

# MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



VOLUME 3	NUMBER 2	JUNE 1993
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## Focus on PACDU



# MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MINEWARFARE AND DIVING COMMUNITY

*Front Cover: Scenes from PACDU EOD operation at  
Flamborough Head—See article on page 21 and 22.*

VOLUME 3 NUMBER 2

JUNE 1993

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**MINEWARFARE AND DIVING is published twice-annually by the MDT Department of SMOPS on behalf of the Director of Naval Warfare, Ministry of Defence.**

Service units requesting copies of the Magazine should forward their applications to the Director of Naval Warfare, C/O The Editorial Offices, address as above. Contributions of Minewarfare or Diving interest and correspondence are invited and should be addressed to the same location.

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## Foreword by



### **Commodore C J Freeman, Commodore Minor War Vessels, Minewarfare and Diving**

*By the time this edition of the MAD Magazine goes to print I shall have been relieved in the post of Commodore Minor War Vessels, Mine Warfare and Diving. It has been a great privilege to hold the appointment and I thank you all for the support I have received.*

*Times are not easy for any activity involving defence expenditure, but in the world of MCM and diving there is much of which to be proud, and at the top of the list I would place the quality of the people—you, the reader. It is your standards of sonar operating, of diving, or of running and maintaining the ships that puts the RN at the head of the field in these areas.*

*For the future, the SANDOWN class is starting to show its full potential and procurement of the new MCM/EOD diving set is moving ahead satisfactorily, as are plans for new RCCs; but whatever kit we use the final performance will depend on the people. I ask and encourage you all to keep up the traditionally high standards of RN Mine Warfare and diving—and be proud of doing so.*

*Finally, special congratulations to the present editorial staff of this entertaining journal and all their predecessors. It has always managed to educate and amuse since Volume 1 Number 1. I hope there is a copy in my next ship!*



## Editorial

Having spent these past two years on the other side of the Atlantic valiantly showing the flag amongst our allies in Charleston, South Carolina, I feel bound to report that the Minewarfare and Diving magazine enjoys an excellent reputation within the U.S. minewarfare community! It is indeed then a pleasure, in my new post here at Gunwharf, to have an opportunity to play a small part in maintaining the high standards set by my predecessors.

That said, I can take little credit for the production of Vol 3 No 2 which was all but completed by the time I arrived. The honours must go to Lt 'Brigham' Young who, as part of his convalescence from a particularly nasty car accident, has piloted the editorial effort for this issue. I must not forget the good work of Lt Jim Acton who has also put in a deal of time helping to smooth the final package.

To those of you who sent in articles for inclusion in this edition I must also reserve a special thank you. If your particular article does not appear please be patient as it is likely that we have decided to hold it over to the next edition for genuine editorial reasons.

Although they have had considerable coverage in past editions we felt that the quality of the contributions from PACDU this time deserved recognition. Our centrefold is therefore a focus on their recent activities which were officially recognised by Flag Officer Portsmouth, Rear Admiral D.K. Bawtree at a presentation ceremony in February this year. Our congratulations to Lt Ian Morton and his team (unit)!

HAZMAT is becoming an increasingly important aspect of diving and EOD business and our attention is brought to the subject by Lt Cdr Jon Chapple, late of the Inspectorate of Diving and shortly to be let loose on the west country, and I commend his article to you. On the minewarfare front WO Dixie Dean gives us an update on the progress of the implementation of the warfare branch and Lt Cdr Tom Chambers highlights the vital part that MCM has to play in future amphibious exercises and operations. All this and many more articles of merit too numerous to mention.

Looking forward to the next issue the intention is to give as much exposure as possible to those of the cloth in appointments, drafts and operations outside the UK. The minewarfare branch contribution to the UN effort in Cambodia will definitely feature and I make a plea now for material from the rest of you lucky enough to be serving in more exotic climes. Also articles from our wider audience would be most welcome.

Our readers will be pleased to note that this year will see the reincarnation of the MCD conference which, under the new sponsorship of COMMW, will be held at HMS Nelson (Gunwharf) on Tuesday 30 November and Wednesday 1 December. By the time this magazine reaches you, full details should already have been promulgated in a calling notice from Rosyth. I look forward to seeing many of you there and listening to your comments on the magazine first hand. Meanwhile please keep those articles coming!



# THE END OF AN ERA BUT A NEW BEGINNING?

by WO(MW) (O) Dixie Dean

February saw the end of another era in Minewarfare Training. With the introduction of the Warfare Branch on the horizon, the completion of Seaman (MW) 109 Course, under the firm control of CPO(MW) (O) Tony Mulrain, marked the end of basic Minewarfare Training for the Operations Branch as we know it. Since the introduction of the Minewarfare Branch we have trained some 1300 Part III Trainees which has taken 3542.5 working days, that is 28340 instructional hours.

Unfortunately the Course photographs and training records retained by the section only go back as far as Sea (MW) Course number 26 so we are unable to identify the students of the very first Sea (MW) Course. Do you know who was on that course? Are they still serving? If you do know of anyone who was on that first course let us know. The earliest student we have identified is CPO(MW) N. Smith from Sea (MW) 2 Course. In the meantime I do have photographs of the following personnel when they were Part III Trainees, PO (MW) Pugh, PO (MW) Bladon, PO (MW) Porter, PO (MW) Prouse, CPO (MW) Hembrow and PO (MW) Takel just to name a few. These photographs can be made available to the highest bidder.

On a more serious note the Warfare Branch is upon us and the Operator Mechanic (Minewarfare) a reality. By the time you read this article, all AB(MW)'s and below will have completed the Warfare Branch Cross Training Preference Form and the lucky few selected for Cross Training and subsequent Branch Change to the Warfare Branch. I have been inundated with enquiries about the Warfare Branch and its effect on individuals. Whilst I am more than happy to answer these queries, you should be aware of DCI 195/92 detailing the Introduction of the Warfare Branch and DCI 14/93 seeking volunteers from the Ops Branch to cross train into the Warfare Branch.

Those of you who have been selected will undertake a Cross Training Course in Collingwood where you will be taught the maintainer skills comparable to the present day WEM but restricted to the equipments which you operate. We will not be conducting Cross Training Courses



at Gunwharf as there are no vacancies for WEM's to transfer to the Minewarfare Branch.

We at Gunwharf are continuing to perfect the course documentation for the PC1 Course and are in the middle of producing the Task Book for the Operator Mechanic 2nd Class (OM2) and the cross trainee. PO(MW) (O) Pony Moore has been given the task of producing the above and has developed typing skills that would put

some secretary's to shame (pity about the legs though).

One last word on Warfare Branch - as from 1 December 1992 all Senior Rates should be adding the abbreviation (O) after their rate, ie WO(MW) (O) - CPO(MW) (O) - PO(MW) (O). The O is for Operator and will distinguish the Operations Branch trained Senior Rate from his Warfare Branch counterpart. Happy Hunting!

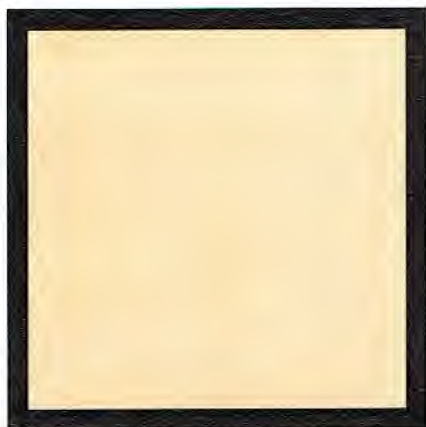
*A full update on the implementation of the Warfare Branch is on page 16.*



## Diver Training

# AN INTRODUCTION TO HAZMAT

by Lt Cdr J. Chapple Inspector of Diving



The more observant among us may well have noticed that the majority of vehicles belonging to CDUs are now sporting vivid orange plates on the front and rear. 'Why is this?' you may ask, 'Surely those flashy red wings, EOD signs and blue lights are self-explanatory?' The answer to these innocent questions is that hazardous material, or HAZMAT, regulations - of which the marking of vehicles is but one small part - apply to the RN and cover such items as driver training, vehicle equipment, vehicle parking, provision of Transport Emergency Cards (TREM CARDS) and much more.

### Driver Training

The Road Traffic (Training of Drivers of Vehicles Carrying Dangerous Goods) Regulations 1992 introduced new training arrangements for all drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods from 1 July 1992. The regulations, which specify instruction and training requirements, are a UK legal requirement and apply to operators (including MOD) carrying a wide range of dangerous/hazardous materials. These include explosives and compressed gases. The introduction of this training is part of the process of implementation of EEC Directive 89/684 and the European Agreement (also known as 'ADR').

The carriage of dangerous goods is

integral to clearance diving operations and training. In the past, personnel serving in Clearance Diving Units (CDU) have completed local training conducted by PSTO(N) but this training is no longer available or valid. The new system is administered by the City and Guilds Institute on behalf of the Department of Transport (DoT) and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Confused yet? Training is conducted at training centres approved by the DoT and, as might be expected, fees are payable for the privilege. Licences are issued to individuals by DVLA, Swansea on successful completion of an examinable course.

First raised in late October 1992, it was accepted by MOD(N) and CINCPACFLT staff in early March 1993 that dangerous goods driver training is required for clearance diving personnel serving in shore-based CDUs, DEODS and MDT Dept of SMOPS. The arrangements to establish this as a formal training course of 5 days duration have now been completed (May 1993). Take it from me, this is fast-track staffwork...

### The UN System

Some background information; All hazardous or dangerous goods are divided into United Nations (UN) classes. This is a worldwide system used for road, rail, sea and air transport. The relevant UN classes of dangerous goods for CDUs are detailed below. Training in Class 7 (Radioactives) is not considered necessary for our personnel.

Class 1 - Explosives

Class 2 - Compressed Gases

Class 3 - Flammable Liquids

Class 4 - Flammable Solids

Class 5 - Oxidising Substances and Organic Peroxides

Class 6 - Toxic and Harmful Substances

Class 8 - Corrosives

Class 9 - Miscellaneous Goods

### Clearance Diving Operations

Diving, EOD and IEDD operations frequently involve the carriage of one or all of the nine UN classes of dangerous goods. Particular factors to consider are:

- a. The driver of a vehicle is under a legal obligation to be trained.
- b. JSP 341 (JS Road Transport Regulations) imposes strict limitations on drivers' hours. Therefore, when on a task which involves lengthy absence from the Unit, the EOD Element or IEDD Team must include sufficient trained drivers to meet the requirements of both sets of regulations for the entire period of absence.
- c. Even a routine task such as transporting diving equipment to a ship within a Naval Base can fall under the regulations if sufficient dangerous goods are carried.
- d. For journeys outside UK, all attendants in the vehicle are required to be trained.
- e. Although minimum threshold limits may not be exceeded on a routine basis, there are numerous occasions when large amounts of dangerous goods are transported and the new rules will apply.

In addition the consignor (ie. OiC, Deputy or CPO(D)) is under a legal obligation to ensure that the regulations are followed.

It is worth noting that this training is not just a reiteration of previous career course training. The instruction given is from the standpoint of the vehicle driver not an EOD operator and is therefore important. It is also in our own interests, as professional divers, to ensure that the highest standards of safety are met. The few who have attended these courses to date have said that they went thinking that the training was necessary and returned knowing that it was essential.



# Diver Training

## Arrangements for Training

For the transitional period to 31 December 1994 applications for provisional certificates have been made, successfully, to the DoT on a one-time basis but these are limited to the carriage of explosives (Class 1 only). In addition, a limited exemption has been sought from the Secretary of State for Defence. As detailed above, the introduction of formal HAZMAT training covering UN Classes 1 to 9 (not 7 - radioactives) for all clearance divers drafted to shore-based units has been approved. This will start in May

1993 courtesy of the Driver Training Wing, Royal Marines Poole. All drivers of vehicles carrying dangerous goods must be qualified under the full course by 31st December 1994 since after this date they will no longer be eligible to drive these vehicles.

In the meantime, the measures put in place to ensure that CDUs are not in breach of the law remain. Comprehensive service regulations contained in BR 862 (Naval Magazine & Explosive Regulations) and JSP 341 (Motor Transport Regulations) have been supplemented by signalled

instructions from Supt of Diving to CDUs. HAZMAT measures are also covered during annual inspections of units.

In summary, the move towards full dangerous goods training is underway and diving, EOD and IEDD work continues. Further details will be published when they arise. Background information is contained in BR 5063, Clearance Diving Operations (Change 1) and the publications detailed above.

Safe diving and safe driving!

## HSE PART ONE DIVER TRAINING

By CPO (D) Bielby, PACDU

Following recent developments in the requirements for diver training to be HSE recognised, several articles have appeared in the pages of this magazine. It is important that as a diver you are FULLY aware of these developments and that YOU make sure that YOU apply for any certificates that YOU feel are due. I say this because some time ago I signalled the Diving Branch and informed them that the rules for diver training certification were about to change and that if we, as divers, were not in possession of a Diver Training Certificate (DTC) by the 29th April 1992 then it would cost us, as private individuals, a considerable sum of money to obtain one. Despite this I still receive calls (and I have been out of the job almost 2 years!) asking me how to get hold of a Part 3 ticket (DTC) because 'I didn't know I had to apply.'

If you care to read the last issue of this splendid magazine you will find an article which details up to date information regarding HSE DTC's and I would like to make a small post script to that article now:

If (and only if) you are in possession of a Part 3 DTC you may wish to upgrade this to a Part 1 Certificate and this normally costs in the region of £2,500, however, after careful negotiation with both the HSE and a well known commercial diving school, there is a scheme by which you can upgrade.

Provided you meet ALL of the following requirements the scheme is open to you.

- a) Hold a current Part 3 DTC.
- b) Successful completion LMCDO and LS (D) course (L/Rate not required).  
**OR**
- b i) Achieve the following minutes AFTER qualifying as member of DIVER Sub-Branch and during service dives: 30-

30 metres, 100 minutes total (including 60 in surface support equipt.), 40-50 metres, 150 minutes total (including 90 in surface support equipt.).

- c) Log the following experience as a Navy diver (ie Service dives which can include training sessions at recognised Continuation Training Facilities):
  - i Underwater Construction - including rigging or lifting or slinging etc.
  - ii Water Jetting
  - iii Air Lifting (not lifting using bags but 'vacuuming' the sea-bed with an Air Lift).
- d) Attend a lecture in the principles of air sampling from either HP or LP compressors including the use of ' Draeger Tubes '.
- e) Submit your Diving Log to the Theory Section, MDT Dept., SMOPS for approval and WHEN DOING SO INCLUDE A SMALL NOTE IN THE FRONT WHICH SHOWS THE DATES WHEN THE MINUTES IN b i) WERE ACHIEVED [if applying as a non LS(D)]. This will make the job of the assessor simpler and less time consuming and therefore put him in a better frame of mind, thereby improving your chances of getting what you want.

When ALL of the above have been done AND your log has been assessed and annotated, you are eligible for 'Top-Up' training, this is in the form of Wet-Bell diving (using hot water suits to a minimum depth of 10 metres) and a lecture in the hazards associated with diving from Dynamically Positioned vessels.

On successful completion of your training, a certificate of competency will be raised and sent to the Theory Section who will

then accept your application form for a HSE Part 1 DTC which they will forward on your behalf.

The obvious question is cost, as I mentioned earlier in this article a Part 3 to Part 1 Conversion Course will set you back somewhere in the region of £2,500 whereas using the scheme outlined above you can expect to pay something like £200 which I hope you will agree is a considerable saving.

Being divers the next obvious question is can I have a go please. The simple answer is yes! provided you are willing to pay a deposit and wait a maximum of 8 weeks while your oppos make their minds up and there are enough people to make a course (min 6). If I tell you that the last course had 9 people initially and after arranging the whole weekend at reduced cost, 4 people then backed out for various reasons, you can see why the school is wanting a deposit. If the demand is sufficient then perhaps there will be a change to run these weekends every month.

The course is held at The Commercial Diving Centre, Poole and involves working from 0800-1700 on a Saturday and Sunday, overnight accommodation can be arranged.

As a final note, if you are interested you can obtain further information from me at PACDU on Portsmouth Naval Base Ext. 24822 or 23818.





# Diving Reporter

## Out with the old— in with the new



AB(D) Gary Horvarth-Toldi is the new 'Roving Reporter'. He qualified as a diver in 1989 and was quickly placed in the thick of things during OP GRANBY on HMS BICESTER. Since then he has been passing away his time running around the countryside with PACDU. If you have any 'dits' contact him on Portsmouth Dockyard Ext. 24822.

### SOSOD UPDATE

As stated in the last issue of the MAD Mag, I now work directly for the Superintendent of Diving's organisation based in Pompey and only rent a desk and office space in the Warfare Office. I think it would be inappropriate for me to update you on recent diving events this would, I suspect, only be a repetition of SOD's input.

I continue to monitor Diving and EOD standards in the MWVF and I'm glad to say that the standards remain high, there is room for improvement, (isn't there always?) especially in the maintenance of your 54m capability. I cannot stress enough the importance of taking every opportunity to conduct deep diving from your ship, (if you will forgive Grandmother sucking eggs) this not only 'works up' the divers, but also 'works up' the rest of the ships company, this is an important consideration that must not be forgotten.

Whilst talking about Deep Diving, a number of Ship borne diving elements have, over the past few months, taken the opportunity of conducting a Deep 'work up' in Gibraltar. On their return all the ships have commented on the helpfulness of the Chief diver in Gib, Jim Carling. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Jim, on the behalf of the MCMV flotilla, for his support and assistance during these training periods. That's it for now. End of 'Dit'! For the elements in the ships you know where I am if you have any problems and now we are in '93, let's have a safe diving year.

WO(D) J Timms



At a recent clear lower deck of the MDT Department of SMOPS, Cdr P.J. Gale took the opportunity to make presentations to two members of the Minewarfare Section. The first was to WO(MW) (O) 'Dixie' Dean who has at last received his long awaited (two years) formal warrant of promotion. The other was the award of the Long Service and Good Conduct Medal to CPO(MW) (O) 'Thommo' Thomas.



# Minewarfare Reporter



● **Minewarfare Reporter CPO (MW)**  
*Paul Cambell*

● **Staff Officer Minewarfare (SOMW)**  
*Lt Cdr Thompson presents the 'VERNON TROPHY' to LS(MW) Strickland.*



Leading Seaman (Minewarfare) STRICKLAND was nominated as the Best Student of LS(MW) 62 career course and became the first recipient of the refurbished 'VERNON TROPHY'. The trophy consists of a model moored mine and sinker, sitting within the mine trap of a minelay system. The model was originally made by the apprentices of the Mining Depot at Milford Haven (since closed) and has recently been refurbished by the engineers at HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF). The trophy will be awarded to the Best Student of each subsequent LS(MW) course.

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

The Minewarfare (MW) Branch was formed in 1975. The initial nucleus of Senior Rates were transferred from the now redundant TAS Underwater Weapons (UW) Branch. They were required to complete the MW conversion course and then either remained as Instructors in the MW school, or were drafted to sea as PO(MW)s to serve in TON Class MCMVs in the newly created billets of Minehunting Director (MHD). A small number of these initial 'Branch Fathers' are still serving and old stalwarts such as Barney Barnett, Norman Blick and Joe George still continue to haunt us lesser mortals in the pursuance of our duties. But what of those crusty old characters who did so much in those early days of the MW Branch and then left the service to disappear into obscurity. How many of you, like me have said, more than once in the past 'I wonder what happened to old .....? Names that immediately spring to mind are 'Tex (two LL's as in Double LL Float) Marshall, Ollie (of quiet voice and golden tongue!) Holsworth, Mick Vickers, George Bennel, Jan Bragg and many more, too numerous to mention.

In an effort to satisfy my own and I am sure that of others, idle curiosity it is intended to start a WHERE ARE THEY NOW column. Many ex Minewarfares belong to RNR Divisions and keep vaguely in touch through reading this magazine. If you are one of them then please drop us a line and let us know how you are getting on. Some of you still serving may still be in contact with the odd 'Old Boy'; if this is the case then please encourage them to put pen to paper and give us an update on their current situation. Not only would it be nice to hear from these old expats but it may well be that there is some valuable information to be gleaned from their experience of entering civvy street.

I happened to mention my proposal of starting this column to Mr. Barnett (Barney) some time ago and he with his usual gusto of enthusiasm thought that it was not only a good idea but would it not be even better if it could be arranged to have a Minewarfare gathering at a venue to be decided where all the Minewarfare Senior Rates past and present could get together for a one off bash, sink a few beers, eat some smally/big eats and spin some dits.

After the mandatory back pedalling by me I finally agreed to start the ball rolling and if there was enough initial support arrange such a thrash, provided that he acts as the Northern representative for any correspondence that might follow. Attached is a proforma seeking

the views of hopefully past and present members with possible numbers who might like to attend such an occasion. If you are interested please complete, detach and return to either:

**Southern Rep**  
S/Lt J J Turnbull  
MW Section  
HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF)  
PORTSMOUTH, Hants PO1 3HH

**Northern Rep**  
WO(MW) (O) LJ Barnett BEM  
COMMW  
Lochinvar Block  
HM Naval Base, ROSYTH, Fife, Scotland  
KY11 2YA

✂

From:- \_\_\_\_\_

I \*am/am not interested in attending a Minewarfare social function

I will bring \_\_\_\_\_ guests

I would prefer a \*Buffet/Sit down type meal

My contact address for future correspondence is:-  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*Delete as required



# Fishery Protection

## Island Class OPV1 - Five Watch Manning

by Pawl Stockley

**Five watch manning (5WM) will commence for the remaining six Island class OPV1s on 1 February 1994, HMS JERSEY having gone to disposal at the end of 1993.**

The objective of 5WM is to achieve the required number of Fishery Protection contract days for the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) and the Scottish Fishery Protection Agency (SFPA - formerly DAFFS) with the hulls available after the loss of an OPV1 and MSF. Inshore patrols currently undertaken by the Ton and Hunt class will remain essentially unchanged except that additional Hunts will be recruited when the Tons pay off though the number of Hunts on Fish will be minimised by 5WM.

The target set for OPV1s of about 200 contract days per hull will be achieved by the ships not taking leave periods, therefore remaining on patrol when not in LSP/BMP. Stand off cycles (10 days out - 2 days in) will remain unchanged. As the ships do not have a complement large enough to run through two block leave periods, the requirement for 5WM arises. Many of you will have heard of Fifth Watch Manning, whereby the ship has 125% complement and runs with one watch ashore, thus the ship has 100% compliment onboard at any given time. HMS SENTINEL (Ex Clyde) for example ran under this regime until paying off. Five Watch Manning has a subtle difference in both title and operation in as much as a marginally enhanced ships complement will be 100%, one watch (20%

of complement) will be on leave and the ship will be crewed by the remaining four watches, thus always running with 80% complement. Effectively this transfers the 'Harmony Rules' to the man from the hull. Many members of the complement will undertake an enhanced PJT package enabling them to step up a role, or cover for another member of the ships company whilst their watch is on leave. Some broad examples are:

The XO will be a Lt\*, and will be in command 20% of the year.

The CMEA(ML) will undertake the ME38 (small ships MEO) and become the A/MEO for the 20% of the year that the CCMEA is away.

The CMEM(M) will complete the MWV Coxwains course and will act as the 'Swain when the RPOs watch is landed.

The LS(MW) will fulfil the CBMs duties whilst the LS(SEA) takes his 20%, the LS(MW) having completed the MWV CBP PJT.

It has been accepted that the ships will no longer be able to perform some of the recognised 'Naval' tasks due to lack of manpower, and will become 'role-manned' to 'Fish'. The fact that leave now becomes sacrosanct and that the reduced steaming complement will make it difficult to grant compassionate leave or land sick personnel has also been identified and overcome. What is effectively an ERP for the OPV1s alone is in the process of forming and will be known as the Fishery Protection Support Unit (FPSU). The FPSU will contain manpower not dissimilar to an OPV scheme of

complement for key personnel but will possess fewer than the complimented junior rates. Members will be drafted to CFP(SEA) for FPSU employment and will be loaned to OPV1s 'at the drop of a hat' as any billet requires filling. This will negate Squadrawl/Reqlef actions and allow the ship to remain on patrol without built in delays for temporary manpower allocation. The unit will be co-ordinated by a CPOWTR and Leading Regulator who will be CFP(Shore) scheme of compliment. The two CFP(Shore) ratings are expected to join 1 August 1993, the remainder of the FPSU will be formed by February 1994. FPSU (Sea) members will serve on the unit for approximately six months, ratings in advance of joining an OPV1, Officers on completion of an OPV1 appointment.

The FPSU when not deployed independently will be employed on short term work with OPVs in LSP/BMP/Refit/DED in Rosyth.

Home for the FPSU will be the ground floor of Thistle Cottage (HMNB Rosyth) which will be modified as required when the current occupants, the dentists, move on in the near future. Fishery Protection Squadron Staff for those who do not know, live on the first floor of Thistle Cottage, so the FPSU will be very much 'under the wing'.

An FTM and DCI introducing 5WM are in course of production. This letter is designed to explain in 'broadbrush' for those of you that are likely to join an OPV1 or may have already received a draft order to CFP.

## ASSISTANT MINERWARFARE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

1. Having taken over the post from Nobby Clark, (who is now SCPO(MW) to MCM1), I find myself working longer hours than I have had to do for a long, long time!

2. The Minewarfare Tactical Support System, (MTSS), take up a lot of time in liaison with DGUW and the contractor. The introduction of this innovative system will greatly enhance the capabilities of the MCMTA, (for a list of the functions see the MAD Mag Vol 2, No. 2).

3. The Combined Influence Sweep responsibility has been taken on by SMCMO (WO(MW) Bob Baker).

As the latest changes to the relevant publications hit the streets, we now have a system that, apart from minor changes, will

see us through to the Hunt Mid-Life Update. So with CIS "developed" as far as is practicable, that makes time available to concentrate on other issues in addition to MTSS. Listed below are just a few:-

a. EXTAC 843—new version due shortly, with the instructions being updated accordingly.

b. Production of MXTIs/MOTIs for the Sandown Class.

c. Processing of ship supplied data into the Dreamt Route Survey System, (DRSS). With the arrival of MTSS, all current information will be transferred across in a "once only" movement of data. So, if the quality and quantity of records from ships

are of a high standard, the data available for planning purposes will be so much better.

d. Involvement with Route Survey Data Base investigations, aiming to provide valid data in support of the provision of this equipment.

All of the above are designed to make the MCMV's task easier and to produce results worthy of the efforts being expended.

No matter how poor that you think the various equipments are, remember there is someone, somewhere, putting great effort into the continuing development of MCM systems.

**Pete Cawsey CPO(MW)  
AMWDO**



# Superintendent of Diving

## A LOOK TO THE FUTURE

by Commander B J Mansbridge MBE, Royal Navy Superintendent of Diving

The last Superintendent of Diving Commander David Sandiford ended his 'haul down' report with a modified Churchillian quote so I will take up where he left off, with another Churchillian quote. Writing to his Naval Staff in 1942 Churchill questioned (referring to the capabilities of Italian Frogmen in sinking the Battleships Valiant and Queen Elizabeth in Alexandria Harbour) 'is there any reason we should be incapable of the same scientific aggressive action?'

This is an equally good question for the incoming Superintendent of Diving, after all, some of our current diving equipment is not so far removed from the equipment used in those dark days of the 40's. How indeed are we to take those giant strides? Clearly it is not enough just to get in step with the present, the diving branch needs to take some giant steps in order to equip itself for the future. This is a tall order, especially within the ever reducing budget, but there is a plan, and it needs your support as much as the hard work of those in the Ministry of Defence, my own Staff and of those in the Procurement Executive.

Firstly priority must go to introducing a modern MCM/EDO diving set. The first step, the Staff Requirement is complete and this outlines the characteristics of the MCM Diving Life Support System, as the new set will be called. It is essential that this equipment must be procured to the latest standards at least match all the capabilities of our NATO Allies, many of whom are recently able, through their own new equipment, to conduct MCM and EOD operations to 80 metres.

Secondly, to safely and effectively conduct such diving we must update our Compression Chambers. Two types are required, a portable version, the Transportable Manned Compression Chamber (TMCC) to be borne in ships and for mobile units. This must be complimented by a modern full size chamber with proper facilities to conduct therapeutic decompression and back up the TMCC chamber.

Finally, but by no means least important, we need to be aware of our own expertise and the unique contribution we make to the Navy's overall military capability. Although this is well known within the Branch it is not so wholly understood in the wider world. With more emphasis on the out-of-area threats the skills of the Clearance Diver in mine clearance, EOD and the ability to counter a variety of subsurface threats, whether terrorist or of new world order are unique. Remember, as a Royal Naval Diver your dexterity and versatility in the water and unique, proven military skills are not available anywhere else.

This is the message to get to the Navy at large, and in the competitive struggle to retain a viable proportion of the Naval Budget the contribution of Divers needs to be widely recognised. Make quite sure everyone realises what good value they get from the divers!





# Snippets from the Inspector of Diving

## The Diving Inspectorate is:

Lt Cdr Jon Chapple relieved by Lt Cdr David Hilton—May 93	Inspector of Diving	Tel: PNB 24876
WO(D) Mo Crang	Inspector of Clearance Diving	24866
WO(D) Bob Oulds	Inspector of Ships Diving	24583
CPOMEA Robert Knights	Inspector of Engineering (Diving)	24904
CPOMEA Stuart Lake	Defect Reporting Desk (S2022)	24904
POMA Ian Calvert	Inspector Medical	24530

## SSP(D) Cautionary Tale

The following anonymous incident took place during late 1992 at a RN shore establishment in UK. All details are true. A ships diver submitted his diving log to the Diving Officer at the end of the Jan-Oct diving period to qualify for SSP(D). Two dives were entered in the log (total 130 minutes), both completed at a unit which was not his parent establishment. On examining the log to certify it correct for payment the Diving Officer was concerned at the absence of a signature by the dive supervisor or a Unit stamp for either of the entries and questioned the rating concerned. At this stage the regulating staff were promptly involved.

The previous entries in the Diving Log were examined and the diver admitted that all entries in the preceding 18 months were also false. Although he had been in attendance when diving had taken place he himself had not dived. It was noted that for 5 months of the period he had been unfit to dive and that his log had dive entries during this time. The falsified entries ensured that he continued to draw his SSP(D) when not entitled.

The ships diver in question was found guilty on three charges of theft of SSP(D) by deception involving false recording on Form S.1627. He was sentenced to 28 days detention.

## Inspector of Diving comment:

This salutary tale underlines the BR 2806 requirement that all entries in the S1627 Diving Log are countersigned by the dive supervisor with name and signature and supported by a Unit stamp. All gaps are to be ruled through to prevent falsification of entries at a later date.

## Update by IofD:

As I leave the post of Inspector of Diving for the pleasant climate of the South-West I will mention a few of the more positive aspects of the Inspectorates safety and support activities for Clearance and Ships diving during the past few months (in no particular order):

**Medical Equipment Set** Following on from the introduction of the Medical Equipment Set - Dive Chamber, RN for all 2-compt compression chambers, the provision of the MES-Dive Team/Dive Boats is proceeding. This MES will contain all the items required at the site of a diving operation by BR 2806, including an oxygen resuscitator, and will ensure compliance with the Diving Operations at Work Regulations

1981 (amended 1990). CD Units will be supplied with a number of complete MES due to the nature and locations of diving operations while ships diving teams embarked in HM Ships and Submarines, which already carry an oxygen resuscitator, will be provided with the necessary waterproof container and will supply the contents from onboard stocks. In the latter case the O2 resuscitator will be supplied to the dive site when diving is taking place.

**CMD Packs** After much effort the introduction of Conventional Munition Disposal Packs to CDU's is underway. These packs, developed by Plymouth CDU in conjunction with RNAD Emesettle, standardise the amount, type and quantity of explosives carried by all CDUs when deployed on EOD tasks. All have been approved by the MOD(N) Explosives Safety and Transportation Committee (ESTC) and are the only packs approved for carriage in EOD vehicles. The days of the infamous 'bomb-bag' are now over although explosive stores may be transferred to appropriate rucksacks etc. when on-site. In addition, new procedures and regulations have been published for the transportation and security of all explosives.

**Clothing** A common question during the Inspections of shore-based CDUs is when are we going to receive proper outdoor clothing. The answer is that a major bid for new clothing allowances has been made to DGST(N), Ensligh, Bath. This bid encompasses all items from foul-weather clothing, PT gear and training shoes to working gloves. Although clearance divers have a strong case it must be recognised that this is taking place against a background of belt-tightening and reducing budgets. Since the 'beg, borrow and steal' attitude of old is no longer a successful policy it is indeed unfortunate that this work was not done years ago...

**H & S Matters** The ever-present subject of Health and Safety has kept us busy this year. The first problem concerned the disposal and transportation of pyrotechnics. This type of task, known as a 'milk run', has been conducted for many years but a number of the standard disposal procedures (ie. burning of expired stores) were found to be in contravention of the Environmental Protection Act(!) whilst actual transportation procedures contravened the Road Traffic (Carriage of Explosives) Regulations. On top of this the use of ferries, especially in the Western Isles, presented more problems in the form of the International Maritime Dangerous Goods Code (IMDG). This subject was fast assuming



# Snippets from the Inspector of Diving

nightmarish proportions but, thanks to the efforts of SNICDU and the push by this staff towards HAZMAT training (reported elsewhere in this issue), the problem has been contained and a satisfactory way ahead identified. The lessons learned are that EOD personnel are not exempt from the regulations and that, as professionals, we must ensure that we not only comply with the minimum legal requirements but actually insist on a higher standard.

Moving to *Service diving and the Diving Operations at Work Regulations* 1981, it is well-known that the majority of military divers are ineligible for the award of HSE Certification or are awarded certificates of lesser standard, despite achieving significant levels of competence as a result of their Service diver training, their use of diving at work and the fact that they are paid to do it. This lack of certification has, to date, caused few problems but there is an increasing realisation that the position of Service divers in relation to the DOWR should be formalised. Detailed discussions have commenced between this staff, HSE and MOD towards integration and certification. This will include a definition, for the first time, of 'operations and operational training', terminology which has caused difficulties in interpretation of the DOWR and prevented full application to Service diving. Those readers who do not appreciate the significance of this phrase would do well to read the DOWR since, to quote from BR 2806, 'all personnel should...have a working knowledge of the content of the DOWR.'

## PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION

**Maintenance of Diving Equipment** A through and exhaustive review of the documentation for diving equipment has recently confirmed what has been known for many years, namely that the BRs and MMS/JICs are often different and that there is significant room for error. As a direct result of this a MMS Working Group has been formed by SofD/COMMW/FOSF(ME) with the sole objective of bringing all maintenance documentation for diving plant and equipment to an acceptable standard. Progress is being made towards the introduction of a Diving Equipment Log, along similar lines to the existing NILE Log, for all breathing apparatus. It is worth stressing that the Maintenance Management System (MMS) is the method of planning, managing, implementing and recording all maintenance of diving equipment. MMS documentation takes precedence over the instructions in the BR 2807 series and is the authority for all maintenance, in accordance with BR 1313. All units must ensure that up-to-date copies of the relevant MMS documentation are held, MMS documentation is supplied by UMS Department, FOSF(ME), HM Naval Base, Portsmouth. Oversight of MMS (including DSSCCD logs) onboard all ships and in all units is the responsibility of the MEO.

**Operator Publications** As outlined in the previous issue, the 1993 edition of BR 2806 is now at print. This publication is in 2 volumes and will supersede the existing BR 2806 and BR 2806 (Supplement). Distribution of the new books will commence on completion of printing. In order to ensure that all units conducting diving operations change to the new edition at the same time, implementation will be controlled

by Diving Safety Memorandum. All supervisors and divers must make a mental note to review the new BR 2806 on receipt since there are a number of important changes. The foremost of these, the new medical chapter (dealing with decompression illness), will be the subject of a SMOPS-sponsored training video and a planned Institute of Naval Medicine (INM) roadshow series later this year. Watch this space!

## Other News

**New 2-Compartment CCs** The contract has now been signed for the manufacture and supply of new compression chambers to replace the Admiralty Type 1 CCs in use today. The new CC will come in two varieties (Types A and B). The Type A is a fixed facility for each of the Area CDU's while the Type B is a smaller, containerised version for other users. The Type A is much bigger than the existing chambers - Units relocating to new premises soon please note! DGUW(N) have details.

**DSSCCD Replacement** The requirement for the new MCM/EOD diving set has been approved at MOD level and is proceeding towards an Invitation to Tender to interested manufacturers. Procurement is controlled by DGUW(N) at Portland but the programme is on track for an In-Service Date of the first equipment of December 1995.

From the Inspector of Clearance Diving:

**Transport** Having spent the last fortnight wading through the LTC 10-year bid for funds for replacement EOD and diving vehicles my only item for this issue (apart from using this as an excuse for not writing more) is to emphasise, once again, that motor transport is a valuable commodity. Most CDUs would be unable to function effectively without their specialist vehicles which are rightly regarded as Fleet assets in the same way as an MCMV. All personnel must be made aware of the importance of good MT husbandry and this is especially relevant given the rugged conditions in which CD vehicles are operated. The 'hire car' approach must be actively discouraged.

From the Inspector of Ships Diving:

**Removal of Ships Demolition Outfits** After a period of indecision, it has been confirmed that all demolitions stores, including scare charges and gun-de-icing harness, will be removed from all ships and submarines of the Fleet except MCMVs. The only equipment that will be retained within the Surface Flotilla will be Limpet Mine Disposal Equipment (LMDE). Responsibility for LMDE will transfer to the Ships Diving Team and this subject is now included on Ships Diver Courses. The removal of the demolitions capability is the final chapter of a savings measure generated in 1992 and means that the sole repository of demolitions expertise within the Navy rests with MCMVs and CDUs.



# Snippets from the Inspector of Diving

## Farewell to the Supervisors Det Box? - Heads-up for all divers and dive supervisors:

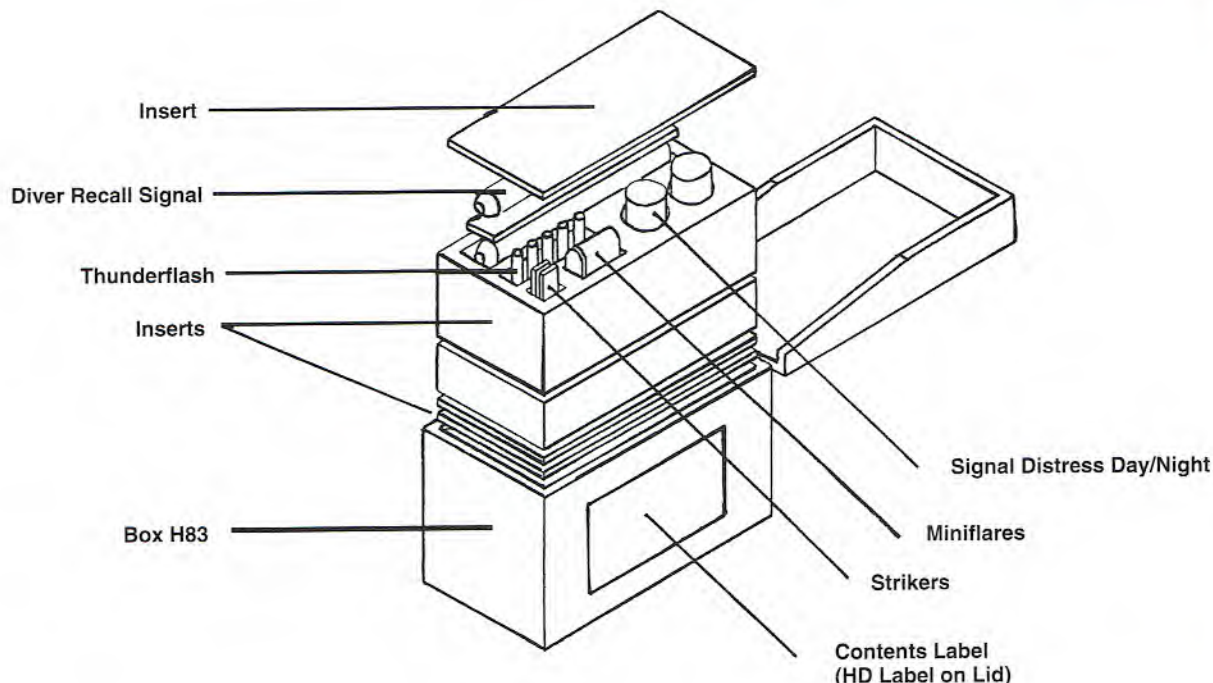
The old 'DET BOX', as a lot of us know it, is usually found in the bottom of the gemini and contains a mixture of thunderflashes, Divers Recall Signals, rusty tools, contents gauges, tape and all the other come-in-hand kit that has accumulated over the years. This has, or is soon to become a thing of the past.

As part of the work towards standard CMD Packs (see page 10) and to conform to the required safety standards for explosives RNAD have produced drawings of the new Dive Supervisors Box. These packs will be made up by RNAD and issued to Clearance Diving Units/Elements (including MCMVs) as they become available. This will be a one-time only issue - when items are used they will need to be replenished from the Units own stocks. Due to problems encountered by DGST(N)/RNAD in supplying other ships (because of ships fit and allowances implications) ships diving teams will be instructed to produce the Divers Supervisors Pack locally. Many ships inspection reports have already included this guidance. Tools and other items must be kept in a separate box.

The Dive Supervisors Box will consist of 1 x H83 Mk2 Box (Lid painted Signal Red) and 1.3G Hazard Division labels containing:

- 5 x Thunderflashes (3 x weighted)
- 2 x Thunderflash strikers
- 2 x Signal Distress Day/Night
- 2 x Divers Recall Signals
- 1 x Signal Kit Pyrotechnic (Red) - Mini-flares
- 1 x User/expenditure form

The above items will be retained in position in the H83 container by black foam inserts cut as illustrated in the diagram. The final result should resemble the one in the photographs and diagram. The user/expenditure forms will work in conjunction with the Officer of the Quarters (OOQ) Log.





## Caption Competition



The above photograph was sent by an anonymous reader without a caption.

Any suggestions, either serious or humorous, will be gratefully received and those that are printable will be reproduced in the next edition.

Please send your captions to  
**The Editor,**  
**MAD Magazine,**  
**HMS NELSON (Gunwharf),**  
**Portsmouth.**





## CST Newsletter

# THE MINEWARFARE AND DIVING WORK UP STAFF

by 'George' Hogg

A year has passed since the last dit from the team. Since then there has been a 75% change, however drafty still gets full marks with everyone continuing to be Rosyth preferrees. First of all let me introduce you to the team.

TITLE	RANK	NAME	JOINED
SMWO	LT CDR	J BURDEN MCD (JOHN)	OCT 92
DSMWO	LT	I WILLCOX MCD (IAN)	NOV 92
SMWI(1)	CPO(MW)(O)	B V HOGG ('GEORGE')	SEP 91
SMWI(2)	CPO(MW)(O)	R G TURNER ('TOPSY')	SEP 92
tbrb	CPO(MW)(O)	P R CAWSEY (PETE)	SEP 93

Pete CAWSEY, yes he is rejoining the staff. The understanding is the 8 - 5 job, 5 days a week behind a desk is not to his liking. He much prefers the smell of the sea air, and the noise of the bow thrust while he tries to sleep on his 3 hours off. (if you're lucky). If you like a topsy turvey routine, with days of peace and tranquillity followed by days of 21 hours on then get your C240's into drafty.

Now to business. The team's primary role is to bring MCMV's passing through on OST up to a high level of efficiency in Minewarfare and Diving. The team can also be called upon to train and assess in Seamanship, NBCD, Navigation etc.

As most of you will be well aware the SRMH is not far away from becoming completely operational (including 2093), and thus we are now spreading our wings to cover both UK and SAUDI SANDOWN class ships as they are presented for their first BOST. Ian WILLCOX joined having served as XO on HMS INVERNESS for 2 1/2 years and has brought some much needed SRMH experience into the team. The remainder of the team have completed the relevant PJT's and visited the ships on numerous occasions when conducting sea/harbour trials. More recently the full team deployed to the Kyle of Lochalsh for four days, where much valuable experience was gained working with the ships company and trials teams onboard HMS INVERNESS. The progress made with 2093 was very encouraging with mines located in various extreme environmental and topographical conditions.

Future intentions for the team is to work closely with the SRMHs during their forthcoming period of OPEVAL in order to assist in the development of tactics and procedures. A challenge to us all, but a one we will meet!

Ships now arriving for OST will immediately notice a change not only in the scenery, and I don't mean a new Forth road bridge!, but also emphasis towards the ship's primary role. Generally MCMVs will encounter a MW programme very much tailored to their needs but more importantly conducted as a block towards the end of OST. The 'MW Phase' will be run as a scenario based exercise from the outset with 7/10 days devoted to a COST/ BOST ship respectively. This will not only enable the ship's teams to 'settle in to the lap' but will also more effectively utilise

the limited time available ie. more nights at sea!! MW OST for the SANDOWN class will be run on a similar basis but split between a shallow phase, in the Forth, and a deep phase in BUTEC - 7 and 4 days respectively.

Moving back to the more general aspects; that of S2022's. Having been in the job 18 months and seen all the Hunts bar one, £10 to the first correct guess!, there have been numerous occasions when the situation warranted S2022 action. In conversation ashore with SMCMO (WO BAKER) it appears that very few S2022s are submitted and this leaves project with the view that all the equipment is working perfectly well and we are the happy customer. In this cost cutting age if ships experience difficulties with equipment's they must back it up with S2022 action to ensure it will be looked at.

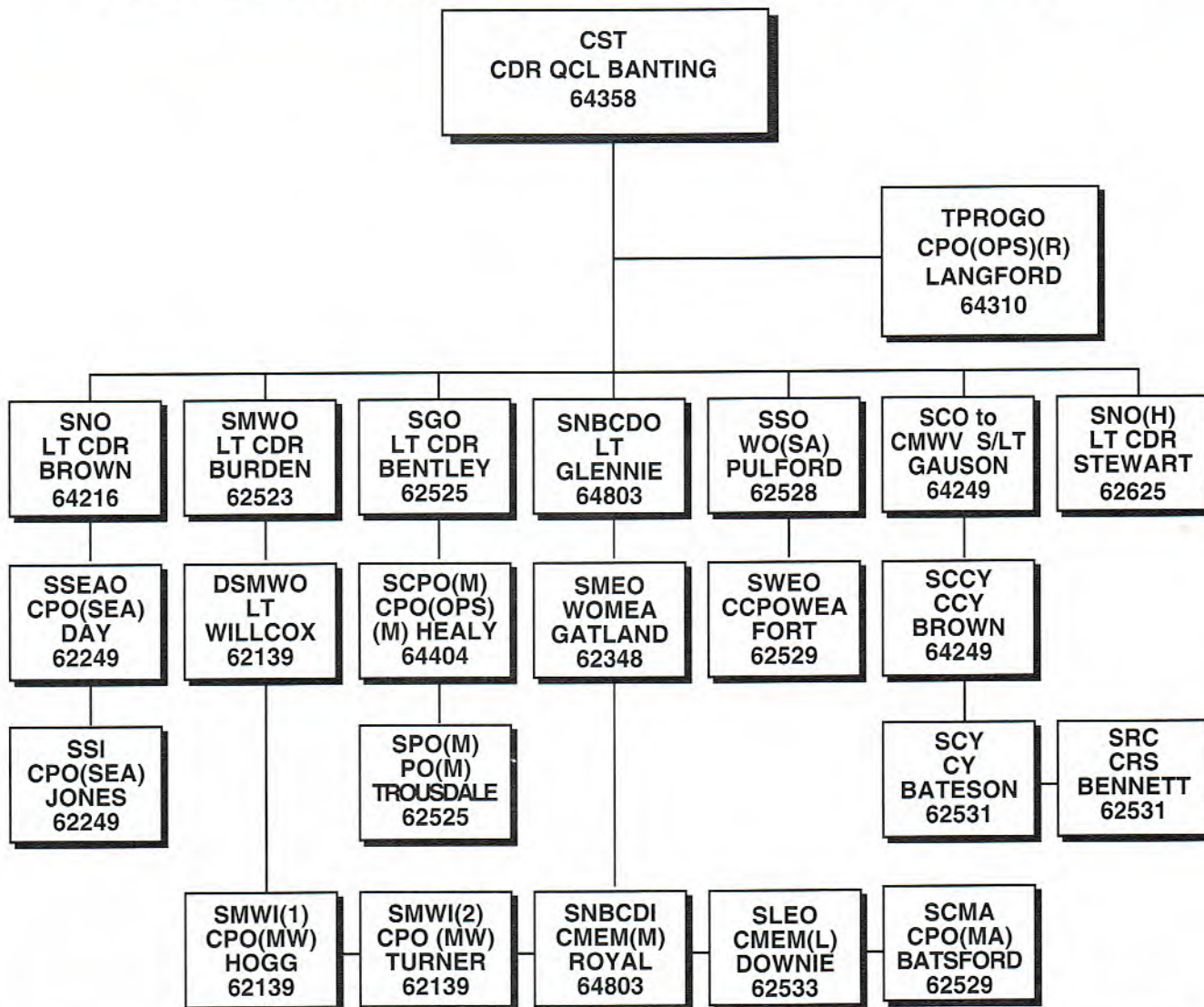
On the good front it is nice to see so many of you making contact with the staff prior to your ship arriving for OST. If a ship comes well prepared in all respects for OST and has the right attitude, then OST can be a relatively painless exercise. We train as well as assess, so keep smiling and remember the staff are always right.

Over the last year a number of SSOTS have changed so I have included a break down of who's who and their number. Try and contact your opposite number on the staff early, they are always happy to speak to you whether it be about a forthcoming OST or just a day to day query.



# CST Newsletter

## SMALL SHIPS OPERATIONAL TRAINING STAFF—SHOULTON BLOCK, HMNB ROSYTH





## Update

# Warfare Branch Update

by WO(MW)(O) R. Dean

**Further to my article in the last edition of the MAD Magazine here is the latest update on events leading up to the introduction of the Warfare Branch later this year.**

You should all be aware of two DCI's concerning Warfare Branch. They are:-  
DCI 195/92 - Establishment of a Warfare Branch

DCI 14/93 - Warfare Branch - Cross training from WEM and Ops branches.

A third DCI detailing the Advancement Regulations for Warfare Branch will be published very shortly (it will almost certainly be on the streets by the time this magazine reaches you). The purpose of the DCI is to outline the advancement regulations with respect to Warfare Branch ratings of all disciplines and should be read in conjunction with the two DCI's listed above.

### Cross Training

As promulgated in DCI 14/93 there is a requirement to cross train ratings from the Operations Branch into the Warfare Branch. All Able Seamen and below were required to complete a preference form by 31 March 1993 stating whether they wished to be considered for selection to join the Warfare Branch. Having collated the preference forms HMS CENTURION selected a number of volunteers and issued Draft Orders for the successful applicants to attend the cross training course in HMS COLLINGWOOD. I understand from the Minewarfare Drafting POWRN that the number of volunteers from the Minewarfare Branch exceeded by far the number of cross trainees required. Some of you may not have been accepted in the first instance but could have been shortlisted to account for any shortfalls that may occur. Those of you that were shortlisted should continue to pursue your careers through the present career structure of the Operations Branch. The course is just over 7 weeks duration and is designed to teach potential OM(MW)'s Mechanical Skills such as the use of test equipment to measure voltage, resistance, insulation and to maintain hydraulic equipment, just to mention a few. The course is made up of the mechanical content of the PC1 and PC2 Courses (see the last edition of the MAD Magazine) and on successful completion each rating passes out as an Operator Mechanic (Minewarfare) 1st Class - an OM(MW)1. Successful completion of the course also means total transfer from the Operations Branch into the Warfare

Branch and career structures will follow the pattern described in the last edition of the magazine and as detailed in the DCI concerning Warfare Branch Advancement Regulations. If you have any queries about the career pattern for WB Ratings see your Divisional Officer who will be able to give you guidance.

### Task Books

The Warfare Branch Task Books are at an advance stage of production. PO(MW) (O) PONY MOORE has been beavering away on his word processor for the past two months perfecting the Minewarfare Task Books for the OM(MW)2. Warfare Branch Task Books for all disciplines will be of the same style and consist of the following sections:-

Section 1 - Know your Ship/Department

Section 2 - On Job Training

Section 3 - Consolidation

Section 1 & 2 have a set time limit for completion and for the first time, On Job Training (OJT) will be formally documented by chapter and verse. This will enable the Task Book co-ordinators to ensure that the correct amount of OJT is carried out by each individual. Remember that completion of the Professional Course achieves the Training Performance Statement (TPS) and by conducting On Job Training at sea, in the areas where only limited training can be conducted ashore achieves the Operational Performance Statement (OPS) for that rate. In simple terms TPS + OJT = OPS. Completion of the Task Book is mandatory for each rate and is not connected to advancement as is the case under the present Ops Branch system. Completion of the task book will enable the rating to be confirmed in that rate providing all other requirements are met. See the DCI for more detailed information.

Task Books have a very important role in the training of Warfare Branch ratings and the responsibilities of onboard Training Officers and Task Book Co-ordinators will increase. As stated previously, On Job Training requirements will be itemised and these requirements must be met if the rating is to achieve the Operational Performance Statement. Of course it is appreciated that Fishery Protection Duties or a prolonged refit etc could interfere with the training process. Provision has been made to cope with unforeseen circumstances that are outside the control of individuals. This having been said it will be up to all those involved in the Training process to make a concerted effort to help

achieve the aim and provide the flotilla with professional Minewarfare Ratings as we have done in the past.

### Advancement

The Minewarfare Branch have retained the Written Provisional Examination as the means of assessing a ratings suitability for advancement to the acting higher rate (LOM and PO(MW)) and also to determine that they have the potential to qualify on the appropriate professional qualifying course. The WPE will only examine candidates on the areas for which he has already received formal training and should already know. It will not contain any material that will be covered in the next appropriate career course (ie PC3 and PC4) and will be based on the Warfare Branch Training philosophy of 'Just enough just in time'. The finer details have yet to be worked out and agreed so watch this space.

### General

It has also been agreed that the Minewarfare Branch will recruit 25 Operator Mechanics this financial year with the first PC1(MW) starting in February. This will enable the course documentation to be properly evaluated as well as the criteria examinations and Minewarfare training pipeline. You can expect these recruits to reach ships in the flotilla around April/May 1994 (Drafty willing). The second course will commence in early March 1994. A lot of planning, negotiation and plain hard graft has gone into the two courses and training feedback will play a very important part in the success of the follow-on courses. So if you are requested to supply any training feedback please be honest and accurate in your reply.

The adaptation of National Council of Vocational Qualification Certificates (NCVQ Certificates) and City and Guilds for Warfare branch ratings is being investigated. The award of such qualifications widens the opportunities for potential employment in civvy street.

The Minewarfare Branch has set off on the right foot within the Warfare Branch. The full potential of WB ratings has yet to be fully realised onboard ships but I am sure that once complemented with Operator Mechanics some of the scepticism expressed by the 'old school' will disappear and that they will "eat their words".





# OR DO YOU WANT A DRAFT TO A DIVING TEAM . . .

By Lieutenant Ian Morton

The other morning I sat in my office looking out over one of the prime views in Portsmouth, there was HMS WARRIOR, VICTORY, LA JAWF and a host of moving traffic, ferries to and from France, the Gosport ferry, the DOLPHIN launch. I bet not many other naval offices have such an interesting view I thought, perhaps at the top of Creasy block. Going to Horsea Island in 95 isn't an inspiring thought, perhaps by that time there wont be any ships left to look at, anyway I will have moved on by

then. I must write an article for the MAD Mag I thought!

The phone rang to disturb my daydreams, Hampshire Police HQ here, Inspector Smith, can you help us? Yes what's the problem, We've got a Nursing Home near Winchester has lost an old lady and we think she might be in the river Itchen. Why do you think that I say, We found her handbag and shoes on the river bank and footprints in the mud, she went missing last night, the Inspector said mournfully. It's only

about a 300 yard stretch you would need to look in for us, can you provide a team? Yes of course, I reply. A small team of volunteers assembled quickly under one of the Killick Frogs, he having rounded up anyone he thought hadn't been on a gruesome job before. We get to the river a short time later and meet the police, fire brigade and thankfully we are so deep in the woods there is no press on the scene. After surveying the stretch of river requiring a search, the junior AB(D) is dressed in suit and set with the senior AB(D) acting



Portsmouth Area Clearance Diving Unit  
PRESENTED BY FLAG OFFICER PORTSMOUTH  
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## Focus on PACDU

as attendant and surface swimmer. The search goes quickly until we reach a large area of debris gathered round the branches of a willow tree, the diver surfaces through the weed several times complaining of the dark creepy things. The body is going to be in there I said, this did nothing to increase his confidence, get back under and carry on the search, I order. A mumble of agreement and he disappears again into the weed and flotsam. Suddenly the whole mass of floating vegetation and debris starts to move in the current towards the small weir just a few yards downstream. I get to where I can watch it flow over the weir, a few seconds later I spot the legs and I know we have found what we came for. We soon have the poor unfortunate woman's body on the bank. She was a nice old girl says one of the policemen, she had often wandered off before. Sad really what Alzheimers disease can do. The formalities over we get on our way back to Portsmouth, the conversation amongst the lads a bit morbid, Hooky had definitely recovered half the bodies the Navy had looked for in the last fifteen years and the young AB(D) who had just done his first was most impressed and tried not to be sick before we reached the section.

At the beginning of January we were involved as the charge layers and firers for the First of Class Shock Trials for the Type 23, HMS NORFOLK being the target ship. After a lot of effort planning to get the evolution to run smoothly, everything was ready except the January weather which as one can expect (everyone except Bath?) was windy, wet and cold. The cold didn't matter, the wind broke the ship from the moor and the weather made the odd person (no names) sea sick. Three charges were laid and fired, one at a time in 30m of water in the Minding Ground. The warm up charge was a MK 11 Depth Charge and the two main charges were MK 12 Ground Mines fitted as demolition charges and fired electrically from the bridge of NORFOLK, all at a range closer than 100m. Everyone was impressed, from the stokers who had to practice damage control in the way of leakstopping fireman beaches (after the warm up shot), the scientists who were filming the movement of the ship down the

main passageway when the watertight door which should have stayed open didn't and the new Commanding Officer who had just joined and was pleased that the ship still floated afterwards. It would need another couple of pages to tell the full story, so I will leave it until another day.

A week or two later on the 3rd February the Team had been invited to Flag Officer Portsmouth's house for what I thought was just going to be lunchtime beer and a sandwich, but as we arrived at the house and were given a glass of champagne (some of our connoisseurs would rather of had a Guinness), trays of petite sandwiches soon disappeared, when's the main course the largest AB(D) was heard to whisper. I'm doing my best to ensure none of the furniture or antiques get damaged or disappear, the Admiral has heard a few dits from even the most junior diver. The Admiral then said a few words of thanks for all the good works we had achieved during his time in office, the beaches we had made safe, the mines and bombs we had safely removed from fishing vessels, the good publicity we had generated, and all our other works. We had done more Conventional Munitions disposal than any other single Naval or Army Unit in mainland UK during 1992, outgunning the Colchester Det RAOC by some 48 jobs over the year to reach a staggering total of 338. A large glass engraved wine bucket was then presented to the team in appreciation. It can be seen on entry into Triton Building where it is displayed on the stairway. Presented by Flag Officer Portsmouth for Excellence 3 Feb. 1993

I want to mention some of our diving work that we have done this year, one or two useful jobs which our readers may find of interest.

Having talked last year to the engineers about HMS BRISTOL and the plans for it to replace HMS KENT as the harbour training ship, I was asked to investigate the possibility of removing the propellers of BRISTOL, and decided it would not be beyond the team's capabilities, it was left at that. Then one day in February the call came in for the job to go ahead. Drawings obtained, tools mustered, victuals arranged to keep the hungry lads going in the cold weather, what was needed was a tent

to set up on the dockside for cover. I've borrowed one before from Daedalus, a great big frame tent, just what we need, I'll fix it said Hooky. A few minor difficulties over the next five working days were overcome with the usual diver's improvisation and at times brute force, using the strongest young men available, when that failed a tiny amount explosive was used in the old fashioned way that many of you will remember to loosen the props from the shafts. The soup kitchen ran a cafe service Macdonalds would have been proud of courtesy of the head chef Mo (team boatman), every visit I made to the site a mug of steaming coffee and even one a liver sarny (not obtainable at Macs) were thrust in my hand. A couple of very senior divers even volunteered their services, getting in the water (getting minutes), and doing a very satisfying job. It's untrue that the FDG HQ staff only dive in the Tank, Mediterranean, Caribbean or other places I hear them mention often. One cold day when paperwork made the office the nicest place to be the phone rang and Chiefy said you'd better get down here now Boss the first one is about to come off. I'll been down right away, I said and drove to the yard. On arrival, a bacon sarny, coffee in the hospitality tent, then out to view this 10.5 Ton monster break surface and be swung over our heads by the crane to be lowered next to the CO's car (only just). You haven't got hard hats on said the head dockey, proudly sporting a shiny new white one. Won't do you much good I said looking at this monster fifty feet above our heads, its not going to bounce off your hat, the edges are so sharp it will embed itself in the road by at least six feet after its been through your hat. I am not saying we were not incorrect, but there are times when a hard hat just isn't quite the thing. I moved back a few paces until the monster was firmly on the deck. Then like all good divers they wanted photos taken sitting on top of it. A couple of days later and the process was repeated, the section prop sitting on the dockside. The reason they were removed was actually to reduce the amount of movement of the ship in the water at her new berth adjacent to the ferry port when the jumbo ferries enter and leave causing many ships to surge at their berth and break wires, and the



## Focus on PACDU



second reason was for the scrap value, which try as I might I couldn't get credited to the Units' Travel Budget.

The next big event on the diving front arose on the day before Easter Leave when we were asked if we could strip on of HMS INVINCIBLE'S propellers and find out why water was getting all the way to the gearbox, simple we thought, it must be the agouti system or the plugs in the forward face of the prop. A small team, consisting of the duty element with the team Tiffs and two of the ships own divers one male and one female got to work and soon the fairing collar and cone removed. The agouti non return valve was found to be bent, a new valve was found and soon put in place. Not much longer the whole prop was back in working order, a good

weekends work. A dry dock had been available, but to dock to do this job would have meant recalling crew off leave and the expense of docking for a fairly simple underwater engineering job. The Shoreside Engineering Staff took a bit of convincing at first that we could achieve the timescale required but we had no doubt that it could be done. Divers are capable of many tasks under the ships of our fleet, given the correct tools to use a lot more money could be saved in this area.

A minor mention at this stage of Improvised Explosive Device Disposal is perhaps worthwhile and certainly someone learnt a lesson recently. Just after Easter Leave (for those that had some), the lodger units in Gunwharf arranged to give the newest lodger

unit, CGRM and his staff an introductory brief one morning. The evening beforehand an unidentified suspicious briefcase was found in Gunwharf and was subsequently explosively examined by one of my team. It turned out to belong to the ADC to CGRM (his Flat Lt's). This made any demonstration at the briefing of PACDU's role unnecessary and there have been no repeat incidents.

Many more diving jobs than I can mention here have been carried out recently but it would be unfair to not give EOD a little mention just to let you all know the latest from the Thames Estuary. At the end of April about 0900 the phone rang from Thames Coastguard and told me the tale of a Belgian trawler which had a torpedo in its net and the propellers were going round, the skipper wanted a bit of advice and help as it was so tangled in the chains of this trawl he could not get rid of it. Do you want a helicopter? said Thames Coastguard. Yes, lets get out there and give the Belgians a hand. OK says the Coastguard, minutes later the Duty Controller from MHQ Mount Wise is on the phone to me and a big yellow Sea King is on the way from RAF Manston in Kent. The duty watch organised, with two in the flying crew and one to take the Land-Rover to Manston for the return journey, I decide to pop along for a look. Hooky gets to drive the Rover and is not impressed! Arrangements made to keep in touch by cellnet phone, we jump into the helo that lands outside the office and have a lovely flight to the trawler fifteen miles off North Foreland. Looking out the window when over the boat we see that there is not just a torpedo in the net but that it is still in its tube! Lets get stuck into this says PO(D) No Legs, dying to get his fee on deck and out of the yellow flying brick. Winching from a helo not being something I'd do on a daily basis, the three of us were glad to be safely on the sea and in our natural environment. That we now had this torpedo to deal with was of little consequence. Are you sure the skipper doesn't want to evacuate some of the crew? the Helo pilot says over the radio, a firm no from the Belgian and I tell the pilot we will give him a shout if we need him again. RAF MANSTON only being 15 miles away to the south. We work out the



## Focus on PACDU



plan to extricate the tube from the net and chains and hang it on a couple of strops over the starboard bow. It works and we steam south to Margate Sands, a shallow bank just off Margate. The phone in my pocket rings, Hooky here, what do you want me to do Boss? Wait where you are and we will have you flown out if we require any more equipment. We get near the sands and Margate Lifeboat arrives on the scene to assist (or remove survivors). The torpedo still in its tube is lowered gently to the seabed and the fishing boat moves quickly away, the fuses lit we watch expectantly for the bang. A Belgian beer? The much relieved skipper asks us. Smiles all round. A few minutes later a large fountain of water erupts from the sea and we realise, yes it was live and dangerous. Ashore in the lifeboat, Hooky meets us with the Rover pack the kit into it and we are off on the road to Portsmouth another job completed. Back in the office at 1930 quite a fun day, lets get home.

The following Monday, just getting into the paperwork after standeasy, the duty crew already on their way to their second job at Brighton having been down Southampton Water first, the phone rang, Hello, Thames Coastguard, good morning, the fishing vessel Louise has found a mine in its nets and laid it still in the cod-end in the usual place just off the mouth of Blackwater when can you come up?

We will be there this afternoon tell them. Arrangements to meet the fishing boat at West Mersea at 1500 were made and the duty team diverted from low priority job at Brighton. The mine is GC was dived upon, 4lb pack placed and it went off with the usual plume of water into the air 350ft at least. The first GC of the year, a little later than normal, perhaps they are finally running out, I thought.

Early May Bank Holiday is quiet, not a job over the weekend, watch the powerboat racing and have a relaxing

weekend. The next day back at work, quiet until at 1500, yes you've guessed it, the outside line rang, and who was on it, Thames Coastguard. Another Belgian trawler its got a long silver object on its deck, out of the net and unable to get it back over the side, We have told them to keep it wet says the Coastguard. Good says I, Do you want the Helo? says he. If it's available I say. Didcot informed, MHQ controller spoken to and the Helo is already airborne on exercise and will be with us in under an hour. I decide to go along with my fairly new supervisor, and collect a few notes for his 2641's and yes perhaps I don't mind flying so much after all. Hooky comes with us in the Helo this time and someone else takes the Land-Rover up to Margate for the return trip. We get to the trawler, a bit of wind blowing, the crewman with the hi-line gets down easily, next Hooky and Supervisor are out the door together in a double lift and it takes a least five minutes to get them on deck. I'm next and reach the deck in 3 seconds. A German mine it is, balanced tail on the gunwhale, off we go again to Margate Sands I explain to the skipper, who doesn't speak very good English, and we will put it over the side. Slings arranged, photos taken we steam south into the Sunset towards Margate. If you want to know what happened next see the next edition of MAD Magazine.





# EOD OPERATION AT FLAMBOROUGH HEAD

By PO(D) A. D. Noble

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Initiation

At 1030 Monday 23 November 1992 a call was received by PACDU EOD team from Bridlington Coast Guard that a mine-like object had been found on the beach at Flamborough head by VIC CROSSWAITE the local coastguard. Questioning over the 'phone gave a description that suggested it was a German type 'D'. This was subsequently proved to be correct.

The duty watch prepared the PACDU EOD Land Rover. Joint Service EOD Operation Centre at Didcot was informed and tasking authority obtained. The local coastguard at Flamborough Head was requested to place a cordon at half a mile and ensure no one approached the mine. The PACDU EOD team, consisting L (D) Roy New, AB(D) N. 'Smudge' Smith, AB(D) O.E. 'Taff' Galsworthy, led by myself, PO(D) A.D. 'Nobby' Noble, departed at 1100 for RNAD Gosport to collect Emergency Explosive Disposal Packs. After this call, the journey started in earnest. On the way we made two refuelling stops, and made our way with all despatch using the siren and blue lights operated as required to clear the way ahead.

### 1.2 Description of the mine

The German type 'D' (aerial delivery) mine has an aluminium alloy casing of 'Rhinemetal', extremely resistant to corrosion by sea-water. It carries an explosive load of between 650 and 775 lbs. depending on the particular firing mechanism fitted; determined by whether the mine was to be initiated by pressure, magnetic, or acoustic influence, or a combination of all three. The explosive, 'Hexanite', is still potent after 50 years in the water. Fitted with a 'bomb-fuse', beneath which is a 'Zeus 40' anti-handling device, (part of the preventive stripping equipment). Often up to three, still active mechanically operated other preventive stripping equipments, ('booby-traps') are fitted to these mines. In addition to the preventive stripping equipment(s), they have anti-recovery switches, a 'Liss' (?) and 'Workentopf' (?), to detonate the mines recovery ascent at about 3 metres. The bomb-fuse in the event of non-immersion or insufficient depth of water

is designed to actuate after 22 seconds. It may have been the initial impact 50 years ago that stopped this clockwork mechanism or it may have been sabotaged by the slave-labour in the German armament factories. The implication of this is that the bomb-fuse, because of its protected position within the mine was still capable of initiating an explosion, if disturbed by further movement or sudden impact.

## 2. The Operation

### 2.1 Location

The team arrived at Sough Landing, Flamborough Head, at 1645 and was met by the local police, Coast Guard, BBC and ITV television crews. Initial briefing was provided by VIC CROSSWAITE, coastguard, who had earlier secured the mine on the rocky beach. This would have enabled the team to have dived on it while it was covered by water, had the weather conditions been satisfactory. As informed earlier by the coastguard the mine would be visible at approximately 1900. The team took advantage of this first break, since leaving Portsmouth, to refresh themselves. The location was half a mile from the nearest habitation, the village of

Flamborough Head, and three miles from the town of Bridlington. 300 metres away was the new, expensive, and recently opened sewage outfall, and the local water authority were naturally very concerned.

Later that evening at 1900, the mine was still not visible as the onshore wind was causing the tide to still be covering it. Myself, Roy, and VIC CROSSWAITE walked within 50 metres of the mine using high power torches. The mine could be seen occasionally moving in the shallows. We then retired a safe distance up the beach to wait for the tide to go out. At 2030 the mine was fully exposed, high and dry.

### 2.2 Survey

Myself and Roy positively identified the mine as a German type 'D' mine at 2035. With sacks and lines provided, myself and Roy secured the mine with sandbags and ropes. It was now time to formulate the plan of attack, in consultation with the police and VIC CROSSWAITE. In view of the deteriorating weather conditions, (gusting Force 8), I considered it unsafe to all concerned to continue the operation that evening.





## Bomb Job

### 2.3 The Plan

The plan for the next day was to wait until an hour before low water, and fit a police flotation bag together with a 240 metre tow-rope and allow the flood tide to float the mine off. We would then tow the mine out to a safe area for a controlled detonation of the mine, with two RNLI Lifeboats from Flamborough Head and Bridlington and an RNLI Inshore RIB as safety cover. Once in a safe area the mine would be sunk and charges placed by a diver. A suitable window in the weather was required to execute this plan.

Lt I. MORTON, RN (OIC PACDU), was informed of my proposed plan, and said to go ahead with minimal risk to all personnel and to contact him in the morning before commencement of the operation. It was now time for a pint and good nights sleep at the guest house in Flamborough Head.

### 2.4 Execution

At 0830 the following day (24 November 1992), the weather was such that the EOD team returned to South Landing. We were able to commence the execution of the plan after informing the Boss by 'phone that there was an eight hour break in the weather. Myself and Roy carried the equipment required, with Taff and Smudge carrying the flotation bag provided by Humberside Police Diving Unit to within 50 metres of the mine. Once Smudge and Taff were safely out of the area we approached the mine. Smudge and Taff prepared the Gemini, diving, and auxiliary equipment and transferred it out to the RNLI Bridlington Lifeboat. Roy and myself removed the ropes and sandbags previously securing the mine. We then fitted lifting straps, flotation bag, tow-rope, and a light float, together with a piece of carpet to prevent the damaged parachute housing puncturing the flotation bag. It was now 1038. We returned up the beach. Because the flooding tide would lift the mine off the rocky foreshore and bounce it, this was a critical period and I directed, assisted by the coastguard and the police, the onlookers to take cover. During the initial lift the strain was to be taken on the towing line by the Gemini and to maintain the mine's position and therefore preventing it being washed further up the foreshore. Despite the precautions taken earlier, the flotation bag was slightly damaged necessitating partial reinflation by Smudge. The mine got underway at 1230 and all was well until the mine snagged on some fishing floats, 50 metres from its earlier position. The RNLI RIB was called over and the



RNLI crew transferred to the Gemini, with Smudge remaining, to maintain tension on the two-rope, to prevent the mine being washed further up the beach.

Myself and the RNLI Cox in the RNLI RIB closed the mine to 100 metres (at a relatively safe distance) where I entered the water and swam over to the mine. I cut the fishing float lines away. The mine was heard bumping on the rocky bottom at this time. The mine then sprung free trapping and dragging me along. I waved to Smudge to slow down, in vain, he had earlier removed his contact lens, (for reasons best known to himself). I managed to get free in less than half a minute, though it seemed longer at the time. It was only later we could laugh at this incident.

The RNLI Cox in the RIB came nearer inshore and recovered me. The mine continued its journey seaward, with the RNLI RIB catching the Gemini up and transferring the RNLI RIB crew back and returning me onboard.

Meanwhile Roy and Taff onboard the RNLI Bridlington Lifeboat prepared the diving equipment and explosive packs. On arrival at the safe area, two large anchors, provided by the RNLI, were attached to the tow rope 240 metres from the mine. I now transferred to the Gemini and all three RNLI boats withdrew to at least half a mile away. The gemini now closed to the mine; Roy swam over and attached explosive packs to the mine underwater, with extreme difficulty as the tide was now running at two knots. Roy

was then recovered and a navigational warning was put out that a controlled detonation would take place within 7 minutes. Detonators attached, safety fuse was lit having checked the area was clear through the Coast Guard and RNLI. At 1347 the mine detonated.

On return to South Landing we made our gratitude and appreciation known to the RNLI and Coast Guard and Police for their efforts.

I informed the relevant authorities and, of course, the Boss that the operation was successfully completed, and was interviewed by the television crews and press.

### 3. Summary

This was one of the most difficult and potentially dangerous tasks that I have ever undertaken in eight years as a CD(1) involving explosive ordnance disposal. The marginal weather conditions and location of the mine made this task particularly arduous and difficult, however, despite this the task was completed satisfactorily and safely.





## Spreading the word—MCM's vital part in amphibious operations

by Lieutenant Commander Tom Chambers

With the arrival of the first incumbent in the post of **SO2 N3(MW) to COMUKNLPHIBGRU/ SWO(MW) to COMAW**, (supply of suitably large name tally presently out to tender), another step in the integration of MW/Diving expertise and advice within other operational commands has been achieved. Recent operations in the Gulf and a plethora of lessons learnt in national/NATO exercises have highlighted the key nature of timely MW advice to commands and the need for good two-way communications between the Commander Amphibious Task Force (CATF) and the MCM Commander. Spreading 'the MW gospel' has recently been furthered by the arrival on COMAW staff of Cdr Jim Merrett (EX-MCM3) as SOO. The complex coordination of amphibious operations, involving the integration of land, sea and air assets to achieve a military goal, requires detailed and early planning with progressive refinement and amendment throughout the execution of the operation. This responsibility for joint amphibious operational planning rests with Commodore Amphibious Warfare, COMAW, and the Commander 3 Commando Brigade (or COMUKNLPHIBGRU and COMUKNLLF in their NATO hats) both based at Royal Marines Barracks STONEHOUSE. Leaving aside the land and air interfaces, COMAW has no dedicated naval assets and thus faces the challenge of quickly moulding the allocated force of escorts and amphibious shipping (including STUFT) into a cohesive and effective Amphibious Task Force (ATF). The ability to counter the maritime threats (ASW/ASUW/AAW/NBC/MW) requires both a good intelligence picture and the allocation of necessary assets accepting that these might be limited. This intelligence plot will also be used to determine the relative priorities of individual warfare disciplines and their overall effect on the mission. Within this framework, the importance of MCM is acknowledged but, inevitably, full use of the different MCM techniques

within amphibious operations creates its own problems. As the 'customer', COMAW can only highlight these present shortcomings but it is encouraging to see that Tactical Development and liaison is already underway to address these problems and rectify where possible.

From a COMAW viewpoint, areas of particular concern (with no immediate solution) are as follows:

### 1. MCM in support of amphibious operations

In recent years, it has become apparent that MCM in support of amphibious landings presents its own unique set of difficulties. There is a fine balance between putting sufficient MCM effort into the Amphibious Objective Area (AOA) in order to reduce the mine threat to an acceptable level and the need to maintain the security of landing areas to maximise the element of surprise. Exercises, both LIVEXES and paper have often chosen to either ignore the problem or to play a game of nocturnal MCM close inshore which supposedly defeats the opposing sensors (ESM/active radars/night sights/IR etc). Hopefully, future exercises and practice, despite their specific scenario requirements, will help to determine the general planning criteria for improved integration of MCM operations. There should be sufficient time to complete exploratory/short term operations whilst allowing insufficient time for OPFOR to relocate its defences.

### 2. Protection of MCMVS in a multi-threat environment

Should sufficient escorts be available, it may be possible to detach assets to provide protection for the MCM force. Development of tactics to provide adequate area defence with individual units retaining freedom to conduct ASMD and SPMs are at an early stage. The present method of the Air Defence FF/DD providing early warning and raid countdown with MCMVs conducting

organic soft kill procedures require considerable practice to ensure rapid reporting between all units to maximise safety against the most urgent threat.

### 3. Shallow water MCM (SWMCM) - The vinegar strokes of the MCM operation

There remains a capability gap within the MCM inventory to conduct effective MCM/EOD from 10 metres to the surf zone. It is likely that the Inner Transport Area (ITA) and certain that Boat Lanes (area for ship to shore movements) will straddle this area with the resultant mine threat to amphibious shipping/landing craft/landing force. FDG and SBS are presently looking to see whether it is feasible to adapt present techniques to cover any of this shortfall. Once again, the preferred option to conduct these operations in a covert manner adds significantly to their complexity.

### A Brighter Future

Recent events have served to raise the profile of amphibious warfare and confirm the importance of MCM skills in an Out of Area context. The correlation of both warfare disciplines will be advanced by established links between COMMW and COMAW and efforts to exercise together at every opportunity. Meanwhile, visiting 'members of the cloth' are always welcome to drop in at STONEHOUSE for amphibious indoctrination or to update on local scandal.

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## Tanks

# ARMY-NAVY—A DIFFERENT GAME

By N J DAVIS Lieutenant Royal Navy OPS Officer



Back in November 1992 members of the Ship's Company of HMS CROMER (the third Sandown Class Single Role Minehunter) had a once in a lifetime offer to drive Chieftain and Challenger tanks at the Army's School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (SEME). Located in the North of Hampshire, near the town of Bordon, SEME's role is to provide the Corps of REME with trained electro - mechanical tradesmen and in addition provides training for Royal Marines, Royal Air Force and many Foreign soldiers. Every year more than 4000 students undertake training at SEME making it one of the largest training organisations in the country.

The trip was organised by AB(D) Artie Shaw with the kind permission of Lt. Col. G.J. Mead. After a brief introduction to the School, 9 sailors, armed with 'L' plates,

made their way out to the tank pound. Then began an exhilarating driving lesson where pupils met tanks, tanks met mud and pupils met grief! There was no escape from the elements in the forward driving position and all were soon waist deep in heathland soup. The 62 tonne monsters were surprisingly manoeuvrable and allowed the drivers to take out Part 4 trials frustrations over the rough terrain whilst colleagues, and the surprisingly cool staff, clung on for dear life in the turret! Refreshed, impressed and soaked through, the team returned to Portsmouth and the now spacious surrounds of the ship!

It was a thoroughly enjoyable day and a unique liaison which we aim to keep.

- *Some members of Ship's Company on Chieftain tank. (On the turret of Chieftain are, left to right, PO(MW) Coles, PO(D) Cardwell, PO(MEM) White, Lt Russell (GO) and Lt Davis (OPS)).*





# VERNON REMEMBERED

By S/LT George Turnbull

Having just completed yet another form which asked me to list the detailed requirements for the forthcoming move to HMS DOLPHIN it suddenly dawned on me that this time they were getting down to the nitty gritty. Questions such as, 'how many sockets would you like in your office?' and 'What colour paint would you like on the walls?' meant that people were beginning to take this move quite seriously and perhaps it was not just a bad buzz.

Being involved in the 'Death Throes' of our Almer Mater set me thinking back to the time when it must have all begun. I decided to do a little delving.

The history of HMS VERNON is fascinating, but what really came to light was the fact that all the work being done today on Warfare Branch implementation, the move from the old 'VERNON' site and the proposal of shifting training to a ship borne environment has all been done before by our illustrious predecessors and probably for very much the same reasons. It really is amazing how the wheel appears to have turned one complete circle.

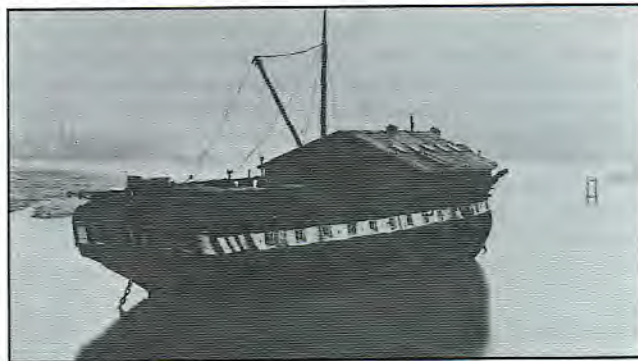
The establishment was originally named after Edward VERNON (1684-1757) who joined the Royal Navy as a Midshipman in 1700. He was promoted Lieutenant in 1702 and after taking part in the capture of Gibraltar in 1704 became a Post Captain in 1706. Elected to Parliament in 1722, he was instrumental in persuading the Government to declare war on Spain in 1739. As a result of an incautious speech in Parliament, the now Admiral VERNON was given command of a Squadron of only six ships and sent off to the West Indies, where it was hoped he would fail to achieve anything and be held up to ridicule. Instead the Admiral captured Portobello, on the Isthmus of Darien from the Spaniards in November 1739 (Depicted in the painting currently hanging in the Conference Room at HMS NELSON, (GUNWHARF). The action was one of the earliest successful amphibious operations and Admiral VERNON'S most famous exploit.

Although considered to be a persistent thorn in the side of Government Ministers he was very popular with his men and was scathing in his condemnation of the conditions in which seamen were forced to serve. In particular he disliked the Admiralty custom of issuing neat rum to sailors and was very conscious of the detrimental effects that it had on their general health. He was named 'Old Grog' after the Grogam boatcloak he always wore on board and the word 'Grog' has been perpetuated as a result of his introducing the compulsory watering of rum which, like Admiral VERNON has now passed into Naval History.

The first three ships to bear his name were privateers (armed vessels which belonged to private individuals). The fourth was a fifty gun frigate which had a reputation for being a fast sailing and easy ship. She saw service in home waters, the Americas and the East Indies. She remained in the fleet from 1832 until 1848. (Her figurehead is now by the 'Old Quarterdeck' at HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF). Laid up in Chatham dockyard for the following nineteen years she emerged from obscurity in 1867 and her first job was as a floating jetty for coaling. However the study of the torpedo was destined to bring the hulk VERNON back from ignominy.

Towards the end of the 19th century the Mine and Torpedo were introduced into the Royal Navy. Their development and training being carried out in the Gunnery School at HMS EXCELLENT, Whale Island. The old VERNON was brought to Portsmouth as a tender to EXCELLENT and there she was fitted out as a Torpedo instructional ship.

Torpedo warfare was growing rapidly to such a degree of importance that on April 26 1876 VERNON broke away from EXCELLENT to become an independent command. The hulk



● VERNON as she was in 1904

ARIADNE was added to provide accommodation so that VERNON could be used purely as an instruction ship. Later the hulk ACTEON was added and used as a workshop. Soon the name VERNON stood not only for the old frigate herself but for all the other ships which were subsequently added to her. Amongst these other ships were DONEGAL, MARLBOROUGH and WARRIOR. From 1874 to 1923 VERNON had as a tender the VESUVIOUS a Gunboat of 250 tons. I mention all these names because they are still to be found in the names of buildings or structures on the current site of GUNWHARF.

From being moored close to the Dockyard wall in Fountain Lake, VERNON was moved to a position in Portchester Creek in 1895 as the busy Fountain Lake was gradually becoming unsuitable. There she stayed until 1923 when VERNON was transferred ashore.

Long before it actually took place, there was considerable thought given to the possibility of transferring VERNON to a shore establishment. The ships were becoming leaky and insanitary and during the 1914-18 war, the mining school had already moved ashore to the south side of Gunwharf.

Preparations to take over the whole of the Gunwharf (the other half being occupied by the army) began in 1919. Considerable work was done on the building to make them ready to receive the Torpedo school and on 1st October 1923 the pennant of the Captain of HMS VERNON was hoisted on the Gunwharf, marking the beginning of an era, which is just about to end.

The development of the Torpedo during this period was very much the responsibility of the Electrical Trials Department (ETD) assisted by the Torpedomen Branch. However in 1946 there was the formation of a new branch which was to consist of the Torpedomen, (who had previously worked hand in glove with the ETD) and Anti Submarine Officers and ratings to be known as the TAS branch. The Electrical trials department were segregated and moved to HMS COLLINGWOOD.

It is therefore with a certain sense of 'deja vu' that I fill in my form on the proposed move of what we still refer to as 'Old VERNON'. Prepare for the training of Warfare Branch personnel in electronics at Collingwood and Comment on the viability of conducting operational training in 'laid up Ships'.





# A Week with the RAF

by PO(D) Mick Beale - Coxwain HMS Sandown

With the ship in DED the opportunity to get away and do something different was fully taken by HMS Sandown's diving team. After a workup in Gibraltar where we were well looked after by CPO(D) Jim Carlin and his team we returned to Rosyth to recover for a few weeks before our next excursion. The boss Lt. Chris O'Flaherty had arranged for us to work with the RAF Wittering EOD team. So it was weekend on route in order to join the RAF at 0800 Monday morning.



● *HMS Sandown Diving team: Left to right Lt. Chris O'Flaherty AB(D) Whiskey Walker LS(D) Dave Couling AB(D) Tim Hall*

We arrived bright and early and were shown to the crew room while we waited for the boss to arrive. It was here that we met Cpl Neil Abbot who greeted us with 'What have you lot done to deserve this' and went on to explain the job in hand for the next week. The RAF were handing over an area of land near RAF Scampton which had to be cleared and certified explosive free. They had been working in the area for a number of weeks armed with a 4021 locator, foul weather gear and a spade. Alas nothing was found. We resigned ourselves to a lot of walking and digging for the next week. We met Sgt Trev Tilsey and set off for RAF Scampton where we were to be accommodated. On arrival we reported to the main gate to be shown to our



● *Meeting the Police*

respective messes only to find that an urgent message had been left for us. Three 500KG bombs had been found at a place called Finedon approx 70 miles away and the team had been asked by Didcot to investigate. So it was about turn, back to Wittering to load up the EOD gear. As the gear was being loaded Trevor and myself tried to find out some more information about the bombs which had apparently been dug up by an aircraft enthusiast at the site of a crashed German plane.

It turned out that on 3rd August 1942 a Dornier flew at low level along the Nene valley and was heading towards Northampton when it turned and headed back over Wellingborough. Here four bombs were dropped across the town centre at 6.10pm falling on property in the town. Two Spitfires comprising blue section of 485 squadron flown by Pilot Officer I.P. Maskill and Flying Officer L.S. Black, had taken off from an advanced base at Docking, Norfolk, and were ordered to circle around Wittering. They were then given a series of different courses to steer and the location of several enemy aircraft, eventually spotting the bombs bursting on Wellingborough. After circling south of



● *First bomb found*

Cogenhoe, they were given a fresh course to steer and set off, almost running into a Dornier coming in from the North-East along the river valley. The Dornier turned violently to the right. Flying Officer Black, flying Spitfire Vb BM208, managed to keep sight of the enemy aircraft and as he closed range he fired a six-second burst with his guns (using up all 120 rounds of cannon ammunition). The Dornier then climbed into cloud, followed by Black, and when they emerged he closed again firing his four machine guns in one second bursts at 100 and 75 yards range. He experienced some inaccurate return fire from the gunners in the Dornier, which then dived back through the cloud layer and crashed close to Fox Covert Lodge farmhouse by the A510 road, north-east of Finedon. The pilot Unteroffizier Eugen Beyerer and crew of three were killed instantly. Indeed, it may well have been that Beyerer had already been mortally hit by Black's final burst of machine gun fire. Flying Officer Black later said that he was surprised when the Dornier crashed, and felt lucky to have scored the success.

The postscript to this event came in 1976, when members of the Kettering Aircraft Research Group excavated the crash site of Beyerer's Dornier, only to discover among the buried wreckage an unexploded 500KG bomb (duly dealt with by Royal Engineers



# Bomb Disposal



● *Lt. Chris O'Flaherty drilling the fuze.*



● *PO(D) Mick Beale minimising the fuze with S SET.*

EOD Team). This discovery cast doubt upon the accepted view that the destroyed aircraft was the one that had dropped four bombs on Wellingborough, for the normal load of bombs of this calibre was four, not five. Official reports of the incident mention either three or four bombs dropped, and a gap of some four to five minutes between the two sightings of Dorniers over the town. Even if only three bombs fell, which on the weight of evidence seems unlikely, it would have been rash for a bomber crew, on a daylight penetration raid, to return to an unimportant target to try to drop a remaining bomb. It would have been just as unlikely for a second plane to have flown further into England after dropping three bombs elsewhere. The third possibility is that it was a second aircraft, with a full load on board, which had the misfortune to run into the Spitfires that were pursuing the first raider, and which was then shot down with its load intact. This, if this was the case there could well be three more 500KG bombs still buried in the field by the A510.

We arrived at Fox Covert Lodge farmhouse and were met by the local police who had closed the A510. The person who had dug the bombs up covered them over immediately on seeing

them, so the first job was to uncover them and get a positive ID. We set to work with a JCB borrowed from the farmer and began to tentatively excavate the area. Within a few minutes the first bomb was seen, a 500KG German SD, and shortly after the remaining two were uncovered. The next job was to immunise the fuses before moving the bombs to a safe area to be trepanned and steamed. As myself, the boss and Trev started to get the S Set out and identify the fuses, LS(D) Dave Cowling and Cpl Neil Abbot took the JCB over to the next field and started work on the steaming pit.

With the fuses identified and the S Set primed and tested Trev made his way down to the first bomb to drill the fuze. After drilling, the S Set was connected and sealed with luting and a saline solution was pumped into the fuze to remove any picric crystals. There was no need to use any BD liquid as the bombs had not been armed. Trev made his way back to the farmhouse and approached the boss and I 'your turn next Mick, and the boss can do the last one,' he said. There's nothing quite like leaning over a 500KG bomb and drilling a precise hole into the fuze. Myself and the boss were extremely relieved when this part of the operation had been successfully completed!



● *Moving the bombs to the Steaming pit*



● *PO(D) Mick Beale setting up the trepanner*



● *Fuze with S SET connected*



● *LS(D) Dave Carling preparing the Steaming pit*

Now that the fuses were immunised the bombs could be transported to the steaming pit ready for trepanning. Each bomb was trepanned in four places, two of them being at each end of the fuze pocket so that the fuze could be removed and disposed of with plastic explosive. After the holes were cut the laborious job of steaming out the explosives could take place. Once all the explosive filling was steamed out and collected on the coconut matting in the run off to the pit it was to be burned. The plan was to do one bomb each day. However, the cases were thicker than expected and the job in fact lasted all week. During our stay we were very well looked after by the RAF and a great deal was learnt from their knowledge and professionalism. We hope to see a few of the RAF onboard if they get the chance. Yet, I can't promise them such an interesting job will crop up. By the way Trev, I still think we should have put a 4LB pack on them!



## Walney Update

# HMS WALNEY—YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING YET

By Lieut Darroch Woodward

On the 19 August 1992 HMS WALNEY was accepted from Vosper Thornycroft into Naval service. The particular 'buzz' in a new ships company is a feeling that few get to experience in their careers and the enthusiasm onboard was immense. HMS WALNEY, as the fourth RN hull of the SANDOWN class, single role minehunter (SRMH) represents a potentially significant technological advance in the MCM field and the desire by the team to learn to operate their new 'toy' was strong. Moreover, the light, wide passageways and the high standards of accommodation surpassed those experienced by men used to the 'hardlyers' days of the TONs or the inhospitable messdeck location of the HUNTs, and this contributed to the general sense of well being. Early September saw WALNEY in her base port of Rosyth preparing for Shakedown and Preliminary Safety Training. The aim of PSTs is to ensure the ship is competent in all firefighting and seamanship, so that the ship can then proceed safely into its trials programme. It proved a most steep of learning curves as the ships company worked hard to understand the practicalities of their new ship, and to develop into a cohesive and effective unit under the guidance of MCM3 and CST Staff. PSTs successfully completed, there followed a visit to that favourite of haunts, Newcastle: A few days later, with many a sore head but good memories, WALNEY returned to Portsmouth for the fitting of its 2093 sonar so that the ship could commence its Part IV trials.

The subsequent news that the programme was to slip by 6 months due to a delay in the availability of the sonar body caused disappointment but little surprise. All were aware that this was likely to be the first of many future frustrations. Those acquainted with the SRMH and 2093 project will be aware of the teething problems that 2093 has experienced, and this article does not aim to amplify on the saga. Nevertheless there remained much to do in the following six months for the Minewarfare and Diving departments: some assorted trials and constant weapon training, particularly in those areas that would otherwise not have been approached until after ODMA.

Autumn saw the ship remaining mainly in the Portsmouth area, undertaking HATs and SATs on IFF, COMMS, and the SPCS (Ships Position Control System), Log Cals and some guaranteed defect rectification work by VTL. The highlight of this period saw WALNEY's Ops Room taking charge of a less than switched on Type 42 during the conduct of UHF trails involving a FRADU Hunter. Whilst many of these trials were routine, the capabilities of the SPCS and SMS (Ships Manoeuvring System) proved impressive. The manoeuvrability of the ship has proved dazzling to numerous visitors and opportunities to show off the manoeuvring capability have been eagerly exploited ever since.

November saw 2 weeks on passage and a visit to Gibraltar, to allow ocean navigation training and WANLEY's Clearance Diving Team to conduct a 54M deep work up. The ship was blessed with favourable weather and the Diving Team had to endure the standard ribaldry over 'swanning around in the sun' while working up to 54M. This was achieved, but not without several agrophobia hits suffered by divers unused to more than 3m visibility. LS(D) Kev WILKINS, terrified by the experience, surmounted the problem by keeping his eyes firmly shut and requested a draft back to the murky waters of Rosyth.

WALNEY returned to Rosyth prior to Christmas leave, spending January and much of February carrying out a BMP and harbour

training. A brief period of weapon training at the beginning of February was conducted in the run up to the Commissioning Ceremony on Saturday 20 February. The day itself was a successful balance of formality and fun; the smartness of the Minewarfare and Diving rates was assisted by there being no requirement to march. There followed a most agreeable visit to the ship's affiliated port of Barrow In Furness, resulting in an open invitation for WALNEY to return in the future. During the visit WALNEY's football team was skilfully led by LS(MW) Stu ESPLIN to a 5-0 defeat against the local police force.

Early March was spent carrying out a period of training in Northern Ireland waters, contributing to the NI squadron during their careers and, whilst not able to undertake boarding operations our additional presence was a useful contribution to one of the RN's dedicated tasks. A brief visit to Glasgow was followed by weapon training in the Clyde

areas, some diving on the west coast of Scotland, weapon training again in the Forth and a visit to Rotterdam, during which the Flotilla Chaplain (Rev Roger CUTLER) was introduced to the spirited style of small ship's runs ashore.

After Easter leave WALNEY returned to Portsmouth to spend time alongside until early July, having the sonar body fitted and the 2093 and RCMS2 set to work. Inevitably teething problems are expected, but the programme appears more stable than that of the previous autumn. The time in Portsmouth will now be utilised to ensure the Mine Warfare and Diving departments focus again on their prime roles and to this end extensive use will be made of Gunwharf's training facilities, practical instruction

onboard while alongside, and sea riding in INVERNESS and CROMER during their trials.

After summer leave WALNEY will enter an intensive trials programme, which should result in ODMA in February 94. There remains little doubt, that despite the problems endured in bringing the SRMH through their trials, the potential of the SANDOWN class will ultimately make it a leader in MCM operations. This knowledge continues to provide inspiration and we look to the future confident that our problems will be less extensive than those encountered by SANDOWN, INVERNESS and CROMER, thanks to their efforts in breaking the ground ahead of us.

### The WALNEY Team

Lieutenant Commander Nick STANLEY (MCD) (CO)  
Lieutenant Jonathon LEE (MW) (XO)  
Lieutenant Darroch WOODWARD (MCD) (OPS)

PO(D) Thommo THOMPSON  
LS(D) Kev WILKINS  
AB(D) Fletch FLETCHER  
AB(D) Paddy O'LYNN  
AB(D) John LENNON

PO(MW) Polly PORTER  
PO(MW) Billy BREBNER  
LS(MW) Stu ESPLIN  
LS(MW) Alice COOPER  
AB(MW) Dougie BOWMAN  
AB(MW) Alex GROVES  
AB(MW) Winkle DONAGHY  
AB(MW) Scotty HIBBERT  
AB(MW) Brum BRUMPTON



• HMS WALNEY showing off to another visitor



# DON'T COUNT YOUR CHICKENS . . .!!

By Lieutenant Graham Collins, XO, HMS SANDOWN

It was another cold, wet, cold, windy and cold January day in Rosyth. HMS SANDOWN was in the sheds and I was in my office in Lowden Block.

Lt Chris O'Flatbattery had taken the entire diving team to Gib for a deep dive workup. The entire team except the CO and myself that is. I was staring vacantly at a list entitled 'One thousand and one things you really should be getting on with whilst your ship is in DED' when the phone rang. It was Warrant Officer 'Tiny' Timms wanting to know if I had two divers to spare to go on a deep dive work-up in Oban on full subbies? Does a fish have a watertight head? Is the Pope Catholic? Does a one legged Duck swim round in circles? Do hamsters eat Kiwi fruit? 'Yes' I replied 'my CO and I will be glad to volunteer, when, with whom and why'. It transpired that Lt Cdr Holloway and his intrepid team wanted to test out SIVA 55 under deep diving conditions so that they could then train the Saudi Divers on the equipment. 'Who needs a deep dive work-up in Gib when you can get subbies in OBAN and use SIVA 55?' I thought to myself 'O'Flapperty will be green with envy'.

My diving medical had just lapsed so I booked myself in for prelims on the following Thursday. The festive season had done its usual trick of making my bathroom scales lie to me so I embarked on a quick fitness campaign before the medical, a brisk jog, followed by a sauna followed by five pints of eighty bob to replace lost liquids. Ideal! The evening before the medical I ran three miles, sat in the sauna for twenty minutes and then showered and changed for dinner, unfortunately when I went to the heads I discovered that I was passing neat blood. A visit to the sickbay and a piece of paper dipped into a sample of my urine confirmed that there was indeed higher levels of blood in my urine than there should be!

The medical the next day went fine until the Doc told me that he could not sign my log as fit to dive until I had seen a specialist about my urine/blood level (which, I hasten to add, was now normal). As it would take at least a month before I could see anyone in Scotland, and less than a month before I was to go to Oban, I saw the promise of

all those subbies slowing disappearing down the swanee. Fortunately for me I mentioned that I would be at HMS CAMBRIDGE for the next week doing the OG 528 course and surely there would be a specialist at RNH Stonehouse who could see me? A few phone calls later and I was booked in for an appointment a week on Tuesday. Hurrah! subbies city here I come. The appointment went well and I was informed that passing a lot of blood is quite common in young men and that I was perfectly fit to dive. I would, however, have to be admitted for a day to have a flexy-cystoscopy which, I was assured is perfectly painless, but involves threading a small fibre optic cable through a certain small orifice so that the bladder can be examined from the inside. I was also assured that there was no hurry for this operation and that it would be several months before I could be given an appointment. Armed with the above information I went back to Cochrane sickbay where my log was stamped with those bank balance enhancing words 'Fit to Dive'.

Saint Valentines Day arrived and instead of being at home with my fiance (now my wife) I was in Oban with Lt Cdr Holloway, his team and my Coxswain (my CO couldn't make it). The disappointment of not being with my loved one\* was offset somewhat by the £600 odd pounds of advanced subsistence in my Swiss bank account.

The guest house that we stayed in was clean, cosy, comfortable, convenient, oh! and cheap.

Monday morning saw us offloading the inconspicuous pussers trailer into the cavernous hold of the INSTOW. My Coxn. Micky Beale and I were then given the run around on the SIVA 55 diving set. It seemed simple enough so it was decided that we would go for a quick acquaint dip. The first pair to go were CPO(D) Tony Devitt and myself. In we jumped and after the ritual faffing about on the surface we started our descent. This is where I discovered that I was hopelessly overweighted and that when the bypass button is pressed on SIVA 55 you don't get the high pressure 'Guff up' that you do with DSSCCD but a gentle low pressure trickle of mixture into the counterlung. I therefore

started sinking to the bottom like the proverbial stone, it was at this time that my left eardrum decided that it really didn't want to equalise and consequently burst. Bye-bye deep dive work-up. I did actually manage to get 40 minutes in before we were called up. The team were very sympathetic to my plight and I spent the rest of the week freezing my nuts off in the gemini supervising everyone else. Alas, my hopes of staying in Oban for the second week could not be fulfilled as the team needed divers and not supervisors, so I was sent back to Rosyth with an infected ear, a bag full of scollies and the prospect of having to return half of my subbies. The inevitable visit to Cochrane sickbay saw me being made temporarily unfit to dive for a month, fortunately it was right at the beginning of the quarter so I was fit again in time to qualify for SSP(D). The moral of this tale is, if you get the chance of subbies, take it but don't spend it all until you return from your work-up, exercise, visit or whatever. It's very nice getting a large mid monthly payment, but heartbreaking when you get a large slice of your pay wrenched off you at the end of a month.

I have fond memories of that week in Oban and am indebted to Tiny Timms for thinking of SANDOWN when looking for divers, Lt Cdr Holloway and his team for looking after Micky Beale and I so well and the Lorne Inn for serving such fine beer. HMS SANDOWN is now out of DED and I can now look forward to CAD, BOST, a PIKE and for a little brown letter to land on my desk with an appointment for me to go and have a tube stuck up the end of my willy.

**By Ed.**

Touching how he missed his Co on Valentine's Day!



# Letters to the Editor



“Minewarfare and Diving” welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be addressed to the Editor and should include a daytime telephone number. Please cite page reference and edition for any article mentioned. Letters may be faxed to: 0705-822351-24705. Letters not intended for publication should be clearly marked as such. Where possible authorities or Units involved in correspondence will be given the automatic right of reply in the same edition.

## MAD CHALLENGE Big Mine Challenge VI

The Mine in the picture is one of the Shoeburyness mines dropped from German Aircraft on the 22 November 1939 and rendered safe by OUVRY and LEWIS.

The Mine was the first mine to be found to have been delivered by parachute and was a Magnetic Mine operated by vertical magnetism.

### Dear Editor

Why have you an (O) after your title Chief? Because: those of us in the Minewarfare branch who are deemed too senior (too old) to cross train under Warfare Branch Development (WBD) have been told to put an (O) for 'Operator (Only)' after our titles, making room for trained operator-maintainers in the post WBD MW branch to use the original title (MW) when they become senior enough. Personal penalties I can identify are I shall continue to pay qualified personnel to fit 13 amp plugs to my domestic appliances - not being trained to use a small screwdriver myself, missing out on the eight hours a day additional sleep allocated to WEs, but on the plus side not having to plaster sweepwires in LG280 grease as I'm not a maintainer am I?

FPS S/R (MW) (O)

### Dear Sir

In your January edition (Vol. 3 No. 1) you have a mystery photo of a group of naval divers. Well, I may be of some help with the following information. My hobby is naval history, in particular the fleet air arm, but I also have a large collection of various naval life postcards and being an ex shipwright diver (civilian) myself, I also have an album containing a lot of diving history. In my diving album I have a postcard of your mystery view, but my card is mint having not been used in the post but is published by Medway Studios Ltd. of High Street, Chatham and Gillingham. So I believe the view to be of Chatham Navy Days August 1936. To reinforce this opinion I showed my postcard to my boss, who is a former Chatham shipwright and he was also interested in local history whilst at Chatham and he has aerial photos of the dockyard. Knowing the layout of the yard he thinks the diving boat is moored at the fleet maintenance base in No. 2 basin, with a view looking N.E. with the light plate shop and the electrical factory in the background left.

Yours helpfully  
Mr Richard Paynter  
Shipt U.P.W. Team  
DML Marine Devonport

### Dear Sir,

The history of your challenge is of the first Magnetic Mine by Commander Ouvry and Lewis and Chief Petty Officer Baldwin and Able Seaman Venmcombe. Found off Shoeburyness and dealt with by above squad they received DSOs and DSMs.

Date November 1939. Details found in J. Fran Turners book, Service Most Silent, as John was a M and B Sub/Officer at one time attached to my squad.

Yours  
Stan Johnson

### Dear Editor,

It was quite a reminder to me to see Commander Ouvry's first magnetic mine on the back page of the January magazine. Well, that answers the What? in the challenge, but as for Why? Well, I know it was put on the trolley for exhibition purposes and in fact when I was a leading Seaman diver on Cdr. Ouvry's team my two AB Divers (ABs TAWN DSM & WHARTON) were given the job of painting the thing prior to a V.I.P. visit. Tawn and Wharton were in fact both killed by a mine during diving operations in Falmouth in April 1941.\*

Yours sincerely  
Lt. Comm. N.L. Smith, B.E.M.

\*See letter on page 31

### Dear Editor

I am deeply concerned that Fishery Protection Vessels now have their Mariner Outboard fuel cans painted red with F\*?' -all painted on the side. With WRNS at sea and female/young civilians often sighting these ships whilst in civilian ports, I feel that F\*?' -all will offend.

Why not paint the cans grey with F50 Civgas etc in red?

DC Locker

By Ed: The Painters mate now hanging from the Starboard outer yardarm.



## More Letters to the Editor

### When David Slew Goliath

Dear Sir,

In response to the recent letter from the MW school sports and moral officers, I submit this tale to the sports pages, and will cover both sport and (I hope) moral.

Whilst chatting to a 'Waffu' lately about rugby, he asked which ship I played for. He had never heard of the Brecon, Surprise Surprise !!

As fate would have it, our MEO, while visiting the Invincible mentioned we were looking for a game. They lost no time accepting and a match was arranged. After several attempts a game with the Atherstone failed to materialise, so we set our sights elsewhere, but the Invincible???

Brecon's team arrived at Whale Island with small-ship determination (bolstered by a couple of wobbly coffee's). The team, not entirely Brecon's first, as awesome 'Tanzy' Lee (DMEO) was replaced by 5'6" flanker, LS(MW) Steward (guest). The backs (oldest in five navies) were notably unsettled when confronted by Invincible's young, fit, gazelle-like opposites. However, the game kicked off with the deafening applause of CPO 'Jim' Hawkins ringing out!

Immediately, AB(MW) 'Mo' Morris (scrum half) dazzled the referee with the bloodiest nose this season, and eventually the pack led by AB(D) 'Whiskey' Walker (flanker) put the game to the big ship boys, even PO(MW) 'Ronnie' Barker hooking for the first time won one against the head! The pressure paid off in the end as PO(D) 'Wobbly' Weaver huffed and puffed his way to Brecon's first try, but shortly after was to upset the ref with his impression of a 16 stone washing-line. Invincible replied with a well engineered try and Brecon found itself up against it!!

The second half saw some great kicking (at last) from team captain CPO 'Stiffy' Corps, and the amazing sight of 17 stone prop LS(MW) 'Benny' Bennion streaking down the wing and getting the pass off to CPO 'Pete' (butter-fingers) Hutchinson (MEO) who took it in for the winning try. Invincible came back strongly and only some desperate defence and a try saving tackle by POMEM 'Steve' Enticknap who, even without his glasses, tackled the right guy!

Brecon came out eventual winners 17-12 and it may not have been Invincible's 1st team but David overcame Goliath on the day.

Yours Aye,  
Ronnie Barker

Dear Sir,

Whilst reading a report cut from a local paper and sent to Scouse Kidman, I thought it worth condensing the story and including for this issue.

It would seem that some time between 1600hrs and 1700hrs on the 22nd March 1941 a GC/GD was seen entering the water somewhere between the Custom House Quay and the life boat mooring which was opposite what is now the Cutty Sark, at Falmouth.

Orders existed whereby RNOs were required to report mines to Vernon which Lt Cdr Kennelly did. One of the base divers, a Mr Harry Grossett temporarily detached from Southampton, offered to locate the mine and place a gelignite charge against it. This was turned down as Vernon wanted as much of the mine as possible. The Commander (Mines) at Vernon despatched an advance party carrying a special launch known as The Mouse. This craft was especially designed to locate underwater objects. The Mouse must have been extremely efficient because they found and marked the mine the following day. A three man recovery team was then organised by Vernon to be led by a Temp. Sub. Lt Bruce Sutherland RNVR. The remainder of the team consisted of Ldg. Smn. Ivan Wharton and Abl. Smn. Robert Tawn DSM. All were divers trained in mine recovery. Sutherland, a wartime volunteer, was considered ideal material for mine recovery as he had no close relatives.

The three men reached Falmouth the following afternoon and despite continual air raids immediately set to work. Sutherland dived and positively identified the object as a mine. The parachute was still attached and the mine was lying in soft mud which stirred up reducing visibility to almost nil. Operations were then suspended for the day. In conclusion with Vernon it was decided to attempt to explode the mine by acoustic means as it was considered too dangerous to tackle such a device underwater. Consequently the next day a minesweeper fitted with Kango hammers made several runs at varying distances from the mine. After a full days sweeping it failed to explode and it was decided to resume diving the following day. Both Sutherland and Vernon now assumed the mine to be magnetic. The day dawned bright and breezy. The Mouse towed the diving barge into position and Sutherland again dived. The diver reported the mine to be on the edge of a narrow channel in thick mud. The clock and detonators were lying on the underside making it impossible to work on. (The Germans were trained at DEODS). Sutherland had made a line fast to the tail and suggested that the Mouse turn the mine over by towing it. This was agreed and the Mouse and another launch took the strain. After ten minutes Sutherland decided to dive again. At 1735hrs the diver reported 'OK on the bottom'. The mine then exploded throwing a column of water about 200ft. The diving barge was blown to pieces, Mouse and a nearby lighter were sunk and two others badly damaged.

Sutherland, Tawn, Wharton of the divers were killed, of the support crew a further three were killed, three were miraculously rescued and survived.

Yours Aye,  
Cornwall





## Ouvry Remembered

# Commander John Garnault Delahaize Ouvry D.S.O. R.N. J.P.

September 19th 1896 - February 19th 1993

An Appreciation of his life given at All Saints Church, Milford on Sea, on Friday, March 5th 1993

Fifteen years ago this church was filled with family and friends who had come to give thanks for the life of Lorna Ouvry, the devoted wife of John Ouvry and mother of their four children. Today we come to honour and give thanks for the head of that family - a person whose service to his country, community and family is worthy of the highest regard. I only had the privilege of knowing John Ouvry for the last three years of his life, but in that time I have seen much of the great depths of faith and generosity of spirit possessed by this lovely christian person.

It is remarkable to think that John Ouvry was born a year before Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. He was baptized JOHN GARNAULT DELAHAIZE OUVRY - a name that betokened his Huguenot ancestry - a people noted for their faith, courage and humanity. All of these characteristics John had in full measure. His faith was no doubt nurtured by his father, an Anglican priest and the Rector of Haydon, near Sherborne. John was the second son, and there were also two daughters. John's father loved to make toys and games for his children to play with, but typically for that time he did not seek to build close relationships with his children; nevertheless he ensured that his children had a solid Christian grounding, and John certainly remained a person of true devotion to his Lord to the end of his life. It was a great privilege each month to take him the Holy Communion and to see the reverence with which he received the sacred elements.

Of his courage I am sure we are all well aware, not least through the splendid obituaries which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Lymington Times/New Milton Advertiser* last week. It must be rare indeed for a national newspaper to devote fifteen column inches to a single event in the life of a person, but that was what the *Telegraph* did as it related the famous incident of his defusing of the first German magnetic mine to be recovered. But John's naval career amounted to

much more than that one remarkable exploit, important though it was in our struggle against the Nazi tyranny.

He joined the navy as a cadet at Osborne at the tender age of 12 back in 1908, one of the youngest, if not the youngest person to join the Royal Navy. At the outbreak of World War I he joined the battle cruiser *Tiger* at Scapa Flow and amongst other places saw action at the Dogger Bank engagement of 1915, at the Battle of Jutland in 1916, and at the Heligoland Battle in 1917, by which time he had been promoted to Sub-Lieutenant. He also witnessed the surrender of the German High Seas fleet at the end of that war. His inter-war experiences took him to a number of places and postings including time with the Royal Australian Navy as head of their torpedo school in Victoria. That was in 1928, the same year that he married Lorna, an English girl who had to travel to Melbourne for the ceremony; it was to be a very happy marriage which lasted almost 50 years.

The direction of his career was becoming clearly established in the area of torpedo and mines expertise, and he was posted to HMS *Vernon*, a shore based establishment near Portsmouth, where he was put in charge of the 'rendering mines safe' department. Thus it was by experience, training and temperament he was perfectly placed in 1939 to play a crucial role in the defeat of the Nazis.

As many of you will have read British shipping, both merchant and navy shipping, was critically threatened at the outbreak of the Second World War by the German's deployment of magnetic mines dropped from the air around our shores, especially in the Thames estuary. By November 1939 we had lost 2 destroyers, 1 cruiser and 27 merchant ships, and the Port of London was virtually closed. Churchill ordered that at all costs one of these new mines must be recovered and investigated so that a means of neutralising them could be developed. That task fell to John Ouvry when on the night of November 22nd an observant Army private spotted one landing in the mud of the Thames off Shoeburyness.

To cut a long story short, after careful examination while the tide was out, John and a colleague, Roger Lewis (also a Lt. Cdr. but some twelve or so years John's junior), had the dubious honour of coming

back the next day to immobilise an object containing 1000 pounds or more of high explosive. If one of these mines could break the back of the cruiser *Belfast*, just think what it could have done to them! Showing total selflessness and very considerable strength of body and mind, John and Roger completed the task safely, and as a result paved the way for the development of a degaussing mechanism to be fitted to all ships to neutralise this very malicious threat to our shipping.

Ouvry and Lewis, who I am delighted to say is with us today, were both awarded the DSO by the King who went to HMS *Vernon* in person to carry out the investiture. These were the first naval awards of the war and no awards have been more worthily merited. To quote from the *Telegraph* obituary - there were those in the Navy who thought the DSO not enough for Ouvry; the regulations state that the VC has to be won in the presence of the enemy and many argued that a 1000 pound magnetic mine 'constituted adequate enemy presence.' Had the George Cross been available at that time I believe there is little doubt that he would have been awarded that. John, however, was characteristically self-effacing and assured people that he was quite content with his honour.

By a remarkable coincidence I was at a meeting only last night and was mentioning this incident when a parishioner told me her father, a naval officer (Vice-Admiral Clinton Danby, Admiral Superintendent of Chatham Dockyard), had spoken with a man who drove John and the mine back to Chatham. 'What did you feel like?' he had asked him. 'I've never been so terrified in all my life. He just sat there on the back seat with the mine beside him and stroked it all the way home!'

After the war John chose to live in Hampshire, initially near Fareham and from 1959 here in the Milford and Pennington area. Having served his country so honourably in two World Wars, he now devoted his energies to his family and his local community. He was a JP both in Fareham and in Lymington, a church warden at Fareham and, with his beloved Lorna, a faithful and very supportive member of this church. He also dedicated himself to the



## Ouvry Remembered

encouragement of sports and youth activities.

As a young naval cadet John had been a very fine sportsman and modestly remarked what a privilege it had been to represent the navy as a wing three-quarter in inter-Services rugby matches at Twickenham; in addition he was a fine runner and keen tennis player. Here he was involved in Milford Country Club, especially helping in the promotion of activities for young people, and for example he acted as umpire in many tennis matches. In these quiet but committed ways he won the love and respect of many in this area.

Such was his vigour and involvement in the local community that right into his 90's John was to be seen pedalling around Milford on his old bicycle!; until in fact his family decided they had to remove this potential menace from the HIGH STREETS in a similar fashion to that which he had once used to remove a potential menace from the HIGH SEAS. So on his 91st birthday, they dismantled his bicycle much as he had dismantled that German mine! I am sure, though, it was done with great love and respect for he was truly a father who was cherished by his four sons and their families.

John's last years were spent at 'Paul's Place' Rest Home in Sway where once again he won the affection and respect of staff, residents and visitors alike. Despite his frustration at his lack of sight and increasing years, he was never known to complain, always showing the greatest courtesy and appreciation to all around him.

In Sway there is a well-known landmark called the Jubilee Oak. An oak seedling was planted there in 1897, one year after John's birth, to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It stands there now in gentle strength and dignity in the middle of a traffic island, encouraging people to go in the right direction and reminding them of the glories of earlier days. As we look back on John's life, we are reminded of those same qualities - gentleness, a quiet strength allied to a deep-rooted commitment to that which is right and good, and a great care and compassion for those around him. Later in this service we shall hear again those words quoted by King George VI in his famous Christmas Day broadcast of 1939, a copy of which hung in a frame in John's house throughout World War 2:

*I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year,*

*'Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown.'*

*And he replied - 'Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way!'*

There is much that I have not had time to include - John's delightful sense of humour, his love of painting, his great enjoyment of sharing the garden work with his beloved Lorna, his devoted care for her during her illness, and no doubt much else. But in the end it all comes down to one thing - that faith in fulfilling the sovereign purposes of God which was I believe at the heart of all that John did and was. Throughout his life he walked hand in hand with his God, often facing great difficulties and dangers, but never doubting that what he was doing was what had to be done. We should be privileged indeed if we were to meet his like again, for John was of a very rare stamp indeed - a true christian gentleman. We thank God for him and we support his family at their time of loss, confident that he is now at peace with the Saviour he served so well.

The Revd. Nicholas Maddock  
Vicar of St. Luke's Church, Sway





## Obituary

# Commander John Ouvry

Commander John Ouvry, who has died aged 96, led the first team of naval mining experts to dismantle the German magnetic mine in 1939.

From the beginning of the Second World War it was clear that the enemy was using a non-contact type of mine immune to normal sweeping methods.

In November 1939, 27 merchant ships and the destroyers *Gypsy* and *Blanche* were sunk in home waters, the cruiser *Belfast's* back was broken, the Port of London was effectively closed and coastal shipping traffic brought to a virtual standstill.

Winston Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, ordered that an example of this new weapon be recovered 'at all costs'.

On the night of November 22, off Shoeburyness in Essex, a German aircraft was seen to drop a parachute from which was suspended an object which 'looked like a sailor's kit bag'. Lt-Cdrs. Ouvry and Roger Lewis, CPO Baldwin and AB Vearncombe, all from HMS *Vernon*, the torpedo and mining school in Portsmouth, were summoned to the scene.

Led by the private from the nearby Army firing ranges who had first sighted the object, the party splashed across the mud flats in pouring rain to find what Ouvry called 'a dark, menacing-looking object lying partially embedded in the sand'. By the light of Aldis lamps, Ouvry and Lewis found 'two unpleasant-looking fittings near the fore end'.

Rubbings were taken of the mine's fittings so that special non-ferrous tools could be manufactured; the mine was photographed by flashlight and securely lashed down. Ouvry and Lewis returned at midday, when the mine was next uncovered by the tide.

By this time a second mine had been found. It was decided that Ouvry and Baldwin would tackle the first, while Lewis took notes; Ouvry and Vearncombe would then deal with the second.

Ouvry did not know whether the mine was magnetic (reacting to metal) or acoustic (detonated by sound) or both. Working once or twice having to use considerable force, he unscrewed and lifted out a hydrostatic valve which armed the mine, two primers and two detonators.

After 40 minutes of tense work he made the mine safe.

As they carried the various fittings ashore the party stopped for a breather, and Vearncombe put the heavy hydrostatic valve down on a stone, whereupon it started to tick noisily.

Everyone dispersed with 'Olympic speed' - but it was only a clockwork mechanism, designed to keep the mine safe until the clock setting had run off. The mine was taken to *Vernon*, where it was completely dismantled and its secret revealed: an electromagnetic device which

detonated the mine when the magnetic influence of a ship's steel hull passed overhead. Within months a solution had been found by fitting all metal-hulled ships with 'degaussing coils'.

Ouvry and Lewis were awarded the DSO, and Baldwin and Vearncombe the DSM - the first naval awards of the war. King George VI went to *Vernon* in December 1939 to carry out the investiture.

There were those in the Navy who thought the DSO not enough for Ouvry. The VC had to be won 'in the presence of the enemy', but some argued that a 1,000 lb magnetic mine constituted adequate enemy presence.

Of Huguenot stock, John Garnault Delahaize Ouvry was born on September 19 1896, and joined the Navy aged 12, going to Osborne, Dartmouth and the training cruiser *Cumberland*.

In October 1914 he joined the new battlecruiser *Tiger* at Scapa Flow and served as a midshipman in the Dogger Bank action in 1915 and at the Battle of Jutland in 1916. As a sub-lieutenant he served in the cruiser *Inconstant* in the action of Heligoland in 1917 and was present at the surrender of the German high seas fleet in 1918.

From 1919 to 1921 Ouvry was in the battleship *Queen Elizabeth*. He then went to the RN College Greenwich and *Vernon* to qualify as a torpedo specialist, becoming a mining instructor in 1923.

He was torpedo officer of the battleship *Benbow* in the Mediterranean from 1924 to 1926 and then went to HMS *Defiance*, the Devonport Torpedo School, as an instructor.

In 1928 he was loaned to the Royal Australian Navy, in charge of the torpedo school at Flinders Naval Depot, Victoria.

He returned to England in 1930 and joined the battlecruiser *Repulse* as torpedo officer. In 1932 he went to *Vernon* to work on the development of British mines.

Although promoted commander in 1941, Ouvry never had the recognition he deserved because his qualities were hidden by his self-effacing manner. He once said that he was 'neither pretty, intelligent nor brave', but he did have iron nerves and steady hands.

Had it not been for the war, Ouvry would have retired as an obscure lieutenant-commander aged 45.

But *Inconstant* was one of the most successful mine-laying cruisers, and Ouvry, the youngest mining officer, made a crucial contribution.

He retired in 1946, but returned to *Vernon* to write his book *Foreign Mines* before retiring finally in 1954. He was a JP in Fareham from 1950.

Ouvry married, in 1928, Lorna Evison, who died in 1978; they had four sons.



## Diving Historical

# Shallow Water Diving Course— A Midshipman's Perspective

Commander A.T.J. Padwick

**I have the honour to submit my report on the Shallow-water Diving course held at HMS Vernon, Portsmouth between August 29th and September 16th 1960, in which I took part.**

I arrived in the evening of August 28th and was shown to a two-berth cabin in the Wardroom, overlooking Portsmouth Harbour railway station. Twenty midshipmen arrived out of an original twenty-four, the others being prevented from attending by illness and other reasons. A large proportion of those there were from Exmouth division, and most were members of the Sub-Aqua club.

The following morning the course began, with a series of lectures on theory of diving, and its medical aspects, a 40 foot 'dive' in a decompression chamber and a perfunctory medical consisting of the question, 'Do you feel well?' asked of the class in general.

The following day we performed our first dives in Horsea lake, an ex-torpedo testing range in the north of Portsmouth harbour, 1200 yards long, 200 yards across and about 30 feet deep in the deepest place. We wore weights and boots and merely got a feeling of the sensation of walking in mud on the bottom, towing the life line which shallow water divers must wear.

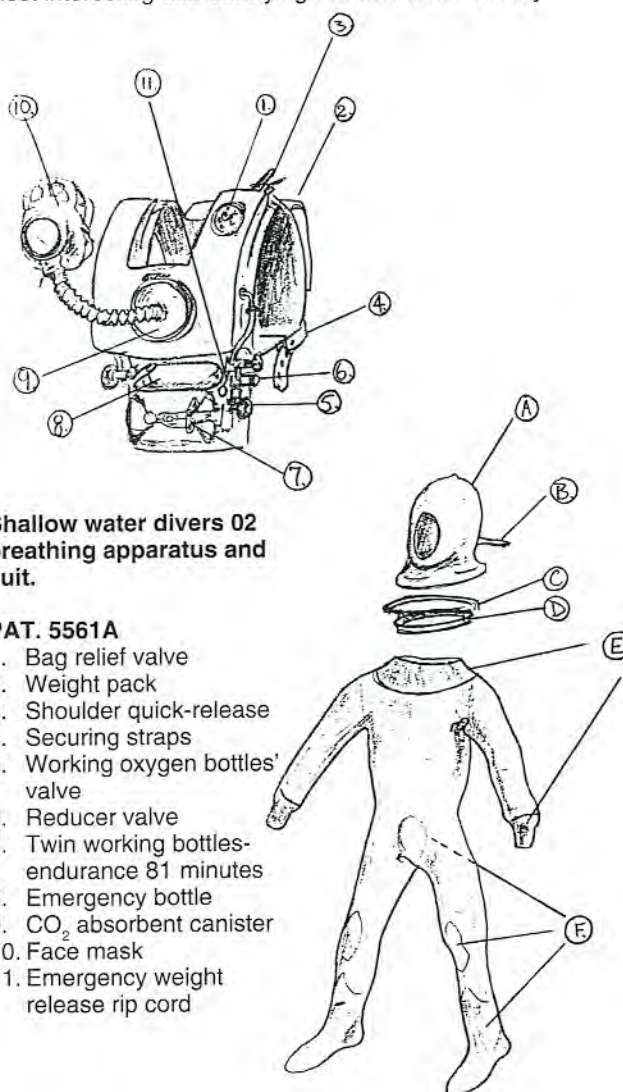
During the first week we spent about one hour per day on the bottom, engaged in sawing through steel bars or cutting chain link. Each day my class swam twelve hundred yards on the surface to get us in training. By the second week these swims had become 2,400 yards and a further under water swim of twelve hundred yards to precede them. We quickly became pretty fit, but even so most of the course regarded sleep as the best way to spend the free time in the evenings.

On 7th September we transferred our diving base to HMS Vernon and dived under the diving ship *Deepwater* to perform bottom searches. *Deepwater* was a last war German diving ship well known to those familiar with Portsmouth Harbour. We were slightly horrified to find that we were called upon to jump from *Deepwater's* forecastle, some 30 feet into Portsmouth Harbour. After the first jump however we became quite fond of the sport, especially as we were over-looked by the Admiralty British Public from Isle of Wight ferries moored nearby. Little diving was done during the last days of the second week, most of the time being taken up in lectures and the very important job of checking the breathing sets.

On Monday September 12th we formed a diver's guard of honour dressed in our suits when *Deepwater* was towed away to be scrapped. The remainder of the day we wandered thigh deep in the inky ooze getting used to the appalling conditions on the bottom of Portsmouth Harbour, and next day we attempted rather unsuccessfully to cut link in the soft mud. As nothing could be seen in the whirling black murk it is not surprising that we made little impression on our tasks.

The remainder of the course consisted of a short night swim, a bottom search of *Leviathan*, the aircraft carrier storeship in Portsmouth dockyard in day light and another in the eerie blackness of night. It proved quite a test of nerves to do the night search, when all one could see was the phosphorescence around one's hand and occasionally the slightly darker form of a curious eel against the navy blue of the surface high above.

On Friday 16th September we reluctantly returned our gear to the Diving Store and sat a theory examination based on the lectures we had received. I think we must have all passed, for it was pretty straightforward and we had done well in the practical diving, according to our instructors. At the end of the course there were 19 midshipmen left, one having fallen out with bad ear trouble early on in the three weeks training. A talk from the Training Commander and Diving Officer finished a most interesting and satisfying summer leave activity.



**Shallow water divers O2 breathing apparatus and suit.**

### PAT. 5561A

1. Bag relief valve
2. Weight pack
3. Shoulder quick-release
4. Securing straps
5. Working oxygen bottles' valve
6. Reducer valve
7. Twin working bottles-endurance 81 minutes
8. Emergency bottle
9. CO<sub>2</sub> absorbent canister
10. Face mask
11. Emergency weight release rip cord

- A. Soft rubber hood
- B. Spear valve trapped air escape
- C. Outer adjustable hood securing neck ring, to fit over -
- D. Inner, solid neck ring
- E. Soft rubber collar and cuffs
- F. Reinforced feet, knees and seat



# 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  
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 HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF)  
 Portsmouth  
 Hants  
 PO1 3HH  
 FAX: 0705 822351 Ext 24705

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 dates are 1 Jan/1 Jul of each year, 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, but that if I am to be considered for either of the prizes associated with each edition, I must be prepared to have a "grip and grin" mugshot taken and published.

Yours.....

Signed.....





## Challenge And Reply

# BIG MINE CHALLENGE VI

### ANSWERS TO BIG MINE CHALLENGE VI (BBC VI)

Two replies were received in response to the Big Mine Challenge VI in the January 1993 edition of the MAD Magazine. Our thanks go to Lieutenant Commander N. L. Smith B.E.M., Royal Navy and Stan Johnson B.E.M., ex Mine and Bomb disposal diver.

Their letters are reproduced on page 30.



## MCDO ASSOCIATION TIES

Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officers' Association ties have been manufactured and are now ready for purchase. They are to a design agreed by the committee and are good value for money. The cost has yet to be determined but will be in the region of £5.00. These most desirable items of personal attire can be purchased from either: Lt Cdr (Frank) Ward, COMMW, Lochinvar Block, HM Naval Base, Royth, KY11 2YA. (Ext 62496) or OIC, FDU1, HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF) Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 3HH (24577).





## BIG SHIP CHALLENGE VII

Identify the ship illustrated above:

Who, What, Where and Why?

Please send your answers, dits and pics to The Editor, MAD Magazine.

The best replies will be published in the next edition of MAD. Stories generated from Big Mine Challenge VI are on page 37 of this edition.

Any badges, mines, ships suitable for inclusion in future challenges would be gratefully received and will of course be returned.