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15 December 2008  
&  
15 March 2009

FOUNDED  
HALIFAX, N.S.  
1981

**FOUNDING MEMBERS**

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## DIPPERS DIGEST #71/08 DIPPERS DIGEST #72/09

Chuck Rolfe, your Digest Editor has been constructing a new house, moving household goods and is in the throes of selling his house in Kinburn, Ontario over the past few months. Therefore the 15 December 2008 Issue of the newsletter is amalgamated into this Issue - please note there is no December 2008 publication. His new address is: 487 Campbells Side Road, RR3, Ashton, Ontario KOA 1B0 and new phone number is: 613-253-4958 as of 31 March 2009. There is no Internet.

## It's Reunion Time Again!

As the year 2009 rolls along, we urge all those who will be attending this, the 10th Tri-ennial Reunion (the first was held in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia in 1982) being held in Victoria, BC to complete the Registration Form attached as soon as possible and send it with the appropriate Registration Fees to the CNDA Western Chapter. Note that CNDA Members may invite any number of guests, however they will be required to pay the non members fees. Members wives/mates/partner are classified as Members and will pay only Members fees. We request that you indicate how many people wish to have either a beef or a chicken dinner. All of the above is vital information for the early planning and scheduling of events - DO IT NOW! As in previous years, Pauls Motor Inn is the recommended place to stay, so you should contact them early for reservation, quoting the number 76849 to get their preferred rate.

## \$2M NAVY MONUMENT

The Canadian navy veterans (along with hundreds of thousands of others) welcomed the news that the Canadian Government is going to erect a monument in conjunction with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Navy. This has been approved by Ottawa's National Capital Commission and its Board of Directors. The site for the memorial is historic RICHMOND LANDING on the Ottawa River just behind the new Canadian War Museum. Completion is scheduled for 2011.



historians as it was the traditional landing for boats from the Great Lakes as well as International Waters.

A pleasing part of the centennial project will be the presentation of a special centennial ship's bell.

Centennial Project.

The Richmond Landing location will please naval

Those who were present at the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Canadian Navy's operations in World War II will long remember the throwing of roses into Halifax Harbour accompanied by a sharp ring of the bell installed at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic at Sackville Landing, commemorating sailors and merchant seamen who had lost their lives in the Battle of the Atlantic.

We were very pleased to hear of the Government's plan to commemorate naval veterans. Their contribution has often been overlooked.

This initiative, in particular, is under the guidance of the Canadian Naval

Milt Skaalrud writes from Armstrong, BC that he met Barbara Anderson, who is the daughter of RCN(Ret) LCDR Will Lawther and Barbara Lawther. Will was Commanding Officer of the RCN Diving Section in the early days of Naval Diving in Canada. Both of them were good friends of that renowned WWII Royal Navy 'frogman' Lionel "Buster" Crabb. Buster disappeared during a clandestine reconnaissance in Portsmouth Harbour of a Soviet Cruiser on 19 April 1956, and his body has never been found. Miss Anderson provided Milt with a copy of a letter, dated 28 January 1954, which Buster had sent to her Mother (seen at the end of the following article). *The Editor appreciates this information from Milt!*

## Lionel Crabb

**Lionel "Buster" Crabb** OBE, GM (28 January 1909 - presumed dead 19 April 1956) was a British Royal Navy frogman who vanished during a reconnaissance mission around a Soviet cruiser in 1956.

### The Silent Enemy (film) *Make a donation to Wikipedia and give the gift of knowledge!*

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*The Silent Enemy* is a 1958 film directed by William Fairchild, starring Laurence Harvey as Lionel Crabb.

The film depicts events in Gibraltar harbour during the World War II Italian frogman and manned torpedo attacks, although the film's depiction of those events is inaccurate: see Human torpedo#Movies and fiction.

#### External links

- The Silent Enemy* at the Internet Movie Database

*This article related to the cinema of the United Kingdom is a stub. You can help Wikipedia by expanding it.*

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\_Silent\_Enemy\_%28film%29"  
 Categories: 1958 films | British films | English-language films | World War II films | Gibraltar in World War II | British film stubs

<i>The Silent Enemy</i>	
<b>Directed by</b>	William Fairchild
<b>Produced by</b>	Bertram Ostrer Raymond Anzarut
<b>Written by</b>	Marshall Pugh (book) William Fairchild (screenplay)
<b>Starring</b>	Laurence Harvey Dawn Addams John Clements Michael Craig Sidney James
<b>Music by</b>	William Alwyn
<b>Cinematography</b>	Otto Heller
<b>Editing by</b>	Alan Osbiston
<b>Release date(s)</b>	1958
<b>Running time</b>	112 min.
<b>Country</b>	U.K.
<b>Language</b>	English
	<b>IMDb profile</b>

## Early life

Lionel Crabb was born in 1909 to Hugh and Beatrice Crabb of Streatham, South West London. They were a poor family. In his youth he held many jobs but also joined the merchant navy.

## World War II

At the outbreak of World War II, Crabb was first an army gunner and then joined the Royal Navy in England in 1941. The next year he was sent to Gibraltar where he worked in a mine and bomb disposal unit to remove the Italian limpet mines that enemy divers had attached to the hulls of Allied ships. Initially, Crabb's job was to disarm mines that British divers removed, but eventually he decided to learn to dive.

He was one of a group of underwater guard divers who checked for limpet mines in Gibraltar harbour during the period of Italian frogman and manned torpedo attacks. They dived with Davis Escape Sets, which until then had not been used much if at all for swimming down from the surface. At first they swam by breast stroke without swimfins.

On 17 December 1942, during one such attack, two of the Italian frogmen (Lt. Visintini and Petty Officer Magro) died, probably killed by depth charges. Their bodies were recovered, and their swimfins were

taken and from then on used by Sydney Knowles and Commander Lionel Crabb.

He was awarded The George Medal for his efforts and was promoted to Lieutenant-Commander. In 1943 he became Principal Diving Officer for Northern Italy, was assigned to clear mines in the ports of Livorno and Venice and was later created OBE for this duty. By this time he had also gained the nickname "Buster", in honour of U.S. actor and swimmer Buster Crabbe.

After the war Crabb was stationed in Palestine and led an underwater explosives disposal team that removed mines placed by Jewish rebels. After 1947, he was demobilized from the military.

## Civilian diver

Crabb moved to a civilian job and used his diving skills to explore the wreck of a Spanish galleon and located a suitable site for a discharge pipe for the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Aldermaston. He later returned to work for the Royal Navy. He twice dived to investigate sunken Royal Navy submarines — HMS *Truculent* in January 1950 and HMS *Affray* in 1951 — to find out whether there were any survivors. Neither effort was successful, however. Crabb married **Margaret Elaine Player** in 1952 but they divorced after a few years.

In 1955 Crabb took frogman Sydney Knowles with him to investigate the hull of the Soviet ship *Sverdlov* to evaluate its greater manoeuvrability. According to Knowles, they found a circular opening at the ship's bow and inside it a large propeller that could be directed to give thrust to the bow. In March 1955 Crabb was made to retire due to his age.

## Diving for MI6

### Crabb's disappearance

In 1956 however, MI6 recruited Crabb to investigate Soviet cruiser *Ordzhonikidze*, that had brought Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin on a diplomatic mission to Britain. Reputedly he was asked to look for anti-sonar equipment and mine-laying hatches. In April 19, 1956 Crabb dived into Portsmouth Harbour and his MI6 controller never saw him again. Crabb's companion in the Sally Port Hotel took all his belongings and even the page of the hotel registry book where they had written their names. Ten days later British newspapers published stories about Crabb's disappearance in an underwater mission.

MI6 tried to cover up this espionage mission. On April 29 the Admiralty announced that Crabb had vanished when he had taken part in trials of secret underwater apparatus in Stokes Bay. Soviets answered by releasing a statement stating that the crew of *Ordzhonikidze* had seen a frogman near the cruiser on April 19.

British newspapers speculated that Soviets had captured Crabb and taken him to the Soviet Union. The British Prime Minister Anthony Eden apparently disapproved of the fact that MI6 had operated without his consent in the UK (the preserve of the Security Service, "MI5"), and forced director-general John Sinclair to resign.

### Body in a British frogman suit found

A little less than two months later, on June 9, 1957, a body in a frogman suit was found floating off Pilsley Island. It was missing its head and both hands, which made it impossible to identify (using then-available technology). Crabb's ex-wife was not sure enough to identify the body, nor was Crabb's girlfriend Pat Rose. Sidney Knowles said that Crabb had had a similar scar on the left knee. An inquest jury returned an open verdict but the coroner announced that he was satisfied that the body was that of Lionel Crabb.

## **Theories and speculations**

### **A second MI6 diver?**

After Crabb's disappearance there have been numerous speculations of what happened to him. Some sources have stated that another British Navy diver was in the water with Crabb on the night of April 19. He held the rank of lieutenant, was stationed at Portsmouth, and usually went home to his wife at night. On the evening that Crabb disappeared, Navy police searched for and found his wife at a restaurant where she was with friends and made her sign the Official Secrets Act. Her husband did not return for several days and had been under severe psychological pressure. She claimed he was never the same again and he died a few years later. She remarried and now lives in Australia.

### **Captured, brainwashed, defected, or a double agent**

Certain Members of Parliament became concerned about Crabb's ultimate fate, and in 1961 Commander J.S. Kerans (and later in 1964 Marcus Lipton) submitted proposals to re-open the case but were rebuffed. Various people speculated that Crabb had been killed by some secret Soviet underwater weapon; that he had been captured and imprisoned in Lefortovo prison with prison number 147; that he had been brainwashed to work for the Soviet Union to train their frogman teams; that he had defected and become a Commander in the Soviet Navy under the name *Lev Lvovich Korablov*; that he was in the Soviet Special Task Underwater Operational Command in the Black Sea Fleet; or that MI6 had asked him to defect so he could become a double agent.

### **Shot in the water by a Soviet sniper**

In a 1990 interview Joseph Zwerkin, an ex-member of Soviet Naval intelligence who had moved to Israel after the fall of the Soviet Union, claimed that Soviets had noticed Crabb in the water and that a Soviet sniper had shot him. Official government documents regarding Crabb's disappearance are not scheduled to be released until 2057.

### **Murdered by MI5**

On March 26, 2006, The Mail On Sunday published an article by Tim Binding entitled *Buster Crabb was murdered - by MI5*. Binding wrote a fictionalised account of Crabb's life, *Man Overboard*, published in 2005. Binding stated that, following the publication, he was contacted by Sydney Knowles, now living in Málaga, Spain. Binding has alleged that he then met Knowles in Spain and was told that Crabb was known by MI5 to have intentions of defecting to the USSR. This would have been embarrassing for the UK — Crabb being an acknowledged war hero. Knowles has suggested that MI5 set up the mission to the *Ordzhonikidze* specifically to murder Crabb, and supplied Crabb with a new

diving partner ordered to kill him. Binding stated that Knowles alleges that he was ordered by MI5 to identify the body found as Crabb, when he knew it was definitely not Crabb. Knowles went along with the deception. Knowles has also alleged that his life was threatened in Torremolinos in 1989, at a time when Knowles was in discussions with a biographer.

## National Archive release

On October 27, 2006, the National Archives released papers relating to the fatal *Ordzhonikidze* mission ([1] (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6089952.stm>)).

## Popular culture

Crabb's time in Gibraltar is covered in the film *The Silent Enemy* with Laurence Harvey portraying Crabb.

## See also

- Buster Crabbe (American actor and swimmer)
- MI6
- *Ordzhonikidze*
- *The Silent Enemy*
- List of people who have disappeared
- Presumed dead

## External links

- Lionel Crabb in Spartacus Schoolnet (<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/SScrabb.htm>)
- Lionel Crabb in Trivia Library (<http://www.trivia-library.com/b/mystery-in-history-disappearance-of-commander-lionel-buster-crabb.htm>)
- BBC News page on release of National Archive documents, October 2006 (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6089952.stm>)
- National Archive page (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/releases/2006/october/crabb.htm>)

Retrieved from "[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel\\_Crabb](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel_Crabb)"

Categories: Articles that may contain original research since September 2007 | Articles needing additional references from May 2007 | All articles with unsourced statements | Articles with unsourced statements since February 2007 | 1909 births | 1956 deaths | People from Streatham | British underwater divers | Royal Navy officers | British military personnel of World War II | Officers of the Order of the British Empire | History of Gibraltar | George Medal recipients

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**SOCIAL**

Jim "Tug" Wilson informs us that he and Joyce were enjoying the pleasant weather and sandy beaches at Fort Myers, Florida just before heading home to Toronto for Christmas. It was exceedingly nice this year down South since there was very little rain.

Ward Palmer, who was the Commanding Officer of the HMCS GRANBY East Coast Diving Unit and also of FDU(P), tells us that he joined the Royal Canadian Navy (lovely name, that!) during WWII (April 1943) and served on various Ships and Bases over his 27 productive years in the RCN. He qualified Naval Diving Officer in the United Kingdom at that ubiquitous Diving Establishment, HMS VERNON. He was awarded the WWII medals, Korean War Medal and CD over his illustrious career and is enjoying all the rest of his retirement years in Victoria, BC.

Milt & Margit Skaalrud write that he is rapidly approaching the age of 65 and still recalls all his good, and bad, times he had during his time serving in the Royal Canadian Navy, which he joined at the young age of 18 as an -E (Esquimalt) rating as a Sonarman. Shortly thereafter he joined the exclusive fraternity of Naval Divers, in which he served for 22 years, retiring as a CP01. Milt served at Bases in Esquimalt, Halifax and at DCIEM (Defence & Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine) in Toronto, aboard ships HMCS NEW GLASGOW & HMCS SUSSEXVILLE, as well as on Diving Tenders YMT's 2,9,10 and 11. He is currently holding the position of Environmental Co-ordinator for Defence Construction Canada on the West Coast.

Kevin "KP" McNamara joined the Naval Element of the Canadian Armed Forces in September 1976, originally as an Electronic Warfare Operator, but soon qualified as a Clearance Diver, then Commissioned as CLDO. He served at FDU(A), FDU(P), EDU Toronto and at NDHQ Ottawa as well as aboard ships HMCS ATHABASKAN, HMCS PRESERVER, HMCS CHARLTTETOWN, HMCS CORMORANT and on YDT's 6,8,9,11 & 12. Some Operations he participated in were BANDIT(1985), AUGMENTATION(2000), ARCHER(2006) and was awarded the Chief of Defence Staff Commendation for his involvement in the RAF Nimrod crash into Lake Ontario at Toronto. Kevin has also been awarded the: MMM, MSM, GSC, CPSM and CD. He has been trained to deploy In Charge of Combined Explosive Exploitation Cell Roto 6 to Afghanistan accompanied by Clearance Divers CPO2 Trombley and Leading Seaman Trimble. *It can be said that this is one busy Clearance Diving Officer over his 32 years in the Navy!*

Wayne "Pussyfoot" Catchpaugh and his good wife, Carol remained living in Halifax, NS upon his retirement from the Canadian Navy as a CPO2 in July 1989, having served 25 years, mostly on the East Coast as a Clearance Diver. He originally joined as an -H (Halifax) rating, ie all personnel joining the RCN from Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay) eastward who then served out of Halifax, whereas those with -E ratings were all those from West of Port Arthur, and who then served out of Esquimalt, BC. *One might presume that Wayne may have been on the old RCN "25 years and out" to retirement Plan that the Editor opted for, rather than the new indefinite service Plan now in vogue.* Wayne served aboard ships HMCS CRESCENT & HMCS ASSINIBOINE and on most of the YMT Diving Tenders, as well as on HMCS GRANBY, that later became FDU(A). He held the position of Director of the Marine Yard for the Royal Nova Scotia Yacht Squadron for 14 years after retirement from the Navy, before semi-retiring (still felt like working and is now self employed) over the past few years. Wayne Catchpaugh, Andy McLaughlin & Chuck Rolfe organized the Shearwater Dive Club in the late 1960's & early 1970's, and for five years thereafter the Club won every Nova Scotia Underwater Council Dive Meet!

*Miss Barbara Lawther  
Huntington*

*From Sinner  
An Admirer*

*TELEPHONE:  
PORTSMOUTH  
7496 74126*

*28<sup>th</sup> Jan: 1954*

*H.M.S. VERNON  
PORTSMOUTH*

*Dear Barbara,*

*Your Birthday Letter  
was such a nice surprise; Thank you  
very much for remembering me.*

*Tell Charles that I think  
you both will be beautiful.*

*Your  
Gabbie*

*XXXXXX*

### Canadian Naval Divers Association Reunion 2009

#### Registration Form

Reunion Information Contact: Moe Coulombe, Telephone: (250)337-5466 or moeco@telus.net

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Guest \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Tel \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Enter events you wish to attend, Registration must be received by Sept 4<sup>th</sup> 2009

	Member /	Non Member	Number attending Events
Meet & Greet	00.00	\$10.00	_____
Tender Harbour Tour	no cost		_____
Tots	no cost		_____
Dinner/Dance	\$40.00	\$50.00	# Beef <input type="checkbox"/> # Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> (indicate type of dinner)
Brunch	\$20.00	\$20.00	_____

All inclusive Cost per person for a member \$60.00

All inclusive Cost per non member is \$80.00

Note: A member is a person who has paid his/her dues prior to reunion. All others shall be considered non members. Make cheques payable to CNDA Western Chapter.

Mail To: CNDA Western Chapter D2-2157 Regent Road, Black Creek, B.C. V9J 1K6

Accommodation should be obtained through Pauls Motor Inn quoting Reservation Number 76849 prior to Aug 4, 2009 to take advantage of special rate.

Pauls Motor Inn Fax 250-386-9547, phone 1-866-333-7285 email : reservations@paulsmotorinn.com Attn: Accommodation Reservations

**CNDA REUNION 2009 VICTORIA B.C.**

**Schedule**

**Friday Sept 11 2009**

**0830 National Meeting**

**1230 Meet & Greet FDU(P)**

**Cold Beer and Buffet provided**

**1700 Hospitality Room Pauls Motor Inn, Victoria B.C.**

**Saturday Sept 12 2009**

**0930 Diving Tender Harbour Tour( Departs FDU(P) )**

**1200 Up Spirits FDU(P)**

**1300 Hospitality Room Pauls Motor Inn & Personal Tours**

**1730 Cocktails- Trafalgar Pro Pats Legion(upper Ballroom)**

**-no-host Bar**

**1830 Dinner/Dance - Trafalgar Pro Pats Legion (upper Ballroom)**

**Dinner-Carved Roast Beef or Breast of Chicken with Salads**

**Potatoes or Rice ,steamed veggies,bakery rolls,cheese,**

**Desserts,Coffee and Tea**

**Sunday Sept 13 2009**

**1100 Brunch—Trafalgar Pro Pats Legion (upper Ballroom)**

**-menu will be mixed grill with cheese,quiches,rolls, toast**

**Coffee & Tea with no-host bar**

**1400 Departures**