Serving on a ship is most people’s idea of a career in the Royal Navy. But there’s another way to go to sea with us. Silent, covert and incredibly advanced, submarines make a vital contribution to UK defence around the world. From surveillance and gathering intelligence to potential long-range strikes on distant land targets, Submariners take on some of our most demanding tasks. The Submarine Service is an elite fighting force, offering challenges, rewards and team spirit you won’t find anywhere else. Join us and you’ll be part of a respected, professional team that’s truly a breed apart.

We hope this publication will help you decide where you could fit into our unique world and way of life.

Visit royalnavy.mod.uk/submariner or call 08456 07 55 55
The Submarine Service and the men who serve within it are part of the Royal Navy. The other areas of the Royal Navy are the Surface Fleet, made up of frigates, destroyers, aircraft carriers and other ships, and the Fleet Air Arm, which operates fast jets and helicopters from ships and shore bases.

We have two main types of submarines – or ‘boats’ as we call them – operating everywhere from the Mediterranean to the Gulf and the Far East. The largest are our ballistic submarines, which each carry 16 Trident missiles. To make sure the boats are always fully manned and ready for action, they’re each allocated two full crews of 155 men, known as Port and Starboard.

Attack submarines are fast, deep-diving and highly versatile. Equipped with conventional weapons, they also carry out surveillance operations, using sophisticated technology to gather intelligence while staying undetected, even in shallow water close to a hostile shore. They also operate with Special Forces.

The trouble is, in today’s world, it’s not always easy to know who’s ‘hostile’ and who’s ‘friendly’. So to meet the new challenges we face, we’ve introduced our new Astute Class – the largest, most powerful attack boats ever built for the Royal Navy.

All our boats are nuclear-powered and can stay at sea for long periods. In fact, with their on-board air- and water-purification systems, they technically never need to surface at all. In practice, they’re generally away between three and six months. For some deployments, almost no one will know exactly where the submarine is – including most of the crew! The Submarine Service is also one of the very few Royal Navy careers currently not open to women, on the advice of the medical authorities (the others are Mine Clearance Diving and the Royal Marines Commandos).

Join the Submarine Service and you’ll be part of a very special team within the Royal Navy, working with some of the world’s most advanced technology – and the finest people you’ll ever meet.
When you join a submarine crew, you’ll be assigned to a team known as a ‘watch’. Your hours will depend on the job you’re doing. If you’re in the Warfare or Logistics branch, you’ll usually work six hours on watch, then six hours off. In Engineering, if you’re part of the weapons team on a ballistic submarine, looking after Trident missiles, you’ll work what’s called a ‘one-in-three’ watch, which means four hours on then eight hours off. When you’re off watch, you can eat, catch up on sleep, use the gym, watch a movie or just relax. Being able to relax is important, because when you’re on watch, you need to be sharp, focused and able to give your work 100% concentration.

Modern submarines are incredibly complex machines, with some of the world’s most advanced nuclear power and weapon systems on board. Under such conditions, lives can literally depend on teamwork, safety and attention to detail. Every man has to have complete faith in the men around him, just as they place absolute trust in him and his abilities. It’s this mutual respect and dependence that gives submarine crews their unique closeness; many Submariners come to think of their crewmates as a second family.

After your basic training, you’ll spend a further four months in the Submarine School at HMS Raleigh in Cornwall, learning about submarine warfare, weapons, nuclear power and escape techniques, plus you’ll undertake training specific to your job and chosen branch at HMS Collingwood or HMS Sultan, near Portsmouth. You’ll also complete specialist submarine training at HMS Drake in Plymouth, or Faslane, near Glasgow in Scotland. To qualify as a Submariner, you’ll need to take a series of tests at the training schools and on board a submarine. At this stage, you’ll be expected to know what every piece of equipment and system on board your submarine does. When you pass, you’ll be awarded your ‘Dolphins’ – the coveted badge of a professional Submariner – and a qualifying bonus of up to £5000.

Your training continues once you go to sea, where you’ll also receive submarine pay, which gives you a higher salary than if you were serving on a warship or shore base. So although life in the Submarine Service will ask a lot of you, you can be sure of a great deal in return.

“I never realised when I joined the Submarine Service that I would be given so much responsibility, both as a professional Chef and as a Submariner. It’s a great job that I would recommend to anyone who’s up for this unique challenge.”

‘Scotty’ Scott, Chef – Catering Services Logistian (Submariner)
Our unique ability to stay at sea, undetected, for months at a time means we can perform tasks that would be difficult, if not impossible, for other forces.

Many of our operations are covert, involving listening in on electronic communications, detecting hostile ships and submarines, or putting Special Forces ashore on enemy coastlines.

Wherever our aircraft carriers and support ships are operating, we’re there too, providing silent, invisible surveillance and protection from surface or underwater attack.

Alongside our military role, we contribute to the Royal Navy’s crucial work in areas like maritime policing, monitoring the environment and surveying the ocean. In our case, that means helping to map the world’s seabeds, to make navigation easier and safer for both Royal Navy and merchant ships.

We also man, train and equip the Submarine Parachute Assistance Group (SPAG). They are a specialist airborne unit providing round-the-clock rescue cover for major incidents at sea involving submarines or surface ships of any nation.

Really?
On a standard deployment, a submarine crew will usually get through 1.5 tonnes of beef, over 14,000 sausages, 2700 choc ices and enough tea and coffee to use 5000 litres of milk!
CONTACTING US

We hope this publication has given you an insight into the life and career opportunities open to you in the Submarine Service.

VISIT
royalnavy.mod.uk/submariner

- Chat to real people in the Submarine Service in our regular live chats.
- Keep up to date by signing up to our monthly newsletter.
- Download full job descriptions.
- Discover a whole host of other useful links.

CALL
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- Check you’re eligible to apply and book your appointment to visit an Armed Forces Careers Office.

We want you to succeed and will do all we can to help. If you have any questions, or would like any further information or advice, please get in touch today.

This publication is for guidance only. The facts in it may change without notice and it is no form of legal contract. We explain details of length of service in the Armed Forces Careers Office and it will be shown in the contract. You may need to repay any bursary or sponsorship money if you do not enter service, or if you fail or withdraw from training.

We can change salaries, bursaries and sponsorship schemes, cadetships and job specifications, with or without notice. Major as well as minor changes may be involved. However, we make every effort to make sure the details in this publication are correct. This publication is not an offer by the Royal Navy to any person. Publications are prepared and printed several months before being distributed so cannot always immediately reflect changes in details or in some cases a particular offer.