



# DIPPERS DIGEST



NAVYDIVER.CA

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Paddle Board Divers Part 1
- Passings
- Reminiscing
- 60th Anniversary

## FOUNDING MEMBERS

Glenn Adams  
André Desrochers  
Leo Goneau  
Terry Havlik  
Michael Walsh  
**First President:**  
Stanley F. Watts

## CNDA

Founded  
HALIFAX,  
N.S.  
1981

**President:**  
Wally Green



## PADDLE BOARD DIVERS – Part 1

By Chuck Rolfe

Mark Simonsen sent out a Group Emailing on 15 September 2014 to all the CNDA Members, stating that Andre Desrochers had donated a large Dive/Surf Board (it is in fact an RCN Paddle Board, vintage 1950's) to FDU(A) a couple of years ago, and it had been mounted on the wall up by the Training Tank. Mark believes it was used back in the 1950/1960's era for surface swimmer type attacks. He would like to get a tally plate made for it, describing what, who, when, where & why it was used, or any other pertinent info you guys can give me – thanks.

Chuck Rolfe forwarded Mark Simonsen's email request to all the Ottawa Members, and to Haydn Iuchi-Sutton in Switzerland for their information, and replied to Mark that when Chuck was the Editor of the DIPPERS DIGEST back in the 1990's, the late CPO Dave Pilot told him the story of Lawlor's Island back in the early 1950's, when most of the DV (Divers) were sent there for training on an assault course and Paddle Boards. Ordnance Officer/Diving Officer the late LCdr Don Loney was one of the Officers conducting this training, and he informed me (see his story in DIPPERS DIGEST #7, 15 September 1991) that in 1952, some person in higher authority decided that Divers had to be in good shape, therefore a decision was forthcoming that a training and conditioning Unit was to be established on Lawlor's Island, which is on the Eastern Passage NS side of Halifax Harbour. Part of the scheme was to build an obstacle course, which in due course was finished and then put into heavy use. This, together with lots of exercise on the Paddle Boards (they had been borrowed from the USN "Frogmen"), consisted of the majority of their physical training. C1DV4 John Brown i/c as Chief Instructor, P1DV3 Keith Powers for Hell Week Instructor, LSDV2 Bruce Robinson and LSDV2 Dave Pilot were some of the RCN Divers involved with this course on Lawlor's Island. Chuck Rolfe also stated that the photos taken on this course can be found on our website navydiver.ca in the Scrapbook file, go to **CNDA ALBUM 1** to find photo # 9 of 72, then go to **VINTAGE PHOTO ALBUM by Chuck Rolfe** to find 9 photos: 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67 and 71 & 72 of 72 pictures for reproduction to go on the exhibit. Additionally, at a later date, there was an actual Divers attack on York Redoubt from both the land, and from the sea (with Paddle Boards), in which one of the Commissionaires standing Watch believed it was the start of World War Three, and had a heart attack – story to be told later. Mark, you are to be commended for wanting to get the full story behind this Paddle Board and Lawlor's Island training! If we don't get it down in writing from this generation of RCN Divers, it will eventually be lost in antiquity.

Jack Lewis contacted us to let us know that he believes Jim Balmforth out on the West Coast would be a good contact about Paddle Boards, since he may have been a part of the story. Jim would have much information from the early 1950's, and has a lot to tell of what occurred then.

RED LARSEN contacted us that there were two of these Paddle Boards at the West Coast Unit when he and Jim Balmforth arrived there in 1954. He doesn't really remember any activity using them, but maybe Jim does. It also seems to me that Jim mentioned that he actually had one in his possession at one time – perhaps he could let you know about this.

Jim Balmforth contacted us to let us know that it is interesting to hear about the Paddle Boards used on the East Coast back in the early 50's. Perhaps around 1954/55, the West Coast Unit's Commanding Officer, LCdr Phil Henry had a visit by his good friend, the late LCdr Don Loney, and I was tasked to try an attack at night in Nanoose Bay on a ship anchored at the end of the Bay. The three of us arrived around midnight as I recall, and I was launched on a Paddle Board from the end of the breakwater. I paddled for a couple of hours but, because of the strong tidal current, I was not successful, and returned to the breakwater. As far as I know, they were never used again for this task. As a point of interest, while on the East Coast in the late 1950's, the Diving Unit was scrapping the Paddle Boards, so I got one, painted it light blue, put a Woody Woodpecker decal on the front and it was used by my young children at the lake for some time.

## PADDLE BOARD DIVERS Part 1 - Continued

**Haydn Iuchi-Sutton** contacted Mark Simonsen to say that it is great to learn that one of the Paddle Boards has survived, and is on display. As Chuck Rolfe mentioned, I am an amateur historian who has been doing a bit of research on the broader topic, so maybe I can shed a tiny bit of light on the subject for anyone who was unaware of the Paddle Board history. The article in DIPPERS DIGEST that Chuck mentioned is a great read and quite humorous; highly recommended! (Divers attack on York Redoubt). The Military application of Paddle Boards is very much a Canadian thing. It started in the early days of World War Two with a junior Officer in the Royal Canadian Navy Volunteer Reserve, the late LCdr Bruce Wright (read his book, THE FROGMEN OF BURMA). He was temporarily tasked with skippering one of the clapped-out boats being used for the St. John's NFLD harbour entrance net defenses, which gave him ample time to ponder how best an enemy might sneak into his harbour. It so happened that he was an accomplished competitive swimmer, who had read an article about how fishermen in California USA dived for abalone wearing goggles and swim fins. They used Paddle Boards, which are similar to surfboards, but longer and more tapered at the rear, and propelled by the arms – often with small paddles attached to the hands.

He put two and two together, and an idea was born; Wright reasoned that a swimmer on one of these boards could tow an explosive charge into the harbour undetected, evading the hydrophone and magnetic detection loops, and negotiating the nets as he went. Wright developed his idea and submitted it for consideration. It took a while, but he was eventually called to London to explain his idea to none other than Lord Louis Mountbatten. This was at a time when the desperate situation led to the creation of several “Special Forces” units, and he was authorized to form a unit from the Royal Marines. Most were poor swimmers, however he persevered, making them into a world class unit. He was a contemporary and associate of some notables, including Major ‘Jumbo’ Courtney (father of wartime {Army} S.B.S.), and LCdr Nigel Willmott (father of Combined Operations Pilotage Parties - COPP). The greatest influence, and very much two-way, was probably Major ‘Blondie’ Hasler, who led the “Cockleshell Heroes” raid on Bordeaux, France. Wright introduced Hasler to Paddle Boards, and Hasler introduced Wright to underwater breathing apparatus. Wright’s new unit was called the Sea Reconnaissance Unit (SRU) and was tasked both with beach reconnaissance and attacks on shipping. There was always a warm-water training emphasis, with much of it being conducted in California and in Bermuda, where the SRU almost certainly had a direct influence (but hard to prove) on the American swimmer units of that time, specifically the OSS maritime unit and the UDT; in post-war terms, that meant the CIA and SEALs. The SRU was held in reserve during the Normandy invasion, but the honour of beach reconnaissance went to the COPP’s. Realizing that there wasn’t much for his swimmers unit in Europe after D-Day, Wright took the SRU to Ceylon, where it joined with Hasler and other SBS, COPP, OSS (Office of Strategic Services), SOE (Special Operations Executive) and Royal Marine Detachment 385. This is where the SRU came into its own, swimming reconnaissance across the Irrawaddy River to allow their men to cross in 1945 against the enemy. The Paddle Boards, goggles and breathing apparatus were soon discarded for this mission, but the successful task was only possible due to the exceptional training under Wright’s command. Amazingly, the unit did not lose a single man! Like almost all Special Units, it was disbanded at war’s end, with Wright returning home to Canada. And like the COPP’s & RN Det - 385, the story of the SRU was virtually unknown for many years, and they have never enjoyed the limelight of units who actually attacked ships. As we all know, recognition often does not match the deed!

What’s been said so far, can be found in Bruce Wright’s book “THE FROGMEN OF BURMA, the Story of the Sea Reconnaissance Unit”, Published by William Kimber (1970). It’s a great read. The post war history of Paddle Boards is even less documented, or acknowledged. There are two lineages, both of which can be said to come directly from Wright. The first was what we call the British Small Boats Service (SBS) today. The post-war SBS was part of the Royal Marines, and very much based on Blondie Hasler’s ideas. They trained with Paddle Boards into the 1950’s, specifically for ship attack. I am told by the former SBS swimmer/canoists, that they stopped training with them when they decided that radars had become too much of a problem. One must keep in mind that all those I have recently discussed this with are from the more modern era than back in the 1940/1950’s. A slight clarification is required here; the Royal Navy Clearance Diver Branch never trained with Paddle Boards as far as I know – they got their ideas from the Wartime Chariot, X-Craft and P-Party company lineage. Then there is the other lineage, the occasional resurgence of interest within the Canadian Navy Diving Branch, which explains the Paddle Board here. I’ll have to dig out my notes from trawling your Newsletter, DIPPERS DIGEST’s (thanks to Chuck again!), but there seems to have been times at least when, for a brief period, there were attempts to reintroduce this skill as the Canadian way of doing things, once in the mid 1950’s, and again at the end of the 1960’s. Neither attempt lasted long, although the reasons were partly financial, I think. Plus a lack of imagination among bureaucrats, I expect too.

The late **Stan Stephenson**, when writing the story of YMT 7 in DIPPERS DIGEST #19 on 15 September 1994 (7 Boat was talking as itself in the first person), that the amalgamation of Standard Dress Divers with the Swimmer Divers had gone pretty smoothly. All the Clearance Divers were now capable of surface air supplied diving, self-contained mixed gas diving, salvage diving, using underwater cutting and welding gear, surface and underwater explosives, ID and disposal of underwater ordnance. The first requirement was then to get all the boys into shape to do these tasks, in the Summer of 1954. A Gate Vessel was moved to the jetty at Lawlor's Island, after which an assault course was set up, which went around the derelict World War Two hospital (Lawlor's was a Quarantine island for VD and other exotic, hard to treat diseases for a number of years in the 1940's), and this was how we spent our Summer.

**Chuck Wilson** wrote that I seem to remember that sometime in the early 1970's Roger "Butch" Boucher and Wayne MacDonald used a surfboard (Paddle Board?) to conduct a couple of night attacks while on the Attack Team. They weren't too successful, due to the ship's boats crews patrolling the area.

**Gary Reddy** wrote on 16 September 2014 that Mark Simonsen attempted an attack during a SABEX in the early 1980's, using an early version of a sea kayak. Outcome was similar, but it added a great diversion to the evenings activities!

**Mark Simonsen** replied to thank Gary Reddy for bringing up the tale of my sea kayak adventure. Kevin McNamara was my wingman, and we had great fun! Surprisingly, we got within 100 yards before we were seen, and then everything went crazy aboard the ship, with people running around screaming like crazy – it looked like a Chinese Fire Drill, only more amusing. We ducked under the jetty cambers, leading them on a merry hide and go seek for about an hour or so, before turning ourselves in, to our by then pissed off and embarrassed captors. When I was on my Basic Clearance Diver course out West, we found a washed up sea kayak, which I immediately took possession, putting it on our Dive Boat to take back to the Unit. At the end of the course I had it shipped back East. I painted the small kayak in a camouflage pattern and used it extensively for duck and goose hunting around Chezzetcook, Conrad's Beach in Lawrencetown, and the Cole Harbour dikes. I had quite a few bird meals due to that little stealth craft. I ended up giving it to Kevin Muise when my hunting days started to interfere with my sons early morning hockey practices. Terry Havlik took a mould of it, selling quite a few copies to other duck hunters on the East Coast.

#### More Tidbits By Chuck Rolfe

In response to the Ottawa Citizen newspaper article of 1 May 2014, stating that 11 RCN Divers were going to take part in an Exercise in Latvia, to remove unexploded WW I and WW II bombs, together with Divers from Sweden, Poland, USA and Germany, we received some interesting stories as follows:

**Dan Normandin** wrote, in 1993 on Exchange Duties in France, I spent one month on the French Minesweeper M712 CYBELLE, in attendance with other Nation's ships in the Baltic Sea. We located an unexploded British Mk 1 ground mine, which had been laid by a submarine in WW II. I was on the first Team that ID'ed this Ordinance, right after the PAP(which is a small ROV from the HS/MH)had a look at it. With a dozen ships clustered nearby, we completed the task of exploding it. Unforgettable moment in the life of a Clearance Diver!

**Harold "Bud" Nuquist** wrote from his home in Florida, I read this article with much interest, and had to wrack this old gourd to see if I could shake anything loose there from the past. I will try to make a list of accumulated Divers that I can remember who were in the old Tripartite Exchange Duties from the Diving/EOD Types. I know that over the years we have exchanged many stories, which may have become either history, or lost in the annals of time. Your own emails contain many stories that some of us have managed to express through the years.

- 1 – USN Exchange Diving/EOD Types to Canada
  - 1967 – 1968 Lt. USN Tom Kelly
  - 1968 - 1971 Lt./LCdr USN H.S. "Bud" Nuquist
  - 1971 - 1974 Lt. USN Donald Reeves
- 2 - Canadian Exchange Diving/EOD Types to USA
  - 1966 - 1967 Lt. RCN Roy Busby, Lt. RCN John Bell
  - 1968 - 1970 Lt. RCN John Cole, Lt. RCN Pete Hill

This might be a start, as there were Exchange Types to the USN in:

- 1 - US Naval Deep Sea Diving School
- 2 - US Naval EOD School
- 3 - US Naval Experimental Diving Unit

*(Editor – in the latter, possibly Lt. Don Loney and/or Lt. Tommy Thompson)*

**RCN Lt. Mark Simonsen** wrote to LCdr Barter of CANFLTLANTHQ, *"It is always interesting to the CNDA members, specially the older/senior retired guys, of the great stuff the present day Diving Trades are doing now. Back then there were no trips, or very seldom indeed between trips like a short hop to Bermuda maybe, or once in a blue moon to the Caribbean for a SABEX. The stuff we do now, like Baltic/Estonia/Sweden/Latvia/Denmark, Poland and Spain Sub Rescue, Solomon Islands, or Afghanistan just floors the old guys. They love to hear about this stuff, and live a little through you. So if you could send a little info/highlights post Exercise, and also other articles(Poland, Antigua, Etc. to Tim Flath, Webmaster(navydiver.ca), and also to be printed in the DIPPERS DIGEST. This way all members of CNDA and the public at large can view it.*

**RCN LCdr Julien**, CO of FDU(A) wrote Lt. Mark Simonsen, that I believe the easiest thing would be to send you an electronic copy of the articles about the Exercises when published, which should work to get the information out to you for publishing.

## Reminiscing

By Chuck Rolfe

**Ken Whitney** wrote that he had seen the FDU(A) Scrapbook that he had started up in the mid to late 1970's, in the Lounge at the Unit, and that it had the list of the Commanding Officers on the front page, as well as many other Diver's names within it. I called it my Hernia maker (it was so big), and at our many social functions we would have it present for all to read. When I retired, I believe that Wayne Catchpaugh (Pussyfoot) was supposed to have continued compiling it, with the back history of the Unit, including old photo's, articles, etc. At some of the Reunions I would glance at it, as it was in its third book, with a lot of the Badges shown, and it was located in the Dias/cupboard. Another note was that I also started the first Canteen in the Unit while in "Y" Hangar, with the first order of FDU(A) T-shirts. After two successful orders sold out, I had my own money back, and from then on all profits went to purchase ball caps, different types of T-shirts, FDU(A) Patches, belt buckles, glasses, mugs and cups. Again, profits were re-invested back into stock. By then I had passed on the Canteen to other Unit personnel. The (in) famous 3 man lift was brought into the Unit by me, as it was one of the PTI (Physical Training Instructor) jokes used to induct the new young PTI's into the Trade. That was in 1959, prior to going North with the UDT BRAVO Team; the first time that Ships Divers were used in the Arctic, along with the Clearance Diver Teams. The only other time the use of DCIEM Ships Divers were used, was for backup at CFS ALERT, on Big Dumbell Lake for the fresh water project. Bill Daley and Bill Burgess were two of them that I can remember.

**Sam Semple** responded, Ken, I was surprised to hear that you started the 3 man lift at the French Cable Wharf (FCW) as, over the years in the mob, I have had many great times pulling that one on unsuspecting friends! When we deployed to Cape Dorset in the High Arctic to do a demolition job, we got to work with some of the Canadian Army Engineers, who were a great bunch of guys. So, armed with a gallon of surge from Sick Bay off the Replenishment ship HMCS PROTECTEUR, we had a good bash at their campsite, with Neil Connors doing the 3 man lift – you know how the rest goes! The Army guys took it all with a great laugh, but insisted that our guys take part in their Engineer's initiation routine. Jim Larder volunteered, whereupon they grasped him by the ankles, hoisted him upside down, and commenced the ceremony by pouring neat Rum into his mouth. Needless to say, most of it went into his nose, eyes and hair! So you see, our 3 man lift was just child's play to them, Hee Hee.

**Bud Nuquist** wrote to Sam Semple, Sam, as soon as I saw that claim by Ken Whitney, I knew that there would be some replies from all over the place. I cannot recall just when the 3 man lift started, but it certainly was a few years ago. Hopefully, all the letters and comments that come out of the woodwork, will be fully truthful to say the least. There just seems to be so many stories and history from within those walls of the old French Cable Wharf building. Of course, there were many events occurred therein, and how they were seen in the observer's eyes, just add to the variety. We know that there were a few happenings that just had to be changed – simply to protect the innocent (as well as those accused!). A wee bit of change or variety always helps to make those moments of history much more interesting. Still have not heard the full truth about the time one of the "bandits" introducing a frozen turkey to one (name to be withheld forever) Number One over the holidays, right after I departed FDU(A). Many messages managed to follow this ol' Yank over the years. Y'all keep things rolling, and maintain that fine tradition that left even more stories to be added to the fine history of HMCS GRANBY, and the Fleet Diving Unit (Atlantic). Like the old song..."Those were the days, my friend.. we thought they'd never end...!!" I am hoping that one day, you will see this Ol' Yank show up there at one of the future moose-milk shindigs, with enough energy and money to make that event memorable for many of those old farts – as well as those young'uns. I had so many good memories that I simply had to get out one of my few bottles of Lemon Hart 151 and hoist a toast or two, or three to many of ya'll – Cheers.

**Sam Semple** responded to Bud Nuquist, good day to you and Glory. It is just great to hear from you, and to know that you still have great memories about the happenings at the (In)famous FCW on the Dartmouth side of Halifax harbour. Just a short note here about your favourite Officer, LCdr Don Hope. At one Xmas function after you had departed for the USA, I had absconded a frozen fruitcake from the Galley, stuffed it in my shirt and carried on drinking with the other guys. Don came back from the Stern Club to have a few beers, and we all noted that his shirt was torn quite a bit. He explained that he had a difference of opinion, then a scrap with someone in the Petty Officer's Mess. Just then, John Chaput, the instigator asked me about my fruitcake, whereupon I informed him that it was going home with me for my Xmas Dinner. John then said something to the effect "*You don't have the guts to hit the Old Man on the head with that frozen fruitcake!*" Well, you know what happened next – I clocked Don hard on the back of the head, and just about floors him. However, he was one tough bastard, just like Gary Cooper in the cowboy flicks, he turned on me and attacked. Shit, the only thing that saved me was Glen Frauzel intervening! The next day, at the morning coffee break, John Dohan asked how I felt.

I said "I feel good John, but I got some awful lumps on the back of my head". Then, John Dohan being John, says out loudly enough for all to hear in the Mess "Sam doesn't remember what he did yesterday to the Captain of the Diving Unit!!" Anyway, as with all the Xmas scraps at the French Cable Wharf, everything was forgotten the next day, with the Divers back on their Tenders and heading off to the Dockyard to work, as if nothing had happened. However, with Don Hope being drafted to the West Coast Unit the next day, Knobby and I took him to the Mess at HMCS SHEARWATER for a couple of going away beers. When Don left, he looked me in the eye and said "Simple, I still owe you something!" I believe he would have taken me on right there in the Mess – Knobby was pissing himself laughing so loud! Yep, you are right Bud, never again will there be a place like the French Cable Wharf for the Fleet Diving Unit(Atlantic)  
Take Care, Sam(ex- Mobile Team).

**Bud Nuquist** forwarded another story as follows: There was another pretty good FDU(A) diving job done in the past. In December 1970, there was an Operation taking place, in which a Destroyer (DD) went aground, damaging both screws pretty bad. This DD was a pretty important part of the Operation and CANMARCOM asked us if we could change out both screws before 4 to 5 days were up. The CO called the Wardroom together and explained the situation. It appeared that the only Officer left onboard over the Christmas/New Years holiday period was this Ol' Yank. Yes, I had changed out screws on USN ships, but none of the Canadian ones to date. We accepted the challenge, and went alongside the limping DD, which was then moored across the harbour in HMC DOCKYARD. We figured it would probably take 48 to 72 hours to complete. With that, we combined the crews of the YMT's into three (3) eight hour shifts. We immediately rounded up all the necessary equipment, and commenced the task in the late afternoon. I cannot recall the exact date, but it was between Christmas and New Year. I picked my three Chiefs (I think) to be Eisner, Cripps and Stephenson. Even though the task seemed to go rather slow, we plugged along at a steady rate, without too many problems arising. Thankfully, the ship kept us in constant coffee and hot food, as the weather at that time was chilly and snowing. With the shifts laid out, we seemed to have a constant flow of fresh Divers on board. They did not have to stay aboard for the off shift, which helped the morale considerably. About midnight on Sunday, we tightened up the last nuts on the dunce cap, and pulled away from the DD. The CO gave us a hearty "Thanks, for a job completed in jig time", and lowered a basket containing a very nice basket of cheer.

I made the Midnight Log entry to be something like this "As we steamed away into the snowy night, this Ol' Yank could have sworn that he heard such a clatter from the rooftop of the YMT \*On Dancer.. On Prancer.. and as he soared out of sight, we heard a HO...HO...HO...to all ye good Divers...and to all a very good night\*!! Needless to say, this was not taken too kindly by the then # 1, who proceedeth to chew on the hind end of this young foreign Officer. That was OK though, as I then made my way to the Stern

Club to give them the Holiday Basket presented to us by the DD's Skipper. This gift of appreciation contained some of the Royals Best Tot material that could be utilized for a proper **Up Spirits**, and to **Splice The Mainbrace** for a job well done. Just another wee memory from the depths of that old building referred to as the French Cable Wharf Building. There should be more material here, but my computer is giving me a very rough time – this is the third version, or copy!!  
Cheers to all from Bud "Da Yank" Nuquist



Ready, set, go! The Victoria Grizzlies line up to take the plunge into the waters at Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific).

They might be in shape for the ice, but on Nov. 4 2014 the hockey players from the Victoria Grizzlies discovered a different kind of fitness – fit to fight. Victoria's Junior "A" British Columbia Hockey League team spent a day in a navy diver's wet suit to see, hear, and feel what it's like to work beneath the cold

Pacific waters. "We didn't know what to expect," says #17 Shawn McBride, Captain of the Grizzlies. "We didn't really know what the Clearance Divers were all about, but we were excited to check it out, and we were all pretty surprised." With the sun barely awake, the hockey players took part in the Clearance Diver morning swim, along with students in the current year-long Clearance Diver course. The one-and-a-half kilometre circuit tested their water skills and endurance. Seasoned divers showed the novices the sideways swimming technique that takes full advantage of the fins and leg extension. "Some on the team are good swimmers, but overall it was pretty tough," McBride acknowledged. "I don't think we realized how long it was going to be until we got out there. It was a new type of swimming too. It gives you a sense of respect for what they do." After a half hour of water work out, everyone clambered to dry land for a little rope work – a 30 foot climb up a rope line on the training float's confidence tower, and in water obstacle course. The Clearance Divers easily zipped up and down the course, while only defenseman #3 Zach Dixon and power forward #16 Dane Gibson of the young hockey players were able to make the feat, all to the rousing applause of their teammates. With the fitness portion done, the Grizzlies were treated to a tour of the Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific), which included a look at Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) equipment, and the Hyperbaric Chamber. During that time they were able to handle bomb disposal equipment, tools, and even don the EOD Bomb Suit. "It was really cool," says McBride. "None of us had seen anything like that before." To pay it forward, the hockey team invited divers to their home rink for some on-the-ice action during the afternoon portion of the day's activity. In the The Q Centre (formerly Bear Mountain Arena) in Colwood, the two groups were divided into mixed teams for a fun match of "Shinny Hockey". "There are some good hockey players in there," says McBride. "They scored some good goals, and were keeping the pace pretty well. I was impressed." While Team Black came out victorious at 5-3 over Team Yellow, McBride says the real strength came from sharing the bench with the Clearance Divers, who became fast friends. "There are a lot of similarities between us, I think," says McBride. "The training we all go through, to hone our skills in each of our fields, it's all sort of the same thing. It was great to meet them, and share those experiences and hear some of their stories. They're great guys." The game ended with a short ceremony at centre ice, where more than 20 Clearance Divers each presented their Junior "A" counterparts with an FDU(P) Coin in recognition of the day, and the new professional relationships that were developed. So well did their meeting go, the Grizzlies are extending their 30 per cent military ticket discount through the rest of the hockey season for all DND employees.

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BALTIC SEA (May 16, 2014) A Canadian explosive ordnance disposal team detonates a World War II German naval mine after safely removing it from the wreck of a German minelayer worked by them and U.S. Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit (EODMU) 8. EODMU-8 is participating in Open Spirit, a multinational operation that disposes of mines and other ordnance remaining on the seabed from World War I and World War II to reduce the risk to navigation, fishing and to the environment in the Baltic Sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication 1st Class David R. Krigbaum/Released)

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NATIONAL POST, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2014

## “ Jim Wilson served in, and remembers well, the Second World War and Korea

fire with the [much smaller] twin Oerlikon gun but the shells just hit the conning tower and bounced off. The sub dove and disappeared.”

Jim was in Halifax on Victory in Europe Day – May 7, 1945 – when the celebrations quickly escalated into a riot. Shortly after he was sent to Vancouver for further

ers” for their success in destroying supply trains coming in and out of tunnels built into the cliffs along the North Korean coast.

Jim had known his wife Joyce Woodburn before the war. “We connected again and agreed to get engaged before I left for Korea,” he told me. “We planned to get mar-

ried as soon as I came back. Joyce had to do everything herself – she even had to buy her own ring.”

Just two weeks after the Korean armistice, in August of 1953, Jim and Joyce got married in Westmount, Que., and went on to spend the next 13 years living in Halifax, until Jim’s retirement from the military in 1966. Only then was he finally required to produce a legitimate birth certificate, for pension reasons.

By the time he retired, Jim one of the foremost Canadian experts on diving, underwater pressure and bariatric chambers. While still officially in the Navy, Jim took a job at the Toronto General Hospital in 1965. He was responsible for operating the hyperbaric chambers, used in many kinds of medical therapies. He worked there until retirement in 1992, and continued as a consultant until 2009. He was a founder of the Divers Certification Board of Canada, an executive with

the Canadian Standards Association, and he remains an honorary director of the Canadian Association of Diving Contractors.

After some health problems in 2009, Jim moved into the Sunnybrook Veterans Centre, where Joyce would visit him almost every day. After almost 60 years of marriage, Joyce passed away in April 2013. They had a daughter, a son, and four grandchildren.

Jim Wilson is one of the 100,000 surviving Canadian veterans of the Second World War and the Korean War, and one of a much smaller number who served in both. You can listen to some of his stories, and to the reminiscences of other Canadian veterans, at [Thememoryproject.com](http://Thememoryproject.com).

I will be at the Sunnybrook Veterans Centre on Remembrance Day, and I hope you will make a point of talking with a veteran in this season, and of attending a service in your neighbourhood on Nov. 11th.

Lest we forget.

*National Post*

# 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mess Dinner

By Glen Gillan

On September 27<sup>th</sup> 2014 Fleet Diving Unit Atlantic (FDUA) hosted a mixed mess dinner to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the Clearance Diver Branch. FDUA Commanding Officer Steph Julien graciously invited members of the CNDA to attend the event held at the Marriott Harbour front Hotel in Halifax. The evening was organized by Leading Seaman Jordan Docherty and was attended by 100 immaculately turned out Divers and Spouses. It was kind of ironic that this was a couple of days before my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The evening started out with the traditional cocktails and conversation followed by the Dinner with a Port and Starboard seating arrangement under strict control of the PMC, PO2 Gouthro and Vice PMC, P2 Dawe. After dinner the Stadaonna Band entertained the crowd with a lively mixture of music prompting many to gyrate and cut a rug (fortunately there were no hip dislocations however; several cases of vertigo were observed). The evening was captured on film by Photographer Dana Fraser and is available at: <http://www.fotophoto.ca/Other/MessDinner/n-6PG9h/> Password: messdinner

During dinner the crowd was entertained by the light banter of Divers picking on each others habits and activities; all of course in jest. After the meal we turned to the evening's speeches and presentations. Former RCN CPO1 Allan Robb was invited to speak to the crowd about the origin and traditions of the Naval Mess Dinner. This was followed by CNDA Eastern Chapter President CDR (retired) Gary Reddy and PO1 (retired) Tony Dubois presenting to FDUA, the spruced up Charter listing the original members of the Clearance Diver Branch, (Below is an excerpt from Gary's speech)  
"For me, and I know for you, these names capture the spirit, professionalism, and dedication that make up FDU(A) today. These names represent the standard bearers from which everything we do emulates. It is important to recognize our founding fathers. Those who stepped fwd to establish the Clearance Diving trade. It is because of them I, my CNDA colleagues, and you enjoyed/enjoy a rewarding career as a Clearance Diver".

Tony D followed Gary's speech with one of his own thanking the spouses for their tireless support of their Husbands throughout their career which was followed by a toast. I felt that one of the classiest touches was the table setting positioned to the side commemorating our fallen comrades, less we forget.

The Guest Speaker for the dinner was 81 yr young CDR (retired) Allan Sagar (former CO FDUA), during the introduction Bill Lukeman was overheard saying "he was a fine officer who kept me out'a jail. Allan's speech will be available on the CNDA Web Site.

While the room was being rearranged for the dance we all went outside for group photos. FDUA Coxn Andy Tiffin was in charge of herding the cats and after a few well chosen words from Andy we managed to get some pictures. One group shot was of the retired Divers however; a few are missing (likely at the Bar).

I would like to thank CO Steph Julien and his team for the invite to this memorial mess dinner. In light of the passing of our comrades over the years it is important to lay eyes on one another and retell old stories. It is equally important that we maintain the connection to the current Clearance Divers and the challenges they face in these troubled times. We can be proud of the accomplishments of the Clearance Diving Branch both past and present. "Strength In Depth".

## 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mess Dinner - Photos



**The Ladies**



**The Divers**



**The Entire Gang!**

**MARK DRAIBYE, 1930 – 2014**

RCN LCdr(ret) Mark Draibye passed away on 20 June 2014 at his home on Vancouver Island BC, from cancer. He left home in Montreal at the young age of 13, working in jobs in a logging camp, the Merchant Navy, and eventually the Royal Canadian Navy. A natural leader, following his service on Destroyers in the Korean War, and a number of positions on warships and a Minesweeper, he became a Deep Sea Clearance Diver, and later the XO of FDU(P). Upon retiring from the RCN, he was appointed Commander of HMCS QUADRA, the Cadet Camp in Comox BC. Mark spent most of his life devoted to the Navy – he will be sorely missed!

Jim White lets us know that he has notified everyone in the Cadet World of Mark Draibye's death, and CNDA National Office has confirmed Mark's crossing the bar to Rory Thompson. Andre Desrochers informs us that he had served aboard a Frigate back in the 1960's and there was a Mark Draibye aboard who was either the Buffer, or the Ship's Cox'n. Andre said that I may be wrong, but I remember Mark being on HMCS SWANSEA in 1963, and that he was a real nice shipmate. Tom Essery stated that he would check with Mark's family to see if they have his Military Service Records, from which they could figure what ships he served on, and then inform Andre.

Roy Busby said I first met Mark Draibye when I was the Navigator on HMCS HURON from 1958 to 1960, and he was a P2 Boatswain then. Strangely enough, one day in Bermuda when we were exercising the Ship's Divers, Mark was on the upper deck watching this evolution unfold. He said to me that it looked like a lot of fun, so I suggested he apply for a Ships Diver Course. Many years later, while I was the XO at FDU(P) from 1968 to 1971, who should turn up but a Clearance Diving Officer named Mark Draibye! He was one great guy, and a real loss to the Diving Fraternity-oops-sorority, as well.

*Editor's Note: Regretfully I missed reporting his passing in the last issue.*

**Jay A. Frew (July 26, 1952 - December 21, 2014)****Obituary**

Retired LT.(N) Jay A. Frew 62, of Cambridge, Ontario, passed away December 21, 2014, surrounded by his family. He was born July 26, 1952, in Calgary, Alberta, the son of Nona and the late James R. Frew. He served proudly in the Canadian Navy for over 35 years as a Clearance Diver; receiving medals, one of which was the Medal of Bravery. A sage advisor, Jay was the pillar of strength to his family. A man of integrity; he was selfless in his actions to the very end. His sense of humour, his laugh, and his comforting hugs will be sorely missed. A zest for life and great food, his other passions included photography, archery, his dogs, and playing his banjo. He is also survived by his loving wife of 39 years, Penny; daughter, Chasin (Will); son Robert (Syreeta); grandchildren, Chanel, Liam, Carter, and Aurelia; sisters Jackie and Joanne (Al), and niece Jade. Memorial donations may be made to the Canadian Cancer Society or to Waterloo Regions Lisaard House.

**HENRY HARVEY WOLFE****Obituary**

Age 57 of Lake Echo It is with heavy hearts that we announce the sudden passing of loving husband and father, Henry Wolfe. Henry passed away at home in Lake Echo on Tuesday, December 9, 2014. Born in Winnipeg, he was a son of Barbara Orvis, Winnipeg. Retired Chief Petty Officer Second Class Henry Wolfe retired from the Royal Canadian Navy after 32 years of service. Henry was a part of the Fleet Diving Unit on both the Canadian West and East Coasts and served on the Cormorant and was Captain of the Pisces II submersible. He participated in some significant efforts, including the Swissair Flight 111 recovery in Nova Scotia and trained in numerous countries. Henry was proud to be a grandfather and he enjoyed spending time with his dogs, Sophie, Mutt and Jeff. Henry will be remembered for his warm, kind spirit, always having a joke to tell and his love of movies and music. Henry is also survived by his wife Kathy; daughters, Sara Wolfe (Sean MacNeil), Dartmouth, Lindsey Marr (William), Dartmouth, Ashley Lapensee (Jay), Frankford, Ontario; grandchildren, Darren Lapensee, Noah Marr, Alyssa MacNeil; sisters, Sandy Fleming, Cathy Blyth; brothers, Dean Wolfe, Danny Wolfe, Tommy Orvis, and aunt, Adele Jorgensen. Cremation has taken place. A Celebration of Life will be held at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, December 14 in Atlantic Funeral Home, 771 Main Street, Dartmouth. Reception to follow. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Christmas Daddies. Online condolences may be sent by visiting [www.atlanticfuneralhomes.com](http://www.atlanticfuneralhomes.com) (Dartmouth Chapel). *As published in the Winnipeg Free Press on December 12, 2014*

**Karl H. Reiter****Obituary**

CNDA Ottawa Member, RCN(R) & RCN 1949 to 1957, passed away in Houston, Texas age 81 on 18 October 2014. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba in 1933 during the Great Depression of 1929-1939, the Dirty Thirties and, for a time, resided in the Winnipeg Orphanage. He joined the RCN in September 1952. He served aboard Destroyer 228 HMCS CRUSADER for one year during the Korean War, then was drafted to Frigate 313 HMCS SUSSEXVALE, where he trained to become a Naval Diver. Upon retirement from the RCN in 1957, Karl worked as a Marine Surveyor and Salvage Diver, forming his own business in the USA, Reiter Marine Service, with his last active dive at age 64 in 1997 in Nigeria. Rest in peace old buddy.

## NAVY DIVER



What my friends think I do.



What my mom thinks I do.



What society thinks I do.



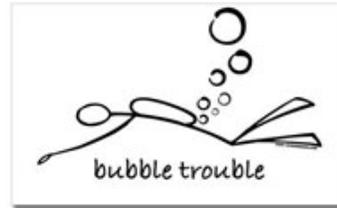
What my instructor thinks I do.



What I think I do.



What I actually do.



### A New Breed of Hard-Ass Navy Clearance Diver is Brought to Light!

## Editor's 10 Foot Stop

Happy New Years one and all! Just a little admin item before going on to some other items. With the start of the new year I have done a little house cleaning on last year's Dippers Digests and removed the passwords and have started fresh with a new password for this issue as is the custom. Please pass this on to non-members who might be interested that last year's editions are now freely available on the CNDA Web Site for them to read and enjoy while gently reminding them that 2015 issues are for CNDA members only which will hopefully entice some more Divers to join. While on the topic of memberships I just want to remind everyone that with the new year also comes renewal time for your annual dues if you have let them lapse with the short grace period allowed. We do this of course so that the association can flourish and keep providing services like the web site and the Dippers Digest for your enjoyment.

I do want to take the opportunity to reemphasize my comments from the last edition that the Western Chapter is still working on the 2015 CNDA Reunion Details scheduled for 11 to 13 September here in Colwood, BC. Rather than take up valuable space in this Digest to explain things I have decided to use the web site Reunion page at: <http://navydiver.ca/Reunion.htm> to begin posting details on the event as they are promulgated. The Committee is set to meet on Monday 19 January with an aim to have more information for you posted on the web site shortly thereafter. We of course welcome anyone who wishes to volunteer and help with making it the success we know it will be.

Lastly, you may have noticed that on the bottom of the "About Us" page on the Web Site, I have posted the Past and Present CO Lists for both FDU (A) & FDU(P) as well as the Coxn list for FDU(A) and a partial Coxn List for FDU(P). We could use some of your long memories to help complete the Coxn List for FDU(P) to help complete the picture. Thank You.

