

Silent and Unseen: On Patrol in Three Cold War Attack Submarines

Alfred Scott McLaren

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#794453 in Books 2015-05-15Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.10 x .90 x 6.10l, .0 #File Name:
1612518451256 pages | File size: 53.Mb

Alfred Scott McLaren : Silent and Unseen: On Patrol in Three Cold War Attack Submarines before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Silent and Unseen: On Patrol in Three Cold War Attack Submarines:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Like being in his living room while the "old man" reminiscesBy W. James D. EastonSecond of a planned trilogy describing the author's career in submarines. Rather informally written

and not always "politically correct." The intended audience appears to be fellow submariners since much of what is mentioned is described only "by name," and will not be familiar to a general audience. Well worth reading by anyone contemplating a career as a submariner. Describes difficult and potentially career or life ending situations that the author handled or endured with good luck, intelligence, hard work, stamina, good reactions, and sensitivity. Proud to have had him in "my" Navy. Lost a star only because of the limited audience. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. This book was almost too much to believe. Of ...By tghThis book was almost too much to believe. Of the three submarines that the author was stationed on and choose to write about, I was also assigned to the first two submarines. I followed his tours with about a 3-5 years delay. Our experiences were over 50 years ago so reading his story jogs the memory of the history of these submarines. The stories are accurate and interesting to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Since then we have collaborated and shared great adventures. By Jim Kyser So interesting to see a professional review of my days on the U. S. S. Greenfish where I worked in the engine rooms while The author provided direction from the control room. Since then we have collaborated and shared great adventures.

Silent and Unseen is a memoir of a submariner's life on a U.S. attack submarine during the Cold War by Capt. Alfred S. McLaren, an experienced submarine officer and nuclear attack submarine commander. He describes in riveting detail the significant events that occurred early in the Cold War during his seven years, 1958–65, on board three attack submarines: the USS Greenfish (SS 351), USS Seadragon (SSN 584), and USS Skipjack (SSN 585). He took part in the first submerged transit of the Northwest Passage, a Baffin Bay expedition, and, as commander of USS Queenfish (SSN 651), a North Pole expedition that completed the first survey of the entire Siberian Continental Shelf. McLaren's stories and anecdotes offer a look at the development of attack-boat tactics and under-ice exploration techniques. During the early high-risk years of the Cold War, submarines were continually at sea, and each reconnaissance and intelligence-collection mission was of potentially great value to the United States. The missions often required zeroing in on the potential enemy to collect the intelligence desired, generally within weapons range. Unlike a war patrol, the U.S. attack boat had to remain undetected, and then withdraw as silently and unseen as its original approach. Greenfish was one of the most successful Pacific diesel submarines when McLaren served aboard her as a watch and weapons officer. He then served as watch officer on the Seadragon when she became the first nuclear submarine to transit from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the Arctic Ocean. En route, she examined the underside of icebergs, conducted the first underwater survey and passage through the Northwest Passage, and surfaced at the North Pole. McLaren concludes by recounting his experiences on board what was then the world's fastest and most advanced submarine, USS Skipjack (SSN 585) during the Cuban Missile Crisis, two Cold War missions, and the very intensive and exciting period of new tactical and weapons development which followed to counter a rapidly emerging Soviet nuclear submarine threat.

"Capt. McLaren also went on into academia, earning his PhD in 1986 from the University of Colorado. This academic bent has meshed wonderfully with his submarine experiences to produce *Silent and Unseen: On Patrol in Three Cold War Attack Submarines* published by the Naval Institute Press. A memoir of his experience on board three submarines, Greenfish, Seadragon, and Skipjack, starting as a very young officer and following him up through the ranks, *Silent and Unseen* produces an interesting series of remembrances of life within the submarine community and the unique world of submarine operations. To facilitate this, the author breaks up the text into three sections, one for each of the submarines in question. Each section is broken up into six or seven chapters covering McLaren's time in the boat. Wrapped up with an introduction and short epilogue, the author provides an interesting read into the daily life on the boats both at sea and on shore." *International Journal of Maritime History* "McLaren's impressive powers of recall in *Silent and Unseen*, his telling detail of life at sea in a steel tube and the humor to be found in even the most grueling of circumstances, make it an always illuminating and entertaining read. *Silent and Unseen* plunges us into that time when nuclear-powered submarines were on the cutting edge of science and exploration." *Warships International Fleet* "Silent and Unseen is a very enjoyable book. By reading this book, young officers can gain more realistic knowledge of submarine service and understand more clearly how important our modern nuclear submarines are to the safety of our country." *The Daybook, Hampton Roads Naval Museum* "Silent and Unseen is more than an entertaining series of sea stories; it also offers a candid reflection on leadership and a remarkable glimpse into Cold War submarine life and operations." *Naval Historical Foundation* "Stories such as these though may provide that inspiration for our youngsters and enable them to do other great things, such as commanding the North Pole expedition that completed the first survey of the entire Siberian Continental Shelf. Above all, the lessons for future engineering leaders—including during the Cuban Missile Crisis—are profound and worthy of digesting. McLaren's story should not remain silent." – *The Navy, Navy League of Australia* "America's nuclear submarines could be said to have become boringly reliable and relentlessly capable and powerful. That may well be so now but, if you have talked with some of the captains of the earlier versions of those 'boats' or read this book, you will soon learn that was not always so. The author graduated from diesel subs and then served on and commanded a number of nuclear boats from 1958 to 1965. Among his many adventures was the first underwater and largely under ice transit of the Northwest Passage aboard

'USS Seadragon'. They were pioneering days and a spirit of adventure prevailed. McLaren and his colleagues were explorers at heart and the new technology enabled them to go, as they say, where 'no man had gone before.' In an unpretentious, almost laconic, way he weaves a vivid and fascinating tale of those early days when the nuclear learning curve was so steep. A delightful, informative and educational tale."?Baird Maritime.com"Reading Silent and Unseen brought back a flood of memories. The stories are good, and they are amazingly familiar. It is an interesting read for submariners or for those interested in life on submarines."?Military "McLaren vividly describes the cramped, smelly living conditions on a sub, patrolling the northwest Pacific Ocean in winter, a passage under the North Pole, and operating 'silent and unseen' along the Soviet Far East coast."?Military Officer"In this very readable and entertaining book the author describes the hectic and varied life on an officer on submarines during the change over from conventional to nuclear boats. The author illustrates both the excitement and frustration of being continually at sea on high-risk reconnaissance and intelligence collection patrols. However, most interesting of all is that Capt McLaren, who is also an Arctic explorer, was serving aboard the USS SEADRAGON when she became the first to transit submerged from the Atlantic to the Pacific via the Arctic Ocean. Conducting the first underway survey and passage through the Northwest Passage and surfacing at the North Pole."?World Ship Society - Warships 181"Silent and Unseen is a pleasurable and honest read that should be of value to those who seek submarine command, to be a submariner or just wish to spend some hours in their armchairs dreaming that they could be a submariner."?Australian Naval Institute"A retired American submarine commander recalls his experiences developing attack boat tactics and under-ice exploration techniques during missions carried about between 1958 and 1965. At that time, US submarines were regularly required to move within range of their targets' weapons to gather necessary intelligence."?SURVIVAL: Global Politics and Strategy"Alfred McLaren's new book provides valuable, first-hand insight into submarine operations during the Cold War."? Capt. David C. Minton III, USN, former commanding officer, USS Guardfish (SSN-612)"As every junior officer, enlisted sailor, or Coast Guardsman is keenly aware, the tone and tenor of any command is set by the commanding officer. A daring and charismatic leader with skill and a sense of adventure will invariably produce a unit with those attributes, just as surely as dull, uninspired, or incompetent leadership will spread those sad traits in equal and painful measure. In this magnificent account of a junior officer's role in Arctic submarine exploration and Cold War operations, Capt. Alfred McLaren offers page after page of invaluable insights into the development of leadership in the most challenging of environments. This book is a must for all junior naval officers and senior enlisted personnel who seek to understand the critical variables in and varieties of the officers under whom they serve."?P.J. Capelotti, PhD MCPO, USCGR (Ret.), author of Shipwreck at Cape Flora and editor of Life and Death on the Greenland Patrol"In Silent and Unseen, Alfred McLaren provides an unparalleled account of the subject of the book's subtitle: On Patrol in Three Cold War Attack Submarines. The Cold War was a special time in the history of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and the content of the book includes details of the missions, mostly submerged to avoid detection, itineraries in Arctic regions, including exploration of the entire Siberian continental shelf, and examples of day-to-day living in the close quarters of a submarine. Submariners and others will find this a fascinating account of what it was like in missions involving sub-ice environments."?John Spletstoessers, Polar consultant, editor (with G. Dreschhoff), Mineral Resources Potential of Antarctica, American Geophysical Union, Vol. 51"Capt. Alfred McLaren's account of the early years of nuclear submarines offers the clear perspective of a sailor historian, Arctic explorer, and a seasoned officer who knows what he's writing about because he lived it. McLaren underscores the seriousness of the mission, the risks and rewards, and the exploits of the submariners who won the Cold War."? James P. Delgado, author of Silent Killers: Submarines and Underwater Warfare"Alfred McLaren's Silent and Unseen invites you into the underwater world of intrigue he experienced during his distinctive career as a submarine officer. McLaren gives a vivid account?including some heart-stopping moments?of the reconnaissance and intelligence gathering missions employed by fast attack submarines during the mid-sixties to the mid-seventies. I had the privilege of serving with McLaren on the USS Skipjack and to observe first hand his knowledge, skills and capability to assess and correct any situation."?Howard D. Mitchell, author's shipmate on USS SkipjackAbout the AuthorCapt. Alfred Scott McLaren, USN (Ret.) PHD is a veteran of more than twenty Cold War missions and three Arctic expeditions. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and two Legions of Merit as a Cold War submarine commander. President of The American Polar Society and former president of The Explorers Club, he is the author of Unknown Waters: A First-Hand Account of the Historic Under-Ice Survey of the Siberian Continental Shelf by USS Queenfish (SSN 651). He is a resident of Nederland, Colorado.