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# MINEWARFARE AND DIVING



THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
MINEWARFARE AND DIVING COMMUNITY

*Front Cover: Montage of the last five years of MAD Magazine*

VOLUME 4 NUMBER 2

AUGUST 1994

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

Service units requesting copies of the Magazine should forward their applications to the Director of Naval Operations, 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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**Captain A S Ritchie OBE, ADC Royal Navy,  
Captain, HMS DRYAD  
and School of Maritime Operations**

I am delighted to have this opportunity to address members of the Minewarfare and Diving community at a time of significant change not least in the way we train our people. Sad though the demise of the old HMS VERNON is, it nevertheless heralds exciting new opportunities to take both branches through into the next century.

In the wake of the Defence Costs Study and Options for Change it is clear that the Navy remains firmly committed to maintaining the high level of expertise we already enjoy in minewarfare and diving. This was underlined by the Defence Minister recently when he approved the build of a further seven SANDOWN Class minehunters to replace the old TON Class, the last of which was retired in June after over 40 years of sterling service. The diving community also are beginning to see the introduction into service of a series of new equipments including replacement recompression chambers and the long awaited successor to DSSCCD.

As the Captain SMOPS both the minewarfare and diving schools are currently part of my 'parish' and I have been impressed by the standards of professionalism and commitment maintained in training at the Gunwharf site. Nevertheless, as Captain HMS DRYAD, I very much look forward to welcoming the Minewarfare training department to the establishment when they relocate to Redpole Building (shortly to be 'recommissioned' as CONISTON Building) in March this year. I believe you have a significant role to play in establishing HMS DRYAD as a centre of warfare excellence which will be unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Later in the year when diving training moves to Horsea Island and the new Defence Diving School is established, links with SMOPS will be firmly maintained. The formulation of Diving and EOD training policy will remain a SMOPS responsibility thus ensuring that each moves forward in step with the Warfare Branch.

The Minewarfare and Diving branches have proud traditions in the Royal Navy and enjoy tremendous reputations abroad. I believe good training provides the bedrock on which such reputations are founded. Rest assured SMOPS is committed to playing a full part in helping to maintain these traditions into the next millennium.



# Superintendent of Diving

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

My aim is to give you an update on how the management of the Clearance Diving branch is changing and take a brief look at the new equipment we expect to introduce in the coming years. Firstly re-organisation; you may have heard from a number of sources as well as from COMMW briefings something of how Fleet management is changing.

Last year I produced a diving operational management paper for COMMW aimed at rationalising and streamlining the complex and diverse control of diving. Some of the recommendations have already been taken into the Defence Cost Studies, for example re-organising the four area CDU's into two Diving Groups based on the Fleet Diving Group model. Overall each Group will offer greater flexibility and better use of resources than the current autonomous Units but it will not change our missions, overall capability nor manpower; other than a few internal adjustments to suit the Group configuration.

The new Groups will be established within the revised 'Local Flag Officers' (LFOs), (FOSNNI and FOST) planned area of responsibility. The Northern Diving Group will be formed of both Scottish Units and be located in Faslane. The Southern Diving Group will be split between Portsmouth and Plymouth. The OIC of the

Groups, formerly the Area Flag Officer SMCDs will be responsible to CinC Fleet for designated operational tasks. TACON will probably be delegated to LFOs for normal routine tasks. For example in the Northern Diving Group routine submarine support should be provided on a daily basis by arrangement between the Naval Support command, the local support managers and Northern Diving Unit

2. Alternatively CinC Fleet may delegate OPCON of Northern Diving Unit 1 to a local MCM commander for participation in a Clyde area MCM/EOD exercise. Overall the group activities will be co-ordinated by the OIC, who as group Staff Officer (SO N3) will, I hope, be awarded 'Officer Commanding' status thus affording the group tactical as well as command identity. Not only will this provide more variety in the work we do it will also spread the operational experience between the Groups and Units. Other recommendations in funding and support are being adjusted to match the management changes expected as a result of FLEETMAN, ROSIT and the planned integration of COMMW with FOSF. Most of these plans still await the final endorsement by CinC Fleet and the FOSF/COMMW integration team but I expect a simple command chain, with CinC Fleet taking the lead for reactionary and contingency operations. The specialist advice to direct such operations will still come from the OICs, COMMW and the Superintendent of Diving. This new management system will also help redress the peculiarity unique to Area Diving Units in that they effectively have two task-masters, the Joint Service EOD Operations Centre and their Naval Flag Officer. With the liaison between these two masters elevated to where priority decisions are made, the traditional conflicts over tasking and readiness should no longer need to be devolved to the operator. To ensure overall maintenance of branch readiness, COMMW, and following integration with

FOSF, Captain Minewarfare, Diving and Fishery Protection (CMDFP) will continue to co-ordinate training and exercises in a parallel manner to his current responsibilities for the readiness of MCMVS and the FDG. He will also continue his responsibility for safety, standards, support, procurement and administration for both diving and EOD through the Superintendent of Diving whose traditional title and responsibilities will remain. The staff of the Superintendent of Diving will be operating from their new purpose built Headquarters at Horsea Island, although the Superintendent is likely to spend more of his time in the COMMW (CMDFP) Headquarters after the relocation to Portsmouth in late 1995.

The second part of my update is about equipment. After some forty years we are to introduce a completely new MCM/EOD diving life support system with the potential and challenges to dive to 80 metres. This is the diving branch's most important project and will replace DSSCCD. A brief history into why the current DSSCCD is being replaced may help clarify the reasons behind the replacement programme. The present set evolved from CDBA which was based on an oxygen set designed in 1943. The introduction of the first minehunting sonar in the 1960s required the depth capability to be

extended to match that of the sonar.

This was achieved by the use of a variable oxy/nitrogen mix and with a controllable gas flow rate. In an attempt to improve safety CDBA underwent major modifications and in the 1980s was renamed DSSCCD. As a result of current HSE regulations, numerous design problems and a catalogue of criticisms from the users, a full audit of the safety and design of the equipment was conducted. The report identified numerous shortcomings, in particular non compliance with the Health and Safety at

Work Act/Diving Operations at Work Regulations for breathing resistance and that no life support back up system existed. To comply with HSE regulations on equipment standards and update our operational capabilities the replacement DSSCCD programme was initiated. After a comprehensive rendering process the following three contender diving sets are being evaluated:

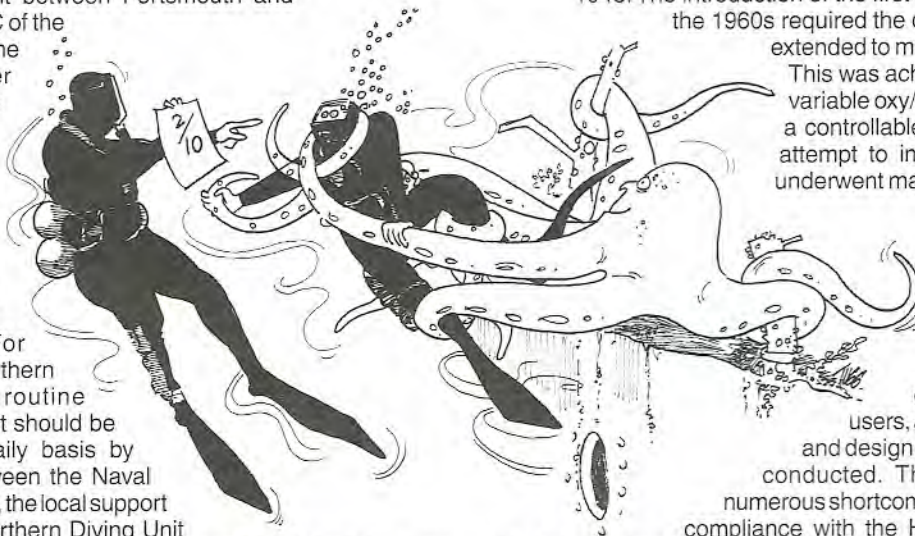
- A version of the Canadian Siva Plus (CUMA)
- A version of the American Mk16
- A home grown set from DIVEX which is based on the secondary life support system (SLS) originally produced for HMS Challenger.

Competitive evaluation will be conducted in three stages:

- unmanned evaluation of performance
- manned evaluation of performance
- user trials

The latter stage will prove all aspects of the specification, including an operational scenario assessment.

For reasons of commercial propriety all sets will be tested and scored in exactly the same manner. Marking of the sets will be against their performance to the specification, any weighting factors will be applied equally to all contenders, thus the winner must be the equipment providing the required performance and achieving the highest evaluation score.





# Superintendent of Diving

The modus operandi for our new set and its 80 metre capability is naturally difficult to predict until the actual characteristics of the chosen set are known, however, I anticipate routine diving will be to 60m, with a switch to Heliox at about 40 metres.

Career training will include diving to 80 metres, but only certain Units such as the On Call Force and the Fleet Diving Unit 2 will work up to sustain an 80 metre depth capability beyond the routine dive depth of 60 metres. As well as the MCM/EOD life support system other major procurement programmes that are underway are the replacement two compartment Compression Chambers and the Transportable Compression Chamber both of which will enter service in 1995. As with all our new equipment they will fully meet the UK Health and Safety regulations.

In support of 80 metre diving the existing 7A One Man Compression Chambers and Duocombs fitted in MCMVs will be replaced by Transportable Manned Compression Chambers (TMCC). These 2 compartment chambers will have a maximum working depth of 80 metres, have modern facilities designed to conduct surface decompression and will include BIBS with external exhausts which will negate the periodic flushing requirement. There will be no Transfer Under Pressure (TUP) facility as DCI treatments can be affected in the 2 compartment chamber on board.

3 Type A Compression Chambers are being procured, Plymouth and Faslane's chamber have been delivered. These 2 compartment, 14 men steel CC's will have on line O2 monitoring, oxygen make up, environmental control and all the modern facilities to support therapeutic requirements, even hyperbaric surgery. Some of the changes in current procedures will include the calibration of digital O2 analysers, setting up the oxygen make up and CO2 scrubber changing. A computer is included to confirm reliability and maintainability data and provide information on each dive schedule. 3 are being built and strategically located around the UK with a TUP facility to accept existing chambers and provide a NATO interface.

14 type B Compression Chambers are under construction and with the exception of 2, designated for HMS Dolphin (SETT) and Horsea, will have containerised support packages. They will be 11 man 2 compartment of aluminium construction with 6 for Submiss and the remainder for COMMW for MCMV forward support, MDT and Units. A few existing chambers will be modified to HSE standard and remain in use until the replacement chambers are fully in service. The maintenance of the new Type A and B CC's will be by the manufacture for the first 10 years. Other improvements to in-service equipments are finally the switch from obsolete KMB 10 to KMB 17 and 18 helmet and band mask, giving us the ability to maintain our surface support air diving to 50 metres and weapon recovery and deep diving roles to 80 metres, all within the required breathing limits set by the HSE.

The provision of an adjustable buoyancy jacket to improve self contained diver safety has been approved. The current use of suit inflation as a buoyancy aid is contrary to HSE regulations. Trials will be conducted shortly to evaluate a number of contenders, it is hoped the suit inflation and buoyancy aid can be directly fed from main cylinders leaving a dedicated cylinder for emergency use only. The buoyancy aid will contain releasable weights to replace the separate divers weight belt. The selected jacket will be retrospectively fitted to all our air sets allowing qualified divers to use wet suits at all depths. In addition in 1996 we expect to equip all the self contained air sets (DSSCCA) with new through water communications and an oral-nasal mask. The Health and Safety Commission after detailed discussions with my staff have issued a proposed change to the Diving Operations at Work Regulations, the revision will move away from the commercial bias toward control based on competence, an agreed code of practice and risk assessment. Certain

warfare roles will necessarily remain exempt from the new regulations however the revision will provide a much better frame-work for us to follow. The RN diving manual will form the military Approved Code of Practice, (ACOP) endorsed by the HSE.

Recent changes to the diving publications in particular the diving manual, have benefitted significantly from inputs from the users. May I encourage you to continue with forwarding your proposed amendments to the Inspectorate. The BR 2806 change governing the use of oxygen analysers, brought in earlier than planned (to avoid the possibility of further gas related accidents) is about to be issued.

In summary, I am pleased to see so much progress being made across the whole spectrum of military diving. There is a new military poignancy to our role and the importance of naval diving is more widely recognised. The long awaited new equipment is coming into service and a more efficient management structure is being developed. The management changes will help focus and maintain our capabilities with a leaner budget whilst retain the flexibility to meet the wide ranging tasks. Our capabilities will be enhanced whether the requirement be military tasks at home or abroad, MCM, EOD, counter terrorism, spearhead support for an out-of-area conflict or equally routine peacetime operations supporting the Fleet. While I am confident that diving is being brought up to date it allows me to turn my attention to EOD, which is lamentably out of date. This has started with the appointment of an 'Inspector EOD/IEDD' on my staff, Warrant Officer (D) G R TAYLOR. Tasked to rectify the present shortcomings. He will provide a focus for advice on procedures, equipment and training in both EOD and IEDD matters.

In these times of squeeze we must not lose sight that the Diving Branch is one of the few that will grow with the welcome introduction of the 7 new Sandowns. We also have more equipment coming into service than has been achieved for many years. The policy and regulations are being kept up to date to provide clear guidance on these changes; however we must not be complacent. We have a clearly defined Battle Damage, Assessment and Repair (BDAR) role, described in the diving policy paper, and it is exercised from time to time. But the peacetime practice of this role, namely Underwater Engineering, is run on a shoestring. We need to educate our masters on how much they stand to gain if they effectively support this diver military role as part of a properly constituted ship husbandry programme. As naval divers we should practice our Battle Damage Repair skills and be properly equipped for the task. This will increase underwater skills, and military readiness as well as provide significant cost savings in Fleet support.

In summary I believe the future is very encouraging for all involved in naval diving. My staff will continue to welcome your invaluable inputs on all subjects. My Diving Inspectorate Staff should be the first contact for anyone who needs more information, their contact numbers are as follows:

Tel: PNB		
Lt Cdr David Hilton	Inspector of Diving	24876
WO(D) Mo Crang	Inspector of Clearance Diving	24866
WO(D) Buck Taylor	Inspector of EOD/IEDD	24583
CPO(D) Pat Pattinson	Inspector of Ships Diving	24538
CPOMEA Paul Linden	Inspector Engineering (Diving)	24904
CPOMEA Taff Owen	Defect Reporting Desk (s2022)	24904
POMA John Pickering	Inspector Medical	24530

Safe Diving!





# Minewarfare Reporter



*PO (MW)(O) 'Titch' Seymour being presented with his LS & GC medal by Cdr Gale on 22 March 1994.*

Dear Ed

It is with deep regret that I write to inform the association of the death of Albert James Kirk known to all as 'Jim' who passed away on Monday 12 December following a coronary attack. Jim was born on the 30 May 1956. He joined the navy on 31 August 1971 at HMS Ganges and was currently serving with COMMW Mining Team.

During his career he served on the following MCMVs:

HMS GLASSERTON	1975 - 1977
HMS NURTON	1978 - 1979
HMS WALKERTON	1980 - 1981
HMS NURTON	1981 - 1982
HMS MAXTON	1982 - 1984
HMS UPTON	1985 - 1987
HMS ABDIEL	1987 - 1988
HMS MIDDLETON	1988 - 1989
HMS KELLINGTON	1991 - 1992
HMS BRIDPORT	1993 - 1994

Jim also served with the RNR at HMS CAROLINE in 1990 and HMS GRAHAM in 1991.

I'm sure both the minewarfare and diving branches would like to join with us in sending our deepest sympathy to his family.  
R J Wardrope  
CPO(MW)



*CPO (MW) (O) 'Joe' George was presented with a glass mine in July by Lt. Cdr. Frank Ward (SOMW) after 29 years service in the Royal Navy.*





## WARFARE BRANCH DEVELOPMENT - UPDATE

# THE CONCERN OF OPS RATINGS NOT SELECTED FOR WARFARE BRANCH CROSS TRAINING

By WO(MW) (O) Paul Stockley

Since taking my post in the Minewarfare Section at SMOPS, I have been bombarded with queries and 'drips' from Minewarfare rates not selected for cross training to Operator Maintainer. I shall take this opportunity to update you on the facts and dispel some of the myths.

### The Myths:

1. No more LS(MW) or PO(MW) (O) courses will run and WPEs for these rates will cease.
2. All Ops ratings not selected will be made redundant.
3. No more AB or LS(MW) will be promoted.
4. OMs can sit the Ops WPE and vice versa.

All of these statements are UNTRUE and regrettably are the perceptions of random personnel, often from outside of Ops/WEM/WB branches!

### The Facts:

Whilst dispelling the myths, it would be desperately wrong of me to give the impression that the career structure of Ops(MW) ratings will not be affected. The circumstances are as follows:

Until early December 94, the situation stood that Ops MWs could continue to sit WPEs and that LS(MW) courses would be planned to run on to 1998 subject to review in 97. In a similar vein, PO(MW) (O) courses would run on until 2001. In addition there was to be no further opportunity to cross train, the "stable door" being closed and bolted.

You should all be aware that the Second Sea Lord (2SL) recently commissioned a review board to examine the discontent amongst the 'source branch ratings' (Ops/WEMs) and to propose solutions to alleviate the concerns. This board recently reported and many of the proposals have been accepted; these are:

- a) the removal of the 'capping' of Ops/WEM courses allowing them to run as long as there remains a requirement, and
- b) a reduction in OM recruiting at new entry to allow a limited further cross training selection.

Some of the other surplus source branch personnel will be addressed in the redundancy package but I hasten to add not all of them! These measures have been

promulgated in 2SLCNH Portsmouths' signal WCR 090900z Dec 94, with a more definitive signal to follow in early 1995.

As we are a small branch and recruiting is limited by other causes in this day and age it is logical that the window for further cross training to OM(MW) will be small. I strongly recommend that all Minewarfare junior rates consider this opportunity carefully and I would ask that their respective divisional officers and senior rates take a keen interest in the application procedures so as not to disadvantage their men. Acceptance will almost certainly be by selection from volunteers. This further chance to cross train should be seen as a one off concession, do not wait for another.

Whilst these measures are positive in respect to Ops ratings, all should be aware that advancement, whilst not being a closed avenue will not be an open free for all. There is a need to be aware that all branches of a reducing service have long rosters for advancement not attributable to Warfare Branch Implementation and the review cannot change this.

### Awareness of the Warfare Branch

Despite substantial promulgation many personnel within the Minewarfare branch are not conversant with WB. Examples include OM2s joining MCMVs and the crew thinking this young lad has come to fix their ship! How many of you were unaware that OMs do no engineering at all until their PC2 (OM1) course?

At the Minewarfare school we have introduced a period of instruction into career courses highlighting the Warfare Branch, its structure, capability etc. In addition, our training feedback team (2 x CPO(MW)) are also equipped to present the package to all X officers and Ops/WB ratings whilst visiting ships on an opportunity basis for feedback. If you feel you would benefit from this informal briefing on WB and its members, please call our Training Design Team (PNB 24827) to arrange a visit.

In summary, the Warfare Branch is here to stay and is not itself up for review. The operations branch as we knew it had become unsustainable and WB is the way ahead.





# AUSTRALIA'S MCM CONSIDERATIONS

By Lt. Tony Silva

Australia's spectacular scenic views, picturesque beaches and idyllic life style are complemented with a population that overtly strives to achieve global recognition in all fields, though they have surpassed their objective in swimming, rugby league; and at the time of writing they appear quite competent at cricket!

This open and unwavering competitive commitment is equally prominent in its MCM community - and possibly more so now they await the delivery of 6 Mine Hunter Coastal (MHC). Whilst the capabilities, limitations and manning requirements of the MHC are topical subjects, they will not be addressed on this occasion as it would be pure speculation on my behalf. The aim of this article is to enable the reader to have a clearer understanding of how the RAN is developing and employing its Auxiliary MCM vessels.



The Minewarfare (MW) branch and school are based in Sydney at HMAS WATERHEN, and its current strength is:

MW/MCDO	54	WO(MW)	3
CPO(MW)	8	PO(MW)	18
LS(MW)	20	AB(MW)	45

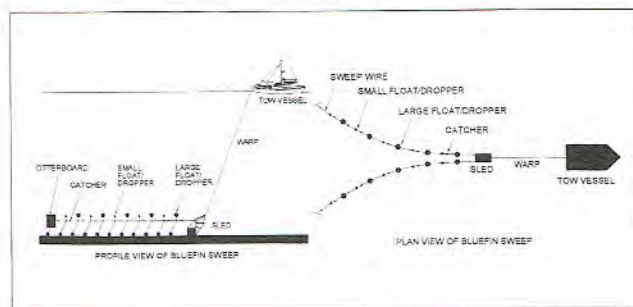
When this MW size is compared in direct comparison to the country's 37,300 mile coastline and the geographical distribution of its industrial ports, it would appear that effective MCM will only be achieved if each port had its own flotilla. Unfortunately this is impractical, as Australia's sparse population could not comfortably support an East/West or North/South MCM force. However, there are a large number of tuna and other fishing vessels that operate around the country. These vessels, after minor modification, are capable of towing 'hook-on' influence and mechanical sweeps as well as a towed sonar body for Route Survey operations. Hence the introduction of 5 Craft of Opportunity (Coop) into the MCM flotilla. These vessels' are now correctly addressed as Mine Sweeper Auxiliary (MSA) and have been further categorised by their operational role and size to: MSA(Large) and MSA(Small).

The employment of these vessels have introduced the need for PO(MW)s to become ticketed Bridge Watchkeepers, though not Ocean Navigation Certificate (ONC), before being eligible for promotion to CPO(MW). Whilst this may seem an excessive pre-requisite for promotion, it encourages the individual to take additional responsibilities' eg. Operation's Room control as the on-watch MW Officer and ultimately the opportunity to Command an MSA. Except for the squadrons Senior Officer all MSAs are Commanded by Senior Rate (MW).

Although proving most successful during exercises the crafts minesweeping equipment and procedures are continually being updated. The sweeps are:



## Bluefin Sweep



### Mechanical Sweeping

**Oropesa Sweep.** This light-weight sweep, constructed of plated steel wire, is housed and deployed from a singular drum. Double oropesa sweeping is the preferred configuration though the single sweep is possible.

**Team Sweep.** A standard Team sweep configuration is deployed, though the lightness of the equipment requires the need to attach drogues to the 'cod end' to aid its depression.

**Bluefin Sweep.** The sweep is bottom following and designed to capture and drag a known contact to shallower water for diver exploration. This sweep is only deployed by MSA(Large).

### Influence Sweeping

This combined sweep consists of towing a number of magnetic dyads. The acoustic signature is generated by fitting Pipe Noise Makers (PNM) at predetermined positions along the sweep. There are 2 sweeps in service - Rig Bravo and Rig Mike. The sweeps have a known influence signature and each represents a different type of ship.

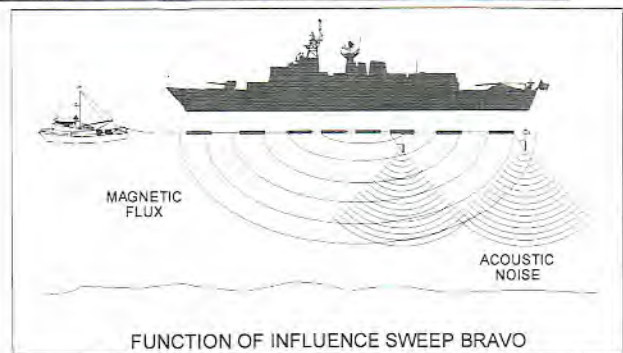
**Big Bravo.** Towed by a MSA(Small). This sweep consists of 2



# AUSTRALIA'S MCM CONSIDERATIONS



## Rig "BRAVO"



PNMs and 8 dyads. Each dyad is 2ft in diameter by 24 ft in length and weighs 1.6 Tons. The sweep is designed to simulate a major war vessel.

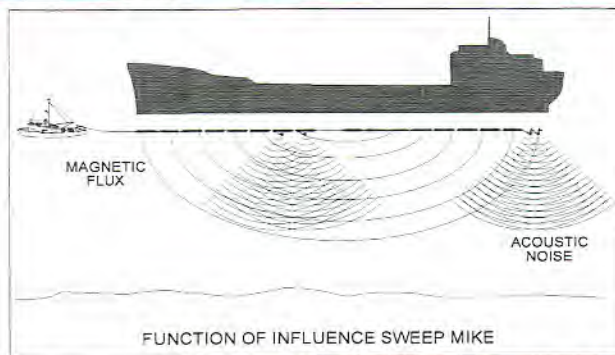
Rig Mike. Towed by MSA(Large). This sweep has 4 PNMs and 16 dyads. Each dyad is 4 ft in diameter by 24 ft in length and weighs 9.7 Tons. The sweep simulates a merchant vessel.

### Route Survey

This side scan sonar has a cylindrical body, with stabilising tail, that transmits simultaneously on 2 frequencies. The operator maintains the height of the sonar body with remote winch



## Rig "MIKE"



controls whilst monitoring real-time sonar data to achieve a swept path of 200 metres. The data is recorded on optical disc and collated by the MW Pilot.

As each sweep is accepted into service it is being distributed and stored throughout Australia and will be fitted to requisitioned vessels as required. The RAN Reserves will supplement, and eventually be responsible, for the manning of these Coops; thereby ensuring a swift MCM response to an area of concern while releasing RAN Minewarfare personnel to operate the intricate and sophisticated mine-hunting system in the MHC.



# TRIALS AND OTHER BITS OF MUPPETS MUNDUNGUS

By WO(MW) (O) Pete Hitchcock

Instead of impressing you with the Sandown class trials update matrix (page 12 Vol 4 No. 2 Aug 94) it's suffice to say that all of the boxes are now completed and the ships are well under way with Fleet Trials. These are a series of trials conducted in support of Fleet Weapon Acceptance FWA. The data collected from these activities will be analysed by the respective equipment projects and the results will hopefully meet the Naval Staff Requirements. The Quick look analysis for Sonar 2093 Fleet trials looks favourable so far, but there is still some way to go before the Sandown class get the big TICK IN THE BOX. (watch this space Magnus Kimber DGUW(N)214). I and my other Trials colleagues, including "Greeny" weaponers, have so far been impressed by the capable and professional manner in which the Ships' Minewarfare teams have conducted themselves during the long and arduous trials programme to date, so keep up the good work Chaps, it ain't over yet!

### S 2022's

With the express permission of 'Review of Naval Engineering' (Greeny Mag) I would like to refer to an article highlighting the importance of raising S 2022s in Minor War Vessels. The point the article is trying to put across is that all equipment shortcomings must be reported back to the respective equipment projects, however trivial you think they are. Please

don't leave it to CWTA or Squadron Staff to instigate. We all know how stretched the WEO/MEO is, however, if improvements are required with the weapon systems including handbooks, then the only vehicle to implement these is the good ol' S 2022.

### Brain Teaser

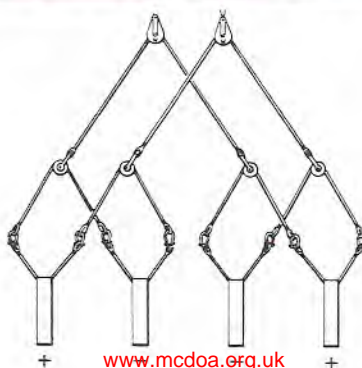
I am still awaiting answers to my 'Brain Teaser' on page 32 last issue. Oh well, I will put you out of your misery anyway: Answers: 1. Qatar; 2. Major; 3. Lt Cdr Garry Kennedy, Royal Australian Navy; 4. The young good looking Chief had his little pinkies over the motors; 5. Doha. Easy wasn't it? And now for another 'Brain Teaser': Spot the deliberate mistake from the

Muppets Mundungus diagram below. Answer on inside back cover. (If your wife or girlfriend put her stockings on this way, she would have to walk cross legged!!!)

Reply to Polly's Dit. Letters to the Editor last issue.

I was disappointed that Polly didn't include the photograph of the three 'Young' God Mupps who graced his goodly vessel (Walney), during trials early this year (94). I feel that after all the effort to get the small horse (pony) sitting on the right hand 2093 display and myself and Dixie on the other displays, it was worth including it with his article, or did the WEO, Kari Oaki forget to put a film in the camera, or did he use it all up photographing the Divers... I wonder.

## MS14 - TOWING SPAN ASSEMBLY:



To Towing stocking.

- 1.6t Bow shackles (8)
- 3.5m x 16mm SSWR pendants (4)
- 2t Straight shackles (4)
- with Sheaves fitted (4)
- 2m x 16mm SSWR Towing pendant (2)

To Towing assembly.





# NAVAL DIVING TRAINING

By Lt. Mark Kessler

## Historical-Intro

During the late 1940's and the early 1950's the Diving Branch had no centralised establishment, all bases had diving schools to cover their respective Flag Officer areas which were at Chatham, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Rosyth and not forgetting the bases abroad which covered all parts of the empire, and are sadly gone.

At this time the Admiralty decided that there was a requirement for a Clearance Diving Branch, because of the large volume of under water ordinance still around the UK and all parts of the Empire, which required expert knowledge and skill to deal with this threat. At the same time a new diving set was emerging which used a counter lung to hold gas as opposed to the



gas being pumped to the diver in a Standard Helmet. The big advantage with this new equipment (C.D.B.A.) was that it was easy to prepare, you did not need a large boat to move it around, it was silent anti magnetic and you could approach mines which might have otherwise given the diver some cause for concern.

The naval base that was to be used as the central training school was to be HMS VERNON. This was to be conducted at HORSEA ISLAND, which had been built to test torpedoes and was at that time a radio station with aerials all over Horsea. There were hardly any facilities to carry out diver training at this time and the personnel that came from north of the border and from the

to form the Defence Diving School (DDS). Plans for the amalgamation and the move from GUNWHARF are being finalised. At the same time, building work is progressing well at Horsea Island where a mixture of new and refurbished old buildings will house the new Navy/Army structure.

An administration centre with offices for staff, training design and support plus messing facilities will be based around the old WT station (galley). This will be 'GUNWHARF' building. (Fig 1).

The Ships Divers Training Organisation will be housed in another new building named 'DEEPWATER', which is being built behind SHELFORD Block. This section will deal with every aspect of the ships divers courses from issue of kit down to classroom and stowage space. 'DEEPWATER' will also house the BA maintenance section and the instructional facilities for ME46 courses. (Fig 2).

A purpose built Tool Training Facility is being constructed around the old DRA trials tank at the south west end of the

Fig 1



SOUTH ELEVATION - GUNWHARF BUILDING

fleet had two weeks to set up this Diving School from nothing. They had to beg steal or borrow equipment and carry out all their own building work which probably cost a lot less than the present building work.

## Diving Training - Looking to the Future

There are probably few readers who can remember Diving Training at Horsea Island as far back as 1952. Those of you who can, will probably recall a most uncomfortable existence - as these pictures may remind you.

The Naval Diving School, as we have traditionally known it, will cease to function as a single service organisation on 1 September 1995. On that date the SMOPS Diving Training Section will combine with the Royal Engineers Diving Establishment

island. This section will be called 'PASLEY' and will provide excellent Underwater Engineering facilities for both Army and Navy courses. The recently refurbished Tool Hut will be moved down to the jetty adjacent to this section so that all types of training can be centred there.

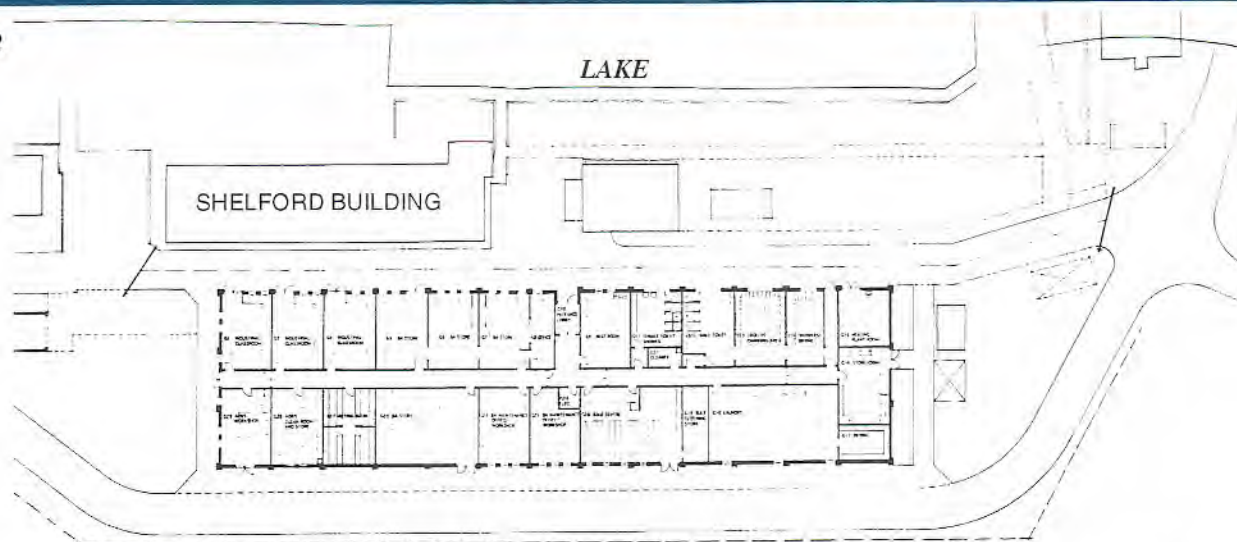
A degree of joint training will take place in this section with the intention that both services will gain from this closer integration. (Fig 3). Career Courses will continue to be run from the buildings at the east end of the lake. These buildings will have some minor refurbishment but the overall effect of the move on career courses will be minimal. A small section of the DDS will be sited at HMS EXCELLENT. A new jetty is being constructed to berth the Diving Training Boats which will allow access to open water. Together with the adjacent





# NAVAL DIVING TRAINING

Fig 2



PLAN - DEEPWATER BUILDING



NORTH ELEVATION - PASLEY BUILDING

Fig 3

classrooms, this will support the 'Up-Harbour' phase of all courses as well as PACDU and a Type A Chamber.

Portland Naval Base is due to close in 1996 and, sadly, after a strong fight to retain the VERNON Building, diving training will no longer use this valuable asset. This will mean relocation of training to ensure that the objectives currently achieved at Portland are adequately covered elsewhere. One option being investigated is the possibility of re-scheduling one week of this period to both Portsmouth and Scotland phases. Under the present plan, the Portland facility officially closes 31 December 1995, but training is likely to cease in August 1995. The Defence Diving School will be operational 1 September 1995 under the Command of Cdr Pat Gale who is soon to be appointed to oversee the move and establishment of the joint school. The degree to which the training becomes integrated is still under discussion but for the mutual benefit of both services we will have a common policy on as many issues as possible. Eventually this may include

portions of basic air diving training but, for the moment, the emphasis on 'Common Training' will only extend to First Aid, Physical Fitness, Diving Theory and some Underwater Engineering. All this will bring about closer ties between the Army and the RN and, as we have already discovered, the combination of single service ideas into 'Joint Thinking' can only lead to an improvement in all MOD diver training. Here at the School we are all starting to 'Think Purple'.

"How will RN diving training be conducted?" For the most part it will run on the same lines as today, with one or two major differences: Career diving training has hardly changed since the 1970's and work has already begun to refresh the old style training. The most important change is likely to be the current review and modernisation of career course documentation which will bring about changes in the way the practical training is conducted. This major task is being undertaken by the Training Design section with assistance from the respective course instructors.

This review will eventually cover all diving courses from Ships Diver to LMCDO. The intention is to rationalise the training format to ensure that the school's end product is what the Fleet actually requires. To this end the school is liaising closely with the customer (SofD) to ascertain the required base skill levels of all divers. This will establish the balance between what the school teaches and what will need to be completed as on-job training in the Fleet. The introduction of new Diving Policies and Equipment will also have a profound effect on the conduct of training. Certain operational tasks, like MCM diving to 80 metres, will present some interesting challenges for the DDS. The aim of this review process is to provide a more manageable and up-to-date training package which will be more adaptable to future changes in customer requirements. Much has been said and heard about training procedures since the last issue. From the School's point of view, a policy change has now been agreed with regard to all physical aspects of our courses. This has meant a positive move away from some of the less relevant practices that students in the past may have experienced. However, 'The Diehards' will be no doubt glad to hear that Mud Runs will remain in the career course syllabus!

The DDS will be directly accountable to the Flag Officer Training and Recruiting (FOTR) which will mean less direct ties with SMOPS and a break away from the wider context of General Service and Warfare activities. During our long time in 'The VERNON' we have enjoyed and benefitted from this association and the "Big Ship Navy" have also benefitted from our input to them. The move to Horsea Island will mean that the diving fraternity becomes even more separated from the rest of the Navy. It is therefore most important that every effort is made to ensure that, as an important part of the Operations Branch, we keep our profile as high as possible. We must continue to emphasize all the positive benefits of divers or we may become just an interesting curiosity rather than an essential Operational Asset.





# MOVING ON AND MOVING OUT

## MINESWARFARE TRAINING RELOCATES TO DRYAD

By CPO(MW) (O) Dave Smith

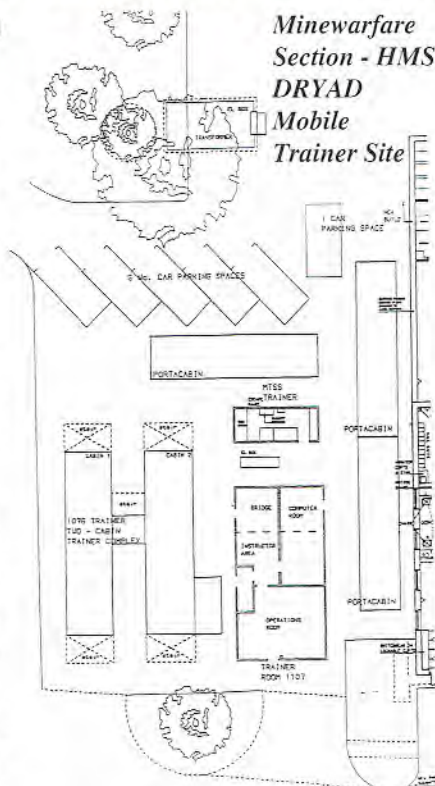
### Background

The decision to move Mineswarfare training to HMS DRYAD had been finalised for some time and will become a reality at the end of March 1995. It is a decision that will bring to an end over three hundred years of military occupancy of this particular part of Portsmouth. The Army moved into the original site in 1662 and used it as an Arsenal, storage area and armoury. (It is rumoured that J & N Builders, a local company, although available were in their infancy and so were not called upon for any of the construction!)

In 1797 Gunwharf was improved under the direction of the Duke of Richmond and it was during this modernisation that the site was extended to include an area to the south of the infamous Creek. The Creek originally ran through the middle of the establishment up as far as, what is now the Heritage Car Park.

The Army made some changes whilst in residence. They completed a boundary wall in 1803 within which is the original main gate. The gate is topped by two concrete mortars and is still visible today next to the Gymnasium. They also filled in the Creek (1876) reclaiming land back to the front of Creasy Block. The Creek remained like this until Army Diving Training and Pasley's pool came along.

Also in 1876 VERNON, which was a floating tender to the Gunnery School at HMS EXCELLENT, became an independent command. This came about because of the growing importance of Torpedo Warfare within the navy. VERNON was moored in the Fountain Lake area of the dockyard and was joined



*Mineswarfare  
Section - HMS  
DRYAD  
Mobile  
Trainer Site*

In 1954 work started on a major rebuilding programme, this included the building of Creasy Block. The northern end of Vulcan Building was demolished to make way for the developers and the new building constructed.

### Nostalgia

Some of the readers of this magazine may well remember the 'sweepers' filling up the creek. Always worth a check at around midday just in case you happen to know anyone on board who may want to watch you drink their beer issue!

The First MCM Squadron left for Port Edgar in January of 1966 (all the beer must have gone) and the Second Squadron were welcomed to VERNON in March 1972. Today the Second Squadron are in the Dockyard and will soon be re-joined by MCM 1 - such is progress.

The rest of the history is fairly recent and by and large is outside the scope of this article, however, who can forget being detailed off for the infamous 'Daffodil' patrol? This entailed a lengthy wait outside the VERNON 'bop' waiting for the only two women to leave and then ensuring that they (or the unfortunate matelots in tow) did not steal, eat any of the Daffs or insert them in the ceremonial cannons between the club and the Main Gate! You may of course have been "pinged" at some stage for Fire Party and you will remember trying to roll the cart on each corner, or missing the fire cart altogether because the pipe was inaudible to anyone other than the duty watch of the planet MEEGON 7!

Was there a Matelot magnet in the base of the fishpond outside the VERNON CLUB? I ask because, oddly, as soon as Jack got within 5 yards of the thing he just seemed to fall in and if at all possible dragged his 'oppo' in as well.

Does the VERNON tattoo ring any bells? Do you remember the mock up of a 'Ton' boat and its gemini that used to do a display on the football pitch during the tattoo? They used to simulate an armed boarding with the gun firing by throwing a thunderflash out of the wheelhouse window while the gemini attempted to chase the offending vessel. I don't suppose that if the drivers were still serving that they would ever own up to the fact anyway.

The final dit that I remember about VERNON comes from the Smith archives. In the early part of 76 I was on my babies course and was detailed off to 'wet the tea' for the course and the instructor. Because this was a first for me I called on all my worldly experience to help me.

by other hulks; Ariadne and Actaeon which were accommodation and workshops respectively plus Donegal, Marlborough, Warrior and Vesuvius. Buildings in Gunwharf are now named after these original hulks.

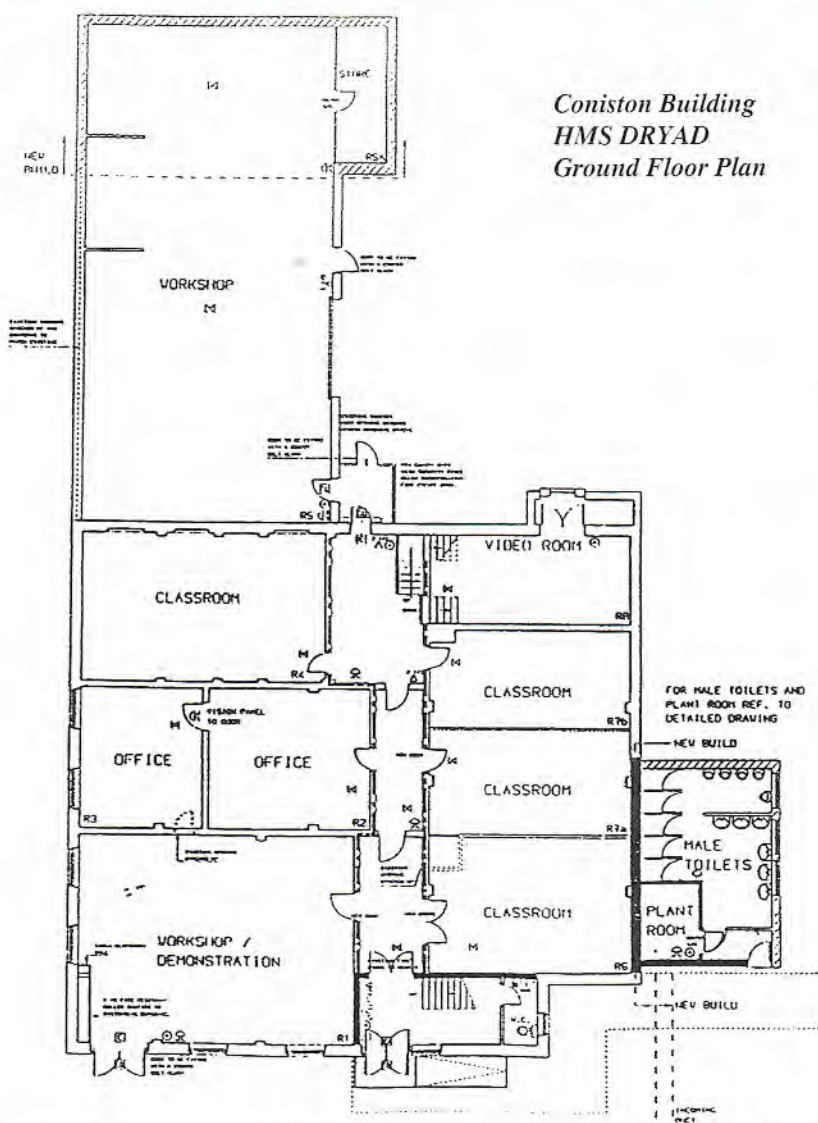
The Army were probably quite content in Gunwharf until 1892 when a distinct split occurred and the area was divided. The Army remained to the north of the creek and the Navy took up residence to the south. Four years later VERNON was moved to Porchester Creek from Fountain Lake and remained in the harbour until 1 October 1923 when the school moved ashore.

During the Second World War HMS VERNON sustained substantial damage during the blitz. Notably Vernon Lodge which was the Captain's house and Marlborough House which the Commander occupied. Both were damaged beyond repair and were subsequently demolished. The houses used to be where the MT Garage is today (just inside the main gate) and where the squash courts are situated. Had the courts been in place during the war the chances of Tony Sheaf taking a direct hit would have been fairly high! The Wardroom Gardens also took a hit creating an enormous crater large enough to bury all the Bar books in. The old mining tower survived everything but sadly, as I write, is being demolished slowly by contractors at a cost far in excess of an old Second World War bomb!





# MOVING ON AND MOVING OUT



*Coniston Building  
HMS DRYAD  
Ground Floor Plan*

Seriously, the contractors have worked hard and the building is in a very good condition. The work programme is on schedule and it is expected that the handover date of 26 January 1995 will be achieved. A detailed floor plan is shown opposite. With regard to the trainers, the AS 1076 ARCTURUS trainer will move to a site adjacent to CONISTON building in early April and will be joined by the MTSS (already on line in Gunwharf) and the new AS 1107 SANDOWN Class trainer when it is delivered. We will be left with a compact Minewarfare Section when the move has been completed and some of the present staff will be absorbed within the DRYAD set up. SOMW and DSOMW will move to Oliver Block and the Course Planning Chief will work alongside all the other course planners. The Advanced Minewarfare Course classroom and tactical cubicles will be remotely located in Cunningham Block.

A list of all the phone numbers will be released in DCI format shortly, when they are known.

Now that the move will happen, all as part of a more modern streamlined armed force, we must move with it and help make DRYAD as enjoyable a place to work in as Gunwharf has been to so many Minewarfares over the years.

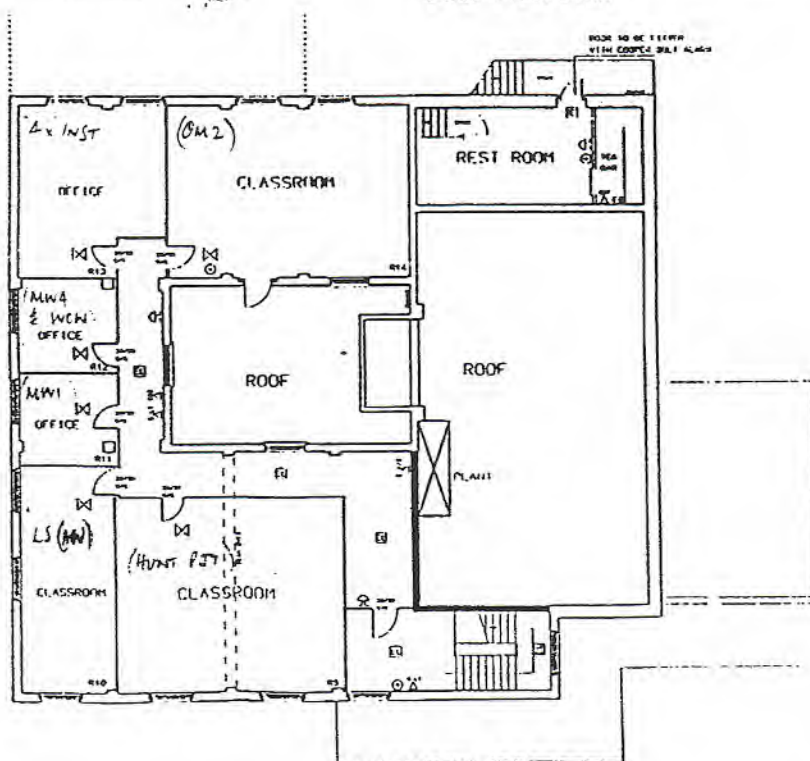


*Coniston Building HMS DRYAD  
First Floor Plan*

That failed, so I remembered what my mum had said, 'A tea bag for everyone and one for the pot'. Cracked it...! Had there been 2 on course it would have been a reasonable wet, unfortunately there were 15 plus the instructor and one for the pot made 17!

## Coniston Reborn

As mentioned earlier the move to HMS DRYAD will take place at the end of March 1995. The Minewarfare Section will occupy a completely refurbished building at Southwick Park presently named REDPOLE. This building will be renamed CONISTON and officially opened by COMMW on a date yet to be confirmed. The building does not offer us the space that we are all used to in Gunwharf as space in DRYAD is at a premium. We really have been spoilt for space in Gunwharf. Seeking sympathy, WO Stockley and the Office Writer claim to have been conducting business from the phone box at the head of the Creek in preparation for the move!





# Minewarfare Trainers Update

By Lt Cdr Frank Ward

## Introduction

1. The integration of Minewarfare principles and acknowledgement of its importance into general warfare continues at a pace. The MW Section move to DRYAD is on line for the end of March 95 to REDPOLE building, now to be named CONISTON (after HMS CONISTON M1101, one of the first TONs built in 1953). You will see from other articles that within our estate we have a number of new trainers. We are fortunate in Minewarfare that our disciplines may be clearly defined:

MINEHUNTING	HUNT Class
	SANDOWN Class
MINESWEEPING	HUNT Class
MINING	Fleet Exercise
	Minelaying System
	Versatile Exercise Mine

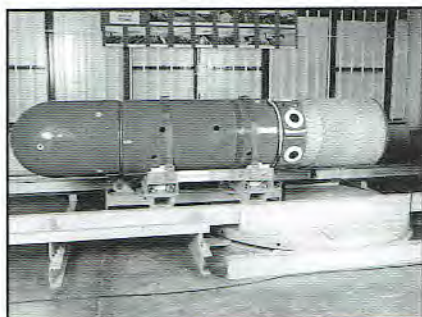


Fig 2.

## MINING

2. As many of you will know the UK no longer retains mine stocks but it is our responsibility to ensure Minewarfare personnel are trained in the capability of both preparing and laying mines. For this purpose we teach the use of the Versatile Exercise Mine (VEM) (Fig 2) which although its main purpose is as an influence minesweeping target has a functionality similar to the BAe Sea Urchin. In June 94 we taught the Pakistani Navy in the principles of Mining and the use of the Marconi Stonefish mine. For Minelaying, instruction in the use of the Fleet Exercise Minelaying System is given (Fig 3).



Fig 3.

## MINESWEEPING

3. Deployment and use of the HUNT Combined Influence Sweep (CIS) can only be taught at sea and this therefore forms a major part of the MCMG courses.

## MINEHUNTING

4. It is in the area of minehunting that we are able to make the best use of shore based trainers.

a) ARCTURUS - HUNT Class trainer. The ARCTURUS trainer has now been in service since 1982 and has proved invaluable for all courses either as career training or familiarisation. Indeed the MWO course final assessment is conducted in ARCTURUS. A number of improvements to the trainer are progressing, these include:

- Implementation of Navigation Processor (NAV PAC) in line with Class fit.
- Enhancement of mine models, Current simulation is to be enhanced in line with the up to date threat scenario.
- Fitting of Mine Avoidance Sonar (MAS) in line with Class fit.

These improvements will result in a necessary enhancement to the simulation processor.

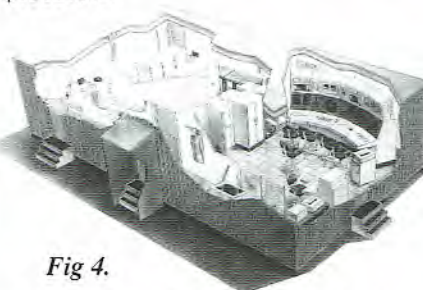


Fig 4.

b) SANDOWN Class Command Operator Trainer. Unfortunately the Sandown COT has been delayed for about a year due mainly to the demise of Ferranti. The programme is now back on line and it is due to be delivered in December 95. As with ARCTURUS the Sandown COT is a full mockup of the Ops Rm (Fig 4). However because of the sophistication of the Ship Manoeuvring System it also includes a GFE Helmsmans Console. There are 2 distinct advantages with this COT

- The design of the scenario is totally at the discretion of the Exercise Controller, utilising the systems own chart digitising facility. This also allows the trainer to be used not only in its primary role but also gives it a capability to evaluate tactical scenarios eg. Gulf and the Adriatic (Fig 5 and 6).
- Facilities to simulate targets are also

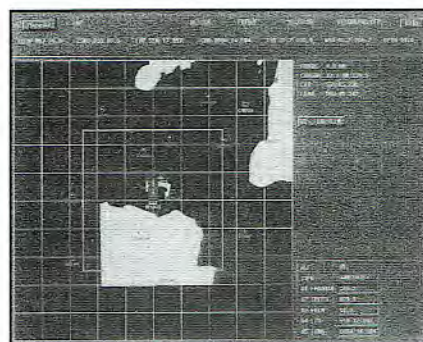


Fig 5.



Fig 6.

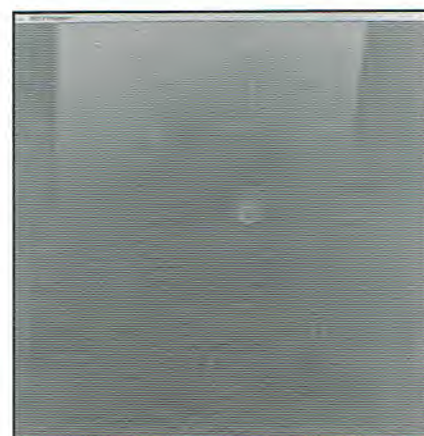


Fig 7.

available to the Exercise Controller enabling him to input new targets with varying degrees of burial and aspect as required (Fig 7).

Both systems also have complementary CBTs, mainly to develop keyboard skills. Although in the case of the Sandown CBT (RFT March 96) full Sonar detection and classification drills will also be included.

## MINEWARFARE TACTICAL SUPPORT SYSTEM (MTSS)

5. The MTSS has been procured to provide the Flag Officers MW staff and the MCM Commander with a computer based Minewarfare management facility. Essentially it comprises two Sun Sparc stations with peripheral equipment and provides the following facilities.

- Automatic processing of MW formatted messages.
- Weapon system capability database.
- Implementation of MW planning, Evaluation and Risk algorithms; with automatic cross referencing to ships tasking.
- Full Genamap facility of UK sea area to 200m contour with Sybase database of all route information, seabed contracts and items of interest (stored on optical disc as master and mission databases).

To implement training the department has taken receipt of the office (flag staff) variant and the 1SO container (MCM TA) variant.



# Minewarfare Trainers Update

## MINEWARFARE MODELLING TOOLS

6. A Number of Minewarfare models exist which enable the investigation of the effects of tasking ships under varying operational scenarios.

a) **Sandown Tactical Development Model.** Designed by Marconi this model simulates the operation of the Sandown Class in various environments (Fig 8 and 9).

b) **SEAMIST.** The Simulation for Evaluation and Analysis of Mine Search Tactics (SEAMIST) is a simulation of a mine hunter searching an area for mines; including classification, identification and prosecution. The area of interest can contain varying

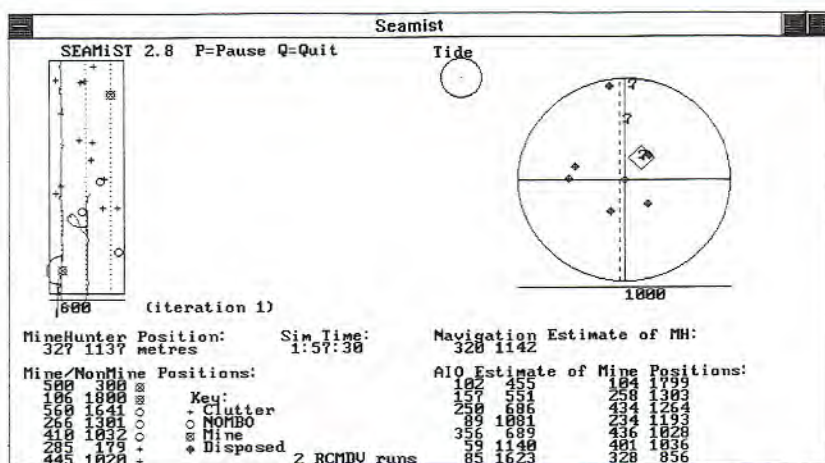


Fig 10.

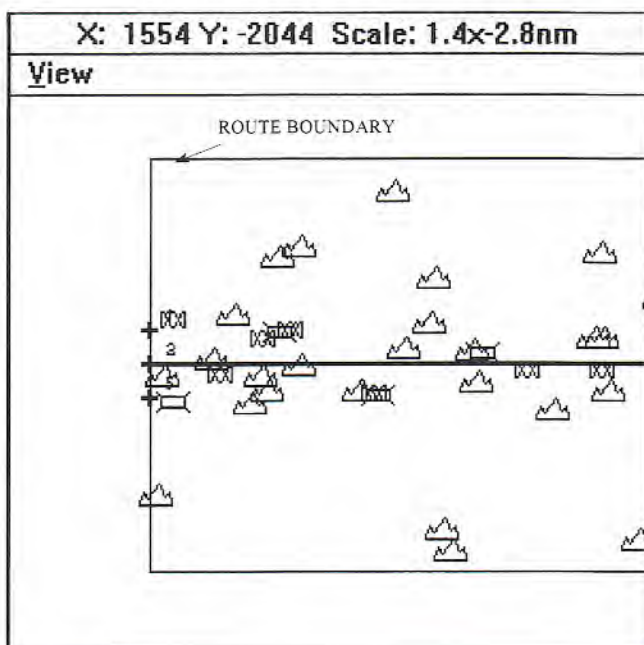


Fig 8.

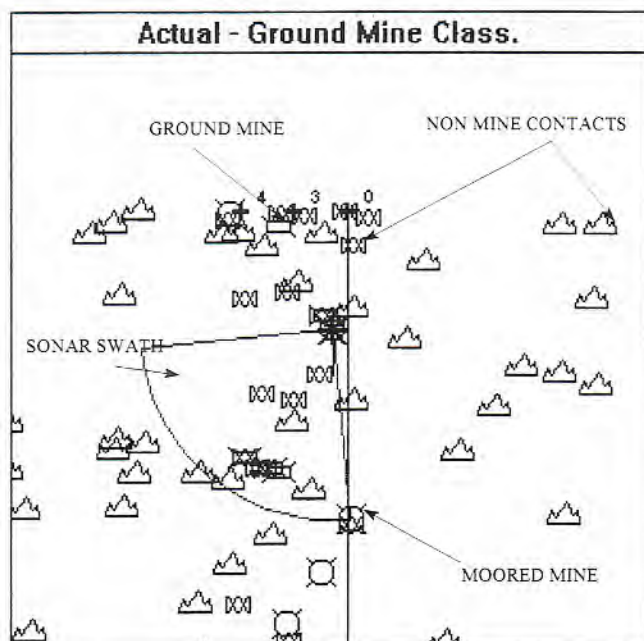


Fig 9.

depths and bottom types. The programme is written in C++ and by manipulation of various text data files allows for a variation of tactics to be used (when to classify/identify, prosecution radius etc.), as well as variations in the physical scenario (Fig 10.)

c) **Sonar Environmental training aids.** Investigations are currently underway into the development of a training aid to assist students in gaining a better appreciation of the effects of the environment on Minewarfare sonar range prediction and detection probability. BAe SEMA INSIGHT and Hodgson are among those being reviewed.

## THE WAY AHEAD

7. Fig 11 illustrates the Trainers, Simulators and models which emulate the MCMV and its environment and the tactics to be deployed to achieve best results. It is therefore a logical step to try to link these systems to enable both students and Operational MCM Staffs to run simulated MCM Exercises as though a squadron were deployed (currently Exercise EMPTY SQUARE). The additional requirement would include a computer suite with bespoke software that could emulate an on task MCMV and generate the appropriate signals for the tasking authority to respond to. The COTs would operate in real time, manned either by students or a command team. At present the BE/NL Minewarfare school at Oostende provides this facility in parts and is widely used. Such a facility could also interact with the MTS in the development of MW tactics in support of Inshore, Amphibious and Advance Force Operations.

## MINEWARFARE INTEGRATED SYSTEM TRAINER

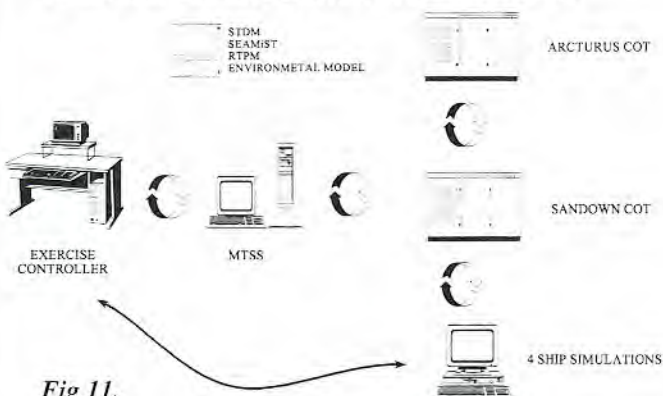


Fig 11.



# COMMW

## The Future - not forgetting the Present

By CMDR Richard Moore

**The aim of this short article is to give all the readers of this excellent magazine an appreciation of which direction I think the UK's Minewarfare, Diving and EOD capability and expertise is moving.**

At the recent MCDO Association dinner, Rear Admiral CLARKE (FOTR) highlighted the progress that has been made in the Branch in recent years. He was particularly complimentary about the professionalism of the officers and ratings of the MCD, MW and Diver sub branches - praise indeed from an eminent Submariner! Not surprisingly, I fully endorse his views and it is an honour for me to be COMMW when the quality and reputation of our officers and ratings is so high. The evidence is quite clear that our branches continue to attract fit and intelligent people who enjoy the challenge of working in an MCMV, Diving team, Squadron staff, shore staffs and the training organisation. We have the right people, will we be able to keep them? - my answer is an emphatic 'Yes' - assuming that people like myself can resolve some of the current burning personnel issues. The Warfare Branch Implementation and its effect on source branches (primarily MW), relocation from Rosyth to Portsmouth/Faslane (in November 95), unacceptably slow advancement rates and perceived MCMV/FDG/ACDU excessive activity rates leading to possible breaches of the harmony rules are all important issues of the mid 1990s. As I write this article, a clearer way ahead on WBI is apparent and details will have been published at the end of 1994. Given the perceived benefits of the 'operator maintainer' principle, I hope that the majority of MW ratings will recognise that the changes promulgated in late 1994 will lead to real improvements in career prospects for those who want to stay in the Service.

I hope that those of you directly involved in the relocation of the MWV Flotilla and its integration with FOSF will be aware of the following relevant dates via normal line management:

- COMMW (and CFP) will cease to exist in early 1996 and a single Captain Minewarfare, Diving and Fishery Protection will assume responsibilities for minor war vessels on the Staff of FOSF.
- CMDFP will be based in Portsmouth in North Office Block (perhaps Lochinvar Block!) from early 1996.
- HQCOMMW/CFP/1MCM/FPS/ITS staff plus FSU02 will all move to Portsmouth in Oct/Nov 95, the Squadron staffs, including MCM2 and BSO NELSON's UPO, will all be co-located in new offices in the Sail Loft (above the current MCM2 offices).
- 3MCM/SSOTS will move to Faslane in Nov/Dec 95, plus FSU03.
- Plymouth/Portsmouth CDUs will become Southern Diving Group and FOSNNI/Clyde CDUs will become Northern Diving Group in 1996. In terms of SOCs, this will mean very few changes, they will both come under the CincFleet/CMDFP umbrella whilst TACON will probably be delegated to the new local Flag Officers.
- Responsibility for MWV sea training will be transferred from COMMW to FOST early 1996. MCMVs and NI Squadron will be worked up in the Clyde, OPVs and others on the South Coast. All OST(MWV) will be conducted by SSOTS staff based in Faslane.

Clearly the planned changes resulting from the closure of the Rosyth MWVOB are profound, however, I believe that after the moves are complete the future of MCM and Diving looks very bright. We are deeply involved in the protection of Trident and are an inextricable part of the UK's new amphibious capability. The equipment looks impressive with 7 new SANDOWNS, HUNT MLU, MTSS, new diving systems and NAVPAC all in the pipeline. However, there are other areas of equal importance that we need to focus on, some examples are:

- Our MCD/MW representation in NATO Staffs is unacceptably low. For too long we relied on CINCHAN being our RN 4-star Admiral to maintain our MCM/MW influence within NATO. His departure has highlighted how poorly the UK is represented in SACEUR and SACLANT. We are endeavouring to increase our MCD/MW staff officers but I am not entirely hopeful we will be successful.
- With all 5 SANDOWNS now passed ODMA, the reliability of Sonar 2093 and RCMDS 2 are receiving our attention. Clearly if we can match the proven operational performance of Sonar 2093 with strong reliability then we have a 200m capable minehunter which is a world beater.
- The role and employment of FSUs continues to be given high priority. With the possible deployments to the Eastern Seaboard of the USA, Eastern Mediterranean and the Gulf over the next 3 years, our requirement for afloat support ships is being re-examined.
- The introduction into service of the new diving life support equipment, whichever set is selected, will bring with it some real challenges. We have proposed that all MCMVs and diving units should be at least 60m capable with the OCF and FDU2 being 80m worked up at all times. We will be developing this policy in the next few months.
- Health and Safety of military diving is one of my prime responsibilities, the recent problems with diving gases has highlighted the care we need to take in

this area. Along with INM, DGUW(N) and DRA we will be addressing a range of HSE matters in concert with the introduction into service of the new diving systems.

- The integration of the new RNR Seagoers into the MWV Flotilla continues apace, we are overcoming some of the early transitional problems and I am confident that once the system has had time to settle down, they will be an asset to the MWVs in general and MCM in particular.
- As the follow-on build SANDOWNs enter service, the intention is for the first three to join 3 MCM, 04/05 1 MCM and 06/07 2 MCM. The arrival of these MCMVs should reduce the activity level per ship and thus contribute to an overall reduction in stretch.
- I have proposed that a Personnel Co-operation Programme is originated with the US Navy MCM Force such that a small number of our officers/ratings would transfer to an AVENGER Class MCMV for 4 to 6 months, and vice versa. The aim of the programme is to increase the awareness of the operational capability of our respective MCM Forces and give MCD/MW officers and ratings the opportunity to operate USN equipment.
- The future expansion of the MCM Force and the agreement to maintain Diving Group manpower at its present level will mean that towards the end of the decade an overall increase in Diver/MW officers and ratings will be required. Fundamentally, the new SANDOWNs will require 14 PO (MW), 7 PO(D), 14 MCD/MW officers plus the L/H and AB rates. This expansion will undoubtedly lead to improved advancement rates at all levels.

I would like to finish on a personal note, despite the disruption that is being caused to the MCM and Diver branch by all the planned changes over the next 18 months, I continue to be extremely impressed by the standards of professionalism and good humour that I witness during my many visits to ship and the Diving Groups. It will not be plain sailing in the next few months but I do sincerely believe in the medium term that the future for our branches has never been brighter. Whether it is finding mines in 20m water depths, EOD clearance jobs in Cyprus, IEDD and EOD tasks on the mainland or jumping out of serviceable aircraft with a parachute, the well trained, intelligent and physically fit personnel we have now, and will recruit in the future, will I am sure continue to demonstrate the levels of excellence which have become synonymous with the MCDO, MW and Diver branches.





# Plymouth Clearance Diving Unit - 1994

## PLYMOUTH



## CLEARANCE DIVING UNIT

By Lt Cdr J.C.B. Chapple

Prompted into action by the 'MAD' Editors plea for articles in the previous issue I am writing this on a bracing (but sunny) late October day in the South West during the week that the Unit received its grat issue of upperdeck crewman suits. Now I am definitely looking forward to next months deep diving work-up on the west coast of Scotland.

Since it would be almost impossible to detail the PCDU year in one sitting I shall attempt to summarise and highlight some representative items from the past few months.

The services of PCDU have continued to be in demand operationally and 1994 is shaping up to be one of the busiest on record for both of our main peacetime roles - EOD and underwater engineering (UWE) - and this in spite of a reduction in operational area on 1 Apr 94 from Carlisle to the River Dee. Any gaps in activity have been filled by our secondary tasks which include maintenance of military therapeutic recompression facilities, ships diver aptitude testing and continuation training, general diving duties and demolition training for ships teams (yes, it still exists - principally for RFAs deployed out-of-area).

### Explosive Ordnance Disposal

In peacetime the regular quota of EOD tasks keeps all personnel worked up in MCM/EOD procedures. The number of tasks received from the Joint Services EOD Operations Centre, Didcot, has reduced markedly during 1994 - primarily as a result of the JSEODOC less-than-flexible interpretation of the High Water Mark rule - but this has been compensated by the number of tasks generated through Flag Officer Plymouth's Maritime Headquarters at Mount Wise, Devonport or direct to the Unit by HM Coastguard. I am still a little perplexed why we invariably get put 'on hold' when telephoning Didcot to request tasking authority for a maritime phosphorous smoke float/marine marker on a beach (below the HWM) in Cornwall but such are the mysterious workings of the JSEODOC. Some EOD tasks of interest are covered below:

a) **Gower.** The old War Office ranges at Whiteford Sands, Gower, South Wales continue to yield numerous items of UXO and PCDU conducts planned range clearances on average 3 times per year. The last such clearance in Oct 94 yielded

75 shells, of which 27 were positively identified as chemical munitions. This work, supported by staff from CBDE, Porton Down, emphasises the need for locating equipment (the Forster 4021 works well) and the capability to contain, leak seal and package damaged chemical weapons. A common-sense approach to this task is required since the total range area is approx 4000m by 500-1000m. Faced with a task spread across this amount of tidal shore some commonsense deviation from conventional DEODS teaching is inevitable.

b) **Clevedon.** This is another planned range clearance, mounted approximately 3 times

per year, which continues to produce large quantities of UXO (ie. over 200 projectiles per annum). A particularly interesting aspect of this task is the fact that the range impact area is located entirely on mud flats (ankle to shin deep). A good work out is guaranteed and anyone who believes that mud runs (sorry, 'endurance training') is not an operational requirement is invited to join us in the future. In April 94 the deployed CD Element took time out to search for a mislaid Amk9 mine at DRA Weston-Super-Mare. This was successfully extracted from the mud and detonated in the early hours of the morning.



*AB(D) BUFFERY and Amk9 Mine at Weston-Super-Mare: APR 94*



*Operational EOD at Clevedon: APR 94*



# Plymouth Clearance Diving Unit - 1994

c) **Bull Point.** As part of the process to return the old RN Armament Depot at Bull Point to normal use (it will be used by FOST) a two-year contract has been awarded to a civilian company to certify the site free from explosives. Not an easy task when there are no records and the site has been in use for over 175 years. PCDU has been involved on a reactive EOD and advisory basis and, during Sept/Oct 94, recovered 5 x Mk 7 depth charges from ammunition lighters, sunk in 1941, in the River Tamar. These were transported to Plymouth Sound and disposed of by controlled explosions.

d) **Maritime EOD.** Although not as busy as our colleagues at PACDU when it comes to major wartime UXO, we nevertheless encounter our fair share. The results of a German air-dropped type GC mine when introduced to a Charge Demolition Plastic Pack (4lb) are shown in the accompanying photograph taken on 17 July 94 one mile south of Falmouth.

e) **IEDD.** This activity has seen a sustained increase in taskings in the past 18 months and, due to the particular threat in the south-west, has remained steady in recent weeks.

## Diving Operations

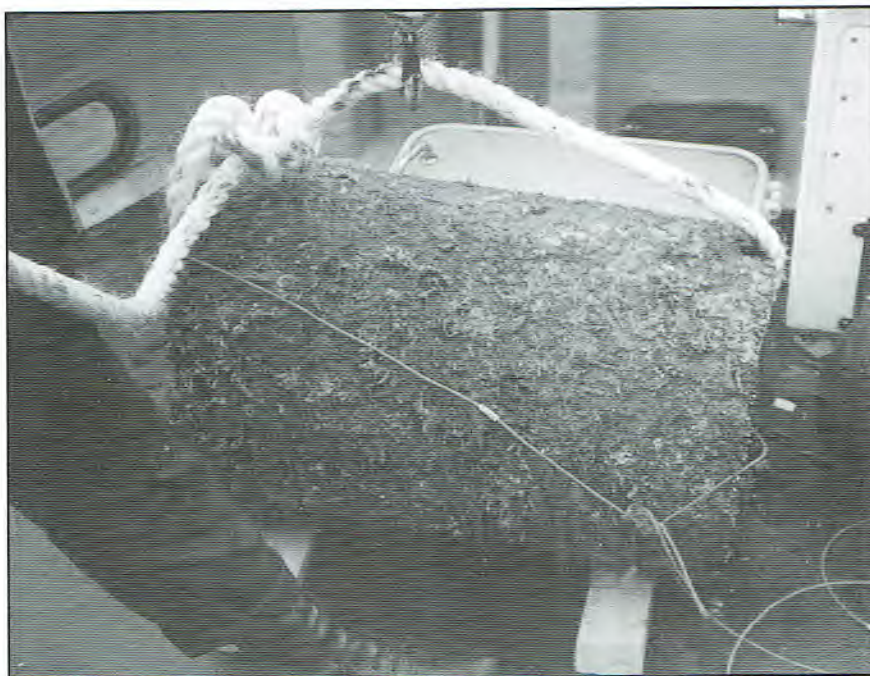
HM Naval Base, Devonport, is the home port for over 35 ships and submarines of the Fleet. This customer-base provides the bread-and-butter diving work for PCDU. The regular UWE tasks provide practical training for Battle Damage Assessment and Repair (BDAR).

The UWE highlight of the year to date was undoubtedly the deployment of an enhanced CD Element to Trieste, Italy, in early June to assist HMS BRILLIANT with a troublesome stabiliser. As is always the case, the first notification of the tasking was received 5 minutes prior to secure on Friday afternoon. In spite of this the PCDU Element (plus u/w engineering tools), augmented by personnel from the Fleet Diving Group, deployed to RAF Lyneham within 8 hours. The job was successfully completed after 12 hours cumulative diving time, the ship sailed on schedule to meet a NATO commitment and all personnel were recovered back to UK within 3 days of departure. Needless to say the diving and engineering equipment took a little longer to get home. This task proved once again the oft-emphasised flexibility and rapid deployment capability of CD Units and it made a welcome change from ropeguard replacement (when will they ever fit first time?) and propeller scrubs in Weston Mill Lake, Devonport.

## General

In May 94, the PCDU became the first (that we know of) UK Area Clearance Diving Unit to participate in a major NATO Exercise, Resolute Response 94. An Element from PCDU, day-running in diving boat 'MINER III' (our Fleet Diving Tender was taken as a savings measure in 1993), conducted anchorage clearance operations in Plymouth Sound as part of the MCM task group. This work was conducted in conjunction with a Dutch diving team embarked in their newly commissioned diving tender (complete with compression chamber and full accommodation). This was a period of intense diving activity and worked everyone up in the art of laying and recovering jackstay searches, the only practical technique (it may be old but it works) in the allocated area. Some improvements were identified, such as the provision of portable GPS navigation equipment, and these have been represented through the appropriate channels.

As I write the compression chamber house at the Diving Centre is being reconstructed to accommodate the new Type A compression chamber. Next on the agenda is the complete rebuild of the HP air system to feed the greedy monster. By the time this edition goes to print the chamber should have been delivered and set to work...



*UK Mark 7 Depth Charge (circa 1941) at RNAD Bull Point: SEP 94*



*Another German Mine Type GC, Falmouth: JUL 94*



# Plymouth Clearance Diving Unit - 1994



*PCDU Diving Boat  
'DATCHET' on her  
delivery voyage: JUL 94*

The PCDU took delivery of its second, and final, 47 ft diving workboat on 12 July 94. The new boat, sister craft to 'MINER III', is named 'DATCHET' to commemorate the old Fleet Diving Tender. Both boats are normally berthed at Drake Pier, Weston Mill Lake, and are heavily used, particularly for UWE. Novel features include a hinged mast (for access under berthing hawsers) and a small galley (ideal for creating those 'heart-attack' bacon butties). 'MINER III' is due to return soon to the boatbuilders in Southampton for minor modifications but, once back at PCDU and subject to operational tasks, it is intended to make one boat available for use by ships diving teams. On the subject of mobility the Unit's vehicles have been enhanced with the arrival of the new Deep Truck (respect is due to the Diving Inspectorate for their unseen work on the MT front) and the useful addition of a Renault Extra van for admin duties. Cries of 'fresh rolls and daily newspapers' are now to be heard when Boss 1 arrives. Our landrovers continue to provide exceptional service and I have yet to see another 4x4 which is man enough for clearance diving operations. Overheating is a minor problem - the positive side being that you can reheat last night's pizza on the vehicle floor!

On manpower, the Unit has seen the normal rotation of personnel although continuity at management level has been maintained. A manpower audit in Nov 93 imposed a reduction in support staff but all Diver billets were preserved. In July 94, WO(D) 'Scouse' Kidman was relieved by WO(D) 'Lawry' Lawrence (escapee

from Lochinvar Block) as Assistant OIC and in Jan 95, CPO(D) Chris Ballinger relinquishes his post as 'Chief of the Team' as his naval service draws to a close. Those big shoes will be filled by CPO(D) 'Big Nel' Nilsson, this means that the PCDU will continue to be gapped 1 x SR billet so all volunteers should talk to drafty now. Maintaining duty cover for IEDD, CMD and diving means that the supervisors watchbill is generally 1-in-3 and, overall, the Unit continues to work a three-watch routine. That this stretch is cheerfully accepted is testament to the quality of our Divers but the catchy phrase 'Personnel Functional Standards' does occasionally spring to mind.

## **The Future**

Approval has now been received to form the Southern Diving Group (SDG) on 1 Sept 95. This clearance diving group will comprise both the PCDU and Portsmouth Area Clearance Diving Unit. Group staff (OIC plus WO(D)) will be based in Plymouth from where the SDG will be managed. 1995/6 is likely to be an interesting time for all CDUs, north and south, since the traditional chain of command through Area Flag Officers will undergo major change. The one area of stability is that the number and frequency of tasks is unlikely to reduce.

## **The Final Word from GUZZ**

'Dum Spiro, Spero'



*PCDU Team Photograph 1994*



## The Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland Clearance Diving Unit

### Underwater and Range Clearance at Cape Wrath

By L/Diver T. Orton

Cape Wrath and its neighbouring rock Garvie Island lie on one of the two most northerly peninsulas of Scotland. An area that is quiet, scenic and quite remote is invaded from nowhere when the Royal Air Force Tornado GR1 and Jaguar aircraft suddenly strike through the lower atmosphere, expending their fire power upon Garvie Island and the Close Air Support Range (CASR) at Cape Wrath Royal Navy bombardment range.

With a restriction of 200 high explosive weapons dropped in any two month period, you can imagine that air activity is exceptionally busy; especially as all the RAF's ground attack squadrons, the US AIRFORCE, Nato air squadrons and HM warships, use the range. Half a mile to the North of Cape Wrath's range stands Garvie



Island, a lonely rock that has been dissipated over the years with HE 30mm, HE 27mm Inert Laser Guided bombs, live 500lb and 1,000lb H.E. bombs that fortunately for us front line bomb-disposalliers don't always go off.

The (CASR) at Cape Wrath takes its regular cannonade of 65lb rigid projectiles and 30mm guns as the pilots impact selected targets along it and pepper the ground with shell holes... Remarkably the range is a wildlife sanctuary which became a specially protected area in December 1993, it has also become apparent that there are certain highland sheep holding 'land speed records'! All air activity and tasking is controlled by Pitreavie Joint Maritime Headquarters at Rosyth. Annually the SNNICDU are tasked to carry out a clearance of the range and in particular an underwater clearance of Garvie Island.

As July to September is the lambing, ramming and tourist season the RAF have to cease bombing. This gives the SNNICDU the best opportunity to carry out the clearance. The job takes approximately 10 days with the bulk of the graft clearing the 1,000/500lb'ders which have bounced on, fallen short of or over shot Garvie Island.

Diving at Garvie offers excellent visibility but horrendous tides of up to 4 knots swirling around the rock. The best results are achieved by diving in the lee of the island during one of the two short diving windows. So it's eyes open on the bottom looking for and marking live ordnance. The FOSNNI frogman who marks a 'blue' has a good deal of egg on face during the finale!

On a daily basis up to 10 x 1,000 and 500lb live bombs are marked, then the fun begins! Fighting against tides whilst placing the 4lb packs, the diver anchors himself to the bomb and wonders why a perfectly intact weapon with a gleaming tall fuse has failed to detonate! The whole explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) is brought together in a cordex ring main, this job can become a nightmare for the diver, so good surface support and very careful gemini driving is essential (Two'zie at the helm) to maintain station and avoid snarling of the det cord. Once this evolution is complete it is T-minus 5 minutes with the safety fuse lit. Now it is time to retire to a safe distance and wait for the delightful sight of approximately

10,000lb of H.E. erupting from the sea bed! The recent clearance operation was filmed by a News Crew from BBC Scotland.

Garvie's excellent underwater visibility allows the SNNICDU to get some hands on still/camera and portable underwater sony cam-corder operation. This year the team also managed to get the underwater scooter out of it's box and put to good use, enabling the diver to search larger areas and work against stronger tides. Just to put our minds at ease (the RAF aren't that good after all) bombs were found on the sea bed up to 400m from their desired target (Garvie).

The last job of the trip is walking the land range, searching the rough terrain for any ordnance or RAF wizardry that requires white noise. It is also a good chance for the fully fledged members of Institute of Explosive Engineers (I.E.E.) to 'black cat' each other with various low order techniques.

Then, after a long hard week its back to Durness to unwind and take full advantage of the facilities this place has to offer: the Post Office and a Telephone! On a more serious note, the SNNICDU are made very welcome by the local community at Durness and regularly participate in the Durness Highland Games. CPO(D) 'Spike Hughes' won the cross country/hill race two years ago and 'mad mac McSkimmings' came a creditable third this year, an excellent result considering the high standard of entrants and number of semi professionals involved.

The SNNICDU have also been involved with 'OPERATION AUK', a Ministry of Defence (MOD) sponsored wildlife survey on the previously mentioned conservation area. Five members of the team turned 'hippie' for five days in the great outdoors, assisting the Cape Wrath conservation group in recording damage to nesting birds, hazards to aircraft flight safety and to report bomb damage to the range. They destroyed odd bits of ordnance to impress the 'spotters'. The team carried out an underwater survey in the vicinity of Garvie Island and promoted conversation awareness within and outside MOD through good public relations. The operation was a success.



Future operations at Garvie will include the recovery intact and render safe procedure of up to 15 1,000lb bombs. This task will be a joint venture with the RAF EOD organisation and the Mine Exploitation Team from Portland. Watch this space in the next issue MAD! (By Ed: Noted!)

Garvie has always been the SNNICDU's 'choice' regular clearance. It creates an excellent opportunity to achieve some first class diving and practical EOD experience for the whole team. Optimistically the big move to the west side and the formation of the Northern Diving Group will encourage and secure already established and future EOD work for the SNNICDU.





# The type A two compartment compression chamber

## BIGGER AND BETTER?

By R.D. Bell, Lieutenant Royal Navy

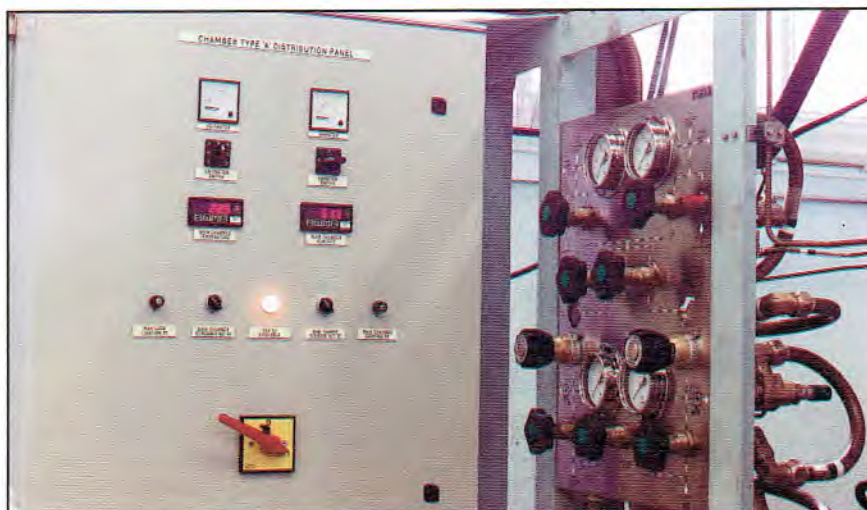
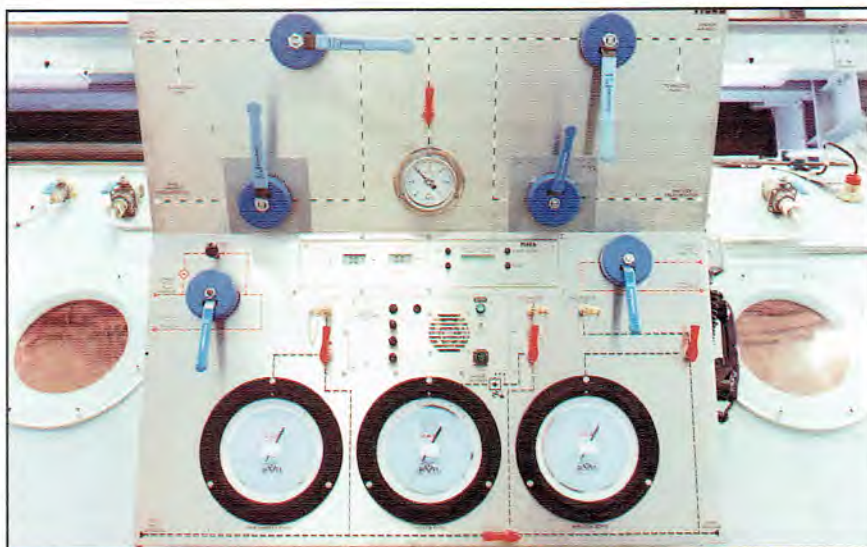
On Tuesday 18 October 1994, something momentous occurred at CSBCDU. Actually, it did not so much occur, it arrived! MARA Engineering Limited (Aberdeen) delivered the first of the Royal Navy's new Type A, Two Compartment Compression Chambers, (15 men) complete with a plethora of "Gucci" attachments.

### Dimensions and Weights

Length Overall	5.8 Metres
Width Overall	2.44 Metres
Internal Length Main Chamber	4.0 Metres
Internal Length Man Lock	1.5 Metres
Minimum Internal Height	
Above Floor	2.25 Metres
(you can stand in it and jump up and down	
-Walking the patient has taken on a new	
meaning)	
Weight (Dry)	10 Tonnes
Weight (During Hydro-test)	36 Tonnes
Silencer	5' x 18"
(you try converting it!)	

### Gadgets

Depth Control Panel - 3 Gauges plus 2 Digital Depth Readouts and Clock (Wot no Pusser's Stop watch?)  
 O2 Make Up and Analysis Panel - Continual analysis of CO<sub>2</sub>/O<sub>2</sub>.  
 Electrical Distribution Panel - Includes Humidity and Temperature Controllers  
 Therapeutic Panel - Ultra lite II BIBS mask supplies. (Oral Nasal Over Board Dump) (Goodbye Rubbery Lips)  
 Communications - BIBS microphones, Talk Back Speakers with Emergency Sound  
 Powered phones to each compartment  
 Data Collection - Notebook PC (it records what you really did)  
 Environmental Control System (Air Conditioning and Central heating to suit all. It's just not comfortable enough)  
 CO<sub>2</sub> Scrubber  
 Hyperbaric Lighting (The old 25 volt lights look great on my mini)  
 Porta-Potti 44 Flush Porta-Loo (or similar) (You use it You Clean it!)  
 2 Bunks (1 fitted with cantilever system to receive a stretcher)  
 Transportation Stretcher  
 TUP - of course!  
 Medical Monitoring/Defibrillator Penetrators. (Make way, I've watched Casualty, I know what I'm doing - NOT!)





# The type A two compartment compression chamber

40cm x 50cm Service Lock (Hamburger hatch? More like a hamburger hatch!)  
Lots of Viewports, but one ideal height for television.  
(Probably originally designed for X Ray equipment)  
Main Chamber/Man Lock Fire Extinguishers

## Omissions

DC Wedge/Wooden Mallet

Pussers Bucket

Nose Clips

Beautifully soft, Lenor/Comfort conditioned Pussers Blanket

Incidentally, the building's air system has required serious modification. The old bank and system effectively cuts into the new system (as opposed to the other way round). Where we had a bank of single bank of 5 x 9.1 cu.ft. to support the old pot and the building's ancillaries, we now have:-

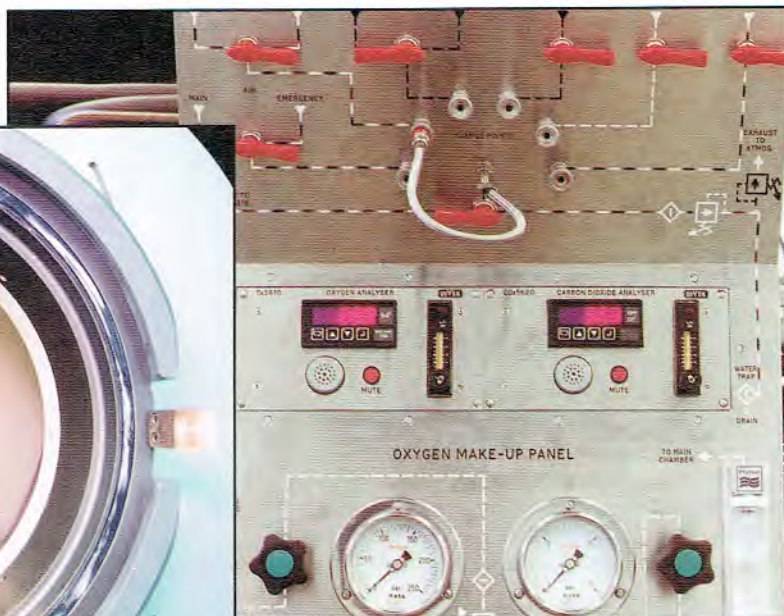
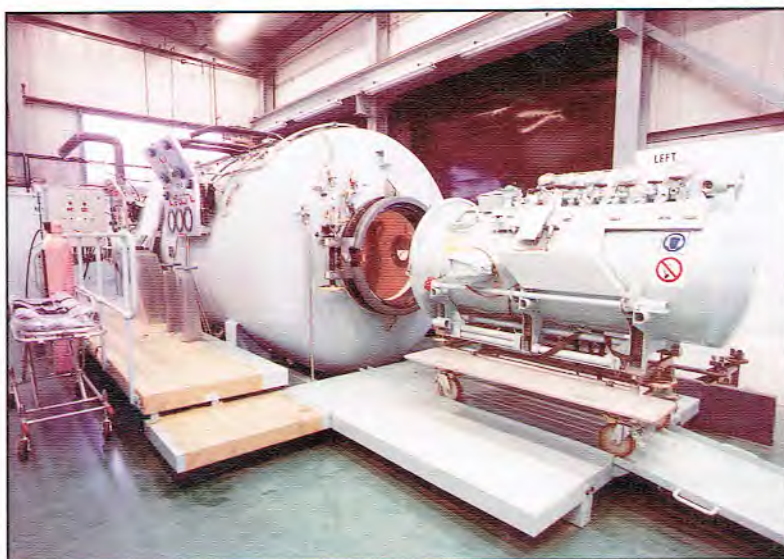
Main Supply of 5 x 9.1 cu. ft.

Emergency Supply of 5 x 9.1 cu. ft.

Ancillaries' Supply of 3 x 9.1 cu. ft.

Redundancy is a key word in the design of this system and pressurisation rates of 36 msw/min (0-30 msw) and 20 msw/min (30-80msw), mean a lot of air bank. Of course you can guarantee that the old system had UNP (Unified Pusser) threads and the new industry standard is Metric. Lots of fun for the Fitters! Redundancy also means a lot of valves x 2 (Inner and Outer). You would not believe the pre dive checks.

All in all, just a lot different from what most of us are used to. It certainly looks most impressive, and at the time of writing (3 Nov 94), the new toy was undergoing Contractors Acceptance Trials (CAT). Hopefully the CCU will have been issued by Christmas. Is it bigger though? - Yes! Is it better? - Yes! Can we work it? Not a hope in hell's chance, but we will keep working on it.





# Rationalisation of Teams - Northern Diving Group

By LS(D) M. A. Maddock

## INTRODUCTION

The breakdown of the Soviet Block in 1990 and the resultant end of the 'Cold War' drew attention to the requirement for a more efficient and cost effective Defence Strategy for the United Kingdom.

The Defence Cost Study (DCS) was initiated in 1993, to look into more effective ways of running the 3 Armed Services. As a result of this Study, the Royal Navy identified areas of excessive expenditure and now plans to trim down to a leaner, but more effective organisation. The DCS led to a proposal for one Naval Base to close, and as we are all aware, following the announcement in July of this year, Rosyth is now planned to run down, from Nov 95 onwards, to its new status as a Support Establishment. This led to a problem within the Diving branch and the Staff of FOSNNI of where to locate the Scotland, Northern England, Northern Ireland Clearance Diving Unit (SNNICDU) currently based at Rosyth.

## OPTIONS

In the early stages of discussion, a number of Options were considered. These were eventually whittled away until only 2 were considered viable and studied in any detail - the East and West Coast Option.

### ONE

The first Option was for the Unit to remain in its present location on the East Coast of Scotland and continue independent operations with a number of locations being considered for its base. The first was to remain in the Rosyth Support Establishment and lease a building from the Dockyard Management Service. Other locations were also considered such as R.M. Arbroath, RAF Leuchars and Dregghorn Barracks in Edinburgh however, with no other RN Units planned to be based on the East Coast and the loss of all Dockyard Engineering commitments, the Units principal tasks would reduce to Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operations (EOD) and assistance to the Civil Authorities under the Military Aid to the Civil Powers (MACP) Agreement. It was considered the substantial costs associated with maintaining and running an isolated RN Unit with limited Operational commitments were not justifiable and the Option was not pursued.

### TWO

The second option was to relocate SNNICDU from Rosyth to the Clyde Submarine Base (CSB) at Faslane. This option was chosen as the most effective solution with the main areas of difficulty being associated with the cost of relocation of assets and the increase in domestic support infrastructure required. However, these should be offset by the anticipated lower overall running costs once the Unit is established. The relocation of the Unit will cause considerable problems, especially with the limited budget allocated for the

move and the lack of available space at the Base. Faslane will now have to cope with the additional influx of personnel from Rosyth and other outlying establishments as well as that associated with the recent increase in manpower attributed to the introduction of the new Trident Submarines. Due to these constraints it is planned, at present, that both Units will have to operate from the existing Diving Section Building with minor changes to the internal layout - definitely a case of squeezing 3.52 litres (quart) into a 1.75 litre (pint) pot - whilst forming a new Diving Group.

## WORKLOAD

At present the work load for each current Unit is as follows:-

### CSBCDU

The Clyde Submarine Base Clearance Diving Unit (CSBCDU) to date has a compliment of 30 men, plus 6 augmentees. It operates Improvised Explosive Device Disposal (IEDD) coverage for the Glasgow area and Conventional Munitions Disposal (CMD) cover for the Clyde Sub Sea Areas. However the Unit's 'Bread and Butter' is undoubtedly the Underwater Engineering Support (UWE) it provides within the Base to the submarines based on the Clyde. The amount of work undertaken has put heavy demands on the personnel, especially since the Unit began supporting the Trident Project in earnest. Support has included foreign deployments, due to the unrivalled expertise within the Unit in this field, and personnel have clocked up well over 85,000 minutes carrying out a variety of Underwater Engineering Tasks in the Base.



### SNNICDU

The SNNICDU has a compliment of 22 men with 11 augmentees. As the Command Area Unit it has the largest 'patch' of real estate in the UK. This stretches north from an imaginary line drawn between the Humber and Dee estuaries, through Northern England to the Scottish Highlands and Islands and also includes Northern Ireland. The Unit has undertaken a considerable and varied amount of EOD work throughout the year with its busiest period being from early March to the end of October. During 1994 the Unit has covered over 72,000 road miles, which will increase when the Unit is re-located to Faslane, dealing with over 200 call-outs of which 95% have been to

live ordnance. They have also collected and disposed of over 5,000 assorted pyrotechnics in various states of disrepair. These totals do not include assistance given to the Civil Authorities, Range/Wreck Clearances, or demands throughout the year from Northern Ireland.

## NORTHERN DIVING GROUP FORMATION

The SNNICDU move at present, is planned for January 1996 and it is then that the new Northern Diving Group (NDG) will come into existence. For the reasons discussed the Group will at least initially, operate from the existing buildings within the base which should ensure the transitional period is both challenging and slightly cramped. The NDG will consist of two co-located Diving Units operating as follows:

### UNIT ONE: (NDU1)

Northern Diving Unit 1 will be the Local Unit (effectively the original CSBCDU). The main changes that effect this Unit, at present, will be the introduction of a WO(D) as the Officer-in-Charge (OIC), effectively taking over the Boss II's position as DIVO. Main Tasks will continue to be Underwater Engineering Support of SSBNs/SSNs based at Faslane (practice for Battle Damage Repair) and Base IEDD Coverage prior to the deployment of an SSBN. It is likely the Units present CMD commitment will be passed to NDU2. The Unit will incorporate the present 'Additional for Trident Work Element' into its basic structure but will lose its Current C Element.

### UNIT TWO: (NDU2)

Northern Diving Unit 2 will basically retain the overall strength structure of the existing Rosyth Based Unit, but an extra PO(D) billet will be created to enrich one of the Elements from a 'C' to an A/B element. The Unit will continue to provide the CMD/IEDD coverage of the old SNNICDU, and additional UWE support to Royal Navy Vessels operating in Northern Waters but outside of the CSB. It will also continue to support Military/Naval Operations in Northern Ireland at the request of SNOI.

## GROUP STRUCTURE

The overall structure is as per the diagram below. At present the Deputy Staff Minewarfare Clearance Diving Officer (DSMCDO), and WO(D) Terms of Reference are still being discussed between FOSNNI, SoF and COMMW. It is considered necessary, with the number of Exercises/Operations etc. in Northern Waters to employ one Lieutenant in the role of a DSMCDO. This in turn will require the WO(D) to be employed as OICNDU1. Whilst this organisation is different to that of the Fleet/Southern Diving Groups, and leaves the position of Group Controller gapped, it is, a pragmatic solution to local difficulties. If this management structure is adopted it will be reviewed after two years and changed as necessary/if required.



# Rationalisation of Teams - Northern Diving Group

SMCDO's overall responsibility will be as the OIC of the NDG, and in addition he will retain responsibilities for all the National MW Operations/Exercises in the surrounding Sea Areas and will almost certainly still support the NATO Commands of COMNORLANT and COMNAVNORTHNORTHWEST.

## FUTURE

The future is certainly not set in concrete and the old adage, 'Watch this space' applies. There may well still be many changes both before and after the formation of the NDG. One of the main problems still to be addressed, is that of the Day to Day Control of the Units? At present Opcon will be passed to Cinclant in Northwood and the Coastguards will be expected to report incidents to the Fleet Duty Controller, a very busy man to get hold of at the Fleet Headquarters!

What priority he will place on a smoke float on a beach in Whitby, whilst enemy aircraft are bearing down on a Type 23 in the Adriatic is not easy to predict. IEDD tasking is likely to remain via the Joint Service Explosive Ordnance Disposal Operations Centre JSEODOC at Didcot. Other problems include, the exact split of present IEDD commitments, the distribution of transport, cost effectiveness of building improvements, and most importantly,

manpower and drafting. In addition the increased distances and response times to CMD and emergency call outs on the East coast, whilst not dramatic, will still increase the workload on the Group and will require careful handling if the Group is to remain an effective and responsive organisation. If not the tasking may eventually be lost to our willing and friendly Army chums.

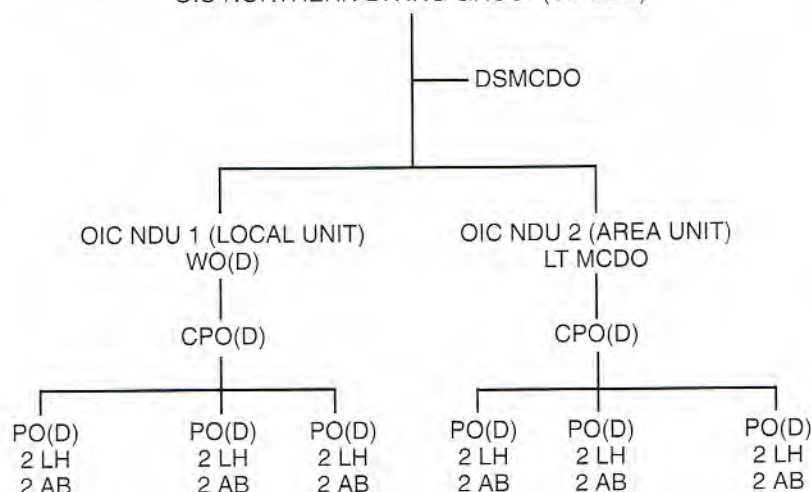
Whatever happens, the next few years will

see a big change, not only within Scotland but across the Branch as a whole. We are a small band of warriors, but our value to the Fleet is great and must continue to sell the fact that we are just as important in peace time as in conflict, when our contribution is never in doubt.

M.A. Maddock  
L/D SNNICDU



## OIC NORTHERN DIVING GROUP(SMCD)O



# Third (Deep) MCM Squadron Update

By CDR J. A. Humphrys

## Highlights

In May/June SANDOWN completed a very successful deployment to the Med as part of a Belgian led Task Group. During the seven weeks away she achieved the most on-task time of any of the ships in the Group - so much for the unreliability of MHSA3!

**OST.** At the time of writing HMS SANDOWN has completed BOST, beating HMS WALNEY to this milestone by a short head, with HMS INVERNESS underway and due to complete by Christmas.

**Trials.** The Third Squadron won't be the same without the seemingly endless stream of trials. Well, the end is in sight! I know you've heard it all before, well this time it really is the truth - promise. With some of the Opeval and much of Fleet Weapon Acceptance completed, there are just minor inconveniences like RCMDS2 (proving 200m capability with Remote Cable Cutter and MDC) outstanding.

## Personnel

One lesson learned during the deployment and BOSTs is the critical under-manning of the Class, particularly amongst the WB personnel. The good news is that the battle for an extra OM2(MW) has been won to add to the WEM/OM(C) already added to the original Scheme of Complement. COMMW

has also agreed that when deployed as part of the OCF or STANAVFORCHAN then augmentee ROs will be loaned to the ships. This is particularly good news in view of the possible demise of STAFU (an electronic version of an RO that doesn't go off watch, drip about the food or use up mess space which could be more valuably occupied by a Diver or OM(MW)) (SOO wrote this!)

**Females.** The MCM Flotilla's first female officer has been nominated, and will be serving with the Third Squadron by the early summer. The follow on build (we're not allowed to call them batch two) will have accommodation for female senior and junior rates as well as officers.

## Equipment

The major shortcoming in MHSA3 is still RCMDV Recovery; in essence the crane won't reach far enough for the vehicle to be kept comfortably away from the Voiths. An interim solution has been identified (hero platforms - see last issue - extended reach crane and lightweight pole/recovery hook) and all ships will have this fit by late spring. A package of hot weather enhancements is under consideration but it seems unlikely that this will be in place in time for the OCF Deployment to the Med this Summer, just as well we're taking a couple of Hunts - without them there'd be no ice!

## Future Programme

In March WALNEY and INVERNESS will be joining BRECON and HURWORTH in the first four ship OCF, led by MCM3, and SANDOWN takes over from ATHERSTONE as the STANS unit in July next year. Suddenly it's all coming together. What is there left for the Squadron staff to do? I know, let's worry about the move to Faslane next autumn.

**Tactical Development.** How do you employ a SANDOWN? Answers on a postcard please to SOO3, Algerine Building, Rosyth. Whilst SOO is reading all your replies the rest of us (Ships, Squadron, COMMW, SMOPS and MWDC) are trying to produce some guidance. Progress has been made, see MOTI 0202 and 0203, for Route Survey, and draft MOTI for EXTAC 843 as applied to Sonar 2093. The whole process is empirically driven and so will inevitably be evolutionary. Good ideas are always welcome; none of us is the expert in MHSA3; some just know a bit more than others!

By sounding upbeat I am placing myself in a position to be shot at. The risk is one I have considered and I fervently believe that MHSA3 is nearly there and very soon the SANDOWNS will be contributing their bit, complementing the hard pressed Hunts.





## HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLEMENTATION IN COMMW

By A/CPOWEA(WD) A.J. Rettie, COMMW

The COMMW Health & Safety Implementation Team (HSIT) was formed in August 93 and tasked with implementing health and safety legislation in the MWV Flotilla by 1 Apr 95. It currently comprises a LT (WE) submariner and an A/CPOWEA (WD) with Type 42 experience - so who says that Drafty has no sense of humour!

Since its formation the HSIT has visited most of the Flotilla, and a number of ships have been involved with trials of various kinds. The learning curve has been steep, but the progress to date includes:

- The publishing of a *Health and Safety Policy Statement* by the Commanding Officers of all MWVs.
- The setting up of a *Health and Safety Committee* in all ships to promote a positive health and safety culture and to progressively improve the management of health and safety.
- The distribution of a large amount of information and advice, including *COMMW Safety Memoranda*. These address a wide range of topics - with the aim of raising the general level of awareness and understanding of safety-related matters at all levels.
- The distribution of a *New Joiners Booklet* to all ships to assist with health and safety induction training.

Future plans include:

- Issuing a *Health and Safety Log* to each ship.

- Issuing guidance to ships on the *Control of Substances Hazardous to Health* - including generic assessments where these are applicable.
- Distributing a range of *safety posters* to ships at the rate of 2 per month.
- Issuing guidance to ships on dealing with *contractors*, including a ship's/contractor's responsibilities form.
- Issuing a *safety information board* to ships for use on the gangway to improve the provision of information to ship's staff, contractors and visitors.
- Trialing a simple *loss reporting system* to assess the accuracy or otherwise of current performance indicators.
- Issuing guidance to ships on *personal protective equipment*, its maintenance, use and stowage.
- Issuing guidance to ships on *risk assessment* - including generic assessments for hazardous activities where there are no laid down procedures.
- Making provision for enhanced *health and safety training* for ship's, squadron and HQ staffs.

The HSIT will formally cease to exist on 31 Mar 95 - with a Warrant Officer taking over from 01 Apr 96 as the Flotilla Health & Safety Officer. In the meantime, anyone requiring advice or assistance on health and safety matters can contact the team on HM Naval Base, Rosyth ext. 64337.



## ROYAL SAUDI NAVAL FORCES MINEWARFARE DIVER TRAINING TEAM

### Team Members

Lt Cdr Martyn Holloway  
CPO(D) Taf Morse  
LS(D) Froggy Gradidge  
LS(D) Dave Brearey to be relieved by  
LS(D) Andy Frowley  
AB(D) Tony Watt to be relieved by  
AB(D) Al Reilly  
Having read Abdulmageed Al Devitt's Saudi dit in the last Mad Mag, a few lines from me to keep all you avid readers up to date.

It would be nice to be able to boast of our achievements in training having qualified even more Saudi Arabian Minewarfare Divers this year; however, due to circumstances beyond our control in that the presence of students is usually a pre-requisite to running a course, I am unable to so boast. Accordingly, the third of five expected RSNF Minewarfare Diver Courses will not now commence until Easter Monday 1995. The frustrations of 'will we, won't we' apart, we have kept ourselves occupied with trips to Saudi to recruit elusive students for aptitudes;

Germany for Drager Duocom maintenance courses, 'Royal Navy Divers, would you like to see our new set?'; Canada for SIVA 55 maintenance courses; 'Royal Navy Divers, would you like to see our new set?', and a deep work up in Falmouth. 'Royal Navy Divers, has anybody brought our new sets?' (this **doesn't** happen on our team). Some of the team have even managed to fit in a variety of training courses, and are supremely qualified in computer studies, equitation, small arms, intelligence photography, HAZMAT, PT and even (dare I say) scoobi doing (but we won't dwell on that).

We have also been able to acquaint a few fellow members of the branch with SIVA 55, no 0-40 bar gauges to be over pressured here, oh joy of joys. I would like to stress these acquaints have no connection whatsoever with any project the trials organisation might presently be involved in and has been offered purely as an insight into another re-breather for those who are interested, practice in

instruction for us, as we have no students, and as a method of getting peoples' minutes in. Enough said!

The programme for 95 appears to be a little more promising and will certainly be busier in the early part of the year. Two of our merry bunch are off to pastures new; Dave Brearey to FDU3 and Tony Watt to HMS Dulverton. Many thanks and best of luck to them both. These guys are to be relieved by Andy Frowley and Al Reilly respectively, so a lot of in-house training will be required, (see para 2 above).

Well that about covers what's happening now and in the near future, as always subject to change at short notice, (what's new). At the time of writing we are preparing to depart again to Saudi, and hopefully, we will get further than the Club Lounge at Heathrow before the organisational nightmare begins.

In the meantime, pause for thought...Have fax machines stopped telephone drafting? Until then, keep it safe.

Taf Morse





# Letters to the Editor



... letters to the Editor ...



## A GOOD START TO THE YEAR A Summary of life on a typical MCMV

*Tuesday 4th January*

Just back from Christmas leave, it sounds like everyone had a great time, all the dits are being spun about what Santa bought us all for Christmas and how many of us got locked up for molesting WPCs on New Years Eve. Well it's going to be a week of settling back into the old routine and getting ready for the dreaded 'Pike'; two weeks in Campbeltown, Diving and Hunting our a \*\*\* s off. At least we have one more weekend at home, my girlfriend's birthday in fact; I've got the plush hotel, four poster bed and champagne all booked - it can't fail.

*Wednesday 5th January*

Well, survived yesterday, everybody working to get the ship stored up and ready to sail before the weekend. There is a buzz going round that some WAFU has landed his Harrier in the Bristol Channel, apparently it's a prototype and the Navy wants it back. I can't understand why, surely it's a write off, maybe it's for insurance purposes? Anyway I think we're pretty safe, there are five other boats in the basin and some of those haven't got any immediately impending exercises so surely they'll be tasked for this job.

*Thursday 6th January*

It's 1300, we've just left Pompey on our way to the Bristol Channel, life has been extremely hectic for the last 24hrs especially the 4hrs trying to explain to Liz why I had to sail tomorrow, and, that 'No, I don't think if I told the skipper it's your birthday on Saturday I would be able to stay behind'. So why, we're all asking, is it us that has been blessed with the dubious honour of hunting for the Harrier? Is it because ATHERSTONE is top of the alphabetical order or are we simply the best. It turns out it's neither of these, it's the result of a catalogue of catastrophes, first the Bicester lost her anchor in the Solent or somewhere, so she had to go and search for that, then someone lost a WWII buoyant mine off the back of a fishing boat so TWO Hunts were dispatched to find that. Then the WAFU lost his Harrier, a good month for C126s. So here we are at sea heading NW on our way to Lundy.

*Friday 7th January*

Lundy island looms over the horizon, the sea state is 4 to 5 and we're rolling like a pig. This is not a good re-introduction to being at sea. The diving team is short of the Cox'n, the depth is between 51 to 55m, right on the limits. The Jimmy and resident MCDO is a good man but he lacks the experience of a PQ(D). The team as it stands consists of one AB(D) and two baby divers, one fresh off course and the other whose only other diving draft was a fish boat, and myself the LS(D) who hasn't done a Minehunting dive for 5 years, this could be interesting. As usual nobody knows what's going on, will we recover it or will it be recovered by a salvage vessel after we've located it? Will FDU II with their 75m capability come out and help us or are they somewhere spending their subbies on yet another pair of Raybans. Who knows?

*Saturday 8th January*

We're Hunting and PAPing anything that moves or not as the case may be. The weather is too rough to hunt properly but the Navy wants its Harrier so we keep on trying. It seems that every PAP is surfacing with some malfunction or another so it's away Gemini to recover them. The Muppets say there's a problem with the PAPs and the divers say there's a problem with the Muppets, vive la difference as they say in France. The Salmad is coming out to recover the wreckage when we find it. She carries her own divers so it looks like we're out of the game as far as diving is concerned, back to the rôle of professional sea boat crew. We also now have a salvage officer onboard who is supposed to guide us onto the wreckage and assist us with I.D.ing it, but he's a WAFU, so his experience with things underwater is practically nil.

There are helicopters buzzing around us like flies on s...; they are following the emergency pinger which is attached to the infamous 'black box', which by the way isn't black and isn't a box because the military don't carry black boxes, it all gets very confusing. Anyway we're chasing this pinger which seems to be taking us further and further away from the original datum. We're not convinced this is good but the WAFUs know best.

*Later Saturday*

We've convinced the Salvo to allow us to search the original datum again as so far our search has been fruitless and the natives are getting restless. We seem to be picking up small contacts which could be wreckage.

After locating some larger contacts worth PAPing we had a look and have discovered what could definitely be aircraft wreckage. (PAP recovered by gemini).

*Sunday 9th January*

The weather is really bad now, the Salmad has run for cover, she's probably twice our size so maybe that should tell us something.

A decision has been made and we're on our way into Pembroke Dock, not the most exciting run ashore in the world but it's terra firma even if it is Wales.

*Monday 10th January*

Still alongside with Salmad, it turns out the civvie divers couldn't get dispensation to go below 50m so its over to the sunshine boys FDU II, what time can you get here lads? 0200 was the reply, ready to sail by 0500, cheers lads, why not 0800 ready for 1100.

*Tuesday 11th January*

Sailed at 0500, we've managed to catch a weather window so ideal hunting conditions, a straightforward day, just go out relocate the wreckage, PAP it to confirm it's what we're looking for, con the Salmad onto it and away to Campbeltown for lunch. Another lesson learnt in the art of Minehunting, I say art because it certainly isn't a science, nothing is ever as easy as it first seems. Four PAP runs, each recovered by gemini, before we managed to get a good look at the main wreckage which is an almost complete Harrier and all credit to the muppets, it was an excellent



# Letters to the Editor

piece of filming. So one more PAP run (recovered by gemini) and we've got it. All that remains to do is con the Salmaid over it and we're out of here (time 1900).

So, how do we guarantee the Salmaid is in the precise position. Considering she doesn't have our precise nav or sonar and the weather is now worse than ever? Maybe leave the Icos recovery line on the wreckage for her to pick up? No, two hours of conning runs and the weather has beaten us, there must be another way, maybe if we used Salmaid as the gemini and lowered the Icos over her bow and did a conning run with her. Sounds a little far fetched but it worked. 30 minutes later Salmaid was in position and we're on our way to Campbeltown, deep joy (time 2330). A good start to the year and life back at sea, it certainly cleared up any misconceptions I might have had.

I would like to personally thank Mo Morris and his boys for dropping two 25kg sinkers, a LL float and 60m of rope from a passing Sea King which me and my baby diver enjoyed hauling into the gemini on Sunday morning.

Also Harry Cripps who contracted some disease over leave and who is still, to the best of my knowledge sunning himself at Costa del Horsea.

Yours Aye

**L/D Bouch Bouchard**  
**Atherstone**

## WILL THE REAL FIRST CLEARANCE DIVERS STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

So far we are three in number, the last remaining known dinosaurs from as far back in historic time as 1944. There must be others around from the 70 divers or thereabouts who were trained with 'P' Parties but all efforts to trace their fossilised remains have failed.

Anyway for the benefit of the unenlightened younger species who have evolved and carried forward our proud name, I give you a short precis of your noble beginning. It all started around 1943 when the Allies were planning the invasion of Europe and how they would use the liberated ports for much needed supplies. A wise gentleman by the name of Commander Hammond R.N. ably assisted by Lt. Cdr. Mould RANR, hit upon the idea of using divers to clear said ports of unexploded bombs, mines and other nasties, a sort of human minesweeper. A unique (at the time) type of diving gear was assembled (aptly named 'Clammy Death') and a technique of underwater search developed. He was ready to train his 'water babies' and selected none other than Wapping Docks in London for the baptism. This was a most melodious basin of water and a hulluva winner when calling for volunteers for Special Service from the Seaman branch - many of whom were from the South.

There were 4 Parties of approximately 15 Divers plus 15



Maintenance hands trained at Forest Gate, known as H.M.S. 'Fireworks', - later 'Vernon D' at Brixham became the venue. Our training programme was virtually unwritten, apart from basic diving principles and the golden rule of bomb disposal 'never cut a taut wire or pull a slack one', we really developed our own technique of search, location and recovery. The bomb disposal officers (BDO) attached to each unit were the kiddies who dived on our finds and decided the best method of disposal - ie. recovery or a big bang! So as the Allied Armies gained their foothold in Europe and ports began to fall 'P' Parties went to war to do their

clearance bit. Many a thrilling tale could be told (all the better like wine for the passing of time) of the exploits of these clearance diving parties. Suffice it to say it is a miracle that the casualty rate



wasn't total considering the enemies deadly explosive devices in the hands of 18 and 19 year olds, the cold and compositions! But hearty Jolly Jack took all in his leaded boots stride and the four operational parties found themselves together in Antwerp (there were a few liberated runs ashore there) billeted, if my memory is correct in a Musical College. Antwerp, as a major port, was the key to the final advance into Germany, hence the concerted efforts of all 'P' Parties to clear it safe for ships to use in as short a space of time as possible. We did this

and to show their extreme gratitude My Lords Commissioners decided we could have some diving pay - the first ever for Clearance Diving!

At the end of hostilities in Europe the Parties regrouped as 'P' 2443 and 2444 in Brixham ready for shipment to the Far East, having trained in the clear water or Torbay in the M.R.S. The war with Japan came to an unexpected sudden end before our departure with the dropping of the atomic bomb and its effect on 'P' Parties was traumatic. We were all given indefinite leave.

On recall to Brixham after just two lousy weeks we found that the two Parties would remain as before. 'P' 2443 would clear U.K. ports and coasts of undesirables and 'P' 2444 go back across the channel to help the French clear the port of Dunkirk, which incidentally was never taken by the Allies, just surrounded and watched. There are some good diving ditties to be told about this bunch, but I will leave that for those who were there as I was included in the 'home party'. 'P' 2443 had a marvellous jolly, starting off at Tower Bridge, London, we slowly progressed Northwards along the coast and harbours investigating reports of unexploded bombs etc., seen to fall in the water during the war. Lowestoft, Cromer, Yarmouth, Blyth, North Shields, Aberdeen and Peterhead float before me as does the accommodation we had to endure in such delightful abodes as the Eagle Brewery and a local Y.W.C.A!

Yes I am proud to be one of the dying breed, an almost extinct specie, a 'P' Party Clearance Diver. I have a great deal to be thankful for and all it has offered me. Firstly for the unique type of comradeship that was formed then and still exists amongst the diving fraternity today. Also for that early diving training that enabled me to earn a very fulfilling and profitable living as a commercial diver for 32 years. But as the Great Bard himself says, that is another story.

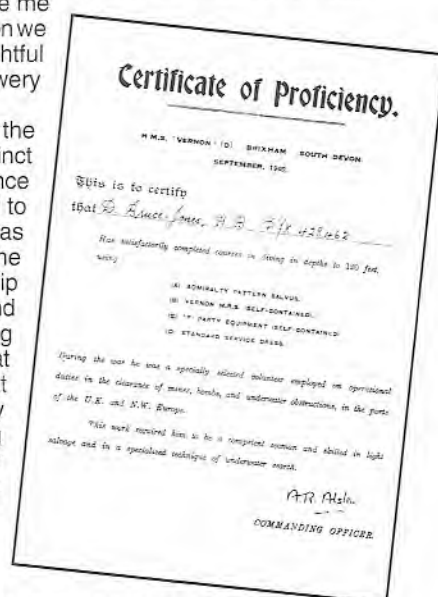
So you young Siblings, that is how you evolved.

May Clearance Divers go from strength to strength, forever blowing bubbles and keeping your heads just below water. Your real Daddies are proud of what has developed over the past 50 years. And Momma, who is a little the worse for wear, now thanks you're cute!

**D. Bruce-Jones B.E.M.**

**Clearance Diver**

**ex 'P' Parties 1574 & 2443**





# More Letters to the Editor

## More Letters!

Dear Ed

The enclosed photo was taken at a charity night and may be of interest to your readers.

It seems that the king of rock & roll 'Elvis' himself, has at last re-emerged. After many years of hiding and media evasion it seems the ideal choice was to appear in the guide of a mine warfare specialist.

Removing part of his expert disguise the unmistakable hair and eye brows gave credence to his true identity. Silencing the female screams of excitement with a truly magnificent pelvic swing (the kind that only this man is capable of) he enchanted the assembled onlookers with a previously unrecorded number which if memory serves correctly (and it does indeed) went as follows:-

*1st Verse* Hey Mr. Fisherman home from the sea, have you a lobster you can sell to me.

*Chorus* I've been so lonesome baby, I've been so lonesome I could die etc. Well I took the lobster home etc.

Unbridled hysteria followed this astounding revelation, and as the ambulances drove away brimming over with swooning women, the remainder of us stood Ga Ga, awe struck, watching Elvis collect his T Shirt reward and fade once more into the shadows from whence he had appeared. Weeks have now passed with no more sightings of 'The king of rock & roll' although a recent rumour locates him in the geographical area of Algerine Building, HM Naval Base, Rosyth.

Yours in awe  
G. Otcha



Dear Editor

On opening the latest edition of your excellent magazine I was somewhat startled to find my name in print above a photograph of my father-in-law, then Lt A H Rowlandson! This prompted me to ask him for some personal recollections of VERNON at the time of the photo and I hope they may be of interest.

The group was divided into RMS, Mining, A/S Weapons, Sea Trials, Equipment Trials and Administration.

**RMS:** Cdr Ouvry + Mould, Syme, Wadsley, Armitage, Hodge and Ellis. In due course these seven had been awarded one DSO, four GCs and seven GMs.

**Mining:** Lt-Cdr Macdonald + Morley, Nicholson (Hydrographic and recovery of mines for exploitation - often by bottom trawls or grapnels), Griffiths (long-time Editor of Yachting Monthly), and Clayton, who later ran the MX section. This team of 50-60 Wrens provided special tailor-made mine circuits to meet short notice requirements for specific operations (eg. anti-sweeper mines). They produced up to 100 circuits a week.

**Equipment Trials:** Lt Frary + Cleverley and Elliot

**A/S Weapons:** Lt-Cdr Harper + Hight

**Administration:** Lt-Cdr McVittie and 3/0 Noble (i/c WRNS)

**Sea Trials:** Lt-Cdr Glenny responsible for the Mining Shed, run by Lt Jennings with Martin, Brown, Cook, Preston and Bell; and for Mining Trials run by my father-in-law. These were mostly shock trials to check that mine circuits would survive nearby mine explosions.

The Mining Trials took place in the Solent off Ryde using the VERNON Tender NIGHTINGALE but by November 1941 the Luftwaffe was seriously interfering with the trials programme. Also a new requirement arose when the RAF wanted to test air-dropped mine mechanisms against water-entry impact. Since the Solent was too confined for the RAF trials, Cdr Thistleton-Smith had to find somewhere else.

He sent his Mining Trials Officer (father-in-law) to see if Weston-Super-Mare was suitable - it was! Indeed, the site was a happy choice as my future mother-in-law had evacuated from Hampshire to W-S-M a couple of months before to give birth to my wife Sonia. The Mining Trials team used a nissen hut at RAF Locking as their base. 33 years later, when I first visited the site, I was hosted by Julian Thompson in the same nissen hut! In the 1980s new buildings were put up near the foreshore and the hut at Locking was cleared out. A copy of the group photo was found and given to me. I discovered a better copy in the Sea Trials office at VERNON and in due course arranged for it to reach the Head of the new Mining Section in Southwell - so that he could start the 'new section with the reminder of its previous incarnation.

During my own use of the site at W-S-M I got my father-in-law and my wife to visit the facilities and witness some big bangs. During a tour of the site he was then able to see how it had developed since the first visit back in late 1941! He was pleased to see that his choice had survived for so long despite extensive use by his son-in-law!

Yours sincerely  
B.H.L. Braidwood  
Lt-Cdr (retd.)

*p.s. Further information relating to the activities listed above can be found in:*

*'Mines, Mine-layers and Mine laying' by Captain J S Cowie; 'HMS VERNON 1930-1955' by Cdr ED Webb; 'Secret Naval Investigator' by Captain Ashe Lincoln, QC, RNVR; 'Designed to Kill' by Major Arthur Hogben (Custodian EODTIC); and 'The Torpedomen' by Rear Admiral E N Poland.*

Dear Editor

I would like to draw the attention of readers to a recently published book entitled 'Forecastle to Quarterdeck'. The author is Harry Wardle, a retired Deep Diving officer and active member of the Minewarfare and Clearance Diving Officers' Association who is well known among the older brethren.

The book covers Harry's early life, entry into the RN at HMS GANGES as a 2nd Class boy aged 16 in 1934 and then describes his eventful service in various ships before and during WWII. The book ends with him being 'volunteered' to start training as a Deep Diving Officer in 1945.

Harry tells a story which includes colourful descriptions of life and travel in a Navy which saw its share of joys and hardships with action seen during runs ashore and at sea. From Liverpool to Malta and the Yangtze, in destroyers, cruisers and battleships, Harry describes the scenes and the people he met whilst gradually rising through the Torpedo branch to commissioned rank. You do not have to be a naval historian to enjoy it.

At £4.95 in paperback, the book is available from CPW Books, 1 Harbour Road, Hayling Island, Hants. I am looking forward to any sequel which should describe Harry's training as a Deep Diving Officer under 'Uncle Bill' Filer followed by his long post-war service in the branch when, among other things, he is described as having trained Commander Lionel 'Buster' Crabb famed for the disposal of chariot-delivered mines in Gibraltar and the enigma of the Soviet cruiser visit to Portsmouth.

Yours aye  
Rob Hoole

*p.s. I am not on commission!*





## More Letters to the Editor

### JACK EASTON, GC

Jack Easton, GC, hero of wartime bomb disposal, died on November 28 aged 88. He was born on May 28, 1906



The scourge of the East End of London because of the vast amount of damage it did to artisan housing during the Blitz, the landmine, with its unpredictable fuse mechanisms, was also a nasty customer to tackle for the bomb disposal man. It was for one such hazardous attempt, which he was lucky to survive, that Jack Easton won his George Cross, of whose award he learnt on the wireless as he lay in a hospital bed recovering from the horrific injuries he had sustained.

A solicitor by profession, Jack Maynard Cholmondely Easton had been educated at Pangbourne Nautical College and when war came he volunteered for the RNVR. Having, in addition, volunteered for bomb disposal he was an acting sub-lieutenant with the Land Disposal Section on October 17, 1940, when an unexploded parachute mine was reported as having landed on a house in Clifton Street, Shoreditch.

With his assistant, Ordinary Seaman Bennett Southwell, Easton hastened to the scene to find that the mine had smashed through the roof and plunged down into the house. There it was precariously supported between two floors, propped up by fallen masonry and a stout iron bedstead, partly sustained by its own parachute lines. Easton immediately sent to work, with

Southwell passing tools and equipment to him.

As Easton wrestled with the fuse, however, the mine suddenly shifted, bringing down more rubble on the pair. Easton immediately heard that its clockwork mechanism had restarted with the jolt and yelled to Southwell to run for it. Easton followed him out of the building with all speed, and just succeeded in reaching a shallow surface air raid shelter as the mine's 1,500 lb of high explosive detonated. The immense power of the explosion - in 1940 German bombs packed four times the punch of their English counterparts for the same all-up weight - demolished not just the house but several adjacent streets. Easton and Southwell were buried under rubble, the latter killed instantly. Southwell's body was not recovered until six weeks later. He was awarded the GC posthumously for his part in the defusing attempt.

Easton was eventually dug out, having mercifully lost consciousness in the interim. His injuries were severe: his skull, pelvis and both legs were all broken. He was still in hospital when he heard that his George Cross had been gazetted on January 23, 1941.

Nevertheless he made a good recovery and spent the rest of the war in sea commands, skippering armed trawlers and minesweepers. In the Normandy landings he commanded a minesweeping flotilla and was injured a second time when a German mine exploded under his ship.

After the war he went back to the family firm of City solicitors, William Easton and Sons, which he had joined in 1930. With his father John he was a partner in the firm whose litigation department he headed for many years, a tall, impressive figure, well known in the law courts. He retired from practice in the late 1970s.

He had been a member of the VC and GC Association since its inception (it had originally been founded as the VC Association in 1956, the 100th anniversary of the decoration) and was active on its committee. He was also the association's honorary solicitor. He is survived by his second wife, Joan, and by a daughter of his first marriage to Felicity Field, who predeceased him.

### LT-CDR GOLDSWORTHY

Lt-Cdr 'Goldie' Goldsworthy, who has died aged 85, was Australia's most decorated naval officer of the Second World War.



As a mine disposal expert, he was awarded the George Cross in September 1944 for a series of recoveries between June 1943 and April 1944, in which he made safe four German ground mines, three magnetic mines and an acoustic mine.

In August 1943 Goldsworthy donned a special diving suit, which he had helped to design and test a year earlier, to recover a ground mine off Sheerness. It was only the second time such a mine had been rendered safe under water, and there was no means of escape for the diver.

Many mines had short fuses, and had one been activated Goldsworthy would have had just seconds to defuse it or try to make his escape.

In April 1944 he disarmed an acoustic mine off Milford Haven which had lain in deep water for two-and-a-half years and resisted all conventional attempts to sweep it. Using the same diving suit, he successfully removed the fuse and primer and later recovered the whole mine intact.

Earlier in 1944 Goldsworthy had been awarded the George Medal and mentioned in despatches for mine recoveries in Southampton and other British ports. In one case, at West Hartlepool, a fuse was so badly corroded that he had to make three dives before the mine was safe.

Later that year, when the port of



## Letters to the Editor

Cherbourg was badly needed by the Allies for the campaign in Normandy, Goldsworthy dived to a depth of 50 feet in the harbour waters to strip and make safe a German Type 'K' mine - the first of its kind to be discovered. For this he was awarded the DSC.

Leon Verdi Goldsworthy, always known as Goldie, was born on January 19, 1909 at Broken Hill, New South Wales, and educated at Kapunda High School, the Adelaide School of Mines and Adelaide University. He wanted to join the Royal Australian Navy but was turned down because he was not tall enough.

When the Second World War broke out he re-applied, and was commissioned in March 1941 as a sub-lieutenant in the RANVR.

He was then sent to HMS VERNON, the torpedo and mining school in Portsmouth, where he joined the Rendering Mines Safe section - a hush-hush unit which often went under other names such as the Land Incident Section.

Late in 1944 Goldsworthy went to the South Pacific to work with the US Navy on Japanese mines.

Goldsworthy had tremendous physical strength. He once badly jarred his spine while diving for a mine, but he shrugged off the injury and immediately went to Normandy to search for a new German 'oyster' mine off the D-Day beaches. When working Goldsworthy never lost his composure, and his methodical process, along with his attention to detail, kept him alive. He had a dry sense of humour, which he sustained during nearly five years of unravelling intricate mechanisms, fuses and booby traps.

After the war Goldsworthy managed a factory making electric signs in Perth. He was overseas vice-chairman of the Victoria Cross and George Cross Association from 1991.

He married in 1939, 'Georgie' Rutherford; they had a daughter.



### CAPTAIN ROGER LEWIS

Captain Roger Lewis, who has died aged 85, was one of the naval mining experts who first dismantled the German magnetic mine in 1939.



From the outset 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 Lewis said 'looked like a sailor's kit-bag.'

Lieutenant Commanders John Ouvry and Lewis, C P O Baldwin and A B Vearncombe, all from HMS *Vernon*, the torpedo and mining school at Portsmouth, set off to the scene.

Led by the private from the nearby army firing-ranges who had first sighted the object, the party splashed across the mudflats in pouring rain to find a 'dark menacing-looking object lying partially embedded in the sand.'



## Letters to the Editor

At first Ouvry and Lewis thought it was an acoustic mine, sensitive to sound, and they lowered their voices to a whisper; as a precaution they also emptied their pockets of metal objects including coins and keys before approaching the mine. By the light of Aldis lamps they found 'two unpleasant-looking fittings near the fore end.' Lewis took paper rubbings of them so that special non-ferrous tools could be made; the mine was photographed by flashlight and securely lashed down. They returned at midday on the 23rd, when the mine was next uncovered by the tide. By then a second mine had been found and Ouvry decided that he and Baldwin would tackle the first; Lewis (who had in fact never disarmed a mine before in his life) and Vearncombe would then deal with the second.

Lewis stood at a distance, taking notes for the benefit of their successors, should the mine explode. Ouvry removed one primer and detonator and signalled to Lewis and Vearncombe to come and help him turn the mine over so that he could remove a second primer. After 40 minutes of tense work the mine was safe. But as they carried the various fittings ashore the party stopped for a breather and Vearncombe put a 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.

That evening Lewis was summoned to the Admiralty to make a personal report. 'Imagine my consternation,' he said, 'when I was told the meeting would be rather larger than intended, with Mr Churchill in the chair and about 60 officers and civil servants as well.

Lewis sat between Churchill and Admiral Sir Dudley Pound, the First Sea Lord, and was subjected to close questioning which he found 'a bit of an ordeal.' At the end Churchill asked: 'Were you frightened?' Before Lewis could reply Pound, who thought the question insulted the Navy, said indignantly: 'Frightened? Of course he wasn't frightened.' Actually, Lewis later admitted he was not nearly so cool about the affair as Ouvry had been.

The mine was taken to *Vernon*, where it was completely dismantled and its secret revealed; an electro-magnetic 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'.

On December 19, four days before the awarded were actually gazetted, King George VI came down to *Vernon* to

invest Ouvry and Lewis with the DSO and Baldwin and Vearncombe with the DSM.

Ouvry later refused to exchange his DSO for a George Cross because he did not want to give up the medal his Sovereign had personally presented to him. But for some reason the same offer was never made to Lewis.

Roger Curzon Lewis was born on July 19, 1909 and went to Dartmouth as a cadet in 1923. His first ship was the old coal-burning battleship *Benbow*, which he joined in 1927. After service in the destroyers *Vivien* and *Valentine* he specialised in torpedoes in 1934 and was torpedo officer of the cruiser *Enterprise* in the East Indies from 1936 to 1938.

He rejoined *Vernon* in 1939 and was in Sheerness when the magnetic mine emergency occurred, organising block ships and demolition parties for an operation which was never carried out - to block the harbours of Ostend and Zeebrugge. He spent the bitter winter of 1939-40 in the Experimental Flotilla as a travelling 'Admiralty troubleshooter', investigating incidents involving magnetic mines.

In June 1940 he joined the battleship *Rodney* and served in her during the dramatic chase and destruction of the battleship *Bismarck* in May 1941. *Rodney* fired torpedoes from her submerged tubes during the final stages of the action, though one tube was jammed shut by a near miss from *Bismarck* off *Rodney's* starboard bow. Lewis was mentioned in despatches.

'Bull' Lewis, as he was known to his friends, was a large genial man, with such great personal charm it was impossible to be angry with him. In 1943 he was Fleet Torpedo Officer in the Mediterranean, based at Hannibal in Algiers.

The fleet was short of torpedoes because expenditure greatly exceeded supply. Lewis arranged for some torpedoes to be brought by ships and others, so 'as not to have all my eggs in

one basket', by land in lorries.

But the ship was torpedoed and sunk and the lorries lost their way and drove over a cliff. Lewis was summoned to account for himself before Admiral Cunningham, General Eisenhower and Air Marshal Tedder. But such was the dismayed expression on his face that all three chiefs burst out laughing and sympathised with his predicament.

In January 1944, off the beaches of Anzio, the Allies captured a 'double torpedo' the top one manned, with another slung underneath. Lewis at once realised the potential of such weapons in enemy hands against the forthcoming Allied invasion of Europe, and arranged for evaluation trials to be held in Malta. In 1944 he was appointed OBE for his Mediterranean service.

Lewis had an original mind and was bold enough to take an unusual initiative. In 1950 he was superintendent of Torpedo Experiment and Design at the Torpedo Experimental Establishment at Greenock when trials were being carried out on electric torpedoes.

He knew that more silver would be needed for the sea-water batteries in the torpedoes and, as the stock exchange forecast that silver prices were going to rise, he bought £50,000-worth, on his own authority and in the teeth of admiralty bureaucratic opposition. He was severely reprimanded for going over his annual budget, but the price of silver rocketed dramatically and the Navy saved nearly all the £50,000.

He was Chief Staff Officer at *Osiris* in the Suez Canal Zone from 1952 to 1955 and his last appointment before retirement in 1958 was as Captain Superintendent and Queen's Harbour Master, Chatham.

For many years he was a popular honorary steward at the All England Club, Wimbledon.

He married, in 1945, Marguerite Cherry, who pre-deceased him. They had two sons.



### LEAVING THE SERVICE

1. Are you a Rating due to leave the service? If so, have you considered a part-time career in the Royal Naval Reserve (RNR) Diving Branch? Can you think of a better way of keeping in touch with your old shipmates once a year and being paid for doing it? At the present moment there are 30 'Ex' RN CD's on the books of the RNR with room for more, all rates are required, Senior and Juniors alike so come along and join us. You will be directly administered by the Superintendent of Diving's organisation and do not have to join an RNR unit.
2. If you are interested and would like to know more about the RNR, then please give us a ring or drop us a line.
3. Point of contact is CPO(D) PATTINSON, Inspector Ship's Diving and RNR co-ordinator, on Portsmouth Naval Base Ext: 24538 or BT (01705) 753751. I look forward to hearing from you.



# More Letters to the Editor

## MINESWARFARE VESSELS OF THE ROYAL NAVY 1908 TO DATE

By M P Cocker ARHistS

Published by Airline Publishing Ltd 1993

223 pages Hard £22.95 ISBN 1-85310-328-4

At the time of the invasion of Normandy, 57,055 personnel in over 1200 vessels were directly engaged in British minesweeping operations.

This detailed reference book, peppered with high quality illustrations, begins with a short introduction into the historical development of maritime minewarfare and its constituent parts. The author, a retired Lieutenant RNR, describes how the mine has repeatedly achieved a potency and significance far beyond its cost or numbers since its first recorded use by the Dutch against the Spanish at Antwerp in 1585. He also notes how he has found it more difficult to acquire particulars of the sea mine than the facts and figures of fission weapons and missiles!

The very existence of the mine and its threat, implied or otherwise, has resulted in a demand for minelayers and a disproportionate requirement for mine countermeasures vessels. These are described in the main body of the book. Chapters cover HM Minelayers, HM Ships and Other Vessels Converted for Minelaying, HM Minesweepers, and HM Ships and Other Vessels Converted for Minesweeping. Five Appendices contain examples of basic mines, ship builders, and casualty statistics.

Vessels, with the notable omission of submarines which also lay mines, are divided by class and type and listed by name or pendant number. From MFVs to battleships, black and white photographs normally show examples of each class of vessel listed. Ship specifications are accompanied by enlightening historical notes.

There are errors, most surprisingly among recent data. Units long paid off are shown as still current eg. the RNR's converted trawlers HMS VENTURER and HMS ST DAVID and the hydrofoil HMS SPEEDY, all of which made fleeting appearances during the late 70s/early 80s. HMS NURTON, described as a constructive total loss after colliding with HMS BROCKLESBY in 1983, actually survived to hunt again and only recently decommissioned. Minesweeping is fully described but the British-led development of acoustic minehunting, and the conversion of much of the highly successful TON Class to this role, is given scant regard.

These are minor shortcomings amid the impact made by the overwhelming variety and numbers of British vessels engaged in minewarfare through the years. For example, did you know that the 18,800 ton battleship HMS COURAGEOUS was converted into a minelayer during WWI?

The author has accumulated a wealth of information and presented it logically and attractively. A useful glossary and index help make this a fascinating book with plenty of detail for the enthusiast happy to pay the price.

Lt Cdr Rob Hoole

## ROYAL COMBAT

I've had this old copy of 'Military Technology' knocking around the loft for years but thought the picture might be of some amusement to MAD readers.

Note the caption to the picture. Don't believe everything you read in the Military press!

Richard Larn, who served eighteen years in the Royal Navy as

a Chief Petty Officer Diver, has been Principal of a commercial diving centre which trained over 1,000 civilian dives for the North Sea offshore diving industry, and co-authored the recent publication 'Commercial Diving Manual'.



*Two Royal Combat divers in exercise. They are wearing the DSSCCD suit (Diving self-contained clearance diving). The 'horns' protruding from their helmets are part of an underwater communication system.*

## PIGEON POST

On sorting through Archive material a pack marked Pigeon Post was found which raised many a quizzical look. This article has been written, using letters and extracts dated 1970.

Background by Captain MCM:

Coastals on patrol were having difficulty clearing traffic, because the transmitter, type 618, was not man enough for the job (Sort it out FWEO), or not in close enough vicinity of a coast radio station. Therefore, like any good CO, they were sending a man ashore in a Gemini to make a phone call, which was often inconvenient. (The buffer would always end up in the Boozer).

As a solution pigeons could provide an alternative form of communication. Ships would embark say 3 pigeons which, when released, would fly to Lochinvar at Port Edgar. Once all 3 had flown, new birds from Lochinvar would be delivered at a convenient port in their travelling baskets.

Actions:

The Captain then brainstormed the logistics of this task, namely:

1. Hire man to look after Pigeons (additional pay for man in Heavy Gang)
2. Buy breeding birds
3. Build loft
4. Buy feed

Secondly:

1. Breed pigeons, the progeny being the ones to home.
2. Fit bell which rings in QMs position to tell of returned pigeon.

The FC then did some investigating and luckily there was a pigeon fancier in the Heavy Gang, (isn't there always), who could look after the birds when not embarked.

However, if this idea was to get off the ground (cheap joke I

*Continued overleaf*



# More Letters to the Editor



## USE OF CARRIER PIGEONS

know), BSO would need to find funds to pay the Heavy Gang member, and to buy and keep the pigeons. Also, FHEO would need to investigate construction of a loft somewhere near the quarter masters position, (good job we'd gone back to white caps after the war!), and a pigeon return alarm system.

The Sec got wind of the Captain's idea and made a sarcastic comment (as they tend to do) in the pack to which the Captain, not amused at this insubordination, replied how serious he was and wanted early action on this matter to catch the spring 1970 breeding season. Also Mr Pigeon would be included on security rounds and have his own Aboard/Ashore board.

Much discussion and comment followed about where the funds would come from to buy and look after the birds. In particular the BSO was concerned about overtime for the Heavy Gang person!

By mid April the Captain was in full flow directing people to achieve the implementation of feathery communications, but made comment that he didn't want FOSNI or any other higher authority brought in until the project was under way (naughty, naughty!)

The letter which follows was sent to FOSNI.

*The Captain Mine Countermeasures*

H.M.S. LOCHINVAR

SOUTH QUEENSFERRY

West Lothian

Telephone: South Queensferry 381, 515, Est 296

(MOD STD Code: 81)

25th March 1970

No 235/36

The Flag Officer Scotland and Northern Ireland Rosyth

1. The unreliability of R/T communications between ships of the LOCHINVAR Flotilla and shore, particularly Pitreavie COMCEN, and the recurring delays in the handling of messages, are causes for concern. This was highlighted during Exercise GREY SEXTET and a copy of the report is enclosed.

2. Whilst I am aware that better equipment is under development, experience has shown that improvements in the Fleet cannot be expected for some years yet.

3. As an interim, and indeed partial, solution to the problem, it is desired to conduct a series of experiments with carrier pigeons. Broadly, it is envisaged that a number of selected ships would carry a small number of pigeons, reared to 'home' on HMS LOCHINVAR, and they would be used in circumstances where there were geographical or atmospheric limitations on ship/shore communications.

4. The requirements are:

- 2 pairs of prize quality breeding pigeons, at a cost of approximately £15.
- Feed, the cost of which would depend on the numbers of birds held, at an average of £1 to £2 per week.
- Lofts and minor equipment, to be provided locally from Service sources.

5. Approval is requested, therefore, to embark upon this experiment, and that funds not exceeding £100 may be allocated in the forthcoming financial year.

Enclosures:

The Senior Officer, First Mine Countermeasures Squadron's letter No M.230-1 dated 31 October 1969.

One month later:

- The coop had been completed.
- 4 pairs of birds had been purchased and registered from the CO's Fund (utilising all of it, and most of the following quarter's allocation).
- Food was purchased through the Postage Fund.
- A training programme had been implemented for the next year.

Breeding commenced shortly after with the laying of 2 eggs and training flights were conducted although set back due to an abortive sortie.

No more information was available about this confidential project. What has happened to Mr Pigeon and his family since then?



## For your edification...

In Sweden, diving regulations were instituted as early as 1874 (yes, 1874!) - probably not many of you know that. One of the regulations is entitled, *Selection of Divers*, and an English translation from the Swedish follows. Some doctors think that it may be as useful now as it was 121 years ago.

Before anyone is accepted as a student of diving he must be examined by a doctor to find if he is suited for diving.

None shall be accepted for diving if:

- (1) He has headache, is partly deaf or has discharge from his ears.
- (2) He has a dark red face, short neck and sometimes in combination with red injected eyes.
- (3) He has coughed or spat blood.
- (4) He has tachycardia.
- (5) He is pale and has blue lips, cold hands and feet, in other words is an anaemic.
- (6) He is a heavy drinker or has had repeated occasions of syphilis, rheumatism or sun stroke.



## ROYAL NAVY CLEARANCE DIVERS GOLF CHAMPIONSHIP 1995

VENUE – SOUTHWICK PARK (Naval Recreation Centre)  
 DATE – 0730 Friday 21st July 1995  
 COST – £25 for Divers. (Members of SPNRC Golf Club)  
 £35 for Divers. (Non-members of SPNRC Golf Club)  
 £35 for Guests.  
 £22 for Diving Vets (55 and over) PM round only. (Vets Championship)  
 £5 extra for Ex Divers playing in main championship who wish to participate in Vets Championship. (Over 55's only)

Cost includes: Entrance fee, green fees, nearest the pin (charity hole) morning coffee, luncheon, 2 ball sweep, evening barbecue and entertainment.

£8 per head for evening barbecue/entertainment for non golfers.

There will be a limit of 84 players on a strict first cheque first served basis including guests. No post dated cheques. Priority will be given to Past and present CLEARANCE DIVERS up until 1st June 1995 with last entries 21 June 95 or before if limit is reached.

CANCELLATIONS - £10 cancellation fee will be charged for any cancellation after 1 JUNE 95. No refunds after 21 June 95.

**Cheques** made payable to the 'RN Divers Golf Championship' and addressed to WO(D) M J Crang, Fleet Diving Headquarters, HMS Nelson (Gunwharf), Portsmouth Hants, PO1 3HH. Tel PNB 24866 or BT 0705 753751.

### CLEARANCE DIVERS ENTRY FORM (DIVERS ONLY)

Name & Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Present/Retirement Rank/Rate \_\_\_\_\_

Handicap \_\_\_\_\_ Golf Club (if member) \_\_\_\_\_

Service or home address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Tick one – Chicken & Chips ☐ Sausage & Chips ☐ Ploughmans ☐

Entrance fees –	Clearance Divers (members SPNRC Golf Club)	(25)	£	_____
–	Clearance Divers (Non members SPNRC)	(£35)	£	_____
–	Ex clearance Divers PM Vets Championship	(£22)	£	_____
–	Additional PM Vets Championship	(£5)	£	_____
–	Additional Evening Guests (£8 a head) No _____	Cost	£	_____
		Total	£	_____

If applicable do you wish to play with your guest. Yes / No

### GUESTS ENTRY FORM

Name & Initials \_\_\_\_\_ Service Rank/Rate (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Handicap \_\_\_\_\_ Golf Club (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

Service or Home address (This section must be completed, failure to do so may cause disappointment/unnecessary travelling):

Telephone No: \_\_\_\_\_

Tick one – Chicken & Chips ☐ Sausage & Chips ☐ Ploughmans ☐

Entrance fee –	(£35)	£	_____
Additional Evening Guests	(£8 a head) No _____	Cost	£
		Total	£

### FOUR BALL STABLEFORD TEAM APPLICATION FORM

Only one team member to fill this application form in. Players not identified will be teamed at random.

Name of Team \_\_\_\_\_

Team members: \_\_\_\_\_



## The Divers Open

### A RIGHT ROYAL SHOW

By WO(D) Mo Crang

His Royal Highness the Duke of York together with a record number of divers entries, guests and celebrities witnessed a titanic battle for the trophies on offer in the 1994 RN Clearance Divers Golf Championship.

The event was again staged at the much improved Southwick Park Golf course which provided a severe, yet fair test to even the most proficient golfer. After a morning round and championship best of 73, Commodore Richard Moore (COMMW) was the clear leader by 4 shots. As the afternoon round progressed PO(D) AJ Wheeler and LS(D) Jessie Owen both found form and steadily chipped away at the Commodore's lead. The championship finally hinged on an 8ft putt on the last hole, which Wheeler sank, to take the title for the second year in succession by one shot over the disappointed Commodore. Owen's courageous final round 73, equalling the earlier championship record by the Commodore was dampened on the penultimate hole when he pulled his ball out of bounds to finish 2 shots behind Wheeler. Owens reward was winning the 'Ebinger UK 1st Division Stableford' prize.

The equally important 'Fullerton Sherwood Stableford Championship' was won by PO(D) Tim Sizer with an aggregate score of 76 points. PO(D) Peter Younger won the Haskell Energy Systems Second Division title with the inaugural Veterans event 'Drager UK Divers Veterans Championship' going to former championship winner Dave Bartlett.

The Team trophies were equally exciting with the AJ's consisting of AJ's Owen and Wheeler, Buck Rogers and M Hollis taking the Solent Divers Title. The exciting Mick Fellows Divers Pairs Championship was won by A/B (D) Beefy Roast and PO(D) Timothy Sizer.

The popular MARA Engineering Guests Championship was won by Keith Miller. The Divex Guests Stableford 1st and 2nd Division Medals presented by the Superintendent of Diving-Commander Brian Mansbridge went to Stan the Man Brooks of Drager UK and Tony Walker a former Club Captain of Southwick Park Golf Club.

Always a hit with the hackers the Sabre Safety Ltd's sporting trophy 'Sabre's spoon' was proudly received by Jim Carlin with the MSI 'Can't even come last' trophy going to PO(D) Dolly Parton who snatched the trophy from Hacking retired Lt/Cdr Colin the Dodd on a count back or was it forward? Interspiro's Putting Champion was a real Bill, policeman and ex Leading Diver Tim Hadley.



*His Royal Highness the Duke of York presenting PO(D) A J Wheeler with the Divers Golf Championship Trophy*



*His Royal Highness the Duke of York presenting PO(D) Tim Sizer with the Fullerton Sherwood Stapleford Trophy*

The main prizes on offer were presented by His Royal Highness the Duke of York and Tony Scannell alias 'Ted Roach' of the Bill, both playing afternoon rounds. Retiring committee member and founder organiser of the championship John the legend Dadd was presented by Commodore Moore a glass engraved figurine, our thanks John for all your efforts.

The evening social and prize giving was once again a success with Shep Wooley (now an Honourary CD) presiding. A splendid day, a splendid evening was complete when the Duke of York presented the KIDS APPEAL Charity a cheque for £500. See you all 21 July 1995 for championship number 10.





# Operational Training Staff

## CST(MWV) AND THE SMALL SHIPS OPERATIONAL TRAINING STAFF

By Pete Cawsey & 'George' Hogg

Although the future of Rosyth as a Naval Base has been the subject of much discussion, the working up of the Minor War Vessels has gone ahead unabated. It has been a while since our last article, but now is as good a time as any to update everyone with 'who's who', 'what's what' and, more importantly, 'what's happening'.

### THE TEAM

POST	TITLE	NAME	PHONE
Commander Sea Training	CST	Cdr BR Archibald	64358
Staff Navigation Officer	SNO	Lt Cdr A Brown	64216
Staff Navigation Officer (H)	SNO(H)	Lt Cdr DC Ventura	62526
Staff Minewarfare Officer	SMWO	Lt Cdr RH Hawkins	62523
Deputy Staff Minewarfare Officer	DSMWO	Lt CPJ O'Flaherty	63664
Staff NBCD/Technical Officer	SNBCDO	Lt B Glennie	64803
Staff Gunnery Officer	SGO	Lt SJ Clements	62525
Staff Marine Engineering Officer	SMEO	WOMEA P Doggett	62348
Staff Weapon Engineering Officer	SWEO	CCPOWEA I Forest	62529
Staff Chief Medical Assistant	SCMA	CPOMA A Batsford	62533
Staff NBCD Instructor 1	SNBCDI1	CMEM(M) J Butt	64803
Staff NBCD Instructor 2	SNBCDI2	POMEM S Baxter	62528
Staff Electrical Engineering Officer	SLEO	CMEM(L) G Downie	62529
Staff Seamanship Officer	SSEAO	CPO(SEA) J Jones	62249
Staff Seamanship Instructor	SSI	CPO(SEA) R M Gould	62249
Staff Chief Ops Missile	SCPOM	CPO(M) G Beckwith	64404
Staff Petty Officer Medical Assistant	SPOMA	POMA H Crockett	62528
Staff Petty Officer Missile	SPOM	PO(M) T Coleman	62525
Staff Minewarfare Instructor 1	SMWI1	CPO(MW) B Hogg	62139
Staff Minewarfare Instructor 2	SMWI2	CPO(MW) PR Cawsey	62139
Staff Chief Communications Yeoman	SCCY	CCY K P Browne	64249
Staff Communications Yeoman	SCY	CY S Baines	62531
Staff Radio Supervisor	SRS	RS P J Mills	62531
Training Programme Officer	TPROGO	CPO(OPS) S Guppy	64310

As far as the MW and Diving office is concerned, we have some good news and some bad news, (and we'll leave **you** the reader to decide which is which). From mid 1995, there will be two new billets - one for another Lieutenant (MCD) and one for another CPO(MW)(O). Could all those volunteering for the above please form an orderly queue.

The raison d'être of the whole of SSOTS is to bring Minor War Vessels undertaking OST to a high level of operational efficiency. Cdr BR Archibald (CST(MWV)) and most of his staff have served in small ships and take great pride in ensuring that the training is of the highest quality. All of us here know that OST starts long before the day of the Staff Sea Check, in some cases months before, with preparation being highly important to all concerned. The same applies to the staff who, when not at sea, welcome people to the office for either a pre-OST brief or a more informal chat. Our doctrine remains the same as ever - follow the procedures laid down in the relevant documentation, read the ROSTG and Common Weak Areas issued by COMMW

and you won't fall down the same holes as your compatriots and predecessors. The emphasis remains firmly on TRAINING, but obviously we expect a degree of competence from day one. Unfortunately, (or fortunately some might say), the period allowed for Operational Sea Training is not particularly long. As a result, if week one is spent instructing basic points at Training Performance Standard, (TPS), level, then this short time can become even more compressed. In summary, prepare well, ensure that operators are at least at their TPS and work together with the Staff to enable a sound result at the end of OST.

We have recently completed the full BOST package (including MCM!) on SANDOWN, WALNEY and INVERNESS. They were interesting to say the least and certainly provided a challenge for the Staff during the MCM phase. It is safe to say that much was learnt by all and **everyone** must continue to work to improve the way in which we 'fight' these superb ships.

All MCMVs arriving for OST will immediately notice a change in



# Operational Training Staff

the way the MCM phase is run and this is, hopefully, a change for the better. The emphasis is most definitely on the ships' primary role and ships will encounter a minewarfare programme tailored to their needs and conducted as a block after the general OST period. The 'MCM Phase' is run as a scenario based exercise from the outset, with 7/10 days devoted to COST/BOST ships respectively. This not only enables the ship's teams to 'settle in to the lap' but more effectively utilises the limited time available, (more nights at sea!) The MCM phase for the SANDOWN class is run on a similar basis, but is split between a shallow phase in the Forth (at present) and a deep phase in BUTEC, (7 and 4 days respectively). This split is under review and the package will undoubtedly be modified once we have a better feel for the requirements.

It is good to see so many of you making contact with the staff prior to your ship arriving for OST. Needless to say, if a ship comes well prepared and has the right attitude, then work up **can** be a relatively painless and enjoyable exercise. We train as well as assess, and are quite proud of our 'results' - so keep smiling and remember that no sooner do we descend upon you, than we are moving on to the next ship and her team.

The move to Faslane is beginning to take up more and more time within SHOULTON Block. We will move during the first two weeks of December 95 and will be open for business as part of the FOST organisation immediately after Christmas leave. Obviously everyone expects some turmoil during the changeover period, but all are striving to limit the stress and to ensure that concurrent work ups are unaffected. Staff are regularly on the phone to the Clyde and areas are being negotiated in which to conduct all the OST exercises currently on offer on the East

coast. Minelay areas are being negotiated with fishermen and support requirements are being assessed for all the ships that will conduct OST in our new areas. Parallel work is in hand for OPV work ups by SSOTS on the South Coast. We are all committed to making the best of the situation so that you - the customer - does not suffer.

## CST(MWV) OVERVIEW

I hope that this article re-emphasises the fact that my staff exist for the single purpose of generating improvements in the fighting capability of all Minor War Vessels, be they MCMVs, OPVs, the Northern Ireland, Gibraltar, Hong Kong or Coastal Survey Vessels. Although we are past masters at critical assessment our aim is to be constructive and to train ships in a positive and amiable atmosphere. Failure disappoints us whilst we are delighted by success. Success is a combination of several factors including programmes, manpower changes, attitude and preparation. Of these, preparation is by far the most important and the ship which prepares well will invariably perform at her maximum potential.

Although changing from the auspices of COMMW to that of FOST at the end of 1995, it is my intention that ships will not be disadvantaged in any way and that my experienced and capable staff will provide an undiluted service to all Minor War Vessels. This may not be easy, but rest assured that I apply absolute standards to my staff and their training ability in the same way that I apply them to ships. Wherever you may be worked up in the future I assure you of a warm welcome and a constructive package.



## Editorial

Perhaps it is appropriate that this edition of the MAD magazine, which highlights the plethora of changes taking place in the Minewarfare and Diving community, should also herald my departure as the Managing Editor. Having been responsible for overseeing the publication of four volumes I hand over the reins at the end of March to my relief, Lt Cdr Jonathan Lee.

Before taking over in March 1993, I had always been under the impression that, principally, the job entailed constant badgering of the MW and CD communities for contributions to the magazine which, largely, they were reluctant to provide! Happily, I could not have been more wrong. The overall response to periodic requests for articles has been magnificent and we have had little difficulty filling each edition with quality articles. I hope you will agree that Volume 5 No 1 is no exception.

As promised in Volume 4 No 2 this edition concentrates heavily on the reorganization of both the operations and training staffs, focusing on the implications for seagoing and shore based personnel. Clearly, there will be teething troubles as we "find our feet" in our new environments but perhaps of paramount importance is that Minewarfare and Clearance Diving communities maintain the close links which co-location of the schools has fostered over the years. For this reason it is our firm intention that the posts of Managing Editor and Assistant Editor will continue to be held by personnel from the separate schools, thus ensuring equal coverage for both in future editions. Mark

Kessler, who deserves all the credit for collating this and previous recent editions has agreed to stay on as the Assistant Editor and so, with the support of Jonathan Lee, I am entirely confident that standards will be maintained.

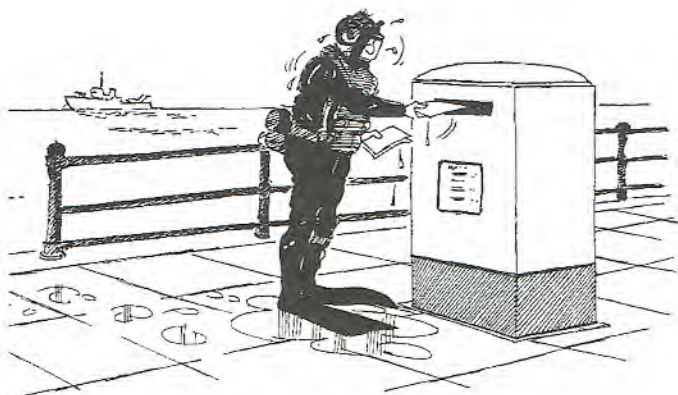
Unhappily, it has been necessary, once again, to include an obituary section in this edition. The untimely death of Petty Officer (MW) Jim Kirk was of particular sadness to all who knew and had the privilege of serving with him over the years. Our sincere condolences go to his wife and family; he will be sadly missed.

The extremely successful response to last edition's Big Badge Challenge, from which we even managed to track down an original of the flag we featured, has been difficult to follow. Nevertheless, those of you with a long enough memory to remember the subject of this edition's challenge as he was, are invited to write in with suitable anecdotes. The pick of these, if printable, will be featured in Volume 5 edition 2!

My thanks again to all who have contributed to the production of the MAD magazine over the past couple of years. There is little doubt that this periodical has come along way since the publication of the first Buddyline magazine. I believe it is important that it continues to be a forum where all with a vested interest have an opportunity to express their views, concerns and aspirations. Please keep those articles coming!



# 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  
MDT Department of SMOPS  
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 FLAG CHALLENGE

## ANSWER TO THE BIG FLAG CHALLENGE IX



### Dear Editor

Big Badge Challenge IX shows the flag of Captain Inshore Flotilla (Far East) who brought MCM Squadrons from Australia and New Zealand to join the 6th and 11th Squadrons in Singapore during that period of armed hostility with Indonesia in the sixties known as 'Confrontation'. The flag flew in the MCM Command ship HMS Manxman, the Flotilla carried out the patrols and RFA Gold Ranger provided the support.

The patrols ended in 1967 when three of the Squadrons returned home leaving the 6th MCMS to undertake the Hong Kong patrols and practice MCM. At about this time some of the minesweepers were being replaced by minehunters who soon demonstrated their superiority in a series of joint exercises with the naval forces of Australia, Malaysia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States. These exercises were often attended by far more ships than were available at the more prestigious maritime gatherings. It was not unusual to have fifty or so vessels for ten days including minelayers, headquarters ships and support ships.

Then Manxman went home, and one by one the MCM vessels made the big trip back except for the few that stayed behind to continue the patrols in Hong Kong. For the last few weeks, the Inshore Flotilla was reduced to an office in the dockyard but it still kept the flag with the black foot, the kiwi, the kangaroo, the lion and the three legs from Man. Finally, in August 1969 the flag went home – in my baggage. Well, as the last SOO and the first and last SMCD (they were all TAS before that) it seemed a good idea at the time – to give it temporary safe custody. It is still in my roof, in pristine condition and looking for a good home – any offers?

Yours Sincerely,

Michael G. Gillam

## 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 OIC, FDU1, HMS NELSON (GUNWHARF) Portsmouth, Hants, PO1 3HH (24577).





## BIG BADGE CHALLENGE X

This picture was received by the editor with a footnote saying: "It is believed that one of the gentlemen shown in this photo is a clearance diver, could you shed some light on this please"?

I must say as the editor I'm intrigued to know more. Replies through the normal channels please!