

# MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



VOLUME 8	AUGUST 1997
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**FDU 2 ON EXERCISE**

# MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MINEWARFARE AND DIVING COMMUNITY

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VOLUME 8 NUMBER 1

AUGUST 1997

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the August 1997 Volume 8 edition of the MAD Magazine.

First I would like to thank my predecessor Lt Cdr Jonathon Lee for putting much of this edition together along with Lt Mark Kessler who has, for the last 4 years, been an enthusiastic lynch pin in the production of, and I quote from your feedback "this high quality, informative magazine". The fact that both these officers have been given foreign appointments subsequent to their stints as MAD mag editorial staff is, I understand purely coincidental, and not indicative of the requirement for a recuperative appointment! However if you are reading this, put me down for Singapore in '99 please Mark.

Thanks are also due to Cdr Colin Welborn for writing the Foreword to this volume and also for his thought provoking article on the Standing Naval Force Channel.

As most of you will now be aware, the MAD Mag will henceforth be published annually through the Graphics section, HMS DRYAD. In order to maintain the standard and reputation of the MAD mag all of YOU, the readers need to be prepared to submit suitable articles for inclusion. If you don't contribute, you are ill placed to criticise when you find the articles boring or the mag folds from lack of material. I would also make a heartfelt plea to anyone out there who has the slightest interest in publishing to volunteer to assist me in the collation and compilation of material to enable the best possible end product.

Volume 9, August 1998 is now being compiled, so start scribbling, recording or photographing and then send it to me, at HMS DRYAD by May 31 1998.

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**Commander C G Welborn Royal Navy  
Commander Standing Naval Force Channel**

As the twenty first Commander of STANAVFORCHAN it is a great pleasure to write the introduction to this fine magazine. It remains an excellent forum for promulgating knowledge and experience thereby stimulating debate and greater OE. However, maintaining high standards requires constant vigilance and old fashioned hard work.

Shakespeare wrote:

“Experience is a jewel and it had need to be so, for it is often purchased at an infinite price.”

Please ensure we have learned the lessons from past conflicts and above all listened to other nations views. It is worth noting that the defeated participant often learns more than the conqueror.

Within the Force competition remains fierce but it is also the key to team building and cohesion. There is nothing so dull as the average, always aspire to greater standards, excellence and perfection because once those concepts are thrown away, so is much of the excitement and incentive for life. However, remember the trap for over confidence is still comeuppance!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C G Welborn". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

# THE COMMODORE MFP WARFARE OFFICE - WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, (HOW)

By Lt. Cdr Raisbeck



In the Warfare Office we have, on occasion, heard muttered a worrying question - "What does the Warfare Office do?" This is usually followed by a diatribe about how ships never hear from us and only see us or get letters from us when things go wrong. Apart from the fact that this generality is fundamentally incorrect, there are two reasons why you do not see as much of us (or receive as much from us) as you do from your squadron staff.

The first reason is because the command chain is working correctly, ie when you have a problem you pass it on to squadron for action; they either action it or pass it up the command chain to us. We then decide the policy (in consultation with our FOSF colleagues at the Parade, CINCFLEET, 2SL or whoever) and pass the response back to squadron who then disseminate to the ships.

The second reason is that we spend the majority of our time on policy matters which although in support of the ships and their "fitness for task" do not involve you directly.

We in Commodore MFP, as part of FOSF, base much of our effort on fulfilling the requirements of the SURFLOT Management Plan. The SURFLOT Management Plan is a document held on board all MM/PPS and which it is recommended that you read; it will open your eyes to all manner of things you had not previously considered and will be of special benefit for OPS/XO about to go on the ISC and the CO who is about to swap his chair on the bridge for one in the MOD. It sets out the way in which FOSF intends achieving the tasks laid on him by CINCFLEET; it supports the Fleet Plan which in turn supports the Naval Management Plan and the Departmental Plan (and all this time you thought that you

trundled around the ocean at the whim of SPROGO!).

In a similar vein, CINCFLEET's aim is "to prepare and operate the Fleet"; from this FOSF has determined that his (and therefore our) aim is "to provide ships and units fit for contingent and current tasks". Fitness for task is a phrase which, although perhaps not common at ship level, certainly gets aired at least once a day in the Headquarters and more frequently in the higher echelons of FOSF and CINCFLEET. Some see it as just a new buzzword, a new management-speak phrase, which comes after a long line of others such as OE and OC and which we all understand in a general sense but have difficulty in defining clearly. Others see it as a phrase which describes quite clearly the purpose of the shore support agencies - providing support to ensure that all ships are fit to conduct the task for which they are programmed.

This task is undertaken in a variety of different ways. Some, such as OST and CAPES returns, are very visible to the ships and are recognised by all as a vital function in keeping a ship running and "up to scratch". Others are not so visible to you in the ships but all are necessary to ensure that the aim is both achievable and achieved.

One huge strand in this process is the LTC - the Long Term Costings. This is our bank balance - but on a much grander scale than the account you hold with Barclays - which tries to forecast 10 years ahead to ensure that the right funding is available and at the right time.

A few years ago the Directorate of Naval Plans and Programmes produced "A Sailors Guide To The LTC". In the introduction it states that the aim of the booklet is to

## THE COMMODORE MFP WARFARE OFFICE

"set out in simple terms the complex workings of MOD's financial machinery with particular reference to the effect on the Navy". This "simple booklet" runs to 22 sides of A4 plus another 18 pages of annexes!

The annual process takes about 9 months to staff from start to finish as it meanders back and forth amongst the various levels of staffing. During that process we have to identify all our areas of responsibility which will need money spending on them in order to function - that means everything from your pay packet down to the Warfare Office paperclips. Luckily the Budgets Office here in the Headquarters deals with the nitty gritty of the LTC but the input from ourselves and the Ops Room is still quite considerable.

Another area where it is vital that we get things right is the MILCAP - the Military Capability Report. The MILCAP provides a comprehensive statement on the military capability of the Fleet, assessed against the tasks which ships are expected to do as laid down in the Fleet Plan. Once again this process takes a great deal of time and effort to achieve but we need to get it right. We need to identify where ships are not able to carry out their task and why, so that CINCFLEET can review that shortfall against all the others reported from FONA, FOSM, RFA etc and determine a priority for the limited funds available to amend the shortfall.

The MILCAP is one area of our work where ships play a significant part - if you don't tell us you have a shortfall in equipment capability then we can't report that up the chain. Anyone can raise a Constraint on a piece of equipment - contact the office for details and we will investigate it and take it forward if valid. Do be aware though that your "significant shortfall in messdeck coffee making equipment resulting in lack of opportunity for all mess members to get a decent wet at standeasy" may pale into insignificance when put up against a frigate with a defective weapon system!

Apart from preparing the reports themselves, a great deal of work stems from the LTC/Management Plan/MILCAP process. For example once we have persuaded Fleet that a particular piece of equipment is required it then needs to go through the procurement process - something else you may have heard of but never really understood. This process brings DNO (Directorate of Naval Operations) and DOR(Sea) (Directorate of Operational Requirements (Sea)) into the equation. From a practical point of view it involves us attending numerous meetings, writing letters to half the people listed in the MOD telephone directory, reading complex scientific reports and then (if funding has been cut) the whole process needs to be reviewed and amended. When the equipment is finally procured we then need to discuss fitting and trials arrangements with the engineers and SPROGO and develop tactics for its use. This means that the BRs need updating (another of our tasks in conjunction with the Fleet Staff Authors at Collingwood). And so it goes on ...

Once we've finished with all the routine business outlined above we are always keen to get out to see the ships, if only to keep in touch with those of you in the front line who matter. Usually we will only searide in the formal sense if cover cannot be provided by squadron staff but there may be occasions when we "ask you to invite us" to sea for less formal visits. This doesn't mean that you have done something wrong but simply that we feel that we haven't seen you for a while and would like to see how you're getting on. These visits give you the opportunity to quiz us as much as we might quiz you, we recognize that quite often news and information does not filter down as well as it should and these visits are an ideal opportunity to replace the galley buzz with hard facts.

In a similar manner please feel free to come and see us in the office to discuss your worries/thoughts/last run ashore. We have an open door policy and are always glad to see personnel from the ships (in fact we actively support it - our coffee and donuts have proved to be a highly effective way to lure people into the office!). CO/XO/OPS Officers are also welcome to attend the weekly briefs which usually take place on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (Cdre's programme dependent - phone the Ops Room for actual timings).

To finish off this Warfare Office contribution here are a number of short, sharp ditties from the various members of the office on subjects which may be of interest ....

Hunt Mid Life Update - way ahead is to provide the Hunt Class with a new hull mounted, wideband sonar and a replacement ship class early in the next century. All other aspects of the HMLU have been rejected due to a number of factors including immaturity of technology, hull limitations and poor cost effectiveness, but watch this space on influence sweeping ...

Hunts to Northern Ireland - now well underway with Cottesmore due out of refit late June. NI Hunts will have their canopy deck removed to make room for the NI boats, one RCMDs will be removed and the diving team and Ops Officer will be landed to make room for Royal Marines. Despite these changes the ships will remain at notice for regeneration to the MCM role and will maintain a degree of MCM OC whilst on NI tasking; this is planned to take the form of 2-3 day packages between patrols where the ships can use the MCM facilities in and around the Clyde. NI Hunts will get the HMLU sonar upgrade.

Gapping - remains a fleet-wide problem with a great deal of effort being expended in Victory Building/2SL to try and alleviate the problems. Recruitment of OM(MW)s has one of the highest priorities (and has been for nearly a year) but the problems are going to take time to subside. Small comfort, but the size of the problem is now considered to be remaining steady, as opposed to getting worse.

Female OM(MW)s - the first Batch II Sandown (HMS Penzance) will soon be operational and has been fitted

## THE COMMODORE MFP WARFARE OFFICE

out for female junior and senior rates, the other 4 ships will also be capable of being mixed-manned. These bunks are likely to be filled by non-MW personnel initially (comms, WE, ME) but the gates at HMS Raleigh are now open for the recruiting of female OM(MW)s in line with naval policy.

CAPEs - Ops Officers around the Fleet will be sad (glad?) to hear that WO Clark - "Mr CAPEs" - is due to move jobs towards the end of this year. He is moving back to his beloved Scotland to take over from WO Baker who is retiring. Our best wishes for a long and happy retirement go out to Mr Baker. Despite his move north, Mr Clark will remain closely linked with the Headquarters as he will still be working for MFP as Staff Mining Officer; we welcome the arrival of newly promoted WO Mulrain in his place as the new CAPEsMAN. See Mr Clark's CAPEs dit elsewhere in this edition for more details.

Precise Navigation - Military GPS (Outfit QYF) is now accepted as being the primary PN positioning system for use within the RN. We have come a long way since accuracies were measured in terms of thankfulness at having found a continent! Despite continuing to suffer teething troubles with QYF the system is achieving good results (tests at DRA Bingleaves show consistent accuracies of approximately 8m). Incidentally, over 50% of QYF system boards returned as defective are subsequently tested and found to be fault free. When MOD State 0 is reached later this year the current freeze on QYF will stop and the new improved software version will be distributed. It is planned that all MMs will be fitted by Jan 99.

When Hyperfix is finally shut down in March 2000 all MMs will be Military GPS, Commercial GPS and Trisponder capable. These systems, along with the fallback modes of short scope buoy and radar fixing, will provide the long term future of MCM PN.

Navigation - personnel problems dominate the Navigation desk in-tray at MFP - a number of Navigators have dropped off the plot at short notice - which has tested the

system of emergency re-supply to the limit - and there is also a fleetwide shortage of Navigator's Yeomans. Young Navigators do not have the time, training or experience to correct the chart outfit whilst carrying out their normal duties, yet it is a job that needs doing otherwise the outfit quickly becomes out of date and unreliable. In an effort to build up the numbers, and also to provide insurance against the Nav's Yeo being drafted/landed without relief, it has been decided to add a second Nav's Yeo line number to the SOC for all MM/PPs. Until this change is fully implemented ships suffering a gapped Nav's Yeo billet should develop a swift and close liaison with Lt Cdr Ray Blair (SWO(N)) on PNB 26681. Commander N to FOSF recognises the situation is unacceptable as it stands and will consider preventing the ship from sailing if the chart outfit cannot be maintained in accordance with BR 45(7), or if the safety of the ship will be in jeopardy. It is a CAPEs requirement that the ship's chart outfit is inspected every 6 months by FOSF Staff Nav's Yeo (PNB 26654). The Navigation message is the same as BT's - it's good to talk - so get on the phone or come into the office if you're in Portsmouth.

Despite the manning problems, results at OST have been very encouraging with many fine assessments being achieved. Common weak points during Staff Harbour Check include poor T&Ps organisation, poor knowledge and application of Fleet Notice to Mariners and a less than thorough spot check organisation. Performances at sea have been generally impressive but two important areas - blind pilotage and chart support - leave plenty of room for improvement. Don't just hope that your chart assistant will deliver the goods - train him/her to do so; EPs accurate to within 5 seconds should be possible with the right training. Watchkeeper's Forums can play an important part in this training and should be held regularly; plan it into the Shortcast and get involvement from all members of the Command/Bridge team. Whilst talking to OPS about the Shortcast don't forget ROR tests/training; results have improved over the last year but are still not at the level which you and your fellow professional Seaman officers can feel complacent about.

## THE WARFARE OFFICE - WHO'S WHO

Cdr W	Cdr Sean O'Reilly	26315	SWO(N)2	Lt John Garrat (tbrb Lt J Vallis 10/97)	26310
WDCO/Cdr W PA	Mrs Marilyn Knight	26314	SWO(PN)	Lt Cdr Rob Lawson	26312
SWO MCD 1	Lt Cdr Paul Raisbeck	26308	SANO	Lt Cdr Richard Hill	26305
DSWO MCD 1	Lt Tony McDonald	26309	ASANO	Mr Tony Potts	26306
SWO MCD 2	Lt Cdr Mike Leaney	26313	RSO	Lt Cdr (Rtd) Alan Bayliss	26300
ASWO MCD 2	CPO Dickie Wardrope (tbrb CPO Davis 10/97)	26307	CAPEsMAN	WO Nobby Clark (tbrb WO Tony Mulrain 10/97)	26311
SWO(N)	Lt Cdr Ray Blair	26681			

# MINEWARFARE/DIVING REPRESENTATION AT NORTHWOOD

By The Northwood 3

## Background

1. The major changes and re-organisations that have swept through the Fleet in the past few years have not left the Fleet Headquarters at Northwood unaffected, nor the way that Minewarfare, Diving and EOD is represented here or indeed how the Command and Control of the Fleet is conducted. It is hoped that this article will clarify what have been the most significant changes and developments and describe what everyone here at Northwood does - assuming we can decide!

2. The principal changes over recent years have been:

a. The disbandment of the old Major NATO Command (MNC) of CINC Channel (CINCHAN) and its replacement by the Principal Sub-ordinate Command (PSC) of COMNAVNORTHWEST during the NATO reorganisation of 1992. This effectively changed the NATO side of Northwood from a policy making to an operational HQ, with the loss of one of the MW Staff Officers on the staff. Although this did not directly affect the UK at the time it was to have major repercussions later.

b. The loss of COMMMW's Type Commander Status in late 95 and the replacement of the post of Staff Officer COMMMW at the 4\* Headquarters by the position of the Staff Officer (MFP) as part of the Flag Officer Surface Flotillas (FOSF) Staff.

c. The establishment of a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) within the Northwood site in April 1996.

d. The ongoing re-establishment of the N7 (Warfare) Division within the Staff of CINCFLEET. This division was originally lost as a result of the Fleetman review however, it became apparent that the provision of advice to the Commander-in-Chief on a whole range of subjects affecting warfare at a 4\* level was required and the formation of a 4\* Warfare Staff, at Northwood, was finally agreed at the Fleet Flag Officers meeting in May 97 after approximately a year of study and discussion.

3. All the changes mentioned above have to one degree or another affected the organisation at Northwood and hence how Minewarfare, Diving and EOD issues are raised and staffed within the various Headquarters be it PJHQ, Fleet or NATO. Looking at each in a little more detail we find:

## NATO

4. As discussed, the changes within NATO, principally the disbandment of CINCHAN, left the NATO Command at the Northwood site as an Operational (vice Policy making) Headquarters. The position of the Deputy Staff Officer Plans & Policy (Minewarfare) DSOP(MW) was therefore disbanded and policy making decisions moved to the Supreme Headquarters Allied Forces Europe (SHAPE). However, there was no corresponding increase in the numbers of minewarfare staff officers at SHAPE and therefore, in

practice, most of the in depth minewarfare issues were passed back to Northwood via Commander in Chief North West (CINCNW) for staffing. However, with the reduced numbers of officers at Northwood this not surprisingly proved a problem.

5. At the time, the Royal Navy (representing UK PLC) had no minewarfare staff officers within NATO. Therefore, following discussions between CINCEASTLANT and COMMMW a pragmatic solution was reached whereby SO COMMMW would be dual hatted as DSOP(MW). Hence, with one mighty bound the UK would get a finger in the NATO pie and NATO would get an additional staff officer at no cost! This arrangement worked effectively however, it soon became apparent that the volume of work still required a dedicated minewarfare officer within the NATO organisation and eventually in January 97 it was formally decided by NATO to re-establish the post of DSOP(MW). Nations were approached to fill the position and the UK, anxious to maintain a representative within NATO, offered the services of a Lieutenant Commander which was eagerly accepted.

6. The position of DSOP(MW) is therefore now a completely separate post filled by Lieutenant Commander John LAW Royal Navy. His responsibilities are as follows:

a. Assist in the preparation and maintenance of mining and MCM Plans, Agreements and Operations Orders on MW for the CINCEASTLANT/COMNAVNORTHWEST area.

b. Assist in the planning of the MW aspects of NATO Livexs.

c. Be a member of the Mine Warfare Working Party Panel 3 (Exercise Evaluation).

d. Represent CINCEASTLANT/COMNAVNORTHWEST at NATO Minewarfare Conferences and Ad Hoc Working Groups etc.

e. Provide advice and briefings to CINCEASTLANT/COMNAVNORTHWEST Staff on all matters concerning MW Policy and Planning.

f. Contribute to the formation of Staff Policy in the long term planning of MW.

7. It is important to remember that John does not work for the UK although he obviously views problems through dark blue glasses and is in a position to consider early UK perspectives and difficulties with NATO ideas and plans etc. The planning of NATO exercises and participation as a DICONSTAFF or MW Cell Leader represents by far the bulk of his work and involves a considerable amount of travelling to Europe and the US - as John says "It's a dirty job but someone has to do it!"

# REPRESENTATION AT NORTHWOOD

8. His address and telephone contact numbers, when he is in the country (!) are as follows:

DSOP(MW)	Direct Dial:	(01923) 843737
Room 1.9	IVSN:	531 3737
Atlantic Building	Military:	96 30 43737
HMS WARRIOR	Fax:	(01923)843679
Eastbury Park		
Northwood,		
Middlesex HA6 3HP		

## The Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ)

9. The Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ) was born out of a need to move away from the ad hoc joint headquarters that were formed whenever a joint operation reared its ugly head (Northwood 82/High Wycombe 91). It avoids the need to draw upon staff from other headquarters and by its permanent, truly joint nature suggests that its members will be better equipped to deal with purple operations. It was established on 1 April 1996 which, considering that the time lag between the Secretary of State identifying the need for a Joint Headquarters and its establishment was less than two years, was quite an achievement.

10. The PJHQ sits in the higher chain of command between the Ministry of Defence, which gives political direction and the new Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ) which takes operational control and fights the battle. The JFHQ is the headquarters which deploys into theatre for an operation (eg Dhahran during the Gulf in 91). Depending on the nature of the operation the JFHQ may be ashore or afloat as both operational CVS now have an interim JFHQ afloat equipment fit. The JFHQ has a much smaller staff than the PJHQ and when not deployed is based at Northwood as another division of the PJHQ.

11. Any future operation will be Commanded by a Joint Commander, who will be "The commander with OPCOM of assigned units" and who will be based in and head the PJHQ. In a small scale operation he will most likely be the Chief of Joint Operations (CJO) who is the normal head of the PJHQ. In a larger operation one of the single service chiefs may be appointed as Joint Commander. The Joint Force Commander is "The commander with OPCON of assigned units" and he will usually be based in theatre.

12. This will mean a change for each of the single service organisations. In future operations CINCFLEET will retain Full Command of maritime units and will be responsible for providing military capability (operational readiness, training etc) and support to enable combat effective forces to be deployed sustained and recovered from an Area of Operations (AOO) but will have no operational control.

13. The PJHQ's primary function is therefore "To be responsible, when directed by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), for the planning and exercises of UK-led joint, potentially joint, combined and multinational operations, and for exercising operational command of UK Forces assigned to combined and multinational operations led by others, in order to achieve MODUK's military-strategic objectives". The PJHQ is therefore the Operational Commander for all current UK Joint Operations. These include Operation Lodestar (Former Yugoslavia), Operation Armilla and Operations

Warden and Jural (Patrolling the No Fly Zones in Northern and Southern Iraq). Other PJHQ responsibilities are:

- The monitoring of designated areas of interest.
- Contingency planning.
- To contribute to MOD decision-making.
- To formulate Joint Warfare doctrine at operational level.
- Plan, Conduct and Evaluate Joint Force Exercises.
- Focus for Joint Rapid Deployment Force (JRDF) planning and exercising.
- Advise/access joint capabilities/standards.

14. To understand how difficult it is to plan joint operations, each single service was asked how it would respond to the order to "Secure a Building" - The Royal Navy replied it would turn off the lights, lock the door and go home, the Army said it would surround the building with a body of men, a passing Royal Marine responded he would rush at the building, kick the door down and take no prisoners whilst the Royal Air Force wanted to take out a long term lease with an option to buy!

15. At sea you should not, on a day-to-day basis, be greatly affected by the PJHQ but rest assured that this new system should produce a more rapid response in the normal course however, should you be in the right place at the right time when a crisis occurs, PJHQ will provide the strategic (MOD/PJHQ) and operational (PJHQ/JFHQ) direction.

16. The current minewarfare officer on the staff of the PJHQ is Lieutenant Commander Chris LADE Royal Navy or SO2 J3 (M) (MW) to give him is full title who may be contacted via:

The Permanent Joint Headquarters	Direct: (01923) 846210
NCC Room 2010	Mil: 93 60 46210 (Patron)
HMS WARRIOR	Fax: 93 60 46295 (Secure)
Eastbury Park	SMA: PJHQUK
Northwood	(Fao SO2 J3(M)(MW))
Middlesex HA6 3HP	

## Fleet N7 (Warfare) Division

17. As discussed, with the nature of warfare becoming more integrated and complex not only at platform level but in every discipline of maritime warfare and indeed across air, land and maritime warfare the decision was taken earlier this year to re-form a warfare division at the Fleet HQ. The aim of the new N7 (Warfare) Division will be to provide an overarching 4\* level warfare staff capable of producing a focused and coherent framework for warfare development with the various Type Commanders, across all warfare disciplines. The responsibility of the separate Type Commanders (FOSF in the case of minewarfare) to develop and maintain Military Capability (MC) at platform level and produce ships fit for tasks to Fleet however, will remain.

18. The exact Terms of Responsibilities (TORs) of the N7 staff officers are still being formulated but several key areas of the Divisions development are already in place. The N7

# REPRESENTATION AT NORTHWOOD

Division formed on 1 Sept 96 with a nucleus of officers from the MC subdivision of N8 (Policy). It will itself comprise a number of sub-divisions one of which will be Under Water Warfare (UWW) headed by a Commander with 2 Lieutenant Commanders, one ASW and one MW, working as his subordinates. The Division will be based above ground in the JHQ buildings at Fleet and the addresses and contact numbers will be promulgated when known.

19. The intended minewarfare staff officer (SO2 N7 (MW)) is Lieutenant Commander Chris Ameye Royal Navy who joins on 9 Sept 97. As mentioned the work and responsibilities of the Division are still being discussed but are likely to include:

- a. Long term policy development with the MOD.
- b. To co-ordinate and direct warfare development.
- c. To provide warfare input into the Fleet Plan,
- d. Provision of warfare advice to CINCFLEET etc.
- e. To provide advice on LTC matters at the Fleet level.
- f. Audit of Military Capability through the annual Milcap.
- g. Warfare development objectives (Priority/employment of the Maritime Warfare Centre etc)
- h. Development of Operational Requirements and output of MOD funded Applied Research Packages (16A for minewarfare)
- i. Directing analysis of exercises.
- j. To contribute to weapon system development.
- k. To contribute to the formation of Fleet Training Policies.

20. The importance of the division will continue to grow throughout its development, which is likely to take some time, but ultimately we are likely to feel its effects whatever platform or operation we happen to be on/undertaking.

### Staff Officer (MFP)

21. Finally, this brings us to the Staff Officer (MFP) who is your, or perhaps more accurately the Commodore's - since he pays the wages - only dedicated staff officer at Northwood. As stated until April 97 he was dual hatted as DSOP(MW) and worked out of the NATO (Atlantic) Building on the Northwood site. Although this was a sensible location whilst working for NATO it did leave SO(MFP) remote from the rest of the other Type Commanders representatives and the Fleet Operational Staff that they support. It was therefore decided once the post of DSOP(MW) was re-established to re-locate SO (MFP) back into the underground National Command Centre (NCC) adjacent to the Fleet Operations Officer (FOO) or more accurately SO1 N3 (Ops) and FOSF's Surface Fleet Programming Officer (SFPROGO). Hopefully, this move will be completed by early July 97 along with a similar move of the MFP Northwood site administration support staff (ie 1xWriter) to an above ground office. These arrangements should hopefully raise the profile of

minewarfare within the Fleet Operational Staff which had suffered slightly post the move to the NATO building whilst dual hatted.

22. The current incumbent of the post is Lieutenant Commander Chris DAVIES Royal Navy - there was a cunning plan for all minewarfare staff offices at Northwood to be called Chris for simplicity but unfortunately John Law has derailed the plan slightly. His primary responsibility is to represent Cdre MFP at the 4\* Headquarters and provide advice and guidance on specialist minewarfare immediate diving/EOD and fishery protection issues to CINCFLEET officers (Plans/Policy and Operational) which historically have not been available from any other source at Northwood. Other responsibilities include:

- a. To contribute to the formation of staff policy in the long term planning of minewarfare.
- b. To ensure proper consideration of minewarfare in wider warfare discussions at the 4\* Headquarters.
- c. To plan and support NATO/National invitation Livexs into which the Royal Navy programs assets - this has included Joint Maritime Courses from JMC 971 onwards.
- d. To act as the Type Commanders specialist minewarfare/diving representative on the Fleet Force Generation and Support Group (FFGSG) which is the method by which CINCFLEET generates and supports assets required by and declared to the PJHQ. Post September this function may transfer to the new SO2 N7(MW) in which case it is likely that SO(MFP) would become the MW advisor on the Fleet Alternative Battle Staffs (FOSF/DFOSF) a concept that was trialled during JMC 972
- e. To act as the UK national representative and attend NATO Minewarfare Conferences and working parties.

23. If you are visiting the Northwood site, let SO(MFP)'s office know you are coming. He can arrange an NCC/Car pass, lunch etc if you don't have a dedicated host officer, provide a place to change and may even buy a round in the bar although the pockets are deep..... ! His address/contact numbers are as follows:

Room 16	Direct: (01923) 838946
Cormorant Building	Mil: 93 60 38946
HMS WARRIOR	Fax: (01923) 838675 (Unsecure)
Eastbury Park	Fax: (01923) 837874 (Secure)
Northwood	SMA: NWP NORTHWOOD
Middlesex HA6 3HP	

See MFP Northwoods's LVA 301138Z May 97 for full details.

24. Finally, whatever the staff title or organisation for which we work all the minewarfare staff officers at Northwood are here to help you and your ship or unit. If you are unsure who to call, SO(MFP) is a good first bet and he will either deal with your enquiry or put you in touch with a more appropriate officer. In the meantime we will continue to work to provide you with an interesting program/exercise and effective and reliable tools to do the job!

# EXERCISE PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING

By Lt Cdr C Davies

1. So its dark, raining and blowing a bastard. You are 100nm from land in 500m of water and supposed to be carrying out meaningful MCM. You are being protected by DD/FFs which you haven't seen in 5 days and are seriously starting to consider a career with IBM! So what's gone wrong? and how was the exercise planned in the first place?

## EXERCISE PLANNING

2. The grown ups in the Exercise Planning Programme are as follows:

**NECB - NATO Exercise Co-ord Board** - This meets at 2\* level every 6 months and agrees/deconflicts exercise programmes produced by SACLANT/SACEUR. This committee also ensures that most major exercises take place over summer leave and stop/start back to back so a weekend transit in between will be required.

**LERB/AERB - Atlantic/European Ex Review Board** - Apart from not being able to recognise the first letter of the first word in their titles correctly, they also co-ordinate the ex plans of their subordinate commands and produce a 5yr rolling programme. They also ensure all exercises will start/stop on a Bank Holiday Monday and finish in ports which are gash runs ashore.

**OSE - (Officer Scheduling the Exercise)** - NATO Command responsible (that's detailed off) for sponsoring an exercise, the production of the EXSPEC (See para 6) and losing the mail during the exercise.

**OCE - (Officer Conducting the Exercise)** - The poor sucker that is responsible for planning and running the exercise. For major exercises there may be several OCES, which is where the first level of confusion and mayhem could arise.

3. Once the exercise details are known each nation will then allocate assets dependent on their availability, perceived benefits of the exercise and other commitments - lets say 1 MCMTA, 3MMs, 1 FDU and 1 FSU. The next stage is to plan the exercise with my job to ensure UK MCM PLC gets the best value for money/runs ashore etc. The current core exercises for the UK are:

**Strong Resolve** - a Bi-MNC major joint/combined exercise involving the deployment of an NETF with amphibious forces and both land and air elements. Conducted in early spring every 3 years with the next scheduled for 98.

**Resolute Response** - A Bi-MNC NTF Livex which concentrates on supporting operations to contain/resolve a Med crisis. It exercises protection of Atlantic shipping, convoys and combatants to and from the Med. Once again this exercise takes place every 3 years with the next scheduled for ??.

**Northern Lights** - also a NTF Livex which is designed to demonstrate and improve the readiness of participating forces and HQs under the current in place NATO Command Structure. Scheduled by CINCEASTLANT in

an area from the Norwegian sea to Northern Biscay. Held 3 yearly with the last in 96.

**Linked Seas** - is an NTG exercise, scheduled by CINCIBERLANT which takes place every 2 years generally happening in odd years with MCM2 taking part in the latest (97) with the OCF. It aims to exercise the formation and training of MNMFs which have been formed in response to a regional crisis or limited conflict within the NATO area. It will take place between the IBERLANT AOR and the STROG.

**Baritzan Hinge** - another NTF Livex, similar to Northern Lights which is designed to demonstrate and improve the readiness of participating forces and HQs within the NATO European Command Structure. Scheduled by CINCNW it normally takes place within the southern portion of the North Sea and the first is scheduled to be held in 1997.

**Blue Harrier** - A dedicated MCM Livex held in the eastern North Sea/Baltic. Scheduled by COMNAVNORTHWEST/COMNORTH and COMBALTAP in rotation it is actually organised and well executed alternatively by ADMIRALDANFLEET (97) and CINCGERFLEET (98). It is held every year.

## PLANNING MEETINGS

4. These are normally attended by a National Representative of each nation that is contributing forces to the exercise and the NATO commands in whose Sea Areas the exercise will be conducted. The schedule is not rigid and is tailored to fit the scale of the exercise. For smaller exercises e.g. Baritzan Hinge 97 (Who thinks of these names!) the two CPTs are combined and known as the Main Planning Conference (MPC).

## INITIAL PLANNING CONFERENCE (IPC)

5. The majority of the business of the IPC is carried out in a Plenary session with some syndicate work and the meeting can last up to 5 days. The primary objective is to produce/revise the Exercise Specification (EXSPEC) in the light of force commitments and command preferences. Consequently, the IPC is largely a "talking shop" during which a well organised staff can have a major influence on the shape of an exercise. Lets say for our exercise (Amphib in nature) this will include 3 Cdo Bde, the use of a CVS in the LPH role and the MMs et al conducting Advanced Force Operations plus follow on ops in an AOA. The IPC is normally attended, for the UK, by representatives from the MOD/CINCFLLEET. Commands are usually represented down to TF level

## EXPEC (Exercise Specification)

6. This contains a broad outline of the exercise and includes:

The aim	Exercise Objectives
Scale of the exercise	Outline scenario
OSE and OCE(s)	Concept of Operations
Time frame	Force Requirements
Geographical area.	Planning timetable

# EXERCISE PROGRAMMING AND PLANNING

## CENTRAL PLANNING TEAM 1

7. The CPTs are where the detailed structure of the exercise is worked out in syndicates and documented within the Exercise Order (EXOPORD). This is also where detailed problems start to raise their ugly heads. The only beach which has an adjacent land training area and is hence where the Marines would wish to land is also the main area of the local fishing community, so no MCM in front of the beach. It is also at the end of an International Airport runway, so no flying either! Some compromise is inevitable at this stage if the exercise is to get off the ground but this is where a loss of focus in our training requirements will also happen if we are not careful or well represented. At this stage of the planning Exercise and Analysis Objectives are also decided and are included into the draft of the Exopord which will normally be distributed after CPT1.

## EXOPORD (Exercise Operation Order)

8. This contains the detailed information necessary for the conduct of the exercise. It should only contain amplifying material peculiar to the exercise and should not repeat items covered in standard NATO publications.

## CENTRAL PLANNING TEAM 2 (CPT)

9. The majority of CPT2 work is carried out in syndicates with a daily co-ordination meeting of syndicate leaders and national representatives. Again, pre-planning and good presentation are the keys to achieving the best for our units. A typical timeline for a major exercise is:

IPC	21 Months
CPT1	14 Months
CPT2	10 Months
FPC	5 Months (See para 12)
Pre sail	3 Days (See para 13)

The timeline for an exercise is usually determined by the requirement to meet a major event, such as an amphibious landing or the outbreak of hostilities. During the CPT2 the detailed sequence of events is determined for each TG/TU and the Conduct of Operations is documented within Annex D of the Exopord. Naturally, speed/time/distance are major factors (honest!).

10. NATO exercises normally start with 3-5 days of training evolution's at TG/TU level. They used to be referred to as a

Combat Enhancement Training (CET) phase and were designed to ensure units were up to speed before the start of the tactical phase. Nowadays the trend is towards Force Integration Training (FIT) which is necessary to weld together a Multi national Maritime Force (MNMF) - the current way NATO does its business.

11. FIT at CPT2 level is discussed in terms of timeframe, geographical area and availability of assets, the outline programme is published in the second draft of the Exopord which appears after CPT2. CTFs are normally tasked to carry out the detailed planning of serials that will be carried out by their TGs, excepting inputs from subordinate commands, and to present their programme for approval at the FPC. It is inevitable that FIT programmes are in a state of flux right up to STARTEX and much of the detail has to be promulgated by a string of signals.

## FINAL PLANNING CONFERENCE

12. Final Planning Conferences are variable feasts and on occasions they may not be required. The amount of work necessary is dependent on the quality of the preceding planning and the magnitude of unforeseen changes, such as the withdrawal of forces (rare) and changed perceptions by senior staffs (common). In essence, an FPC should carry out a thorough review of the latest EXOPORD draft and fine-tune it as necessary. For the UK MCM world this conference is normally attended by the Operations Officer of the Squadron that will undertake the exercise.

13. NATO is attempting to change the way the Planning Conferences described above are organised. In essence, the replacement of dedicated exercise planners by operational planners (i.e. the commands that will undertake the exercise say MCM2) is envisaged. Whilst this initially sounds sensible, commands such as MCM Squadrons, who have a very limited number of personnel to go around may well not be able to make some or even all of the planning conferences thus being unable to push for their training requirements or other aims to be considered and included.

## PRE-SAIL CONFERENCES

14. The final part of the planning cycle is the pre-sail briefings and conferences attended by individual ships and units. After this its time to put it all into practice and see if it works - happy sailing!

**And finally from Northwood**

# SIGNATURE REDUCTION AND RANGING

Our profile in this area remains high. The drive continues to increase awareness of signature reduction and control, not only within ships but also at Project and platform level.

Since the move down from Rosyth, the Cdre MFP Ranging Budget has been integrated into the FOSF bid. In order to harmonise procedures SIGO to FOSF, in conjunction with DSWO(MCD1), issued SFTM 14/97 which details the ranges available and how to book them. Ops Officers should find all the information needed to effectively plan a ranging in that SFTM.

In-theatre operational ranging is becoming increasingly important with the move towards out of area ops. The current capability consists of the Mobile DG Range maintained by DTEO staff at Gosport. Mobile acoustic ranging is currently embryonic, although DTEO Loch Goil have indicated that some facility could be provided if required. Current Cdre MFP policy is to deploy the Mobile DG Range annually and recent deployments on Operation PIKE and Exercise LINKED SEAS have proved the flexibility of this asset. Plans are in hand to deploy the range further afield next year.

## SWO 2 SHOWS HIS HARDWARE (FUTURE PROJECTS)

By Lt. Cdr Mike Leany

### Forthcoming Attractions:

#### Advanced Concept Technology Demonstrator

An American initiative to bring COT technology into service as quickly as possible, and involves the operator at an early stage of procurement. MCM 3 is heading a delegation to observe and participate in JFTEX 97-3. This demonstration takes place at the end of August off Camp Lejeune (E Coast USA), and will involve the following equipments:

#### Advanced Sensors

UW mine detection, classification and identification system with a high coverage rate.

#### Magic Lantern (Adaptation)

Upgraded Laser Linescan system with an 'enhanced tactical decision aid' to detect, classify and localise minefields in shallow water.

#### Advanced Lightweight Influence Sweep System

An acoustic/magnetic sweep for use in SW/VSW.

#### Explosive Neutralisation Advanced Technology Demonstration

Consists of a Line Charge, a Surf Zone Array, and a Beach Zone Array with a fire control system. Deployed from an LCAC by rockets, they utilise shaped charges to counter ordnance.

#### Near Term Reconnaissance System

Unmanned Undersea Vehicles (UUV's) deployed and recovered by submarines for covert minefield reconnaissance.

#### Littoral Remote Sensing

The fusion of various experimental sensor inputs to detect VSW and beach obstacles.

#### FLEET TACTICAL TRIAL - HMS BRIDPORT

HMS BRIDPORT will be conducting trials against 2 sensor packages laid on the seabed at BUTEC late in June. Data will be collected on Ship, ROV and Diver signatures. Analysis of the results will be undertaken by DRA Bingleaves and a full report is to follow.

#### SANDOWN CLASS OPERATIONAL EVALUATION

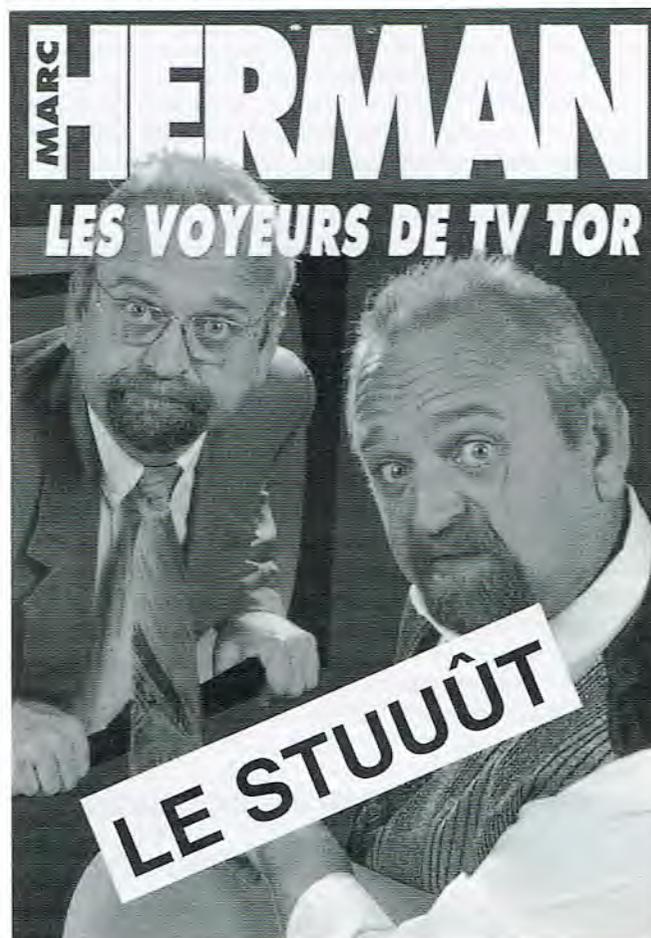
Good progress has been made with the OPEVAL, and the report for Stage 2 undertaken by HMS INVERNESS and SANDOWN is almost complete. Minehunting was conducted in shallow, medium and deep minefields in the Clyde approaches and at BUTEC, providing masses of good data. The final reports will be given a wide

distribution. Further evaluation took place during Blue Harrier 97 in the Baltic, and Alcudra 97 around the Balearics.

#### MCM IN SUPPORT OF AMPHIBIOUS OPS, AND VSW MCM/EOD

These topics retain a high profile, and the DNO paper 'MCM in Support of Amphibious Operations' has circulated numerous times at many levels in the quest for endorsement. This should be achieved in the near future. An Ad-Hoc Working Group has been set up to look at MCM/EOD in VSW.

Objectives have been agreed, and the latest version of EXTAC 620 (Amphib Ops in a Mine Environment) has been issued for review.



Confirmation that as well as his daytime job at the DDS, WO(D) Piggy TROTTER finds time to tour the comedy circuit in BRUSSELS, and has the neck to drop fly posters at the NATO HQ

## CDRE MFP ANALYSIS OFFICE

By Lt Cdr Richard Hill

In October 1995 the post of Staff Analysis Office became a MW/MCD appointment due to the demise of the WRNS Fleet Analyst Branch. The first incumbent was, and still is, Lt Cdr Richard HILL RN. He is assisted by Mr Tony POTTS, a Civil Servant of Assistant Scientific Officer grade.

The Analysis Office is responsible to CDR W (Cdr Sean O'REILLY RN) for the reporting of Operational Capability (OC) of MMs through use of Weapon Practice Assessments (WPA) and analysis of directed NATO or National exercises.

### OPERATION PIKE

During Operation PIKE, MMs conduct minehunting and minesweeping (CIS) Weapon Practice Assessments (WPA) to assess ship's OC through the award of a Measure of Performance (MOP). The assessments also help to identify weak areas of minewarfare systems, operations or tactics. These weak areas are passed to equipment projects or SWO(MCD)2 for tactical issues. In the past 20 months, 22 WPA assessments have been completed; the aim is for all MMs to conduct a WPA annually, although this is not always possible due to the busy exercise schedule.

### NATO EXERCISES

For certain directed exercises the Analysis Team conduct analysis of ship's records forwarded at the end of the exercise; these records are analysed along with mine positions (passed by the exercise co-ordinator) and a report is produced highlighting permanent points of the exercise, shortfalls in tactics or equipment. In the past 20 months the following exercises have been analysed: Blue Harrier, Alcudra, Linked Seas and Purple Star. Analysis assistance has been given to COMINWARCOM in the United States and the Permanent Analysis Team (PAT) in Northwood.

### OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS (OA) RECORDING

The Hunt Class OA recording package has been well proven and data has been extracted and analysed for many exercises and live operations. OA recording has been used extensively in preparation of data for the Hunt Mid-Life Update (HMLU) and has more recently contributed to NATO planning and evaluation tools (including MCM EXPERT). However the NAUTIS OA recording package is not as mature as its CAAIS counterpart. Some shortcomings have been identified

and a get well programme is now underway with GEC to solve these minor problems. It is expected that the Batch II Sandowns will receive the updated OA package first with the plan to retro-fit Batch Is in due course,

### VERSATILE EXERCISE MINE MARK 2 (VEM MK2)

DSWE is the Versatile Exercise Mine Mark I (VEM I) Project Manager. A modification to the original VEM is in development at present. The VEM II will have better acoustic, magnetic and pressure sensors and has a planned ISD of late 1998. A prototype version has been used on several occasions recently during OP PIKE and JMCs and results have been very promising. HMS BRECON became the first RN minehunter to recover the VEM Mk II during PIKE 2/97.

### MTSS

The Minewarfare Tactical Support System (MTSS) is being provided with an OA analysis package which will replace the Minewarfare Operational Analysis Tool (MOAT) currently used to analyse CAAIS data. NAUTIS data is currently analysed manually or via EXCEL based spreadsheet programs using data recorded from both NAUTIS and a dedicated data logging laptop supplied by MWC Portsdown for specific exercises. With the introduction of an updated NAUTIS OA package all MM analysis will be conducted using MTSS.

### REAL TIME PERFORMANCE MONITORING EQUIPMENT (RTPME)

RTPME has recently been updated for both Hunt and Sandown Classes; predictions are now more realistic, especially if hypothetical targets are used. The RTPME Working Party is being re-convened shortly to discuss areas of possible development; ships will be invited to attend if available. MOM2/97 gives Sandown operating procedures and BR8513(2C1) is in the process of being updated for the Hunts.

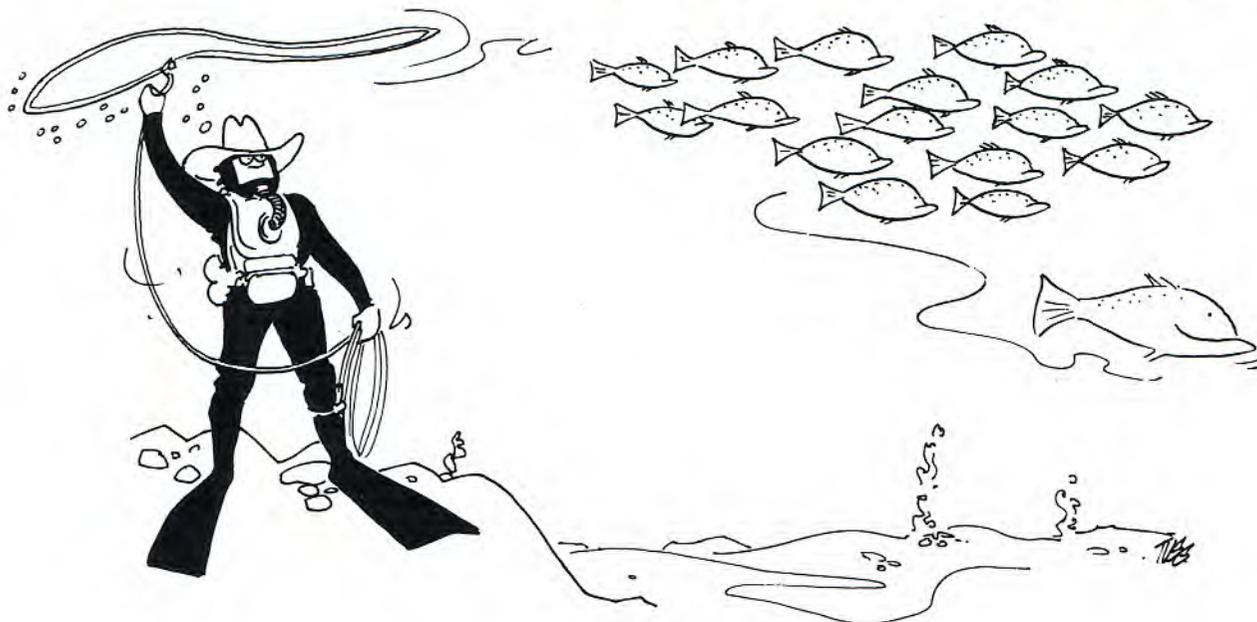
### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

Both SANO and ASANO are the HQ IT advisors, they also assist in the selection of IT equipment for ships and are a useful source of advice from the use of MS Office to IT Security. They are there to help.

The Office welcomes visitors at any time to discuss records, WPA or any minewarfare or IT related topics. Operations Officers remember FOST (MPV) OST Guide para 0733!

# THE FLEET DIVING GROUP

By Lt Cdr Mike Allen RN, CO Fleet Diving Group



## Introduction

With this short article I aim to outline the FDG structure and how it has operated over the past year or so and then highlight some of the changes that are going to happen in the Group during 1998.

## Current Structure

As outlined in DCI 181/95 (Reorganisation of FDG Responsibilities) the group is the UK's prime mobile diving team capable of operating world-wide for Special Operations, Mine Countermeasures, EOD and Battle Damage Assessment and Repair/Underwater Engineering roles'. As most are aware the

FDG is divided into 3 peacetime Fleet Diving Units (FDUs) with additional units formed during hostilities as follows:

FDU1 - responsible for Special Operations and diving/IEDD support to SF world-wide.

FDU2 - deployable world-wide for general CD/MCM/EOD tasks including some specialised roles.

FDU3 - responsible for Battle Damage Assessment and Repair (BDAR) plus underwater engineering (UWE) world-wide and diving/EOD equipment trials.

Fleet Diving Unit 4/5 - dormant; formed in crisis/tension/war and may include members of the RNR diving branch.

The FDG operates from RECLAIM Building at Horsea Island under the operational command and control of FOSF although it has the benefit of a considerable amount of autonomy in the planning and execution of its commitments.

## Recent Programme

The 3 Fleet Diving Units are always busy with their own particular problems; FDU 1 continues to operate in its highly specialised area offering support to the SF. With a complement of thirteen they regularly take part in many short, specialised exercises such as LEMON PEEL and LOBSTER POT in addition to maintaining currency in their unique skills which include CQB with pistol, parachuting, rapid roping, climbing, O2 swimming and IEDD in addition to the usual diving work-ups.

The FDU 2 programme has a longer cycle; they need to conduct month long 75m DDWUs in Scotland three times a year in addition to their exercise commitments to retain the demanding skills of surface supported 75m diving from inflatables. Exercise commitments during the past 12 months have included deployment to the USA, Germany, Singapore, Malaysia and Turkey. Spending up to 75 percent of the year out of base they move around the world courtesy of the RAF transport force and are often the only UK element committed to an exercise. (Four days in a C-130 IS cattle class.) With a fully



Photograph 1 - FDU 1 on MCT Operations

## THE FLEET DIVING GROUP

complemented team of 18 they are also the largest of the Fleet Diving Units.

Fleet Diving Unit 3 have, as I am sure you all know, had a busier than usual time during the past 18 months or so with the trials of the new CDBA. From the competitive comparison stage (when there were three sets) to the final completion of the pre-production trials with just the one set, the work was relentless, Fort William almost became their second home and the rectal thermometer a way of life! In between they also conducted various other underwater trials from assessing the new BCA to testing suit inflation valves and whips for the DSSCCA. They also solved an underwater engineering problem on HMS SCEPTRE in St Croix and cleared an offshore weapons range



*Photograph 2 - FDU 2 Deploying by RAF C-130 Hercules*

off Cyprus (Op UPRAISE 96). With 12 personnel they are the smallest, just, of the Fleet Diving Units.

What should be plainly evident is that, with only 53 clearance divers, the Fleet Diving Units have a wide ranging set of responsibilities. Considerable demands are placed on them due to the levels of recall they are all under (FDU 1 -30 mins and 2 hours, FDU 2/3 - both 6 hours - to re-role and deploy), and the workload can be heavy. However, they continue to fulfill all of their commitments.

### **The Future and a New Task - Very Shallow Water (VSW) MCM**

Over the past few years there has been considerable interest in VSW MCM. This stems from the Gulf conflict in 1991 when it became apparent that no one had the capability to clear boat lanes for an amphibious landing. This severely constrained the military options of the Coalition Commander. As a result, and after much high level discussion, the decision was taken to form a specialist VSW MCM Diving Unit along similar lines to those recently formed in Australia and America. Because of the nature of the role a considerable amount of time will have to be spent in training. New operational methods and techniques will need to be developed and new skills learnt especially from other agencies. It wasn't feasible to give this as an additional task to one of the 3 FDUs without severely impinging their existing commitments so it was decided to re-examine the tasks allocated to all the Diving Groups.

Some of the finer details are still in the planning stage and I am deliberately avoiding mention of implementation dates, however the following outlines the envisaged role changes from early 1998:

FDU 1 will continue to support SF operations world-wide, as necessary, in exactly the same way as they do now - their role will not change.

FDU 2 will train to conduct both overt and covert beach and harbour clearance.

FDU 3 will assume responsibility for MM, overt beach and harbour clearance (standard MCM) and 80m CDBA diving including specialised roles. They will continue lead in SUBMISS exercises.

FDU4/5 will continue to provide the additional flexibility needed in-theatre and their function will depend on priorities.

FDU 2 will only lose 75m surface supported diving when FDU 3 are fully worked up on CDBA for deep recovery operations and MIE. Thereafter, surface supplied diving will no longer be conducted below 50m by the RN. Overseas underwater engineering tasks will be conducted by either the Northern or Southern Diving Group, depending on which one is best qualified and available. This is a logical solution because these Groups conduct the majority of engineering tasks carried out by RN divers and they are therefore the most up to date with current practices. FDU 4/5 will not change in structure.

As a result of the VSW role FDU 2 can expect a considerable amount of new specialist training in insertion and extraction techniques along with more general military skills. Fitness will be a major factor and the Divers Basic Fitness Test will become a standard assessment for joining. There will therefore be a certain amount of common training between FDU 1 and FDU 2 but to allow greater flexibility FDU 3 may also benefit from cross-training when the opportunity allows and therefore all three units will need to be particularly fit.

### **Conclusion**

The restructuring of the roles of all the Diving Groups prompted by the need to conduct VSW MCM is an evolutionary step; as circumstance and priorities change so too should the organisations conducting them. This restructuring gives the Fleet Group a new role, VSW; spreads the other roles more evenly and results in Underwater Engineering being done by those best qualified to do it - the ones who do it now. Finally trials will now be done by whoever is the best unit to do them; get used to conducting operations and writing constructive reports on new equipment in addition to the reports you usually do.



*Photograph 3 - FDU 3 on Operation UPRAISE in Cyprus*

# WHEN THINGS GO WITH A BANG

By Lt Cdr Rob Hoole

Every now and then, something happens which concentrates the mind. Before the incident described below, I had served on the Plymouth Clearance Diving Team with its usual tally of EOD jobs. During that time, I like to believe that I was extremely safety-conscious and ever mindful of the hazards associated with wartime ordnance. But to be honest, at times I possibly deluded myself that something which had rolled around on the seabed for forty years would not go bang very easily, at least not without the help of a 4lb PE Pack. The events below put paid to any such delusions for all time.

P R 261746Z APR 83

FM FDT IXWORTH  
TO FO PLYMOUTH  
INFO MODUK NAVY  
CINCNAVHOME  
CINCFLEET  
FO PORTSMOUTH  
VERNON

BT  
UNCLAS  
SIC ILL/OAL

A. FO PLYMOUTH ILL/OAL 251942Z APR 83

1. REPORT BY LT R J HOOLE RN, LONG COURSE TRAINING OFFICER, HMS VERNON IAW REF A. ALL TIMES ZULU.

2. AT 251221 APR, FDT IXWORTH WAS DAMAGED BY UNDERWATER EXPLOSION WHILST WEIGHING ANCHOR IN POSN 50 DEG 05 MIN 24 SEC NORTH 005 DEG 00 MIN 54 SEC WEST. THERE WERE NO CASUALTIES AND THE HULL REMAINED WATERTIGHT.

3. NARRATIVE. READ IN TWO COLUMNS:

0730 FDT IXWORTH (RN MANNED BASED HMS VERNON) SAILED FALMOUTH WITH LONG MCD OFFICERS' COURSE AND STAFF EMBARKED FOR DIVING TRAINING FALMOUTH BAY.

0800 ANCHORED IN 48 METRES USING STBD ANCHOR WITH 4 1/2 SHACKLES. COMMENCED DIVING FROM THE STERN.

1151 TERMINATED DIVING OPERATIONS DUE DETERIORATING WEATHER. WIND SE FORCE 4 SEA STATE 4.

1217 SHORTENED TO 2 1/2 SHACKLES WITH ENGINE IDLING. VIOLENT UNDERWATER EXPLOSION LIFTED SHIP, SET ENGINE RACING ASTERN, SEVERED BRIDGE CONTROLS AND CUT ELECTRICAL POWER EXCEPT 24 VOLT BATTERY SUPPLY. BOTH MAN OVERBOARD MARKERS ACTUATED IN BRIDGE WING STOWAGES.

1225 MUSTERED PERSONNEL CORRECT. COMMENCED CHECK FOR LEAKS.

1230 USED ENGINE ROOM FUEL COCKS TO SHUT DOWN AFTER FAILURE BRIDGE EMERGENCY STOPS.

1236 RE-ASSEMBLED VHF AND RAISED FALMOUTH CG CHANNEL 16. REQUESTED ASSISTANCE AND RMAS ILCHESTER RESPONDED HAVING BEEN ALERTED BY MOB MARKER SMOKE.

1240 LET GO PORT ANCHOR TO STOP SHIP'S DRIFT.

1300 ILCHESTER ARRIVED SCENE. LTO AND IXWORTH COXSWAIN TEMPORARILY TRANSFERRED FOR DISCUSSION.

1407 SECURED ILCHESTER TOW.

1408 BROKE, SLIPPED AND BUOYED BOTH CABLES. COMMENCED TOW INTO FALMOUTH HARBOUR.

1500 ASKED BY FALMOUTH DOCK MASTER ON VHF TO CONFIRM IXWORTH WATERTIGHT QUOTE *WE CANNOT LET YOU IN IF YOU ARE GOING TO SINK* UNQUOTE.

1507 SLIPPED TOW IN SHELTER OF FALMOUTH BASIN. BERTHED SOUTH SIDE KINGS JETTY WITH ILCHESTER ASSISTANCE.

4. LIST OF OBVIOUS DAMAGE:

- A. SWITCHBOARD SEVERELY DAMAGED.
- B. MAIN ENGINE LUB OIL COOLER DISCHARGE PIPE FRACTURED.
- C. MAIN ENGINE SALVAGE PUMP SUCTION VALVE FRACTURED AT MANIFOLD.
- D. MAIN ENGINE GOVERNOR CONTROL ARM BRACKETS FRACTURED.
- E. AFTER BALLAST TANK SUCTION VALVE DAMAGED.
- F. HP AIR FLASK MOUNTINGS BROKEN.
- G. BRIDGE INSTRUMENT CONSOLE MOUNTINGS SHEARED.
- H. HOT WATER TANK RUPTURED.
- I. LIGHT FITTINGS SHEARED/SHATTERED.
- J. REFRIGERATOR DOOR SHEARED.
- K. HEADS, SHOWER AND SINKS SHATTERED.
- L. NUMEROUS PIPES, FITTINGS AND FURNISHINGS FRACTURED AND BROKEN.

5. VERNON TECHNICAL TEAM ETA PM 26 APR. HP AIR SYSTEM DRAINED.

6. STBD CABLE RECOVERED BY RMAS HEADCORN AND RETURNED IXWORTH. ANCHOR MISSING AND JOINING SHACKLE (19MM) SPLAYED TWICE NORMAL DIAMETER. PORT ANCHOR AND CABLE NOT FOUND.

7. CONCLUDE ANCHOR ACTUATED IMPACT FUZED BOMB 250KG APPROX.

8. INTEND SUBMIT DETAILED WRITTEN REPORT TO THE CAPTAIN HMS VERNON ON RETURN PORTSMOUTH.

I for one prefer not to think of the consequences had the divers still been in the water.



*Oops!*

## THE BLACKHAWK EXCHANGE

By AB(D) Taylor

It was a close call, carry on with STANS on the Inverness or take a months exchange to the U.S.S Blackhawk, in Florida!! A quick head to head with Cags Lacy and a promise of a bottle of the holy golden Scottish water to the Coxn (Jas Garlick) guaranteed my place and I was soon on a flight from Kiel back to sunny Heathrow. I met up with Lt. Howgill and LS(MW) Webster at Gatwick, the two other lucky members of the exchange. After a long flight, with a few technical problems, we landed at Fort Lauderdale and walked outside, it was at this point that the heat really hit us, this is going to be a good month I thought to myself.



### *The School*

We arrived at the ship at 22:00 local, just as it got alongside. The U.S.S. Blackhawk is an Osprey class mine hunter, an Italian design with 2 Voith Schneider props as her propulsion, very similar to our single roles, minus the bow thrust. The ship has a crew of 51, which at first seemed very large considering that it is not much longer than a Hunt, but after a short period aboard and seeing how the Americans utilised their manpower, it was clear that at times the crew were stretched. The mine hunting system onboard comprised of a Raytheon/Thompson Sintra SQQ 32 variable depth sonar and one vehicle, resembling a large PAP. I was quite disappointed to find that there was no diving team onboard and that they only embarked a team when required, a damn good idea if ever I've heard one.

Within a day I had found every route to my rack and lots of places to hide from the bosun. The next 2 days were spent in Fort Lauderdale soaking up the sun and trying to get drunk on American beer (impossible). The temperature on average was 100 Degrees Fahrenheit and at times rose to as high as 120, Spider must have thought we were going to the North Pole as he didn't take any shorts or T shirts with him 'BLOODY MUPPET!!' We sailed on the Monday for five days noise ranging. The week soon flew past and we were again back in Fort Lauderdale. Four members of the crew decided to take me out for a D.T.S. and show me how to drink! Within three hours two of them were sick one couldn't talk and the other one couldn't walk. I don't call myself a big drinker, but at this point I was just getting the taste for a session. The Ops. officer wanted to know what I had done to his lads, as they were carried back on board. It's a funny old thing, but after that none of the crew would come out with us and go drink for drink!!

We were soon back to sea, after a good Independence Day party and on our way to Panama City on the west coast of Florida. This was the area in which the ship would be carrying out it's part four acceptance trials, it sounded like hard work to me. As we pulled into the dockyard, I noticed a chamber on the jetty, divers I thought. After a bit of detective work I found out that the Coastal Systems Station Panama City was home to the USN's main diving school, experimental diving unit and various other diving, SEAL and EOD teams. On our first day in, LT.

Howgill and I slipped off to the diving school, hoping to get some minutes in during our stay. We spoke to the Master Chief Diver and arranged to join an engineering class for a couple of days, but would pop in to see him at the end of the week to confirm.

The trials started and a watch and station bill for mine hunting was written, as you can imagine I was horrified to find my name on the list of sonar operators!! I tried to explain that I didn't have a clue about the Ops. room and divers didn't do that sort of thing, but to no avail. Three weeks in the Ops. room I thought, I almost wished Cags had won the head to head. Well, my first six hour watch soon arrived and I sat down in front of the set. One of the crew gave me a quick run round and left me to it, I swear I didn't touch a thing, but within fifteen minutes the screen flashed and disappeared "OOPS". Most of the crew thanked me and the next day we were back alongside, sonar tits up. I did tell them not to let me on it. The parts were not available and would take at least a week to come through.

On the Friday the ship sailed to Pensicola, west of Panama City, for a PR exercise to show off the new ship. LT. Howgill and I were left behind to organise the diving. We walked into the diving school, it was a big and well organised unit, with 250 staff and 300 students. The Master Chief Diver asked what sort of diving we wanted to do, I mentioned the MK.16 with little hope. He looked down at his weekly planner, "There's a 2 week course starting on Monday." I looked over to LT. Howgill promising lots of beer. After a bit of negotiating with the ship, LT. Howgill had 2 days diving Superlight 17 and I hit the jackpot joining 9630 MK.16 course. The weekend flew past and I soon joined the course.

The class was made up of an LMCDO's course a couple of naval reservists and myself, a total of 26 students. Each day started at 0600 with a muster followed by 2 hours of sport. The first week was all theory, LT. Howgill found it highly amusing to find me neck high in BR's revising partial pressure formulas etc., for the theory exam, while he was jet skiing and parascending down at the beach. The first week passed and it was soon exam time. Needless to say, as the course was made up of LMCDO's, I came joint first, which really rubbed their noses in it, especially as six of the course failed. Another hazy weekend of sand, sea, surf and beer and we were back at school.



### *Course members at the tank top*

The second week was all practical, in the pool and tank, with two more exams to pass. As the course was so large we were split up into two groups, an AM and PM group. This turned out to be a really good system as we could spend either the

# THE BLACKHAWK EXCHANGE

morning or afternoon at the beach playing volleyball and generally taking it easy. The first dive was just a familiarisation dive in the schools swimming pool, practising reports and general operating drills. The second day was the first practical exam, demonstrating our knowledge of emergency procedures and reaction to these. This dive was also carried out in the pool. On the fourth and fifth day we moved to the schools diving tank, it was very similar to the old one at Gunwarf, with a depth of 50 feet.



*Me prior to one of the tank dives*

Here we were taught tactical deployment of the set in a mine hunting scenario and were also again examined on our emergency procedures. The E.B.S. (emergency breathing system) was introduced to us, it was a twin set that stayed on the surface with a length of hose that went up and down with the lazy shot. If diving with a free mouth piece a second stage reducer was fitted and if diving with an AGA full face mask a Q.R.F. was fitted and could be connected to a fitting on the mask. It was used as an alternative air source should the MK.16 fail. We all had 2 dives in the tank and everyone passed the practical exams.

The last day was spent clearing up. I was a bit disappointed to find out that the school would not give me the course certificate, due to the fact that the course costs a lot of money and I was on it as a freebie. I at least got all the dives logged and have got some experience when our variation of the set comes out. We all parted, with the LMCDO's course carrying on to their EOD phase at India Head, Maryland. There were no open water dives on the course, which seemed strange, as the students were expected to gain experience on the job! Overall I found the MK.16 a vast improvement over our current set, bringing us back into the 20th century. Although at a first glance it looks very complicated, after a while it all falls into place and is fairly easy to set up and operate. The two criticisms that I would make is that it is a very large set for swimming long distances with and that in shallow water it tends to force feed you with gas, although this soon disappears as you descend.

I left the school to rejoin the Blackhawk, for our last weekend in Florida. The crew had organised a farewell B.B.Q. on the beach



*Surfacing after the final practical*

for us, with the use of a ski boat and a couple of jet skis. Overall we had a really good time, although my bank manager wouldn't agree. No sooner had we arrived than we were on our way home, via Atlanta, back in the UK just in time for summer leave. "It's a hard life!"



*Course members carrying out pre dive checks on the Mk.16*

## VIEW FROM THE OUTBACK ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY NEW MIXTURE GAS DIVING - 'VIEWPOINT' RN (EXCHANGE)

By "Flash Mack from Outback", aka Lt Martin Mackey RN (MCD)

The "Yes!!! It's CDBA" article by WO(D) Mo Crang (Vol 7 No 1 Jul 96) was read with enormous interest by a number of Clearance Divers in Australia. So, having been over here in the colony for some 4 months now, I thought I would put something together on the subject of where the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) are with their new mixture Diving Set.

The RAN identified a requirement to replace their Dräger FGT 1A MCM mixture diving set in 1990. As with the RN, a number of replacement options were considered including: the Canadian Siva +; an up-dated Dräger FGT 1A; an Inter Spiro Heliox set; the US Mk 16; and a locally made set. The US Mk 16 Mod 0 was selected as the replacement set and brought into service in 1993. It was designated the SCUBA Mix A5800. A5800 being the first part of the set's project number. The set is used in an MCM environment, and more specifically on the new Huon Class Mine Hunter Coastal (MHC) which comes into service with the RAN in 1998. Incidentally, the Huon class hull, of which there will be 6 platforms on-line by 2004, is moulded from the Italian Lerici class. The principal difference between the A5800 and CDBA is that of the partial pressures of oxygen (PPO<sub>2</sub>). The A5800's PPO<sub>2</sub> is set at 0.75 Bars Absolute whereas the CDBA is set at 1.3 Bars Absolute. The latter therefore having a significant advantage over the former when calculating the diver's decompression requirements.



Lt Cdr Baz Everest RAN (Ex-XO HM Ships QUORN and BERKELEY)

Based on a number of studies, the RAN decided that they will require a diving depth capability of 90m; the set itself is capable of going to 300m. Working closely with the Royal Canadian Navy and adopting the diving tables of the Defence and Civil Institute Environmental Medicine (DCIEM), Canada, the A5800 conversion course was developed.

Instructed at the RAN Diving School, HMAS PENGUIN, the course is 2 weeks long and aims to convert Clearance Divers to the use of the A5800. Additionally, for the diving supervisors, it acquaints them with the new omitted decompression rules and the DCIEM diving tables; the RN



Lt Cdr Dave Triston-Rattay USN (Ex-Chatenden EOD staff)  
'The Perpetual Exchange Officer'

Tables no longer being used except for therapeutics. The school caters for a maximum of 10 CDs per course; 6 supervisors and 4 divers. The courses have been running since the beginning of 1996, and are due to complete in the next few weeks. As with all diving courses the first day is in the classroom studying the set and how it works. The next 2 days are taken up with learning and carrying out the sets Emergency Procedures (EPs). Once the staff are satisfied that the EPs can be carried out correctly, then it is full on diving and supervising. Some of the more difficult decisions I had to make whilst on the course were, how rare was my BBQ steak going to be, and whether I would have to wear a hood or, worse still, a wetsuit jacket over my RAN issue 3mm wetsuit!! (Av water temp 22°C). The final few days are taken up with preparation for the supervisor's practical test, which is based primarily on the requirement to fully understand the new RAN omitted decompression procedures. There is none of the old 5 minutes then 2 minute run-over and what depth for the surface decompression to worry about. After I was able to place to one side the well ingrained RN omitted decompression routine in my diver's brain, I found the new adopted routine very easy to use. I do not intend to go into the procedures as I'm not sure what tables and therefore which routine the RN have or will be adopting. No doubt we will all know soon?

I had my reservations about the set before diving it. There were a lot of buzzes flying around the bazaars about it before I left the UK, especially since the only document on the subject of the new CDBA available in the public domain was WO(D) Crang's MAD Mag article. Having now dived the set I can thoroughly recommend it. The only concern that I have with the A5800 is that it relies on the diver monitoring his Primary Display (a LED attached to the face mask) and a Secondary Display (a LCD attached to the Buoyancy Control jacket). The set requires the diver to be able to see the Secondary Display. In the event that he cannot see it then the dive must be aborted. Not generally a problem here in

# VIEW FROM THE OUTBACK

Aus, but we all know that there are some waters around the UK where the water visibility is nil, even with a torch, and therefore diving with the A5800 would not be possible. Overall, the set, which is easy to put together: is comfortable in the water; has excellent endurance; is easy to prepare for another dive; requires minimal maintenance; and most importantly, feels very safe.



*Lt Mackey RN dressed in SCUBA Mix A5800 rig. Went for the hood but didn't really need it.*

So where are the Aussies going from here?

- Sending Clearance Divers back to sea (they have all been shore based since HMAS CURLEW, the last RAN 'Ton', decommissioned in 1989). Better still, they are sending Chief divers back to sea, at least on the first few MHCs.
- Reviewing divers pay and allowances to such an extent that they might earn more than we do.
- Studying the management of diving operations and vehicle runs during Defence Watches in their 'Lean Manned' ships.
- Conducting 90m diving conning runs with the aim of being able to have a diver placed charge on or at a mine for demolition or recovery and exploitation purposes.
- Reviewing exactly how the organic CDE will be deployed tactically if in-water stops are the preferred method of decompression after deep diving. Is there much choice?
- The whole concept of conning runs using an icos and anchor to 90m. Is there a better method?
- The Health and Safety implications of a 90m icos recovery. What gadget to fit to the bow of the gemini (or 'zod' to use the Aussie parlance)?
- Who will need to dive to 90m and how will they remain worked-up?

Does most of this sound familiar?

In the meantime however, the RAN is procuring the ancillary equipment to support the deeper diving and closely studying the techniques which will be employed to safely conduct the evolution in a live MCM theatre. They are working hard on developing the capability of diving to 90m. Their most

considerable achievement to date however is that all their CDs will soon be converted to the set; the FGT 1A being defunct. The intention is that only those CDs posted to the new MHC will be trained in Heliox diving to 90m. The plan is that the MHC teams will undertake a 4 week heliox deep dive PJT in both Australia and New Zealand. The 2 shore based clearance diving teams will continue to use LAR 5, LAR 6, SDDE and SCUBA sets. They also have the A5800 but will not dive to the same depths as those at sea.

Overall therefore, it would seem that the RN and RAN are not so far apart in the development and introduction of their new deep diving MCM sets. I only hope that the distance between our two countries does not stifle the flow of



*A5800 2/97 course. Rear Standing (Left to Right) Lt Cdr Triston-Rattay USN (SOCD staff), Lt Paul Doble RAN (XO HMAS DUBBO), Lt Cdr Barry Everest RAN (CO CD Team 4), Lt Cdr 'Paps' Papalia RAN (SOCD), Lt Mackey RN (2I/C, MW Faculty). Seated Rear (Left to Right) LSCD 'Blue' Graham (Course 2nd Dickie), LSCD 'Blue' Ellarby (Diving School Staff). Front Seated ABCD 'Dolly' Gray (HMAS CERREBERUS - Recruit Training School).*

information and learning opportunities that are quite obviously available. The potential for us all to exceed ourselves in this new and exciting era of MCM is enormous.

Finally, I would like to add that it was a pleasure being able to undertake the RAN's A5800 conversion course and thank them for giving me the opportunity to do so. I would also like to wish those who are continuing with the training and development of the RN CDBA the best of luck and hope that all is going well.

1 Pull from the Diver!!!



*RAN jackstay swim. Tough for the surface crew.*

## THE FUTURE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### Bye Annon

Having chosen English as the preferred language in the EEC, the European Parliament has Commissioned a feasibility study in ways of improving efficiency in communications between Government departments.

European officials have often pointed out that English spelling is unnecessarily difficult: for example: cough; plough; rough, through; and thorough. What is clearly needed is a phased programme of changes to iron out these anomalies. The programme would, of course, be administered by a committee at top level by participating nations.

In the first year, for example, the committee would suggest using, 's' instead of the soft 'c'. Certainly, sivil servants in all sities would resieve this news with joy. Then the hard 'c' would be replaced by 'k' sinse both letters are pronoused alike. Not only would this klear up konfusion in the minds of klerikal workers, but typewriters could be made with one less key.

There would be growing enthusiasm when in the sekond year it could be announsed that the troubklesome 'ph' would

henseforth be written 'f'. This would make words like 'fotgraf' 20 per sent shorter in print.

In the third year, publik akseptanse of the new spelling kan be expekted to reash the stage where more komplikated shanges are possible. Governments would encourage the removal of double letters which have always been a deterrent to akurate spending.

We would al agre that the horrible mes of silent 'e's in the language is disgrasful. Therefor we kould drop thes and kontinu to read and writ as though nothing hapened. By this tim it would be four years sins the skem began and peopl would be reseptiv to steps sush as replasing 'th' by 'z'. Perhaps zen ze funktion of 'w' kould be taken by 'v', vitsh is, after al, half a 'w'. Shortly after zis, ze unesesary 'o' kould be dropd from words Containing 'ou'. Similar arguments vud of kors be aplid to ozer proseses yer after yer. Ve vud eventuali hav a reli sensibl riten styl. After tventi yers zer vud be no mor trubls or difikultis, and evrivun vud fin it ezi tu understand ech ozer. Ze drms of ze Guvemment vud finali hav kum tru.

## OPERATIONS OFFICERS I HAVE BEEN THROUGH!!

In the mighty ship LEDBURY the Gunnery Officer shares the forward cabin with the Operations Officer (Ops). The Navigator is left to fester with the YOs poor YOs. On joining LEDBURY in April 95 I shared a cabin with Ops number one. A man with a unique ability to communicate telepathically with women, or I think that was what he was doing as every time he went up to a woman he just stood there and said nothing. To my complete surprise he never got so far as a smile from any girl he 'communicated with'.

Number one left the Ship to pick up a diving phase of the Long Course to become a MCDO in the summer of 95. Ops number 2 was his relief, a man whose reputation and stories preceded him. He was an MWO and was claustrophobic when in the Ops Room, not so good for an MWO. Usually as OOW I bore the brunt of his frustration. He was first and foremost a rugby player, secondly a drinker and womaniser, of sorts, who could pull a table along the floor with a drawing pin and a certain part of his anatomy. He was a regular user of Anusol cream and would go to great lengths to ensure that his fellow mess members were aware of this fact. He did not enjoy being at sea and after much talking and bribery he was appointed somewhere else (a cushy number).

Ops number 3, another MWO, diver groupie and fashion victim joined the ship in Norway in Feb 96. I was slowly coming to the conclusion that there are no happy MWOs out there and that all of them have some sort of medical problem to do with their backsides!! Storms (as he became known) was not a very patient man in the Ops Room. In real life, Hunt Class MCMVs do not respond the same as the Arcturus Simulator in DRYAD. The throwing down of headsets and storming out of the Ops Room heading for the bridge was not uncommon. Number 3 developed a boil on his cocyx and whilst on weekend duty in the autumn of 96 this decided to explode. Muggins was called in to

complete the weekend duty in order to relieve the CO as OOD. Number 3 went to hospital and that was the last we saw of him. Another one bit the dust!

Lt MCD big watch wearer sports car driver diver joined straight from course. He was on loan as a Temp Ops just in time for our COST one week later, lucky man. Number 4 (I'm not borne for watchkeeping duties) to his credit, managed to get the Ops Dept ready for OST. The carrot throughout COST was a visit to Swansea on completion. What a run! so many students, so much beer and an opportunity for Ops Officer number 4 to prove how rich he was by paying £850 for a sparkly watch and then continue to strengthen RN/Swansea relations with the sales assistant. Yes the money was for the watch.

The appointer still hadn't managed to appoint a permanent Ops Officer when number 4 had to return to his own ship. As a replacement we got the Fleet ready ROMFT MWO. Ops Officer number 5 joined in Jan 97 and was notched up on my headboard. Since he only had to compile the shortcast and the First Lieutenant had daily orders to do, all his other duties had been dumped on GUNZ and NAVS.

My final and sixth Ops Officer joined on a permanent basis on 27 Jan 97 after having just completed MW phase. The MCD/MW appointer had him by the short and curlies and there was no getting away. Ops Officer number 6 with only 3 weeks left in the LEDBURY for me. No dits on this one yet as I'm still breaking him in.

As Julio Iglesias once sang "For all the Ops Officers I have known before".

That will teach you to shout at me about the hover!!!

# AN OFFICER ABROAD

By Lt Tim Lambie RN



There has been an Exchange Job at Toulon for some years now. The first here was Lt Simon ELLERMAN, followed by Lt John LAW and now me. The job has seen a great deal of changes since its conception from sea service to shore service and back again. It is now more in line with a true exchange. Before coming to France I was the Ops Officer in HMS CROMER. My relief was Lt Thierry ARNAULT FN, so it seemed logical that I should embark in the next French Hunter available, as Ops.

After 3 months language training at BRNC, with little background in the language before, I came to France. I was very warmly welcomed by John LAW and after a brief handover period I was sent to Brest to undergo the French Navy's equivalent of the MCMG course. Based entirely in the classroom the 2 weeks were basically a refresher of MW theory and tactics, but more importantly served as a supplementary language course.

On my return to Toulon a 3 week course was arranged for me at the Ecole de Plongee to familiarize myself with the different diving sets and techniques. The whole concept of French diving is so completely different to ours, that it really isn't worth trying to explain it in this article. It is worthy of note however, that the limits are a little different although the mixtures remain the same:

Air	60m	Free swimming
DC55 60%	25m	Buddied, free swimming
DC55 40%	45m	Buddied, free swimming
DC55 30% (32.5)	55m	Buddied, free swimming
MIXGERS 23%	80m	Buddied, free swimming
CORAILLEUR 18%	80m	Buddied, free swimming

The Mediterranean Region has 3 Tripartites based at Toulon (PERSIUS, LYRE and EAGLE). They follow roughly the same

maintenance periods as UK ships, but the philosophy is based on days at sea and not fuel expenditure, so they are generally less limited in scope. Participation in National and International exercises is frequent. There is usually a major exercise (CACHALOT) in the spring and autumn organised specifically for the 3 hunters, with 1 or 2 Italian ships invited. Lasting 3 weeks, they are split into 3 phases; surface exercises, diving and minewarfare. A spontaneous MW exercise usually takes place late spring which lasts a week and isn't that spontaneous! As well as this, 1 or 2 of the Tripartites are invited to ALCUDRA and MINEX, hosted by the Spanish Navy and sometimes ARIADNE in Greece. So there is never a shortage of work, quite apart from the frequent route surveys clearance operations and Individual training periods.

The Tripartites are very capable ships, where everything has been made simple. The minehunting system is easy to use, if a little dated, reliable and generally achieved good results in exercises. The sonar DUBM 21B is well proven, providing a similar sonar picture to the Hunts. One display is dedicated to the Det with a max range of 900m whilst the 2nd display is the Class. Split in 2 the Class has a max range of 300m on the lefthand display and a footprint of 28m on the 'Loop', which is a magnification of the area around the marker. The classification process is a little different to ours. Whilst shape and form come into the process, they are not formalized, instead they rely on a flash from the echo. No flash - no mine. The flash is the luminescence reflected from the echo which goes right across the Loop. For some targets, it only appears at 150m but for others it can be seen at 200m without even switching to high power. The other major factor in the process is of course the shadow, which is measured by eye, but gives accurate results as to length and height. There is no such thing as auto-classification.

## AN OFFICER ABROAD

Contacts are plotted on a table a little like an Ops Room Tactical Plot on tracing paper. Called the EVEC 20 system it is a refinement for the Tripartites of the EVEC 10 system that was fitted in the Tripartites forerunners. Whilst not the most precise way of doing things, it works, and repeatability is obtained. Radio Navigation is provided by Syledis which has an error of 15m. The French MW Flotilla has the same problem as ours in convincing budget holders that DGPS is an essential investment. Whenever the ships deploy on exercise they only have normal GPS (50m) or radar ranging methods! The tracing paper plots are treated ashore where the relative changes are incorporated in a computer system and updated. Certainly nothing in comparison to MTSS in sophistication, but for its day 24 years ago, was a concept that they were way ahead of us on! The EVEC's can talk to each other in much the same way as the Hunts, with a computer generated Reliefrep, not just between French hunters, but the Dutch and Belgian as well. The whole world has been divided up into squares the size of the tracing paper plot, which means they are completely deployable.

The diving system onboard is worth a mention. The divers are treated very much as an embarked diving team. Whilst they operate the PAPs, they have very little other role onboard apart from diving. They certainly don't keep watches. When in minehunting watches, they work during the day and sleep at night, with a guaranteed minimum of 8 hours sleep. The way they are treated does of course differ according to whether the CO is a diver or not, but there is generally not very much disparity. The ships are equipped with 3 diving stores/workshops on 2 deck where the maintenance is conducted. On 1 deck there is a changing/locker area, a drying room and a ready use equipment store, which is where the sets are kept. Each ship has its own 2 man recompression chamber and 2 zodiacs, so the diving system is very much a part of the minehunting system.

The DC55 their equivalent of DSSCCD, brought into service in 1955 has recently been modernised and is now predicted to last until 2005. It is extremely comfortable and easy to use, with the very minimum of maintenance required. The CO2 scrubber contains twice the amount and only needs to be changed after the 3rd dive or 3 hours. There is no requirement for a bypass, because it works on a completely different system, and everything is contained in a GRP container like the Siva 55, including the counterlung, that was designed in the 50s. All French diving is wet suit diving, so their additional buoyancy is provided by a stab jacket, which has complete interoperability with all their different sets. The Belgians used the same set, although I believe they have committed themselves to the SIVA, and are regretting it, particularly in view of its modernisation.

The French diving community is very proud of its capabilities and heritage and rightly so. It was only 5 miles from Toulon that COUSTEAU and his best friend Phillipe TAILLIEZ spent much of their early years snorkel diving for fish. In their constant search to go deeper for longer they co-invented the aqualung. They both joined the Navy and continued their research, until COUSTEAU left as a Lt Cdr to work in his organisation, the results of which made him a household name in 1954 with *The Silent World* at The Cannes Film Festival. When TAILLIEZ left as a Captain, he continued to

dive with a passion, but particularly on the ecological and environmental side of life. Now both in their 90s and still both diving, they are considered very much national heroes making regular appearances on TV. They also regularly visit the Navy at Toulon, where I had the opportunity to meet them both. The GERS organisation at Toulon was for a long time at the forefront of world diving technology, particularly in pushing further the depth barriers. Now replaced by COMISMER, Toulon remains the centre of French diving as the equivalent of RNSUPDIV.

The most enjoyable thing about being here is the enormous potential for demolitions training and diving on live ordnance. I will explain by giving you a bit of background information. During the last war an area of 14,000 square kms was mined in the Mediterranean almost exclusively consisting of moored mines. An immense sweeping effort was conducted to clear the approaches of St. Raphael, St. Tropez, Toulon, Nice and Marseille before and during the allied landings consisting of some 100 sweepers from America, Britain and France (recaptured from the Germans with POWs as crew). From Oct 44 to Nov 46 a national force of sweepers dealt with the rest of the coastline, destroying 1790 mines. In some areas up to 16 coverages were necessary. Of some 1200 men, 35 lost their lives and 16 were wounded during the ops. These ops were of course conducted in what was then peacetime. The crews of the sweepers were almost forgotten by the nation, and certainly weren't considered the heroes that they were. In all it took three and a half years to clean up the French and Corsican coastline.

Coming back to the demolitions potential, all the moored mines that were dealt with were simply punctured and left to sink to the bottom. With the advent of minehunters these mines now offer superb training. In my time aboard PERSEE we have dealt with 17 mines type GY/GV/GZ/IJ. But it doesn't end there. Before leaving Toulon the Germans disposed of their entire stock of GCs which they didn't have time to lay, in 100m of water just off Toulon. So, 3 or 4 times a year we go and find one and do a live PAP run against it. They are still in superb condition, a testament to German workmanship. We have dealt with 5 in my time, and we know the positions of 12 more. Quite apart from the mines, the coast is littered with wrecks of allied and German aircraft as well as Ships, Torpedo Boats, mortars and the occasional torpedo. Such is the availability of mines, that we haven't even thought of starting on the torpedoes! There are also several stories of minelayers that sank with their cargo of mines intact off Marseille and Bastia in Corsica, which we have yet to find.

So life here is certainly different to that aboard my last Ship where I spent most of my time on trials. In the last diving quarter I achieved 714 minutes underwater in 32 separate dives. The average quarter for a Diving Officer here is about 450 minutes, which means the lads are diving almost twice as much as that. So, if there is a potential MCDO out there who has a spare couple of years to spend on the south coast of France starting from around Jan to Aug 97, drop me a line care of The Editor. Whilst they might not be very receptive to our beef, the French are actually a very friendly race who will warmly welcome you. Having whet your appetite, the next article will concentrate much more on techniques and equipment. A bientôt.

# FLEET DIVING UNIT TWO - EXERCISE STAR FISH 96 & EXERCISE FLYING FISH 97

By CPO (D) A J Wheeler

Having left the organised daily chaos of SDU1, I looked forward to the relative calm of an organised but busy two year period ahead of me with FDU2. It commenced by joining FDU2 on the Monday and departing through that well known modern terminal located at RAF LYNEHAM on the Tuesday. As usual all the Team's equipment passed through the export terminal under the easy to follow, never changing and straight forward Air Cargo Transport Regulations (JSP 335)! Now that the team was safely ensconced upon the C-130, it was time to settle down for the next four days whilst speeding towards Exercise Star Fish 96.

After a fairly non eventful flight we arrived in Singapore eager to embark our equipment onto MV Ocean Explorer (O.E). All equipment was embarked onto O.E in record time thus enabling us to return to the hotel for a shower and possible last orders. Next day, with all the team embarked upon O.E, we sailed for Tioman Island to rendezvous with the other diving teams participating in the Exercise and the Fleet. During the passage to Tioman Island Tatty and I spent the night in mortal combat against an army of cockroaches, maggots and rats. You have no idea how much we were looking forward to breakfast. Not.

On completion of the command briefs all units disappeared over the horizon to their respective parts of the ocean in order to commence the exercise. FDU2 were detailed with the Singaporians, Malaysians and Kiwis. The Kiwis were embarked in a vessel called MANAWINUI (a sister ship to the CLANSMAN for those who remember those glorious days) and proceeded to an area called Juara Bay.



*Manawinui seen from OE*

Juara Bay proved to be a small tropical horse shoe shaped bay, with that post card type beach. The four dive teams worked together and collectively searched and cleared 75% of a 1000m x 800m box during the exercise phase. The tactical phase was a similar area in size to be searched and with the aid of a MCMV towards the deep end of the box a 100% search was completed locating several mine shapes by all nations.

In conjunction with the Diving Ops, two EOD serials were attempted. Although it was beneficial for the respective ships from a damage control point of view, it was clear that little thought had been put into the EOD teams physical participation within these serials. It was difficult to generate enthusiasm to RSP two empty 105 shells, execute the task within 30 minutes

and then spend 8 hours trying to return to your parent unit. Maybe more thought will be put into the next Exercise.!



*Teloj Juara Bay*



*International Beach Clearance Team*

In conclusion, Exercise Star Fish was an enlightening experience and valuable lessons were learnt by all team members. The driving force of the exercise proved to be mainly the Kiwis and ourselves. The Singaporians were keen to learn MCM Diving Ops but due to the size of their team they were limited in what they could achieve. The Malaysian Diving unit are obviously on the first rung of the ladder but equally keen.

Working off of MV Ocean Explorer proved to be an excellent way to loose weight. Our Breakfasts, Lunches and Dinners consisted of the same fish heads and rice. The Heads and bathrooms were located in the same bucket. However, I have been told that the next time we will be working off of RFA DILIGENCE. Things are bound to be better next time!

## EXERCISE FLYING FISH 97

Having now completed 8 months within the unit, encompassing two 75m work ups and an exercise in the Dardenelles, I was now presented with the second Exercise in the Far East. However, this was to be a completely different kettle of fish!

It was decided to provide an explosive demonstration during the

## FLEET DIVING UNIT TWO

exercise. The main charge consisted of a M.D.D.U and a suitable amount of white noise would be used to initiate it, in conjunction with a D.R.F.D. Sounds simple enough I know but once again the RAF played a blinder. The initial intention was to take a C.M.D. Pack No 1 & No 2 which is more than adequate to deal with any EOD incident and conveniently packaged you would have thought. Not so, the RAF did not recognise any CMD packs in their regulations. Consequently after numerous phone calls between Bath, High Wycombe and RNAD Gosport, a compromise was achieved in taking individually packed Det Cord, PE4, Safety Fuse, Flash Dets and Elec Dets. You will be pleased to know that in future the RAF will now recognise the CMD packs.

This time the equipment was split between a C-130 and a VC 10 and departed UK with the usual smoothness. Upon arrival in Singapore we were met by a helpful RNLO staff and all equipment and personnel were transferred to RFA DILIGENCE (DIL). First impressions when you see DIL is that she will easily accommodate any diving team and be a useful asset on site. I was surprised at the lack of space in which a diving team had to set itself up to work in, never mind three dive teams. Once again we were working with the Kiwis, Singaporeans, Malaysians and this time the Australians turned up. When all teams were safely onboard we departed for Tioman, without OC Diving and his WO(D) who were on a culture mission in Athens.

When we arrived at Tioman the usual briefing ensued but Boss FDU2 became OC Diving and I became Mr fix it. Yorkie and Dickie shared a work load that they were totally unprepared for. With the other nations looking to us to take the lead on the situation the best was made of an unfortunate situation and the spirit of the branch shone through.

When DIL finally arrived at the intended exercise area the respective units made themselves ready to commence Diving Ops. However, a certain amount of disruption was experienced because all the other ships found DIL to be a very useful alongside berth which gave rise to the age old problem of diving units working from ships used for purposes other than just diving. As a result Diving Ops for the first week were severely disrupted

Once again Juara Bay played host to all the diving units and the same area of sea bed was once again searched. The tactical phase began and the teams quickly fell into the routine dictated by Diving HQ. It was disappointing from the Divers point of view that apparently only one mine shape had been laid in the whole area. (long way to come for one contact) One area that fell by



RFA Diligence

the wayside on the last exercise was realistic EOD scenarios. This was now being addressed by WO(D)FDG who had taken dummy ordnance to be placed on different ships to respond to. Dickie and John deployed on the Sunday for a two day scenario and were not seen again for the rest of the exercise. Meanwhile, the remainder of the diving units progressed in searching the exercise area looking for mine contacts.

Unfortunately, the planned gas supply for the Kiwis and Singaporeans turned out to be defective and therefore our own supply of gas was shared amongst three nations. This drastically reduced the capability of all three units. Approximately 75% of the areas were searched with snag line and Hand Held Sonar (2 Alpha) search techniques. The remaining 25% once again being cleared by a MCMV. There were several other equipment shortfalls but once again FDU2's autonomous approach ensured that the exercise continued smoothly.



EOD Serial

With the diving phase completed and our impending return to Singapore all efforts were concentrated on locating Dickie and John. It later came to light that they had been kindly taken care of by HMS GLOUCESTER and they had finally smuggled themselves back into Singapore under their own initiative. Now was to pass a three day period waiting for our RAF flight home. However, this turned into a five day stint for the majority of the team with the assistance of the High Commission, who incidentally begged us to leave as they were running out of ready cash! Dickie, having only just recovered from his EOD experience, was volunteered to baby-sit the cargo whilst the rest of the team flew back Com Air. The cargo was received twelve days later and FDU2 are to have a whip round to fund Dickie's return eventually!

Conclusion: Two well planned, satisfactory exercises.

# AN IMMEDIATE REACTION FORCE - STANDING NAVAL FORCE CHANNEL (SNFC)

By Cdr Colin Welborne

I took Command of Standing Naval Force Channel (SNFC) during a memorable change of command ceremony in May 96 at Portsmouth Naval Base and what follows are my thoughts 12 months later having been deployed for over 300 days. It was a notable time to visit much of Europe because the only thing being thrown out of Europe faster than English beef was our soccer teams. The Force consisted of 26 units, with a maximum of 15, steaming over twenty thousand miles, to undertake 18 exercises with ships from 12 nations and remained sustainable as an Immediate Reaction Force (IRF). The variety of the classes was impressive and ranged from the familiar Tripartite and Hunt class through Oksoy, Flyfisken, 332 and a Sandown.

Standing Naval Force Channel has been in existence for over 22 years. The Commanding Officer of the first ship assigned was Lieutenant (now Admiral) M P Gretton and while its name may be an anachronism the Force has evolved and reflects both the technology and vitality of the contributing nations. Indeed, she reflects her age, like a young person recently graduated from a prestigious university: fresh, proud, highly qualified and self-confident whilst still willing to learn. She can only retain credibility if the Force remains highly trained, totally integrated, well equipped and readily available. As such she is a symbol of Nato's maritime efficiency and cohesion.

The Force is under the Operational Command (OPCOM) of Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General G A Joulwan, who has delegated Operational Control (OPCON) to Commander Naval Forces North West Europe (COMNAV NORTHWEST) Admiral Sir Peter Abbott and commanded rotationally by officers from the United Kingdom, Denmark (97/98) Norway (98/99), Netherlands (99/00), Germany (00/01) and Belgium (01/02).

Multi-national operations, be they under NATO/UN or PIP auspices, are an increasing reality but they remain amongst the most complex and unpredictable of all military operations. The cornerstone of success remains dialogue between different cultures. Too frequently the reaction to other nationalities is judgmental, patronising or worse. However, our response originates as much from our own attitudes and values as from actions. There is considerable cross-pollination between units, both at sea and in harbour, but the disappointment was that individuals generally had to be detailed off. Invariably when they came back, they enthused about their experience but it would have been marvellous to have had volunteers!

There are inevitably many generalisations but the aspiration has been to achieve a rich blend with the talent available. SNFC is an example of mature co-operation between NATO members but human relationship can only flourish where it is possible for people to live together in honourable disagreement and we need to ensure that the Force remains credible.

Command of a multi-national group is much more than management of forces because the scale and scope of responsibility is underestimated, as is the aggregation of power. The multi-national make-up of the Force means that this power must be exercised with discretion. A number of factors need additional thought, not least leadership style, because co-operation and trust are vital. Indeed, they are more important than individual performance. This means that one-upmanship is to be frowned upon, to avoid embarrassment, but overt co-operation does not preclude rivalry. Any interference in the COs sphere of responsibility will be viewed as an infringement of trust because the relationship can only flourish based on equal independence, collective dependence, reciprocal obligations and mutual respect. The highest

standards of personnel integrity, old-fashioned good manners such as courtesy and consideration are essential and note emotional responses set dangerous precedents. I was often asked for an anecdote about nations and the only one I really noticed was that German soccer teams tended to win most competitions.

Language is words, so beware humour and certainly forget irony and sarcasm at all costs. Equally take care with literal translations, which at best cause amusement at worst offence. The lady in Stockholm certainly wondered why I mentioned her genes (jeans). The former East German officer (whose second language was Russian) was alarmed by a Commanding Officer stating that his National Commander "was an absent lunatic". However that is how "out of sight out of mind" can be translated. I have forgiven the young officer who, when asked in a restaurant if he would like to order "a la carte" declared he would look at the sweet trolley once he had ordered the main course. Language is also manners, dress and body language. Therefore, recognising cultural differences has to be the starting point because it will avoid misunderstandings. The skill is to use it constructively. Do not push things but allow them to unfold because constant intervention will be seen as interference. The Force has its own culture, which newcomers have to adapt to, and the reality is that it is 'the way we do things around here'. The understanding of the work ethic varies but it is not how hard people work but how effectively. Equally do not jump to conclusions, you probably misunderstood what was said and it is easy to see questioning as mistrust; actually it's a teaching opportunity. It is in the perceptions of behaviour that misunderstandings occur. In all this remember your achievements are actually the work of others; without his army Napoleon was a man with a hat! At the end of the day an individual's worth is as a Team member and that is how people and, in our Force, Units were judged.

The UK staff consisted of the Commander, Force Medical Officer, Chief Radio Supervisor, Communications Yeoman, Leading Steward and a Leading Writer. The Operations Officer comes from another nation and changes six months after the Commander to ensure continuity. Therefore the staff and the mix of the Force achieve synergy but this is a word which should be used with caution because not all such relationships are positive. Think of the relationship between animal feed and a degenerative brain disease (CJD/BSE) or aerosol sprays and the ozone layer. However, each nation brings a set of skills to the Force which can be utilised.

There is a need to keep all war-fighting skills up to speed and while it is the Commanding Officers responsibility to prepare their ship and people for war, sustainability is a constant concern. Much has been written about poised operations in the Adriatic and an IRF such as SNFC reflects much of that. The need for a balance between keeping the Force ready for IRF short notice operations and maintaining the Force for longer periods and therefore at a lower readiness for immediate operations. The balance is a potential conundrum and has a fairly fundamental effect on training, maintenance and resources. Training is cyclical not least when ships join the force. Integration is achieved by a varied programme of multi-ship activities in a weekly training schedule. The requirement is for high quality, balanced and frequent military training. After a maintenance period, training will initially focus on units to preserve vital and highly perishable skills. There is a risk that the Staff become adept at peacetime programming, as opposed to running a risk-reducing mine countermeasures operation. The Force do however take part in every major NATO/National exercises where the command estimate and table-topping can hone traditional expertise and is all part of continual professional development. However, lessons 'learned' in exercises should be treated with caution not least that exercise minefields are designed to be found and that the planning of a mining campaign is a lost art for most

## AN IMMEDIATE REACTION FORCE (SNFC)

European navies. There are also other opportunities on passage which are utilised. However, training uses up equipment hours, spares and makes people tired. Be aware live operations could commence at the end of a 5 day stimulating training programme.

The Royal Navy units acquitted themselves well, generally in the van and never knowingly in the rear but an MCMV is not a Command platform for 15 units in a multi threat environment. In the end neither role (MCMV/Command) is fulfilled in the way which we know it has to be done. On the support side it was fascinating to witness a Hunt class provide both water and oil to another MCMV. The regular absence of a dedicated command and/or support ship challenges the capability of the force and embarking 9 additional staff in an MCMV for several months compromises principles. Whilst the role of a Command and/or support ship appears less well understood in the United Kingdom, when compared to the Alliance and some PfP countries (notably Sweden), please rehearse the arguments and understand the requirement (military communications etc etc). Whilst no one could justify daughter of ABDIEL and accepting there are examples of good practise eg DILIGENCE, it is of note that our European allies MCM support ships have several roles. There is one nation where it is also the Royal Yacht but I stop short of promoting

heresy! My point is that we have to make use of what we have. Hence BULLDOG was the Command platform for a period. She brought her unique additional skills not least meteorology and beach survey but also my Medical Officer and senior rates had a bunk to call their own! A dedicated platform offers much more than the sum of its individual parts, particularly balance, mobility but above all sustainability and the deployment of one is a skill particularly if an FSU is to be embarked. It has recently been agreed that SNFC will always have a dedicated command/support ship and nations will provide this rotationally for a minimum of 3 months.

Whenever instability threatens, those in need generally turn to NATO because of all the Western institutions she remains the most relevant and maritime forces are at the heart of any operation. Multi-national force operations are the most stimulating available. They are at the very heart and soul of NATO maritime policy. The aim is both a dynamic and exhilarating responsibility. The challenge, to leading an effective team, is to know the people across the Force and to be equally well known by them. Only then can their abundant talent be released. To miss-quote Churchill. The Force have the lions heart Commander SNFC has the luck to give the roar.

## ROMANIA - THAT'S THE WAY WE DO IT

By Corporal J Hurst

It was with a heavy heart and an even heavier dive bag that I made my way to the SMI's office, desperately racking my brains for which minor misdemeanour I had been caught and which truly believable excuse I could give.

I needn't have worried. "Well done, Cpl Hurst, You've been picked from a cast of one to go on an exchange visit to the Romanian Navy diving school. Here was my chance to represent the Army, the Corps, the Defence Diving School and a small town in Lancashire called Radcliffe. I was to go with a naval lieutenant, a Lt Foster.

Arriving in Constanta in temperatures roughly equivalent to the sun we were taken to the Military Hotel, fed, watered then left to our own devices for the night. We took the opportunity to boldly go where no 'joint service' mission had gone before, Lt Foster taking up the old cry of "Follow the Sapper" as, apparently, they only serve tomato juice on Her Majesty's minesweepers.

Next morning at the base we were introduced to Cdr Chiron, the Romanian diving centres XO (that's Navy for 2IC), an extremely capable man who could do just about anything and had a badge to prove it. Besides, anyone who welcomes you with a vodka at 0930hrs is OK by me! He personally showed us around the centre which had an array of one-man compression chambers, wet bells, small diving vessels and a chamber so large you could compress all the Corps divers at once down to 500m and, no, that isn't a typing error.

After the visit we were given an introductory meal (with vodka) then it was off to the Midia Ship base and on to a rather large diving vessel for more food and vodka. The afternoon progressed with discussions about the differences in equipment and diving methods. The Romanians were very interested in any new methods they could implement as some of their entry and exit methods had come from Hollywood films, 'Navy Seals' being one of them. The Romanian divers are basically split into two groups, the combat divers and the EOD divers, the latter being roughly equivalent to Navy clearance divers but without access to rebreathers, searching equipment and all the resources available on Her Majesty's minesweepers; the former are loosely based on a boat troop from Sch..., you know where! All the members of this

unit are Para trained and spend a lot of time running around the mountains on exercise. Their role, amongst others, included covert insertion, beach clearance and counter-terrorism on oil rigs in the Black sea.

Whilst Lt Foster briefed the EOD divers about mine clearance in the Gulf, I had the combat divers waiting on my every word with tales of tough Engineer divers in 3m deep, nil visibility, raging torrent rivers searching for highly expensive bridging stores clips, kerbs and the like.

The next few days were spent discussing the various differences in training and the courses the two respective diving schools ran, for example, the Romanian aptitude course lasts a month and is nearly all physical so, those of you who grumble about our two day aptitude test, think yourselves lucky. Their fitness standards seemed on a par (if not higher) than ours but almost all their potential divers meet these standards, possibly because their recruits have to pass an equivalent of the BFT before leaving training, unlike ours.

Along with differences in training, we also got to see the difference in equipment and try it first hand. Apart from the initial shock of the bright orange wetsuits, the sets were roughly the same twin-cylinder, although the way of operating the reserve did differ considerably. The equipment itself was French, and Jacques Cousteau undoubtedly did his training on it. Once under the water, the breathing resistance was quite hard. Seven seconds seems a long time to wait before getting a lung full of air but, being a hardy Engineer diver, I would rather have drowned than lose face, so I carried on as if this was normal. As I climbed out of the water I couldn't help but have a quiet chuckle to myself as Lt Foster kitted up and asked me if there had been any problems with the kit. "No problems at all", said I, but afterwards Lt Foster and I celebrated being alive with another hearty meal washed down with our new favourite drink.

As the week drew to a close we discussed our conclusions and said our thank yous to our hosts for their excellent hospitality. On the final day plaques were exchanged, photographs taken and a date set for the return match. Then we left for Alcoholics Anonymous via Bucharest and Gatwick.

## DIVERS OPEN 96 APPEAL

The clearance divers annual golf championship took place at Southwick Park on the 26 Jul 96, this years competition was in aid of the "ROCKY APPEAL" raising moneys for an MRI scanner to be sited at Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham, Portsmouth. The event raised £600.00 on the night with further donations of £40.00 being received the next day; the Rocky appeal is hoping to fund the purchase of the MRI scanner (£2,000000.) purely from fund raising events and personal donations, as yet they have raised £300,000.

The photograph shows the fund raising team (group photograph)

*Back Row: CPO(D)ROGERS\*, WO(D) CRANG, MR M LYONS MBE, CPO(D)SIZER, MR YOUNG. \*(Charity Organiser)  
Front Row: Staff nurses from the radiography department.*



## NORTHWOOD - WHAT EXACTLY DO THE 3 (SOON TO BE 4) MCDO's DO?

**A recently released document gives us a clue.....**

**RE: Is there a Santa Claus? — Now we know.....**

As a result of an overwhelming lack of requests, and with research help from that renown scientific journal SPY magazine (January, 1990) - I am pleased to present the annual scientific inquiry into Santa Claus.

1) No known species of reindeer can fly. BUT there are 300,000 species of living organisms yet to be classified, and while most of these are insects and germs, this does not COMPLETELY rule out flying reindeer which only Santa has ever seen.

2) There are 2 billion children (persons under 18) in the world. BUT since Santa doesn't (appear) to handle the Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Buddhist children, that reduces the workload to 15% of the total - 378 million according to Population Reference Bureau. At an average (census) rate of 3.5 children per household, that's 91.8 million homes. One presumes there's at least one good child in each.

3) Santa has 31 hours of Christmas to work with, thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of the earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical). This works out to 822.6 visits per second. This is to say that for each Christian household with good children, Santa has 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, get back up the chimney, get back into the sleigh and move on to the next house. Assuming that each of these 91.8 million stops are evenly distributed around the earth (which, of course, we know to be false but for the purposes of our calculations we will accept), we are now talking about .78 miles per household, a total trip of 75-112 million miles, not counting stops to do what most of us must do at least once every 31 hours, plus feeding and etc.

This means that Santa's sleigh is moving at 650 miles per second, 3,000 times the speed of sound. For purposes of comparison, the fastest man-made vehicle an earth, the Ulysses space probe, moves at a poky 27.4 miles per second - a conventional reindeer can run, tops, 15 miles per hour.

4) The payload on the sleigh adds another interesting element. Assuming that each child gets nothing more than a medium-sized lego set (2 pounds), the sleigh is carrying 321,300 tons. not counting Santa, who is invariably described as overweight. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds. Even granting that "flying reindeer" (see point #1) could pull TEN TIMES the normal amount, we cannot do the job with eight, or even nine. We need 214,200 reindeer. This increases the payload - not even counting the weight of the sleigh - to 353,430 tons. Again, for comparison - this is four times the weight of The Queen Elizabeth II.

5) 353,000 tons traveling at 650 miles per second creates enormous air resistance - this will heat the reindeer up in the same fashion as spacecraft re-entering the earth's atmosphere. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 QUINTILLION joules of energy. Per second. Each. In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them, and create deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire reindeer team will be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second. Santa, meanwhile, will be subjected to centrifugal forces 17,500.06 times greater than gravity. A 250-pound Santa (which seems ludicrously slim) would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force.

In conclusion - If Santa ever DID deliver presents on Christmas Eve, he's dead now.

## Letters to the Editor



... *Letters to the Editor* ...



Dear Sir

A letter from a concerned Clearance Diver. The jungle drums have been beating yet again with tales of woe from around the nation, no doubt some have had more than the normal 10% "for dit value" added but with this subtracted there is still cause for concern. It also appears that the DDS has become more of a vacuum for information than VERNON used to be. However I write in the hope that you can put me straight on a couple of items and answer a couple of questions at the same time:

Why is it that we are becoming a branch of SF groupies who want to wear Multi coloured Berets and be able to run 30 miles with an enormous pack on our backs. Obviously it is important to be fit as a Diver and I support those individuals who volunteer and make it with SF. However those individuals who want to wear a Green or Red Beret should join the requisite regiment and not strut around like a Boy Scout showing off his Tea badge after a short PJT. We should be proud of the fact that we are Royal Navy Clearance Divers whose first stop is deeper than the maximum depth most service divers can go and we should wear the coveted Blue Beret with pride.

Secondly, so I have heard, whilst some Units are over stretched with UWE others are turning it away because they don't want to do it. Although BDAR is a secondary task UWE (the peace time means of maintaining skills) allows Divers to get in the water on a regular basis whilst undertaking a "live" task where achievement and progress can readily be seen and appreciated, it is both challenging for the diver and supervisor. It also maintains water fitness, familiarity with UW tools and is enjoyable. Should we not therefore give this tasking higher profile?

I understand that a large number of prospective divers and current divers fail the fitness test. If this was to become an annual requirement, another rumour, would we not lose half of the branch? And do we believe that the current fitness test, that was promulgated with ridiculous reasons for performing certain exercises, is the answer? After all a sixteen year old girl does not have to prove she can do numerous upper body exercises to become a lifeguard, she is just taught how to remove a person from the water. I believe there are better and more high tech ways of proving if someone is fit, ask at your local gym.

Onto equipment, any improvements on equipment should be met with open arms. As I understand it a new high tech swim board is undergoing trials and whilst this is an important piece of equipment it is only used by one or two Units and whilst on course. However there are items of kit that are used more widely, by every Group, Unit and element that are in desperate need of improvement. They are the Lost Diver Marker, containerised lazy shot and a container for the ICOS and line. For years we have had to put up with home made efforts and the ability of our Divers to scrounge containers that can be modified. This applies equally to the infamous "Fish Board".

Whilst we are on equipment, I feel that it was a crass decision to allow the personnel issue of Stop Watches to Army Diver Supervisors and not to RN Clearance Diver Supervisors who clearly are the more obvious recipients. Instead we have left it to the stores system and personnel loan that will no doubt be abused with many being lost with the inevitable C126 action. People take more care of equipment that is personal issue as has been proved by the issue of the UNISUIT. Can we not reverse this decision?

It seems to those of us at sea that information on trials, new procedures and on general issues affecting the branch take a long time to filter to those embarked on Ships. This generates rumours and information is passed via "Chinese Whispers" so those of us outside the DDS and Group environment feel slightly left out. S of D's visits to teams and regular correspondence with group IC's works well but is not viable with embarked Diving Elements, perhaps a solution would be a Six, on an irregular basis, issued, when something noteworthy happens, to keep the entire branch informed on issues that will affect us all.

I make no apologies for the length of the letter and I am sure it will generate much sucking of teeth and perhaps some unfavourable remarks. However I am only stating how I and others, who feel it not necessary to write, think. If I am way off the mark on any points then perhaps that highlights the importance of my final remark. I, as we all are, am extremely proud to be a Clearance Diver and look forward to the introduction of the new set that will give us a much needed boost and improve our profile within world diving.

Yours Aye  
Somerset

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Ed

I was interested to read in your magazine (volume 7 number 1) how strongly CCWEA Newman's opposition to 'glossies' was, and actually wondered why he had targeted Minewarfare and Diving for his vitriolic attack.

Of course I do agree with him, but only on the understanding that should such views force you to close down, then your highly talented contributors should continue to write, and send their articles to me.

EDITOR - Review of Naval Engineering, HMS Collingwood.

P.S. This Weapon Engineer approves of your magazine, but then I can lay claim to being a ships diver from 1964 until I retired from active service in December 1994. In the current issue I did enjoy Cpl Andrews article in diving in Antrim, and feel I was not alone in admiring the courage shown in your obituary on Lieutenant Commander Geoffrey Hedges.

Dear Mr Hughs,

I hope that you don't mind my writing to you, blame the photo in the Navy News (May) of AB(D) Dickson & AB(D) Sirs, newly qualified divers, and some old equipment of mine, a pump and helmet,

I am 82, and was a Stoker PO, and qualified Diver in Dec./Jan. 1936/7 at the Diving School H.M.S. Drake, Devonport, and had my last dive from H.M.S. Implacable in the Clyde, September 1944, as it was so called periodic compulsory dive it was down to my limit 30 fathoms.

Two months after I went down with pulmonary TB and out of the Service Mid 1945. Of course I made a complete recovery and have not been particularly effected by it.

I have very many happy memories of that Course, unlike Pompey which had the luxury of a tank in H.M.S. Dolphin, we had to do our stuff anywhere in the Tamar from Saltash down to the Sound.

There were many wet cold forenoons spent out in the river in an open boat, (I think we were towed out and left) piled high with bods, pipe lines, breast ropes etc.

In spite of the many wet cold hours we spent out there it was great to get into Depot, and although we were junior rates our tot was in neaters at the Guard Room, and then into Jagos for a huge dinner, it was no wonder that with that lot under our belt we could not keep awake during the lectures in the afternoon, but I never felt fitter in all my life.

As I mentioned before it is over 60 years since I had my last dive, and I know nothing of the physics, methods or even the suit used in modern diving, they just seem to leap into the water, how about decompression stops without a shot rope and is a stray line still used on the bottom, do hand signals still have to be memorised?;

Yours sincerely  
Thomas G. Shirley  
Ex S.P.O. D/KX8177G  
Vice President Stone RNA

Dear Sir,

I was interested to read about CPO's Divers Jack Diamond and Bob Clements by Doug Bruce Jones. Both were Gunners Mates and, I believe were qualified in Deep Diving.

During my time as the officer in charge of Devonport Diving School on the transfer of the school from HMS Drake to Defiance, in 1946 I had the privilege of both men serving with me from 1947 - 48 as diving instructors.

Both men were excellent, as were many of the senior diving staff in Defiance at that time. For me the highlight was the day the "procured" a boiler from a cruiser in the dockyard and erected our first diving tank at Wilcove.

Yours sincerely  
A. Wardle

PS. I missed the visit to Horsea Island on 3rd May. I would appreciate a visit as convenient to the Officer in Charge.

Dear Ed,

An old Leading Diver once told me, and I've really no idea how he came by the information, that a number of ghostly figures inhabit what used to be the wardroom at HMS VERNON. From lunchtime onwards they take up residence in the far corner of the bar, backed up against the fireplace. Amongst their number they boast a former Superintendent of Diving, a Surgeon Captain and at least one retired Special Duties officer. If this is purgatory then they have made it their very own. Younger readers would not be able to recognise them and, if they will forgive my ageist advice, would do well to skip the rest of my warblings and surface at the next letter or article.

Let me declare here and now that, for my part, I aspire to nothing greater than a stool at the corner of the bar nearest the main entrance so that I can make a sharp exit if the call should come. And although I have never witnessed these apparitions myself I can tell you, albeit rather ashamedly, that I hear their voices from time to time. The last such visitation occurred only recently.

I recall the incident quite clearly. Nurse had parked my bath chair in its usual sheltered corner and tucked a napkin under my chin to collect the pool of drivel that habitually forms there. I was just dozing off when I was startled by their discontented babble. They were discussing the latest issue of MAD magazine and the pictures of the new CDBA on the front cover in particular. According to them, something with a similar moniker had entered a cocoon 20 years before and what they saw emerging now amazed them. Surely the metal spheroids at the base of the set were fitted back to front they said. These must have been intended to house the diver's testicles for only someone with balls that big would be brave enough to put this set on in the first place.

Ah me, halcyon days .....

Bubbles

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Full marks to Mo Crang on the very informative article "Yes it's the CDBA". It was of particular interest to me because I was associated with the trials of the first CDBA in 1951. This equipment, manufactured by Dunlop was designed to replace three sets in service:

- i) 'P' Party set as used in WWII
- ii) Underwater Swimmer's set also used in WWII
- iii) Salvus Breathing Apparatus as used by the then Shallow Water Divers.

The combined requirement meant that certain advantages of the individual sets were lost, and the result did not meet with universal approval. However, the 1951 CDBA, with some modifications, served the Divers well for many years.

G. A. Franklin

Dear Sir,

I found "More Collections" interesting reading and hope that the following will help Bruce-Jones. A.S.V. SALVERDANT was launched just before the war but was never completed, and was laid up during hostilities on the Clyde and finally completed 1946-7 H.M.S. RECLAIM, a great ship. I served about 8 years on her but not at one time, I hasten to say.

Another of the A.S.V's, which one I do not know, was converted in 1953-4 to a submarine rescue vessel to carry the U.S.N SQUALUS RESCUE CHAMBER and named H.M.S. KINGFISHER. The chamber was carried on the upper deck aft, under the main derrick as can be seen from the enclosed photograph. The ship carried its own moorings, two ton mooring buoys were housed each side of the foremast. Four anchors were hung over the stern on gantries, and sited below the quarter deck were 4 cable lockers, each holding 8 shackles of cable. Depending on the depth of water, (SQUALUS maximum working depth 850ft), the rest of the mooring was made up of wire hawsers stropped alongside, each side of the ship, the outboard end being secured to the cable and the inboard end being secured to the buoy.

KINGFISHER was based in Rothesay as part of the 3rd Submarine Squadron, and every time the ship went back down south to Chatham for a refit, the rescue chamber had to be tested to 850ft en route and all defects included in the ships defect list for rectification during the refit. This was usually carried out in the Irish Sea.

C.P.O. Bob Clements was the Chief Diver on H.M.S RECLAIM in 1948-50 and when he retired he became mine host in a pub in Rainham Kent, and Sam Stanley a civilian instructor with the R.E's at Marchwood.

I would like the photograph returned as it is the only one I have. It was part of the ships christmas card in 1956.

Keep up the good work, a great magazine.

Yours sincerely,  
Jack Smith

### DIVING OFFICER EXCHANGE DUTY WITH THE ROYAL NAVY LCDR Jim Bladh USN (Ret)

Being a member in good standing in the MCD Officers Association, I thought it time that I make a contribution to your excellent "Minewarfare And Diving" publication.

I had the pleasure and distinction of being the first exchange Diving Officer to the UK from here in the Colonies. After some initial difficulties I, in good Diver fashion, manoeuvred a First Class passage aboard the SS United States at minimal expense to arrive in Southampton, August 1967. Docking in Southampton I noticed two RN Officers on the dock, they turned out to be Lt Jackie Re and Lt Cdr Bill Filer. At the time I believed their primary mission was to provide me with transport to HMS Vernon, I later realized that through some mystical sense that only Divers possess, they knew the lounge bar on the ship was open. It was an excellent way to get acquainted, in fact we almost lingered long enough to make the return voyage to New York. I might add this was in the days before the breathalizer.

My next stop was the Wardroom at HMS Vernon where I was assigned a cabin: immediately, refreshments at the bar were the order of the day, my generous hosts were continually writing chits and welcoming me aboard. Too late I realized they were working me, I was attempting to have a drink with every officer in the mess, no easy task even for an experienced Diving Officer. The next thing that I remembered was waking up in my cabin sleeping nearly in the raw when a wardroom WREN entered without knocking and said "Good morning Sir, your morning tea" I immediately replied using my best English that I had learned the night before, "Bloody Hell I've been in the wrong Navy for 25 years.

At my first breakfast I didn't fare much better, on entering the mess I attempted to be a friendly cheerful Yank, greeting everyone and saying good morning in a loud and cordial way. This was met with a few disdainful looks and perhaps a grunt, RN Officers do not talk while having breakfast and reading their morning paper.

At the Admiralty Experimental Diving Unit, I reported aboard as a relief for Lt Jackie Re, Officer in Charge of the Admiralty Experimental Diving Team. I met the S of D Cdr Phil White and his deputy Lt Cdr Jackie Warner, Ray Common chief scientist, Searle Williams, Wendy, Edna, Pauline, Barry and many others whose names escape me. My Diving team was made up of an excellent assortment of very good divers. Bob Fraser was the leading CPO. (Bob, after retirement from the RN formed a very



HMS KINGFISHER

## Letters to the Editor

successful business "Fraser Diving" in Singapore. He has since retired from commercial diving and lives in Hampshire).

While serving as OIC of the AEDT I soon learned the secrets of obtaining flights through the RAF movements in London, a lunch with the two old dears that handled quota assignments resolved my transportation problems. I solved the communications problems by getting a telephone credit card from the USN and local travel with a book of travel warrants from the RN. (A conductor on the Portsmouth Harbour-London Waterloo train advised me unceremoniously that I was not to bring my wife on a RN Travel Warrant). My experiences were widely varied and interesting, I will relate a few:

\* Diving training in Alderney, Channel Islands, I remember the water being quite cold and the diving very interesting. One of my favorite recollections was Stu Honor, Jackie Warner and I having drinks with the Mayor of Alderney. I vividly remember that the Mayor always had a drop of moisture hanging precariously from the tip of his nose, one immediately became absorbed waiting for the drop to fall into his glass of gin.

\* While in Gibraltar, Cdr White telephoned me to say that I had made the promotion list to Lt Cdr. I am sure that had the promotion board seen and heard Jackie Warner, Peter Messervey and myself walking down the middle of the street at midnight in Gib after escaping across the border from Spain singing at the top of our voices "ME NO LIKEE BRITISH SAILOR, YANKEE SAILOR COME ASHORE" the board would have had second thoughts.

\* At sea in HMS RECLAIM Lt Cdr Peter Messervey commanding. Lt Peter Coby trained and qualified me as Diving Officer of Reclaim while conducting salvage operations off of Tusker Rock, Ireland. Peter Messervey was tough but magnificent, I have said many times since that if I had to go into harms way, I would hope to see Peter's bull dog face on the bridge in command.

\* Deep Trial Unit at Alverstoke. Working with Lt Cdr Bill Filer through many hours of tedious trials was a great learning experience. Bill ran a tight quarterdeck and maintained the DTU ship shape and ready at all times. When the American Navy was running trials that required altering the pressure chamber they crossed swords with Bill, as you surely will when you are using his equipment, I had to sit down with Bill and drink a glass or two of his home made wine to settle him down. His wine was not really a "Nuit St George" from France, but it was good. Some of the other officers and men that I particularly remember are my two Chiefs, Bob Fraser and Ginger Andrews, then there was Wolfey Dodd, Shiner Wright, Harry Wardel, Johnny Gratan, Patrick Dowland and Bill Filer who had difficulty counting beyond four while on the golf course, Peter Messervey had the same problem when we played at Rowlands Castle at Havant. Lt Cdr Stu Honor was one of my closest friends, Stu looked like the American movie stereo type of a RN Officer, monocled and very distinguished. Stu has left us, I miss him, he will always be remembered.

My tour with the RN is one of my fondest memories, I shall always remember it. One of my proudest possessions is a cartoon caricature of myself that was presented to me on my last mess night in Vernon, stating that I may retain my mess life and that this was recorded in the Vernon Mess

One final note, in your Volume 6 Number 2 November 1995 issue of Minewarfare And Diving, Phil White alludes to the fact that Divers appear to have more female children than male. Perhaps these are divers without imagination and need a of them.

I am still employed by the US NAVY and am still in the Supervisor of Salvage Office assigned as the Head of Operations Branch.

Thirty years active duty followed by twenty three years civil service. I believe that I have got Bill Filer beat.

Dear Editor

Presently I am a serving Canadian Naval Clearance Diver who has taken a keen interest in our diving history. I am currently attempting to write an article on this history, which our training department will eventually give to the new diver trainees.

Although, the Royal Canadian Navy was established in 1910, the Royal Canadian Navy's Diving branch origins can only be dated back to the early 30's. Before WW II Canadian Naval personnel who wished to become divers were sent and then underwent training at Whale Island, England.

We would be very interested in obtaining any information with regards to the types of training that these people endured. What types of equipment were these people being trained in? After training, what kind of diving duties did these divers perform once they were posted back to their ship's and what were the different classifications of divers during those times?

What we also lack are any period photographs of Whale Island training school and the training of these Naval Divers during this period. Any light or information that you could provide us on these topics would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours  
B Clarke  
Master Seaman B. Clarke  
FDU(P)

### THE DAY THE TELEVISION BROKE

You might be hard pressed but if you manage to find an old and bold killick such as Steve Westby or Smudge Smith they will tell you that at one time the junior rates didn't stare at the TV all night being as how there wasn't one. This circumstance was to come about once more to the Junior Rates Fwd mess of HMS Hurworth.

One night in rough seas off the west country, passing south in order to carry out a dawn strike on an unsuspecting foreign Beamer (NO! NO! WE WILL SURPRISE THEM, HONEST. THEY DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WE'RE COMING!!). As usual, nearly everyone had binned the mess in favour of anywhere whatsoever to sleep and dream of shooting Hunt Class designers. One person remained up forward, an infamous legendary character only spoken of in whispers, OM(MW) 'Bullet' Wilton. He faithfully carried on watching the television through the roughers until it fell out of its stowage, then with nothing else to do, he went to bed.

A day passed and people were beginning to fall apart. How was Grant Mitchell shaping up with his newly found nineties man

## Letters to the Editor

nice guy image ? What antics had that crazy pair Derek and Mavis been up to ? How was everyone going to cope ?

Just when it was beginning to get too much somebody said "Fancy a game of cards?" It snowballed from there. Muppets took over the world in risk, divers suddenly held thousands of pounds in Monopoly (no change there and yes we've heard all the experimental diving dits YAWN YAWN) The RO's thought about a quick game of Snakes and Ladders but decided to get their heads down as usual, still the thought was there.

The games carried on, the heated high profile debates moved from Muppets are not thick to divers are not all "prima donnas" and back again. The stokers started a sweep stake on whether the killick 'L' would ever turn to or not - he didn't.

Eventualy of course we had a stand off and the television was repaired. Still it was good while it lasted.

AB(MW) Nobby Hall  
HMS Hurworth

## CAPES EXPLAINED

By WO(MW) Nobby Clark (The Capes Crusader)

Hello and welcome to the wonderful world of CAPES. What is this mystical thing I hear you cry, it is of course the CAPability Evaluation System. Designed to evaluate the Operational Capability (OC) of the FLEET and its constituent Units, CAPES is to be found FLEET wide, excluding the RIVER and P200 Classes. No other Unit escapes, this includes Ships (RN/RFA), Submarines, RM units, Ships Flights and FLEET/Area Diving Units.

Why CAPES and why in the WARFARE Section of Cdre MFP? The answer is simple. FOSFs mission statement is 'TO PROVIDE SHIPS FIT FOR TASK'. The WARFARE Section of Cdre MFP is responsible for the monitoring and upkeep of MM/PP OC (SofD for Diving Units). CAPES provides the wherewithal to evaluate OC, thus enabling the FOSF mission statement.

How does CAPES work? Data is entered at Platform (MM/PP/DU) level in three categories: Equipment Availability (EA), Operator Availability (OA) and System Performance (SP) (SP is more commonly known as the achievement of FCD3 training serials, BR 5063 serials for DU). These data plus Commanding Officers' comments are forwarded to Squadron Commanders (SofD for DU) and Cdre MFP (Flotilla) on Disk at monthly intervals; records are examined at Squadron and Flotilla to identify any downward trends or anomalies and actions initiated to correct them. Quarterly reports from Squadron Commanders are forwarded to Cdre MFP who in turn reports to CINCFLEET; all transactions are on Disk. The quarterly reports from all Flotilla Users (FOSF, Cdre MFP, FONA, FOSM, COMRFA and CGRM) are scrutinised at CINCFLEET who reports to the NAVY Board. CAPES top level 'scores' (EA/OA/SP) are used to assess the OC of the FLEET and help show how resources are being used and what is being achieved with those resources. The aim being to ensure the best value for money is obtained.

Other uses of CAPES data. Apart from allowing the Command to evaluate own Unit OC, CAPES data is:

- transferred to the FLEET Management Information System (FLEETMIS) (3 monthly).
- used for inputs to the Surface Flotilla Management Plan (6 monthly and annual).

c. transferred to the Ships Support Agency (SSA) (monthly). EA data is used for monitoring equipment defect trends.

d. used as indicator aligned with Platform Readiness Status.

e. available on demand for any purpose (providing the question is clearly defined).

But enough of the PR, what does the CAPES Manager (CAPESMAN) do. The list appears endless but in summary: complete responsibility for SURFLOT(MFP) CAPES activities, including presentation of records plus maintenance and defect rectification (both hardware and software). The additional non-CAPES tasks of managing FCD3, MXTIs, MCM Operators handbooks, STUFT co-ordination documents and the distribution of the Annual Practice Ammunition Allowance to Squadron Commanders and SNONI take up any spare time in the evenings.

There is no doubt that CAPES is here to stay. The vehicle for transfer of data may change, modem/phone link instead of disk transfer and the system will be incorporated in CHOTS(shore units) and OASIS (seagoing units) but the measurement of OC will remain paramount. To this end, a training structure is evolving. Operations Officers are given instruction during the LMCDO course and shortly Small Ship Navigators (CAPES Officers in ISLANDs, CASTLEs and NI HUNTs) will also benefit from the same introduction. Experience gained in MM/PP/DU eases the transition to big ship CAPES as careers evolve. At Senior Rate level, PO(MW)s are exposed to CAPES as the ships FCD3 co-ordinator and at Squadron level (CPO(MW)) as the CAPES Manager; Flotilla level is of course a WO(MW) post. PO(D)s are similarly involved with the responsibility for OA records at Platform level and then as CAPES Manager in Diving Units.

Thats all folks, I move on in October to the Mining Team at CROMBIE and Tony Mulrain (ex MCM1) takes over. Happy CAPESing.

# ALL ARMS COMMANDO COURSE 4/96 (POLAR BEARS ONLY NEED APPLY)

By Lt Dave Hunkin RN



"We were now on the downhill stretch and the end was in sight as passing the Avon Dam meant there was only a few kilometres to go. Eight weeks of pain and suffering were soon to be over as our 14 man syndicate formed up for the march to the finish. Caps were straightened, webbing and buttons were done up as we forgot our swollen feet and bleeding backs. Putting that green beret on your head for the first time is quite an emotional moment, one that only those who wear it can understand. You had joined an elite 'club', the right to wear a green beret and no one can take that away from you."

On 28 October 1996 sixty five members of the Royal Navy, Army and Royal Airforce started All Arms Commando Course 4/96. On 19 December, some eight weeks later, only 34 of those original 65 received the coveted green beret in a windswept, rain lashed field somewhere on Dartmoor and luckily, I was one.

The aim of this article is twofold, firstly to dispel some myths that surround this 'cloak and dagger' course and secondly to assist those who may be considering undertaking the course in the future. Forewarned is forearmed!

The All Arms Commando Course (AACC) is split into 2 phases, phase 1 - 2 weeks Pre Course, followed by phase 2 - the 6 week Commando Course. The course is run by the Commando Training Centre, Royal Marines, Lympstone (CTC) to train officers and men of other services, already trained in their specialist skills, for service with Commando Forces Royal Marines. The course has now been extended to include a 2 week 'beat up' at CTC, all courses are now 10 weeks long.

During the welcoming address by the course officer the course are left in no doubt as to what they are about to undertake. Described by CTC as "eight of the hardest weeks of Commando training put back to back" it is widely accepted as the hardest way to earn the green beret, the reasons for which will become clear later.

The course takes the form of lectures and instruction in the field followed by practical application and assessment. Of the eight weeks, six are spent in the field culminating in the final exercise in week seven. Interspersed with the field exercises are the Commando Tests which start at the beginning of week three. There are 9 Commando Tests to be passed, all with their own absolute criteria:

1. 4 mile speed march (msm) - 40 mins
2. Battle Physical Training Pass Out.
  - a) Climb 30 foot rope

- b) Complete Assault Course in under 5 minutes.
- c) Fireman's carry of 200m in under 90 seconds
- d) A full regain
3. 6 msm - 60 mins
4. 12 mile load carry - 4 hours with 68lbs
5. Final exercise
6. Endurance Course - 72 mins followed by 6 from 10 shots at a fig 11c target at 25 metres.
7. 9 msm - 90 mins
8. Tarzan & Assault course - 13 mins
9. 30 mile march - 8 hours
10. All physical tests are conducted carrying 22lbs plus weapon unless otherwise stated.

The Commando Tests start after only 2 weeks on course. There is no time to train once on course therefore it is imperative that candidates arrive fully prepared both physically and mentally. Failure of a Commando Test may lead to a re-test if time allows but generally results in immediate RTU (Returned to Unit).

### Passing In

Before the joys of Commando Tests however, candidates must first 'pass in' to the course. Day 1 - Basic Fitness Test is as it states - basic! 50 sit ups in 2 mins, 5 pull ups, 1.5 mile squaded run followed by a 1.5 mile individual run in under 12 minutes. All tests are conducted in denims, t shirt and boots. The RAF left us at this point!

After the Royal Marines Swimming Test, basic for any bubble head, day 2 heralds the first real physical test that sets nerves trembling. The Combat Fitness Test consists of marching 8 miles in 1 hr 50 mins carrying 35lbs, a rifle and helmet. At a glance it may not appear too hard a test however, when the squad forms up and sets off at a lightning pace uphill, it soon dawns that this test is designed to weed out the weaker members of course.

The first 4 miles are all uphill and encouragement for those failing behind is forbidden as the PT staff increase the pace and everyone is forced to run as hard as they can. More candidates are lost during this test but there is some satisfaction to be had on returning to CTC knowing that the first real physical test is over. The following day the course deploys for Exercise COUNTRYMAN. 3 days designed to introduce the basics of field craft to those with no field experience - step forward the 8 matelots! The exercise started with a vengeance as the course formed up carrying full Combat Equipment Marching Order (CEMO) weighing some 65lbs plus the ubiquitous 14lb SA80 rifle. Suddenly the staff leads off at a frightening pace and yet again the course is forced to run as fast as they can as falling behind would mean being RTU'd. Surely you're not supposed to run carrying 70lbs? But there is no one around to ask and 40 lung tearing minutes later the course arrives at Woodbury Common in a state of exhaustion and shock.

Many lectures are given in various military skills such as shelter building, night navigation and basic tactics but this exercise remains memorable for one particular treat; Field Inspections. Usually at 0730 the course muster in a clearing with all their kit laid out in a strict format ready for inspection. Each course member stood nervously behind his kit as the staff approached bellowing at people to stand still and issuing press ups to anyone drawing attention to themselves. Before long kit is strewn about and the whole course is put 'on the flank'. A

## ALL ARMS COMMANDO COURSE

'flanking' meant standby for about an hour of "therapy" which takes many forms but always results in a period of intense physical pain by uphill grid sprints, leopard crawling through 'the bog of eternal stench' or a run through the water filled tunnels of the endurance course. Needless to say the Naval contingent found themselves 'on the flank' almost every day for the first two weeks as we struggled to bring our "personal administration" up to the required standards. Not an ideal way to start the course as it eats into the energy resources. No allowances were made!

Friday, week 1 brought the next shock, Battle Physical Training. The course returned from a tiring 3 days in the field on a Friday



*Lecturer explaining maintenance of arms*

afternoon to be sent down to the Assault Course for a 90 minute period of Battle Physical Training. There are only 3 sessions on the Assault Course before the Pass Out so the periods are long and intense and all are on a Friday afternoon. Not what you need after a week in the field! Much time is spent learning techniques and it soon became apparent that endless aggression alone wouldn't suffice. The Commando Tests are conducted when you are physically drained to show those who are willing to give 'that little extra'. Technique when you're exhausted is paramount! The rope climb and regain proved the most difficult technique to master made all the more difficult by combats, a rifle and 22lbs of webbing.

The sessions on the Assault Course were hard, dirty work and resulted in numerous minor injuries. There was an immense sigh of relief when the BPT Pass Out was over as you would never be asked to climb that damned 30 ft rope again!

Week 2 consists of a five day exercise practising and enhancing skills already taught. There is a greater emphasis on the tactical aspects of soldiering all of which are practised by day and by night. Sleep is virtually non-existent and the 'phys' (Bootneck speak for physical exercise) is typically intense. The 'flankings' continue!

Following the pattern of 2 hard weeks followed by a less strenuous one, week 3 is quite enjoyable by comparison. An excellent 3 days is spent on the ranges at Tregantle learning and practising the principals of marksmanship and being introduced to foreign weapons. There are also helicopter drills to be learnt, more tactics and everyone's favourite, BPT. The only slight sting in the tail is the 4 msm, the first Commando Test, 0730 on Monday morning.

### **Trenches!**

Week 4 is probably the hardest week in many respects. Exercise

DIGGING MAN is a defensive exercise where lessons are given in defence and patrolling. Defence means trenches and at 1700 on Monday the course sets off to Woodbury Common carrying the usual 75lbs. By 1730 it was dark and 4 hours later the course arrived at its defensive position on a bleak hillside.

It then started to rain. Not the normal rain we had grown used to, it was a winter course after all, no, this rain had been ordered specially by the staff. It came horizontally, mixed with hail and sleet blown by a gale force 8 easterly wind. The trenches were dug continuously throughout the night and by 0300 they were all twelve inches deep in water. In the four man trenches 2 men dug while 2 men huddled behind their bergans out of the wind. Shelters were not allowed and it made a sorry sight. By day break most trenches were dug down to 3 or 4 feet, all were by now soaked to the skin, covered in mud not to mention freezing cold and a little hungry. The staff couldn't believe their luck - "Quality training!" By 1500 the trenches were dug, some 18 hours after starting, and the rain still poured and the wind howled. Not surprisingly some soldiers suffered from mild exposure which was to become evident later in the week,

The daily routine could now begin. Each night Reconnaissance Patrols (Recce Patrols) went out and Observation Positions (OPs) were established. These brought back information on enemy activity and formed the basis of the daily dawn attack. Troop attacks were to become second nature but it took quite some time before the course became the coherent fighting unit the staff were looking for.

### **The Stretcher Race**

Having completing an exhausting week in the trenches and carrying out troop attacks, patrols etc, the staff had a special 'Friday surprise' for us: We were to run the Endurance Course - twice! First as an instructional period followed by a race around the course carrying a stretcher and 3 filled jerrycans. "Last one back gets them in!" (It was very tempting to offer my diving pay and take the hit but discretion being the better part of valour.....!) During the instructional phase the course, already cold, tired and hungry, grew even colder as they stood in a bitter wind, soaking wet, waiting for 40 soldiers to squeeze through one tunnel.

The stretcher race was predictably an emotional affair as aggression took over mind and body. An extreme example of



*Assault Course Training*

# ALL ARMS COMMANDO COURSE

this was one officer who suffered severe hypothermia. He had become separated from his group during the run back and was found by the staff as he zig zagged down the road. In a daze he finally ran into the side of the approaching Landrover and was rushed to the sickbay at CTC. Diagnosed as suffering from hypothermia his core body temperature had dropped to 33°C and was minutes from unconsciousness. 30 minutes after being admitted he started to shiver and he spent the weekend in sickbay re-warming and receiving treatment for frostbitten fingers. (Top tip: Don't do a winter course!)

## Dartmoor

Week 5 brought the second of the Commando Tests and one which filled most with a little anxiety, the 12 mile load carry. This is carried out at night carrying a minimum of 68lbs over open moor and tracks to be completed in under 4 hours.

Orders were given at 1830 on Sunday night and dinner was taken in the Officers' Mess on completion. The mess felt particularly warm and inviting that night as we sat in our combats chatting, concerned that none of us had managed to get our kit to weigh less than 75lbs. However, the inevitable soon came and the course were flown by Sea King to a bleak, dark Dartmoor ready to start at 2200. The course set off led by the staff at the now familiar brisk pace. The quick pace across the moonlit moor carrying 75lbs soon took its toll and before long most had twisted ankles. One course member was suffering from food poisoning and tried to make frequent stops to be sick. Sometimes he was able to stop, sometimes he wasn't. The fear of falling behind and being collected by the staff Landrover was motivation enough and all passed the test in 3 hours 50 minutes. By 0200 Sections were being given orders and ammunition for the forthcoming 4 day exercise. Most had a 4 hour yomp to their OP's which were to be up and running by 0730. There then followed the first full week on Dartmoor carrying out the tactics taught on Woodbury Common. This time however distances were increased, the weight carried was increased and Dartmoor threw its best winter weather at anyone foolish enough to venture across its boggy undulating terrain in December.

## The Endurance Course

Having collapsed into bed late on Friday night after a week on Dartmoor, waking at 0500 on Saturday to run the Endurance Course demanded 'Nirvana' at full blast! After an early breakfast the course marched the 4 miles to Woodbury Common in the dark ready to start the course at 0745. 72 minutes is allowed to complete the course consisting of water filled tunnels, the 'sheep dip', Peters Pool and the run back followed by a shoot.



Look Mum no hands!



Woodbury Common

The Endurance Course Pass out was a particularly unpleasant affair. Days of sub zero temperatures had left the water obstacles frozen and the officers' syndicate was chosen to break it! The wade through Peters pool was done in record time as the ice broke on our chest and we sprinted to the other obstacles. Soon extremities were numbed by the cold, which had its advantages as it meant you couldn't feel the gravel and rocks in the bottom of the tunnels as they ground into hands and knees. As the sun was only just rising, the air temperature was still below freezing and combats and webbing froze during the run back, apart from below the knee. Shoot complete, the Endurance Course was over, a painful, unpleasant experience.

## 'Interest Week'

Week 6, loosely called an interest week, gets the course away from CTC with Amphibious Drills at RM Poole, Dunker Training, climbing, and a very good field firing package. Yet again, however, Monday begins with a Commando Test - the 6 msm. Overall an excellent week and one that finally introduces the 'Commando element' with amphibious Ops and roping.

## The Final Phase

Week 7 begins the final and most intensive phase of the course:

Wk 7	Sun-Fri	Final Exercise
	Sat	Endurance Course Pass Out
	Sun	Rest
Wk 8	Mon	9 msm
	Tues	Tarzan/Assault Pass Out
	Wed	30 miler - Green Beret!

Final Exercise has 2 aims: To assess candidates in all that they have been taught on the course and to 'prepare' them for the final Commando Tests. It is also described by the Marines as being "Yomptastic" as that is what most of the week is spent doing, yomping from one position to another, carrying out attacks, patrols, OPs and more yomping. This ensures that candidates approach the final Commando Tests tired, foot sore and devoid of energy, however for most, this had happened weeks ago

But the end was in sight, and nothing, bar serious injury, was going to stand in the way of the course getting their green berets. Or so it was thought. In the end, even at this late stage, 4 failed the Tarzan Assault course. Three passed a re-test after the 30 miler but one failed on the penultimate day of course.

In total, 34 passed the course including:  
3 Officers from 9 starters (including 1 x MCDO!)

# ALL ARMS COMMANDO COURSE

3 RN Jrs from 7 starters ( 1 x LCK, 1 x LPT & 1 x AEM)  
28 Army Ors from 49 starters (including 4 x RE Divers)

A 52% pass rate is considered good for a winter course. Most had carried out a thorough 'beat up' and were well prepared for the course.

Anyone considering attending the course must start training at least three months prior to it starting. A part from the obvious, running, getting 'boot fit' and improving upper body strength, early contact should be made with the Education Centre at CTC. Run by Commando trained Instructor Officers they are a mine of information and advice and can arrange essential visits to CTC in order to practice various techniques on the Assault Course etc.

But why do the course in the first place? Undoubtedly almost all Divers are capable of passing AACC with the right mental and physical preparation. Personally, I think it should be actively encouraged as the Clearance Diving Branch are becoming leaders in Very Shallow Water MCM (VSW MCM) and the future holds many joint projects with RM Poole that require the unique talents of a Clearance Diver. Being Commando trained can only enhance your position within these expanding areas of warfare and with an ever increasing budget, Amphibious and therefore Joint Operations are the future. Clearance Divers will and should be in the forefront of this. So don't be left on the shelf, make yourself part of an exciting, challenging future, get Commando Trained!

## AACC Course Programme

### Phase 1 The Pre Course

#### Week 1

Passing In Tests  
Basic fieldcraft exercise  
Battle Physical Training (BPT)

#### Week 2

BPT  
Fieldcraft Exercise

### Phase 2 The Commando Course

#### Week 3

4 mile speed march  
Tactics  
Range work  
BPT  
Helicopter training

#### Week 4

BPT Pass Out  
Patrolling exercise  
Endurance course  
Tarzan course

#### Week 5

12 mile load carry  
Tarzan/Assault course  
Survival training/exercise  
Endurance course

#### Week 6

Dunker drills  
Amphibious training  
Roping & abseiling  
Live firing  
6 mile speed march  
Tarzan/Assault course

#### Week 7

Final exercise  
Endurance course pass out

#### Week 8

9 mile speed march  
Tarzan/Assault Pass Out  
30 mile march  
Course wash up & dispersal

# OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS!

## By Mike Stannard MoD NEBSM Verifier

There is a great opportunity for those candidates selected to qualify in the Mine Warfare PO's course currently held at HMS DRYAD.

During this 10 week course all students are encouraged to participate in an individual written project which qualifies for the National Examinations Board in Supervisory Managements (NEBSM) certificate.

### NEBS MANAGEMENT

NEBSM was set up in 1964 by the British Government. The current mission statement is "To facilitate the best methods of flexible and effective supervisory and management education, development and assessment".

NEBSM currently offers awards at three levels - Introductory, Certificate and Diploma through a network of over eight hundred recognised Centres in the UK and with over 32,000 candidates in 1993/1994 is the largest single provider of management education and training.

NEBSM offers its own SVQs and NVQs in Supervisory Management at Level 3 and in Management at Level 4 plus NVQs in Supervisory Management and Management at Levels 3, 4 and 5 in association with City and Guilds.

NEBSM believes that the supervisor is the key front line manager - the person who can 'make or break' top management plans. The trained supervisor is the person who has the skills to make senior managers' decisions work in practice.

NEBSM qualifications bring confidence, prestige and greater

promotion prospects for employees and a cost effective answer to employers' training needs.

NEBSM standards are monitored by a team of Assessors and Verifiers who are appointed by the Board by virtue of their interest in Supervisory Management education and training together with their personal experience of management.

NEBSM programmes can be tailor made to suit the industry, organisation or area. Guidance is offered to prospective Centres who wish to submit a proposed programme to the Board's Approvals Panel. The four basic groupings of Management of Human Resources, Management of Financial Resources, Management of Products and Services and Management of Information are used to develop NEBSM programmes.

NEBSM produces the UK's best selling open learning materials for supervisory management, Super Series 2, which is published by Pergamon Open Learning. These materials can be used as part of a programme leading to NEBSM awards. Also available to assist NEBSM tutors to run high quality programmes are overhead transparencies, role play exercises, assignments and case studies together with material to support the NVQ and SVQ programmes.

This project, similar to the PO's Leadership Course Exercise, is designed to show ability in examining a problem, analysing what is happening, reaching conclusions, and making recommendations for improvement. This invariably includes costs and the effect on human relations, which are commonly found in industry and commerce, and which may be of interest to anyone faced with the need to solve problems and subsequently write a report on a suggested solution.

# A SUPERVISORS WORST NIGHTMARE

By PO(D) McKeever

## The Training

Ships Divers Course 673 had a successful week one & two at Horsea Island with all divers achieving all the requirements to continue the course to week three, this included a companion diver drill assessment at the end of week two.

They started week three on the bottom of HMS Bristol, with all searches getting round with minor problems. LWEM Bunker was involved in both dives.

Day two of week three was allotted to HMS MANCHESTER, the 5 Mar 96, but due to all the activity on HMS MANCHESTER this arrangement was changed so that diving would take place on the hull of HMS RICHMOND instead.

## The Dive

All divers, having checked for leaks, left surface at 1135 with LWEM Bunker being positioned as No4. There were only four divers on the search, plus one acting as surface swimmer.

Once all the divers were in position the No1 diver gave two pulls to start the search which the surface swimmer answered to the No4 diver. The search started as planned.

The search continued well down the Port side of the ship with all divers staying together to the point of it reaching a Dockyard barge. Four bells was passed down to the No4 in order to take the float down to clear the obstruction, at which point the No4 took the float under the ship.

The barge was larger than normal and the search continued at a pace that was considered normal for a course at this stage of their training.

Once the divers bubbles had passed the obstruction and had reached the surface swimmer, four bells was given on the hull by the surface swimmer using his knife to instruct the No4 to release the float. The four bells was given three times and even though the divers were making good progress the float still hadn't arrived back on the surface. At this stage I was positioned at the bow of HMS RICHMOND to check for bubbles on the starboard side. No bubbles were sighted by my staff, or myself

Shortly after this, 10m from the bows, the bubbles moved from the port side to the starboard side under the keel, at which point I took over the dive from the trainee supervisor, LT WILLIAMS. The time was 1149.

The stand-by diver was brought to immediate notice and a thunderflash deployed. The first thunderflash did not activate so another one was deployed, this one did activate correctly. Shortly afterwards, a diver appeared on the surface who turned out to be the No2 diver, CPL HUNT. CPL HUNT was waving his coupling line indicating that he was detached from the rest of the search.

A third thunderflash was deployed and the stand-by diver, AB(D) KELLOW, sent away having been briefed to proceed down the divers bubbles. AB(D) KELLOW took 36 seconds

to enter the water. Shortly after, AB(D) KELLOW brought up an unconscious diver with a facemask full of white foam.

The stand-by diver was instructed to get the diver off air and get him to the gemini. Once in the gemini I checked for a pulse, no pulse was present. His airway was checked for obstructions then the casualty was put on Ambu with a 15 LPM flow set. From the diver arriving on the surface to the point where he was put on Ambu was between 10-15 seconds. ECC & AV was conducted by myself and LT WILLIAMS while AB(D) SILCOX drove the gemini to the jetty.

ECC & AV was conducted for 6 minutes both in the gemini and on the jetty until the LMA of HMS RICHMOND and the POMA of HMS MANCHESTER turned up. The LMA and POMA took over giving ECC & AV and at the same time, using their specialist equipment, emptied what little water there was out of the casualty.

In those 6 minutes we did manage to get a heart beat of nine per minute. Within ten minutes of the incident happening we had two Ambulances on the scene and the medical staff from HMS NELSON led by POMA PEARCE.

The Paramedics worked on the casualty with all manner of medical equipment until he was in a stable condition to move, he was then moved to the Accident & Emergency Unit at the Queen Alexandra Hospital, Cosham.

Once stabilised at the Accident & Emergency Unit he was moved to the Intensive Care Unit and later that night transferred to Haslar Hospital.

LWEM BUNKER was making a good recovery with his heartbeat and core temperature back to normal and breathing unaided, he was however put on a ventilator so he could direct his energies elsewhere. 24 hours later the after affects of drowning took place resulting in his brain swelling to a point where he was diagnosed as brain dead. His life support machine was switched off on the 7 Mar 96.

The autopsy report concluded that LWEM BUNKER died due to a non diving related illness, namely, a Cerebral Infarction.

A year has passed now, but there isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about LWEM BUNKER and the events that happened that day. Could I have done more or done something better, I don't think I could have done, I just did everything that my training taught me to do. I am thankful that I had very competent staff with me who reacted in the manner that was both calm and professional, the result of which gave LWEM BUNKER the chance of life.

No matter how well you think you're prepared, even in controlled conditions like this day was, things out of your control can go wrong. All I can say is that if things do go wrong, go with your training even though it looks like it may be in vain.

I would personally like to thank AB(D) KELLOW & AB(D) SILCOX for their professional support in this incident. Thank you.

# SMOPS(MW) BARBECUE. PO(MW) 67 COURSE.

## By PO(MW) 67

June 18th was the date set for the inaugural Minewarfare branch barbecue. The venue was the Warrant Officers and Senior Rates Mess at SMOPS, HMS DRYAD.

The plan was first formulated during week one of PO(MW) 67 course. Course instructor CPO(MW) George Hogg informed us that one of the many tasks we were to undertake was to organise a barbecue for the entire MINEWARFARE section at SMOPS. This first appeared to be a simple leadership task for seven experienced Acting PO(MW)s to accomplish. Wrong!

Geoff Palmer, SEA DAD to the course decided maybe we should boost numbers a little by opening the invitation to all MINEWARFARE Senior Rates and Officers of the fleet (including a few retired members). One week later and we were in full swing with approximately 150 letters having been sent out. We take this opportunity to apologise to any members of the branch who did not receive an invite. We did our best to find you!!

The response from those in the real world was rather slow, mainly due to the number of ships away on exercises, but overall it was encouraging.

The day of the barbecue fell in week 10 of this 14 week course and it seemed to arrive quicker than we would have liked, still, with all the preparations completed we were ready in all respects to commence the evolution.

First to arrive was WO(MW) Pete Cawsey, down from Northwood, closely followed by Ex WO(MW) Barney Barnett, who travelled up from Dartmouth (apparently on a duty trip!?). Within a couple of hours the numbers had swelled to around 60 Muppets from around the country with more arriving later. Special mention must go to the Chefs de Cuisine A/PO(MW)s

Baz Hunt, Stu Esplin and Geoff Palmer for an excellent scran. We would also like to thank "Chief Food Taster" PO(MW) Olen (Truffle Hunter) Thores.

As the night progressed and dits became even more fantastic, more Minesweeping was achieved in the vicinity of the bar than during the last 10 Hunt Boat COSTs covered by FOST(MPV)! During this phase of the evening we decided to liven things up with the muppets formation handbag dancing championship, and a folk singing demo by Geoff. It is fair to say that "shaking a hoof" is not one of the course's strongest attributes.

We thank those of you who attended and hope you left with fond memories and renewed acquaintances. For those of you who could not make it, you missed out on a highly enjoyable evening. We hope that this jamboree will become an annual event, with increased numbers next year.

All we have to do now is finish the course, the light is at the end of the tunnel, sweeps at long stay, ready to down kite etc.

ROLL ON THE NEXT ONE!

### PO(MW) 67 COURSE

Where we are all off to.-

A/PO (MW) Geoff Palmer	HMS INVERNESS
A/PO (MW) Andy Kidd	HMS HURWORTH
A/PO (MW) Baz Hunt	HMS CHIDDINGFOLD
A/PO (MW) Stu Esplin	HMS DULVERTON
A/PO (MW) Sleepy Gelder	HMS QUORN
A/PO (MW) Neil Clark	HMS CATTISTOCK
A/PO (MW) John Gunter	HMS CATTISTOCK



# CONISTON CHRONICLE (C2)

By Lt Tony Silva RN, MW3

Another training year has passed since the MW Section's last MAD Mag article and since then, the Section has tirelessly continued to train MW personnel from OM up to Squadron Commander level. In fact, over the past 12 months, trainee through-put has increased beyond all expectations with OM2 courses expected to continue at 2 above maximum until further notice and all courses full. The training of foreign personnel has also markedly increased with Flagship bringing officers and ratings from countries (literally) all around the world. So far the section have seen Canadian, American, Australian, Saudi and Portuguese personnel, with the expectation of contingents from Japan, Italy and Korea within the next year.

However, before we embark on the nif-naf trivia of everyday Coniston life, the following are highlighted as worthy of all our congratulations for their recognition by various selection boards.

## Queen's Birthday Honours:

### MBE:

Peter Hitchcock

## Officers Promotion

### Commander:

Chris Lade  
Simon Neil

Chris Ameye  
Adrian Cassar

### Lieutenant Commander:

Tony Griffiths  
Mark Kessler

Nigel Hill  
Rob Cornick

## Senior Rate Promotions

### Warrant Officer:

Peter Whitehead

Tony Mulrain

### Chief Petty Officer:

Priddy Hattle  
Jan Tackel  
Charly McKloskey  
Steve Blaydon

Ian Cook  
Simon Chapman  
Max Coffey

### 2OE:

George Hogg  
George Coyle  
Simon Mansell

Paul Campbell  
Steve Downey

## TRAINING

In Aug 96 the PO(MW)(O) career course training was reactivated after a period of 2½ years. Three LOM and four OM courses have graduated and Sep 97 will see the first LS(MW) course for 3 years albeit running with 11 instead of the maximum of 8 students. Initiating any training from a 'cold start' is difficult, however, the grounding laid by our predecessors has stood the test of time and we look forward to reactivating this important course. LMCDO courses continue to thrive and Lt Yvonne Gray, has just qualified as the first female MWO. As an aside, the first female OM is expected on course around Christmas time.

A slow trickle of Advance Minewarfare students wrestle with the vaguaries of MCM evaluation each term, enjoying the new, enhanced computer run wargame in Eguermin and

completing the training cycle from baby OM on the sweepdeck up to SOO in the MCMTA.

## URSA

URSA, the SANDOWN COT, has successfully completed the rigorous demands of its first Structured Command Team Training which in conjunction with CDREMFP should increase in frequency in order to utilise both the COT and the associated CBT to its full potential.

The increasing global acceptance of NAUTIS and 2093 has enhanced our training commitments and our future programming looks healthy. Indeed, due to the forecast training requirements, 'Flagship' has been sub-contacted to assist with the increased load. We therefore welcome the appointment of Mr Tony Bassett (a retired CPOMW) who completed the SRMH PJT earlier this year and has been appointed as Flagship's representative trainer.

## ARCTURUS

1076 has undergone a major hardware upgrade. The old Argus system has been replaced with VME busses and the Exercise controller system has been brought up to date and is now mouse driven.

MAS has been incorporated into the sonar system and is up and running. The reliability of the trainer has vastly improved, a complete system re-boot takes a bare two minutes.

The Hunt Class CBT has undergone a software 're-write' which has incorporated a number of moving of moving scenarios and remains a useful tool for learning keyboard skills. This facility is available to all comers and proved particularly beneficial to those seeking promotion to POMW. As with URSA, ARCTURUS will also be used for the revised CTT packages with CDREMFP scheduling the training programming.

## WARFARE TRAINING

The integration of Minewarfare into mainstream Warfare training continues to develop. As a section within the 'U' Department of SMOPS, it is possible to inject Minewarfare awareness and training into the Officer of the Watch upwards. The PWO Course now receive comprehensive introduction or refamiliarisation to Minewarfare, including a full awareness of our capabilities and limitations, and then progress onto an appreciation of the role and methods of the MCM Cdr. MW inputs are being increasingly fed into the myriad of simulator, table top and carpet top exercises that are the bread and butter of SMOPS warfare training. General awareness for our discipline is growing, helped on more than one occasion by a serial not achieving the usual or expected result due to the students ignoring, or failing to fully appreciate the implications of the mine threat.

Conversely, SMOPS is also educating us to improve our understanding of FF/DD capabilities, procedures and requirements. Whilst we do not aim to make LMCDO students mini PWOs we are overtly aware that a basic warfare knowledge is critical for our MWOs if they are to operate effectively and safely in company with the broader warfare community for whom, after all is said and done, we are supposed to be providing the service.

# READERS RESPONSE PAGE



Your Name.....

Your Rank/Rate .....

Your Job Title .....

Your Unit .....

Your Address.....

.....

.....

Your Tel No .....

Your Fax No .....

The Editor  
 "Minewarfare and Diving" Magazine  
 Coniston Block  
 School of Maritime Operations  
 HMS DRYAD  
 Southwick, Fareham  
 Hants PO17 6EJ  
 Tel: 01705 284782

Dear Editor,

1. I have read this edition from cover to cover and I think:

- (a) It's terrific – keep up the good work
- (b) It's OK – but you need more
- (c) It's no good – because

2. Please find attached my contribution towards the continued success of "Minewarfare And Diving" Magazine. It is:

- (a) a written article/Letter to The Editor, typed, double spaced and word-counted.
- (b) a photograph  /slide  /diagram  No. of items:
- of .....
- (c) less than RESTRICTED in classification

- 3. I realise that the Magazine publication date is 1 Aug and that by sending my article in today it will arrive at least six weeks before the next edition is due.
- 4. I would/would not like my material/contribution returned on completion of printing.
- 5. I understand that inclusion of my contribution, in whole or in part, is at the discretion of the Editorial Committee.

Yours .....

Signed .....

## POSTCARD FROM ABBEY WOOD



By Lt Cdr Jon Chapple RN, WE123N

### Dear fellow MAD readers,

Just a quick line to let you know that WE123 (minewarfare) and WE128 (Diving & Life Support) groups ("Project" to the uninitiated) are settled into their new home at MOD Abbey Wood, Bristol. We finally moved from the Portland area in Mar 97 and are now swimming with the tide of communications technology that keeps Abbey Wood running (networked E-mail, desk top PC signal message drafting etc.) Quite a change from those far off halcyon days at Southwell! Still, the ornamental gardens and fountains are pleasant at this time of year.

Recent organisational changes within Naval Support Command mean that we are part of the MOD's Ships Support Agency (hope you like our new logo!). However, Project's role remains unchanged: our prime task is to support in-service equipment but, due to the discrete nature of MW and Diving equipment, we also procure new items and bring them into service. To assist with this, we formed up as a multi-disciplinary group on arrival at Abbey Wood and now have the stores commodity teams from Copenacre working alongside us. This concept is working well.

I thought you might like a snapshot of the current projects that are keeping the WE123/128 groups busy. In no particular order, Minewarfare Tactical Support System (MTSS) will receive a major software update in late 97. Route Survey Data Base (RSDB), fast approaching acceptance testing, is due for delivery to the Hydrographic Office in Spring 98. A second buy of RCMDS 2 vehicles is underway (the light at the end of the tunnel is not a train) together with a formal 6 month trial of recovery methods (Hero, Skipping Rope and Happy Hooker). MSSA Mk1 (the venerable TAG) is heading for a trial of the Mk3 version late 97 - the end of the tale that began with endorsement of the staff requirement in 1958?

MCM/EOD - LSE (CDBA for short) completed successful production proving trials earlier this year and is due to enter service late 97. The first Transportable Manned Compression Chamber (TMCC - aka Type C) is due for delivery 97/98 and Project staff have been liaising closely with the Sandown and Hunt Class platform managers to develop the ship fitting plans for both (more of this next time I write). A myriad of minor items of Divers Ancillary Equipment (eg divers personal lights, lost diver markers, rigid flag Alpha etc) will be formally introduced when stocks are available. Oh yes, we spent a thrilling weekend at the DERA range, Weston-super-Mare, for live MDC trials of the German version just a few weeks ago (I love the smell of cordite and Bristol Channel mud in the morning).

For the record the Naval Applications staff (with tel nos - just dial 9352 + extrn) are:

- Lt Cdr Jon Chapple - WE123N Senior Minewarfare & Diving Applicator (38216)
- WO(MW) Dixie Dean - WE123N2 Minewarfare Applicator (38218)
- CCWEA Andy Cockram - WE123N1 MW Technical Support Manager (38217)
- (tbrb CCWEA Ian Forrest Sep 97)
- WO(D) Graham Petrie - WE128N Diving Applicator (38231)
- CPOMEA Neill Scott - WE128N1 Diving Technical Support Manager (38234)

That's all for now. Will write again soon. Don't be afraid to call or visit.

Yours aye, Bristol (Jon, Dixie, Andy, Graham and Neill)

## THE MINEWARFARE & CLEARANCE DIVING OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

By Lt Cdr Rob Hoole

The Minewarfare & Clearance Diving Officers' Association (MCDOA) was founded five years ago. Far from being another club for 'old fogies,' its membership numbers 140 serving officers and 88 retired but extremely energetic officers from the MCD, MW and QDD specialisations. The membership also includes several officers from foreign navies who have undertaken the appropriate RN courses. Associate membership is also offered to exchange officers serving in RN Minewarfare and Diving billets and REDE officers on the staff of the Defence Diving School.

The association's objectives are to promote the interests of the Minewarfare and Diving community and to foster the esprit de corps of its membership. Whilst there is an active social programme, which includes the annual party or ladies night normally held in March/April and the annual dinner held in November, the association also looks after its own by providing a ready response where there is need such as hardship, illness or bereavement. As another example, the association has joined forces with the Association of First Class Divers in the refurbishment and care of the diving helmet font in which many a 'paddler' has been christened over the years. A regular newsletter of activities is published.

The association's president is Richard Moore, recently retired from the Navy as Commodore MFP. Activities are organised by a committee of the following officers elected at the AGM for 1995/6:

Cdr John Arrow	Chairman
Lt Cdr Rob Hoole	Vice Chairman
Lt Cdr Martyn Holloway	Serving Officers'
	Representative (1)
Lt Cdr Bob Hawkins	Serving Officers'
	Representative (2)
Cdr David Edwards	Retired Officers'
	Representative (1)
Cdr Mike Kooner MBE	Retired Officers'
	Representative (2)
Commander Frank Ward	Honorary Secretary
Lt Cdr Chris Baldwin	Honorary Treasurer

If you are a member and have an item to raise, please contact the appropriate representative. If you are not yet a member but feel you are entitled and wish to join, please contact: The Honorary Treasurer, MCD Officers' Association, Castlewood House, 77-91 New Oxford Street, LONDON WC1A 1DS, or telephone him on 0171 829 8536. The privileges of membership cost only £10 per year, which also entitles retired members to a regular copy of the Minewarfare & Diving Magazine. Association ties costing £5, and other memorabilia are also available from the Hon secretary or Hon Treasurer.

## LEAVING THE SERVICE?

1. Are you an ex MCDO or CD due to leave the service? If so, have you considered a part-time career in the Royal Navy Reserve (RNR) Diving Branch?

Can you think of a better way of keeping in touch with your old shipmates once a year and being paid for doing it? At the present moment there are 30 "Ex" RN CD's on the books of the RNR with room for more, all rates are required, Senior and Juniors alike so come along and join us. You will be directly administered by the Superintendent of Diving's organisation and do not have to join an RNR unit.

2. If you are interested and would like to know more about the RNR, then please give us a ring or drop us a line.

Point of contact is, CPO(D) HALL, Inspector Ship's Diving and RNR co-ordinator, on Portsmouth Naval Base Ext: 4116 or BT (01705) 224116. I look forward to hearing from you.

**MINEWARFARE AND DIVING is published annually by the MW Section of SMOPS.**

Service units requesting copies of the Magazine should forward their applications to the Editor. Contributions of Minewarfare or Diving interest and correspondence are invited and should be addressed to the same location.

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# CAPTION COMPETITION



**Who was saying /doing  
what to whom, when and why?**

Suggestion on a postcard please, the best entry will receive 1 years free subscription to the MAD Magazine.