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Advancement  
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## 1960 survivors clawed 900ft up rope

By Chris Gray

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A former Russian naval cadet who survived when a Soviet submarine sank deeper than the *Kursk* recalled yesterday how crew members escaped by clawing 900 feet up a rope to the surface.

Chayim Sheynin was one of 14 survivors from a crew of 56 on board a submarine which sank to 270 metres after a torpedo exploded in its firing pod in 1960.

He said it took him about two hours to inch his way up the rope before he reached the surface, with blood from a damaged lung coming out of his mouth.

Mr Sheynin said he was confident the crew of the *Kursk* could be saved as their situation was less desperate than his experience.

"Our situation was much worse. There was an explosion. We were in a deeper place. There was no officer. From this depth the climb should take about three hours. I came up in about two hours. Fear is pushing you out of the water but you need to restrain yourself.

"When I came up blood was coming out of my mouth. It was from a destroyed lung," he said.

He and the other 13 survivors wore oxygen masks and camel hair protective clothing covered with rubber. They left the submarine by squeezing one by one into an empty torpedo tube at its rear, which was then flooded. As each man escaped more air was taken out of the vessel.

The first man through the tube released a rope with a float attached to take it to the surface. Each man was ordered to move slowly because of the huge change in pressure they would experience on the way up.

If they panicked and moved too quickly they could have been killed by air bubbles forming in the blood, known as the bends.

Mr Sheynin, who now lives in Philadelphia in the United States, was 22 when he joined the training exercise on the submarine, which lasted for several months. He recalled the moment when the crew realised their vessel was facing catastrophe.

"There was a terrible sound. All the boat is metallic, so you hear the explosion," he said.

He and the other survivors were rescued by a Soviet navy vessel and he spent a year in hospital recovering before he was discharged as medically unfit.

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