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## 'None of us can get to the surface' - Kursk sailor's note

A note found on one of the four bodies recovered from the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk reveals that at least 23 men remained alive after powerful explosions killed most of the crew.

It is the first clue that anyone had survived the initial blasts that tore apart the submarine. But it does not contain hints of what had caused the catastrophe, which killed all 118 men aboard.

Russian Navy chief Admiral Vladimir Kuroyedov said that the note was found in the pocket of an officer identified as Lieutenant Dmitry Kolesnikov, the commander of the Kursk's turbine section.

It said: "All the crew from the sixth, seventh and eighth compartments went over to the ninth. There are 23 people here. We made this decision as a result of the accident. None of us can get to the surface."

The chief of staff of the Northern Fleet, Vice Admiral Mikhail Motsak, said later that the note was written between 13:34 and 15:15 local time on August 12, the day of the disaster.

He said: "The note indicated that at 12:58 most of the crew from the sixth, seventh and eighth compartment went over to the ninth compartment.

"It also said that two or three people might try to escape the submarine through the emergency escape hatch located in the ninth compartment."

Mr Motsak said that the escape attempt could have been thwarted by the water that gradually flooded the ninth compartment.



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