

Author A.C. Frieden Visits Former French Ballistic Missile Submarine

CHERBOURG, France (Sept. 6, 2013) – Thriller author A.C. Frieden arrived in Cherbourg, France to visit the largest submarine open to the public: the former French Navy SSBN *Le Redoutable*. The submarine is on display at the Cité de la Mer maritime museum next to the city's cruise port. "You can't help but feel awed by the immense size of this vessel," said Frieden before heading into the submarine. At 420 feet in length, and a displacement of 8,900 tonnes, it was one of the world's largest submarines of its time, though since the 1990s, SSBNs have become larger, with nearly twice the displacement and more missiles.



(Above) Author A.C. Frieden stands near the former French Navy ballistic missile submarine *Le Redoutable*.

Le Redoutable was France's first ballistic missile submarine, or SSBN (in French, "SNLE" —*Sous-marin Nucléaire Lanceur d'Engins*), giving the country a much-needed third component of its Cold War nuclear defense strategy (in addition to air-launched and land-based missiles). The vessel was commissioned in 1971 and was initially armed with 16 M1 ballistic missiles, each carrying a 450 kt warhead and able to reach targets up to 1,100 nautical miles away (by comparison, the bomb dropped on Hiroshima had a yield of about 16 kt). A few years later, the submarine was refitted with the M20 missile, with an increased warhead yield of 1 Mt and a fifty percent extended range. By the time it was decommissioned in 1991, *Le Redoutable* had undertaken more than fifty patrols, navigating a distance equal to going 32 times around the world.

In 2000, its nuclear reactor was removed and the vessel was moved to its new home: a purpose-built dry dock at the Cité de la Mer museum in Cherbourg, where it has since become one of the area's most popular attractions. It remains to this day the largest submarine—and the only standard-configuration SSBN—open to the public. The museum also has on display numerous other submersibles and diving equipment, which is of particular interest to Frieden, who is an avid diver and currently a divemaster candidate.



(Above) Author A.C. Frieden at the controls of Le Redoutable.

(Below) Frieden stands by the row of launch tubes that once housed the ballistic missiles.





(Above) A.C. Frieden stands near the tower or sail portion of the submarine.

About the author: A.C. Frieden is a Swiss-Brazilian-American novelist, lawyer, pilot, diver and former sniper and currently lives in Chicago. He is the author of several espionage thrillers and other literary works, both fiction and nonfiction. For more information, visit his website at www.acfrieden.com.

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