



**Britannia  
Royal Naval College**

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Full Distribution

11 January 2021

**TRAINING OFFICE TEMPORARY MEMORANDUM 02/01/21**

Sponsor: DSTO PWLS

**WARRANT OFFICERS COMMISSIONING PROGRAMME DIVISIONAL NAME**

**Aim**

1. The aim of this TOTEM is to announce the selection of a Divisional name for the Warrant Officers Commissioning Programme (WOCP).

**Introduction**

2. The WOCP offers bespoke Officer selection, training, and employment opportunities to our most experienced Warrant Officer 1s, with continued career progression to Lieutenant and beyond in a way which recognises and utilises their considerable Service skills and experience.<sup>1</sup> The programme is entirely separate to the Senior Upper Yardman (SUY) scheme.

3. For the purposes of Ceremonial Training and for consistency with other Initial Naval Training Divisions the WOCP requires to be given a Divisional name.

**DUTTON Division**

4. To recognise that the WOCP rewards experienced Warrant Officer 1s by commissioning them as RN Officers, it has been decided to name the Division for a Special Duties (SD) list Officer of note. The WOCP will therefore be named DUTTON Division after Lieutenant Commander Brian Dutton DSO QGM RN.

5. Displaying a genuine commitment to excellence and duty, and always acting in the highest traditions of the service while showing outstanding leadership and gallantry, it is fitting that Lt Cdr Dutton is remembered by having his name used for the WOCP.

6. Cancel this TOTEM on inclusion of DUTTON Division in INT Standing Orders.

**Annexes:**

A. Biography of Lt Cdr Brian Dutton DSO QGM RN.

**Distribution:**

Full

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<sup>1</sup> [RNTM 01-045/20 WARRANT OFFICER TRANSFORMATION - THE WARRANT OFFICER 1 COMMISSIONING SCHEME](#)

**Lieutenant Commander Brian Dutton DSO QGM RN**



Lieutenant Commander Brian Dutton DSO QGM RN was born in Southend-on Sea in 1931 and joined the Royal Navy in 1946 as a boy seaman. At just 16 years old he was serving in HMS Belfast's 'A' gun turret during the Korean War.

A strong, fit and energetic sailor, he transferred to the Physical Training Branch on his return to the UK. As a member of the PT Branch, he was 'Speedy Wheel', carrying a 150lb wheel on several occasions for the Chatham Field Gun Team in the 1950s. He rose to Petty Officer PT Instructor before being accepted as a Special Duties List Officer, commissioning as a Sub Lieutenant in 1964. After service in the Commando Carriers BULWARK and ALBION, in 1969 he applied and was selected for training as a Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officer.

Having served in minehunters, cutting his teeth as an MCDO, the now Lieutenant Dutton's first job in Bomb Disposal was as Officer-in-Charge of the Portsmouth and Medway Clearance Diving Team. This heralded the first recognition of Brian's gallantry when, with the support of his No.2 Leading Seaman Brett, they boarded the Suction Dredger THE SOLENT moored off Felixstowe on the evening of 3rd August 1974 to investigate a mine which was jammed solid in the vessel's drag head. Of all the types used by the Germans in WWII, the mine, a German Ground Type GD, is the most difficult and dangerous ordnance to render safe.

After organising the evacuation of non-essential personnel from the dredger, Lt Dutton and LS Brett commenced the difficult task of removing the mine from the vessel's drag head. Because of the location and condition of the mine the normal procedure for rendering the mine safe was impossible. Damage to the fuse caused by the dredging operation prevented identification and the use of the normal defusing procedure, requiring Lt Dutton to adapt the

render safe procedure. Although aware that the fuse might be in a highly dangerous state, Lt Dutton and LS Brett continued with the task until the mine was eventually freed, lowered to the seabed and detonated very early the following morning. He was subsequently gazetted for the Queen's Gallantry Medal, a synopsis of the citation read; "Lieutenant Dutton's skill and calm efficiency and Leading Seaman Brett's courage and devotion to duty, during the prolonged operation were in the highest tradition of the Service."

8 years later, and now promoted to Lieutenant Commander, he was coming to the end of his service. In April 1982, whilst he was on terminal leave, Argentina invaded the Falkland Islands. His terminal leave was cancelled, he was appointed as Officer in Charge of the hastily formed Fleet Clearance Diving Team 1 and he was dispatched to the South Atlantic as the Senior MCDO in Admiral Woodward's Task Group.

Operation CORPORATE, the name given to the Falklands Conflict, provided the most challenging Explosive Ordnance Disposal environment that the Clearance Diving branch had engaged in since World War II and was a defining epoch in the Mine Warfare and Diving branch's history. The assembled Fleet Clearance Diving Teams would be responsible for the disposal of unexploded ordnance and, repeating the gallantry of 8 years earlier, Lt Cdr Dutton was involved intimately with perhaps the worst case of several such operations.

On 21 May HMS ARGONAUT was struck by a 1000lb bomb which did not explode. The bomb caused extensive damage and was lodged between two missiles in the fwd magazine, where it was surrounded by damaged and extremely dangerous ordnance. As Officer in Charge of Fleet Clearance Diving Team 1, Dutton was tasked to remove the bomb in order to get ARGONAUT back into the fight. On arrival at the scene, his judgment was that the bomb was too dangerous to defuse in situ. Instead, he took the decision to lift the bomb from the magazine and hoist it overboard. The task proved extremely complex and hazardous, requiring clearance of ammunition from the magazine and the cutting through of sections of the ship's structure. The operation took the team seven days, during which ARGONAUT sustained further air attacks. The slightest jar or disturbance to the precise lifting angle could have resulted in an explosion which would almost certainly have caused the loss of the ship.

After his return from the South Atlantic Lt Cdr Dutton was gazetted for gallantry, this time with the Distinguished Service Order. A synopsis of his citation read: "In spite of these difficulties, the bomb was successfully removed, largely due to the skill and ingenuity of Lieutenant Commander Dutton. He displayed staunch determination, steadfastness and courage of the highest order."

What is remarkable about the award of the DSO, rather than the Distinguished Service Cross, is the rarity of its award to a relatively junior officer. The DSO is normally the preserve of more Senior Officers taking Operational Command of larger Squadrons and Task Groups, but such was his sustained operational leadership of all EOD forces in theatre, in difficult and sustained combat conditions, that the decision was taken to recognise his outstanding leadership overall during Operation CORPORATE with the award of the DSO.

On leaving the RN Lt Cdr Dutton became a Post-master, followed by taking up the role of liveryman in, and Beadle for, the Carpenters Company. He also became Mayor of Petersfield and Chairman of East Hampshire District Council, whilst carrying out a great deal of charity work, including fund raising for the Vernon Monument Project – completing a remarkable career and record of service to his country.