



THE DOLPHINS

A Brief History



Most, but not all countries that operate submarines use one or more dolphins in the insignia that is worn by those who have qualified in their program thereby earning the right to call themselves 'submariners'.

Your humble editor had always understood that the submarine qualification badge had come from the USN Submarine service. Likely that inaccurate but undoubtedly thought to be true understanding came from a US **sub mar ean er**. Interesting, at least to your editor, the **WWII USN** boat crews called themselves **sub mare in ers**, like we do in Canada.

Some submariners will tell you that the

Dolphin

was selected as the default symbol of

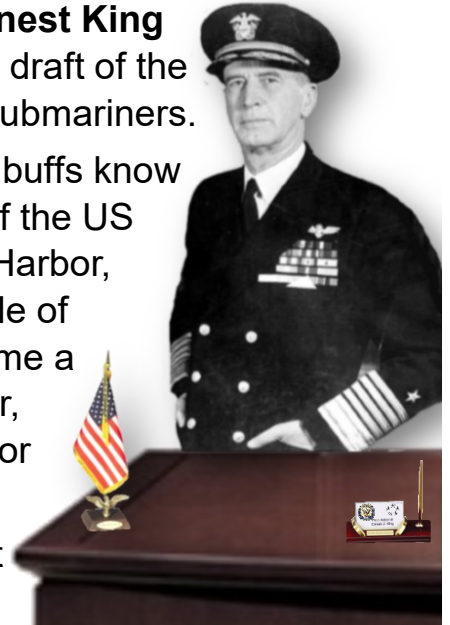
SUBMARINE Qualification

because it is the smartest creature in the ocean's depths

A recent survey confirmed that almost all skimmers agree unequivocally with that conclusion.

In 1923, as Commander of the US Navy's Submarine Division Three [then] US Navy Captain **Ernest King** (right) proposed and designed the first draft of the dolphin badges worn by modern day submariners.

However, King, who naval history buffs know was appointed Commander-In-Chief of the US Fleet shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, plus Chief of Naval Operations a couple of months later and would go on to become a Fleet Admiral before the end of the war, was not the first to submit a proposal for such recognition.



Probably (even the author of what is considered the definitive illustrated reference for collectors of submarine badges and insignia, **Pete**

Prichard, is equivocal in making the statement) that the first such badge was awarded to the January, **1909 Imperial Russian Naval Officer's submarine graduating class**. It was however only worn until the Communist October Revolution in 1917.

The following year, **Austria-Hungary** introduced their own badge.

"Wait a minute", I can hear you say. **"Both Austria and Hungary are landlocked!"**

And that is true today. But in 1914 the map of Europe looked very different and central Europe was dominated by two powers: Germany and the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. And both had ports and a growing number of submarines.



In fact **Fiume** which is now **Croatia's Rijeka**, was the home of the **Whitehead Naval Factory**, from which came the first 'modern' **Whitehead torpedo** and **Pola** (now **Pula**) was Austria-Hungary's main base for their +/- 20 U Boat fleet as well as hosting boats of the

1914 vs 2018



Kaiserliche Marine, the **German ‘Imperial Navy’**, which had continued to grow since its creation in 1871 to the point of being second only to Britain’s Royal Navy. While the German surface fleet did not fair that well, their fleet of submarines performed exceptionally well. By the end of the war, Germany had built 350 boats.

The **Austro-Hungarian Empire’s submarine service badge** (right) was introduced in **April, 1910**, it was worn by all ranks of their submarine service, on or below the left breast pocket.



In **January, 1918** the German Kaiser introduced the **U-Boat war badge** (right) to belatedly recognize the importance of their submariner’s efforts during the war. It was **awarded to both German and Austro-Hungarian submariners** who had served during the war.



In 1939 the Kaiser’s badge was ‘updated’ with a sleeker boat, the wreath was unwrapped, the crown replaced by the Nazi Eagle and, of course, young Adolf’s appropriated swastika.



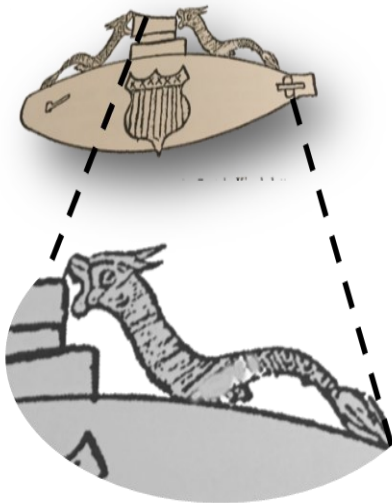
The young art student designed the first Nazi flag in 1920, using a symbol that was revered for centuries in various cultures and religions as a symbol of good fortune or well being. Coming from the **Sanskrit ‘svastika’** it appeared in Eurasia as early as 7,000 years ago and appeared on artifacts from pre-Christian European cultures including the excavation site of **‘Troy’** and sites of an ancient period in Germany, and is still a sacred symbol in Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Odinism. (Paraphrased from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum).

The WWII badge shown above included twelve diamonds (or rhinestones) in the wreath and thirteen in the swastika. The plain badge was awarded for a number of reasons but was not a qualification badge. The **version with diamonds was awarded only 28 times** to certain high scoring holders of the **Knight’s Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves**.

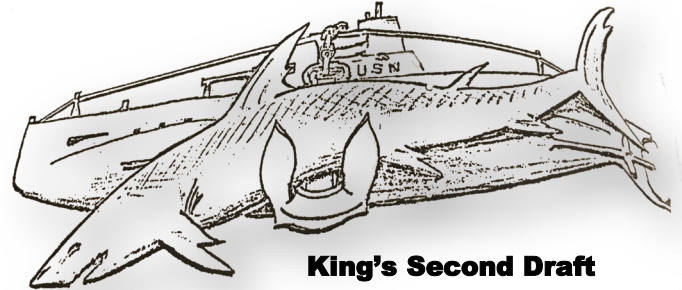
Circling back to 1923, and reconnecting with **Captain Ernest King**, his first draft was a submarine with a USA shield on its port side with dolphins that looked more like eels fore and aft of the sail. He also submitted a drawing (both appear on the next page) of a much more realistic submarine with an anchor replacing the shield and, as he called it in his submission, **“a good, lively, vicious-looking tiger shark would be more apropos”**, nearly the size of the submarine, overlaid. He submitted at least one more, as did a few others including a Commander F.R. Wheeler, who adopted a version of the heraldic dolphins used in

the final version, although facing inward whereas Wheater's were facing fore and aft. In one form or another those heraldic dolphins which are based on the dolphinfish (aka Mahi-mahi) which has a blunt nose and scales, appear today on the badges of so many of the world's submarine forces, including the USN below, and our own in Canada.

Even when the Navy requested a Philadelphia company that had supplied such trappings as the Naval Academy class rings, to get involved, they went through an interesting series of designs before their final emerged on paper., which is basically the dolphins worn by US Submariners today,



King's First Draft



King's Second Draft

Although his attempts at design were rejected, King's recommendation was accepted in **March, 1924**, by the then Acting Secretary of the Navy, **Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.**

King's recommendation included a restrictive that dolphins only be worn while on active duty in submarines and that applied until **1941** when the

regulations for

the US Navy uniform were changed to allow the insignia to be worn by submariners after being posted elsewhere.



US Officer (gold) Dolphins. Note the red dots indicating that the owner had participated in five war patrols.

Another paragraph (#2) of **King's June 13, 1923** submission, read:

It is firmly believed that this recognition will help materially in improving and maintaining the morale of Submarine personnel. It has now become necessary to detail officers as well as men to submarine service for lack of volunteers for duty which involves greater hardships, greater endurance and greater risks than any other naval duty, in peace as well as war.

Although making many trips on boats King never 'qualified'. Even so, in 1923 he was appointed CO of the sub base in New London. In 1926 he earned the first of his three Navy Distinguished Service Medals, directing the salvage of USS S-51.

Later that year, by invitation he moved to the **Naval Air Wing**, taking command of the aircraft tender **USS Wright**. The following year congress passed a law requiring all Cos in the Air Wing to be qualified aviators or observers which is why, in 1927, King found himself the only Captain in a class of twenty at **Naval Air Station Pensacola**, Florida. Although he

did qualify his flying was described by at least one wag as 'erratic' and he was once asked by the CO of the squadron with which he flew if he "knew enough be scared?"

In 1938 King staged a **simulated naval air raid** on **Pearl Harbor** which verified the conclusion of a similar exercise in 1932 by Admiral Harry Yarnell; that the base was dangerously vulnerable to aerial attack. Both were ignored and more will be said about that later.

Although King was and is often eulogized, he also had many detractors. It was said that he was disliked by so many that it may be that only British Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery had more enemies. One of King's own daughters uttered a tongue-in-cheek comment that was oft repeated throughout the USN that "**he is the most even tempered person in the US Navy - he is always in a rage.**"

Franklin D. Roosevelt apparently once described King as a man who "**shaves every morning with a blow torch.**" Roosevelt's reply to a letter he received from King when he turned 64 on November 23rd, 1942 telling the President that he had now reached the mandatory retirement age was, "**So what, old top?**"

King is also the guy who, in responding to a request for a public relations policy, said, "**Don't tell them anything. When it's over, tell them who won.**"

King began his naval career at the Naval Academy in 1897, graduating fourth in his class in 1901. He left active service in December 1945, replaced as Chief of Naval Operations by **Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz**, but remained in the Navy as five-star officers were to be given active duty pay for life. He passed in June 1956 at age 77.

Although those USN dolphins are still in service today, basically unchanged, the US Submarine Service, over the years has developed a number of other badges which are interesting to browse but will not be included here, except for one, the **USN Deep Submergence Badge**. The badge on the right was developed by the crews of the **Trieste II in 1971**, gold for officers and silver for enlisted. The holes in the scroll bar at the bottom are for stars, one for crew, 2 for operator and 3 for Officer in Charge. While it was never officially approved, the badge on the left was approved in 1981.



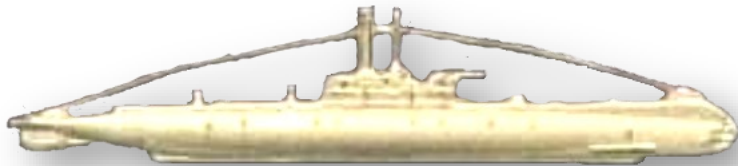
SOAC West has **one member** who earned the deep submergence badge. **Jim Denzien**, who lives in Arizona and is the **USSVI Western District 1 Commander**, served in six submarines including, briefly, the USS Argonaut, before going deep submergence in the **Trieste II** in 1978. While submarine service is a pretty exclusive club, Jim was only the **80th** operator qualified on the Trieste II which is rated to 20,000 feet. Jim's qualifying dive was to more than **16,300 feet** and he has been to the ocean floor at the sites of both the Thresher and the Scorpion.



For clarity, it was **Trieste I** that took **Don Walsh** and **Jacques Piccard** to **36,000 feet**, the bottom of the **Challenger Deep** in the **Mariana Trench** on **January 23rd, 1960**.

By 1910 a growing number of countries had submarines and by the 1920's a few started to introduce badges reflecting service in the monstrosities. Chile introduced a badge

unofficially in 1920 that was finally officially recognized in 1927 (right) and replaced in 1929 (below, left) with the upgrading of their fleet. There were several others over the years but the one that strikes the eye (at least this



eye) is the two piece beret badge with the wreath and a heraldic Naval crown encircling a separate submarine (right).



in 1919 Spain issued its first submariners badge (right). It was topped by the crown of Alfonso XIII (sometimes attached, other times separate) with the oval on the tanks being red for qualified personnel and blue for those in training. During the second republic (1931-1939) the crown was removed and after the Spanish Civil War the badge was changed to a more modern submarine with Franco regime Regent's Coronet, which lasted until **Juan Carlos** came to the throne in



1975 when the House of Borbón (in Spanish, Bourbon in English and French and **Borbón** in Italian) crown once again took its position above the shears.



Turkey implemented its first badge in 1928 with seemingly a great deal of German influence, Those original badges are so rare that we were unable to find a copy that is even reasonably reproducible. It was replaced in 1935 by the badge on the right which was itself replaced in 1956 and a couple of times following until, in 1977 they returned to the badge on the right.



There are a number of other countries that introduced submarine badges during this period such **Italy** in 1924 (left) and even **Siam** (right, and yes the Kingdom of Siam, before it became Thailand) got it's first submarines in 1936. The anchor and chain hung loose. The Thailand pin and a fake appear on page 10.



And there were others but all of this to say, with all of these examples to be inspired by why, when the British finally got around to creating a badge sometime in the mid-1950s (Prichard's reference guide says **1958** but



Bos'n (Don) Brown says they were issued pre-1957) did they come with something that most of their submariners hated and would not wear.

It was embroidered in silk and worn on the left sleeve (some references suggest it was the right sleeve but that would have the submarine going backwards and Bos'n Brown can't

remember for sure). Wearing it was not a requirement and though Brownie wore his, he says that he can't remember a Brit wearing one. In fact, I had sent an enquiry to Britain and the reply I got back from the curatorial team at the **National Museum of the Royal Navy** was *"I think he means the 'sausage on a stick' badge."* The email from the Museum continued, *"My understanding is that it was rarely worn."*



IN AUSTRALIA, submarine **Commander Henry Cook** believed that submariners deserved a badge of which they could be proud and he set about convincing the **Australian Naval Board** to consider approving the badge if a suitable design could be found. Cook turned to a non-submarine co-worker, Commander (at the time) Alan MacIntosh who used the mammal dolphin rather than the heraldic dolphinfish in his design. After the RAN issued its approval in July, 1966, Cook was given the honour of being the first Royal Australian Submarine officer to wear the dolphins.



THE CREW OF THE ROYAL NAVY SUBMARINE, HMS Trump, the last RN boat based in Sydney, was given the new RAN dolphins to wear for their last year of the assignment. Their approval was so obvious that when the RN finally got around to developing their own in **1972** to replace the 'Sausage' it very closely reflected the design by the now Captain MacIntosh, with a couple of exceptions: the RN placed an anchor below the crown with the top of the shank extending up into it, and, for some inexplicable reason, gave the mammal dolphins scales.



A DIGRESSION, but it is submarine related. The British and Australian submarine services maintained that mildly symbiotic relationship when it came to the writing of their respective submarine marches.



Both the RN's '**Jolly Roger**', composed for the centennial of their submarine service in 2001 and the RAN's '**March of the Silent Service**', composed for their submarine centennial in 2014, were composed by a former bandsman with the British Royal Marines Band, **Martyn Hancock**, who had moved to Australia in 2007. A brilliant composer and good guy, who your editor got to know through email when were working on the production of the '**Dolphin March**' for the Canadian Submariners.

As the 1950s morphed into the 60s, **Canada** entered into discussions with the British (it was a lot more political than just Navy to Navy) for the purchase of three submarines for the east coast (the 'O' boats - original discussions were for six but it stopped at three until into the nineties) and, at the same time, with the **USN**, leasing a **WWII Balao Class** submarine (the **USS Burrfish SS/SSR-312**) for the west coast in **1961**, thereby being the first to re-establish a Canadian submarine service.

The man who had crawled through numerous US fleet boats and finally chose **Burfish** was (then) Lcdr **Ed Gigg**. He also became the first Commanding Officer of the new **HMCS Grilse SS-71**.

In a 1990s letter to submariner **Larry Hickey**, a retired Commodore who was the Commander of the Atlantic Fleet in his last posting, **Mr. Gigg** described how he wanted **"a distinctive Canadian submarine insignia clear of all the usual clutter of crowns, maple leaves, (sic) anchors, etc already in abundance on our uniforms and which would tend to obscure the designating symbol"**.

He apparently sat down with civilian naval artist, **Doug Baker** who sketched while the Mr. Gigg described how he wanted **"a modern looking clean lined dolphin with its tail flippant in the air. He made a few changes and in less than ten minutes the form was set for production of the final painting, again using the dolphinfish"**.

The dolphin was initially approved for the **'Men Only'** and to the best of Mr. Gigg's recollection he handed the first one to **Dunc Akers**.

While they were still in the United States he got around the **'Men Only'** issue by turning a blind eye to the qualified officers wearing **USN** dolphins. That gave him time to get the powers that be in Ottawa to reconsider and allow the officers to also wear the **'Dancing Dolphin'** as it became known to some. (It also became known, rather irreverently as the **Gigg Worm** or **Dancing Worm** to others). Apparently the Officers were not at all impressed with having to replace the USN Dolphins on their chest with the **Worm** above the Executive Curl, but at least it was being replaced.

The only problem that left on his desk was the matter of the Officer's white and Kaki uniforms where the stripes are worn on shoulder boards. Serendipitously, Mr. Gigg had arranged with Birks Jewelers to produce a gold metal pin for, he originally figured, wives and sweethearts. Turned out it was also ideal for Whites and Kakis. Though never officially approved, there were apparently 'no questions asked'. As an aside, those Birks pins are still a very sought after item today.

As is shown above, this new Canadian badge, based on the bottle-nosed dolphin, urinant (head down and seen on the inset on the right) was worn on the left sleeve, abutting the cuff of a jumper (for P2 and below) and for a P1, above the crown or above the buttons for a C2 and above the buttons and crown for a C1. Officers, also as mentioned, wore it above the executive curl on a the left sleeve of their jacket except for the whites and kakis.

One wag remembers that in response to an American Officer's inquiry, Mr. Gigg explained it was our new Submariners Badge. The American purportedly looked at it for another moment and said, **"Looks like a fish, looking for a ... for sex"**. Mr. Gigg apparently did not take kindly to the quip and was sensitive about remarks for a long time.

The pictures below are samples of heraldic dolphin statues which seems to have been influences for both the Canadian and USN dolphin design.





The dolphins on the left are a reminder of the fiercely malevolent appearance of so many of the depictions during and following the time of the Roman empire. Scholars and this observer are left to wonder



why the dolphinfish was used as a model rather than the mammal.

Regardless, from sculptural relief on building to fountains in city squares, to the brass doorstop on the right, dolphins have been very popular for depiction.

In **1968** the Canadian Forces were amalgamated and over the next couple of years green uniforms were substituted for all of the blues, kakis and greys. During the initial transition a yellow 'Worm' replaced the red, blue and gold, and though initially still worn on the left sleeve, it fairly quickly migrated up to the left side of the chest.



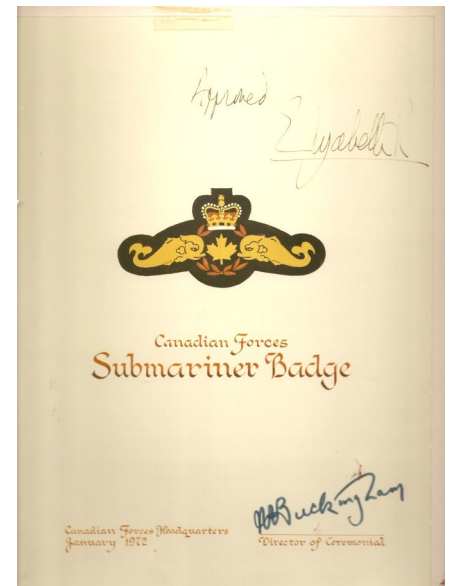
In **1972** the then Commander of the Canadian Submarine Squadron, Cdr Maurice Tate (Retired), was not taken with the look of the yellow worm on the chest and so set about arranging for a newer, more modern design. He cannot now remember who actually did the design but knows it was not anyone from within the squadron. He says that this new design was fairly quickly approved and was being issued within the year. As the uniforms were green the maple leaf was an off yellow with a green background. In the mid-eighties the navy went back to blue uniforms and the dolphins changed to red maple leaf with a dark blue background that often looks black. The copy of the approval document on the right is actually signed by Her Majesty.



'73.

SUBMARINE FORCES from around the world each have their own versions of submarine qualification badges, only some using dolphins, but many, like the Canadian and British insignia, morphing over time. And some with multiple versions for various reasons (e.g. the Germans and Russians).

By the fall of '73 some of us in shore bound billets had not been tracked down and were still wearing the worm. In fact, it is all I ever wore before being released in November



Below and on the following page are a **few** rather random samples. The more digging you do the more you realize that no source can be entirely relied upon. We've done our best to cross check, but don't bet the homestead on any representation you see here. If something doesn't make sense or you have a question please send a note to saocwest@shaw.ca, putting 'Dolphins' as the subject.



Sweden



Denmark



Bulgaria



Holland



South Africa



Modern Pin



South Korea



Albania



Brazil



China



Japan



Turkey



Pakistan

Though similar designs, notice that the Turkish wreath is behind the boat while the Pakistan wreath is in front.



Argentina



Imperial Iranian Navy (left)



Islamic Republic of Iran (right)

The pin on the left was designed in the US in the mid-70s. When the Shah was overthrown in 1978 it was replaced by the one on the right. Very similar to the USN dolphins, some suggest that the 'boomer' hull was floated as a possibility for replacing the USN dolphins; without the crown, one presumes.



Indonesian Gold Sharks



Taiwan



France

Italy
Note Crown



Northern
Italy RSI
Post WWII
Almost the
Same but
no crown



The pin on the left is the real Royal Thai-land Submariners Badge. Though sold as such, the one on the right is the Thai Navy's equivalent of the badge worn by the US Navy's S.E.A.L.s



Israel

Old style



May be New style
Have queried their
Sub Association



Vietnam

Other Pins



US Navy



US Dolphin Scholarship
Fund lapel pin
Ships Crest
Scholarships for families
of US Submariners



Peru



HMS Trump
Ships Crest
Last British Boat
Stationed in Sydney
Australia.
The trumpet does
look like a golf tee.



Russian
Kursk Memorial Pin

Editor's Choice

Quite a number are very good looking badges but your Editor's favorite is the Australian Dolphins, except I would have put a small diamond chip in the middle of the shield, representing the Southern Star, Sirius.



Just a thought.