/07/1964 |
| A (Adel) Groundwater(A) | 29/07/1973 |

Happy Birthday All!!

DISCLAIMER

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Nothing printed may be construed as policy or an official announcement unless so stated. Otherwise, the Association accepts no liability on any issue in this Newsletter.

SUBMARINE COMMISSIONING CREW LISTS

Commissioning, De-commissioning and Re-dedication Crew Lists – are still wanted, thank you very much. This is for an ongoing project to compile a Chronological Record of Submariners. If you don't have any Crew Lists and you wish to be added to the Record you can always send me your details - where and when joined boats, rank or rate, boats served in - with dates if known – Official Numbers are helpful as well.

I am still looking for 'First Commission' Crew Lists as follows: PORPOISE, GRAMPUS, CACHALOT, WALRUS, OBERON, ONYX, ORPHEUS, ODIN, OTUS, UNICORN, AUDACIOUS and ANSON. Also

looking for copies of Crew Lists for subsequent Commissions of any 'O' Class, 'P' Class or Nuclear Boat – SSN & SSBN. Crew Lists for any Commissioning or Decommissioning of any Diesel 'A,' 'S' or 'T' Class Boat refitting in Home Dockyards or in Malta, Singapore or Sydney are also required. Have a look through your records and 'Ditty Boxes' and see what you can find. You can contact me by E Mail, Snail Mail or Telephone. Thanks, Barrie Downer

REMEMBERING FORMER BARROW BRANCH MEMBERS - JULY

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| N T V Evans | 1985 |
| Herbie Rowlands | 1988 |
| Francis Jordan | 1992 |
| Kenneth Martin | 1993 |
| Len Malkin | 1998 |
| David Melvin | 2001 |
| Christopher Breeze | 2010 |
| Ben Skeates | 2010 |
| Terry Spurling | 2015 |
| Peter Lorking | 2015 |
| Mike Kirk | 2022 |
| Carl Haythornthwaite | 2022 |
| Brian Reed | 2022 |

RESURGAM

NEWSLETTER CONTACT INFORMATION

Do you have a story to tell or have information you feel should appear in the Newsletter - then ring Barrie Downer on 01229 820963 or, if you wish to send me an article, my postal address is The Firs, Dundalk Street, Barrow Island, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RZ. You may also send your contribution by e-mail to me on frozennorth55@gmail.com. Come on – every Submariner has a story to tell – some more than one! Let's see yours in print!

Constructive suggestions about the Newsletter are also very welcome. The Newsletter will be published in the last week of each month i.e., the last week in July 2023 for the August 2023 Issue. Please ensure you have any information with me by the 15th of the month to ensure its inclusion in the next issue. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition – keep them stories coming!

SUBMARINE/SUBMARINER LOSSES OF WWII - JULY 1943

No Submarines were lost in July 1943 and no individual Submariners were reported as being lost!

Scientists 'unearth' submarine buried under naval town's park

By PA News Agency

Two scientists believe they have confirmed an urban legend which has intrigued a town for nearly a century.

Since the 1930s, residents of Dartmouth – home to naval officer training for more than 150 years – have been convinced the wreck of a submarine is buried under a coastal park.

Experts from the University of Winchester used ground penetrating radar to scan the site in Coronation Park where the submarine is believed to have been buried.

The vague outline of what is thought to be HMS E52 can be made out on the resulting scans – as well as a second object, a German torpedo boat, which is longer but also narrower.

The discovery comes after Lieutenant Tom Kemp, an officer from Britannia Royal Naval College, believed he had identified HMS E52 as the submarine that was unceremoniously buried alongside rubble and other landfill at the five-acre park.

The findings were made by Dr Simon Roffey, reader in archaeology, and Dr David Ashby, who manages Winchester University's soil laboratory.



Lieutenant Tom Kemp said finding the submarine had become his 'personal hobbyhorse' (Royal Navy/PA)

The pair were intrigued by Lt Kemp's research last year and, working with him, the scientists focused on one corner of the park.

The radar sent sound pulses through concrete and Tarmac and the resulting concentrations of red on the scans suggest large metallic objects lying about one metre beneath the surface.

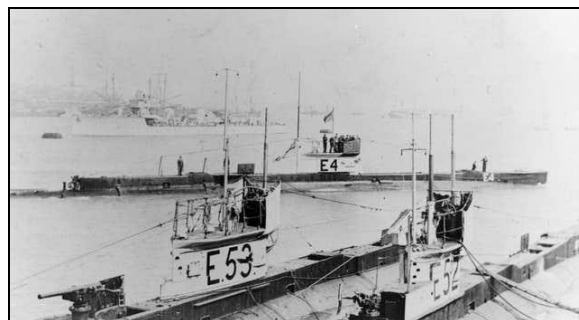
The team concluded the E52 probably lies in the north-east corner of the park, while roughly at right angles to it is another large metallic object, most likely a German torpedo boat destroyer, S24, bought for scrap like E52 after the First World War.

The positions of the two "finds" correspond with a contemporary aerial photo of Dartmouth in the 1920s which shows the submarine and another craft sitting on the mudflats.

The park is located at the foot of the hill occupied by the naval college and was once mudflats.

After the end of the First World War, the UK had a surplus of ships and submarines, including scores seized from the defeated Germans.

Many were driven ashore, left up creeks and anchorages and forgotten about as they decayed over decades.



Submarine E52, bottom right (National Museum of the Royal Navy/PA)

Coombe Mud and neighbouring Sandquay in Dartmouth became a similar breakers' yard for unwanted warships, including at least two submarines.

The site was purchased by the local authority in the late 1920s and filled in to create the park, which opened in 1937 in time for the coronation of George VI.

Dr Roffey, a former submariner who served in O-class boats in the 1980s, said: "The 'submarine under the park' is a local legend, and it could make a wonderful tourist attraction if we could identify its exact location.

"We know that there was a torpedo boat there but everyone assumed that it had been moved. Maybe it was stuck fast in the mud and they just left it there."

To compound the challenge of identifying the submarine is another Dartmouth urban legend, which suggests US troops who camped in the park in the latter stages of the Second World War buried some of their kit in the park rather than ship it home when they left.

The team is seeking permission from the local authority to dig small bore holes in the park to hopefully identify a piece of equipment or metal unique to E52.

HMS VICTORIOUS ARRIVES IN DEVONPORT FOR REFIT



Preparation work has started on HMS VICTORIOUS ahead of her planned major refit to ready her for future tasking.

The Royal Navy say in a news release that the maintenance programme on the Vanguard-class submarine, taking place in Babcock's Devonport facility, will sustain more than 1,000 jobs in the south west region and will see the boat modernised and improved to

continue operational patrols into the 2030s. "The multi-million pound, long-term programme will involve 1,000 Babcock employees from those working directly on the boat to others working in production, design, commissioning and the wider supply chain.

HMS VICTORIOUS' arrival is in tandem with significant investment in the naval base's facilities, creating additional jobs for people in the region. As well as supporting the maintenance of existing and future classes of submarines, it will also enhance Devonport Dockyard's ability to deliver major defence projects."

Brigadier Mike Tanner, commander of HMNB Devonport, was quoted as saying: "I am delighted to announce that the work has begun to prepare HMS VICTORIOUS as she commences her major refit. This activity will sustain jobs and key skills for the City of Plymouth and wider south-west region for the foreseeable future."

Paul Watson, managing director of Babcock's Devonport facility, added: "As part of the UK's critical continuous at sea deterrent, HMS VICTORIOUS represents one of the most complicated pieces of engineering there is. Work on the vessel has started and the capability, knowledge and experience our people have gained through the delivery of similar projects supporting the Royal Navy fleet, along with new and innovative and collaborative approaches with our customer, means we are well prepared to deliver this important overhaul project."

HMS TRIUMPH FOUND!

Greek diver discovers long-lost British World War II submarine



A prominent Greek diver and researcher announced on Wednesday he had discovered the lost British submarine HMS TRIUMPH, whose true fate had been shrouded in mystery ever since the vessel and its entire crew disappeared in 1942.

The submarine had disappeared without a trace, with all 64 crew members on board, some 81 years earlier, in the midst of World War II. Various attempts to find it had been mounted at various times by teams from the United Kingdom, Malta and Russia, all without success.

The wreckage was discovered on the seabed by Greek diver Kostas Thoctarides and his team, after a search lasting roughly 25 years. "It was the hardest and most expensive mission I have ever carried out in my life," Thoctarides told the state-run Athens-Macedonian News

Agency (AMNA). "The history of the submarine is multifaceted and unique in naval chronicles, as it is inseparably connected with the national resistance and secret services of the time, which operated during the occupation," he said.

The key to unlocking the secret that had remained hidden for more than eight decades, he said, was "research using primary historical sources. There had to be an extensive study of the archives, both in the UK and in Germany, as well as in Italy and in Greece."

It lies with an eight-degree starboard list, dozens of kilometers from the shore. The periscopes and hatches are down, indicating that it was in a deep dive during its last moments, while its depth and directional rudders indicate that it was moving at a steady depth, the diver explained. On its turret are the wooden helm, compass and a four-inch cannon that is slightly raised. The hatches on either side of the cannon leading to the interior are also shut. On the fore side of the bridge, the door leading to the gunnery is open, all hatches are closed. The right torpedo tube has opened and an MK VIII torpedo is half-out of the submarine.

The submarine appears to have sunk due to a powerful explosion in the fore section but the cause of the explosion is still unclear. "Our research continues, chiefly on a historical level as new evidence and facts come to light, which combined with the information that we now have from the wreck and the assistance of naval experts specializing in submarines and torpedoes will unlock the secrets of the HMS TRIUMPH," Thoctarides said, who described the site as "a watery grave for 64 heroes that inspires awe."

The history

First launched in 1938, the TRIUMPH joined the war in earnest in May 1939 and carried out 20 military missions in total. It first sailed to the Aegean at the end of March 1941 to scout the shores of the Dodecanese islands and land officers on Greek shores. She notched up a number of successes, sinking a large number of enemy ships, including the Italian submarine Salpa. She also undertook difficult missions to land Special Operations Executives (SOE) and MI9 agents and rescue trapped soldiers who needed to escape to Alexandria in Egypt.

On December 26, 1941, the TRIUMPH would set sail from Alexandria for its 21st and last mission before it was due to return to England for a general repair and maintenance. It had orders to carry out two special operations and, in the meantime, to patrol the specific section of the Aegean.

On board the vessel were some very unusual crew members – SOE and MI9 Agent, Lieutenant George Atkinson, Greek SOE wireless expert, Diamantes Arvanitopoulos (codename DIAMOND), New Zealand liaison officer, Captain Craig, two British Army commandos from the Northamptonshire Regiment and Royal Artillery and five tons of emergency supplies. Atkinson's mission (codename ISINGLASS) was to meet up with a Greek resistance cell in Athens and then

liberate 18 selected Allied soldiers who had been held prisoner by the Italians.

Atkinson carried substantial quantities of money in cash and gold coins, destined as MI9 and SOE assistance to specific individuals in occupied Athens, as well as two sets of radio transmitters for communication with Cairo. Captain Craig was in charge of the second secret mission codenamed "Coney Island," which was to coordinate the liberation of 30 British fugitives who were on the island of Antiparos.

In Atkinson's pocket was his Operation paper with typed heading "Not To Be Taken Ashore." With his mission complicated by dual SOE & MI9 instructions, he was to overlook this warning.

During the night between December 29 and December 30, 1941, the TRIUMPH sailed into the bay of Despotikos, where it let off the special team and supplies. The captain, John S. Huddart, told the 30 fugitives that he had orders to carry out a patrol of the Aegean and would return to collect them on January 9-10 in order to take them to Alexandria. He also radioed the successful conclusion of the first leg of the mission. This was the last communication ever received from the vessel.

All members of the SOE team were arrested on Antiparos and Atkinson's Operation paper, which contained the names of 37 members of the Greek resistance in Athens, with their aliases and code numbers, fell into enemy hands. The information was passed on to German authorities and all 37 were rounded up and executed, along with Atkinson. The others were taken to concentration camps.

The TRIUMPH continued its patrol, making its presence felt near the islands of Milos and Naxos. On January 9, 1942, at 11.45 a.m. it attacked the cement freighter Rea as it was being towed by the vessel Taxiarchis south of Sounio, with the torpedo exploding on the rocks.

"Recently, in the same part of the deep, we identified another three British Mk VIII torpedoes of the same type as that carried by the TRIUMPH ... this fact makes us believe that the TRIUMPH launched more than one torpedo during its last attack," Thoctarides said.

The last time the submarine was sighted in motion was by an Italian pilot flying in the area, about four nautical miles southeast of Sounio, he added, noting that this hitherto lost piece of information helped complete the puzzle of the submarine's history. After this, all traces of the vessel disappear and on January 23, 1942, the British Admiralty declared that the submarine must be considered lost, all hands. [AMNA]

Video of the wreckage published by Planet Blue History on YouTube:

BACK WITH A BLAST!

Field Gun returns to HM Naval Base Clyde

ROYAL NAVY MEDIA RELEASE Tuesday, 27 June 2023

HMS NEPTUNE Field Gun Crew recently put on an impressive display for Naval Base staff and visitors when

they completed the first Field Gun public run in over three years. The 18-strong team of Royal Navy sailors from HM Naval Base Clyde held the public run just outside the south gate of the Base, with families, friends and colleagues invited to watch. It was the first Field Gun public run to be held since Covid lockdown and a chance for the team to wow the crowd ahead of the Brickwood's Field Gun competition at HMS COLLINGWOOD from June 26 to July 1.

Commander Gareth Batsford, HMNB Clyde Field Gun Officer, said: "With just a few days to go until the competition begins at HMS COLLINGWOOD, our training continues at pace. Today has been our first opportunity to conduct a full run in front of our supporters and the continued support from everyone, especially family, friends, colleagues, and our sponsors, is greatly appreciated.

"The Field Gun competition is an important occasion for the Royal Navy," continued Commander Batsford. "It exemplifies the Service's virtues of discipline, teamwork, respect, dedication, and determination.

"The team is made up entirely of volunteers who give their spare time to undergo some really intense training.

"We look forward to a week of acclimatisation at HMS COLLINGWOOD before we get into the competition where we will finally put all our hard work to the test. Let's hope it has been worth it and we can bring back some silverware to HMNB Clyde."



The Field Gun competition simulates the Naval Brigade's heroic mission to relieve the besieged British Army during the Second Boer War. During that conflict, sailors offloaded guns from HMS TERRIBLE and HMS POWERFUL, manhandling them over many miles to come to the Army's aid. Royal Navy teams have been recreating the event ever since, beginning at the Royal Tournament in 1907, and continuing to the present day where they compete at HMS COLLINGWOOD in Fareham. Naval establishments and units from all

around the country compete at the competition, entering teams of 18 – with support staff and back-ups – to race with the 1,300-kilo gun and limber in the fastest time.



Selection of images of the Faslane Field Gun team in action during the public run.

Sent by: Royal Navy, Communications & Influence (RNCI) Regional Press Office (Scotland & Northern Ireland), HM Naval Base Clyde.

BARROW IN FURNESS BRANCH

The Barrow Branch 60th Anniversary Dinner

In May 2023 Barrow in Furness Branch reached the milestone of the 60th Anniversary of its 14th May 1963 Inauguration. The first Meeting of the Barrow Submarine Old Comrades Association (SOCA) took place in the Bay Horse Hotel at Hawcoat and was attended 15 of the 18 Founder Members.

Dave Smith (Barrow Branch Secretary) reports that:

A fantastic night was had by all who attended the Branches 60th Anniversary Celebration Dinner at the Castle Green Hotel, Kendal. All the hard work put in by Steve May (Committee) and Alex Webb (Social Secretary) paid off. The weather held which enabled 'al fresco' pre-dinner cocktails to be consumed in the gardens of the hotel. Steve May MC'd the evening making sure the usual protocols were followed and the evening ran smoothly. Steve also gave a special mention and tribute to our absent honoured guests, Barrie and Margaret Downer and John and Margaret Hart, who could not make the evening due to circumstances beyond their control.

Alex Webb lit the candle for 'Absent Friends' and Tony Plater, from the Morecombe Bay Branch, gave the grace. The dinner was served in a timely and efficient manner by the Hotel Staff. Dolphin-engraved glasses, for the Port and Toasts, had been arranged by Steve and Alex which were kept by the attendees as a memento of the evening. After dinner, Bob Sherriff gave the toast to the Ladies and Jean Brumby gave the response. Formalities over the Candle was extinguished and the entertainment and dancing commenced. The function room activities ceased at midnight but the hotel lounge bar remained open for guests - an opportunity taken up by most of the guests.

The 60th Anniversary Dinner was funded in part from Branch Funds and by a very generous and much appreciated Minor Grant from the Royal Navy/Royal Marines Charity via The Submarine Family.



BARROW BRANCH VISIT TO THE NATIONAL ARBORETUM

No written report has been sent in for the Branch visit to the Arboretum but a bus load of members and friends made the trip to Alrewas to visit the Submariner Memorial and other Service Memorials on Saturday 1st July. As you can see from the photos they chose a

perfectly good day for the visit and everyone seems to have enjoyed themselves.

The last two photos show members having a relaxing pint or two after a very hot and busy day







More Detail on the AUKUS Plans U.S Navy To Supply 3 Virginia-Class Submarines To Australia

By MI News Network June 9, 2023, Shipping News

The senior commanders of the Royal Australian Navy have disclosed the hard details related to Australia's trilateral AUKUS nuclear acquisition deal on submarines with the US and the UK. These details, which came up under stringent questioning in parliamentary defence budget hearings, have ramifications for the US Navy's submarine capability. Nearly two years after the unexpected September 2021 trilateral declaration that the US and the UK would collaborate to assist Australia in acquiring and field a next-gen nuclear-powered submarine fleet, major plans for this program have come up in a Senate Estimates hearing in the Australian capital of Canberra on 30 and 31 May.

Under very intense and often hostile interrogation from Jacqui Lambi, the upper-house, crossbencher Senators, the Australian head of the Nuclear Powered Submarine Task Force of the Royal Australian Navy disclosed several 'known unknowns' of Australia's AUKUS nuclear submarine mission. This included the timings and configurations for the introduction of the initial three attack submarines of the Virginia class, the number of follow-ons nuclear-attack AUKUS-class submarines to be developed in a co-development contract with the UK, and the intended strength of Australia's future nuclear submarine fleet.

Two Virginias would be transferred to the Royal Australian Navy. Then, they would purchase one off the production line, Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, the Head of Nuclear Powered Submarine Task Force, Australia, informed the panel of the Senate Foreign Affairs,

Defense, and Trade Legislation Committee in formal evidence following repeated interrogations from Senator Lambi. The allocations of submarines to be transferred to Australia are yet to be chalked out by the US and Australia, Vice Admiral Mead mentioned in response to questions.

However, they are looking at submarines with more than 20 years of service life. The "20 years of service life" refers to the submarines' potential operational hull life following their transfer from the US Navy to the RAN around 2032, as disclosed in a joint statement in March by US President Joe Biden, British PM Rishi Sunak, and the Australian PM Anthony Albanese. Armed with Mead's revelation of the 20 years' of service life of the first-ever transferred Virginia, the reactor service life, and the US Navy's published Virginia class entry and build into the service timeline, Senator Lambi was pressing the commander regarding which Virginia-class configuration block was Australia in constant negotiation with the US Department of Defense for transfer from the US Navy.

Mead responded that they are looking at the Virginia Blocks III or IV. Mead's identification of the Virginia class Block III/Block IV as the production configuration of the two SSNs that are expected to be transferred to the Royal Australian Navy appears to reduce the targeted US Navy submarines to one, possibly two, SSN-774 Block III boats (SSN791 USS Delaware that was commissioned in April 2020, and relatively less likely SSN790 USS South Dakota that was commissioned in Feb 2019) and 10 Block IV boats, of which, only three have been in service since April 2020. Seven additional Block IV Virginias are currently at different stages of production or in US Navy or contractor sea trials much ahead of entering service. This is based on the info available now and is subject to change.

Several differences

Mead presented all the information in a hearing before the Australian Senate but was silent on some of the topics that would be termed confidential. Per experts, the US and Australia may agree to stay silent on which two boats from which Blocks would be getting transferred to Canberra. These are the things Mead decided to disclose to the Senate. However, there are unclear things that trouble the general public. For instance – until now, both the US and Australia believed that the Virginia-class submarines should establish Australia's capability once it decommissioned its eight (?) Collins-class fleet whilst AUKUS-class submarines were built. (Actually there are only six Collins Class Boats!)

Per Mead, Australia will develop eight nuclear submarines, three of which will be the Virginia class, meaning that Australia will not construct eight submarines belonging to the AUKUS class but five. For now, until one more claim emerges. And it did appear.

Per sources, if Australia can't build the AUKUS-class submarines, and if the planning reflects that they cannot be ready operationally by 2050, the US will sell more Virginia-class submarines to Australia. It is unclear how

many submarines of the AUKUS class Australia will eventually come up with. An Amazon deal for the local economy is being squeezed through the fingers of Australia's government. Such a possibility exists since the current government cannot make each decision right now. Mead emphasized the same — how many submarines will be supplied by the US and how many will be constructed in Australia is a crucial decision that the future governments will make.

The 2021 cancellation

BulgarianMilitary.com recalls that Australia cancelled back in 2021 the deal with France for constructing submarines worth \$40 billion, one of the main reasons for Australia's desire to produce components, parts, and configurations for them. However, following the statements before the Senate, this is likely not working out in the new AUKUS deal. Among the general public, the AUKUS alliance started being referred to as the NATO ver.2.0. Even earlier in 2023, Britain sent out a proposal that Japan and India be part of the AUKUS alliance, taking into consideration the expanding fleet of China's People's Liberation Army Navy.

Chinese statement

The proposal came from Tobias Ellwood, the chair of the defence committee of the British Parliament. The agreement, which aims to empower Australia to build its nuclear submarine fleet with technology transfer from the UK and the US, was signed in 2021 on 16 September. Even though China wasn't mentioned in the deal, the three countries' emphasis on rising regional security concerns has resulted in comments that the cooperation is a deal that aims at balancing the military power of Beijing in the region.

Australia may only build three of eight AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines locally

Tory Shepherd Thu 15 Jun 2023 01.06 BST

Despite widespread reports that all eight submarines would be built in Australia under \$368bn deal, up to five SSNs will be US Virginia class

The defence department has confirmed that, rather than building eight of the new AUKUS submarines, Australia plans to acquire a total of eight nuclear powered submarines (SSNs) under the \$368bn deal.

At least three and up to five of that eight will be Virginia-class submarines it will buy from the United States.

The "only actual promise" under AUKUS is for Australia to build three nuclear powered submarines, Greens senator David Shoebridge said.

It has been widely reported that all eight submarines will be SSN-AUKUS boats built in Australia.

The misunderstanding appears to have crept in because, while successive governments have talked about acquiring eight submarines under the AUKUS program, those submarines will not all be SSN-AUKUS submarines.

Vice Admiral Jonathan Mead, the navy's nuclear-powered submarine taskforce chief, told estimates last week the government had "indicated eight nuclear powered submarines for Australia".

However US Virginia class submarines have been hit further two-year delay as Australia awaits 2030 delivery

"Based on our modelling and working with our US and UK partners, we are looking to have a fleet of eight SSNs for the Royal Australian Navy in the mid-2050s," he said.

The Greens senator David Shoebridge then said: "Sorry, eight AUKUS-SSN?"

To which Mead replied: "No, eight nuclear powered submarines. That includes three of the Virginias."

The majority of reports on the AUKUS submarine program refer to eight AUKUS submarines, to be built in Australia.

The defence minister, Richard Marles, has consistently referred to the AUKUS plan to acquire a "fleet of eight nuclear-powered submarines", not SSN-AUKUS submarines.

He has said the threat of a capability gap as the existing Collins class submarines are retired and before the SSN-AUKUS starts to roll out in the 2040s is why they arranged with the US to get the three Virginia class submarines.

"But were those timelines to slip, there is the option to have four and then potentially five Virginias," he has said.

When AUKUS was first announced by the former prime minister Scott Morrison, he promised to find the "optimal pathway" to deliver "at least eight submarines"

When the "optimal pathway" was announced in March, the prime minister, Anthony Albanese, described the SSN-AUKUS as a "new, conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine, based on a British design and incorporating cutting edge Australian, UK and US technologies".

Our Australian morning briefing email breaks down the key national and international stories of the day and why they matter

Paul Keating sent explosive email to Labor cabinet two hours before attack on AUKUS, FOI documents reveal

"This will be an Australian sovereign capability, built by Australians, commanded by the Royal Australian Navy and sustained by Australians in Australian shipyards, with construction to begin this decade," he said, while describing the 20,000 jobs and increased skills set to flow from the project as well as the plan to buy Virginia submarines.

The defence department's guide to the optimal pathway mentions the possibility of up to five US boats, but no overall number for the SSN-AUKUS.

The US president, Joe Biden, said the SSN-AUKUS would "feature cutting edge propulsion technology and provide unmatched stealth and manoeuvrability".

He confirmed the US would sell three Virginia-class submarines to Australia, “with the potential to sell up to two more if needed”.

But “selling subs” was not the ultimate goal, he said. “It’s developing something new together. We’re calling it the SSN-AUKUS.”

The UK prime minister, Rishi Sunak, said the new submarine would be “one of the most advanced nuclear-powered subs the world has ever known”.

Shoebridge continued to question Mead in the May estimates about the number of SSN-AUKUS submarines to be built.

“The decision to go beyond eight nuclear powered submarines would be a question for a government in the future,” Mead said.

The secretary of the Department of Defence, Greg Moriarty, said the government had been “very upfront” about deciding on five SSN-AUKUS submarines.

“But [defence minister Richard Marles] has also said that a future government will take a decision about acquiring additional SSN-AUKUS,” he said.

“In Mr Marles’s view, once we have that production line going, he thinks we will involve ourselves in a continual shipbuilding production run of SSNs in Adelaide.”

The Australian Industry and Defence Network chief executive, Brent Clark, said a future government might decide to keep building submarines, but the timeframes are so long it starts to become a “flight of fantasy”.

“We don’t know what a government in five election cycles will do ... it may determine it doesn’t want a nuclear submarine at all. It may want underwater drones,” he said.

That uncertainty made it difficult for industry to plan, he said, adding that the uncertainty had been increased by the defence strategic review emphasising speed and capability “trumping” Australian content.

Shoebridge said he was surprised by Mead’s admission, but “nowhere near as surprised as workers” would be, and that it made the AUKUS decision appear a “thought bubble”.

“Labor’s promise that a future government might decide to build some more boats from 2060 is about as useful as flyscreen on a submarine,” he said



SUBMARINERS 'CROSSED THE BAR' REPORTED IN JUNE 2023

| Reported by | Date | Name | Rank/Rating | Official No. | Age | Submarine Service |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--------------|-----|---|
| We Remember Submariners | 18th May 2023 | Scott Dolan | Leading Radio Operator | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service including RESOLUTION & WARSPITE |
| We Remember Submariners | May 2023 | Sean McMillan | Marine Engineering Mechanic (L) | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service including OPPORTUNE (on commissioning at Devonport on 12th May 1990) |
| | 1 st June 2023 | A H (Tony) Bray | Petty Officer | P/JX 911786 | TBA | Submarine Service in GRAMPUS from 11 th May 1962 & SEALION from 25 th June 1965 |
| SA Ex Gosport Branch | 10th June 2023 | William G C Kinnaird | Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic | P/KX 914027T | 87 | Submarine Service from November 1955 to October 1975 in UNTIRING, SERAPH, ALARIC, ARTEMIS, ACHERON, AMPHION, AUROCHS, TOTEM, OBERON, ONYX, SEALION & WARSPITE (November 1968) |
| Barrow Branch Website | 10 th June 2023 | Peter D (Lofty) Hulme | Electricians Mate | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service 1949 to 1955 in ARTEMIS, TRUNCHEON, TIPTOE & AMPHION |
| Friends of SM Museum | 13th June 2023 | Douglas (Doug) Frederick Blake | Chief Engine Room Artificer/Lieutenant (SD) (E) (MESM) | P/MX 914138 | 91 | Submarine Service January 1957 in ANCHORITE, SPITEFUL, ORPHEUS, DOLPHIN (July 1967) & OLYMPUS & from 1969 to November 1980 in DOLPHIN (1971), OLYMPUS (1972 & 1973), NEPTUNE (1974 to 1976), DOLPHIN (1977 to 1980) & CAF(N) (1981 to 1986) |
| We Remember Submariners | 14th June 2023 | Keith Rustage | Chief Petty Officer Weapons Electrical Artificer | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service including RESOLUTION & REPULSE (Port Crew) on 20th February 1979 |
| We Remember Submariners | 22 nd June 2023 | K J (Jim) Wynn | Chief Petty Officer Marine Engineering Mechanic (M) | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service in SCEPTRE (1st Commission Crew) on 14th February 1978 & SPLENDID (1st Commission Crew) on 21st March 1981, SWIFTSURE, SOVERIGN, SUPERB & SPARTAN |
| We Remember Submariners | 25 th June 2023 | John Boyd | Petty Officer Marine Engineering Artificer | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service in SCEPTRE (early 1990s) |
| SA Ex Hull Branch | June 2023 | Michael Westwood | Acting Leading Seaman (UW) | P/J598497 | 79 | Submarine Service from 1965 to 1970 in OPPORTUNE, OLYMPUS (on 'Commissioning' at Portsmouth on 21st October 1966) & ONSLAUGHT |

| Reported by | Date | Name | Rank/Rating | Official No. | Age | Submarine Service |
|-------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|--|--------------|-----|---|
| SA Ex Portsmouth Branch | June 2023 | Barry Jefferies | Ordnance Electrical Mechanician | M929590H | 86 | Submarine Service from 1970 to 1976 in CACHALOT |
| | June 2023 | Gordon W Cameron | Chief Petty Officer Weapons Electrical Artificer (SWS) | TBA | TBA | Submarine Service in RESOLUTION (P) (on recommissioning at Rosyth on 1st October 1984), REPULSE, REVENGE, RENOWN (S) on rededication at Rosyth on 21st November 1992, VICTORIOUS & VANGUARD |
| | | | | | | |

