

## Neil Hopkins

### Career History

#### **Profile:**

Neil joined the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 1975 as a Constructive Technician Apprentice in Devonport Dockyard. He has worked exclusively on submarines for 31 years. He worked for the Director General Submarines on the build and in service support of the Royal Navy's SWIFTSURE, TRAFALGAR, UPHOLDER and VANGUARD Class submarines. He was a Structural Naval Overseer at Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd (now BAE Systems) in Barrow-in-Furness, overseeing the build of all four VANGUARD Class submarines. His last 6 years in the UK MoD were spent in the Submarine Escape, Rescue and Abandonment Systems Project (SMERAS). Within SMERAS he was initially responsible for managing the MOD's contract for provision of the UK's rescue system before taking responsibility for updating and improving submarine escape and abandonment systems.

Neil left the MoD in November 2006 and joined Sonistics Ltd as an advisor on submarine escape, rescue and abandonment systems. He has been contracted back to the MoD through Sonistics Ltd to participate in the technical tender assessment for the replacement for the Mk10 Submarine Escape and Immersion Equipment (SEIE). Representing Sonistics Ltd, he was contracted by BAE Systems to supply the Submarine Escape and Rescue Guardbook for the Royal Navy's latest ASTUTE Class submarine. He has provided SMERAS advice to the Royal Navy, the Royal Netherlands Navy, the Royal Canadian Navy, the Royal Malaysian Navy, the Royal Norwegian Navy and the Indonesian Navy. He was contracted by the Indonesian Navy to develop and deliver a submarine escape and sea survival course to their submarine crews in Indonesia. Through Sonistics Ltd he is has tendered for work in Australia, Netherlands, Brazil, Japan, Italy, Canada, South Africa, Taiwan and USA. Neil has worked very closely with SETT and appreciates the requirements and difficulties now facing the UK MoD.

#### **Summary of Employment from 2000 – 2006**

- Project manager for the update, review, authorisation and production of the Royal Navy's SWIFTSURE, TRAFALGAR and VANGUARD Class Guardbooks.
- Advisor on SMERAS matters to BAE Systems and the ASTUTE Class Project Team.
- Project manager for the update and issue of BR241, Submarine Escape and Rescue Manual, and associated SMERAS publications authorised by the MoD Submarine Project Team for use by the Royal Navy.
- SQEP panel member for safety case studies on Escape Air Systems, Escape Towers (single man towers and two man Logistic Escape Towers, including ASTUTE Class) Submarine Escape and Immersion Equipment (SEIE) and Escape Tower Pressurisation Trial.
- Trials Officer for Live Escape Exercise from VANGUARD Class escape tower.
- Trials Officer for large scale Surface Abandonment Trial from a TRAFALGAR Class submarine.
- Member of the MoD tender assessment panel for the latest carbon dioxide absorption system to be introduced into service as a replacement to current method.
- Project managed the introduction of liferafts into RN submarines.
- Represented the MoD at the last 5 NATO Submarine Escape & Rescue Working Groups and Submarine Escape Equipment Panels.
- Managed the UK Submarine Rescue System contract on behalf of the MoD Submarine Project Team Director.
- Undertook Vessel of Opportunity (VOO) selection with the UK's Chief Salvage and Mooring Officer. (These Vessels of Opportunity were used to support Submarine Rescue Operations.)

#### **Sonistics Ltd**

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#### **SMERAS**

Submarine Escape Rescue and Abandonment Systems

**Timeline:**

- 2006-Current Sonistics Ltd. Note presentation
- 2000-2006 **Submarine Escape, Rescue and Abandonment Systems** - Deputy Head of SMERAS Project Team. Please refer to "Summary of Recent Employment" above.
- 1998-2000 **VANGUARD Class** (SSBN) Project Office – Responsible for in-service improvements and updates to all 4 submarines of the Class.
- 1996-1998 **SWIFTSURE** and **TRAFALGAR Classes** (SSN) – Responsible for in-service submarine external hydraulic system maintenance, improvements and updates.
- 1995-1996 **UPHOLDER Class** (Diesel) Sales Team – Prepared maintenance work package for the UPHOLDER Class to prepare the submarines prior to their sale and delivery to the Royal Canadian Navy
- 1994-1995 **Batch 2 Trafalgar Class** (SSN) Project Office – Responsible for compiling the Structural Technical Requirements for the newest class of UK submarine. Batch 2 Trafalgar Class evolved into the latest ASTUTE Class (SSN).
- 1986-1994 **VANGUARD Class** (SSBN) Build – Naval Constructive Overseer. Responsible to the MoD's Principal Naval Overseer for the acceptance of all structural aspects of the submarine.
- 1982-1986 **VANGUARD Class** (SSBN) Project Office - Undertook detailed structural design and layout of the submarine. Participated in 1/5 scale model inspections with the shipbuilder to resolve design defects prior to starting construction.
- 1979-1982 **SWIFTSURE Class** (SSN) Project Office – Responsible for the support and maintenance of submarines in service with the Royal Navy and for the last submarines of the Class being built at Vickers Shipbuilding in Barrow. Participated in submarine structural and hydrodynamic surveys of vessels under construction.
- 1975-1979 Constructive Technician Apprentice – Royal Naval Dockyard, Devonport

**Professional Qualification:** HNC Naval Architecture and Shipbuilding – Plymouth Polytechnic