



# The Silent Deep: The Royal Navy Submarine Service Since 1945

*James Jinks, Peter Hennessy*

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"The Ministry of Defence does not comment upon submarine operations" is the standard response of officialdom to enquiries about the most secretive and mysterious of Britain's armed forces, the Royal Navy Submarine Service. Written with unprecedented cooperation from the Service itself and privileged access to documents and personnel, *The Silent Deep* is the first authoritative history of the Submarine Service from the end of World War II to the present. It gives the most complete account yet published of the development of Britain's submarine fleet, its capabilities, its weapons, its infrastructure, its operations and above all—from the testimony of many submariners and the first-hand witness of the authors—what life is like on board for the denizens of the silent deep. Dramatic episodes are revealed for the first time: how HMS *Warspite* gathered intelligence against the Soviet Navy's latest ballistic-missile-carrying submarine in the late 1960s; how HMS *Sovereign* made what is probably the longest-ever trail of a Soviet (or Russian) submarine in 1978; how HMS *Trafalgar* followed an exceptionally quiet Soviet "Victor III," probably commanded by a Captain known as "the Prince of Darkness," in 1986. It also includes the first full account of submarine activities during the Falklands War. But it was not all victories: confrontations with Soviet submarines led to collisions, and the extent of losses to UK and NATO submarine technology from Cold War spy scandals are also made more plain here than ever before. In 1990 the Cold War ended—but not for the Submarine Service. Since June 1969, it has been the last line of national defense for the UK, with the awesome responsibility of carrying Britain's nuclear deterrent. The story from Polaris to Trident—and now "Successor"—is a central theme of the book. In the year that it is published, Russian submarines have once again been detected off the UK's shores. As Britain comes to decide whether to renew its submarine-carried nuclear deterrent, *The Silent Deep* provides an essential historical perspective.

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