

DOWN TO THE SEA IN SUBMARINES

Publisher's Advanced Information

This unique memoir charts the career of the author in the Royal Navy Submarine Service during the period 1967 to 1997, and in doing so details many of the Silent Service's remarkable achievements since the end of the Second World War. And it provides a dramatic first-hand account of the underwater confrontation during the Cold War between submarines of the West and the huge submarine force of the Soviet Union.

Dan Conley narrates the successive stages from his basic submarine training to taking command of two nuclear attack submarines, but he does not demur from describing the personal and professional difficulties he encountered in this journey. He sets out in detail what life was like serving onboard both diesel and nuclear submarines, and in particular, the book describes the British submariner's remarkable transformation from the somewhat buccaneering, free spirit serving on a clapped-out WW2 boat during the sunset of the British Empire, to the highly professional individual who spends prolonged periods under the sea in a platform which matches the complexity of a space craft.

The book describes the long and difficult challenges encountered in developing effective weapon systems for the British submarine force, and discusses the difficulties and shortcomings in the UK's defence procurement system, a situation which still exists today. Ultimately, however, Western technological superiority and crew proficiency enabled the submarines of the Royal and United States Navies to match those of the Soviet Union, and he describes vividly the suspense and tension of underwater confrontations which might so easily have escalated to another dimension of warfare. And the book sets out hitherto undisclosed details of submarine activities during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when the world confronted the real possibility of a massive nuclear exchange.

But it is not all serious content, and he also offers a glimpse for the reader of many humorous situations and events, of animals that found themselves under the sea in a submarine, in one case during a war patrol, and other moments of levity that broke the tension of serving in a highly complex and sophisticated fighting machine.

The Cold War era is now long past. However, it is evident that as the West now confronts an aggressive, recidivist Russia and a more aggressive China, Britain's submarine force once again will be key to the security of all its citizens. This fine memoir captures vividly the key events and history of the Cold War, and in doing so will open the reader's eyes to the significance and importance today of the Royal Navy Submarine Service.